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IMPORTANT THEMES FOR ANCIENT HISTORY & ART AND CULTURE

Student Notes:

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1. Prehistory and Protohistory

Introduction

Prehistory refers to the period **before the invention of writing**. Since there are **no written records**, it is **studied using artifacts**. It should however be noted that humans used language long before they invented writing systems. **For example**, the cuneiform script appeared in Mesopotamia circa 3400 BCE.

Protohistory is a **transitional phase** with different meanings **depending on the context**. Protohistory in the Indian subcontinent consists of the **Harappan civilisation**, noted for its undeciphered script, and **Vedic Age**. **Archaeologists** define protohistory as the period between the **start of food production** and the introduction of iron technology.

1.1. General Features of the Stone Age

Period	Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)	Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age)	Neolithic (New Stone Age)
Time Period	Approximately 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 BCE	Approximately 10,000 BCE to 4,000 BCE	Approximately 4,000 BCE to 2,000 BCE
Regions	Widespread across India, including sites like Bhimbetka, Hunsgi, and Attirampakkam	Widespread across India, including sites like Sites include Bagor, Langhnaj, Adamgarh, etc	Widespread across India, including sites like Sites include Koldihwa, Mahagara, Burzahom, etc
Tools	Hand axes, cleavers, and choppers made of stone 	Microliths (small, pointed tools), arrowheads, and scrapers 	Polished stone tools , axes, and adzes 
Economy	Hunter-gatherer lifestyle	Transition from hunting-gathering to more settled life; evidence of early agriculture	Settled agriculture with domestication of plants and animals
Technology	Simple stone tools using direct percussion method	More refined tools using pressure flaking technique	Advanced stone tools , pottery, and weaving
Art and Culture	Cave paintings and engravings at sites like Bhimbetka and Lakhudiyar	Rock art depicting hunting scenes and daily life at sites like Bhimbetka	Pottery, farming tools , and permanent housing.

			
Human Evidence	Early humans evolved from simple tool-makers to advanced Homo sapiens , evidenced by the Narmada skull of Homo erectus.	Humans transitioned from hunter-gatherers to early agriculturists , evidenced by microlithic tools and burial sites with grave goods.	Humans developed settled agricultural communities , marked by domesticated animals, cultivated crops, and advanced pottery .

2. Harappan Civilization

The **Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)** was a **Bronze Age civilization** that thrived in the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent between **3300 and 1900 BCE**. It was **one of the three early river valley civilizations**, along with ancient **Egypt** and **Mesopotamia**. The Indus Valley Civilization was the **largest** among these, covering an area of about **800,000 square kilometers**. This vast region included modern-day Pakistan, northern India, and parts of northeast Afghanistan.

Urban Planning and Architecture

Components	Explanation
Classification of City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A typical Harappan city was divided into two parts: the Citadel, where it is suggested that the ruling class lived. It had public buildings and granaries as well. The Lower Town was considered to be the place where the ordinary people lived and worked. In some sites (like Dholavira), a third level has also been found. This area, located between the citadel and the lower town, is said to have housed skilled artisans and trades people.
City Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city was planned in a grid pattern, with streets spanning north-south and intersecting at 90 Degree.
Construction Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun-dried and burnt bricks & Mud-brick were the primary building material. Stone was sometimes used in villages for laying foundations and drains The standard brick size for Harappan houses was 7 x 14 x 28 cm [The Indus Proportion 1:2:4]
Drainage System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a sophisticated drainage system in all cities, smaller towns and villages. The drains were connected to larger drains located on the main streets, which emptied outside the city walls. Main drains had corbelled arches of brick or stone, with rectangular soak-pits for solid waste collection placed at intervals. Sewage pipes were separate from rainwater drains.

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Harappan houses were built around a central courtyard. • Doorways and windows of Harappan houses usually faced side lanes. Harappan houses were multi-storied and often had staircases. • Harappan houses featured dedicated bathing areas and toilets, with bathing platforms and drains located in rooms next to wells.
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Agriculture

Components	Explanation
Surplus Production and Diversity of subsistence Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture formed the backbone of the Harappan economy, supplemented by animal husbandry and hunting. • The existence of urban centers within the Harappan Civilization implies the generation of agricultural surplus to sustain a non-agricultural population. • There existed regional variations in crops, with barley, wheat, sesame, rice, millets, grapes being cultivated across the civilisation.

Social Structure

Components	Explanation
Social Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of urban centers suggests some degree of social organization and specialization • The distribution of artifacts, including precious metals, seals across various settlement sizes, suggests a degree of equality in accessing wealth and its symbols. • Existence of specialized crafts within the Indus Civilization, indicating a degree of occupational specialization • The extensive trade networks, both inter-regional and long-distance, indicate the presence of a merchant class.

