

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE

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Unit - I

Culture - An Introduction - General Characteristics of Culture - Indian Culture - Cultural Identity, Religion, Region and ethnicity.

Objectives

1. To understand the **meaning and characteristics of culture.**
2. To know the **features and uniqueness of Indian culture.**
3. To identify how **religion, region and ethnicity shape cultural identity.**

Introduction

Meaning of Culture

Culture has been defined by many people in different ways. Culture can be defined as a complex system of knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and many other habits acquired through traditions by a man as the member of a particular society. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, described culture as "the outcome and basis of training, establishment and development of physical and mental potentials". Sri Rajagopalacharya, the first Governor General of British India, defined culture as "the collective expression of the thoughts, speeches and deeds of the learned, talented or creative members of a society or a nation". By these, we understand that culture is seen or felt through our thought process, literature, language, arts, religion, customs, traditions and the way we know the world around us.

Evolution Of Culture

The most spectacular forms of Indian cultural expression are closely associated with religion. Some of traditions are functional, practical and prescribed for keeping clean. For example taking bath everyday and worship only after taking bath, cleaning the house everyday, lighting the lamps in the evening without fail, not to wear the used cloth etc. Later, these practices were associated with religion for strict adherence. This is how most of our cultural traditions have been evolved. Outstanding structures were created for religious purposes. Temples were like the centres of socio-cultural life of the society. All temple traditions have cultural relevance and practiced in the context of social activities. For example, temples generated employment opportunities for various sections of people like architects, chariot makers, stone and wood cutters, sculptors, painters, priests, teachers, accountants, epigraphers, dancers, musicians, garland makers, people who participate in and execute processions, traders, cooks, guards, officers and many more people.

Our religious beliefs also influence our daily lives. Marriage rituals, the food we eat, the clothes we wear are governed by the religious rules and also it goes with the region to which we belong. For example the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh women of Punjab wear salwar kameez where as the all women irrespective of religions wear saree in Tamil Nādu. Thus, our cultural traditions are shaped by many factors other than religion.

Indian Culture and Cultural Traditions

Fine Arts The arts are one of the important forms of cultural expression. Dance, music, painting, sculpture, drama, architecture have

evolved through centuries. There is wide range of varieties in each of these because they have acquired changes during historical period. Each of these communicates a message and signifies the way the ideas and emotions were expressed through the means of artistic language. You will study each of these forms of culture in the lessons later. For example, the Buddha and Mahavira sculptures communicate the feelings and the state of peace and tranquillity. The sculptures of dancing Shiva tells us how God's enjoyed dancing, the Panchatantra stories are depicted on the walls of temples and also paintings from Mughal period tells us the taste and interests of Mughal emperors. If we take music we have classical traditions such as Hindusthani, Carnatic, popular traditions like Sufi, folk, bhajans, kirtanas, Bhakti sangeet, Rabindra sangeet, film music etc. India is very rich in the development of all such traditions.

Religious Tradition

Indian religious tradition talks about 'vasudaiva kutumbakam', the entire universe is one family of God. Through the ages the Vedic chants, Buddhist chants, Jaina chants, sufi songs (Islamic-Hindu combination), folk songs, poetic compositions of saints from all over the country during Bhakti movement have made Indian culture rich and deep-rooted. The women saints like Akka Mahadevi (Karnataka), Meera Bai (Rajasthan), Andal (Tamilnadu), Lal Ded (Kashmir), have richly contributed to the Indian literary and religious tradition.

Although, the Indian society was divided into many caste groups, harmony was maintained between the people of different religions. Religious tolerance was the basic principle of Indian culture. From such experience, spirituality and the science of Yoga have emerged as cultural

traditions. Indian spirituality and Yoga are the great contributions to the world today. The folk traditions are known as living traditions they are colourful, rich and closer to nature.

Epics and their Influence

Indian cultural values can be seen through the narration in our great epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. The story of these two epics is very familiar to Indians as they like to watch these even now on television or through the enactment of their episodes in classical arts or folk arts. The values upheld in these epics are applicable to all times. The contents are so impressive that countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, and Nepal have also imbibed these in their culture.

Fairs and Festivals

Indian culture is seen in the way festivals are celebrated in rural and urban places. The customs followed in fairs, festivals show the beliefs such as the truth triumphs the evil, the happiness and sorrow are to be seen complementing each other, the elders are to be respected, the family tradition should be valued, peace has to prevail, violence of any kind is to be avoided, dance, drama and music become part of ceremonies symbolising life is a celebration.

Food and Dress Tradition

Our food tradition and dress tradition are very rich and vibrant. Each region comes out with delicious and tasty dishes which are prepared according to the availability of resources like milk, vegetables, greens, and grains. The dishes are based on the availability of the resources found naturally in different seasons. Fresh and natural food is

preferred and is of good quality as tinned food is still not desired in Indian traditional preparations. In temple, churches, mosques and Gurudwaras culture food offerings are made with tasty dishes. India has rich textile tradition in silk, cotton, woolen and raw fibre yarn. Each region has its own weave with typical way of weaving and design. For example moonga silk from Assam, paithani sarees from Maharashtra, bandini from Gujarat, kanjeeivarm silk from Tamilnadu and Mysore silk from Karnataka etc. Kashmir shawls and carpets have great demand in other countries since many centuries. In Indian tradition the textile that is handmade are known as handlooms.

Nature Of Indian Culture

In our tradition, prayer is not for the happiness of mankind alone but plants and animals are also included. The prayer is not for one's own happiness and prosperity but for collective happiness. This is for the purpose of the removal of distress. Ancient India was a land of wisdom. All branches of knowledge developed in India and in many fields we had excelled much ahead of the western society. 'illuminated knowledge possessing the higher and renouncing the lower' was greatly considered and in present times it means 'simple living and high thinking'. In Indian culture 'dhanna' has higher goals. Dhanna is not the English translation of religion. Dhanna is not imposed but naturally, voluntarily followed, the closer meaning of which is righteousness. One has to develop a natural behaviour and functions of righteousness. In that sense sanatana - 'the ever prevailing' is the . correct word than the narrow usage of the term 'Hindu'. Dharma was upheld in Vedic, Buddhist and Jaina paths. As the symbol of respecting dharma, the dharmachakra of Ashoka appears on our national flag. Evil plans do not stand for long as we

believe in truth and truth ultimately prevails. We will discuss some more features in detail under the characteristics of Indian culture.

Plurality in Indian Culture

India is known for its **unity in diversity**, which reflects the **pluralistic nature** of its culture. Plurality means the existence of **multiple traditions, beliefs, languages, and lifestyles** coexisting peacefully within one society.

Key Points:

1. Religious Plurality

India is home to major religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism. All these religions have contributed to India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

2. Linguistic Diversity

India has **22 official languages** and hundreds of regional dialects. This linguistic richness shows how different communities express their identity through their own languages.

3. Cultural and Regional Variation

Each region has its **own customs, food, dress, art, and festivals** – from Bharatanatyam in Tamil Nadu to Kathak in Uttar Pradesh, from Pongal to Baisakhi – all form part of India's cultural fabric.

4. Philosophical and Intellectual Pluralism

Indian philosophy accepts **different ways of understanding truth** – for example, the coexistence of Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, and Bhakti ideas.

5. **Social**

Plurality

Indian society includes **various castes, tribes, and communities**, each contributing to the social and cultural richness of the nation.

6. **Unity**

in

Diversity

Despite differences, Indians share a common sense of identity and belonging, shown in shared values like tolerance, harmony, and respect for all faiths.

Characteristics Of Indian Culture

There are certain essential characteristics which are unique to Indian culture. Good governance was always considered to be an essential pre-requisite for the happiness of people. That is why prayers were offered to invoke auspicious time. So the rulers bestow happiness and prosperity on people, always treading the path of righteousness in governing the state. India is an agricultural society; happiness of the people is linked with the wellbeing of the cattle. For the happiness of all, the pancha mahabhutas, the five primordial elements such as Prithvi - the earth, Akasha - the sky, jala- water, Vayu - air and Agni - fire are propitiated and respected. Through the functioning of these elements, the life of every individual survives. In our culture these elements are worshipped in rituals, pilgrimages, and festivals and respected in everyday life. Though they are natural elements, they are treated as gods in Indian culture and as far as possible, harm should not be caused to these elements of nature. Many customs and traditions have developed over the centuries respecting these five primordial elements.

Ahimsa - Non-violence was upheld in Jainism and Buddhism and in our times Mahatma Gandhi had championed the cause of ahimsa by sending the British away without OSC waging a war during our freedom struggle and got our India Independent. The story-line, contents, characters, messages, and lessons we draw from our epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata are not confined to one geographical area. These are for every Indian and at any time and space these two epics stand as great examples to draw inspiration from time to time. They have great impact on the thought process of Indians. From all such experiences and ideals has developed a common outlook towards life. Another perennial value that the Indian culture has inculcated is the spirit of universal relationship. M~ is not alone and does not live in isolation. He is related to the entire world through a very strong bondage. What is now being called global consciousness covering the entire world was the very foundation of Indian culture.

Unity in Diversity – Composite Nature of Indian Culture

India is a land of **unity in diversity**, where people of different religions, languages, customs, and traditions live together in harmony. The **composite nature of Indian culture** reflects the blending of various cultural influences that have developed over thousands of years.

From the ancient Indus Valley Civilization to modern times, India has absorbed the best elements of many traditions. **Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Christian, and Sikh** cultures have all contributed to shaping the Indian way of life. This blending has created a **composite culture** based on mutual respect, tolerance, and coexistence.

The **diversity in India** can be seen in its languages, food, dress, art forms, music, and festivals. Each region of the country has its own unique identity but remains connected through common values of peace, respect, and brotherhood. Festivals like **Diwali, Eid, Christmas, and Pongal** are celebrated by people across religions, symbolizing cultural unity.

Philosophically, India believes in the saying “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (the world is one family). This spirit of inclusiveness and respect for all ways of life has helped India remain united despite its vast differences. **India’s unity in diversity** is the foundation of its **composite culture**, which combines many traditions into one harmonious civilization. This unique feature makes India a symbol of cultural richness and universal brotherhood.

Importance Of Culture in Human Life

Culture is closely linked with life. It is not an add-on, an ornament that we as human beings can use. It is not merely a touch of colour. It is what makes us human. Without culture, there would be no humans. Culture is made up of traditions, beliefs, way of life, from the most spiritual to the most material. It gives us meaning, a way of leading our lives. Human beings are creators of culture and, at the same time, culture is what makes us human. A fundamental element of culture is the issue of religious belief and its symbolic expression. We must value religious identity and be aware of current efforts to make progress in terms of interfaith dialogue, which is actually an intercultural dialogue. As the world is becoming more and more global and we coexist on a more global level we can’t just think there’s only one right way of living or that

any one is valid. The need for coexistence makes the coexistence of cultures and beliefs necessary. In order to not make such mistakes, the best thing we can do is get to know other cultures, while also getting to know our own. How can we dialogue with other cultures, if we don't really know what our own culture is? The three eternal and universal values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness are closely linked with culture. It is culture that brings us closer to truth through philosophy and religion; it brings beauty in our lives through the Arts and makes us aesthetic beings; and it is culture that makes us ethical beings by bringing us closer to other human beings and teaching us the values of love, tolerance and peace.

Cultural Identity, Religion, Region and Ethnicity

Our cultural identities are based on various factors such as religion and region. As a result each Indian possesses multiple identities. Which of these identities asserts itself at a certain point of time and prevails over the others, depends on the political, social or economic context in which the person finds himself/herself. Thus each person may have some things in common with another, but may be vastly different in some other aspects. For example, except belief, forms of worship and rituals, there may be little that is common among those who follow a particular faith from the point of view of the whole country. Even in the forms of worship and rituals there are sectorian and regional differences.

Thus culturally, Hindus are not all similar, nor are all the Muslims. Brahmins in Tamil Nadu are quite different from their counterparts in Kashmir. Similarly, Muslims in Kerala and Uttar Pradesh are dissimilar in several aspects of their culture. Regional

identities are more real. People of different religions and jatis may have common regional cultural traits like language, food, dress, values and also the worldview. In Bengal, both Hindus and Muslims take pride in being Bengalis. Elsewhere one finds Hindus, Christians and Muslims sharing several elements of regional culture. In principle, different religious groups owe their allegiance to different religious doctrines. For instance the Vedas and Shastras may be sources of inspiration for Hindus, Koran and Hadees for Muslims, and the Bible for Christians. However, at the level of rituals and life styles there is a lot of intermingling among followers of different religions. Ethnic culture is strong among the tribal groups. For example, in the small state of Nagaland, there are more than a dozen tribes and they differ from each other in their dress, speech and beliefs. Bastar district of Chhattisgarh has several groups claiming different ethnic origins.

Cultural Influences

In the modern context, there are at least three significant influences on our culture. They are westernisation, emergent national cultural styles and popular culture. Before independence some Western modes were adopted by the aristocracy and members of the civil services. The influence, over the years, has spread to the middle classes and to a small extent, to the villages as well. The growing demand for English medium schools in the villages is a proof of this statement. During the struggle for freedom a new style emerged. This became a national style. For example the Gandhi cap and khadi may now be only ceremonial and a symbol, but it contributed to the unity of the country and provided commonness to culture. Popular culture which is the product of mass media is another unifying factor. The impact of films

has been tremendous. Radio and television also reshape images and attitudes. Their hold on us is undeniable. Modern media has promoted issues that are of both traditional and public interest.

Defining 'Society' And 'Culture'

Of the two towards, Society and Culture, culture is the most difficult word to define. If a man is not regarded as conscious and regarded as an object of consciousness it would be easy to distinguish Mr. X from Mr. Y. In other words, if man is perceived as an item (then as person) then the distinctions become easy. Shall we similarly seek to identify cultures by their geographical boundaries? Underlining the role of Hindu religion in the formation India as a nation,

Perspectives on Culture

In contrast to this unified view is the evolutionary perspective, which underlines the synthetic and synthetic processes inherent in a multicultural situation. The complex history of the sub-continent experienced the coming together of a variety of cultural streaming drawn from different civilizational traditions. All communities (Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Parsi) experienced the influence of this multiple cultural interaction. Tarachand, an advocate of the synthetic character of Indian culture observed:

Cultural plurality

The cultural plurality is intelligible only in the context of relationship between religion and culture, which are interrelated but not

synonymous in any society. There is no uniform religious culture in terms of Hindu, Muslim or Christian, but there is an uniformly shared culture throughout India. The different castes follow different patterns of rituals and customs. This is also true form of art. Almost, each caste has different art forms, music, dance, theatre and so on. In fact, the plurality is also an expression of resistance against any kind of domination and exploitation.

Evolution Of Culture

Modern anthropologists, archaeologists and historians consider the birth of civilization as a technological and organizational achievement. The ancient myths of humankind remember the dawn of civilization as a fall of humankind from simplicity. Increasing greed of man put him into the need of food production. Hot chase of the pot belly began. Man moved from 'the order of the ritual' to 'the order of machine' and 'super highway'. Myth of the fall of man is not memory but one of speculative imagination. The idea of progress also arose as a myth in the eighteenth century, long before the rise of archaeology as a science. In the Indian social tradition, these values were partially accepted. Nagara or urban came to be accepted as sophisticated in contrast to Gramya or rustic while sabhya or courtly came to mean well-bred and polished. Seers and prophets of all ages and Indian history preferred rural surroundings and disapproved materialistic civilization.

Art and Culture

According to ancient Indian tradition the artist or si/pin (sculptor) is the intermediary who transmitted the revelation of Viswakarma, the artificer (Divine sculptor) to society. The Art or Silpa included ritual,

skill, craft and imagination. Silpin was a member of an artisan caste, a guild or a court and the groups were an integral part of the larger social order. The relations between the silpin, the patron or yajamana and society were sacrificial. For example, construction of the vedic sacrificial altar or vedi within a series of concentric magic circles was the activity. The altar was a throne to be occupied by the individual gods to whom the sacrifice was addressed. The rite united the human domain of whole society with the divine inside the sacred dimension of a tabernacle (a tent or sanctuary). The patron commissioning a temple, shrine, palace or city was the sacrificer who selected a priest as his sacrificer. The priest assumed the role of architect and the overseer of silpin hierarchy (the maker of the building, the surveyor, the sculptor, the plasterer and the painter). The artist's role was to restore the unity of society which is lost.

Religion And Culture

Intellectual climate of India between 6th and 3rd centuries B.C. was characterized by rise of Buddhism, schools of metaphysics and ascetic sects. The new urban man felt increasingly alienated from nature. Social discipline created an anxiety resulting in non-conformism. There was withdrawal into the forest to recover the sense of identity. Upanishads were composed. Renunciation became a virtue. Caves served the needs of monks and laymen in search of ideal environment to practice meditation. Brahmanic religion reasserted itself by the end of 1st century A.D. The cave sanctuary of Buddhism resulted in chaityas while that of the Brahmanic religion produced the Hindu temple. Now, that the temple was constructed of slabs of stone, sculpture itself had to be modified to fit the new scheme. Religious devotion (different from monastic meditation) demanded imposing structures and focused the

attention of worshipper on a complicated mythology. The tower of the temple combined the expression of both religious and temporal power. It became the emblem of a dominant ruling power of the king as well as the symbol of contact with God established by the king.

Media And Culture

Art in all its form (story telling, dance, chanting, image-making) is a social activity which balances tensions within the collective. Plurality as an expression of resistance has ensured the stability of our society on the principle of co-existence of social inequalities. Tensions arising out of progressive division of labour, inter-caste rivalry, inequality in hierarchical status and disputes over property have been healed by the unifying function of art. For example, village India is very active during seasonal festivals. Any festival, with its oracles, trance dances, and collective rapture is a restorer of collective unity. All Indian cultural media ultimately derive from social culture. Brahmans have enjoyed a ritual monopoly in the Sanskrit medium while potters, weavers and basket-makers have been vernacular cultural performers. Drama and religious festivals at great temples were mixed media and drew from with classical and popular traditions. Popular inter-caste media emphasized devotional religiosity which included bhajans, recitals or dance dramas from epics and puranas (Ram Lila) and folk dances on the festival days.

Cultural Synthesis

Human species was given the name homo sapiens. In course of time the same human species was designated homo faber (man, the maker). There is another label called homo ludens which means man as player, play to be understood as a cultural phenomenon. The play element is found in language, law, war, art, poetry and philosophy. The play demands application, knowledge, skill and strength. The more difficult the game, the greater, the tension in the beholders. The primary thing in a competition is a desire to excel others and not a desire for power or will to dominate. To dare, to take risks, to bear uncertainty and to endure tension are the essence of play spirit. We want to be honoured for our virtues. In order to excel, one must prove one's excellence; in order to merit recognition, merit must be made manifest. Competition serves to give proof of superiority. About Indian culture there are two diametrically opposite views. One is the segmented view of culture in terms of religion, i.e. a Hindu view of culture, a Muslim view of culture or a Christian view of culture etc.; or in terms of region, i.e. Bengali, Assamese or Tamil culture and so on. The second view is that Indian culture is composite. Gurudev Tagore highlighted India's culture as a living organism thus:

We argue that culture is a thought process while civilization is conduct. We have also thought that our culture can remain pure even if our conduct suffers degradation. The need to establish the interrelationship between the two is important. For a long period, science has not been viewed as part of a culture, even though science and OSC culture are after all products of the creative expression of human minds. OSC role to neutralize the negative elements of a market economy. A

sense of dignity and sense of self-confidence of among people is necessary to have control over lives as well as environment.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. **What is culture?** Explain any four general characteristics of culture.
2. **How is Indian culture unique** when compared with other world cultures? Give suitable examples.
3. **Define cultural identity.** How do religion and ethnicity contribute to shaping cultural identity?
4. **Write a short note on the relationship between region and culture** in the Indian context.
5. **Discuss with examples** how India maintains **unity in diversity** through its cultural expressions.

Unit - II

Ancient India - Vedic Culture - Mauryan Culture - Cultural Development Under the Gupta Period - The Pallavas and the Cholas

Objectives

- ✓ Understand the **main features of Vedic and Mauryan culture** in Ancient India.
- ✓ Explain the **cultural development under the Gupta period**.
- ✓ Describe the **cultural contributions of the Pallavas and the Cholas**.

Ancient India

India has a continuous history covering a very long period. Evidence of neolithic habitation dating as far back as 7000 BC has been found in Mehrgarh in Baluchistan. However, the first notable civilization flourished in India around 2700 BC in the north western part of the Indian subcontinent, covering a large area. The civilization is referred to as the Harappan civilization. Most of the sites of this civilization developed on the banks of Indus, Ghaggar and its tributaries. The culture associated with the Harappan civilization is the first known urban culture in India. The Harappans built the earliest cities complete with town planning, sanitation, drainage system and broad well-laid roads. They built double storied houses of burnt bricks each one of which had a bathroom, a kitchen and a well. The walled cities had other important buildings such as the Great Bath, Granaries and Assembly Halls.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the Harappans who were living in rural areas. Those living in the cities carried on internal and external trade and developed contacts with other civilizations such as Mesopotamia. They were excellent potters. Various types of utensils, toys, seals, figurines have been excavated from different sites. Harappans also had the technical knowledge of metals and the process of alloying. The bronze sculpture of a dancing girl found in Mohenjodaro testifies the sculptural skills and aesthetic sense of the Harappans. Shell, ivory, bone and faience were used as material for different crafts and objects. Lothal was a dockyard situated in Dholaka Taluk of Ahmedabad in Gujarat. It was also a well planned wall city. It was an important centre of sea trade with the western world. Another important town in Gujarat was Dhaulavira while Kalibangam was in Rajasthan.

Numerous seals carrying the images of the one-horned rhinoceros known as unicorn, peepal leaves and a male god throw light on the religious beliefs of the Harappans. It appears that they worshipped plants and animals and the forces of nature. They worshipped a male god resembling Lord Shiva of later times and a mother goddess among others. They probably believed in life after death and also in charms and spells. Seals engraved with animal figures like the humped bull, elephant and rhinoceros suggest that these animals were considered sacred. 'Peepal' has been found depicted on many seals. Harappans knew how to write and most of their seals contain some form of script. But unfortunately no one has yet been able to decipher that script. As a result, our knowledge of the Harappan civilization is based on the archaeological evidence alone. The figures of men and women on various seals found in the excavations reveal that the people knew the

art of spinning and weaving. They were perhaps the first people to cultivate cotton. A large number of Indus seals found in Mesopotamia which indicated of a possible trade between the Indus valley and Mesopotamian civilization. By 1800 BC the Harappan civilization began declining. However, we do not know the exact reasons why this happened.

Vedic Culture

A few centuries after the decline of the Harappan civilization, a new culture flourished in the same region and gradually spread across the Ganga-Yamuna plains. This culture came to be known as the Aryan culture. There were significant differences between this culture and the culture which preceded it. Aryans settled on the banks of rivers Indus (Sindhu) and Saraswati (which is now non existent). They composed many hymns in honour of the gods and goddesses they worshipped. These were compiled in four Vedas - the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The word veda means knowledge of the sacred spiritual knowledge. These vedas were considered infallible as they imparted the highest spiritual knowledge. Initially the Vedas were transmitted orally. Since our knowledge of the early Aryans is based on these Vedas, the culture of this period is referred to as the Vedic Culture. Scholars divide the vedic period into the earlier and later Vedic period. The earlier is represented by the Rig Veda while the latter by all other Vedic literature including the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. Two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Puranas, though compiled much later, also throw light on the life and society of an earlier period. For this period archaeological evidence has also been found in some areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Society and religion

Though Aryan society was patriarchal, women were treated with dignity and honour. The family was the smallest social unit; several families (kula) made a village (grama) and several villages formed a vis. A number of villages formed a tribe or jana which was ruled by a chief called rajan. His chief function was to protect the tribe from external attack and maintain law and order. He was assisted by the members of two councils called sabha and samiti. The Purohita performed religious functions while the senani looked after military activities. There was no concept of the state or kingdom at this stage. Although the post of Rajan had become hereditary, he could be removed from power if found weak and inefficient or cruel. Towards the later Vedic period, society was divided into four varnas - Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. This was also called the Varna-Vyavastha. To begin with it denoted categories of people doing different kinds of functions but with the passage of time this division became hereditary and rigid. The teachers were called Brahmans, the ruling class was called Kshatriyas, farmers, merchants and bankers were called Vaishyas while the artisans, craftsmen, labourers were called Shudras. Moving from one occupation to another became difficult. Simultaneously, the Brahmans also occupied a dominant position in the society. Another important social institution of the time was the system of chaturashrama or the division of life span into four distinct stages i.e. brahmacharya (period of celibacy, education and disciplined life in guru's ashram), grihastha (a period of family life), vanaprastha (a stage of gradual detachment and sanyasa (a life dedicated to spiritual pursuit away from worldly life). However it should be noted that these stages were not applicable to women or to

the people of lower varnas. Women were respected by the society, enjoyed freedom, had access to education and were often free to choose their partners through swayamvara. Purdah and sati was not prevalent. The ultimate aim of life was to attain moksha or salvation through the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama. Karma or performance of duty without any expectation or return was preached in the Bhagavad Gita. The early Vedic people worshipped forces of nature and personified them as gods and goddesses. Indra, Agni, Varuna, Marut were some of their gods while Usha, Aditi, Prithvi were some of their goddesses. Some of the solar Gods and goddesses referred to in the Rig Veda are Surya, Savitri and Pushau. Yajna (sacrifice) was performed along with chanting of Vedic hymns. People poured ghee (clarified butter) and other ingredients into the fire to invoke the blessings of gods. Agni or fire was looked upon as an intermediary between Gods and humans. The vedic people prayed individually as well as collectively for the welfare of the jana.

