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Art and Culture

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Previous Year Questions

Year	Question
2013	Chola architecture represents a high watermark in the evolution of temple architecture. Discuss.
2013	Discuss the Tandava dance as recorded in the early Indian inscriptions.
2013	Though not very useful from the point of view of a connected political history of South India, the Sangam literature portrays the social and economic conditions of its time with remarkable vividness. Comment.
2014	Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Hindu / Muslim societies to any appreciable extent. Comment.
2014	Taxila university was one of the oldest universities of the world with which were associated a number of renowned learned personalities of different disciplines. Its strategic location caused its fame to flourish, but unlike Nalanda, it is not considered as a university in the modern sense. Discuss.
2014	Gandhara sculpture owed as much to the Romans as to the Greeks. Explain.
2014	To what extent has the urban planning and culture of the Indus Valley Civilization provided inputs to the present day urbanization? Discuss.
2015	Mesolithic rock cut architecture of India not only reflects the cultural life of the times but also a fine aesthetic sense comparable to modern painting. Critically evaluate this comment.
2015	The ancient civilization in the Indian sub-continent differed from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece in that its culture and traditions have been preserved without a breakdown to the present day. Comment.
2016	Krishnadeva Raya, the King of Vijayanagar, was not only an accomplished scholar himself but was also a great patron of learning and literature. Discuss.
2016	Early Buddhist Stupa-art, while depicting folk motifs and narratives successfully expounds Buddhist ideals. Elucidate
2017	How do you justify the view that the level of excellence of Gupta numismatic art is not at all noticeable in later times?
2018	The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss.
2018	Assess the importance of the accounts of the Chinese and Arab travellers in the reconstruction of the history of India.
2018	Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment, Discuss.
2019	Highlight the Central Asian and Greco -Bactrian elements in Gandhara art.
2020	Persian literary sources of medieval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment.
2020	Indian philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss.
2020	Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate.

2020	The rock-cut architecture represents one of the most important sources of our knowledge of early Indian art and history. Discuss.
2021	Evaluate the nature of the Bhakti literature and its contribution to Indian culture.
2022	How will you explain that medieval Indian temple sculptures represent the social life of those days?
2022	Discuss the main contributions of Gupta period and Chola period to Indian heritage and culture.
2022	Discuss the significance of the lion and bull figures in Indian mythology, art and architecture.
2023	Explain the role of geographical factors towards the development of Ancient India.
2023	What were the major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period? How did those technological changes influence the Indian society?
2023	What are the main features of Vedic society and religion? Do you think some of the features are still prevailing in Indian society?
2024	Underline the changes in the field of society and economy from the Rig Vedic to the later Vedic period.
2024	Estimate the contribution of Pallavas of Kanchi for the development of art and literature of South India.
2024	"Though the great Cholas are no more yet their name is still remembered with great pride because of their highest achievements in the domain of art and architecture." Comment.
2025	Discuss the salient features of the Harappan architecture.
2025	Examine the main aspects of Akbar's religious syncretism.
2025	"The sculptors filled the Chandella artform with resilient vigor and breadth of life." Elucidate.

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CHAPTER

Indian Architecture

Indian architecture has continuously blended indigenous techniques with external influences from the grid-planned brick cities of the Indus Valley to Mauryan pillars, Gupta temples, Sultanate arches, Mughal gardens and colonial revivals. Shifts in patronage and materials spurred new building types (stupas, caves, mosques, palaces), while modern & sustainable approaches reflect evolving cultural, technological and environmental priorities. Today's structures echo centuries of layered innovation and identity.

Mesolithic period in India (c. 10,000 BCE – 6,000 BCE)

The Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) represents the transitional phase between the **Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age)** and the **Neolithic (New Stone Age)**. It corresponds to the period when the last Ice Age ended, climate became warmer, and humans gradually shifted from nomadic hunting to early forms of sedentary life.

➤ **Chronology and Background**

- ✓ Begins around **10,000 BCE** with the end of the Pleistocene Ice Age and onset of the Holocene climate.
- ✓ Ends around **6,000 BCE**, though overlap with Neolithic varies regionally.
- ✓ Marked by **microlithic technology**, semi-sedentary settlements, domestication of some plants/animals, and remarkable rock art.

➤ **Environmental and Climatic Changes**

The Mesolithic world saw significant environmental transformations:

- ✓ Melting of glaciers → rise in sea levels.
- ✓ Expansion of grasslands and forests → greater biodiversity.
- ✓ Extinction or reduction of some large animals → shift to **small game hunting**.
- ✓ Humans adapted by developing new tools and new subsistence strategies.

➤ **Mesolithic Tools and Technology**

- ✓ **Microliths – the hallmark of the Mesolithic period**
- ✓ Tiny, sharp stone blades (1–3 cm), often made of **chalcedony, chert, agate, jasper**.
- ✓ Used as **barbs or tips** on arrows, sickles, spears, and harpoons.
- ✓ Significance:
 - Allowed composite tools.
 - Increased hunting precision.
 - Enabled processing of plant foods (sickle blades).
- ✓ Other tools include:
- ✓ Bone tools (needles, harpoons).
- ✓ Grinding stones for plant processing.
- ✓ Fire-hardened wooden tools.

➤ **Subsistence Patterns (Economy and Food Sources)**

Mesolithic people were **hunter-gatherers**, but with important innovations.

a. Hunting and Fishing

- Hunting of small animals: deer, wild boar, hare, porcupine, birds.
- Fishing using microlith-tipped harpoons and nets.
- Evidence of **seasonal hunting camps**.

b. Gathering

- Nuts, tubers, wild fruits, seeds.

c. Early Domestication

- Earliest evidence of domesticated animals (e.g., **dog**).
- Some sites show beginnings of plant domestication → **proto-agriculture**.

d. Food Storage

- Pit structures for storing grains/seeds in late Mesolithic.

➤ **Settlements and Lifestyle**

a. Semi-sedentary Life

- First indications of people settling near rivers, lakes, and grasslands.
- Seasonal camps → gradual semi-permanent settlements.

b. Housing

- Circular/oval huts with post-holes found at Bagor, Damdama.

c. Burial Practices

A key cultural advancement:

- **Burials with grave goods**, indicating belief in afterlife.
- Child burials with animal bones; collective burials.