Religious System

Components	Explanation
Religion of Harappan People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abundance of terracotta female figurines was interpreted as worship of Mother Goddess • The recurring motif of a horned figure has been referred to as Proto Shiva or Pashupati Seal. • The frequent depiction of trees, particularly the pipal tree, suggests some religious significance of nature. • While no structures definitively identifiable as temples have been found, the discovery of "fire altars" at sites like Kalibangan and Banawali hints at the possibility of ritual use.
Funerary Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common burial practice involved laying the deceased in an extended position. Fractional burials were also found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Symbolic burials devoid of skeletal remains but accompanied by grave goods were discovered in Kalibangan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grave goods were typically placed alongside the body. These items included food, pottery, etc. • Variations in burial practices across different sites and periods provide insights into the diversity of beliefs and customs within the IVC
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Writing and Script

Components	Explanation
Varied Use and Decode of Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Script is characterized as a logo-syllabic system, with each symbol representing a word or syllable exhibiting a consistent structure across its geographical spread, suggesting cultural integration. • It is primarily written from right to left though instances of left-to-right and boustrophedon styles also exist. • Despite being the oldest known script in the Indian subcontinent, the Indus script remains undeciphered • The majority of Indus inscriptions have been discovered on seals and sealings, and on pottery suggesting their primary function as a marking system for trade and ownership. • The discovery of a large “sign board” at Dholavira, comprised of ten large symbols, hints at the potential civic use of the script

Art and Architecture

Components	Explanation
Pottery, Seals, Terracotta and Metal Craft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pottery in the Indus civilization was mass-produced and wheel-turned. Kilns at major cities like Mohenjodaro and Harappa confirm organized production. There is characteristic standardized bright red slips and black designs on pottery. • The IVC is renowned for its intricate Seals, carved mainly from steatite. These seals often bear short inscriptions and depict a variety of motifs, including animals like bulls, elephants, and tigers, along with humans and mythical creatures(unicorn). • Terracotta figurines of animals, such as bulls, buffaloes, monkeys, and dogs, were popular, alongside toy carts with wheels. • Artifacts confirm the use of copper, bronze, gold, and silver by the Indus people. Metal was crafted into tools, weapons, ornaments, and vessels, with copper arrowheads, celts, knives, and decorative items highlighting its importance in daily life. • Bead making represents a sophisticated craft deeply rooted in the IVC. Bead-making factories at sites like Chanhudaro and Lothal have been found.

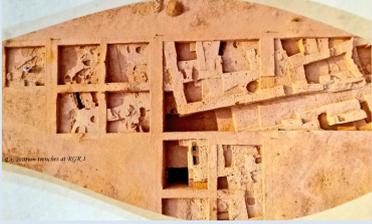
2.1. Important Themes on Harappan Civilization

9th Excavation of Rakhigarhi Site

Recently the 9th excavation of the Rakhigarhi site has been initiated. The site is considered to be one of India’s most important Harappan sites, yielding skeletal remains that have helped uncover questions on Indian Ancestry, helped in scientific analysis of food practices of Harappan people, among others. The crucial details of this site are as follows:

Details of Rakhigarhi site:

Student Notes:

Aspect	Points to Note
Location	Hisar District, Haryana, India
Area Covered	Approximately 350 hectares
Excavation Periods	Initial excavation was done in 1969 , followed by major excavations in 1997-2000, 2011-2016, and ongoing from 2021 
Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site features multi-story houses, walled settlements with burnt-brick walls, well-planned lanes, and an efficient drainage system. There is evidence of a jewelry making unit, including semi-precious stones such as agate and carnelian. There are also thousands of clay pots, terracotta figures, copper and gold jewelry, Steatite seals, terracotta unbaked sealings with elephant relief, and Harappan script found at this site. A Granary made of mud-bricks, with rectangular or square chambers has been found. 
Human Remains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skeletons of two females adorned with jasper, agate beads, and shell bangles have been found. Female Skeleton of Rakhigarhi kept at National Museum New Delhi 
Scientific Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DNA analysis of skeletons has been done to determine ancestry and dietary practices of Harappan People. The Migration theories of the past have been challenged by the findings of this site. A study done by Deccan College Pune along with the Central Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has established that human remains discovered at an ancient site of Rakhigarhi date back around 8,000 years.
Govt Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget 2020 declared Rakhigarhi as an “Iconic Site” and a site museum was to be developed here.

- Recently, a new excavation supported by ASI has been started to uncover more mysteries of Harappan People.