Their place was taken by a new trinity of Gods where Brahma enjoyed the supreme position, while Vishnu became the preserver and Shiva completed the trinity. The religion became extremely ritualistic. Sanskrit mantras, which were the monopoly of Brahmins, became an essential part of all religious functions. This made the Brahmins very powerful and the Yajnas expensive. Participation in them was restricted to the upper three classes. The kings performed Ashvamedha, Rajasuya and Vajapeya sacrifices to establish their position. It is very interesting to know that some elements of the culture of the Vedic Age have survived over a period 3,000 yrs and continues to be a part of Indian culture even today. By the end of the latter Vedic age

changes started occurring in the society. For the first time people started discussing certain beliefs such as creation of the universe, life after death and essence of life. These were questions which were dealt with in great detail in the Upanishads.

Material Life and Economy

The Aryans were mainly pastoral and agricultural people. They domesticated animals such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and dogs. Their diet was simple and included cereals, pulses, fruits, vegetables, milk, and various milk products. They also consumed a special beverage known as *Soma*. Chess, chariot racing, and similar activities served as their popular forms of entertainment.

In the early period, there were no money transactions or formal taxes. Instead, *bali*, or voluntary offerings, were common. Wealth was measured primarily in terms of cattle. Over time, the extensive use of iron brought significant changes to their material life. Iron axes made it possible to clear forests, leading to the expansion of agriculture across the Gangetic plains. Iron tools encouraged the development of various crafts and technologies, while iron weapons and horses improved their ability to wage wars and defend themselves.

As crafts multiplied, food production increased, and the population grew, specialization of skills began to emerge. This contributed to urbanization, leading to the growth of towns, cities, and eventually territorial states. High-quality pottery, such as *Painted Grey Ware* and *Northern Black Polished Ware*, has been found in many regions from this period. Coins also came into use, and trade expanded both by land and waterways, boosting material prosperity.

By the sixth century BCE, sixteen major territorial states—known as *Mahajanapadas*—had emerged in North India and the upper Deccan. Among the most important were Anga, Magadha, Kosala, Kashi, Kuru, and Panchala.

Religious Reforms in India

This period (B.C. 600 to B.C. 200) is important not only for political unity of the country but also for cultural unity. Ancient India saw the rise of two very important religions, Jainism and Buddhism which left a lasting influence on Indian life and culture. Vedic religion was earlier also known as Brahmanism because the Brahmins played a major role in it. Later it came to be called Hinduism. The Brahmins had developed a vested interest demanding large charities at the end of the scarifies. As a result, the sacrifices became very costly. Moreover, the Brahmins considered themselves superior to the other varnas and became arrogant. This led to the unpopularity of Brahminism and a need for reforms was felt. Besides, there were other factors like the reaction of the Kshatriyas to the Brahmin claim for supremacy and the Vaisya's demand for an improved social position. The Vedic religion had become very complex and ritualistic. The reforms led by the Kshatriyas and aided by the poorer masses who could not afford the high cost of sacrifices, resulted in the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism around sixth century BC. These new religions that is Jainism and Buddhism also influenced the religious beliefs and several practices of Hinduism.

Jainism

The founder of Jainism is believed to be Rishabhadeva, the first of the twenty four tirthankaras and as the last tirthankara Mahavira developed and gave final shape to the Jain doctrines. The Jains lay great emphasis on severe penance and asceticism. Lord Mahavira asked them to take five vows - not to tell lies; not to injure life; not to own property; not to steal; and to maintain chastity (celibacy). He also asked the Jains to follow the three-fold path of Right belief, Right Conduct and Right Knowledge. Later, the Jains were split into two sects the Shvetambaras (white clothed ones) and the Digambaras (the naked ones). Most of followers of Jainism belong to the trading community. The other movement was led by Gautama Buddha (563 - 483 BC), a younger contemporary of Mahavira. He taught the Four Noble Truths. His path was the middle path. He believed that there is sorrow in this world and that desire is the cause of that sorrow and it can be conquered by following the Eight Fold Path (ashtangika marga). The eightfold path comprises:

- (1) Right understanding,
- (2) Right thought,
- (3) Right speech,
- (4) Right action,
- (5) Right livelihood,
- (6) Right effort,
- (7) Right mindfulness

(8) Right concentration.

Basically both these movements were against the orthodox and ritualistic Brahmanical religion. Both the reformers emphasised a good moral life and the importance of ethics. Both of them founded an order of monks, established monasteries called sthanakas in Jainism and viharas in Buddhism. Later, Buddhism was also split into two divisions- the Hinayana and the Mahayana to which a third called Vajrayana was added subsequently. Buddhism spread to a very large part of the world- Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Japan, Thailand, Korea, Mongolia and Afghanistan. Even today a substantial population of these countries is Buddhist. Hinduism underwent many changes in history. It gave rise to several religious sects within itself with varying beliefs and practices. Like Buddhism, some sects of Hinduism also spread outside India, particularly in the countries of South East Asia. Later Hindu tradition even accepted the Buddha as one of the incarnations (avatara) of Vishnu.

Persian invasion and its Impact on Indian Culture.

In the first half of sixth century BC, there were a number of small tribal states in north west India. There was no sovereign power to unite these warring tribes. The Achaemenid rulers of Persia or Iran took advantage of the political disunity of this region. Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, and his successor Darius I annexed parts of Punjab and Sindh. It was believed to be the most fertile and populous part of the Achaemenid empire. Indian subjects were also enrolled in the Achaemenid army. The Persian rule in north western India lasted for nearly two centuries. During this period there must have been regular

contact between the two regions. The naval expedition of Skylax probably encouraged trade and commerce between Persia and India. Some ancient Persian gold and silver coins have been found in Punjab. Though the mountainous passes in the north western border were being used from very early times, it seems that Darius entered India through these passes for the first time. Later on, a section of Alexander's army traversed the same route, when he invaded Punjab.

The administrative structure of the Mauryan empire was influenced in some measure by that of the Achaemenid rulers of Persia. It may be mentioned here that the Persian title of satrapa (governor) continued to be used by the Indian provincial governors as kshtrapa for quite a long time. The cultural effects of the contacts with the Persians were also significant. The Persian scribes brought into India a new style of writing. It is called kharoshthi. It was derived from the Aramaic script, which was written from right to left. Many of Asoka's inscriptions found in north western India are written in kharoshthi. This script continued to be used in north western India till about third century AD. The Persian influence may also be traced in the preamble of Asokan edicts. The Mauryan art and architecture were also greatly influenced by the Persian art. The monolithic pillar edicts of Asoka with their bell-shaped capitals are somewhat like the victory pillars of the Achaemenid emperors which have been found in Persepolis. The Persian influence found in Chandragupta Maurya's court was in the form of the ceremonial hair bath taken by the emperor on his birthday. It was in typical Persian style. It is mentioned in the Arthashastra that whenever the king consults the physician or the ascetic, he should sit in a room where the sacred fire

was kept. This indicates the influence of Zoroastrianism, the religion of ancient Iranians.

The Greek Macedonian Invasion and Its Impact on Indian Culture

During the fourth century BC, the Greeks and the Persians fought for supremacy over West Asia. The Achaemenid empire was finally destroyed by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander of Macedon. He conquered Asia Minor, Iraq and Iran and then marched towards India. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, Alexander was greatly attracted towards India because of her fabulous wealth. On the eve of Alexander's invasion, north western India was divided into a number of small principalities. Lack of unity among them helped the Greeks to conquer these principalities one after another. However, Alexander's army refused to march ahead when they heard about the vast army and the strength of the Nandas of Magadha. Alexander had to return. He died at Babylon at the young age of 32 on his way back to Macedon. Alexander hardly had any time to reorganise his conquests. Most of the conquered states were restored to their rulers, who had submitted to his authority. He divided his territorial possessions covering parts of eastern Europe and a large area in western Asia into three parts and placed them under three Greek governors. The eastern part of his empire was given to Seleucus Nikator, who declared himself a king after the death of his master, Alexander.

Though the contact between the Macedonians and ancient Indians was for a brief period, its impact was fairly wide in range. Alexander's invasion brought Europe, for the first time, in close contact with India, as routes, by sea and by land, were opened between India

and the West. A close commercial relation was also established. The traders and craftsmen used to follow these routes. Alexander asked his friend Nearchus to explore the sea coast from the mouth of the Indus to the Euphrates in search of harbours. The Greek writers have left many valuable geographical accounts of this region for us. Alexander's invasion paved the way for political unification of north western India by conquering the warring tribes of this region. It seems that by his campaigns Alexander made Chandragupta Maurya's work of annexing this area easier. Soon after Alexander's departure, Chandragupta defeated one of his generals, Seleucus Nikator and brought the whole of north western India upto Afghanistan under his control. The influence of Greek art is found in the development of Indian sculpture as well. The combination of the Greek and the Indian style formed the Gandhara School of art. Indians also learnt the art of making well-shaped and beautifully designed gold and silver coins from the Greeks. The Greeks had some influence on Indian astrology as well.

Many valuable information about the social and economic condition of northern and north western India of that time are known from the Greek accounts left by Arrian, admiral Nearchus, and Megasthenes. They tell us about the developed condition of many crafts, existence of a brisk trade with the outside world, and about the general prosperous condition of the country. Much has also been said in these accounts of carpentry as a flourishing trade in India. It seems the fleet which Alexander sent along the western coast of India under Nearchus was built in India. Alexander's adventure also helped the West to know something about the Indian life and thinking. It has been said that the ideas and notions of Indian philosophy and religion which filtered into

the Roman empire flowed through the channel opened by Alexander. As the Greek writers left dated records of Alexander's campaign, it helped us a great deal to frame the chronology of ancient Indian history. The date of Alexander's invasion - 326 BC provides a definite 'marker' for arranging the sequence of historical events in India.

Ashoka The Great : Representing The Acme Of Indian Culture

Ashoka occupies a unique place in the history of India. His policies of universal peace, non-violence and religious harmony find no parallel in the monarchs of the world. Ashoka stands out as a monarch who combined successful kingship with idealism and philosophy. Like other rulers, Ashoka too began his reign with war - the conquest of Kalinga. However, the mindless destruction of life and property in this war shattered him so greatly that he vowed never to wage any war again. Instead he adopted the policy of Dhamma Vijaya that is conquest through dhamma. In his thirteenth major Rock Edict, Asoka states that true conquest is by piety and virtue. Such a decision taken by a king, who lived in an era where military might was the measure of power, earned him a unique place in history. Ashoka was a true humanist. His policies were oriented towards the welfare of his people. His dhamma was based on social responsibility. Besides giving importance to respecting brahmins, and servants, obedience to elders, abstention from killing living beings, dhamma also asked people to live in religious harmony. It combined in itself the good points of all sects. Ashoka proved to be a tolerant monarch who, although himself a Buddhist, never sought to impose his personal religion on his subjects. In his twelfth major Rock Edict, he states that in honouring of other sects lies the honour of one's own sect. As a king, Ashoka set a very high ideal for himself. He saw

himself as a father and the subjects as his children. He communicated his thoughts and philosophy to his people by inscribing them on stone pillars and rock surfaces. These edicts are remarkable examples of Mauryan architecture and also of engineering skills. They are the living monuments of his times. Ashoka attempted to educate his subjects by pointing out the wastefulness of expensive rituals. He asked people to practice ahimsa. He himself gave up the practices of the royal hunt and pleasure tours and instead began Dhamma Yattas tours for the furtherance of Dhamma, By giving his empire a common Dhamma, a common language, and practically one script (Brahmi) he brought further political unification. India has been a secular country since the Buddhist age. Though he himself became a Buddhist he did not impose it on the others but followed a tolerant religious policy. He made gifts and grants to non Buddhist as well as anti-Buddhist. Ashoka's fame also rests on the measures that he took to spread the message of peace amongst the different regions of the world. He sent ambassadors to the Greek kingdoms and the West. Indian culture spread to far-away lands. According to a Buddhist tradition, Asoka sent Buddhist missions to regions such as Sri Lanka and Central Asia. Buddhism spread to different parts of the world and although it is no longer a major force in India today, yet it continues to be popular in Sri Lanka and the Far Eastern countries. The Varna system popularly known as the caste system which had arisen in the Vedic Age now became well established and gradually became the dominant form of social organization throughout India. Along with the new religions and philosophy the growth of cities, crafts and trade furthered the process of cultural unity in our country. Asoka unified the entire country under one empire and

renounced the use of war as state policy. On the other hand he says that he strives to discharge the debt he owes to all living creatures.

Art And Architecture: Mauryan Beginnings

The Mauryan contribution to art and architecture was significant. Ashoka is known to have built 84,000 stupas to commemorate various events of Buddha's life. According to Megasthenes, Pataliputra's grandeur matched that of the cities of Persia. Ashokan edicts were inscribed on stone pillars that were made of single columns of polished sandstone and had capitals on their top. The best preserved of all Ashokan edicts stands at Lauriya Nandangarh (Bihar). This thirty-two feet tall column has an almost fifty ton seated lion capital placed on its top, an engineering feat worth admiring. The bull capital from Rampura is also another fine example of Mauryan sculpture. The most famous capital is the one at Sarnath, which shows four lions and the Dharmachakra. You must be familiar with this as this has been adopted as the national emblem of the Republic of India. Besides pillars, few Mauryan figures have also come to light. The most well known of these is the Yakshi from Didarganj. The beauty of these figures lies in the exactness of their workmanship and in the fact that they appear to be made from one single stone. Like the pillars, these figures are polished with a unique surface gloss (now called Mauryan polish). You will be amazed to know that despite all these centuries this gloss has not lost its shine. Besides the language that has been used in nearly all the inscriptions and Prakrit which appears to have become the lingua franca of the country and in the Brahmi script the earliest known Indian script. Another noteworthy aspect of Mauryan architecture is the rock cut caves. The Lomash Rishi (with its impressive entrance) and the Sudama

caves are examples of such architecture. These caves cut from solid rock were provided by Ashoka for non-Buddhist monks. These caves marked the beginning of the rock cut architecture which was patronised by later rulers too. His rock edicts were inscribed in the local language and the local script.

Mauryan Culture

POST - MAURYAN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

Although the Greeks, Shakas, Parthians, and Kushanas were foreigners, they were slowly absorbed into the local population. Since they were warriors, the law givers assigned them the status of Kshatriyas. It should be noted that such a large scale assimilation of foreigners into the Indian society took place only in the post-Mauryan times. We can say roughly from about 200 BC to about 3rd century A.D. profound changes took place in the economic and political life and vital developments in different aspects of cultural life of our country i.e. religion, art and science as well as technology. There was a significant advancement in foreign trade both by land and by sea, besides emergence of various crafts. Many foreign rulers adopted Vaishnavism. In the Besnagar Pillar inscription, Heliodorus (the Greek ambassador of the Indo-Greek king Antialkidas) describes himself as a Bhagavata i.e. worshipper of Vishnu. Similarly some coins of Kanishka also show the figure of Siva on them. You will recall that one of the Kushan rulers was called Vasudeva, clearly indicating his vaishnava faith. Do you know the importance attached to the year of Kanishka's accession i.e. 78 A.D.. Well, it marks the beginning of the Saka era. The interaction among different foreign ethnic groups and the Indians played an important role

in their choice of one or the other Indian religions. Some foreign rulers also turned to Buddhism, as this did not create the problems of fitting into the caste system. Menander converted to Buddhism. Kanishka too is remembered for his services to this religion. However this increasing popularity of Buddhism brought about a major change in the religion. Buddhism in its original form was too abstract for the foreigners. They therefore advocated a simpler form through which they could satisfy their religious cravings. Around the same time Buddhism split into two schools: the Mahayana or the Great Wheel and the Hinayana or the Small Wheel. The former believed in image worship, rituals and Bodhisattvas, (incarnations of Buddha) while the latter continued the practices of the earlier Buddhism.

Art and Sculpture

Central Asian invasions led to further development of Indian art and sculpture. Close contacts with the western world introduced many new forms in Indian art. The most significant development was the growth of the Gandhara school of art. This school borrowed features from both the Greek and Roman art forms. Many images of the Buddha from the Kushan period have Apollonian faces, their hair is in the Graeco-Roman style and their draperies arranged in the style of a Roman toga. This assimilation of artistic features was probably because many artisans from different countries trained in different schools came together under the Kushan rule. Mathura, which was the centre of the indigenous school of art, was also influenced by the invasions. A number of images from here of terracotta and red sandstone, which have definite Saka-Kushan influence, have survived. The most famous is the headless statue of Kanishka from Mathura. While the earlier Buddhists had used

only symbols to depict the Buddha, the Mathura school became the first to make faces and figures of the Buddha. Folklores such as the Jatakas were drawn out in long panels on rock faces. Besides the images of Buddha, which were made in large numbers, statues of Mahavira were also produced.

Deccan and South India

The Satavahanas in the Deccan held an important position under the Mauryas. After the death of Ashoka, they assumed total independence. They became very powerful and made their capital at Paithan or Pratisthan on the river Godavari. The Satavahanas soon entered into conflict with the foreign satraps, especially the Shakas. It was under Gautamiputra and his son Vasishthiputra Satkarni that the Satavahanas became very powerful. They extended their kingdom, cleared forests, made roads and administered their State well. New towns came up and trade was carried on with far off countries like Persia, Iraq and Combodia.

Kharavela of Kalinga

Another kingdom which rose to a position of importance after the Mauryas was Kalinga. Kalinga included modern Orissa and parts of Northern Andhra. Its most important ruler was Kharavela. The Hathigumpha Inscription in a Jain cave at Udaigiri hills would give us a detailed account of his reign, but unfortunately it is not easily decipherable. It is definitely known that he was a great administrator as well as a brave warrior. He carried out works of piety and public utility, like building roads and gardens.

South India

The area which lies to the south of the river Krishna and Tungabhadra is called South India. It was the region of the Cholas, Cheras and the Pandyas who were constantly at war with each other. Sources The main source of information about these kingdoms and the life of the people is the Sangam literature. That is why this period from the beginning of the 1st century B.C. to the end of 2nd century A.D. is called the Sangam period of the history of South India.

Cholas

Karikala was the most important ruler of this kingdom. He defeated the combined forces of the Cheras and the Pandays. He succeeded in pushing back an invasion from Ceylon. Karikala has been credited with many welfare activities. He got many canals dug so that water from the river Cauvery could be used for irrigation purposes. Karikala patronised works of literature and art. He was a follower of the Vedic religion.

Pandays

The Pandyan empire was founded by a woman king. She maintained a huge army. She also encouraged trade and patronised art as well as literature. Life and Culture The people during this period lived a simple life. They were fond of music, dancing and poetry. Many musical instruments like drums, flutes, pipes, etc. were popular. Most of the people lived in valleys and a majority of them were farmers. Others were herdsmen. There were artisans and craftsmen also who mainly

lived in towns. There were merchants specially in the coastal areas and trade was carried on by sea.

Society

The Greeks, Kushanas, Shakas and Parthians were called Yavanas. They soon merged with the Indian society and adopted Indian names and inter-married. Even their coins started carrying the images of Indian gods like Vishnu, Ganesha and Mahesha. The fact that they had adapted to the Indian society easily may explain why foreign rulers patronised Buddhism.

The Age of Harshvardhana

King Harshvardhana decided that he must subdue the petty warring rulers and bring them under his domain. He devoted six important years of his life to do so. Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese traveller and Bana Bhat, his court poet, have given detailed accounts of Harsha's reign. According to Hiuen Tang, King Harshvardhana had an efficient government. He further tells us that families were not registered and there was no forced labour.

Harsha's religious activities

Do you know that Harsha built many hospitals and rest houses? He also gave grants to many religions especially Buddhism and Hindu Religion. Later in his life Harsha became more inclined towards Buddhism. Harsha's literary activities had some important plays e.g. Nagananda Ratnavali and Priyadarsita. He collected learned men around him as is evident from the report of Hiuen Tsang and Bana Bhat.

Bana wrote Harsha's famous biography, Harshcharita as well as the literary piece Kadambari.

Kingdoms of the Deccan and the South:

You have read about the Satavahanas who controlled the Deccan for a long time. After their decline, many small kingdoms came up in the Deccan. The first one among them was that of the Vakatakas, who tried to build a strong state, but they did not last long. After the Vakatakas came the Chalukyas of Vatapi and Kalyani. Pulakesin was a powerful ruler of the Chalukya dynasty. The Chalukyas kept fighting with the Rashtrakutas (towards the north) and the Pallavas (towards the south). The Chalukya rule came to an end in 753 A.D. when the Rashtrakutas defeated them. The capital city of Vatapi was a prosperous one. There were trade relations with Arabia, Iran and the Red Sea port to the west, as well as with South-East Asia. Pulakesin II sent an ambassador to king Khusrao II of Persia. The Chalukyas patronised art as well as religion. They build temples and cave shrines in the deccan hills. Many of the sculptures of the Ellora caves were created at this time under the patronage of the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas.

Cultural Development During The Gupta Period

The last phase of ancient Indian history starts in early fourth century A.D. and ends in about the 8th A.D. The Guptas built a strong and powerful kingdom and under the political unity and state patronage that was provided by them, cultural activities increased manifold. You will recall that following the Greek invasion, various art forms in India had been markedly influenced by Graeco-Roman styles. This art mainly depicted the Buddha or Buddhist thought. But during the Gupta period

art became more creative and Hindu gods and goddesses also came to be portrayed. The artistic achievement of the age is exhibited in the delicate workmanship and the variety of designs shown in different kinds of Gupta coins. The general scheme that was followed was to exhibit the portrait of the king on one side of the coin or an appropriate goddess.

with her associated symbols on the other side. The king is shown in many positions shooting a tiger or a lion, playing a musical instrument seated on a high backed couch etc. On the reverse in most cases was Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and in some cases Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and arts. Besides coins, Gupta art found adequate expression in monuments and sculptures. The skilled artists of this age used their tools and skills to express the ideals and philosophical traditions of India through various art forms. They decorated even the niches and corners of religious places with statues of gods and goddesses. The images of gods were treated as symbols representing attributes associated with the gods. Hence the god were shown having four or eight arms in each carrying a symbol or an ayudha (weapon) although they were depicted in human forms. Stone, terracotta, and other materials were used to construct the abodes of gods and goddesses. Examples of the Gupta art can be seen at the dashavatara temple at Deogarh and the cave temples in Udaigiri hills. However, the most famous examples of Gupta art that still remain are the numerous seated and standing images of Buddha from Sarnath. The school of art that thrived at Sarnath provides us with some of the most pleasing and graceful images of the Buddha. Besides stone, Gupta artists were also skilled in bronze. A two metre high bronze image of Buddha has been discovered at Sultanganj

(near Bhagalpur in Bihar). Examples of sculptures in caves created during this period are traced to the famous Ellora Caves.

Architecture

The Gupta architecture has survived in a few shrines, rock cut caves (Ajanta) and temples, such as the Dashavatara temple at Deogarh. These structures were mainly made of stone and bricks. Some references in the works of Kalidasa give us a glimpse of Gupta architecture. The poet has given a vivid picture of a well-planned town with a network of roads, market places, big sky-touching palaces and mansions with terraces. The palaces had many inner apartments. They had court-yards, prisons, court-room and sabhagriha. Their verandahs opened on roofs lit with moon-beam at night. The pleasure garden which was attached to palace contained all sorts of seasonal flowers and trees. Archaeological evidence about Gupta architecture is however poor. However, examples of Gupta shrines have been discovered in the jungles of Central India, especially in the Bundelkhand region. These include the one at Bhitargaon in Kanpur district.

Painting

Painting as an art form reached a high degree of perfection during the Gupta times. The wall frescoes at the Ajanta caves (Aurangabad) and the one at Bagh caves (near Gwalior) bear evidence of this. Although Ajanta paintings belong to the period between the first to the seventh century AD yet most of these were produced during the Gupta time. These paintings depict various scenes from the life of the Buddha. The skill with which the human, animal and plant figures have been drawn shows the refined and sensitive nature of Gupta art. The conception of

beauty was a characteristic of Gupta art. Expression through art was given importance as it was regarded as a means for the attainment of spiritual joy.

THE PALLAVAS AND THE CHOLAS

Any account of ancient India is incomplete without referring to the two dynasties of South India i.e. the Pallavas and the Cholas and their contribution to art, architecture, administration and conquests. Quite a few dynasties rose in the South from the early centuries of the Christian era. Among them the Pallavas were great patrons of art and architecture. The 'ratha' at Mahabalipuram style of temples built by them were fine examples of rock-cut temples. The Pallavas also built structural temples like the Kailashanath and Vaikunthperumal temples at Kanchipuram. The Kailashanath temple is a huge structure with thousands of images and is said to be the "largest single work of art ever undertaken in India". There is also a set of bas reliefs found at Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram) which is attributed to the pallava period. The Pagodas built at Mahabalipuram go back to the first century AD. Temple building activity flourished in India from the 5th century AD onwards. While the North Indian temples were built in the Nagara style consisted of the shikaras (spiral roofs), the garbhagriha (sanctum) and the mandap (pillared hall), the temples in the South were built in the Dravida style completed with vimana or shikhara, high walls and the gateway topped by gopuram. After the Pallavas (6th to 8th century AD) the tradition of building temples was further developed by the Cholas (10th - 12th century AD) in the south. Do you know that the temple was the central place in the village? It was the gathering place for the villagers who would come here everyday and exchange ideas and discuss all

matters of common interests. It served as a school too. During festival days dances and dramas were also performed in the temple courtyard.