➤ **Mesolithic Art and Culture**

One of the richest dimensions of this period:

Rock Paintings

- ✓ Found in **Bhimbetka**, Adamgarh, Pachmarhi, Kupgallu.
- ✓ Themes:
 - Hunting scenes
 - Dancing, rituals
 - Honey collection
 - Group processions
 - Animals (bison, deer, elephants, boars)

Aesthetic Features

- ✓ Dynamic movement, expressive stick figures.
- ✓ Use of ochre, manganese, and vegetal colours.
- ✓ Layering/superimposition.

Rock art is an invaluable record of Mesolithic cultural life and symbolic thought.

➤ **Important Mesolithic Sites in India**

Central India

- ✓ **Bhimbetka (MP)** – UNESCO site; rich rock art.
- ✓ Adamgarh (MP)
- ✓ Pachmarhi (MP)

Rajasthan

- ✓ **Bagor** (largest Mesolithic site in India; evidence of domesticated animals).
- ✓ Tilwara, Langhnaj

Ganga Valley

- ✓ **Sarai Nahar Rai**, Mahadaha, Damdama (UP) – advanced burials.

South India

- ✓ Kupgallu (Telangana)
- ✓ Sangankallu (Karnataka)

Gujarat

- ✓ Langhnaj – animal bones, microliths, burials.

These sites show regional variations in lifestyle and ecology.

➤ Social Life and Cultural Traits

- ✓ **Small bands/tribes** of 25–50 members.
- ✓ Division of labour: men hunted, women gathered (inferred from ethnography).
- ✓ Earliest signs of **ritualism**:
 - burial customs
 - shaman-like figures in paintings
- ✓ Possibly early forms of **music and dance**, inferred from paintings.

➤ Transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic

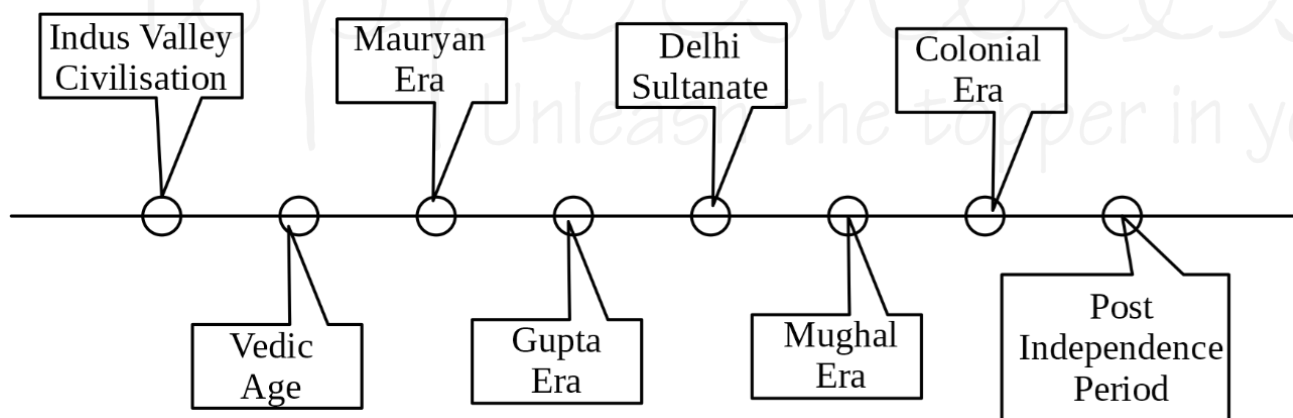
The Mesolithic gradually evolved into Neolithic due to:

- ✓ Further warming of climate.
- ✓ Increased population pressure.
- ✓ Need for stable food sources → agriculture.
- ✓ Domestication of cattle, goats, sheep.
- ✓ Permanent settlements and pottery.

In many Indian regions (e.g., Rajasthan, Ganga valley), Mesolithic and Neolithic phases overlapped.

➤ Significance of the Mesolithic Period

- ✓ Represents **human adaptability** after dramatic climate change.
- ✓ Pioneered **microlith technology** still used in historic periods.
- ✓ Provides earliest evidence of **artistic expression**.
- ✓ Shows **intermediate stage** between nomadic hunting and farming.
- ✓ Burials reflect early **spiritual life and social structures**.
- ✓ Key to understanding the origins of Indian civilisation.



Indus Valley Civilization

➤ Major Sites:

- ✓ **Harappa** (Punjab, Pakistan) → Featured the Cemetery H culture, granaries, working platforms, and burial grounds.
- ✓ **Mohenjo-daro** (Sindh, Pakistan) → Known for the Great Bath, assembly hall, large residential houses, and the priest-king statue.
- ✓ **Ropar** (Punjab) → Offers evidence of early burial practices and is located on the Sutlej River.