Water Conservation and Management System at Dholavira

Aspect	Details
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khadirbet, Bhachau Taluka, Kutch District, Gujarat, India Dholavira has two seasonal streams: Mansar in the north, and Manhar in the south. 
Area Covered	Approximately 47 hectares (120 acres)
Excavation Periods	Initiated in 1989, with 13 field excavations between 1990 and 2005 
Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced urban planning, sophisticated water conservation system, and extensive reservoirs are the key features of this site. Citadel, middle town, lower town, and numerous reservoirs are found here. It is one of the few sites to have three tier classification of towns. Satellite images have revealed an underground reservoir extending from the city's walls. This expert construction allowed the settlement to thrive despite the sparse desert rainfall. Artifacts found include terracotta pottery, beads, gold and copper ornaments, seals, fish hooks, animal figurines, tools, urns, and imported vessels, indicating trade links with distant lands like Mesopotamia. Dholavira Signboard is possibly worlds first such artifact found at river valley sites. It indicates civic use of script. 
UNESCO Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021.

Relevance of Harappan Civilization Today

Civic Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indus Valley Civilization showed remarkable urban planning with well-designed cities, sophisticated drainage systems, and paved roads. The infrastructure of the Indus Valley, with its advanced underground sewage systems and dedicated waste disposal systems, contrasts sharply with modern Indian cities facing challenges like flooding from inadequate drainage and traffic congestion from poorly maintained roads. This historical example highlights the importance of robust sanitation and infrastructure for contemporary urban planning in India.
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indus Valley Civilization utilized a network of reservoirs and channels to conserve rainwater, ensuring water availability for domestic and agricultural purposes. This approach could be insightful for modern India, where farmers often rely heavily on monsoon rainfall, leading to vulnerability in times of drought. The discovery of structures, potentially granaries, with air passages for ventilation suggests advanced storage techniques used by the Indus people to preserve agricultural produce. This knowledge could be relevant for addressing post-harvest losses that plague the region today.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indus Valley Civilization thrived on organized manufacturing industries, producing goods like pottery, beads, and tools, not only for local consumption but also for export. This model of skilled craftsmanship and trade holds potential for creating employment opportunities in India, particularly for rural and socially disadvantaged communities.

3. Vedic Period

3.1. Differences Between Early and Later Vedic Era

Aspect	Early Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
Political Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society was primarily pastoral with Aryans organized into smaller tribal units. These tribes frequently migrated and engaged in conflicts over resources, particularly cattle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society transitioned to a more settled agricultural lifestyle with the adoption of iron technology. Larger kingdoms emerged, replacing the smaller tribal structures. Conflicts shifted from cattle raids to territorial expansion, and the concept of "Rashtra," denoting a larger territorial unit, became prominent.
Social Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society exhibited social stratification based on occupation and gender but 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Later Vedic period saw the varna system become more pronounced and rigid, dividing society into four classes:

	<p>lacked the rigidity of the later caste system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women held relatively higher social standing, participating in assemblies, accessing education, and choosing their life partners. • There were no instances of child marriage, sati, or purdah. 	<p>Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of women declined, with restrictions on their participation in public life and the emergence of practices like child marriage and sati. • The concept of gotra (lineage) also emerged, further solidifying social boundaries.
Economic Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy was primarily pastoral, with cattle rearing as the dominant activity. • Agricultural practices were limited, and resource distribution was based on voluntary offerings rather than a formalized system of taxation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advent of iron technology revolutionized agriculture, making it the mainstay of the economy. • Forests were cleared for cultivation, ploughs were used, and mixed farming became common. • A more formalized system of taxation emerged, with the Sangrihitri responsible for collecting tributes. • The period also saw the beginnings of urban centers, indicating a shift towards a more complex economy.
Religious Beliefs and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Vedic religious practices were characterized by the worship of natural forces, with deities like Indra and Agni being prominent. • Rituals were simpler, involving hymns and offerings, with limited emphasis on elaborate sacrifices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Later Vedic period, religious practices shifted towards the centrality of sacrifices (yajnas), which became more elaborate and frequent. • The rise of the priestly class (Brahmanas) and their influence in conducting these rituals led to social tensions. • Deities like Prajapati, Vishnu, and Rudra gained prominence, while Indra and Agni lost their earlier significance.

4. The Mahajanapadas

The Mahajanapadas were ancient Indian kingdoms that emerged around the **6th century BCE** during the **“Second Urbanisation.”** These political entities played a crucial role in shaping early ancient history and were significant political, economic, and cultural entities.

Key Features of Mahajanapadas

- **Political Organization:** The Mahajanapadas marked the transition from **smaller tribal units to larger states with centralized governance**. Kings, supported by councils of ministers, played central roles in these political entities. There were two types of states:
 - **Monarchies (Rajyas):** Ruled by kings with centralized administrations.