The achievements of the Cholas also lie in their conquests across the seas and developing democratic institutions for governance at the village level. The village panchayat called *sahha* or *ur* had extensive powers. It had control over finances too. This body included several committees which looked after various aspects of village administration. A very detailed account of the functioning of the *sabhas* is available from one of the Chola inscriptions. The Chola rulers were also great builders. The Dravida style of temple architecture reached its zenith under the Chola rulers. One of the finest example of this style is the *Rajarajeshwar* or *Brihadeshwara* temple. During this period one also notices great achievements in the field of sculpture.

Great progress was made in literature both religious and secular. Sanskrit also became the language of the courts in many parts of the country. Tamil literatures also made great progress. The *Alvars* and the *Nayanars*, the *Vaishnavite* and *Shaivite* saints made lasting contributions to it. In spite of the dominant position of Sanskrit in most parts of the country, this period marks the beginning of many Indian languages as well as distinct scripts in different parts of the country. In short, we can say that by the time, the ancient period of Indian history came to an end, India had developed a culture which was marked by features that have characterized it ever since.

Nalanda's Emergence As A Great Centre Of Learning

Nalanda became a great centre of learning during Harsha's reign. Students from different parts of the world came here to imbibe learning.

Although all the remains mounds of Nalanda have not yet been excavated, yet the evidence of a huge complex of buildings has been uncovered. Some of these were as many as four storey high. According to Hiuen Tsang, Nalanda housed as many as 10,000 students. It was supported by the revenues of 200 villages. Although this huge monastic-educational establishment was primarily a centre for learning of Mahayana Buddhism, yet the curriculum included secular subjects as well. Grammar, logic, epistemology and sciences were taught here. Students were encouraged to develop a spirit of enquiry and reasoning. Active discussions and debates were taking place. Harsha is said to have invited a thousand learned monks of Nalanda to take part in the philosophical assembly at Kanauj. In his account, Hieun-Tsang has given a detailed account of Nalanda. Thus university continued to be the centre of intellectual activity till the twelfth century

Self Assessment Questions

1. Write a brief note on the **main features of Vedic culture**.
2. What are the important **cultural achievements of the Mauryan Empire?**
3. Why is the **Gupta Period** known as the **Golden Age of Indian Culture?**
4. Describe any two **cultural contributions of the Pallavas**.

Unit - III

Medieval India - Culture Heritage Under Delhi Sultanate - Rise of Islam and Sufism - Development of Folk Arts.

Objectives

1. Understand the **cultural heritage under the Delhi Sultanate.**
2. Explain the **rise of Islam and Sufism** in Medieval India.
3. Identify the **development of folk arts** during the

Medieval India

Life of the people Under Delhi Sultanate

When the Muslim invaders came to India they decided to make it their home. They inter married and took to the culture of the Indians. There was a mutual exchange in ideas and customs. In dress, speech, manners and intellectual outlook, the two influenced each other very profoundly. Some of these changes are described below.

Society

The Indian society was divided into four major groups. They were the aristocrats, the priests, the towns people and the peasants.

Aristocrats

The aristocrats included the Sultan and his relatives, nobility and the landholders. There were also the Hindu rajahs, chiefs, Hindu merchants and bankers. They concentrated all the wealth as well as the power in their hands. Needless to say that they were a group of very powerful people. They lived in great style and luxury. The Sultan outmatched everyone in this. He had to do it so as to maintain his superiority and his status. He had to show that he was different from the others. Whenever a new sultan came to the throne, the Khutba or sermon was read out in his name in the Friday prayers at the mosques and coins were issued in his name. This established the new ruler on the throne. To maintain his distinction as the ruler, he was provided with many officers and servants at the royal household where he lived in great luxury. Even the nobility imitated his style and showed off their wealth.

The Priests

The Priests were another important class of people in the society. Among the Hindus, they were the Brahmans and Ulemas among the Muslims. They were given grants of tax-free land for their maintenance and were often very powerful. The Ulemas wielded great influence on the Muslim Sultans and often influenced their policies. But at other times like during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, they were even ignored. Sometimes the priests were not interested in religious affairs but were more interested in worldly affairs.

The Town People In the town lived the wealthy merchants, traders and artisans. The nobility, the officers and the soldiers also stayed in the towns, that were the administrative and military centres. Places where the Sufi and Bhakti saints lived and places which housed

important temples and mosques had become pilgrim centres. The artisans lived in their own special quarters. In fact, the weavers lived in the weaver's colony, the goldsmith lived in a colony inhabited by goldsmiths and so on. This was the general pattern for all artisans and craftsmen. These people supplied luxury goods were also sent abroad for trade. The royal karkhanas or workshops employed these workers for producing beautiful goods which were often used as gifts to be given away by the Sultans.

The Peasants

The peasants, of course, lived in the villages and were often the worst off. They paid huge taxes to the state as land revenue. Any change of dynasty had no effect on their lives. Their life continued as before. The caste system was very rigid and intercaste marriages and intercaste dining was totally prohibited. But exchange of ideas did take place on a large scale. Those who converted themselves to Islam did not forget their old customs. Thus, exchange of ideas and customs took place. Many Hindu customs were adopted by the Muslims while many Muslim customs were adopted by the Hindus, like those concerning food, dress, clothing and music, besides many others.

Religious Condition

When Islam came to India, Hinduism was in vogue. But by this time Hinduism had degenerated itself. There were superstitious beliefs, rituals and sacrifices. Brahmans had become very powerful and the caste system was very rigid. The people, especially the lower classes, were ill-treated. Islam was the opposite of what was in practice among the Hindus. It talked of equality, brotherhood and oneness of God.

There were no dogmas in Islam. On the other hand, it had a simple doctrine and a democratic organisation. The coming of Islam did not bring in many changes in the political structure of the country. On the other hand, it challenged the social pattern of society. The important result of this contact was the emergence of the Bhakti movement and the Sufi movement. Both the movements were based on the fact that God was supreme, all men were equal for Him and Bhakti or devotion to Him was the way to achieve salvation.

RISE OF ISLAM AND SUFISM

The Muslims first came to India in the eighth century AD mainly as traders. They were fascinated by the socio-cultural scenario in this country and decided to make India their home. The traders who came to India from Central and West Asia carried back with them traces of Indian science and culture. As a result they became cultural ambassadors of India by disseminating this knowledge to the Islamic world and from there to Europe. The immigrant Muslims also entered into matrimonial alliances with the local people and learned to live together in harmony. There was mutual exchange of ideas and customs. The Hindus and Muslims influenced each other equally in dress, speech, manners, customs and intellectual pursuits. The Muslims also brought with them their religion, Islam which had a deep impact on Indian society and culture. Let us find out more about Prophet Mohammad and Islam in this lesson. Prophet Mohammad preached Islam in the seventh century AD in Arabia. He was born in AD 571 in the Quraysh tribe of Arabia. He migrated to Madina from Mecca in AD 622 and this marked the beginning of the Hijra Era. According to the Muslim belief, Quran is the message of Allah revealed to Mohammad

through his archangel Gabriel. It has been translated into several languages. The five fundamental principles of Islam are:

- (1) Tauhid (belief in Allah)
- (2) Namaz (prayers, five times a day)
- (3) Roza (fasting in the month of Ramzan)
- (4) Zakat (giving of alms)
- (5) Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

Prophet Mohammad's sayings are preserved in what is called the Hadith or Hadees. After his death the Caliphate was established. There were four pious Caliphs. Islam talked of equality, brotherhood, and the existence of one God. Its arrival particularly made a profound impact on the traditional pattern of Indian society. The rise of both the Bhakti and the Sufi movements contributed immensely in this regard. Both the Bhakti and the Sufi movements believed that all humans are equal, God is supreme and devotion to God is the only way to achieve salvation.

Rise of Sufism

Sufism is a common term used for Islamic mysticism. The Sufis were very liberal in their religious outlook. They believed in the essential unity of all religions. They preached spirituality through music and doctrines that professed union with God. Sufism originated in Iran and found a congenial atmosphere in India under the Turkish rule. Their sense of piety, tolerance, sympathy, concept of equality and friendly attitude attracted many Hindus, mostly from lower classes, to

Islam. Sufi saints such as Moinuddin Chisti, Nizamuddin Auliya, Fariduddin Ganj-e-Shakar were the pioneer sufis who are still loved, respected and honoured in India. The sufis were also influenced by the Christian and Buddhist monks regarding the establishment of their khanqahs and dargahs. Khanqah the institutions (abode of Sufis) set up by the Sufis in northern India took Islam deeper into the countryside. Mazars (tombs) and Takias (resting places of Muslim saints) also became the centres for the propagation of Islamic ideas. These were patronized both by the aristocracy and the common people. The Sufis emphasized respect for all human beings. The Sufis were organised into religious orders or silsilahs. These silsilahs were named after their founders such as Chishti, Suhrawardi, Qadi. and Naqshbandis. According to Abul Fazl, the author of the Ain-i-Akbari, there were as many as fourteen silsilahs in India during the sixteenth century. Each order had its own khanqah, which served as a shelter for the Sufi saints and for destitutes, and later developed as a centre of learning. Ajmer, Nagaur and Ajodhan or Pak Pattan (now in Pakistan) developed as important centres of Sufism. These also started the tradition of piri-muridi, (teacher and the disciple). In order to attain a state of mystical ecstasy, the sufis listened to poetry and music (sama) which were originally in Persian, but later switched to Hindawi or Hindustani. They preached the unity of God and self-surrender unto Him in almost the same way as the votaries of the Nirgun Bhakti movement did. Music attracts everybody, irrespective of language. Slowly such music attracted the Hindus who started visiting the dargahs in large number. The Hindu impact on Sufism also became visible in the form of siddhas and yogic postures.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The rulers of Delhi, who ruled from 1206-90, were Mamluk Turks. They were followed by the Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodis, who ruled northern India from Delhi till 1526. All these rulers were called Sultans. A Sultan was supposed to rule over a territory on behalf of the Khalifa or Caliph, who was considered to be the spiritual and temporal head of the Muslims. Both the names of the Khalifa and the Sultan used to be read in the khutha, (Friday prayers) by the local Imams. In 1526 the Delhi Sultans were replaced by the Mughals, who initially ruled from Agra and later from Delhi till 1707. Thereafter, the Mughal rule continued only nominally till 1857 when the dynasty ended. The Mughals did not ask for any investiture but continued to send presents to the Khalifas. They also got the khutba read in their own names. However, Sher Shah, a local Afghan ruler, challenged the Mughal ruler, Humayun and kept him away from the throne of Delhi for about fifteen years (1540-55). Sher Shah's reign stands out for many outstanding achievements. Among these was the construction of several roads, the most important being Sarak-i-Azam or Grand Trunk Road extending from Sonargaon (now in Bangladesh) to Attock (now in Pakistan) and run through Delhi and Agra a distance of 1500 kos. The other roads were from Agra to Burhanpur, Agra to Marwar and from Lahore to Multan. He struck beautiful coins in gold, silver and copper which were imitated by the Mughal Kings. Mughal emperor Akbar who ruled from 1556-1605 was a great ruler in the history of India. He made a sincere effort to foster harmony among his subjects by discouraging racial, religious and cultural biases. He tried to develop friendly relations with the Hindus. To fulfil his imperialist ambitions he entered into matrimonial alliances with the Rajput rulers. His greatest contribution was the political unification of the country and the establishment of an

all powerful central government with a uniform system of administration. Akbar was a great patron of art, architecture and learning. As a secular minded monarch he also started a faith called Din-i-Illahi which encompassed ideas from various religions. On every Thursday, scholars from different religions came to debate on religious issues raised by the emperor. This was done at the Ibadat Khana in Fateh Pur Sikri at Agra. Though illiterate Akbar patronised scholars and learned men. In his court there were nine such Navratna Mulla Do Pyaza, Hakin Human, Abdur Rahim Khan e Khanan, Abul Tayal, Tansen, Raja Todar Mal, Raja Man Singh, Faizi and Birbal. Akbar's policy of liberalism and tolerance was continued by his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. However this policy was abandoned by Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb's short sighted policies and endless wars in different parts of the country (especially in South India) resulted in the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The rise of the Marathas in the south, the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, unrest amongst the nobility in the court and the rise of the Sikhs in north-western India destroyed whatever was left of the Mughal power. Economically India was still the biggest exporter in the world and had great wealth, but it was left far behind in the process of modernization.

Cultural Development

It was in the field of art and architecture that the rulers of this period took a keen interest. The composite cultural characteristic of the medieval period is amply witnessed in these fields. A new style of architecture known as the Indo- Islamic style was born out of this fusion. The distinctive features of Indo-Islamic architecture were the (a) dome;

(b) lofty towers or minarets; (c) arch; and (d) the vault. The Mughal rulers were great lovers of nature. They took pleasure in spending their time in building beautiful forts and gardens. The famous Mughal gardens like the Shalimar Bagh and the Nishat Bagh are important elements of our cultural heritage. There were waterways and fountains criss-crossing these gardens and finally, there were gardens with stages or levels. The water, while cascading from one stage to another, was made to fall in small streamlets with lamps lit behind them, making the water shimmer and lend a special charm to the whole atmosphere. It could also be made to flow over a chiselled and sloping slab, so that the water flowing over it shimmered. The best example of this type of garden is the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore (now in Pakistan). The Lahore garden has three stages. But a better example can be seen in India at Pinjore Garden situated on the Chandigarh-Kalka road where we have a seven-stage garden. This impressed the British so much that they created a three-stage garden in the Vice-Regal Lodge (now the Rashtrapati Bhawan) in New Delhi. It was on these very lines that the famous Vrindavan Garden in Mysore were built in the twentieth century. The pietra dura or coloured stone inlay work on marble became very popular in the days of Shah Jahan and the finest examples of this type of work are available in the Red Fort in Delhi and the Taj Mahal at Agra. Besides, the structures within the Fatehpur Sikri complex, the forts at Agra and Lahore and the Shahi mosques in Delhi and Lahore are an important part of our heritage. During this period mosques, tombs of kings and dargahs came to dominate the landscape.

Bhakti Movement

The Sufis were not the only popular religious teacher of the time. There were also the Bhakti saints. Their teachings were similar to those of the Sufis but they had been teaching for a longer time. They were popular among the artisans, craftsmen and traders in the towns. The people in the villages also flocked to listen to them. The Sufi and Bhakti saints had many thoughts and practices in common. Their essential belief was in the need to unite with God. They laid stress on love or devotion as the basis of the relationship with God. To achieve all this a Guru or a Pir was needed. The Bhakti saints attacked the rigidity in religion and the objects of worship. They disregarded caste and encouraged women to join in their religious gatherings. The Bhakti saints did their entire teaching in the local vernacular language to make it comprehensible even to simple minds. The Bhakti saints belonged to various backgrounds but mainly from the lower castes.

Many were artisans by origin or belonged to the less prosperous class of cultivators. They stressed the need for tolerance among humans and religions. The Bhakti movement was long known in the South. The idea of preaching Bhakti through hymns and stories was traditionally done by the Alvars and the Nayannars of the Tamil devotional cult. You will read about them later in this book.

Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak was born of a Khatri family in the village of Talwandi which is now called Nankana. Though Guru Nanak was trained in accountancy, he preferred the company of saints and sufis. Some time later, he had a mystic vision. He left home for the company of saints and pirs. He composed hymns and sang them to the

accompaniment of the 'rabab', which is a musical instrument. His hymns are popular even today. He emphasised love and devotion for the one and only God. He strongly denounced idol worship, pilgrimages, sacrifices and rituals as a way to achieving God. He demanded purity of character and conduct as the first condition of approaching God. He believed that anyone could achieve a spiritual life while doing his duties as a householder.

Ramanuja

Ramanuja was from the South and he taught in the language of the common people. His disciple was Ramananda who took his Guru's message to the northern parts of India.

Ramananda

Ramananda was born at Allahabad and educated at Varanasi. He preached at both these places. He wanted to rid the Hindu religion of its evil customs and practices. He wanted people to know that all men were equal in the eyes of God and there was nobody high born or low born. His followers belonged to different walks of life. For example, Kabir was a weaver, Sadhana was a butcher, Ravidasa was a cobbler and Sena was a barber.

Kabir

Kabir was Ramananda's favourite disciple. Like Nanak, he criticised the existing social order and called for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kabir, the son of a Muslim weaver, strongly denounced idol worship, taking part in formal worship such as Namaz, pilgrimages or bathing in rivers. He wanted to preach a religion which was acceptable to all and

that would unite all religions. He emphasised the unity of God. He called Him by several names such as Rama, Gobinda, Hari and Allah. You must have read his 'Dohas' or 'couplets' in Hindi.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Chaitanya was a saint from Bengal. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna. Though he was a Brahman he condemned the caste system and emphasised on the equality of all. He wanted the people to know that true worship lay in love and devotion. He used to go into a trance singing devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna.

Mirabai

Mirabai was another Bhakti Saint who worshipped, composed and sang songs in praise of Lord Krishna. Like Chaitanya, she too would go into a trance in her love for the God.

Namadeva

Namadeva was a tailor. He wrote in Marathi. His poetry spoke of intense love and devotion to God. Popularity of the Bhakti Movement

How did the Bhakti movement become so popular with the people? An important reason was that they challenged the caste system and the superiority of the Brahmanas. They welcomed the ideas of equality and brotherhood which the Sufi saints also preached. People were no longer satisfied with the old religion. They wanted a religion which could satisfy both their rationality as well as emotions. All the Bhakti saints emphasised oneness of God. They said that the path to God lay in devotion and Bhakti to Him and not in any rituals. They condemned rituals and sacrifices. In northern India, it developed into two streams,

nirguna bhakti and saguna bhakti. The nirguna bhaktas were devotees of a formless God even while calling him variously as Rama, Govinda, Hari or Raghunatha. The most conspicuous among them were Kabir and Nanak. The saguna bhaktas were devotees of Rama, the son of Dasharatha, or Krishna, the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Some of the best examples of Saguna bhaktas were Tulsidas, who idolised Rama in his famous Ramcharita Manas, and Surdas, who sang praises of Krishna in his famous Sursagar. Raskhan, a Muslim poet, who was a devotee of Lord Krishna, also belonged to this tradition. The first important feature of bhakti movement was the concept of oneness of God and brotherhood of all human beings. It did not discriminate against anyone on the basis of caste or gender. Its second important feature was surrender into God, who is all pervasive and capable of solving the problems of the devotees. The third important feature of bhakti was an intense personal devotion to God with an emphasis on a good moral life. It was felt that chanting the name of God constantly purified the soul and prepared one for His grace. A true devotee does not want heaven or moksha. He only wants to chant the Lord's name and be born again and again to sing His praise. In addition, came the guru or spiritual teacher, whose function was to provide people with hope, strength and inner courage. He was supposed to be a person who had marched ahead on the path of bhakti and had probably realised God and hence was capable of leading others into Him. This brought in a system of pahul. Pahul was the sanctified water offered by a master to the pupil or shishya as a token of his being accepted as a trainee on his march to godliness. The Sikhs performed "washing of the swords" ceremony, called khande ka pahul, evolving as the pir-muridi custom (the saint-soldier concept). Have you been able to notice here some features of the Bhakti tradition, which

were similar to the practices and ideas of the Sufis? The spirit of Bhakti pervaded the whole of India and found vivid and beautiful expression in the religious poetry of the medieval saints and mystics, no matter what religious faith they believed in. Their literary compositions, rendered into geet, qawali, etc united the people, as nothing else could have done. It also stimulated the development of regional languages.

Development Of Folk Arts

The rural masses got opportunities to display their creative skills in many fields. Several occasions associated with agricultural operations, for example the tilling of soil, sowing of saplings, picking of cotton, pulling out the weeds and many other social functions provided opportunities for singing and dancing. Does this sound familiar to you? Yes, the festivals and rituals you perform today have continued from the past with necessary changes in keeping with time. The advent of rains became occasions for dancing and merry-making. The gods were invoked and special pujas offered in the temples. It was also an occasion for enjoying the swings. Similarly, ladies on their spinning wheels accompanied by other ladies would sit together and sing till late into the night. This was a common sight in almost all the villages in India. It is important to note that almost every region developed its own peculiar dance form with a local flavour. Thus Garba, Kalbella, Bhangra, Giddha, Bamboo dance, Lavani and innumerable other dance forms, came into existence. Today, some of these are performed during the Republic Day celebrations as well as on other festive occasions. Formal education was not considered very important for women but this did not prevent them from showing their talent in various other fields.

They displayed their creativity in needlework. In Rajasthan, girls came up with beautiful designs on odhanis, shirts and ghagras. The Rajasthanis also created beautiful designs of tie and dye work in fabrics used both by women and men. Even today, we find the people of Rajasthan as the most colourfully dressed in India. Their lavishness could be seen in the way they decorated their animals (horses, bullocks, camels and even elephants). In Punjab, the girls created beautiful phulkaris. In and around Lucknow, came up the chikan work on shirts, salwars, odhanis and even sarees. It appears that the dramatists about whom Bharata mentions in his Natyashastra (fifth century AD) had not completely disappeared. The tamasha and the lavani forms of dance drama were developed in Maharashtra; the Pandavanis in central India and Merasis in northern India applied such art forms with slight modifications. So also the puppeteer, the bard and the mime moved from place to place, entertaining people in various ways. The acrobat and the juggler also could be seen moving from place to place. In some areas the martial arts were developed, while wrestling has been popular all over India since time immemorial.

Painting

Another area which was influenced by Islamic culture was painting. Humayun had spent more than twelve years in Persia as a refugee. He brought painters with him to India when he became the ruler of Delhi once again in 1555. Famous among them were Mir Sayid Ali and Abdus Samad who nurtured the tradition of painting manuscript. An example of it is Dastan-e-Amir Hamza, which has nearly 1200 paintings. The period also witnessed the flowering of portrait and miniature paintings. However, what is amazing is that some of these

painters tried to paint the classical ragas, thereby giving form and colour to such abstract conceptions as music. Seasons or baramasa paintings were similarly given artistic forms. Can you ever estimate the creativity of these artists? Nowhere else in the world except perhaps in China, artists have tried to paint music or seasons. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan continued to give patronage to these artists and as a result, the Mughal school of painting continued to flourish. Akbar as a liberal ruler extended his patronage to painting. He also employed a large number of Hindu painters like Daswant and Basawan Lal. Consequently, there was a fusion of Persian and Indian styles (of painting) during his period. The European influence on Indian painting too was noticed. The Mughal school of painting reached its zenith under Jahangir who was a famous painter. His court was adorned with famous painters like Ustad and Abul Hasan. Mansur was famous for his miniature painting. However Aurangzeb due to his orthodox views and political preoccupations, stopped patronising music and painting. Like their masters, some princes also extended patronage to painters. Thus, besides the Mughal school, the Rajput and the Pahari schools of painting also received encouragement. Even the upper classes in society started patronising painters. As a result, the havelis (big mansions) of the rich and temples were profusely embellished. These havelis in Rajasthan attract a large number of tourists even today. You can visit these havelis if you find an opportunity to visit Rajasthan. The Mughal school of painting from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century gave rise to the Indo-Persian school of miniature art. The Mughal court painters introduced landscapes together with human figures and costumes. When they came in touch with the traditional Indian styles, they became more natural. Signing on the miniatures as a tradition also started. Artists

were now employed on monthly salaries. They illustrated such important works as the Changeznama, Zafarnama and the Ramayana.

Music

The Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, patronised several musicians. Tansen, who adorned the court of Akbar, not only sang the classical ragas but also composed new ones. It is said that Shah Jahan himself was quite a good singer. These musicians entertained the emperors at different times of the day and in different seasons with appropriate ragas. During the Turko-Afghan rule in India, a synthesis of Indo Iranian music had started. During the Mughal rule, it developed further. It is interesting to note that Aurangzeb was against music, but the largest number of books on classical Indian music in Persian were written during his time. In the North, a distinct school known as the Hindustani school of music came into being and its speciality lay in producing sweet and rapturous melodies to suit different moods of life. The ragas and the raginis were personified accordingly. Khayal, Thumri and Ghazal were also elaborated during this period. Tansen, was in a sense the pioneer of this school. Similarly, in the south, the Carnatic school of music developed. However, ordinary people retained the flair for folk music and folk songs to commemorate their local chiefs like Alha-Udal, Dulla-Bhatti, Jaimal-Phatta etc.

Indo-Mughal Culture

The Mughal rulers discarded the Afghan titles of Sultan and styled themselves as Badshah (emperor) and Din-e-Panah (protector of faith). Further, to evoke reverence among the subject for the emperor, they started the practice of jharokha darshan or making public

appearances through specially built windows. They also encouraged the court practice of sijda (low prostration before the kings) and concentrated religious and political power more firmly in their hands

Self Assessment Questions

1. Examine the cultural contributions of the Delhi Sultanate to medieval Indian society.
2. Trace the rise and spread of Islam in India during the Delhi Sultanate period.
3. Explain the origin, principles, and significance of Sufism in medieval India.
4. Discuss the role of Sufi saints in promoting religious harmony and cultural synthesis.
5. Analyze the development of folk arts during the Delhi Sultanate period.

Unit-IV

Modern Indian - Rise of the west and its impact of India - Socio Religious reforms - Indian Language and Literature - Religion and Philosophy .

Objectives

- ❖ **To study** the impact of Western ideas and colonial rule on modern India.
- ❖ **To understand** the role of socio-religious reform movements in social change.
- ❖ **To learn** the growth of Indian languages, literature, religion, and philosophy in the modern period.