-
- ✓ **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan) → Revealed fire altars and ploughed fields, the earliest known evidence of agriculture, but no Great Bath was found.
 - ✓ **Lothal** (Gujarat) → It was a significant maritime site with a dockyard, warehouse, bead-making factory, and seals. It is now the location for the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC).
 - ✓ **Rangpur** (Gujarat) → Late Harappan site, evidence of rice cultivation.
 - ✓ **Dholavira** (Gujarat) → Had a unique stone-built, tripartite city plan and was known for its advanced water management systems.
 - ✓ **Rakhigarhi** (Haryana) → 5,000-year-old Water Management Techniques unearthed at Harappan site.
 - **Urban Planning**
 - ✓ Cities were designed with rectangular street grids that intersected at right angles.
 - ✓ The cities were divided into an upper town (citadel) and a lower town, both built on raised platforms.
 - ✓ Streets & buildings were designed with slopes to efficiently direct water runoff.
 - ✓ Houses typically had **multiple rooms**, a central **courtyard**, kitchen, bathing areas.
 - ✓ Many had **two storeys**, reflecting structural expertise.
 - **Building Materials & Techniques**
 - ✓ Buildings were primarily constructed using uniform burnt-mud bricks of standard ratio **1:2:4** (height: width: length) joined with gypsum mortar.
 - ✓ At **Dholavira**, stone masonry was used instead of bricks, indicating unique architectural techniques.
 - ✓ No evidence of arches or columns present in the architecture of the civilisation.
 - **Residential Layout**
 - ✓ Houses were typically multi-room structures arranged around central courtyards with flat roofs.
 - ✓ Many had private wells & bathing areas; doors/windows rarely faced main streets for privacy.
 - ✓ Use of staircases suggests some houses had upper floors.
 - ✓ No central palace or temple complex indicates an egalitarian society.
 - **Sanitation & Water Management**
 - ✓ Covered drains from each house connected to main sewers; accessible for cleaning.
 - ✓ Regular cess-pits and widespread wells helped manage waste and water distribution.
 - ✓ **Dholavira**: Rainwater harvesting using interconnected tanks and channels.
 - ✓ Wells were common; Mohenjodaro alone had **700+ wells**, showing water accessibility within homes.
 - **Public & Defensive Structures**
 - ✓ Cities were protected by fortified brick walls, designed to guard against floods and invasions.
 - ✓ Granaries were constructed on raised plinths with air-ducts to prevent pests and preserve food supplies.
 - ✓ The **Great Bath** at **Mohenjo-daro** was a central water tank surrounded by rooms, likely used for communal rituals or public bathing.
 - ✓ **Assembly Halls and Pillared Halls**: Large public buildings indicating social and administrative functions.
 - **Absence of Palaces and Temples**
 - ✓ No large palatial or monumental religious buildings.
 - ✓ Suggests a non-theocratic, egalitarian urban system with emphasis on civic amenities rather than royal display.
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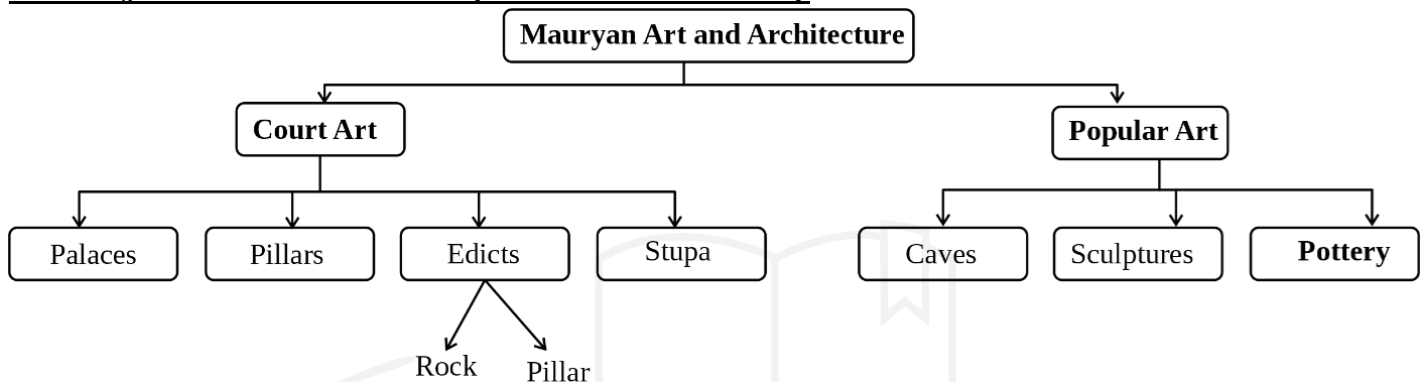
➤ Industrial Architecture

- ✓ Planned production areas:
- ✓ **Bead-making workshops** (Chanhudaro).
- ✓ **Lapis lazuli, shell, copper-working units** with furnaces and circular platforms.
- ✓ Kilns and workshops were placed downwind to reduce pollution.

➤ Citadel vs Lower Town

Citadel	Lower Town
Located in the western part .	Located in the eastern part .
Smaller than lower town.	Larger than the citadel.
Hosted large buildings like granaries, administrative buildings, pillared halls, residences of the rulers and aristocrats, courtyards etc.	Contained small one-roomed houses, probably for working-class people.

Mauryan Architecture (c. 322–185 BCE)



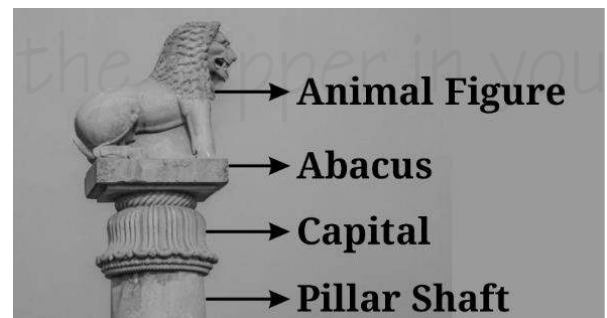
1. Court Art (State-sponsored)

➤ Palaces

- ✓ **Ashoka's Palace:** Located at Kumrahar, it was a multi-storey wooden structure with a central monumental pillar, showcasing architectural grandeur.
- ✓ **Chandragupta's Palace:** Situated in **Pataliputra**, it was modeled after the Achaemenid **Persepolis** (as described by Greek ambassador **Megasthenes**), symbolizing political and cultural influence.

➤ Ashokan Pillars

- ✓ These **monolithic Chunar sandstone shafts** were a key feature of Mauryan architecture, designed to convey royal power and imperial authority.
- ✓ Each pillar consisted of four main components::
 1. **Shaft:** single-piece stone.
 2. **Capital:** lotus- or bell-shaped top (bell-form shows Iranian influence).
 3. **Abacus:** circular/rectangular slab above capital.
 4. **Animal Figure:** lions, bulls, elephants atop abacus.
- ✓ Surviving examples: Lauriya Nandangarh, Rampurva (bull), Sankisa & Sarnath (lion).



➤ National Emblem

- ✓ The **Sarnath Lion Capital** serves as India's **national emblem**, with its four lions back-to-back, representing strength and pride.
- ✓ The **abacus** below the lions features animals that may symbolize key stages in **Buddha's life**.



- ✓ The **Dharma Chakra** (24-spoked wheel) represents the eternal wheel of law.
- ✓ The inscription “**Satyameva Jayate**” beneath the emblem signifies "Truth alone triumphs," highlighting moral authority and justice.