- **Ganasanghas (Republics):** Oligarchic states where assemblies (Santhagara) made decisions through discussions and voting.
- **Economic Activities:** Trade and commerce flourished, with significant trade routes like **Uttarapatha** and **Dakshinapatha** facilitating the movement of goods. Agricultural advancements, supported by **iron technology**, were key to their economies.
- **Social Structure:** Society was divided into classes, and the **caste system** was emerging. **Brahmanas** saw a rise in status due to elaborate rituals.
- **Religious Beliefs and Practices:** The Mahajanapadas were religiously diverse, with **Buddhism** and **Jainism** rising to **challenge the Brahmanical order**, bringing significant social and economic changes.
- **Significance and Impact:** The Mahajanapadas laid the foundation for powerful empires like the **Mauryas**. They contributed to the flourishing of art, culture, and economic prosperity through control of resources and trade networks.

4.1. Rise of Magadha

Among the **16 Mahajanapadas** mentioned in Buddhist texts, **Magadha**, located in the fertile plains of the Ganga basin, became the most dominant.

- **Geographical Advantages:** Magadha's strategic location in the Gangetic plain provided numerous advantages:
 - **Fertile Soil and Rainfall:** The region's fertile alluvial soil and abundant rainfall resulted in an agricultural surplus, crucial for supporting a large army.
 - **Strategic Capitals:** Its capitals, **Rajagriha** and later **Pataliputra**, were naturally fortified and strategically located, offering protection from enemies.
 - **Natural Resources:** The region's rich **iron deposits** allowed the production of superior weapons. Additionally, the availability of **timber and elephants** enhanced Magadha's military power, giving it an edge over other Mahajanapadas that relied on horses and chariots.
- **Political Acumen and Effective Administration:** Ambitious and able rulers played a key role in Magadha's rise:
 - Rulers like **Bimbisara**, **Ajatashatru**, and **Mahapadma Nanda** employed strategies such as matrimonial alliances, political maneuvering, and military conquests to expand their kingdom.
- **Economic Growth:** The rise of **trade** and the **use of metal money** contributed to Magadha's wealth, enabling its rulers to maintain a large army and control a vast empire.

Some Important Dynasties and Rulers of Magadha

Dynasty	Ruler	Contributions
Haryanka Dynasty	Bimbisara (544-492 BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Magadha's territory through conquests and diplomacy. Employed a three-pronged policy: matrimonial alliances, forming alliances with strong rulers, and conquering weaker neighbors.
Shishunaga Dynasty	-	Continued to expand Magadha's territory and influence.
Nanda Dynasty	Mahapadma Nanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further consolidated and expanded the Magadhan empire.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uprooted Kshatriya dynasties in north India and extended conquests beyond the Gangetic basin, establishing a vast empire.
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4.2. Guilds in Ancient India

Guilds, known as *Sreni*, were **associations of craftsmen, traders, and artisans** united by their trade. They existed in major towns, covering professions from weavers to merchants. Each guild was led by an "Elder" (*Jyesthaka*), often hereditary, with a council of senior members managing affairs.

- Functions and Regulations:** Guilds regulated industries by setting rules for work, wages, standards, and prices, upheld by the king.
 - They also **settled disputes** and expelled unruly members. Guilds acted as **social safety nets**, providing support for widows, orphans, and the ill.
- Economic and Social Significance:** Guilds played a key role in the economy, fostering trade, regulating industries, and acting as financial institutions.
- They **accepted deposits, lent money**, and managed **religious endowments**. Some even maintained militias to **support the king's army**.
- Relationship with the State:** Guilds **maintained close ties** with the ruling elite. Guild leaders **advised the king** and held administrative roles.
 - The **state recognized guild authority** and relied on their economic contributions, creating a symbiotic relationship.

Guilds were pivotal in shaping the economic landscape, influencing social norms, and closely interacting with the ruling class in ancient India. They exemplify organized labor and economic regulation in a pre-modern context.

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5. Mauryan Period

The **Mauryan Empire** was founded by **Chandragupta Maurya** in **322 BCE**. It became one of ancient **India's largest** and most powerful empires during the course of time. Under Emperor **Ashoka**, it covered much of the **Indian subcontinent** and parts of Iran and Afghanistan. The empire is known for its strong military, effective government, and significant cultural achievements. The **capital** of the Mauryan Empire was **Pataliputra**, near modern-day Patna.

Sources of Mauryan History

Archaeological Sources

Archaeology	Key Findings
Sanchi Stupa	Evidence of Ashoka's architectural contributions and the spread of Buddhism.
Ashokan Pillars and Inscriptions	Edicts and inscriptions providing insights into Ashoka's policies, administration, and moral teachings.
Barabar Caves	Examples of Mauryan rock-cut architecture and Ashoka's patronage of religious sanctuaries.
Stupas and Monasteries	Evidence of Buddhist propagation and Mauryan architectural influence in different regions. Example: Dhamek Stupa at Sarnath