Modern India

The history of our country can safely be divided into ancient, medieval and modern periods. The ancient period started long ago, as long as humans have lived on earth. In an earlier lesson you read about what happened in Medieval India i.e. from about the 8th century A.D. and lasted till the beginning of 18th century. Now, we shall read about the Modern period in History. During the last two periods you must have found the society, economy, polity and culture very different from each other. These differences which you may also call progress, developed, continued and increased at a very fast pace and had very much more deeper impact on our lives. You may recall that all those who came to India from outside such as the Turks, the Afghans, and the Mughals made India their home. But the British colonial rulers always

remained foreigners to this land. Nonetheless they brought profound social, economic and political changes to suit their interests and in the process left deep imprints on many aspects of Indian culture. If you see the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi you can have a clear picture of the British impact on Indian architecture. You see the pattern repeated in many buildings in Kolkata, Mumbai and in several other parts of the country. All these have now become a part of our cultural heritage. Apart from these architectural remains, the colonial state also left behind a uniform system of government, a system of education based on Western ideas, science and philosophies. It would be very interesting for you to know that the social and religious reform movements begun in the nineteenth century helped to build a modern India as well. Modern literature in Indian languages were all deeply influenced by the spread of English education and through it India's intimate contact with the ideas and institutions of the West .

Rise Of The West And Its Impact On India

From 1450 onwards, three important developments had changed the shape of Europe: (i) the invention of printing press, (ii) the beginning and the spread of the Renaissance and the Reformation movements and (iii) the discovery of new trade routes. Thereafter, Europe made great progress in the fields of science, exploration and gunnery. Soon, their armies and navies became the best in the world. Scientific education began to spread. Logic and reason thus became the touchstone on which the old dogmas and learning were tested. Among these European countries, the Portuguese and then the Dutch, the French and finally, the British entered into a race to control the trade from India. The British ultimately succeeded in not only controlling

trade but also the country and for about two centuries India remained under her domination where her entire human resources were recklessly exploited and her wealth was drained away for the benefit of the ruling nation. To further their interest the British used the prevailing social and political situation in India. Where a large number of states had cropped up after the decline of the Mughal Empire. The British took advantage of this situation and had one ruler fight against the other or supported a usurper to the throne. Though Tipu Sultan of Mysore tried to use the same principle as used by the British, that is making use of the rivalry between the French and the British, he could not match the superior diplomacy and fire power of the British. The British domination of India was built upon successive phases. The first phase consisted of taking hold of the Indian trade. They bought Indian goods at very low prices and sold them in the Western markets at very high prices, thereby making enormous profits without giving anything to the peasants. In this, they were helped by the Indian Seths and gomastas.

In the second phase, the British took control of the production activities in a manner that would suit their export objectives. In the process they successfully destroyed the Indian industries. This was because India was a potential buyer of their goods. The third phase was an intensified phase of British Imperialism and colonial exploitation when India was ruled by the British for fulfilling British economic interests. The Britishers came to India for making profits through trade. Slowly they gained political and economic control of the country. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 A.D., they had become the real masters of Bengal. They used political control over Bengal to increase their trade and export of foreign goods. They eliminated the Indian as well as

foreign rivals in trade so that there could be no competition. They monopolised the sale of raw cotton and made the Bengal weaver pay exorbitant prices. They imposed heavy duties on Indian goods entering Britain so as to protect their own industry. With the coming of the industrial revolution in Europe, the Indian industries were hit very hard. By 1813, the Indian handicrafts lost both the domestic as well as the foreign market. Indian goods could not compete with the British factory made products, where machines were used.

On the other hand, the English merchants had accumulated a lot of wealth which they now invested in setting up industries and trade. The East India Company helped in financing and expanding their industrial base. During this time there was a class of manufacturers in England who benefitted more from manufacturing than trading. They were interested in having more raw materials from India as well as sending their finished goods back. Between 1793 and 1813, these British manufacturers launched a campaign against the company, its trade monopoly and the privileges it enjoyed. Ultimately in 1813, they succeeded in abolishing the East India Company's monopoly of Indian trade. With this India became an economic colony of industrial England. As a result, Indian hand made goods faced extinction as British machine made goods were cheaper. These goods either had a free entry or paid very low tariff rates to enter India. Indians were to be modernised so that they could develop taste for western goods and buy them. The Indian industries suffered as a result of exploitation at the hands of the British, who did not at all care about Indian trade interests. They did not protect Indian trade nor did they introduce any advanced technology in the country during this period. Indian handicrafts suffered when foreign goods were given free

entry. On the other hand, Indian handicrafts were taxed heavily when they entered Britain. Indian sugar mills paid duty three times its original price when sent to Britain. So the trade from India virtually came to a stop.

India had become an excellent consumer of British goods and a rich supplier of raw materials by the year 1813 A.D. Since England wanted to exploit India for commercial gains, that is, by buying raw materials and selling finished goods, they introduced steam ships and railways in India. The railways opened a vast market to the British and facilitated export of Indian raw material abroad. Do you know that it was in 1853 that the first railway line running from Bombay to Thane was opened to public? The railways connected the raw material producing areas with the exporting ports. As a result British goods flooded the Indian market.

India In The 18th Century: Economy, Society And Culture

Indian in the eighteenth century was a picture of many contrasts and contradictions. Economically agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Since the rulers were constantly at war, they did not have the time to improve agricultural conditions of the land. Foreign trade was flourishing under the Mughals. India imported pearls, raw silk, wool, dates, dried fruits from the Persian Gulf region; Coffee, gold, drugs and honey from Arabia; tea, porcelain and silk came into India from China; luxury goods were also brought in from Tibet, Singapore, Indonesian Islands, Africa and Europe. Indian exported raw silk, silk fabrics, indigo, sugar, pepper and many other things. India's cotton textiles were famous all over the world In spite of such a favourable balance of trade, India's economic condition could not

improve because of constant warfare. Within the country, there were revolts of the Sikhs, Jats, Marathas and from outside, foreign invasions, like that of Nadir shah (1739 A.D.) and Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761), were common. By the eighteenth century European countries like France, England, Portugal and Spain were interested in trading with India. They helped in creating more political and economic instability in the country and ultimately they destroyed its economy. But, by this time, India's fame had spread all over the world as a land of beautiful handicrafts. Socially, there was no unity of pattern in the social and cultural life of the people. Whether they were Hindus or Muslims, there was division among them on the basis of region, tribe, language and caste. Caste rules were to be observed in matters of marriage, diet, inter dining as well as in choosing a profession. Any one found disobeying rules was most likely to be thrown out of the community.

In the field of science that India, which was so advanced, had by now neglected her mathematics and sciences. They remained ignorant of the advances made in the field of science by the West. Teachers were respected in society during those times. Education was steeped in tradition. The students were taught reading and writing along with arithmetic. Girls seldom went to school. Education was not patronised by the State, but by local rulers, members of the aristocracy and benevolent contributors.

Hindu-Muslim Relations

Friendly relations existed between the people of the two religions. Religious tolerance was practised. The wars were political and fought for selfish reasons rather than for religion. Members of both the

communities participated in each others festivals. Many Hindus had faith in Muslim saints while many Muslims showed an equal respect for Hindu gods and saints. In fact, the upper class Hindus and Muslims had many more things in common with each other than with the lower classes of their own community. Besides, the Muslims had adopted the Indian style and culture so well that it was difficult to distinguish one from the other.

Social Conditions

By the turn of the century, the condition of women had little to be happy about. The birth of a girl child was considered to be unfortunate. Girls were married off in their childhood. Polygamy was permitted. Women had no right to property or divorce. Perpetual widowhood was the injunction of the society, especially amongst the upper castes. These widows could not wear coloured clothes, or attend marriages since their presence was considered inauspicious. As child marriages were common in such occasions sometimes even the infant girls became widows and were condemned to perpetual widowhood. Inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Even the prevailing social system did not permit a person from a lower caste to eat with a person of a higher caste. The condition of muslim women was much the same. They faced immense hardship due to the practice of purdah, polygamy, lack of education and rights to property.

Social And Religious Reformers

Christian priests came to India along with the employees of the East India Company to perform their religious rituals at the time of baptism, marriage, burials and church service. But these priests soon

started preaching Christianity to the non-Christian employees of the Company as well. Slowly they started opening schools that were attended by the Indian children. It were these missionaries, who also started the printing press and magazines for disseminating Christian precepts and literature. Along with Christian propaganda, English education was introduced which had a great impact on the society and economy of India. Though the purpose of introducing English education was to fulfil British political and administrative needs, it opened the windows for Indians to the West. They imbibed new ideas of liberalism, rationalism, democracy, equality and freedom. Soon English language also became the lingua franca of the English educated Indians and acted as a cementing force.

Ram Mohan Roy

Ram Mohan Roy is known as the harbinger of the modern age in India. He mastered several languages including Greek and Latin. His role in reforming the Hindu society and the reawakening of India is important. As a large number of social practices prevalent amongst the Hindus at that time claimed to have religious sanctions. Raja Ram Mohan Roy cited extensively from the religious texts to show that this was not true. The foremost in the list was sati. Sati was immolation by a widow on the funeral pyre of her dead husband which had become a self practice in different parts of Bengal and Rajasthan. Ram Mohan Roy took up cudgels against it and ultimately got it banned. He founded the Brahmo Samaj, which carried his message of rationalism and the principle of social equality. His followers believed in the worship of one supreme god (monotheism) and opposed idol worship, polytheism and ritualism. Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905) succeeded Raja Ram

Mohan Roy as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj. He tried to put new life into the Samaj and propagated Raja Ram Mohan Roy's ideas. Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) took over the leadership from Tagore. All this time the Samaj laid emphasis on individual freedom, national unity, solidarity, democratization of all social institutions and of social relations. The Brahmo Samaj became the first organized vehicle for the expression of national awakening in India.

Prarthana Samaj and Ranade

The Prarthana Samaj was established in Bombay by Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang in 1867. They tried to introduce social reforms like inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes. According to Ranade, rigidity in religion would not permit success in social, economic and political spheres. He believed in the unity of God and de-emphasised idol worship as well as caste system.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa

.Ramakrishan Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda to regenerate Indian society. He was a disciple of Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya, later known as Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Vivekananda gave final shape to the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He advocated liberty, free thinking and equality. He emphasised oneness of all religions. He promoted the vedanta philosophy, which he considered to be the most rational system of thought.

Theosophical Society and Annie Besant

The reform movement was also strengthened by the Theosophical Society founded by Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1837-91) and Colonel H.S. Olcott along with others. Annie Besant promoted studies of ancient Indian religions, philosophies and doctrine. She also established the Central Hindu School to encourage education.

Narayana Guru

Narayana Guru was a great saint of South India. He was born in Kerala in September 1854. He underwent preliminary education under the guidance of a local teacher. He became well versed in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil. He had set his heart on the path of renunciation right from his adolescent days.

After his parents died he set out on his journey in quest of true knowledge. He came in contact with Chattampi Swamikal. They became great associates. They spent their time serving holy men, meditating in solitude and making pilgrimages. Both Swamikal and Narayana realised that the all round progress of Kerala depended on the goodwill and co-operation among the Nayar and the Ezhava communities, in which they were born respectively. The conflict between these two communities threatened to ruin Kerala. They decided to work to bring the two communities together. Narayana Guru was a social as well as religious reformer. He lived a life of an ascetic and did much to improve the spiritual as well as the social life of the people of Kerala.

Muslim Reform

Movement Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the most prominent social reformer among the Muslims. He realised that Muslims could only make progress if they took to modern education. Syed Ahmad Khan was against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism. He denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce. Syed Ahmad Khan started the Aligarh movement. He established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. It was meant to be a centre for spreading Sciences and Culture. It later grew into Aligarh Muslim University. The Aligarh Movement helped in the Muslim revival. It gave them a common language— Urdu. A Muslim press was also developed for the compilation of works in Urdu. Unfortunately, in his later years Syed Ahmad Khan encouraged the Indian Muslims not to join the National Movement. He felt that education and not politics was needed by them. In a way he encouraged the forces of communalism and separatism at this stage.

Social Reform

Do you know that nearly all religious reformers contributed to the social reform movement too? This was because the backward features of Indian Society, such as casteism and inequality of sexes, had religious sanctions in the past. There were two main objectives of the social reform movements. These were: (a) emancipation of women and giving them equality with men, (b) removal of caste rigidities, especially the abolition of untouchability and the upliftment of the depressed classes.

Emancipation of Women

The most striking change in the Indian social life of today is that in the position of women. Attempts have been made by the State and reformers to do away with the practice of early marriage by legislation. The women themselves have been zealous in making attempts to improve their lot in all possible ways, like better facilities regarding education and social abuses. There is now a growth of political consciousness among women. In 1930 the Sharda Act was passed fixing the minimum age for marriage for boys at 18 and girls at 14. Do you know that Maharishi Karve was awarded the Bharat Ratna for his great work in the field of women's education? He started schools for girls, as well as working houses for widows and destitutes. Soon this movement gained momentum and many schools and colleges were opened for women.

Struggle against Caste System

Immense work has been done in this field by the Ramakrishn Mission and the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj especially has contributed a lot towards it by their Shuddhi Movement, that is, a form of purification by which those Hindus who had converted to Islam or Christianity could come back to their own religion. Champions of the backward classes were B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi. Ambedkar opened many schools and colleges for their benefit. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, championed the cause of untouchables whom he called Harijans. He asked for temples to be thrown open to them as well as for equal treatment to them. Even the Constitution of Free India has given the legal and constitutional support to this movement. Untouchability was

declared a punishable offence. But we still have a long way to go to achieve our cherished goal of a society based on complete equality and equity, a society where all the members—men or women coming from any social or economic background—are happy and their needs fulfilled. And we will all have to work together to bring about such a situation.

Swami Dayanand

Swami Dayanand's greatest asset was his mastery over the Sanskrit language and the Vedas. He felt that the myriad social and religious evils which had crept into the Hindu society over the centuries were due to the lack of true knowledge of the Vedas. Therefore, he challenged the Hindu society on the issues of idolatry and women education. In 1875, he founded the Arya Samaj. Its main aim was to propagate the true knowledge of the Vedas and discard all evils that had crept into the Hindu society later in its name. He opposed untouchability. He was similarly opposed to polytheism, avataravada and ritualism. His slogan was 'go back to the Vedas' whose authority he accepted. For the first time in the history of India, the Vedas were printed in India under his patronage. Personally, his most important work was Satyarth Prakash (The Light of Truth). In 1883, Swami Dayanand left his body after an eventful life. His followers started a Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) School and College in Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1886. This DAV movement has carried forward his work since then and now has over 750 institutions under one umbrella. As a result of the works of these two pioneers and other equally well-known personalities and organizations like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Radhakanta Deb, the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj, a large number of people in eastern and north-eastern India were substantially

awakened and many of the social evils were banned with the help of the Britishers.

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-90)

Known popularly as 'Jyotiba', Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was born in Pune (1827) in a lower caste family of malis. According to him the only way to improve the lot of the lower castes and women was through education. So he opened a school especially for the lower castes and also started the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873. His main aim was to seek social justice for the people belonging to the so-called untouchable and backward classes. Recognition for this work came to him in later years and he was elected to the Poona Municipality as a member.

Pandita Rama Bai (1858-1922)

One of the most important names among women social reformers of this time in India and more so, in Maharashtra, is that of Pandita Rama Bai. After her parents died, she along with her brother continued to travel from place to place, giving discourses on the Puranas. Consequently, her reputation as a scholar and religious speaker spread far and wide that the pundits of Kolkata also invited her to address the people of the city. Everyone was astounded by her knowledge and elocution. So people began calling her pandita, a title bestowed on the learned women. In 1882, Rama Bai moved back to Pune. Naturally, she was drawn to the Prarthana Samaj, a reformation society which was propagating the message of the Brahmo Samaj in Maharashtra. Here, she also concentrated on improving the condition of women. In 1890, she started Sharda Sadan, a home for widows. Mahadev Govind Ranade,

R.G. Bhadarkar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Behramji Malbari were other well known personalities, who worked for social reforms in Western India.

Indian Languages and Literature

In 1798, lithography was invented. It used the specially prepared surface of a stone for printing a script, a picture, or drawing. A large number of copies of the same text could be printed in this way. From about 1820 onwards, hundreds of pamphlets and books were printed, which catered to the needs of the growing literate population of India. It was the biggest boon which the West had conferred on India. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, the press had become a powerful tool for influencing public opinion. Since the new printing presses were not costly, their number grew at a fast pace. This, in turn, encouraged a large number of writers to produce literature in different Indian languages. Their original works as well as translations and adaptations of old Indian and Western classics helped enrich our cultural heritage. This helped to bring about an awakening of the Indians. Weeklies, fortnightly journals and daily newspapers were published almost in every language. Although the total number of readers of newspapers was small as compared to their number in the European countries, a whole new set of national literature in the form of novels, essays and poems played a significant role in generating nationalism. Bankim Chandra's *Anandamatha*, Dinabandhu Mitra's *Neeldarpan*, Bhartendu Harish Chandra's *Bharat Durdasha*, Lakshminath Bezbarua's works in Assamese, Subramaniam Bharti's writing in Tamil and Altaf Hussain's works in Urdu stirred the minds of the Indians.

Role of Newspapers

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century the press in India had become a powerful and an important instrument for creating, spreading, influencing and sharpening public opinion. Consequently, the newspapers played a significant role in the dissemination of anti-British feelings by discussing, criticizing and commenting on government policies and on major social and economic issues. This helped in promoting a pan-Indian consciousness and in giving important political education to the people of India.

Some important Newspapers

Bengal :- The Hindoo Patriot (English)

The Amrita Bazar Patrika (English)

Bombay :- Maharatha (English), Kesari (Marathi)

Madras :- The Hindu (English), Swadeshmitiran (Tamil)

Punjab :- The Tribune (English)

Kohinoor, Akhbar (Urdu)

Indian Language and Literature

Indian Languages: The Role Of Sanskrit

Ever since human beings have invented scripts, writing has reflected the culture, lifestyle, society and the polity of contemporary society. In the process, each culture evolved its own language and created a huge literary base. This literary base of a civilization tells us about the

evolution of each of its languages and culture through the span of centuries. Sanskrit is the mother of many Indian languages. The Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and Dharmasutras are all written in Sanskrit. There is also a variety of secular and regional literature. By reading about the languages and literature created in the past, we shall be able to understand our civilization better and appreciate the diversity and richness of our culture. All this was possible because of the language that developed during that time.

Sanskrit is the most ancient language of our country. It is one of the twenty-two languages listed in the Indian Constitution .The literature in Sanskrit is vast, beginning with the most ancient thought embodied in the Rig Veda, the oldest literary heritage of mankind, and the Zend Avesta. It was Sanskrit that gave impetus to the study of linguistics scientifically during the eighteenth century. The great grammarian Panini, analysed Sanskrit and its word formation in his unrivalled descriptive grammar Ashtadhyayi. The Buddhist Sanskrit literature includes the rich literature of the Mahayana school and the Hinayana school also. The most important work of the Hinayana school is the Mahavastu which is a storehouse of stories. While the Lalitavistara is the most sacred Mahayana text which supplied literary material for the Buddhacarita of Asvaghosa.

Sanskrit is perhaps the only language that transcended the barriers of regions and boundaries. From the north to the south and the east to the west there is no part of India that has not contributed to or been affected by this language. Kalhan's Rajatarangini gives a detailed account of the kings of Kashmir whereas with Jonaraja we share the glory

of Prithviraj. The writings of Kalidasa have added beauty to the storehouse of Sanskrit writings.

THE VEDAS

The Vedas are the earliest known literature in India. The Vedas were written in Sanskrit and were handed down orally from one generation to the other. Do you know that preservation of the Vedas till today is one of our most remarkable achievements. To be able to keep such a literary wealth as the Vedas intact when the art of writing was not there and there was a paucity of writing material is unprecedented in world history. The word 'Veda' literally means knowledge. In Hindu culture, Vedas are considered as eternal and divine revelations. They treat the whole world as one human family Vasudev Kutumbakam. 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 Triji. In later years the Atharva Veda was incorporated in this group.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the earliest of the Vedas. It is a collection of 1028 hymns in Vedic Sanskrit. Many of these are beautiful descriptions of nature. The prayers are largely for seeking worldly prosperity. It is believed that these recitations are the natural outpouring of Vedic rishis experiencing a mentally transcendental stage. Some of the well-known rishis are 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. Do you know that most of the hymns spoke of universally recognised higher values of life such as truthfulness, honesty, dedication, sacrifice, politeness and culture. The prayers are for seeking worldly prosperity and for the development of a highly cultured society. Along with religion Rig Veda provides us knowledge about social, political and economic condition of ancient India.

Yajur Veda

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

Sama Veda

Sama means melody or songs. This Veda consists of 16,000 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 prescribes 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.

Atharva Veda

The Atharva Veda is also known 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 is of immense value as it represents the religious ideas at an early period of civilisation. It has two branches, the Paippalada and the Saunaka. This book gives detailed information about the family, social and political life of later Vedic period. In order to understand the Vedas, it is necessary to learn the Vedangas or the limbs of the Vedas. These supplements of the Vedas provide education (siksha), grammar (vyakarana), ritual (kalpa), etymology (nirukta), metrics (chhanda) and astronomy (Jyotisha). A good deal of literature grew around these subjects. It was written in the form of precepts in the sutra style. A precept was called sutra because of its brevity. The most famous example of this is Panini's grammar, Ashtadhyayi, which illustrates the rules of grammar and also throws light on society, economy and culture of those times.

Brahmanas and Aranyakas

After the four Vedas, a number of works called the Brahmanas were developed. These books gave a detailed 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 philosophic 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. Taittiriya 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

Aranyakas 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. All these works were in Sanskrit. Initially they were handed down orally and were put to writing much later.

The Upanishads

The word Upanishad is derived from upa (nearby), and nishad (to sit-down), that is, “sitting down near”. Groups of pupil sit near the Guru to learn from him in the Guru-shishya parampara or tradition. The Upanishads mark the culmination of Indian thought and are the final parts of the Vedas. As the Upanishads contain abstract and difficult discussions of ultimate philosophical problems, they were taught to the pupils at the end. That is why they are called the end of Vedas. Vedas start with the worship of the manifest, as that is obvious and then slowly transform to the knowledge of the unmanifest. There are more than 200 known Upanishads, one of which, the Mukhtika, 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 our literary legacy. 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 earliest Upanishads are the Brihadaranyaka which belongs to the Sukla Yajur Veda and Chand yogya which belongs to the Sama Veda. Some of the other important Upanishads are the Aitareya, Kena, Katha Upanishad. Try and find out some other important Upanishads on your own. Read them and you will find a whole new world of Indian philosophy opening in front of you. There are more books selling on the Upanishads. Start with the small stories. Get interested in them and then go to the whole book of any Upanishad.

The Ramayana And The Mahabharata

Our two great epics are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Ramayana of Valmiki is the original Ramayana. It is called Adikavya and Maharishi Valmiki is known as Adi Kavi. The Ramayana presents a picture of an ideal society. The other epic, the Mahabharata, was written by Ved Vyas. Originally, it was written in Sanskrit and contained 8800 verses and was called “Jaya” or the collection dealing with victory. These were raised to 24,000 and came to be known as Bharata, named after one of the earliest Vedic tribes. The final compilation brought the verses to 100,000, which came to be known as the Mahabharata or the Satasahasri Samhita. It contains narrative, descriptive and didactic material, relating to conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have several renderings in different Indian languages. The Mahabharata contains the famous Bhagavad Gita which contains the essence of divine wisdom and is truly a universal gospel. Though it is a very ancient scripture, its fundamental teachings are in use even today. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior 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. In modern times Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and many others used the text to help inspire the Indian independence movement. This was mainly because the Bhagavad Gita spoke of positiveness in human actions. It also spoke of duty towards God and human beings alike forgetting about the results. You will appreciate the fact that the Gita has been translated nearly in all the main languages of the world.

PURANAS

The Puranas occupy a unique position in the sacred literature of the Hindus. They are regarded next in importance only to the Vedas and the Epics. There are said to be eighteen Puranas and about the same number of Upapuranas. Some of the well known Puranas are- Brahma, Bhagvat, Padma, Vishnu, Vayu, Agni, Matsya and Garuda. Their origin can be traced as far back as the time when Buddhism was gaining importance and was a major opponent of the Brahmanic culture. Puranas are mythological works which propagate religious and spiritual messages through parables and fables. They have a potent influence in the development of the religious lives of the people. The Puranas follow the lines of the epics, and the earliest Puranas were compiled in the Gupta period. They are full of myths, stories, legends and sermons that were meant for the education of the common people. These Puranas contain important geographical information/ histories and deal with the mysteries of creation, re-creation and dynastic genealogies. This period also saw the compilation of various smritis or law books written in verse. The phase of writing commentaries on the smritis begins after the Gupta period. Amarasimha the Sanskrit Lexicographer, states that a Purana should describe five topics;

- (1) Sarga (Creation)
- (2) Pratisarga (Secondary creation)
- (3) Vamsa (Geneology)
- (4) Manvantara (Manu periods) and
- (5) Vamsanucarita (dynastic history)

Buddhist And Jain Literature In Pali, Prakrit And Sanskrit

The religious books of the Jains and the Buddhists refer to historical persons or incidents. The earliest Buddhist works were written in Pali, which was spoken in Magadha and South Bihar. The Buddhist works can be divided into the canonical and the non-canonical. The canonical literature is best represented by the “Tripitakas”, that is, three baskets Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka. Vinaya Pitaka deals with rules and regulations of daily life. Sutta Pitaka contains dialogues and discourses on morality and deals with Dharma while Abhidhamma Pitaka deals with philosophy and metaphysics. It includes discourses on various subjects such as ethics, psychology, theories of knowledge and metaphysical problems. The non-canonical literature is best represented by the Jatakas. Jatakas are the most interesting stories on the previous births of the Buddha. It was believed that before he was finally born as Gautama, the Buddha practising Dharma passed through more than 550 births, in many cases even in the form of animals. Each birth story is called a Jataka. The Jatakas throw invaluable light on the social and economic conditions ranging from the sixth century BC to the second century BC. They also make incidental reference to political events in the age of the Buddha. The Jain texts were written in Prakrit and were finally compiled in the sixth century AD in Valabhi in Gujarat. The important works are known as Angas, Upangas, Prakirnas, Chhedab Sutras and Malasutras. Among the important Jain scholars, reference may be made to Haribhadra Suri, (eighth century AD) and Hemchandra Suri, (twelfth century AD). Jainism helped in the growth of a rich literature comprising poetry, philosophy and grammar. These works contain many passages which help us to reconstruct the political history of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Tamil Or Sangama Literature

Tamil as a written language was known since the beginning of the Christian era. It is, therefore, no wonder that considerable Sangama literature was produced in the early four centuries of the Christian era, although it was finally compiled by 600 AD. Poets who in these assemblies were patronised by kings and chieftains produced the Sangama literature over a period of three to four centuries. Poets, bards and writers, authors came from various parts of South India to Madurai. Such assemblies were called “Sangamas”, and the literature produced in these assemblies was called “Sangama literature”. The contributions of Tamil saints like Thiruvalluvar who wrote ‘Kural’ which has been translated into many languages are noteworthy. The Sangama literature is a collection of long and short poems composed by various poets in praise of numerous heroes and heroines. They are secular in nature and of a very high quality. Three such sangams were held. The poems collected in the first sangam have been lost. In the second Sangam about 2000 poems have been collected. There are about 30,000 lines of poetry, which are arranged in eight anthologies called Ettuttokai. There are two main groups – the Patinenkil Kanakku (the eighteen lower collections) and Pattupattu (the ten songs).