Ashokan vs Achaemenian Pillars

Aspect	Ashokan (3rd c BCE)	Achaemenian (6th–4th c BCE)
Purpose	Freestanding edicts promoting Dhamma	Support large palace/ceremonial structures
Material	Local sandstone	Limestone/sandstone
Structure	Single monolith shaft + capital	Multi-stone fluted shafts + complex capitals
Religious Link	Buddhism	Zoroastrianism/Persian culture
Capitals	Realistic animals (lion, bull)	Mythical creatures (griffins, twin bulls)
Message	Ethical and religious ethics	Royal grandeur and divine authority
Animal depictions	Naturalistic	Stylized or mythical
Installation	Often solitary in open spaces	Installed inside palace complexes

➤ Stupas (Burial Mounds)

- ✓ **Definition:** Solid hemispherical domes enclosing relics and ashes; pre-Buddhist origin, popularised by Buddhists.
- ✓ **Patrons:** From kings (Ashoka) to lay devotees & guilds; artisans named in a few inscriptions (e.g., Kanha at Pitalkhora).
- ✓ **Core Features**
 - Brick core with a burnt-brick or clay exterior.
 - **Drum:** A cylindrical structure topped with a **Harmika** (railing platform) and a **Chhatra** (umbrella-like structure).
 - **Pradakshina Patha:** A circumambulatory path enclosed by wooden railings and decorated with toranas (ornamental gateways).
 - **Symbolic reliefs:** Include motifs like lotus, elephants, and Jataka scenes.

✓ Key Sites

- **Sanchi** (World Heritage Site):

☞ Lies to the west of Betwa river (bhopal).

☞ Three main stupas :

Stupa-1: Buddha relics;

Stupa-2: relics of ten arhats;

Stupa-3: relics of

Sariputta &

Mahamougalayana

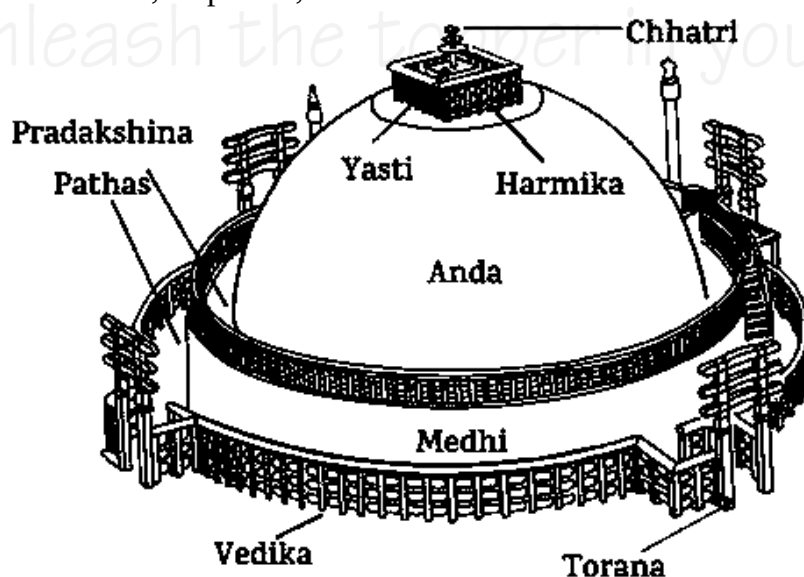
☞ Ashokan lion pillar with

an inscription found in

southern side of stupa;

unique upper pradakshina path.

- Other notable sites: Bharhut, Bodh Gaya, Amravati, Nagarjunakonda.



2. Popular Art (Locally Patronised)

➤ Rock-Cut Caves

- ✓ **Origins:** First rock-cut caves built 3rd century BCE under Ashoka's patronage for the Ajivika sect, later used by Buddhists and Jains.
- ✓ **Key Sites: Barabar Hills** (Lomas Rishi, Sudama, Vishvakarma, Karan Chaupar) & Nagarjuni (Vadathi-ka-kubha, Vape-ka-kubha, Gopi-ka-Kumbha) in Bihar.
- ✓ **Polished Interiors:** Exquisitely smoothed rock surfaces - hallmark "Mauryan polish"- creating austere, meditative chambers.
- ✓ **Decorative Entrances:** Semicircular "chaitya-arch" motifs carved over rectangular or circular doorways (prototype for later Buddhist chaityas).
- ✓ **Minimalist Layout:** Single-cell halls or small viharas with bare interiors for monastic living & meditation.
- ✓ **Later Adaptations:** Subsequent sites like Nasik's Pandav Leni (1st BCE–3rd CE) expanded into multi-cell viharas & chaitya halls with sculpted reliefs.



➤ Pottery & Sculpture

- ✓ **Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW):** Known for its lustrous finish and highly reflective surface, this pottery was of fine quality and used in urban centers.
- ✓ **Sculptural Decoration:** Featured on stupas, toranas, and cave facades, with a narrative style that avoided direct depiction of human divinities.



Rock-Cut Architecture as a Key Source for Understanding Early Indian Art and History

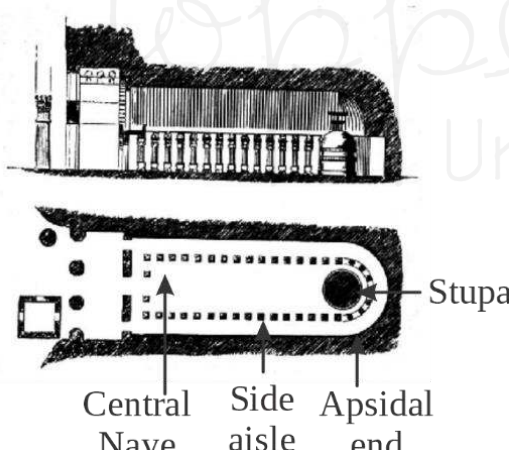
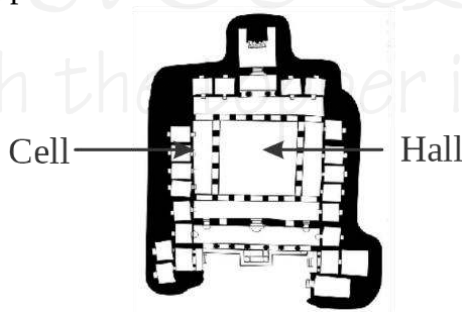
Rock-cut architecture in India, comprising caves, temples, monasteries, and halls carved out of solid rock—serves as a vital historical source for understanding early Indian civilization. These monuments are not only artistic achievements but also rich repositories of information about religion, society, economy, polity, and cultural interactions from ancient to early medieval periods.

1. **Source of Artistic Development:** Rock-cut monuments provide direct evidence of the evolution of Indian art forms.
 - ✓ Early caves such as those at Bhaja Caves and Karla Caves show simple architectural forms with wooden imitations carved in stone.
 - ✓ Later sites like Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves display highly sophisticated sculpture and painting.
2. **Insight into Religious Life:** Rock-cut architecture is closely associated with religious practices, making it a key source for studying ancient Indian religions.
 - Buddhist caves (chaityas and viharas) reflect monastic life, rituals, and the spread of Buddhism.
 - Hindu cave temples (e.g., at Ellora) depict Puranic deities and mythological narratives.
 - Jain caves illustrate ascetic ideals and spiritual teachings.
3. **Evidence of Political Patronage:** These structures reveal the role of rulers, merchants, and local elites in sponsoring art and religion.
 - Inscriptions found in caves mention donors such as kings, guilds, monks, and traders.
 - Royal patronage under dynasties like the Satavahanas, Guptas, and Vakatakas is evident in large-scale excavations.