Literary Sources

Literary Sources	Key Findings
Arthashastra by Kautilya	Detailed insights into Mauryan administration , economic policies, military strategies, and governance. Saptang Theory and Statecraft are key features of this text
Indica by Megasthenes	Descriptions of the Mauryan court, society, and Pataliputra , providing an outsider's perspective on the empire's culture.
Edicts of Ashoka	Ashoka's policies, propagation of Buddhism, Dhamma , ethical directives, and administrative details across the empire.
Puranas	Genealogies and historical narratives of Mauryan rulers, particularly Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka.
Jain Texts (e.g., Parishishtaparvan)	Information on Chandragupta's conversion to Jainism , his abdication, and later life.
Dipavamsa	Chronicles the spread of Buddhism to Sri Lanka and Ashoka's role in promoting Buddhism.
Ashokavadana	Legends about Ashoka's life , conversion to Buddhism, and his efforts to spread the religion.
Divyavadana	Collection of narratives about Ashoka and other Buddhist figures, reflecting on his support for Buddhism.

Kalpa Sutra	Jain text provides information about the early Jain community and connections to Mauryan rulers.
Acharanga Sutra	Jain scripture discussing the lives of Jain monks and their interactions with the Mauryan society.

Nature of Mauryan Empire

Centralized Bureaucratic State:

- Based on the **Arthashastra**, Mauryan state is described as a **highly centralized administration** with a robust bureaucratic structure.
- It details **governance practices**, emphasizing strong control by the central authority over various aspects of administration, economy, and society.

Core-Periphery Model:

- Historian Romila Thapar's core-periphery model suggests that the Mauryan state had a **well-defined central core** with strong administrative control.
- The **peripheral regions** had **relative autonomy** but were still linked to the core through tribute and administrative oversight.

Ashoka as an Emperor

Feature	Detail
Powerful Monarch	Ashoka held central authority in a monarchical system, evidenced by his widespread edicts and inscriptions on pillars and rocks.
Disseminator of Dhamma	Ashoka focused on promoting dhamma , which included principles of righteous conduct and governance.
Concept of Dhamma	Included elements like Ahimsa, Inter-Sectarian Harmony, and Paternalistic Welfare.
Renunciation of Warfare	Adopted dhamma-vijaya (victory through dhamma) post-Kalinga war, expressing remorse over its devastation.
Relationship with Buddhism	Ashoka was a devout follower (upasaka) of Buddhism, promoting Buddhist construction and close ties with the sangha.

5.1. Dhamma Policy

Ashoka's dhamma was a unique framework for governance that emphasized ethical conduct, social responsibility, and inter-religious harmony. Influenced by Buddhist principles, especially ahimsa, it aimed to create a just and moral society. Ashoka's dhamma incorporated various traditions, focusing on ethical living and promoting peace, rather than supporting a specific religious doctrine.

What Dhamma was

Aspect	Details	Artefact/Edict/Pillar
Ahimsa and Respect for Life	Prohibited animal sacrifices, reduced meat consumption, and established medical facilities for humans and animals.	Rock Edict I, Pillar Edict VII
Compassion and Generosity	Encouraged compassion towards all beings and generosity towards Brahmanas, Shramanas, and the needy, emphasizing respect within families.	Rock Edict II, Rock Edict XII

Righteous Conduct and Social Harmony	Promoted honesty, truthfulness, and humane treatment of slaves and servants, advocating for ethical behavior in all spheres of life.	Rock Edict IV, Rock Edict VI
Inter-Religious Understanding	Emphasized inter-religious harmony, urging respect and understanding between different sects, and learning from diverse religious teachings.	Rock Edict VII, Rock Edict XII
Dhamma-Vijaya (Conquest Through Dhamma)	Adopted non-violence and ethical conduct over military conquest, sending missions to promote peace and righteousness post-Kalinga War.	Rock Edict XIII, Pillar Edict V
Role of the King	Saw himself as a moral exemplar, appointing dhamma-mahamatras to implement dhamma, providing moral guidance and ensuring the welfare of his subjects.	Rock Edict III, Pillar Edict VII

What Dhamma was not

Aspect	Details
Not Equivalent to Buddhism	While influenced by Buddhist principles, Ashoka's dhamma was a broader framework for ethical governance, not promoting any single religion as state doctrine.

5.2. Art and Architecture of Mauryas

Category	Details	Examples
Court Art	Patronized by Mauryan kings , especially Ashoka. Includes monumental stone sculpture and architecture, palace (like the Kumrahar excavation), etc.	Ashoka Pillars, Sanchi Stupa
Popular Art	It emerged from the lives and patronage of everyday people and events. Terracotta was the main item which was used for creating this art.	Local terracotta figurines
Revival of Art Forms	Linked to the emergence of empires, accumulation of wealth among urban elites, and increased formalization of religious practices after the Harappan civilization.	Urban planning of Pataliputra, Stupas at Vaishali and Piprahwa
Purpose	Art served political and religious purposes , intertwining with ideology and practices.	Inscriptions on Ashoka Pillars promoting dhamma
Foreign Influence	Some art historians cite Persian influence , while others see it as part of a shared ancient eastern cultural heritage . However, in recent years the focus has been on indigenous nature of pillars.	Architectural styles similar to Achaemenid architecture
Buddhist Stupa Architecture	Evolution of stupa architecture under Ashoka, with mud stupas being expanded or rebuilt with bricks , evident at sites like Vaishali and Piprahwa.	Stupas at Sanchi, Barabar Caves