The former is generally assumed to be older than the latter, and considered to be of more historical importance. Thiruvalluvar’s work ‘Kural’ is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the epics, the second part with polity and government and the third part with love. Besides the Sangama texts, we have a text called Tolkkappiyam, which deals with grammar and poetry. In addition, we have the twin epics of Silappadikaram and Manimekalai. These two were composed around the sixth century AD. The first is considered as the brightest gem of Tamil literature and deals with a love story. The second epic was

written by a grain merchant of Madurai. These epics throw light on the socio-economic life of Tamils from second century to sixth century AD. From the 6th to 12th century AD, the Tamil devotional poems written by Nayanmars (saints who sang in praise of Shaivism) and Alvars herald the great Bhakti movement which engulfed the entire Indian sub-continent. During this period, Kambaramayana and Periya Purana were two Tamil literary classic writers.

Telugu, Kannada And Malayalam Literature

The four Dravidian languages Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam developed their own literature. Tamil being the oldest of these languages began writing earlier and produced the sangam literature - the oldest literature in Tamil. Telugu Literature The Vijayanagara period was the golden age of Telugu literature. Nachana Somanatha, a court poet of Bukka I, produced a poetical work titled Uttaravamsam. Krishnadevaraya (1509-1529), the greatest of the Vijayanagara emperors, was a poet of great merit. His work Amukta Malyada is regarded as an excellent prabandha in Telugu literature. Eight Telugu literary luminaries, popularly known as ashtadiggajas adorned his court. Among them, Allasani Peddana, the author of Manucharitram, was the greatest. He was known as Andhra kavita-pitamaha. The other seven poets of the group were Nandi Timmana, the author of Parijathapaharanam, Madayagari Mallana, Dhurjati, Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra Kavi, Pingali Surana, Ramaraja Bhushana and Tenali Ramakrishna. Dhurjati, a devotee of Shiva, composed two poetical works of great merit known as Kalahasteswara Mahatmayam and Kalahasteswara Satakam, Pingali Surana composed two works Raghavapandaviyam and Kalapuranaodayam. In the former, he attempted a literary feat telling the

story of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata simultaneously. Tenali Ramakrishna, the court jester, was an interesting figure of the Krishnadevaraya's court. His practical jokes on high-placed men of the time are recounted with pleasure even today. Ramakrishna was the author of Panduranga Mahatmayam which was considered one of the greatest poetical works of Telugu literature. Ramarajabhushana was the author of Vasucharitram. He was also known as Bhattumurti. His other works include Narasabhupaliyam and Harishchandra Nalopakhyanam. It is a poetical work on the model of Raghavapandaviyam. One can read in it stories of Nala as well as Harishchandra. Madayagari Mallana's work Rajashekharacharitra is a prabandha dealing with the wars and loves of Rajashekhar, king of Avanti. Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra was the author of two works Ramabhyudayam and Sakalakathasara Sangraham.

Kannada Literature

Apart from Telugu, Vijayanagara rulers extended their patronage to Kannada and Sanskrit writers as well. Many Jain scholars contributed to the growth of Kannada literature. Madhava wrote Dharmanathapurana on the fifteenth tirthankara. Another Jain scholar, Uritta Vilasa, wrote Dharma Parikshe. The Sanskrit works of the period include Yadavabhyudayam by Vedanatha Desika and Parasara Smriti Vyakhya of Madhavacharya. Kannada language developed fully after the tenth century AD. The earliest known literary work in Kannada is Kavirajamang written by the Rashtrakuta King, Nripatunga Amoghavarsha I. Pampa, known as the father of Kannada wrote his great poetic works Adi Purana and Vikramarjiva Vijaya in the tenth century AD. Pampa lived in the court of Chalukya Arikesari. In his poetic skill, beauty of description, delineation of character and development of rasa,

Pampa is unrivalled. Ponna and Ranna were two other poets who lived during the reign of Rashtrakuta Krishna III. Ponna wrote an epic named Shanti Purana and Ranna wrote Ajitanatha Purano. Together Pampa, Ponna and Ranna earned the title ratnatraya (the three gems). In the thirteenth century new feats were achieved in Kannada literature. Harishvara wrote Harishchandra Kavya and Somanatha Charita whereas Bandhuvarma wrote Harivamshabhyudaya and Jiva Sambodhana. Under the patronage of later Hoysala rulers, several literary works were produced. Rudra Bhata wrote Jagannathavijaya. Andayya's Madana Vijaya or Kabbigara Kava is a work of special interest in pure Kannada without the mixture of Sanskrit words. Mallikarjuna's Suktisudharnava, the first anthology in Kannada and Kesirja's Shabdamanidarpana on grammar are two other standard works in the Kannada language. Kannada literature flourished considerably between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries under the patronage of the Vijayanagara kings. Poets of all religious groups made important contribution to it. Kunura Vyasa wrote Bharata and Narahari wrote Tarave Ramayana.

This is the first Rama Katha in Kannada composed on the basis of Valmiki's Ramayana. Lakshamisha who lived in the seventeenth century wrote Jaimini Bharata and earned the titled of Kamata-Karicutavana-Chaitra (the spring of the Karnataka mango grove). The other eminent poet of this period was the great Sarvajna, popularly known as the people's poet. His aphoristic tripadi (three-lined) compositions serve as a source of wisdom and ethics. A special mention may be made of Honnamma, perhaps the first outstanding poetess in Kannada. Her Hadibadeya Dharma (Duty of a Devout Wife) is a compendium of ethics.

Malayalam Literature

Malayalam is spoken in Kerala and the adjoining areas. The language of Malayalam emerged around the eleventh century AD. By fifteenth century Malayalam was recognised as an independent language. Bhasa Kautilya, a commentary on Arthashastra and Kokasandisan are two great works. Rama Panikkar and Ramanuj an Ezhuthachan are well known authors of Malayalam literature. Though it developed much later compared to other South Indian languages, Malayalam has made a mark as a powerful medium of expression. Now a large number of journals, newspapers and magazines are published in Malayalam. When people read and write in their own language, they enjoy it more. This is because language is a part of their culture. It is so well inter woven in their social life that they can express and feel their emotions as well in their own language. This, must also be the case with you and your language also.

Hindi Literature

These was a tremendous growth of regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Marathi and Gujarati during this time. In the South, Malayalam emerged as an independent language in the 14th century The emergence of all these languages resulted in the decline of Sanskrit as they came to be used as the medium through which the administrative machinery functioned. The rise of the Bhakti movement and the use of these regional langages by the various saints helped in their growth and development. We have already noted the various dialects that developed in northern and western India. Prithviraj Raso is supposed to be the first book in the Hindi language. It is an account of exploits of Prithviraj Chauhan. In its imitation several other rasos were written. The language went on changing as the area where it

was used expanded. New words to express new situations were either coined or taken from areas coming under its influence. Hindi literature looked to Sanskrit classics for guidance and Bharata's Natyashastra was kept in mind by Hindi writers. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there started a movement in southern India that was called the Bhakti movement. As its influence reached the north, it started affecting the prose and poetry that were being composed in Hindi. Poetry now became largely devotional in nature. Some of the poets like Tulsidas wrote poetry in a language which was of that region only, while others like Kabir, who moved from place to place added Persian and Urdu words as well. Though it is said that Tulsidas wrote Ramcharit Manas based on Valmiki's Ramayana, he also alters situations and adds quite a few new scenes and situations based on folklore. For example, Sita's exile is mentioned in Valmiki's version but it is not mentioned in Tulsidas's account. Tulsidas has deified his hero while the hero of Valmiki is a human being. Hindi evolved during the Apabhramsa stage between the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. and the 14th C. It was characterized as Veergatha Kala i.e. the age of heroic poetry or the Adi Kala (early period). It was patronised by the Rajput rulers as it glorified chivalry and poetry. The most famous figures from this period were Kabir and Tulsidas. In modern times, the Khadi dialect became more prominent and a variety of literature was produced in Sanskrit. Similarly, Surdas wrote his Sur Sagar in which he talks of Krishna as an infant, a young lad indulging in pranks and a young man engaged in dalliance with the gopis. These poets made a deep impression on the minds of the listeners. If the festivals associated with Rama and Krishna have become so very popular, the credit goes to these poets. Their versions became the source of inspiration not only for other poets but also for painters in

the medieval ages. They inspired Mirabai, who sang in Rajasthani language, and Raskhan, who, though a Muslim, sang in praise of Krishna. Nandadasa was an important Bhakti poet. Rahim and Bhushan were a class apart. Their subject was not devotion, but spiritual. Bihari wrote his Satsai in the seventeenth century; it gives us a glimpse of shringar (love) and other rasas. All the above mentioned Hindi poets, except Kabir, expressed their sentiments essentially to satisfy their own devotional instincts. Kabir did not believe in institutionalised religion. He was a devotee of a formless God. Chanting His name was the be-all and end-all for him. All these poets influenced the north Indian society in a manner that had never happened earlier. As it is easier to remember poetry than prose, they became immensely popular. During the last 150 years, many writers have contributed to the development of modern India literature, written in a number of regional languages as well as in English. One of the greatest Bengali writers, Rabindranath Tagore became the first Indian to win the Nobel Prize for literature (Geetanjali) in 1913. However, it is only with the beginning of nineteenth century that Hindi prose came into its own. Bharatendu Harishchandra was one of the earliest to produce dramas in Hindi which were basically translations of texts written in Sanskrit and other languages. But he set the trend. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi was another author who wrote translations or made adaptations from Sanskrit. Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-94) wrote novels originally in Bangla. They came to be translated into Hindi and became very popular. Vande Mataram, our national song, is an excerpt from his novel, Anand Math. Swami Dayanand's contribution to Hindi cannot be ignored. Originally a Gujarati and a scholar of Sanskrit, he advocated Hindi as a common language for the whole of India. He started writing in Hindi and

contributed articles to journals essentially engaged in religious and social reforms. Satyarth Prakash was his most important work in Hindi. Among other names who have enriched Hindi literature, is that of Munshi Prem Chand, who switched over from Urdu to Hindi. Surya Kant Tripathi, 'Nirala', achieves recognition because he questioned the orthodoxies in society. Mahadevi Verma is the first woman writer in Hindi to highlight issues related to women. Maithili Sharan Gupt is another important name. Jaishankar Prasad wrote beautiful dramas.

Hindi Literature:

Bhartendu Harish Chandra, Mahavira Prasad Dwivedi, Ramchandra Shukla and Shyam Sunder Das were the main among the prose writers of Hindi literature. Jai Shanker Prasad, Maithalisharan Gupta, Sumitranandan Pant, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Mahadevi Verma, Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar' and Haribans Rai 'Bacchan' made great contribution to the development of Hindi poetry. Similarly Prem Chand, Vrindavan Lal Verma and Ellachandra Joshi wrote novels and enriched Hindi literature. If we look at the above writers, we find that they all wrote with a purpose. Swami Dayanand wrote in order to reform the Hindu society and rid it of false beliefs and social evils. Munshi Prem Chand tried to draw the attention of the society to the miserable existence of the poor and Mahadevi Verma recipient of Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award highlighted the conditions of women in the society. 'Nirala' became the pioneer of awakening of Modern India. founded the Fort William College in the same year. It provided training to civil servants of the Company in law, customs, religions, languages and literatures of India to enable them to work more efficiently.

In this regard, a very important landmark was achieved by William Carey, who wrote a grammar of Bengali and published an English-Bengali dictionary and also wrote books on dialogues and stories. It may be noted that the grammar and dictionaries are important in the development of a literature. They guide the writers as to the correctness of a sentence and also help them in finding suitable words for a particular situation and idea. Although the aim of the press run by the missionaries was mainly to propagate Christian faith but other presses run by local people helped in the flourishing of non-Christian literature. Scores of pamphlets, small and big books and journals were produced. In the meantime education spread, although at a very slow pace. But after 1835, when Macaulay won the battle against Orientalists, it spread at a faster pace. In 1854 came Sir Charles Wood's Despatch and in 1857 the three universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established. Besides textbooks for schools and colleges, other literature were also produced. However it was Raja Ram Mohan Roy who wrote in Bengali besides English that gave impetus to Bengali literature. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) and Akshay Kumar Dutta (1820-86) were two other writers of this early period. In addition to these, Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1834-94), Sharat Chandra Chatterji (1876-1938), and R.C. Dutta, a noted historian and a prose writer, all contributed to the making of Bengali literature. But the most important name that influenced the whole of India was that of Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941). Novels, dramas, short stories, criticism, music and essays, all flowed from his pen. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 for his *Geetanjali*.

However, a few things need to be noted about the influence of Western ideas which permeated Bengal and later on other parts of India. Upto 1800, most of the literature produced was limited to religion

or courtly literature. The Western influence brought the writers closer to the man in the street. The subjects were mundane. Some religious literature was also produced but it hardly said anything new. The final years of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century saw a new subject, nationalism, being taken up. Two things were seen in this new trend. The first was the love for old history and culture and an awareness of the facts of British exploitation. The second was a clarion call for arousing the Indians to drive out the foreigners, both by persuasion and force. This new trend was expressed by Subrahmanyam Bharti in Tamil and Qazi Nazrul Islam in Bengali. The contributions of these two writers in arousing the nationalistic sentiments in the readers was tremendous. Their poetry was translated into other Indian languages. Assamese - Like Bengali, Assamese also developed in response to the Bhakti movement. Shankardeva who introduced Vaishnavism in Assam helped in the growth of Assamese poetry. Even the Puranas were translated in Assamese. The earliest Assamese literature consisted of buranjis (court chronicles). Shankardev has left several devotional poems, which people song with rapturous pleasure, but it was only after 1827 that more interest was shown in producing Assamese literature. Two names, Lakshmi Nath Bezbarua and Padmanaba Gohain Barua cannot be forgotten. From Orissa, a couple of names are worth mentioning and these are Fakirmohan Senapati and Radha Nath Ray, whose writings deserve considerable attention in the history of Oriya literature. The works of Upendra Bhanja (1670 - 1720) were important as they ushered a new period of Oriya literature. In Orissa the works of Saraladasa are regarded as the first works of Oriya literature.

language did not lack literature. Guru Nanak was the first poet in Punjabi. Some other contemporary poets, mostly Sufi saints, used to sing in this language. These Sufis or their followers used the Persian script if they wanted to commit their poetry to writing. In this list, the first name is that of Farid. His poetry has found a place in the Adi Granth. The Adi Granth also contains poetry of the next four gurus. All this literature belongs to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Amongst the later gurus, the poetry of the ninth guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur has also contributed to the Adi Granth. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru, was educated in Patna (Bihar), where he learnt Persian and Sanskrit. He has composed two savaaiyyas in Punjabi but these are not a part of the Adi Granth. But it was the love stories of Heer and Ranjha, Sasi and Punnu and Sohni and Mahiwal, which gave this language its theme in the early days. Even the story of Puran Bhagat found favour with some poets. Beautiful poems written by some known and some unknown poets have come down to us. These are being sung by local singers for the last two or three hundred years. There are several other poetic stories which have been composed by the locals. This folklore has been preserved. The most important of these is Heer of Waris Shah. It is the most popular of the early works. It is a landmark in Punjabi poetry. Similar is the popularity of Bulley Shah who was a Sufi saint. He has left a large number of songs. One of his popular forms of compositions was called kafi; it was sung in a classical musical form. Kafis are sung by people with great fervour.

Marathi Literature

Maharashtra is situated on a plateau where a large number of local dialects were in use. Marathi grew out of these these local dialects. The Portuguese missionaries started using Marathi for preaching their

gospel. The earliest Marathi poetry and prose is by Saint Jnaneshwar (Gyaneshwar) who lived in the thirteenth century. He wrote a long commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. He was the one who started the kirtan tradition in Maharashtra. He was followed by Namdev (l 270 1350), Gora, Sena and Janabai. All these sang and popularised the Marathi language. Their songs are sung even today by the Verkari pilgrims on their way to Pandharpur pilgrimage. Almost two centuries later, Eknath (l 533-99) came on the scene. He wrote the commentaries on the Ramayana and the Bhagawat Purana. His songs are very popular all over Maharashtra.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT INDIA

Religion

Religion is the science of soul. Morality and ethics have their foundation on religion. Religion played an important part in the lives of the Indians from the earliest times. It assumed numerous forms in relation to different groups of people associated with them. Religious ideas, thoughts and practices differed among these groups, and transformations and developments took place in the various religious forms in course of time. Religion in India was never static in character but was driven by an inherent dynamic strength. Indian spirituality is deeply rooted in ancient philosophical and religious traditions of the land. Philosophy arose in India as an enquiry into the mystery of life and existence. Indian sages called Rishis or 'seers', developed special techniques of transcending the sense and the ordinary mind, collectively called yoga. With the help of these techniques, they delved deep into the depths of consciousness and discovered important truths about the true nature of human being and the universe. The sages found that the true nature of the human being is not the body or the mind, which are

ever changing and perishable but the spirit which is unchanging, immortal and pure consciousness. They called it the Atman. The Atman is the true source of human's knowledge, happiness and power. The rishis further found that all individual selves are parts of infinite consciousness which they called Brahman. Brahman is the ultimate reality, the ultimate cause of the universe. Ignorance of human's true nature is the main cause of human suffering and bondage. By gaining correct knowledge of Atman and Brahman, it is possible to become free from suffering and bondage and attain a state of immortality, everlasting peace and fulfillment known as Moksha. Religion in ancient India meant a way of life which enables a human to realize his true nature and attain Moksha.

From the archaeological findings in the pre and proto-historic sites it seems that these people believed in the sanctity of the creative force and venerated the male and female aspects of divinity. It appears that they were worshippers of the forces of nature like the sun and the moon. This belief is also partly substantiated by the early literature of the Aryans. The nature of the religious beliefs and practices of the Aryans is also known from the Rig Veda, They believed in many gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Surya and Rudra. Sacrifices, and ritual offering of food and drink to fire in honour of the Gods, constituted the main religious practices. The Sama Veda and the Yajur Veda elaborated the different aspects of the sacrificial acts and this ritualism was further elaborated in the Brahmanas. The Atharva Veda contained a great deal of animistic beliefs. The seers entertained doubts about the utility and efficacy of the Vedic ritualism. Polytheism was challenged by monotheistic ideas and the various deities were introduced as different

ways of naming one eternal entity. The Aranyaka and Upanishad sections of the Vedic literature envisage a progressive outlook. The Upanishads, represent the early stage in the origin and development of the religions metaphysical concepts which were used later by the religious leaders and reformers of ancient and medieval India. Some of them followed the traditional lines while others proceeded along the paths of unorthodoxy.

Unorthodox Religious Movements

The religious movements associated with persons like Mahavira and the Buddha in about the middle of the first Millennium BC fall under this category. There were many other creeds during this time as well. The creeds preached by some of them contained elements that were not in keeping with the Vedic tradition. They ignored the infallibility and supernatural origin of the Vedas. Unlike the Vedic seers who were Brahmin sages, many of these new teachers were Kshatriya. Both Buddhism and Jainism were atheistic creeds in the beginning. However, Buddhism endorsed the doctrine of the Law of Karma and upheld the belief in rebirths of the embodied skandhas and the inevitability of suffering in the very existence of beings. Many of these view points are also found in the major Upanishads.

Theistic Religions

Creeds of theistic character evolved almost simultaneously with the non-theistic religions. The important deities of these religions were not primarily Vedic ones but those that came from unorthodox sources. Influence of pre-vedic and post-vedic folk elements were most conspicuous in their origin. The primary factor that motivated these creeds was Bhakti, the single-souled devotion of the worshipper to a personal god with some moral link. This led to the evolution of different

religious sects like Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Saktism, which came to be regarded as components of orthodox Brahminism. These sects in course of time came to have a significant impact on the popular forms of Buddhism and Jainism.

Folk Cults

The worship of Yakshas and Nagas and other folk deities constituted the most important part of primitive religious beliefs, in which Bhakti had a very important role to play. There is ample evidence about the prevalence of this form of worship among the people in early literature as well as in archaeology. Vasudeva/Krishna Worship: A Sutra in Panini's Ashtadhyayi refers to the worshippers of Vasudeva (Krishna). The Chhandogya Upanishad also speaks of Krishna, the son of Devaki, a pupil of the sage Ghora Angirasa who was a sun-worshipping priest. A large number of people worshipped Vasudeva Krishna exclusively as their personal God and they were at first known as Bhagavatas. The Vasudeva-Bhagavata cult grew steadily, absorbing within its fold other Vedic and Brahminic divinities like Vishnu (primarily an aspect of the sun) and Narayana (a cosmic God). From the late Gupta period the name mostly used to designate this Bhakti cult was Vaishnava, indicating the predominance of the Vedic Vishnu element in it with emphasis on the doctrine of incarnations (avatars).

Vaishnava Movement In The South

The history of the Vaishnava movement from the end of the Gupta period till the first decade of the thirteenth century AD is concerned mainly with South India. Vaishnava poet-saints known as alvars (a Tamil word denoting those drowned in Vishnu-bhakti)

preached single-minded devotion (ekatmika bhakti) for Vishnu and their songs were collectively known as prabandhas .

Shaivism

Unlike Vaishnavism, Shaivism had its origin in antiquity. Panini refers to a group of Shiva worshippers as Shiva-bhagavatas, who were characterised by the iron lances and clubs they carried and their skin garments. Shaiva Movement in the South: The Shaiva movement in the South flourished at the beginning through the activities of many of the 63 saints known in Tamil as Nayanars (Siva-bhakts). Their appealing emotional songs in Tamil were called Tevaram Stotras, also known as Dravida Veda and ceremonially sung in the local Shiva temples. The Nayanars hailed from all castes. This was supplemented on the doctrinal side by a large number of Shaiva intellectuals whose names were associated with several forms of Shaiva movements like Agamanta, Shudha and Vira-shaivism.

Vedic Philosophy

Religion of the Rig Vedic people was very simple in the sense that it consisted mainly of worship of numerous deities representing the various phenomena of nature through prayers. It was during the later Vedic period that definite ideas and philosophies about the true nature of soul or Atman and the cosmic principle or Brahman who represented the ultimate reality were developed. These Vedic philosophical concepts later on gave rise to six different schools of philosophies called shada darshana. They fall in the category of the orthodox system as the final authority of the Vedas is recognised by all of them. Let us now find out more about these six schools of Indian philosophy.

Samkhya System

The Samkhya philosophy holds that reality is constituted of two principles one female and the other male i.e. Prakriti, Purusha respectively. Prakriti and Purusha are completely independent and absolute. According to this system, Purusha is mere consciousness, hence it cannot be modified or changed. Prakriti on the other hand is constituted of three attributes, thought, movement and the change or transformation of these attributes brings about the change in all objects. The Samkhya philosophy tries to establish some relationship between Purusha and Prakriti for explaining the creation of the universe. The propounder of this philosophy was Kapila, who wrote the Samkhya sutra. Infact Samkhya school explained the phenomena of the doctrine of evolution and answered all the questions aroused by the thinkers of those days.

Yoga

Yoga literally means the union of the two principal entities. The origin of yoga is found in the Yogasutra of Patanjali believed to have been written in the second century BC. By purifying and controlling changes in the mental mechanism, yoga systematically brings about the release of purusha from prakriti. Yogic techniques control the body, mind and sense organs. Thus this philosophy is also considered a means of achieving freedom or mukti. This freedom could be attained by practising self-control (yama), observation of rules (niyama), fixed postures (asana), breath control (pranayama), choosing an object (pratyahara) and fixing the mind (dharna), concentrating on the chosen object (dhyana) and complete dissolution of self, merging the mind and the object (Samadhi). Yoga admits the existence of God as a teacher and guide.

Nyaya

Nyaya is considered as a technique of logical thinking. According to Nyaya, valid knowledge is defined as the real knowledge, that is, one knows about the object as it exists. For example, it is when one knows a snake as a snake or a cup as a cup. Nyaya system of philosophy considers God who creates, sustains and destroys the universe. Gautama is said to be the author of the Nyaya Sutras.