4. **Socio-Economic Conditions:** Rock-cut sites provide valuable clues about the economic life of the time.
 - Many caves are located along ancient trade routes, indicating links between commerce and religion.
 - Donations by merchants and guilds show the prosperity of trading communities.
5. **Cultural and Intellectual Life:** Rock-cut monuments reflect the intellectual and cultural environment of ancient India.
 - Murals at Ajanta depict scenes from the Jataka tales, court life, and daily activities.
 - Sculptures portray clothing, ornaments, musical instruments, and social customs.
6. **Architectural Innovation:** Rock-cut architecture demonstrates advanced engineering and planning skills.
 - Entire temples were carved out of single rocks, such as the Kailasa temple at Ellora.
 - Structural features like pillars, halls, sanctuaries, and drainage systems show technical expertise.
7. **Epigraphic and Historical Records:** Inscriptions found in rock-cut caves are crucial historical sources.
 - They provide dates, names of rulers, religious affiliations, and details of donations.
 - They help establish chronological sequences and historical events.

Post-Mauryan - Gupta Period (2nd BCE-6th CE)

➤ Chaityas & Viharas

Chaityas	Viharas
➤ Used as prayer halls. ➤ Chaityas were with Stupas. ➤ These have a small rectangular doorway that opens to a vaulted Hall with an apsidal end. At the end, there is a stupa. 	➤ Residential places for Buddhist and Jain monks. ➤ Viharas did not have stupas. ➤ They consist of a main hall, assembly hall and dining chambers. ➤ From the halls deep into the rocks, cells are provided for meditation. 

➤ Western India Types:

- ✓ **Apsidal, vaulted chaitya halls:** Found in Ajanta, Bhaja, and Pitalkhora, featuring semi-circular or apsidal halls with vaulted roofs.
- ✓ **Pillar-less apsidal halls:** Notable examples include Thana-Nandur in Maharashtra.
- ✓ **Flat-roofed quadrangular halls:** Found in Kondivite, these halls featured rear circular chambers.
- ✓ Use of basalt rock for rock-cutting enabled elaborate carving.

➤ **Key Western Sites:**

- ✓ **Karla:** Known for the largest chaitya hall, with richly sculpted facades.
- ✓ **Pandavleni** (Nasik): vihara cells with ghata-base capitals.
- ✓ **Ganeshleni** (Junnar) & **Kanheri** (Mumbai): extensive vihara networks.
- ✓ **Bhaja caves** (Pune): Famous significant Buddhist cave.
- ✓ **Bedsa caves:** known for well-preserved pillars and sculpted lions.
- ✓ **Kondane caves:** early example of wooden architectural imitations in stone.



➤ **Eastern India Highlights:**

- ✓ **Guntupalle** (Andhra Pradesh): unique cluster of stupa, chaitya and vihara.
- ✓ **Anakapalli & Dhanyakataka** (Andhra Pradesh): massive rock-cut stupas and viharas.
- ✓ **Udayagiri-Khandagiri** (Odisha): Jain monastic caves with bold reliefs.
- ✓ **Jaggayapeta** (Andhra Pradesh): Important site with richly decorated stupas.
- ✓ **Aryaka Pillars** (Andhra Pradesh): Found in **Buddhist stupas** at **Nagarjunakonda**, these pillars supported platforms or railings around stupas and were integral to monastic complexes during the **Ikshvaku period** (3rd–4th century CE).

➤ **Art & Decoration:**

- ✓ Early caves bear semicircular chaitya arches that prefigure later Buddhist gateways.
- ✓ Later sites include narrative reliefs (Jataka scenes), sculptures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and local folk deities.
- ✓ Murals at Ajanta exhibit Gupta-style elegance and narrative depth.
- ✓ Yaksha & Yakshini motifs continue alongside Buddhist themes in decorative elements.

Gupta Architecture “Golden Age”

1. **Rock-Cut Caves:**

- ✓ **Ajanta:** Comprising 25 viharas and 4 chaityas, with phases spanning from the 2nd BCE to 5th CE, under Vakataka patronage.
- ✓ **Ellora:** A complex of 34 caves, with 17 Brahmanical, 12 Buddhist, and 5 Jain caves, dating from the 5th to 11th century, featuring triple-storey halls.
- ✓ **Elephanta:** A collection of 5 Hindu and 2 Buddhist caves, showcasing notable sculptures like Maheshmurti and Nataraja.
- ✓ Other sites: **Bagh** (Satavahana, Rang Mahal reliefs), **Junagadh**, **Mandapeshwar**, **Udayagiri** (Chandragupta II's Varaha).

2. **Stupas & Terracotta:**

- ✓ Post-Mauryan stone stupas: Samat, Ratnagiri, Mirpur Khas, Dhamek; Devnimori outside Gangetic plain.
 - ✓ Clay figurines & red ware pottery found at Ahichchhatra, Rajgarh, Hastinapur.
 - ✓ Terracotta plaques depict scenes from daily life, domestic deities, and nature motifs, reflecting folk aesthetics.
 - ✓ **Devnimori stupa** (Gujarat) reveals a blend of Gandhara & Gupta influences, transition phase art.
-

3. Key Temple Examples:

- ✓ Parvati, Nachnakuthara; Ter (Maharashtra); Maniyar Math(Rajgir).
- ✓ **Bhitargaon Temple (UP):** Earliest known large brick shikhara temple; shows vertical elevation concept.
- ✓ **Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh (UP):** Earliest example of a full-fledged Gupta shikhara temple; depicts Vaishnava themes.

4. Artistic Highlights:

- ✓ Introduction of mural paintings in caves
- ✓ Synthesis of classical sculpture forms, dynamic iconography in both stone & metal.
- ✓ **Gupta bronzes** (e.g., Sultanganj Buddha) show refined casting, drapery & gentle modeling of figures.
- ✓ **Gupta art** is characterized by Sthira-lakshana (calm expression), symbolizing spiritual transcendence.
- ✓ Buddhist, Jain, & Hindu iconographies were harmoniously developed side-by-side during Gupta era.