Large Stone Sculptures	Human figures representing yakshas and yakshis found near Patna and Mathura, initially classified as Mauryan but re-evaluated due to continued use of "Maurya polish" into early CE centuries.	Yaksha statues near Didarganj, Yakshi statues in Mathura
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Decline of Mauryan Empire

Factor	Detail
Weakening Dynastic Control	After Ashoka's reign, successive rulers had shorter reigns, indicating a decline in dynastic stability and effective leadership.
Invasion by Bactrian Greeks	The Bactrian Greeks invaded, exploiting the weakened state of the empire, contributing to further fragmentation.
Impact of Ashoka's Policies	Ashoka's pacifism and religious tolerance might have alienated certain societal segments and reduced military preparedness.
Strain on Imperial Mechanisms	Managing the vast, diverse empire posed significant challenges, straining administrative structures and military power, leading to fragmentation.
Internal and External Pressures	The combined effect of internal weaknesses and external invasions stressed the empire's ability to maintain control and stability.

6. Gupta Period

Beginning in the **fourth century CE**, the Gupta Empire emerged after the decline of the Kushans. **Established by Sri Gupta**, it grew most under the reign of **Chandragupta I** (c. 319–335/336 CE), marking the **beginning of the Gupta period** in 319–320 CE. Often referred to as **India's "golden age,"** the Gupta Empire included most of the subcontinent and was of particular importance for development of science, literature, art, and technology. Most information about the roughly 160 year empire comes from its coins and inscriptions.

Sources for study of Gupta Period

Literary Sources of the Gupta Empire

Source	Details
The Puranas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide genealogical information about the Gupta dynasty, though accounts may be contradictory. Debate exists on whether the Guptas were Vaishyas or Kshatriyas based on different texts and their interpretations.
Secular Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes works like <i>Devichandraguptam</i> and <i>Mudhrakshasam</i> by Visakadatta, <i>Nitisara</i> by Kamandaka, <i>Manjushrimulakalpa</i>, <i>Harivamsha Purana</i>, <i>Tiloya Pannati</i>, <i>Kathasaritsagara</i>, and <i>Kamasutra</i>.
Foreign Accounts (Fa Hien)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The travelogue of the Chinese Buddhist monk FaHien provides details about social, economic, and religious conditions during Chandragupta II's reign.

Archaeological Sources of the Gupta Empire

Student Notes:

Source	Details
Stone Inscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found across the subcontinent, these inscriptions record royal lineages, political events, and religious grants. Examples include the Mehrauli Iron Pillar inscription and the Allahabad Pillar inscription.
Copper Plate Inscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issued by rulers and private individuals, similar to stone inscriptions. Copper inscriptions were primarily used by Gupta rulers to record land grants and details of the administrative hierarchy
Coins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gupta coinage, particularly from Samudragupta and Chandragupta II, includes various types of gold, silver, and copper coins. These coins offer insights into their accomplishments (Samudragupta Coins) and artistic advancements (Tiger symbol, etc).

Social Dynamics of the Gupta Period

Category	Details
Family Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the Dharmashastra texts, historians argue strengthening of patriarchal norms during this period. It is noted from various sources that there is increased subordination of women, withdrawal of women from public life, heightened preference for sons over daughters, emphasis on chastity and prepuberty marriages, etc.
Women's Property (Stridhana)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stridhana refers to the movable property a woman acquires during her lifetime, such as jewelry, clothing, and household items gifted by her family. This property is passed from mother to daughter. Stridhana does not include inherited property or assets earned through the woman's own labor. Katyayana Smriti lists six types of stridhana: gifts before nuptial fire, in bridal procession, from in laws, as bride price, from family members, and anything obtained while married/unmarried.
Women in Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decline in social status and increased subordination of women is argued by historians for the Gupta period. Sons were preferred for family lineage and ancestral rites. Expected roles of women included domestic duties and honoring mothers in law. Financial dependence on men, autonomy limited to stridhana for personal property. Emergence of early marriage and sati practices, with the first recorded instance of sati around 510 CE[Eran Inscription]. Economic activity among women of lower varnas was more prevalent than among women of higher varnas.