Vaisheshika

Vaisheshika system is considered as the realistic and objective philosophy of universe. The reality according to this philosophy has many bases or categories which are substance, attribute, action, genus, distinct quality and inherence. Vaisheshika thinkers believe that all objects of the universe are composed of five elements—earth, water, air, fire and ether. They believe that God is the guiding principle. The living beings were rewarded or punished according to the law of karma, based on actions of merit and demerit. Creation and destruction of universe was a cyclic process and took place in agreement with the wishes of God. Kanada wrote the basic text of Vaisheshika philosophy. A number of treatises were written on this text but the best among them is the one written by Prashastapada in the sixth century AD. Vaisheshika School of philosophy explained the phenomena of the universe by the atomic theory, the combination of atoms and molecules into matter and explained the mechanical process of formation of Universe.

Jain Philosophy

Like the Charvakas, the Jains too do not believe in the Vedas, but they admit the existence of a soul. They also agree with the orthodox tradition that suffering (pain) can be stopped by controlling the mind and by seeking right knowledge and perception and by observing the right conduct. The Jaina philosophy was first propounded by the tirthankar

Rishabha Deva. The names of Ajit Nath and Aristanemi are also mentioned with Rishabha Deva. There were twenty-four tirthankaras who actually established the Jaina darshan. The first tirthankar realised that the source of Jaina philosophy was Adinath. The twenty fourth and the last tirthankar was named Vardhaman Mahavira who gave great impetus to Jainism. Mahavira was born in 599 BC. He left worldly life at the age of thirty and led a very hard life to gain true knowledge. After he attained Truth, he was called Mahavira. He strongly believed in the importance of celibacy or brahmacharya.

Jain Theory of Reality: Seven Kinds of Fundamental Elements

The Jainas believe that the natural and supernatural things of the universe can be traced back to seven fundamental elements. They are jiva, ajivaa, astikaya, bandha, samvara, nirjana, and moksa. Substances like body which exist and envelope (like a cover) are astikaya. Anastikayas like 'time' have no body at all. The substance is the basis of attributes (qualities). The attributes that we find in a substance are known as dharmas. The Jainas believe that things or substance have attributes. These attributes also change with the change of kala (time). From their point of view, the attributes of a substance are essential, and eternal or unchangeable. Without essential attributes, a thing cannot exist. So they are always present in everything. For example, consciousness (chetana) is the essence of the soul; desire, happiness and sorrow are its changeable attributes.

Philosophy Of The Buddha

Gautama Buddha, who founded the Buddhist philosophy, was born in 563 BC at Lumbini, a village near Kapilavastu in the foothills of Nepal. His childhood name was Siddhartha. His mother, Mayadevi, died when he was hardly a few days old. He was married to Yashodhara,

a beautiful princess, at the age of sixteen. After a year of the marriage, he had a son, whom they named Rahul. But at the age of twenty-nine, Gautama Buddha renounced family life to find a solution to the world's continuous sorrow of death, sickness, poverty, etc. He went to the forests and meditated there for six years. Thereafter, he went to Bodh Gaya (in Bihar) and meditated under a pipal tree. It was at this place that he attained enlightenment and came to be known as the Buddha. He then travelled a lot to spread his message and helped people find the path of liberation or freedom. He died at the age of eighty. Gautama's three main disciples known as Upali, Ananda and Mahakashyap remembered his teachings and passed them on to his followers. It is believed that soon after the Buddha's death a council was called at Rajagriha where Upali recited the Vinaya Pitaka (rules of the order) and Ananda recited the Sutta Pitaka (Buddha's sermons or doctrines and ethics). Sometime later the Abhidhamma Pitaka consisting of the Buddhist philosophy came into existence.

Main Characteristic

Buddha presented simple principles of life and practical ethics that people could follow easily. He considered the world as full of misery. Man's duty is to seek liberation from this painful world. He strongly criticised blind faith in the traditional scriptures like the Vedas. Buddha's teachings are very practical and suggest how to attain peace of mind and ultimate liberation from this material world. Realization of Four Noble Truths. The knowledge realized by Buddha is reflected in the following four noble truths: a. There is suffering in human life. When Buddha saw human beings suffering from sickness, pain and death, he concluded that there was definitely suffering in human life. There is pain with birth. Separation from the pleasant is also painful. All

the passions that remain unfulfilled are painful. Pain also comes when objects of sensuous pleasure are lost. Thus, life is all pain. There is cause of suffering, The second Noble Truth is related to the cause of suffering. It is desire that motivates the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, desire is the fundamental cause of suffering. c. There is cessation of suffering. The third Noble Truth tells that when passion, desire and love of life are totally destroyed, pain stops. This Truth leads to the end of sorrow, which causes pain in human life. It involves destruction of ego (aham or ahamkara), attachment, jealousy, doubt and sorrow. That state of mind is the state of freedom from desire, pain and any kind of attachment. It is the state of complete peace, leading to nirvana. d. Path of Liberation. The fourth Noble Truth leads to a way that takes to liberation. Thus, initially starting with pessimism, the Buddhist philosophy leads to optimism. Although there is a constant suffering in human life, it can be ended finally. Buddha suggests that the way or the path leading to liberation is eight-fold, through which one can attain nirvana.

Eight-fold Path to Liberation (Nirvana)

- ❖ Right Vision. One can attain right vision by removing ignorance. Ignorance creates a wrong idea of the relationship between the world and the self. It is on account of wrong understanding of man that he takes the non-permanent world as permanent. Thus, the right view of the world and its objects is the right vision.
- ❖ Right Resolve. It is the strong will-power to destroy thoughts and desires that harm others. It includes sacrifice, sympathy and kindness towards others.
- ❖ Right Speech. Man should control his speech by right resolve. It means to avoid false or unpleasant words by criticizing others.

- ❖ **Right Conduct.** It is to avoid activities which harm life. It means to be away from theft, excessive eating, the use of artificial means of beauty, jewellery, comfortable beds, gold etc.
- ❖ **Right Means of Livelihood.** Right livelihood means to earn one's bread and butter by right means. It is never right to earn money by unfair means like fraud, bribery, theft, etc.
- ❖ **Right Effort.** It is also necessary to avoid bad feelings and bad impressions. It includes self-control, stopping or negation of sensuality and bad thoughts, and awakening of good thoughts.
- ❖ **Right Mindfulness.** It means to keep one's body, heart and mind in their real form. Bad thoughts occupy the mind when their form is forgotten. When actions take place according to the bad thoughts, one has to experience pain.
- ❖ **Right Concentration.** If a person pursues the above seven Rights, he will be able to concentrate properly and rightly. One can attain nirvana by right concentration (meditation). Except for Charvaka school, realisation of soul has been the common goal of all philosophical schools of India.

I am sure you would like to know more about Buddhism. We will go to Bodhgaya in Bihar. Tread reverently along this ancient path. Begin with the Mahabodhi tree where something strange happened - realization of truth or spiritual illumination. Tradition states that Buddha stayed in Bodhgaya for seven weeks after his enlightenment. There you must also see the Animeshlocha Stupa which houses a standing figure of the Buddha with his eyes fixed towards this tree. Bodhgaya is also revered by the Hindus who go to the Vishnupada temple to perform 'Pind-daan' that ensures peace and solace to the departed soul. You can also visit Rajgir and empathise with the Chinese traveller Fa-hein who visited this

place 900 years after the death of Buddha. He wept over the fact that he was not fortunate enough to listen to the sermons of Buddha that were delivered here. Many stories which you might have read about Buddha have their origin here. Imagine Buddha on his first alms begging mission while staying in a cave here. It was here that the Mauryan king Bimbisara joined the Buddhists order. Remember reading the story how a mad elephant was let loose by Devadutta to kill Buddha. Well, this incident took place here. Finally it was from Rajgir that Buddha set out on his last journey. The first Buddhist Council was held in the Saptaparni cave in which the unwritten teachings of Buddha were penned down after his death. Even the concept of monastic institutions was laid at Rajgir which later developed into an academic and religious centre. In your lesson on Architecture, you will read about Nalanda university. It was established in the 5th century BC. It is the world's earliest university. Since Buddha encouraged learning, monks and scholars gathered here for discourses. So much so that by 5th B.C., Nalanda acquired the position of a well established monastery under the Guptas.

Religion And Philosophy In Medieval India

The Sufi Movement

Background-Rise of Islam You will recall that Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad. Islam saw the rise of many religious and spiritual movements within it. These movements were centered mainly around the interpretation of the Quran. There were two major sects that arose within Islam - the Sunnis and Shias. Our country has both the sects, but in many other countries like Iran, Iraq, Pakistan etc. you will find followers of only one of them. Among the Sunnis, there are four principal schools of Islamic Law, These are based upon the Quran and Hadis (traditions of the Prophet's saying and doings). Of these the

Hanafi school of the eighth century was adopted by the eastern Turks, who later came to India. The greatest challenge to orthodox Sunnism came from the rationalist philosophy or Mutazilas, who professed strict monotheism. According to them, God is just and has nothing to do with man's evil actions. Men are endowed with free will and are responsible for their own actions. The Mutazilas were opposed by the Ashari School. Founded by Abul Hasan Ashari (873-935 AD), the Ashari school evolved its own rationalist argument in defence of the orthodox doctrine (kalam). This school believes that God knows, sees and speaks. The Quran is eternal and uncreated. The greatest exponent of this school was Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD), who is credited with having reconciled orthodoxy with mysticism. He was a great theologian who in 1095 began to lead a life of a Sufi. He is deeply respected by both orthodox elements and Sufis. Al-Ghazali attacked all non-orthodox Sunni schools. He said that positive knowledge cannot be gained by reason but by revelation. Sufis owed their allegiance to the Quran as much as the Ulemas did. The influence of the ideas of Ghazali was greater because of the new educational system set up by the state, It provided for setting up of seminaries of higher learning (called madrasas) where scholars were familiarised with Ashari ideas. They were taught how to run the government in accordance with orthodox Sunni ideas. These scholars were known as ulema. Ulema played an important role in the politics of medieval India.

The Sufis

Contrary to the ulema were the Sufis. The Sufis were mystics. They were pious men who were shocked at the degeneration in political and religious life. They opposed the vulgar display of wealth in public life and the readiness of the ulema to serve "ungodly" rulers. Many

began to lead a retired ascetic life, having nothing to do with the state. The Sufi philosophy also differed from the ulema. The Sufis laid emphasis upon free thought and liberal ideas. They were against formal worship, rigidity and fanaticism in religion. The Sufis turned to meditation in order to achieve religious satisfaction. Like the Bhakti saints, the Sufis too interpreted religion as 'love of god' and service of humanity. In course of time, the Sufis were divided into different silsilahs (orders) with each silsilah having its own pir (guide) called Khwaja or Sheikh. The pir and his disciples lived in a khanqah (hospice). A pir nominated a successor or wali from his disciples to carry on his work. The Sufis organised samas (a recital of holy songs) to arouse mystical ecstasy. Basra in Iraq became the centre of Sufi activities. It must be noted that the Sufi saints were not setting up a new religion, but were preparing a more liberal movement within the framework of Islam. They owed their allegiance to the Quran as much as the ulema did.

Sufism in India

The advent of Sufism in India is said to be in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the early Sufis of eminence, who settled in India, was Al-Hujwari who died in 1089, popularly known as Data Ganj Baksh (Distributor of Unlimited Treasure). In the beginning, the main centres of the Sufis were Multan and Punjab. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Sufis had spread to Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan. It may be mentioned that Sufism had already taken on a definite form before coming to India. Its fundamental and moral principles, teachings and orders, system of fasting, prayers and practice of living in khanqahs had already been fixed. The Sufis came to India via Afghanistan on their own free will. Their emphasis upon a pure life, devotional love and service to humanity made them popular and earned

them a place of honour in Indian society. Abul Fazl while writing in the *Ain-i-Akbari* speaks of fourteen silsilahs of the Sufis. However, in this lesson we shall outline only some of the important ones. These silsilahs were divided into two types: Ba-shara and Be-shara. Ba-shara were those orders that followed the Islamic Law (Sharia) and its directives such as namaz and roza. Chief amongst these were the Chishti, Suhrawardi, Firdawsi, Qadiri and Naqshbandi silsilahs. The be shara silsilahs were not bound by the Sharia. The Qalandars belonged to this group.

The Chishti Silsilah

The Chishti order was founded in a village called Khwaja Chishti (near Herat). In India, the Chishti silsilah was founded by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (born c. 1142) who came to India around 1192. He made Ajmer the main centre for his teaching. He believed that serving mankind was the best form of devotion and therefore he worked amongst the downtrodden. He died in Ajmer in 1236. During Mughal times, Ajmer became a leading pilgrim centre because the emperors regularly visited the Sheikh's tomb. The extent of his popularity can be seen by the fact that even today, millions of Muslims and Hindus visit his dargah for fulfilment of their wishes. Among his disciples were Sheikh Hamiduddin of Nagaur and Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. The former lived the life of a poor peasant, cultivated land and refused Iltutmish's offer of a grant of villages. The khanqah of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was also visited by people from all walks of life. Sultan Iltutmish dedicated the Qutub Minar to this Saint. Sheikh Fariduddin of Ajodhan (Pattan in Pakistan) popularised the Chishti silsilah in modern Haryana and Punjab. He opened his door of love and generosity to all. Baba Farid, as he was called, was respected by both Hindus and Muslims. His verses, written in Punjabi, are quoted in the *Adi Granth*. Baba Farid's

most famous disciple Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325) was responsible for making Delhi an important centre of the Chishti silsilah. He came to Delhi in 1259 and during his sixty years in Delhi, he saw the reign of seven sultans. He preferred to shun the company of rulers and nobles and kept aloof from the state. For him renunciation meant distribution of food and clothes to the poor. Amongst his followers was the noted writer Amir Khusrau. Another famous Chishti saint was Sheikh Nasiruddin Mahmud, popularly known as Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Dilli (The Lamp of Delhi). Following his death in 1356 and the lack of a spiritual successor, the disciples of the Chishti silsilah moved out towards eastern and southern India.

The Suhrawardi Silsilah

This silsilah was founded by Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. It was established in India by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262). He set up a leading khanqah in Multan, which was visited by rulers, high government officials and rich merchants. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya openly took Iltutmish's side in his struggle against Qabacha and received from him the title Shaikhul Islam (Leader of Islam). It must be noted that unlike the Chishti saints, the Suhrawardis maintained close contacts with the state. They accepted gifts, jagirs and even government posts in the ecclesiastical department. The Suhrawardi silsilah was firmly established in Punjab and Sind. Besides these two silsilahs there were others such as the Firdawsi Silsilah, Shattari Silsilah, Qadiri Silsilah, Naqshbandi Silsilah.

The Bhakti Movement

The development of Bhakti movement took place in Tamil Nadu between the seventh and twelfth centuries. It was reflected in the emotional poems of the Nayanars (devotees of Shiva) and Alvars

(devotees of Vishnu). These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper. They wrote in local languages, Tamil and Telugu and were therefore able to reach out to many people. In course of time, the ideas of the South moved up to the North but it was a very slow process. Sanskrit, which was still the vehicle of thought, was given a new form. Thus we find that the Bhagavata Purana of ninth century was not written in the old Puranic form. Centered around Krishna's childhood and youth, this work uses Krishna's exploits to explain deep philosophy in simple terms. This work became a turning point in the history of the Vaishnavite movement which was an important component of the Bhakti movement. A more effective method for spreading of the Bhakti ideology was the use of local languages. The Bhakti saints composed their verses in local languages. They also translated Sanskrit works to make them understandable to a wider audience. Thus we find Jnanadeva writing in Marathi, Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas in Hindi, Shankaradeva popularising Assamese, Chaitanya and Chandidas spreading their message in Bengali, Mirabai in Hindi and Rajasthani. In addition, devotional poetry was composed in Kashmiri, Telugu, Kannad, Oriya, Malayalam, Maithili and Gujarati. The Bhakti saints believed that salvation can be achieved by all. They made no distinction of caste, creed or religion before God. They themselves came from diverse backgrounds. Ramananda, whose disciples included Hindus and Muslims, came from a conservative brahman family. His disciple, Kabir, was a weaver. Guru Nanak was a village accountant's son. Namdev was a tailor. The saints stressed equality, disregarded the caste system and attacked institutionalised religion. The saints did not confine themselves to purely religious ideas. They advocated social reforms too.

They opposed sati and female infanticide. Women were encouraged to join kirtans. Mirabai and Lalla (of Kashmir) composed verses that are popular even today. Amongst the non-sectarian Bhakti saints, the most outstanding contribution was made by Kabir and Guru Nanak. Their ideas were drawn from both Hindu and Islamic traditions and were aimed at bridging the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. Let us read in some detail about them. Kabir (1440-1518) is said to have been the son of a brahman widow, who abandoned him. He was brought up in the house of a Muslim weaver. Kabir believed that the way to God was through personally experienced bhakti or devotion. He believed that the Creator is One. His God was called by many names - Rama, Hari, Govinda, Allah, Rahim, Khuda, etc. No wonder then that the Muslims claim him as Sufi, the Hindus call him Rama-Bhakta and the Sikhs incorporate his songs in the Adi Granth. The external aspects of religion were meaningless for Kabir. His beliefs and ideas were reflected in the dohas (Sakhi) composed by him. One of his dohas conveyed that if by worshipping a stone (idol) one could attain God, then he was willing to worship a mountain. It was better to worship a stone flour-grinder because that could at least fill stomachs. Kabir emphasised simplicity in religion and said that bhakti was the easiest way to attain God. He refused to accept any prevalent religious belief without prior reasoning. For him, a man could not achieve success without hard work. He advocated performance of action rather than renunciation of duty. Kabir's belief in the unity of God led both Hindus and Muslims to become his disciples. Kabir's ideas were not restricted to religion. He attempted to change the narrow thinking of society. His poetry was forceful and direct. It was easily understood and much of it has passed into our everyday language. Another great exponent of the Nankana

school was Guru Nanak (1469-1539). He was born at Talwandi (Nakana Sahib). From an early age, he showed leanings towards a spiritual life. He was helpful to the poor and needy. His disciples called themselves Sikhs (derived from Sanskrit sisya, disciple or Pali sikkha, instruction). Nanak was as much a social reformer as he was a religious teacher. He called for an improvement in the status of women. He said that women who give birth to kings should not be spoken ill of. His vani (words) along with those of other Sikh Gurus have been brought together in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs.

The Vaishnavite Movement

You have read that saints such as Kabir, Namdev and Guru Nanak had preached devotion toward a nirankar form of God. During this period, another movement based upon devotion towards a sakar form of God had also developed. This movement, called the Vaishnavite movement, centered around the worship of Rama and Krishna, who were seen as incarnations (avatars) of Lord Vishnu. Its main exponents were Surdas, Mirabai, Tulsidas and Chaitanya. Their path to salvation was expressed through the medium of poetry, song, dance and kirtans. Surdas (1483-1563) was a disciple of the famous teacher, Vallabhachara. He was a blind poet, whose songs are centered around Krishna. His Sursagar recounts the exploits of Krishna during his childhood and youth with gentle affection and delightfulness. The love for Krishna was also expressed through the songs of Mirabai (1503-73). Widowed at an early age, she believed in a spiritual marriage with her Lord. Her poems have a quality of their own and are popular even today. The Vaishnavite movement spread in the east through the efforts of Chaitanya (1484-1533). Chaitanya considered Krishna not as a mere incarnation of Vishnu but as the highest form of God. The devotion for Krishna was

expressed through Sankirtans (hymn session by devotees) which took place in homes, temples and even street processions. Like other Bhakti saints, Chaitanya too was willing to welcome everyone, irrespective of caste, into the fold. The saints thus promoted a sense of equality amongst the people. The worship of Rama was popularised by saints like Ramananda (1400-1470). He considered Rama as the supreme God. Women and outcastes were welcomed. The most famous of the Rama bhaktas was Tulsidas (1532-1623) who wrote the Ramacharitmanas. The Vaishnavite saints developed their philosophy within the broad framework of Hinduism. They called for reforms in religion and love amongst fellow beings. Their philosophy was broadly humanist.

Self Assessment Questions

1. How did the rise of the West and British rule create changes in Indian society, economy, and culture?
2. What were the key aims and contributions of important socio-religious reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan?
3. In what ways did Indian languages, modern literature, and philosophical ideas help in the growth of nationalism and social reform?

Unit- V

Indian Painting - Performing arts, music, dance and drama - Architecture - Spread of India culture abroad.

Objectives

To understand the origin and development of Indian painting, performing arts, music, dance, and drama in the ancient period.

To study the architectural styles of ancient India and their cultural significance.

To learn how Indian culture spread abroad through art, religion, and trade in ancient times.

Ancient Period: Origin

Painting as an art form has flourished in India from very early times as is evident from the remains that have been discovered in the caves, and the literary sources. The history of art and painting in India begins with the pre-historic rock painting at Bhimbetka caves (M.P.) where we have drawings and paintings of animals. The cave paintings of Narsingharh (Maharashtra) show skins of spotted deer left drying. Thousands of years ago, paintings and drawings had already appeared on the seals of Harappan civilization. Both Hindu and Buddhist literature refer to paintings of various types and techniques for example, Lepyacitras, lekhacitras and Dhulitcitras. The first was the representation of folklore, the second one was line drawing and painting

on textile while the third one was painting on the floor. The Buddhist text Vinayapitaka (4th–3rd century) describes the existence of painted figures in many royal buildings. The play Mudrarakshasa (5th Century A.D.) mentions numerous paintings or Patas. The 6th Century AD text on aesthetics-Kamasutra by Vatsyayana has mentioned painting amongst 64 kinds of arts and says that it was based on scientific principles. The Vishnudharmottara purana (7th century A.D.) has a section on painting called Chitrasutra which describes the six organs of painting like variety of form, proportion, lustre and portrayal of colour etc. Thus, archaeology and literature testify to the flourishing of painting in India from pre-historic times. The best specimens of Gupta paintings are the ones at Ajanta. Their subject was animals and birds, trees, flowers, human figures and stories from the Jataka. Mural paintings are done on walls and rock surfaces like roofs and sides. Cave no. 9 depicts the Buddhist monks going towards a stupa. In cave no. 10 Jataka stories are depicted. But the best paintings were done in the 5th – 6th centuries AD during the Gupta age. The murals chiefly depict religious scenes from the life of the Buddha and the Buddhist Jataka stories but we also have secular scene. Here we see the depiction of all aspects of Indian life. We see princes in their palaces, ladies in their chambers, coolies with loads over their shoulders, beggars, peasants and ascetics, together with all the many beasts, birds and flowers of India.

Materials used in the paintings

Different materials were used in different types of paintings. Mention of chitra shalas (art gallery) and Shilpasashtra (technical treatises on art) have been made in literary sources. However, the principal colours used were red ochre (dhaturaga), vivid red (kum kum or sindura), yellow ochre (haritala), indigo (blue) lapis lazuli blue,

lampblack (kajjala), chalk white (Khadi Mitti) terra verte (geru mati) and green. All these colours were locally available except lapis lazuli which came from Pakistan. Mixed colours e.g. grey were used on rare occasions. Use of colours were decided by the theme and local atmosphere. Remains of Buddhist paintings have also been found at the Buddhist caves at Bagh in the North and at various Deccan and southern sites of sixth and ninth centuries. Though the theme of these paintings is religious but in their inner meanings and spirit, nothing could be more secular, courtly and sophisticated. Though only a small part remains of these paintings but they depict a crowded world of Gods and goddesses semi divine being like kinnars and apsaras, a rich and varied flora and fauna, gaiety, love, grace and charm. Example can be seen in cave 3 at Badami (Karnataka), at temples of Kanchipuram, at Jain caves of Sittanavasal (Tamil Nadu) and the Kailasa and Jain caves at Ellora (eighth and ninth centuries). Many other South Indian temples such as Brihadeshwara temple at Tanjavur are decorated with wall paintings on themes from epics and mythology. If Bagh, Ajanta and Badami represent the classical tradition of the North and Deccan at its best, Sittana Vassal, Kanchipuram, Malayadipatti and Tirunalaipuram show the extent of its penetration in the south. The paintings of Sittanavasal (abode of the Jaina Siddhas) are connected with jaina themes while the other three are Saiva or Vaishnava in theme and inspiration. Despite having a very traditionally secular design and theme the paintings of these times started showing the impact of medieval influences i.e. flat and abstract surfaces on the one hand and linear and somewhat angular designs on the other.

Art In The Modern Period

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries paintings comprised semi westernised local styles which were patronised by British residents and visitors. Themes were generally drawn from Indian social life, popular festivals, and Mughal monuments. These reflected the improvised Mughal traditions. Shaikh Zia-ud-Din's bird studies for Lady Impey and the portrait paintings of Ghulam Ali Khan for William Fraser and Colonel Skinner are the examples of some excellent paintings of this period. In the later nineteenth century art schools on the European model were established in major Indian cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Oil paintings of Raja Ravi Varma of Travancore depicting mythological and social themes became highly popular at this time. Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, E.B. Havell and Ananda Kehtish Coomaraswamy played an important role in the emergence of the Bengal school of Art. The Bengal School had a great flowering at Shantiniketan where Rabindranath Tagore set up the Kala Bhavan. Talented artists like Nandalal Bose, Binod Behari Mukherjee and Ramkinkar Baij rendered training to aspiring artists. Nandalal often derived inspiration from Indian folk art and also from Japanese painting while Binod Behari Mukerjee was deeply interested in oriental traditions. Jamini Roy, another great painter of this period, drew inspiration from Orissa's pata painting and Kalighat painting of Bengal. Amrita Shergil, a great painter received education in Paris and Budapest. Considered a prodigy from a Sikh father and Hungarian mother, she painted on Indian themes in bright colours specially Indian women and peasants. Though she died very young, she left behind a rich legacy of Indian paintings. Gradually some deeper changes took place

in the thinking of the English educated urban middle class which began to be reflected in the expressions of the artists. Increasing awareness about British rule, ideals of nationalism and the desire for a national identity led to creations which were distinct from earlier art traditions. Another significant development was the formation of the Progressive Artists Group in Bombay in 1948 under Francis Newton Souza. The group also included S .H. Raza, M.F. Hussain, K.M. Ara, S.K. Bakre and H.A. Gode. This group broke away from Bengal School of Art and represented the modern forceful art of independent India.