Indo-Islamic Architecture (c. 12th–18th CE)

1. General Features

- ✓ **Arcuate Style:** Incorporation of true arches and domes with voussoirs and keystones, with minarets surrounding mosques.
- ✓ **Ornamentation:** Features arabesque patterns, calligraphy, geometric jali screens, and pietra-dura inlay; the use of charbagh gardens (four-part gardens) with water channels and fountains.
- ✓ **Materials:** Brick, lime-mortar, sandstone, marble.
- ✓ **Mihrab (prayer niche) & minbar (pulpit)** became integral parts of mosque architecture.
- ✓ **Iwan** (vaulted hall with one open side) adopted from Persian architecture.

2. Delhi Sultanate (Imperial Style)

- ✓ **Slave (Mamluk) Dynasty:** Key architectural contributions include the Qutb Minar complex (built by Aibak, Iltutmish, and Feroz Shah), and the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque (c. 1197), which employed recycled temple materials. The tomb arch innovation was introduced under Balban.
- ✓ **Khalji** (1290–1320): Notable for the Alai Darwaza, the first true dome, and the use of red sandstone and marble ornamentation.
- ✓ **Tughlaq:** Known for sloping “batter” walls, 4-centred arches & octagonal tombs (e.g., Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's tomb). The Tughlaqabad Fort is an example of their fortified cities.
- ✓ **Lodi:** Famous for octagonal garden-tombs (e.g., Sikander Lodi's tomb), with simpler decorative elements. Public works included saris, bridges, and baolis (stepwells), such as Gandhak ki Baoli built by Iltutmish.

3. Provincial Styles

- ✓ **Bengal:**
 - Distinctive Roof Forms** - Use of sloping cornices and curved (bangla) roofs, inspired by traditional Bengal bamboo-and-thatch huts, to withstand heavy rainfall.
 - Material Preference** - Predominant use of brick, due to scarcity of stone in Bengal; surfaces richly decorated with glazed tiles, terracotta patterns, and moulded bricks.
 - Structural Features** - Incorporation of multiple domes, curved arches, corner towers, and wide-open prayer halls adapted to local climatic needs.

d. **Decorative Style** - Intricate floral patterns, geometric motifs, and tile-work reflecting a blend of Persian artistic influence and local craft traditions.

e. **Major Examples** -

- ☞ **Adina Mosque**, Pandua – largest mosque of medieval India; showcases sloping cornices and brick construction.
- ☞ **Qadam Rasul**, Gaur – known for its curved roofs and ornate glazed-tile decoration.
- ☞ **Lattan Mosque**, Gaur – famous for vibrant coloured tile-work.
- ☞ **Eklakhi Mausoleum**, Pandua – early example with curved cornices.

✓ **Jaunpur:**

- a. **Massive, Lofty Gateways (Pishtaq)** - The hallmark of this style is the tall, imposing central arched gateway, often taller than the dome, as seen prominently in the Atala Mosque (1408) and the Jama Masjid of Jaunpur.
- b. **Broad, Flat-Surfaced Arches** - Instead of sharply pointed arches, Jaunpur structures use wide, flat, almost rectangular arches that create an austere look. This feature is well illustrated in the Lal Darwaza Mosque and Khalis Mukhlis Mosque.
- c. **Minimal Ornamentation** - Decoration is restrained, relying mainly on calligraphy, carved stone screens, and geometric motifs rather than heavy floral designs. The Atala Mosque epitomises this sober, disciplined aesthetic.
- d. **Strong Massing with Horizontal Emphasis** - Buildings appear broad and weighty, with expansive facades and wide prayer halls, a characteristic prominently visible in the Jama Masjid, Jaunpur, which spreads horizontally rather than vertically.
- e. **Indo-Islamic Synthesis in Structural Elements** - Use of projected eaves (chhajja-like features), thick walls, and robust pillars reflect a fusion of local Indian traditions with Islamic architectural forms, evident in the Lal Darwaza Mosque and Jhanjhari Masjid.

✓ **Malwa:**

- a. **Use of Dark Basalt and Contrasting Lime Plaster** - Malwa monuments often use dark black basalt stone contrasted with white or light plaster, creating a striking visual effect. This is clearly seen in the Dilawar Khan's Mosque (Mandu) and the Jami Masjid, Mandu.
- b. **Flat or Low Domes and Trabeate Construction** - Instead of tall domes, the style favours flat or gently curving domes resting on trabeate (post-lintel) systems, influenced by local Hindu traditions. The Hoshang Shah's Tomb reflects this blend of Hindu and Islamic techniques.
- c. **Arched Openings with Minimal Ornamentation** - Arches tend to be plain with limited decoration, relying more on proportion, solidity, and elegance. The Jami Masjid in Mandu exemplifies this minimal and restrained façade.
- d. **Large Courtyards and Elevated Platforms** - Structures frequently stand on high plinths with vast courtyards suited to the Malwa plateau climate. This is visible in the Baz Bahadur's Palace and Hindola Mahal, both highlighting the region's spacious architectural planning.
- e. **Local Traditions and Regional Fusion** - Malwa style integrates Hindu-Jain building elements, such as bracketed pillars, carved lintels, and chhatra-like pavilions, into Islamic forms. Rani Rupmati Pavilion and Jahaz Mahal are excellent examples of this fusion.

✓ **Deccan (Bijapur):**

- a. **Massive Domes and Bold Structural Scale** - Bijapur is famous for its colossal domes, especially the Gol Gumbaz, which has one of the largest masonry domes in the world and features the unique "Whispering Gallery." Structures are grand, heavy, and monumental.