Caste System (Varna and Jati)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crystallisation of importance of four <i>varnas</i> (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra). • Rise of Brahmana power and influence through tax free land grants (<i>brahmadeya</i>). • Proliferation of <i>jatis</i> (castes) through <i>varnasamkara</i> (mixing of <i>varnas</i>). • Assimilation of foreigners and tribal communities into the caste system. • Intensification of untouchability, especially towards <i>Chandalas</i>. FaHien observed <i>Chandalas</i> lived outside villages and announced their presence to avoid contact with higher castes
Religious Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gupta kings were devout Hindus but tolerant of other religions, such as Buddhism. • Buddhism did not receive the same level of royal patronage as in earlier periods.

6.1. Gupta Period as Golden Age

Aspect	Details
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The period saw development of sophisticated stone sculptures. Example: Varaha (boar) avatara sculpture • Flourishing of Buddhist art is visible, especially the Ajanta cave paintings depicting Buddha's life and Jataka stories • There is visible use of vibrant colors and intricate details in cave paintings
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earliest standing stone temples have been found for the Gupta period. • Most significant contributions to Nagara temple architecture with examples like Dashavatara temple at Deogarh, and temples at Tigawa, Bhumara, and Khoh. • The Panchayatana style of temple architecture, associated with the Gupta period, features a central shrine surrounded by four subsidiary shrines at the cardinal directions. The central shrine houses the main deity, while the smaller shrines contain other deities or related figures, forming a group of five temples.
Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of prominent Sanskrit poets and playwrights such as Kalidasa and Vishakhadatta • Compilation of Vedic texts, Dharmashastra texts and epics Ramayana and Mahabharata in their final form is considered to have been done in Gupta period • Works of Kalidasa like Meghaduta, Raghuvamsham, and Kumarasambhavam set in courtly life provide insights into social and cultural milieu

Debate: Gupta Period as Golden Age

Aspect	Description	Examples
Political Unity	Unified a large part of northern India, fostering a centralized government .	The Gupta rulers established political stability, which encouraged cultural and economic growth.

Sanskrit Literature	Emergence of classic works and renowned poets.	Works of Kālidāsa (e.g., Meghaduta) and Viśākhadatta ; compilation of Ramayana and Mahabharata.
Art and Architecture	Significant advancements in stone sculpture and temple architecture.	Buddha statues of Sarnath; temples like Dashavatara temple at Deogarh.
Scientific Progress	Notable contributions in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine.	Aryabhata's explanations of solar and lunar eclipses; proposals that the earth is spherical and rotates on its axis.
Religious Developments	Flourishing of Brahmanism , elaboration of rituals, and composition of religious texts.	Growth of Hindu religious practices , although Buddhism's prominence declined in the Gangetic valley.
Peaceful and Prosperous	Described as a period of relative peace and prosperity.	Compared favorably to the declining Roman Empire and China during a period of turmoil.

Debate: Arguments Against Gupta Period as Golden Age

Aspect	Description	Examples
Land Grants	Increase in land grants to Brahmanas and officials leading to powerful intermediaries.	The emergence of Brahmana landlords; administrative challenges due to intermediary control.
Decline in Trade and Coinage	Decrease in trade and a decline in coinage quality , indicating economic shifts.	Debasement of coinage, reduction in gold content of Gupta coins, impacting the economy.
Rise of Feudatories	Weakening of central authority and rise of independent regional powers.	Huna invasions exploiting weakened Gupta rule; regional feudatories gaining power.
Social Hierarchy	Strengthening of patriarchal structures and subordination of women.	Increase in practices like child marriage and sati , women's dependence on male relatives, and lack of property rights.

Causes for the Decline of the Gupta Empire

Cause	Description
Hun Invasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skandagupta repelled early Huna attacks in the early 5th century, but his successors struggled against their growing power. • The Huna chief Toramana conquered vast territories by 485 CE, weakening the Guptas.
Rise of Feudatories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the Gupta Empire's central authority weakened, local leaders like Yashodharman of Malwa, initially appointed by the Guptas, seized the opportunity to establish independent power bases.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yashodharman's victory over the Huna ruler Mihirkula exemplified the rising autonomy of these feudatories, further fragmenting Gupta control.
Economic Decline	<p>Gradual economic decline evidenced by several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing gold content in coins Increased land grants to Brahmanas and officials straining finances, Disrupted trade routes due to Huna invasions Decreased Roman demand for Indian silk and disruption of Roman Trade.
Weak Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After Skandagupta, later Gupta rulers lacked strength and competence to address challenges, leading to weakened central control.
Feudal Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased land grants and rise of intermediaries contributed to weakening of the empire's central control. The Feudalism hypothesis was considered as one of the most important factors for the decline of the empire. However, the same has now been negated.