In the 1970s artists began to critically survey their environment. Daily encounters with poverty and corruption, the political morass of the country, the explosive communal tension, and other urban issues became the themes or subject matter of their works. The Madras School of Art under Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury and K.C.S Paniker emerged as an important art centre in post independence period and influenced a new generation of modern artists. Some of the artists who made their mark as modern Indian artists are Tyeb Mehta, Satish Gujral, Krishan Khanna, Manjit Bawa, K.G. Subramaniyan Ram Kumari, Anjolie Ela Menon, Akbar Padamsee, Jatin Das, Jehangir Sabavala and A. Ramachandran. Two government institutions have been set up to promote art, music etc in India. The National Gallery of Modern Art has the largest collection of modern art under one roof. The second one is the Lalit Kala Akademi which recognises and patronizes artists in all fields.

Decorative Art

The artistic expression of the Indian people is not limited to painting on canvas or paper only. Decorative painting on walls of homes even in rural areas is a common sight. Rangoli or decorative designs on

floor are made for auspicious occasions and pujas whose stylised designs have been passed on from one generation to the other. The designs are called rangoli in the North, alpana in Bengal, aipan in Uttaranchal, rangavalli in Karnataka, Kollam in Tamilnadu and mandana in Madhya Pradesh. Usually rice powder is used for these paintings but coloured powder or flower petals are also used to make them more colourful. Adorning walls of houses and huts is also an old tradition. The following are some of the examples of folk art of this kind.

Mithila Painting

Mithila painting also known as Madhubani folk art is the traditional art of the Mithila region of Bihar. They are produced by village women who make three dimensional images using vegetable colour with few earthen colours and finished in black lines on cow dung treated paper. These pictures tell tales especially about Sita's exile, Ram-Laxman's forest life, depict the images of Lakshmi, Ganesha, Hanuman and others from Hindu mythology. Apart from these women also paint celestial subjects like sun and moon. Tulsi, the holy plant also is to be found in these paintings. They also show court scenes, wedding and social happenings. Drawings in Madhubani pictures are very conceptual. First, the painter thinks and then she "draws her thought". No pretence is there to describe the figures accurately. Visually they are images that speak in lines and colours and are drawn for some rituals or festivals on household and village walls to mark the seasonal festivals or special events of the life cycle. Intricate flora, animal and birds motifs can also be found along with geometrical designs to fill up the gap. In some cases it is a special practice for mothers to make these art items in advance for their daughters as a marriage gift. These paintings also convey advice on ways to lead a good married life. There is also a social variation in

subjects and use of colours. One can identify the community to which the painting belongs from the colours that are used in them. Paintings made by the upper, more affluent classes are colourful while those made by the lower caste people use red and black line work. But the technique of painting is safely and zealously guarded by the women of the village to be passed on by the mother to the daughter.

Kalamkari Painting

The literal meaning of Kalamkari is a painting done by kalam (pen). This art got enriched as it came down from one generation to another. These paintings are made in Andhra Pradesh. It is hand painted as well as block printing with vegetable dyes applied on cloth. Vegetable dyes are used for colour in the Kalam Kari work. A small place Sri-Kalahasti is the best known centre of Kalamkari art. This work is also found at Masaulipatnam in Andhra Pradesh. This art is mainly related to decorating temple interiors with painted cloth panels, which was developed in the fifteenth century under the patronage of Vijaynagar rulers. Subjects are adopted from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Hindu religious mythology. This art form is a continuous legacy from father to son. After deciding the subject of the painting, scene after scene is painted. Every scene is surrounded by floral decorative patterns. These paintings are made on cloth. They are very durable and flexible in size and made according to theme. Figures of deities have a very rich border embellishments and were created for the temples. Owing to Muslim rulers in Golconda, the Masulipatnam kalamkari was widely influenced by Persian motifs and designs. The outlines and main features are done using hand carved blocks. The finer details are later done using the pen. This art was started on garments, bed covers and curtains. The artists use a bamboo or date palm stick pointed at one end

with a bundle of fine hair attached to the other end to serve as brush or pen.

Orissa Patachitra

Similar to Kalighat Pats, one comes across another kind of Pats which are found in the state of Orissa. The Orissa patachitras, mostly painted on cloth are more detailed and more colourful and most of these depict stories of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Phad Painting

Phad is a type of scroll painting. The paintings depicting exploits of local deities are often carried from place to place and are accompanied by traditional singers, who narrate the theme depicted on the scrolls. This type of painting is a most famous painting of Rajasthan, mainly found in the Bhilwara district. Phad painting depicts the heroic deeds of a heroic figure, the daily life of a peasant, rural life, animals and birds, flora and fauna. These paintings are created using bright colours and subtle colours. The outlines of the paintings are first drawn in black and later filled with colours. The main themes of the phad paintings depict the deities and their legends and the stories of erstwhile Maharajas. Raw colours are used for these paintings. The unique features of phad paintings are the bold lines and a two dimensional treatment of figures with the entire composition arranged in sections. The art of painting the phads is approximately 700 years old. It is said that it was originated in Shahpura, some 35 kms from Bhilwara in Rajasthan. The continuous royal patronage gave a decisive impetus to the art which has survived and flourished for generations.

Gond Art A very highly sophisticated and abstract form of Art works are also produced by the Santhals in India. The Gond tribe of the Godavari belt who are as old as the Santhals produce figurative works.

Batik Print Not all the folk arts and crafts are entirely Indian in their origin. Some of the crafts and techniques have been imported from the Orient like the Batik. But these have now been Indianised and Indian Batik is now a matured art, immensely popular and expensive.

Warli Painting

Warli painting derives its name from a small tribe inhabiting the remote, tribal regions of Maharashtra. These are decorative paintings on floors and walls of 'gond' and 'kol' tribes' homes and places of worship. Trees, birds, men and women collaborate to create a composite whole in a Warli painting. These paintings are made mostly by the women as part of their routine at auspicious celebrations. Subjects are predominantly religious with simple and local materials like white colour and rice paste and local vegetable glue on a plain contrasting background, made in a geometric patterns like squares, triangles, and circles. Dots and crooked lines are the units of these composition. Flora and fauna and people's day to day life also form a part of the painted. The paintings are expanded by adding subject after subject in a spiraling manner. The rhythm of the Warli way of life is beautifully captured in simple images. Unlike other tribal art forms, Warli paintings do not employ religious iconography and is a more secular art form.

Kalighat Painting

Kalighat painting derives its name from its place of origin Kalighat in Kolkata. Kalighat is a bazaar near the Kali temple in Kolkata. Patua painters from rural Bengal came and settled in Kalighat to make images of gods and goddesses in the early nineteenth century. These paintings on paper made with water colours comprise clear sweeping line drawings using bright colours and a clear background. Subjects are images of Kali, Lakshmi, Krishna, Ganesha, Shiva, and other gods and

goddesses. In this process, artists developed a unique new form of expression, and effectively portray a wide range of subjects commenting on the social life of Bengal. Similar kind of pata paintings may be found in Orissa. This painting form has its roots in the culture upheavals of 19th century colonial Bengal. As its market grew, the artists began to liberate themselves from the routine depiction of Hindu deities and began to explore the world of contemporary social events in their paintings. The genre derived much inspiration from the introduction of photography, western style theatrical performances, the rise of babu culture in Bengal as a result of the impact of British colonial and administrative system. The emergence of the unique lifestyle of the nouveau riche of Kolkata in response to these diverse influence also inspired these paintings. All these stimuli gave birth to a new imagery that occupied the centre stage of Bengali literature, theatre and visual arts of the period. Kalighat paintings became the best mirror of this cultural and aesthetic shift. Based on their preexisting models of the Hindu deities, the artists created a whole repertoire of images, courtesans, actresses, heroines, pompous babus and conceited dandies, resplendent in their fancy attire and hair styles, smoking pipes and playing the sitar. Kalighat paintings are often referred to as the first works of art that came from Bengal.

Indian Handicrafts

India is a virtual treasure house of the most exquisite handicrafts. Simple objects of daily life have been crafted with delicate design which give expression to the creativity of the Indian artisan. Every state of India can boast of some unique creation which is special to the region, for example, Kashmir is famous for embroidered shawls, carpets, namdar silk and walnut wood furniture. Rajasthan is famous for its tie-

and-dye (bandhni) fabrics, jewellery, using precious stone and gems, blue glazed pottery and minakari work. Andhra Pradesh is famous for Bidri work and Pochampalh saris while Tamil Nadu is well known for bronze sculpture and Kajeevaram silk saris. Mysore is well known for silk, sandalwood items and Kerala is famous for ivory carvings and rosewood furniture. Chanderi and kosa silk of Madhya Pradesh, chikan work of Lucknow, Brocade and silk saris of Benaras, cane furniture and goods of Assam, Bankura terracotta modelling and handloom items of Bengal are just a few examples of unique traditional decorative arts and crafts which constitute the heritage of modern India. These arts have been nurtured for thousands of years and provided employment to a great number of artisans who carried forward the art to the next generation. Thus you see how the Indian artisans with their magic touch can transform a piece of metal, wood or ivory into objects of art.

PERFORMING ARTS: MUSIC, DANCE AND DRAMA

Hindustani Classical Music

Hindustani classical music may be traced back to the period of the Delhi Sultanate and to Amir Khusrau (AD 1253-1325) who encouraged the practice of musical performance with particular instruments. He is believed to have invented the sitar and the tabla and is said to have introduced new ragas. Most of the Hindustani musicians trace their descent to Tansen. Different styles of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, Dhamar, Thumri, Khayal and Tappa. It is said that Tansen's music had the effect of magic. He could stop the rising waves of the Yamuna and by the force of his 'Megh Rag' he could cause the rain to fall. In fact his melodious songs are sung in every part of India even now with great interest. Some of Akbar's courtiers patronised Musicians like Baiju Bawra, Surdas etc. The most popular ragas are: Bahar, Bhairavi,

Sindhu Bhairavi, Bhim Palasi, Darbari, Desh, Hamsadhwani, Jai Jayanti, Megha Malhar, Todi, Yaman, Pilu, Shyam Kalyan, Khambaj. India also has a rich variety of musical instruments of different types. Amongst the stringed instruments the most famous are sitar, sarod, santoor and sarangi. Pakhawaj, tabla and Mridangam are percussion or tal giving instruments. Likewise, flute, shehnai and nadaswaram are some of the chief wind instruments. The musicians of Hindustani classical music are usually associated to a gharana or a particular style of music. Gharanas refer to hereditary linkages of musicians which represent the core of the style and distinguish them from the other. The gharanas function in guru shishya parampara, that is, disciples learning under a particular guru, transmitting his musical knowledge and style, will belong to the same gharana. Some famous gharanas are Gwalior gharana, Kirana gharana, and Jaipur gharana. Devotional music like kirtan, bhajan, ragas contained in the Adi Grantha and singing in the Majlis during Muharram also deserve a special place in Indian music. Along with this, folk music also shows a very rich cultural heritage.

Modern Indian Music

With the British rule came Western music. Indians adopted some of their instruments such as violin and clarinet to suit the demands of Indian music. Orchestration of music on stage is a new development. Use of cassettes replaced oral transmission of tunes and ragas. Performance which were earlier limited to a privileged few have now been thrown open to the public and can be viewed by thousands of music lovers throughout the country. Music education no longer depends on the master-disciple system but can be imparted through institutions teaching music.

Musicians

Amir Khusrau, Sadarang Adaranga, Miyan Tansen, Gopal Nayak, Swami Haridas, Pt. V.D. Paluskar, Pt. V.N. Bhatkhande, Thyagaraja Mutthuswami Dikshitar, Pt. Omkar, Nath Thakur, Pt. Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Ustad Chand Khan, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan, Ustad Amir Khan, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Pt. Kumar Gandharva, Kesarbai Kerkar and Smt. Gangubai Hangal are all vocalists. Among the instrumentalists Baba Allauddin Khan, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Bismillah Khan, Ustad Alla Rakkha Khan, Ustad Zakir Hussain are some of the well known musicians.

Folk Music

Besides classical music India has a rich legacy of folk or popular music. This music represents the emotion of the masses. The simple songs are composed to mark every event in life. They may be festivals, advent of a new season, marriage or birth of a child. Rajasthani folk songs such as Mand and Bhatiali of Bengal are popular all over India. Ragini is a popular form of folk songs of Haryana. Folk songs have their special meanings or messages. They often describe historical events and important rituals. Kashmir's Gulraj is usually a folklore and Pandyani of Madhya Pradesh is a narrative put to music. Muslims sing Sojkhwani or mournful songs during Muharram and Christmas carols and choral music are sung in groups on the festive occasions.

Dances Of India

The Rig Veda mentions dance (nrti) and danseuse (nrtu) and compares the brilliant dawn (usas) to a brightly attired danseuse. In the Brahmanas, Jaiminiya and Kausitaki dance and music are mentioned together. The Epics are full of references to dances on earth and heaven. Like music, Indian dance has also developed a rich classical tradition. It

has a great power of expression and emotions while telling a story. In India, the art of dancing may be traced back to the Harappan culture. The discovery of the bronze statue of a dancing girl testifies to the fact that some women in Harappa performed dances. In traditional Indian culture the function of dance was to give symbolic expression to religious ideas. The figure of Lord Shiva as Nataraja represents the creation and destruction of the cosmic cycle. The popular image of Shiva in the form of Nataraja clearly shows the popularity of dance form on the Indian people. There is not a single temple atleast in the southern part of the country which does not show the sculptures of the dancers in their different forms. In fact classical dance forms like Kathakali, Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchi pudi and Odishi are an important part of our cultural heritage.

It is difficult to say at what point of time dance originated, but it is obvious that dance came into existence as an effort to express joy. Gradually dances came to be divided as folk and classical. The classical form of dance was performed in temples as well as in royal courts. The dance in temples had a religious objective whereas in courts it was used purely for entertainment. In both cases for the artists devoted to this art form, it was no less than praying to God. In southern India Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam developed as an important aspect of the rituals in temples. Yakshagana, a form of Kathakali in Kerala, tells us stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata whereas Kathak and Manipuri are mostly related to the stories of Krishna and his leela (exploits). Performance of Odissi is related to the worship of Lord Jagannath. Though the Krishna leela and the stories related to Lord Shiva was the theme of Kathak, this dance came to be performed in royal courts in medieval times. Romantic gestures contained in Thumri and Ghazal,

that were also performed with accompanists for the kings, reflect this aspect. Manipuri dance was also performed for religious purposes. Folk dances evolved from the lives of common people and were performed in unison. In Assam people celebrate most of the harvesting season through Bihu. Similarly Garba of Gujarat, Bhangra and Gidda of Punjab, bamboo dance of Mizoram, Koli, the fisherman's dance of Maharashtra, Dhumal of Kashmir, and Chhau of Bengal are unique examples of performing arts that gave expression to the joys and sorrows of the masses.

As far as the analytical study of this art form is concerned, the Natyashastra of Bharata, is a primary source of information, and basically deals with drama. Bharata has discussed dance and its various angas (limbs) in detail. Facial expressions, body movements, hasta mudras and the footsteps have all been brought together under three broad categories namely, as nritta (pada sanchalan), nritya (anga sanchalan) and natya (abhinay). Both men and women took keen interest in dance but generally women dancers were looked down upon in society. However, with the efforts of great music thinkers and various religious and social reform movements, people have started to hold women performers with great respect.

In the medieval period Kathak dance form was promoted by the Muslim rulers. We hear of these performances in the courts of most of the Mughal rulers except for Aurangzeb. In the south, temples, 'court' and other parts of the building provided an important stage for all dancers. Navaras, mythological tales of Rama, Krishna, Ganesh, Durga were all enacted in the form of dance. Some rulers of the north like Wajid ali Shah was a great patron of music and dance and here the seeds of the Lucknow gharana or 'school of dance' was sown. The modern

day dancers like Pt. Birju Maharaj all have come from the Lucknow school of dance. In the medieval period, the south remained very rigid with the rules of dances that were imbibed from ancient Sanskrit texts. It became a seat of learning and institutions of dance sprung up first in the southern region.

Along with classical dance forms, folk dance also flourished. In most of the regions the local dance form became very popular. Manipuri dance, Santhal dance, Rabindranath's dance, drama, chhau, ras, gidda, bhangra, garba are some of the folk dances that have flourished in India. They are equally popular and have extreme acumen and innovation. Practically every region of our country has developed their own rich tradition of folk dances. For example, the Bihu dance of Assam, Mask dance of Ladakh, Wangla of Meghalaya, Bhutia or Lepcha dance of Sikkim. Similarly we also have some dances which are called martial dances like Chholia of Uttranchal, Kalari paittu of Kerala, Thang-taa of Manipur among the more famous ones. Presently, all the three art forms are flourishing in the country. Musical institutions have opened up giving opportunities to many. Schools, universities have departments of music. Indira Kala Vishwa Vidyalaya of Khairagarh is a university of music, Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya, Kathak Kendra and many institutes in the south are all propagating music in their own ways. Music conferences, Baithaks, lecture, demonstrations are all spreading music to nooks and corners of India. Societies like Spic-macay, India International Rural Cultural Centre have worked very hard to bring about a rapport and bondage with artists and the modern generation. Abroad musicians have also flourished and different institutions of music started by Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Alla Rakkha etc. are prestigious teaching centres for foreigners. Many foreign

universities also have facilities of art forms giving degrees and diplomas to students. All over the world Indian artists are invited to perform and participate in various festivals and occasions.

Well-known Dancers of Modern India

Kathak

- Pt. Birju Maharaj, Pt. Shambhu Maharaj, Sitara Devi, Pt. Gopi Krishna, and Pt. Lacchu Maharaj.

- Saroja Vaidyanathan, Padma Subhramaniam, Geeta Chandran.

Odissi • Kelucharan Mahapatra, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Kiran Sehgal and Madhavi Mudgal.

Kuchipudi • Swapna Sundari, Satya Narayan Sarma, Raja Reddy, Radha Reddy and Sonal Mansingh.

Musicologists

- Bharata, Matangamuni, Naradamuni, Pt. Sharangadeva, Pt. Somnath, and Pt. Ahobala.

- Pt. Vyankatmakhi, Pt. Ramamatya, S.M. Tagore, and Acharya K.C.D.Brihaspati.

In the last few decades the status of dance as well as its performers has changed. Young people have started learning dance to enrich their personal qualities. In some of the schools, colleges and universities separate departments have been established for imparting training in dance. Several renowned classical dancers have been awarded national awards like the Padmashree and the **Padmabhusan**.

Throughout the different periods of history starting from the dancing figure found in the Indus valley civilization to the present, Indian people have expressed their joys and sorrows by singing and dancing

through various art forms. This art form has been used to express their love, hatred, their aspirations and their struggle for survival which ultimately led to the enrichment of our culture.

Drama

Indigeneous tradition as well as modern research trace the origin of Indian drama to the Vedas. In the Ramayana we hear of drama troupes of women while Kautilyas Arthshastra mentions musicians, dancers and dramatic shows. Drama is a performing art, which has also been practised since times immemorial. Drama could spring from a child's play. The child enacts, mimics, and caricates which was definitely the beginning of drama. Since early times mythological stories of war between the gods, goddesses and the devils is known. Bharata wrote Natyashastra and created the plays known as Asura Parajaya and Amrit Manthan. Natyashastra is one of the greatest texts written in the field of drama and other performing arts. The next epoch is that of the great Bhasa who wrote plays based on the stories of Udayana, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Swapana Vasabhatta being his masterpiece. In the second century B.C. Patanjali's Mahabhasya refers to several aspects of drama i.e. the actors, the music, the stage, rasa in the performances called Kamsavadha and Balibandha. While referring to drama, Bharata has mentioned nat (male artists), and nati (female artist), music, dance, musical instruments, dialogues, themes and stage. Thus we find that drama achieved a great level of perfection during the age of Bharata. For Bharata, drama is a perfect means of communication. He also started the concept of an enclosed area for drama. There is mention of a community called 'shailoosh' which had professional drama companies. The practice of singing heroic tales became popular. As a result professional singers called kushilavas came into existence. During the

age of the Buddha and Mahavira, drama was a means of communicating the principles of their respective religions. Short skits and long plays were enacted to preach and educate the masses. Music and dance also played a vital role in increasing the appeal of drama. In the ancient period till the tenth century, the language of the educated, was Sanskrit. So dramas were performed mostly in this language. However, characters belonging to lower classes and women were made to speak Prakrit. Kautilya's Arthashastra Vatsyayan's Kamasutra, Kalidasa's Abhijnan Shakuntalam were all written in Sanskrit and were significant plays of those times. Bhasa was another celebrated dramatist who wrote thirteen plays. Prakrit plays became popular by the tenth century AD. Vidyapati who lived sometime during the fourteenth century was an important dramatist. He introduced Hindi and other regional languages in the form of songs. Umapati Mishra and Sharada Tanaya were also instrumental in promoting drama during this time. In the context of drama, two types developed – the classic drama, which had intricacies of theme and subtle nuances of dramatic traits and folk theatre. It was of spontaneous and extempore nature. Local dialect was used in folk theatre and hence in different provinces many types of folk theatres developed. Acting with accompaniment of music and dance was the popular practice. Many names were given to the forms of folk theatre in different provinces like:

- 1) Bengal - Jatra, Kirtania Natak
- 2) Bihar-Bideshia
- 3) Rajasthan - Raas, Jhumar, Dhola Maru
- 4) Uttar Pradesh - Raas, Nautanki, Svaang, Bhaand
- 5) Gujarat - Bhawaii 6) Maharashtra - Larite, Tamasha
- 7) Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka - Kathakali, Yakshagana

Instruments like dhol, kartal, manjira, khanjira were some props used in folk theatre. The medieval period was rich in music and dance but theatre did not get much prominence. Wajid Ali Shah, a great patron of art was also an important patron of drama. He enthused artists to participate in theatre and supported them. In the southern region, folk theatre with the use of local dialects was more popular. The advent of the British in the country changed the character of the society. In the eighteenth century a theatre was established in Calcutta by an Englishman. A Russian named Horasim Lebedev founded a Bengali theatre which marked the beginning of modern Indian theatre in India. English drama, especially by Shakespeare, influenced Indian drama. The stages evolved by educated Indians were different from traditional open air theatre. The stages now had rolling curtains and change of scenes. A Parsi company founded in Bombay showed that theatre could be used for commercial purposes. Dramas began to depict tragedies, comedies and the complexities of urban life. Dramas were now written in different regional languages. Side by side, folk theatre like jatra, nautanki, khyal (Rajasthani folk), and naach also flourished. Another aspect which influenced performing arts was the adaptation of folk forms to classical forms. Connoisseurs in different fields made their respective arts a medium for serving the cause of the masses. So they adapted the popular folk arts to reach out to people. A similar situation appeared in the case of writing of drama. Vidyasundar, a popular drama of the medieval period, was influenced by jatra. Geet Govinda, an exemplary work by the great poet Jayadev, weaved stories of Krishna in kirtania natak and jatra style. At present, a lot of experiments are taking place in the field of drama. Western influences are very clear in the works of

Shambhu Mitra, Feisal Alkazi, Badal Sarkar, Vijay Tendulkar and others.

Presently, various types of dramas are flourishing and some of them are : a) Stage theatre b) Radio theatre c) Nukkar or street plays d) Mono drama (one man show) e) Musical theatre f) Short skits g) One act play.

For the content and thematic aspect of dance and drama, we must examine the works of creative literature. The most important literary event, which influenced not only dance and drama but painting also, was the composition of Jayadeva's Gita-Govinda in the 13th century. Its great impact can be seen on dance and drama forms all over India—from Manipur and Assam in the east to Gujarat in the west; from Mathura and Vrindavan in the North, to Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the South... Innumerable commentaries on the Gita Govinda exist throughout the country. There are a large number of manuscripts dealing with the Gita-Govinda as material for dance or drama and this work has been the basic literary text used by many regional theatrical traditions. The spread of Vaisnavism during this period.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF THE PERFORMING ARTS Presently, all the three art forms i.e. dance, music and drama are flourishing in the country. Several music institution like Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and Prayag Sangeet Samiti have been imparting training in classical music and dance for more than fifty years. A number of schools, colleges and universities in India have adopted these art forms as a part of their curriculum. Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwa Vidyalaya of Khairagarh is a university of music. Kathak Kendra, National School of Drama, Bharatiya Kala Kendra and many institutes are all propagating music in their own ways. Music conferences, baithaks, lecture demonstrations are

being organised and musicians, music scholars, music teachers and music critics are trying to popularise music and dance. Societies like Spic-macay, Sangeet Natak Academies are also working hard to protect, develop and popularise Indian music, dance and drama at the national and even international level. At the international level musicians have made significant contribution. Different institutions of music started by Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and Ustad Alla Rakkha Khan teach Indian music to foreigners. Many foreign universities have departments of Indian performing arts and they award degrees and diplomas to students. All over the world Indian artists are invited to perform and participate in various festivals. Various agencies like Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development continuously propagate all these art forms by giving grants, scholarships and fellowships to renowned artists as well as to young artists and by arranging exchange programmes in the field of Indian music, dance and drama.