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- b. **Use of Local Basalt and Stucco Decoration** - Buildings often use dark basalt stone with stucco ornamentation for surface detailing. The Ibrahim Rauza, often called the “Taj Mahal of the Deccan”, shows elegant stucco patterns, minarets, and refined carving.
 - c. **Distinctive Arches and Vaulting Techniques** - The style employs wide, almost semicircular arches and advanced vaulting, giving interiors a spacious feel. This is visible in the Jami Masjid (Bijapur) with its huge prayer hall and minimal interior pillars.
 - d. **Integration of Persian and Deccani Motifs** - Bijapur art blends Persian floral patterns, calligraphy, lotus motifs, bracket forms, and indigenous Deccan aesthetics. The Malik-e-Maidan cannon platform and Asar Mahal reflect this fusion of Persian elegance with local craftsmanship.
 - e. **Innovative Urban and Water Structures** - Bijapur developed advanced water architecture, stepwells, cisterns, aqueducts, alongside palaces and mosques. The Jahaz Mahal (Bijapur) and Gagan Mahal demonstrate this planning with large tanks and ornamental pavilions.
- ✓ **Gujarat Style:**
- a. **Exquisite Stone Carving & Jain Influence:** - Gujarat’s Indo-Islamic buildings are renowned for intricate stone carving, highly detailed geometric and floral motifs, and rich ornamentation inspired by Jain temple traditions. This is best seen in the Sidi Saiyyed Mosque (Ahmedabad) with its famous Tree of Life jaali.
 - b. **Use of Local Yellow Sandstone & Trabeate Construction** - Builders used yellow sandstone and often relied on trabeate (post-lintel) architecture rather than true arches, reflecting strong Hindu-Jain influence. The Jama Masjid of Ahmedabad (1424) is a prime example combining pillars, lintels, and carved brackets.
 - c. **Multi-Domed Prayer Halls Supported by Pillars** - Instead of a single large dome, Gujarat mosques often have multiple small domes resting on numerous pillars, creating a beautiful rhythmic interior space. This feature is prominent in the Rani Rupmati Mosque and Rani Sabrai’s Mosque.
 - d. **Elegant Minarets & Ornamental Facades** - Minarets are slender, richly decorated, and sometimes fluted, enhancing verticality. The Jhulta Minar (Shaking Minarets) of the Sidi Bashir Mosque show the engineering skill and decorative finesse unique to Gujarat.
 - e. **Blend of Islamic Planning with Local Craft Traditions** - Islamic layouts (courtyards, mihrabs, domes) merge seamlessly with Indian features like corbelled domes, carved brackets, perforated screens, and rich façade ornamentation. The Adalaj Stepwell and Dada Harir Vav, though stepwells, also reflect this blended aesthetic.
- ✓ **Kashmir:**
- a. **Strong Influence of Traditional Wooden Architecture** - Owing to abundant forests and seismic activity, Kashmiri buildings relied heavily on timber construction, featuring multi-tiered wooden roofs, intricate wood carving, and khatamband ceilings. The Shah Hamadan Mosque (Khanqah-e-Moula, Srinagar) beautifully demonstrates this wooden craftsmanship.
 - b. **Use of Pagoda-Like, Pyramidal Roofs** - Unlike other Islamic styles, Kashmir developed tiered, sloping roofs resembling pagodas, adapted to heavy snowfall. This unique form is clearly seen in the Jamia Masjid, Srinagar, with its four large wooden pagoda towers.
 - c. **Trabeate System with Brick & Timber Fusion** - Structures blend brick masonry with timber frames (Deyor system) for earthquake resistance. The Madani Mosque and various Sufi khanqahs of Srinagar show this hybrid system of construction.
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- d. **Minimal External Ornamentation; Rich Interior Craft** - Exterior walls are usually plain, but interiors display papier-mâché decoration (naqashi), wood carving, and lattice screens (pinjara work). The Khanqah-e-Moula is famous for its painted papier-mâché interiors.
 - e. **Influence of Buddhist, Hindu, and Central Asian Forms** - Kashmir's architectural vocabulary absorbed elements from Buddhist pagodas, Hindu temples, and Perso-Islamic motifs, resulting in a syncretic regional style. The Tomb of Zain-ul-Abidin's Mother reflects this blend with its pyramidal roof and ornate wooden detailing.

✓ **Chandella Style –**

- a. **Lifelike Representation & Emotional Energy** - Chandella sculptures exhibit remarkable realism, portraying humans, musicians, dancers, warriors, and lovers with natural movement, grace, and expressive vitality.
- b. **Dynamic Postures & Fluidity (Tribhanga)** - The use of curving, rhythmic postures give figures a sense of motion and resilience, making the stone forms appear flexible and alive.
- c. **Celebration of Complete Life Spectrum** - Themes span love, devotion, daily activities, warfare, nature, animals, mythical beings, and ascetics, reflecting a worldview where all aspects of life are sacred.
- d. **Erotic-Spiritual Synthesis** - Mithuna figures symbolise fertility, cosmic energy, and spiritual union, carved with sophistication to blend sensuality with philosophical depth.
- e. **Ornamentation, Detailing & Architectural Harmony** - Intricate jewellery, textures, drapery, and integration with trees, animals, and the soaring shikhara create a living ecosystem in stone, enhancing overall dynamism.

4. Mughal Architecture

- ✓ **Babur & Humayun:** Early mosques; Humayun's Tomb (first Persian-Indian synthesis; charbagh; double dome architecture).
- ✓ **Sher Shah:** Transitional Lodi-Mughal (Purana Qila, Sasaram tomb).
- ✓ **Akbar:** Fusion style at Fatehpur Sikri (Buland Darwaza, Panch Mahal, Ibadat Khana).
- ✓ **Jahangir & Nur Jahan:** Tombs at Sikandra & Agra (I'timad-ud-Daulah).
- ✓ **Shah Jahan:** Zenith of pietra-dura & marble (Taj Mahal, Red Fort's Diwan-i-Khas with Peacock Throne dais).
- ✓ **Aurangzeb:** Puritanical works (Badshahi Mosque, Bibi-ka-Maqbara).
- ✓ **Civic Projects:** The Mughals constructed key civil works such as the bridge over the Gomati River at Jaunpur and Grand Trunk Road revival (Sher Shah), West Yamuna Canal, Jaunpur bridge.
- ✓ In 1784, Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula built the Bada Imambara in Lucknow using an interlocking brick technique that required no mortar.
- ✓ Asaf-ud-Daula also commissioned the Rumi Darwaza in Lucknow, crafted from brick and finished with a lime plaster coating.
- ✓ **Use of Hasht-Bihisht (eight-part plan)** became standard in Mughal tomb architecture (e.g., Humayun's Tomb, Taj Mahal).
- ✓ **Jharokhas (balconied windows)** were introduced to integrate local Hindu styles within Mughal aesthetics.
- ✓ **Chhatris** (domed kiosks) crowned Mughal structures, giving a distinctive skyline.

Colonial & Modern Architecture

1. 16th–17th c. – Portuguese Baroque

- ✓ **Influence:** Iberian church and civic designs, blending Mannerist and Baroque styles with local adaptations.
 - ✓ **Features:** Internal courtyards, bold colour contrasts, use of laterite stone and lime plaster for coastal buildings.
 - ✓ **Examples:** Se Cathedral & Basilica of Bom Jesus (Goa); Diu Fort.
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2. 17th–18th c. – French Colonial Planning

- ✓ **Influence:** Rational urban grids and civic squares integrated with tropical town plans.
- ✓ **Features:** European church forms combined with local architectural styles, promenade-style riverfronts, and wide boulevards for civic aesthetics.
- ✓ **Examples:** Puducherry (grid layout, Sacred Heart Church); Chandan-nagar.
- ✓ Promenade-style riverfronts and wide boulevards designed for civic aesthetics.

3. 19th c. – British Indo-Gothic Revival

- ✓ **Influence:** Victorian Gothic craft mixed with Mughal/Persian motifs.
- ✓ **Features:** Pointed arches, traceried windows, ornamental facades with jali screens.
- ✓ **Examples:** Victoria Memorial (Kolkata), Gateway of India (Mumbai).
- ✓ Other examples include Bombay High Court and CST Railway Terminus.
- ✓ **Civic Elements:** Clock towers, spires, and stained glass, reflecting European symbolism.

4. Post-1911 – Lutyens' Neo-Roman Delhi

- ✓ **Influence:** Classical Roman and Baroque symbolism for Empire
- ✓ **Features:** Grand colonnades, massive domes, axial vistas; hybrid of Western orders.
- ✓ **Examples:** Secretariat Buildings, Rashtrapati Bhavan extensions.
- ✓ Lutyens collaborated with Herbert Baker, designed symmetrical layouts with Mughal char-bagh influence.
- ✓ Red and cream Dholpur sandstone prominently used.
- ✓ Incorporation of jaali screens (chhajja and chhatris) to provide climatic adaptability and cultural fusion.

5. 1950s–70s – Post-Independence Modernism

- ✓ **Influence:** International Style & Brutalism
- ✓ **Features:** Pilotis, raw concrete, brise-soleil sun-shades, sector-based city planning.
- ✓ **Examples:** Chandigarh Capitol Complex (Le Corbusier); Supreme Court of India.
- ✓ Integration of Vastu principles with modularity in housing schemes (e.g., Delhi Development Authority blocks).
- ✓ Use of exposed concrete (beton brut) and geometric abstraction in form.

6. 1970s–90s – Vernacular Revival

- ✓ **Influence:** Regional climate, materials & crafts
- ✓ **Features:** Courtyard-centric layouts, passive cooling, local stone & brick.
- ✓ **Examples:** IIM Ahmedabad (Balkrishna Doshi); Kanchanjunga Apartments (Charles Correa).
- ✓ Architects like Laurie Baker promoted low-cost, sustainable, people-centric architecture.
- ✓ Use of rat-trap bond brickwork, filler slabs & jali walls for thermal regulation.

7. 2000s–Present – Sustainable & High-Tech

- ✓ **Influence:** Green building standards & digital design.
- ✓ **Features:** Energy-efficient façades; rainwater harvesting; smart HVAC; living walls.
- ✓ **Examples:** CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre; Lotus Temple (Delhi)
- ✓ Platinum LEED-certified campuses emerging across IT and educational hubs.
- ✓ Digital parametric design, solar panels, and green rooftops widely adopted.
- ✓ Biophilic architecture trends, integration of plants, water, and light into building interiors.

Indian Philosophy and Tradition in Shaping Monuments and Art

Indian monuments and their art cannot be studied merely as architectural or decorative achievements; they are deeply rooted in the country's philosophical, religious, and cultural traditions. Indian philosophy, encompassing Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thought, provided both conceptual frameworks and symbolic vocabularies that guided the design, purpose, and aesthetics of these monuments.

1. Philosophical Foundations of Architecture: Indian monuments reflect the integration of metaphysical ideas with physical structures:

- ✓ **Hindu philosophy:** Concepts such as Brahman (the ultimate reality), Purusha (cosmic man), and Dharma influenced temple layouts. The Vastu Shastra prescribed orientation, proportions, and spatial harmony, ensuring that architecture mirrored cosmic order.

- ✓ **Buddhist philosophy:** The chaitya halls and stupas embody ideas of impermanence (Anitya) and the path to enlightenment. The stupa itself symbolizes the Buddha's body, mind, and teachings (Dharmachakra), turning architecture into a meditative and ritual instrument.
- ✓ **Jain philosophy:** Emphasis on asceticism, non-violence (Ahimsa), and liberation (Moksha) guided the construction of Jain caves, emphasizing simplicity, sanctity, and moral didacticism.
- 2. **Religious and Iconographic Influence:** Philosophy directly shaped the iconography and ornamentation of monuments:
 - ✓ Temples and caves often depict deities, mythological narratives, and cosmological motifs. For example, Ellora and Ajanta caves integrate Puranic stories and Jataka tales into sculpture and painting.
 - ✓ Symbolism conveys moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings; e.g., lotus motifs represent purity, while the wheel (Dharmachakra) signifies law and cosmic order.
- 3. **Aesthetic Principles and Indian Tradition:** Indian aesthetic theory (Rasa and Alankara) informed sculptural and artistic expression:
 - ✓ Sculptures and murals evoke emotional states aligned with philosophical ideals such as devotion (Bhakti), heroism (Virya), or serenity (Shanta).
 - ✓ Ornamentation in temples and cave architecture adheres to canonical texts like the Shilpa Shastra, blending utility with spiritual symbolism.
- 4. **Integration of Ritual and Space:** Monuments were designed not only as visual marvels but as spaces for practice and reflection:
 - ✓ Temples align with cardinal directions, emphasizing the connection between the terrestrial and cosmic realms.
 - ✓ Buddhist viharas and chaityas facilitated communal monastic life, meditation, and the dissemination of philosophical teachings.
- 5. **Continuity and Synthesis:** The interplay of philosophy, religion, and art created a uniquely Indian architectural idiom:
 - ✓ A continuity of ideas allowed regional styles (Nagara, Dravida, Vesara) to emerge while adhering to shared philosophical and symbolic principles.
 - ✓ Philosophical narratives were integrated into structural innovations, such as the Kailasa temple at Ellora, which merges cosmic symbolism with technical mastery.

Indian architecture is not static. It is adaptive, inclusive, and layered. It bridges the ancient and the futuristic, sacred and secular, local and global, making it a living heritage that continues to evolve while preserving its soul.