Architecture

Architecture-Origins And Indian Perspective

Architecture is not a modern phenomenon. It began as soon as the early cave man began to build his own shelter to live in. Man first began to create and fix his own shelter when he stepped out from the natural habitat of dense jungle covers. With the artistic faculties of man awakened in the search for larger and better-sheltered spaces, he began to build, with inherent aesthetic sense, shelters that seemed pleasing to the eye. Thus emerged architecture which is a combination of needs, imagination, capacities of the builders and capabilities of the workers.

Architectural Forms and Construction Details: Architecture accommodated the local and regional cultural traditions and social

requirements, economic prosperity, religious practice of different times. Hence, the study of architecture reveals to us the cultural diversities and helps us understand the rich traditions of India. Indian Architecture evolved in various ages in different parts and regions of the country. Apart from these natural and obvious evolutions from the pre-historic and historic periods, evolution of Indian architecture was generally affected by many great and important historic developments. Naturally, the emergence and decay of great empires and dynasties in the sub-continent, each in their way influenced the growth and shaped the evolution of Indian architecture. External influences have also shaped the nature of Indian architecture and so has the influence of different regions of the country. Let us have a look at the process of evolution of Indian Architecture.

Harappan Period

The excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro and several other sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation revealed the existence of a very modern urban civilisation with expert town planning and engineering skills. The very advanced drainage system along with well planned roads and houses show that a sophisticated and highly evolved culture existed in India before the coming of the Aryans. The sites of the Indus Valley Civilization were excavated under the Archaeological Survey of India established by the British. The Harappan people had constructed mainly three types of buildings-dwelling houses pillared halls and public baths. Main features of Harappan remains are:

1. The settlements could be traced as far back as third millennium BC.
2. Some important settlements were excavated on the banks of the river Indus particularly at the bends that provided water, easy

means of transportation of produce and other goods and also some protection by way of natural barriers of the river .

3. 3. All the sites consisted of walled cities which provided security to the people.
4. 4. The cities had a rectangular grid pattern of layout with roads that cut each other at right angles.
5. 5. The Indus Valley people used standardised burnt mud-bricks as building material.
6. 6. There is evidence of building of big dimensions which perhaps were public buildings, administrative or business centres, pillared halls and courtyards, There is no evidence of temples.
7. Public buildings include granaries which were used to store grains which give an idea of an organised collection and distribution system.

Another remarkable feature was the existence of a well planned drainage system in the residential parts of the city. Small drains from the houses were connected to larger ones along the sides of the main roads. The drains were covered and loose covers were provided for the purpose of cleaning them. The planning of the residential houses were also meticulous. Evidence of stairs shows houses were often double storied. Doors were in the side lanes to prevent dust from entering the houses. The most important features of Harrapan architecture are their superior town planning skills and cities that have been built on a clear geometric pattern or grid layout. Roads cut each other at right angles and were very well laid out. As the Indus Valley settlements were located on the banks of the river, they were often destroyed by major floods. In spite of this calamity, the Indus Valley people built fresh settlements on the same sites. Thus, layers

upon layers of settlements and buildings were found during the excavations. The decline and final destruction of the Indus Valley Civilization, sometime around the second millennium BC remains a mystery to this day.

The Harappans had the knowledge and skill of sculpting and craft. The world's first bronze sculpture of a dancing girl has been found in Mohenjodaro. A terracotta figure of a male in a yogic posture has also been excavated. Beautiful personal ornaments, soft stone seals with a pictorial script and images of humped bulls, Pashupati unicorn have also been excavated. The Vedic Aryans who came next, lived in houses built of wood, bamboo and reeds; the Aryan culture was largely a rural one and thus one finds few examples of grand buildings. This was because Aryans used perishable material like wood for the construction of royal palaces which have been completely destroyed over time. The most important feature of the Vedic period was the making of fire altars which soon became an important and integral part of the social and religious life of the people even today. In many Hindu homes and especially in their marriages, these fire altars play an important role even today. Soon courtyard and mandaps were build with altars for worship of fire which was the most important feature of architecture. We also find references of Gurukuls and Hermitages. Unfortunately no structure of the Vedic period remains to be seen. Their contribution to the architectural history is the use of wood along with brick and stone for building their houses In the 6th century B.C. India entered a significant phase of her history. There arose two new religions - Jainism and Buddhism and even the Vedic religion underwent a change

Almost simultaneously larger states sprang up which further provided for a new type of architecture. From this period i.e. the expansion of Magadha into an empire, the development of architecture received further impetus. From now it was possible to trace Indian architecture in an almost unbroken sequence. Emergence of Buddhism and Jainism helped in the development of early architectural style. The Buddhist Stupas were built at places where Buddha's remains were preserved and at the major sites where important events in Buddha's life took place. Stupas were built of huge mounds of mud, enclosed in carefully burnt small standard bricks. One was built at his birthplace Lumbini; the second at Gaya where he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, the third at Sarnath where he gave his first sermon and the fourth at Kushinagar where he passed away attaining Mahaparinirvana at the age of eighty. Buddha's burial mounds and places of major events in his life became important landmarks of the significant architectural buildings in the country. These became important sites for Buddha's order of monks and nuns - the sangha. Monasteries (viharas), and centres of preaching, teaching and learning came up at such places. Congregational halls (chaitya) for teaching and interaction between the common people and the monks were also built up. From now on religion began to influence architecture. While Buddhists and Jains began to build stupas, Viharas and Chaityas, the first temple building activity started during the Gupta rule.

Early Historic Period

An important phase of Indian architecture began with the Mauryan period. The material prosperity of the Mauryans and a new religious consciousness led to achievements in all fields.

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Selucas Nikator who visited the Mauryan court described Chandragupta Maurya's palace as an excellent architectural achievement. It was a large palace carved out of wood. In the Mauryan period (322-182 BC) especially under Ashoka architecture saw a great advancement. Mauryan art and architecture depicted the influence of Persians and Greeks. During the reign of Ashoka many monolithic stone pillars were erected on which teachings of 'Dhamma' were inscribed. The highly polished pillars with animal figures adorning the top (capitals) are unique and remarkable. The lion capital of the Sarnath pillar has been accepted as the emblem of the Indian Republic. Each pillar weighs about 50 tonnes and is about 50 ft high. The stupas of Sanchi and Sarnath are symbols of the achievement of Mauryan architecture. The gateways of the Sanchi Stupa with the beautiful sculpture depicting scenes from Jataka stories are specimens of the skill and aesthetic sense of the artisans. The blending of Greek and Indian art led to the development of Gandhara art which developed later. The other schools of art and architecture were the indigenous Mathura school and Amaravati school. A large number of statues of the Buddha were built by the artisans of these schools specially after first century AD under the influence of the Kushanas. Under the Gandhara school of art life-like statues of Buddha and Bodhisattava. were made in the likeness of Greek gods even, though the ideas, inspirations and subjects were all Indian. Rich ornaments, costumes drapery were used to impart physical beauty. The sculptures were in stone, terracotta, cement like material and clay. The figures of the Mathura school were made of spotted red stone. They had more of spiritual look in them. Here along with Buddha we find sculptures of Jaina

dieties also. The Amaravati school developed under the patronage of the Satavahanas of the Andhra region. A great stupa was built at Amaravati in the Lower Godavari region. The walls of the stupa are adorned with bas relief, had carved medallion and decorative panels. Nagarjunkonda is another place that is famous for Buddhist architecture. The Gupta period marks the beginning of the construction of free-standing Hindu temples. An example of this is the temple at Deogarh (Jhansi district) which had a central shrine or garbhagriha where the image of the deity was placed. Another temple at Bhitrigaon (Kanpur district) are two fine examples of this period.

Cave architecture

The development of cave architecture is another unique feature and marks an important phase in the history of Indian architecture. More than thousand caves have been excavated between second century BC and tenth century AD. Famous among these were Ajanta and Ellora caves of Maharashtra, and Udaygiri cave of Orissa. These caves hold Buddhist viharas, chaityas as well as mandapas and pillared temples of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Rock-cut temples

Temples were hewn out of huge rocks. The earliest rock-cut temples were excavated in western Deccan in the early years of the Christian era. The chaitya at Karle with fine high halls and polished decorative wall is a remarkable example of rock-cut architecture. Kailash temple at Ellora built by the Rashtrakutas and the ratha temples of Mahabalipuram built by the Pallavas are other examples of rock-cut temples. Most probably the stability and permanence of rocks attracted the patrons of art and builders who decorated these temples with beautiful sculptures.

standing temples

The temple building activities that began during the Gupta rule continued to flourish in later periods. In southern India the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Hoyshalas and later the rulers of the Vijaynagar kingdom were great builders of temples. The Pallava rulers built the shore temple at Mahabalipuram. Pallavas also built other structural temples like Kailashnath temple and Vaikuntha Perumal temples at Kanchipuram. The Cholas built many temples most famous being the Brihadeshwara temple at Tanjore. The Cholas developed a typical style of temple architecture of South India called the Dravida style, complete with vimana or shikhara, high walls and the gateway topped by gopuram. Magnificent temples were built at Belur, Halebid where the stone engravings reached even greater heights. In north and eastern India magnificent temples were also constructed and the style followed by them is referred to as the Nagara style. Most of them consisted of the shikaras (spiral roofs), the garbhagriha (sanctum) and the mandap (pillared hall). Orissa has some of the most beautiful temples such as the Lingaraja temple built by the Ganga rulers and the Mukteshwara temple at Bhubaneswar and the Jagannath temple at Puri. The sun temple at Konark was built in thirteenth century by the eastern Ganga ruler Narshimha Deva I. The temple is dedicated to Surya (the sun god) and has been designed as a twelve-wheeled chariot. The temple complex at Khajuraho was built by Chandella rulers between the tenth and eleventh centuries in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. Most important among them is the Kandariya Mahadev temple. Mount Abu in Rajasthan is known for the Dilwara temple dedicated to Jain tirthankaras. These were built in pure white marble and

adorned with exquisite sculpture. These were built under the patronage of Solanki rulers. 194 India Somnath temple at Gujarat, Vishwanath temple at Banaras, Govinda temple at Mathura, Kamakhya temple at Guwahati, Shankaracharya temple at Kashmir and the Kali temple at Kalighat of Kolkata are some other important temples which bear testimony to temple building activity of the Indian sub continent.

Medieval Period Architecture

Delhi Sultanate With the arrival of Turks during the thirteenth century came a new technique of architecture- the architectural styles of Persia, Arabia and Central Asia. The engineering features of these buildings were the domes, arches and minarets. The palaces, mosques and tombs built by the rulers had these features which were blended with the features of the indigenous architecture and a new synthesis in architecture was achieved. This happened because the Turkish rulers of Delhi utilized the services of the local Indian craftsmen who were very skillful and had already constructed beautiful buildings. In the buildings that came up we find the simplicity of the Islamic structure as well as the detailed sculptures and designs they made on their own indigenous structures. A middle path was followed in all their designs in the architecture of this period. The earliest building of this period is Quwwatul Islam Mosque at Delhi and the Qutub Minar. The latter is a tower, whose height is 70 metres. It is a tapering tower that has five stories. There are beautiful engravings of calligraphy both in the mosque and on the tower. Many other buildings were later constructed by the Sultans. Ala-ud-din Khalji enlarged the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque and built a gateway to the enclosure of the mosque.

This gateway is called the Alahi Darwaja and is one of the most beautiful architectural designs even today. Decorative elements were used to make the building outstanding in its beauty. He also built the Hauz Khas in Delhi which was a hydraulic structure. The tomb of Mohammad Tughlaq, Firoz Tughlaq and the forts of Tughlaqabad are some examples. Though their buildings were not beautiful but had very strong walls, massive as well as impressive. During the Afghan rule the tombs of Ibrahim Lodi at Delhi and Shershah's tomb at Sasaram were built. The architecture of this period also shows how indigenous styles were adopted and utilised by the builders. During these years, the Turks were still in the process of settling down. The rulers were threatened by the Mongols, who made sudden invasions from the north. This is why the buildings of this period are strong, sturdy and practical.

Regional Kingdoms With the establishment of regional kingdoms in Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan, beautiful buildings having their own style were constructed. The Jama Masjid, the Sadi Saiyyad Mosque and the shaking towers at Ahmadabad are a few examples of this architecture. In Mandu (central India) the Jama Masjid, Hindola Mahal and Jahaz Mahal were built. In the Deccan, the Sultans erected a number of buildings. The Jama Masjid at Gulbarga, the Madarsa of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar, Ibrahim Rauza, Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur and the fort at Golkunda are just a few famous buildings. Gol Gumbaz has the largest dome in the world. All these buildings vary in design and style from the buildings of north India. In Bengal the oblong shape of many structures and the peculiar style of roof construction were some of the distinctive features of the regional architecture of Bengal like the Adina mosque and the tomb of Jallal-

ud-din at Pandua, Khil Darwaza and Tantipara mosque at Gaur. In Jaunpur, the Atala mosque build by the Sharqui rulers had a gigantic screen covering the dome while the tomb of Hoshang Shah at Malwa is made entirely of marble and is made of yellow and black marble inlay work beautifully done by craftsmen. The rulers of Vijayanagar, an empire which was established during this period also erected many beautiful buildings and temples and had a number of achievements to their credit. Though only ruins remain but the temples of Vithalswami and Hazar Rama at Hampi are good examples.

Bahamani

The Bahamani sultans borrowed from the styles of Persia, Syria, Turkey and the temples of Southern India. The Jama Masjid at Gulbarga is quite well known. The courtyard of this mosque is covered with a large number of domes and is the only mosque in India which has a covered countryard.

Mughals

The advent of the Mughals brought a new era in architecture. The synthesis of style which began earlier reached its zenith during this time. The architecture of Mughal style started during Akbar's rule. The first building of this rule was Humayun's Tomb at Delhi. In this magnificent building red stone was used. It has a main gateway and the tomb is placed in the midst of a garden. Many consider it a precursor of the Taj Mahal. Akbar built forts at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. The Bulund Darwaza reflects the grandeur of the mighty Mughal empire. This building was made following Akbar's victory over Gujarat. The Arch of the Buland Darwaja is about 41 m high and is perhaps the most imposing gateway in the world. The tomb of

Salim Chishti, Palace of Jodha Bai, Ibadat Khana, Birbal's House and other buildings at Fatehpur Sikri reflect a synthesis of Persian and Indian elements. During the reign of Jehangir, Akbar's Mausoleum was constructed at Sikandra near Agra. He built the beautiful tomb of Itimad-ud-daula which was built entirely of marble. Shahjahan was the greatest builder amongst the Mughals. He used marble extensively. Decorative design in inlay work, (called pietra duro) beautiful arches and minarets were the features of his buildings. The Red Fort and Jama Masjid of Delhi and above all the Taj Mahal are some of the buildings built by Shahjahan. The Taj Mahal, the tomb of Shahjahan's wife, is built in marble and reflects all the architectural features that were developed during the Mughal period. It has a central dome, four elegant minarets, gateway, inlay work and gardens surrounding the main building. The Mughal style of architecture had a profound influence on the buildings of the later period. The buildings showed a strong influence of the ancient Indian style and had courtyards and pillars. For the first time in the architecture of this style living beings- elephants, lions, peacocks and other birds were sculptured in the brackets. Next came the British who ruled the country for 200 years and left behind a legacy of colonial style architecture in their buildings.

Monuments Built

Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri The Mughal architecture began in the reign of Akbar. He erected many important buildings. The crowning achievements of his reign was the building of his new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, 40 km from Agra. Fatehpur Sikri is a romance of stones. The Arch of the Buland Darwaja is the most imposing gateway in the world. The tomb of Saint Salim Chisti is exquisite in

its beauty. Jodha Bai Palace is a fine example of ancient Indian architecture. The Jama Masjid was built with the influence of the Persian style. The Dewan-i-Amm and the Dewan-i-Khas are famous for their planning and decoration. The Ibadat Khana and Panch Mahal are another notable buildings. The Panch Mahal is a pyramidal structure in five storeys. It was build on the pattern of a Buddhist Vihara.

Colonial Architecture And The Modern Period

The colonial influence can be seen in office buildings. Europeans who started coming from sixteenth century AD constructed many churches and other buildings. Portuguese built many churches at Goa, the most famous of these are Basilica Bom Jesus and the chruch of Saint Francis. The British also built administrative and residential buildings which reflect their imperial glory. Some Greek and Roman influence can be observed in the colonnades or pillared buildings. Parliament House and Connaught Place in Delhi are good examples. The architect Lutyens, designed Rashtrapati Bhavan, formerly the Viceroy's residence. It is built of sandstone and has design features like canopies and jaali from Rajasthan. The Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, the former capital of British India, is a huge edifice in marble. It now houses a museum full of colonial artefacts. Writers' Building in Calcutta, where generations of government officers worked in British times, is still the administrative centre of Bengal after independence. Some Gothic elements can be seen in the church buildings like St. Paul's Cathedral in Calcutta. The British also left behind impressive railway terminals like the Victoria Terminus in Mumbai. More contemporary styles of building are now in evidence, after Independence in 1947.

Chandigarh has buildings designed by the French architect, Corbusier. In Delhi, the Austrian architect, Stein, designed The India International Centre where conferences are held by leading intellectuals from all over the world and more recently, the India Habitat Centre which has become a centre of intellectual activities in the capital. In the past few decades, there have been many talented Indian architects, some trained in premier schools of architecture like the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) in Delhi. Architects like Raj Rewal and Charles Correa represent this new generation. Raj Rewal has designed the SCOPE Complex and JawaharVyapar Bhavan in Delhi. He takes pride in using indigenous building material like sandstone for construction and also combines steps and open spaces from the plazas of Rome. An example of this is the C1ET building in Delhi. Charles Correa from Mumbai is responsible for the LIC Building in Connaught Place, Delhi. He has used glass facades in the high-rise to reflect light and create a sense of soaring height. In domestic architecture in the last decade, Housing Cooperative Societies have mushroomed in all metropolitan cities combining utility with a high level of planning and aesthetic sense.

Indian Culture Abroad

Spread Of Indian Culture Through Traders, Teachers, Emissaries And Missionaries

In ancient times, traders from India went to distant lands in search of new opportunities in business. They went to Rome in the west and China in the east. As early as the first century BC, they travelled to countries like Indonesia and Cambodia in search of gold. They travelled especially to the islands of Java, Sumatra and Malaya.

This is the reason why these countries were called Suvarnadvipa (suvarna means gold and dvipa means island). These traders travelled from many flourishing cities like Kashi, Mathura, Ujjain, Prayag and Pataliputra and from port cities on the east coast like Mamallapuram, Tamralipti, Puri, and Kaveripattanam. The kingdom of Kalinga had trade relations with Sri Lanka during the time of Emperor Ashoka. Wherever the traders went, they established cultural links with those places. In this way, the traders served as cultural ambassadors and established trade relations with the outside world. Like the east coast, many cultural establishments have also been found on and near the west coast. Karle, Bhaja, Kanheri, Ajanta and Ellora are counted among the well known places. Most of these centres are Buddhist monastic establishments. The universities were the most important centres of cultural interaction. They attracted large numbers of students and scholars. The scholars coming from abroad often visited the library of Nalanda University which was said to be a seven storey building. Students and teachers from such universities carried Indian culture abroad along with its knowledge and religion. The Chinese pilgrim Huiyen-tsang has given ample information about the universities he visited in India. For example, Huiyen-tsang describes his stay at two very important universities— one in the east, Nalanda and the other in the west, Valabhi Vikramashila was another university that was situated on the right bank of the Ganges. The Tibetan scholar Taranatha has given its description. Teachers and scholars of this university were so famous that the Tibetan king is stated to have sent a mission to invite the head of the university to promote interest in common culture and indigenous wisdom. Another university was

Odantapuri in Bihar which grew in stature under the patronage of the Pala kings. A number of Monks migrated from this university and settled in Tibet. Two Indian teachers went to China on an invitation from the Chinese Emperor in AD 67. Their names are Kashyapa Martanga and Dharmarakshita. They were followed by a number of teachers from universities like Nalanda, Takshila, Vikramashila and Odantapuri. When Acharya Kumarajiva went to China, the king requested him to translate Sanskrit texts into Chinese. The scholar Bodhidharma, who specialised in the philosophy of Yoga is still venerated in China and Japan. Acharya Kamalasheel of Nalanda University was invited by the king of Tibet. After his death, the Tibetans embalmed his body and kept it in a monastery in Lhasa. Another distinguished scholar was Jnanabhadra. He went to Tibet with his two sons to preach Dharma. A monastery was founded in Tibet on the model of Odantapuri University in Bihar. The head of the Vikramashila University was Acharya Ateesha, also known as Dipankara Shreejnana. He went to Tibet in the eleventh century and gave a strong foundation to Buddhism in Tibet. Thonmi Sambhota, a Tibetan minister was a student at Nalanda when the Chinese pilgrim Huien-tsang visited India. Thonmi Sambhota studied there and after going back, he preached Buddhism in Tibet. A large number of Tibetans embraced Buddhism. Even the king became a Buddhist. He declared Buddhism as the State religion. Among the noteworthy teachers, Kumarajiva was active in the fifth century.

Spread Of Indian Culture Through Other Modes

Romas or Gypsies Some groups of Indians went abroad as wanderers. They called themselves Romas and their language was

Romani, but in Europe they are famous as Gypsies. They went towards the West, crossing the present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. From there, their caravans went through Iran and Iraq to Turkey. Travelling through Persia, Taurus mountains and Constantinople, they spread to many countries of Europe. Today they live in Greece, Bulgaria, States of former Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Russia, Poland, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Denmark and England. It took them almost four hundred years to spread to these countries. By that time, though they had forgotten their original home, they did retain their language, customs, ways of living, and their professions.

Indian Culture In Central Asia

From the 2nd century B.C. onwards India maintained commercial contact with China, Central Asia, West Asia and the Roman empire. Central Asia is a landmass bound by China, Russia, Tibet, India and Afghanistan. Traders to and from China regularly crossed the region despite hardships. The route, that was opened by them, later became famous as the Silk Route. The route was so named because silk was one of the chief mercantile commodities of China. In later times, the same route was used by scholars monks and missionaries. The route served as a great channel for the transmission of cultures of the then known world. The impact of Indian culture was felt strongly in Central Asia. Among the kingdoms of Central Asia, Kuchi was a very important and flourishing centre of the Indian culture. It was the kingdom where the Silk Route bifurcates and meets at the Dun-huang caves in China again. Thus, there is the Northern and the Southern Silk Route. The Northern route goes via Samarkand, Kashgarh, Tumshuk, Aksu, Karashahr,

Turfan and Hami and the Southern route via Yarkand, Khotan, Keriya, Cherchen and Miran. Many Chinese and Indian scholars travelled through these routes in search of wisdom and to propagate the philosophy of Buddhism.

Cultural exchanges that took place between India and the countries of Central Asia are visible from the discoveries of ancient stupas, temples, monasteries, images and paintings found in all these countries. Along the route there were resting places for Monks and Missionaries, for pilgrims and merchants and later these became famous centres of Buddhist learning. Silk and jade, horses and valuables changed hands, but the most lasting treasure that travelled along the route was Buddhism. Thus, the trade route transmitted religion and philosophy, ideas and beliefs, languages and literature, and art and culture. Khotan was one of the most important outposts. It was on the Southern Silk Route. The history of cultural relationship between India and the kingdom goes back to over two millennia. Khotan was famous for its silk industry, dance, music, literary pursuits, commercial activities and for gold and jade exports. The history of the Indo-Khotanese relationship is witnessed by a continuous flow of teachers and monks from India to Khotan. Coins found from the first century AD bear engravings in Chinese on the obverse and Prakrit in Kharosthi script on the reverse providing evidence of a composite culture in Khotan. A large number of Sanskrit manuscripts, translations and transcriptions of Buddhist texts in Sanskrit were discovered from the monasteries buried in sand.

Indian Culture In East Asia

China The contact between India and China began around the 2nd Century B.C. Indian culture first entered China with two monk scholars—Kashyapa Martanga and Dharmarakshita who went to China in AD 67 on the invitation of the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti. After Kashyapa Martanga and Dharmarakshita, there was a continuous flow of scholars from India to China and from China to India. The Chinese were a highly cultured people. They listened to the thrilling stories of the Buddha with great attention. The Chinese who came in search of wisdom wrote about India and the Indian culture to such an extent that today they are the most important sources of Indian history. Prominent teachers from the Indian Universities and monasteries became famous in China. For example, a scholar named Bodhidharma went to China from Kanchipuram. He went to Nalanda, studied there and left for China. He carried the philosophy of Yoga with him and popularized the practice of ‘dhyana’, (meditation), which was later known in China as ch’an. Bodhidharma became such an eminent figure that people began to worship him in China and Japan. The Buddhists philosophy appealed to the Chinese intellectuals because they already had a developed philosophical school in Confucianism.

In the fourth century AD Wei Dynasty came to power in China. Its first Emperor declared Buddhism as the state religion. This gave an impetus to the spread of Buddhism in China. Thousands of Sanskrit books were translated into Chinese. Braving the hazards of a long and perilous journey they came to visit the land of the Buddha. They stayed in India and collected Buddhist relics and manuscripts related to Buddhism and learnt about it staying at the various educational centres. With the spread of Buddhism,

China began to build cave temples and monastic complexes on a large scale. Colossal images were carved on the rocks and caves were beautifully painted from the inside. Dun-huang, Yun-kang and Lung-men are among the most famous cave complexes in the world. Indian influences are quite evident on these complexes. The two way traffic of scholars and monks was responsible for cultural contacts and exchange of ideas.

Self Assessment Questions

1. How did Indian painting and performing arts originate and evolve during the ancient period?
2. What are the important features of ancient Indian architecture, and how did they reflect cultural values?
3. In what ways did Indian culture spread abroad through art, religion, and trade in ancient times?