6.2. Important Themes on Gupta Period

Sanskrit Literature: Rise of Sanskrit during Gupta Period

During the Gupta period (c. 300-600 CE), Sanskrit reached its **classical form** due to **Panini's grammar, Ashtadhyayi**, which provided a solid foundation for literary creation. The Gupta **patronised** Sanskrit to Prakrit, making it the **language of administration** and elite culture. During this period, **Sanskrit literature** flourished, with the refinement of epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the emergence of genres such as kavya (ornate prose), and the compilation of Puranas. Secular writing thrived as well, with topics ranging from statecraft to story anthologies.

Category	Examples
Epics	Ramayana and Mahabharata - Final compilation symbolizing the victory of good over evil.
Puranas	Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Shiva Purana, Varaha Purana, Vamana Purana, Narasimha Purana - Texts elaborating on various deities and their incarnations.
Smritis	Narada Smriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, Katyayana Smriti, Brihaspati Smriti - Law books providing insights into social, economic, and legal frameworks.
Secular Literature	Kamandaka's Nitisara - Work on statecraft; Vatsyayana's Kamasutra - Treatise on sensual pleasure.
Drama	Kalidasa's Works - <i>Abhijnanashakuntalam, Malavikagnimitram, Vikramorvasiyam</i> ; Vishakhadatta's Works - <i>Mudrarakshasa, Devi Chandraguptam</i> ; Shudraka's Mrichchhkatikam - <i>Little Clay Cart</i> .
Poetry	Kalidasa's Works - <i>Raghuvamsha, Kumarasambhavam, Ritusamhara, Meghaduta</i> ; Bharavi's Kiratarjuniya - Kavya narrating combat between Arjuna and Lord Shiva.

Additional Works	Bhasa's Plays - <i>Madhyamavyayoga, Duta-Ghatotkacha, Dutavakya, Balacharita, Charudatta</i> ; Dandin's Works - <i>Kavyadarshana, Dashakumaracharita</i> ; Subandhu's Vasavadatta ; Vishnusarma's Panchatantra ; Amarasimha's Amarakosha ; Bhatti's Ravanavadha .
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Sanskrit Literature of Ancient India Reflecting the Spirit of their Age

Context: Persian literary sources of medieval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment [PYQ GS Mains]

Aspect	Details	Examples and Analysis
Social Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit literature shows the variety of jobs and roles people had in ancient India. It highlights social classes and specialization of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rig Veda IX, 112 lists priests, carpenters, doctors, blacksmiths, poets. Manusmriti details the roles of Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants), Shudras (laborers).
Religious Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit texts shift from early rituals to deeper philosophical ideas over time. This evolution shows changing religious thoughts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigveda hymns to gods like Indra and Agni show importance of rituals. Chandogya Upanishad discusses the soul (Atman) and universal soul (Brahman), showing deeper thought. Buddhacharita describes Buddha's life, reflecting new religions.
Philosophical Schools of Thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit literature covers many philosophical ideas, reflecting the debates and thoughts of the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nyaya Sutras by Gautama discuss logic and knowledge. Four Stages of Life (Ashramas): Student (Brahmacharya), Householder (Grihastha), Hermit (Vanaprastha), Renunciate (Sannyasa).
Vedic Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early texts like the Rigveda provide insights into the rituals, social structures, and beliefs of the Vedic society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigveda hymns describe the social hierarchy and nature worship, reflecting the values and beliefs of early Aryan society.
Epic Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana show the moral and ethical questions of their time, portraying human relationships and societal duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mahabharata discusses duty (dharma) and actions (karma), showing the importance of ethics and social responsibility. Ramayana reflects societal norms and the ideal roles of individuals.
Classical Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classical Sanskrit literature reflect the cultural and artistic achievements of the Gupta period. These works show the refined courtly life and appreciation of nature and romantic ideals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kalidasa's Works: Shakuntala and Meghaduta highlight the prosperity and artistic sophistication of the Gupta era

Validation with Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparing literary descriptions with archaeological findings gives a clearer picture of historical realities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthashastra: Descriptions of urban planning compared with archaeological findings at sites like Pataliputra confirm the detailed administrative and civic planning mentioned in the texts.
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7. Sangam Period

The Sangam Period lasted from approximately **300 BCE to 300 CE**. The Sangam Period is notable for its **extensive literature**, which provides detailed insights into the social, economic, and cultural life of **ancient South India**. This **era marks a transition** from tribal to more organized societies, with early advances in social complexity and extensive trade networks.

Sources of Sangam Period

Sangam Literature

Category	Details
Ettuthokai (Eight Anthologies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Akananuru: Offers 400 love poems that explore relationships and emotional nuances, providing insights into the social fabric and personal lives of the Sangam society. Purananuru: Contains 400 poems on war, heroism, and governance, offering a detailed look at political structures and societal values. Kurunthokai: Features short poems on love and separation, reflecting daily life and cultural norms. Aingurunooru, Narrinai, Kalittogai, Paripadal, Padirrupattu: These anthologies collectively depict various aspects of Sangam life, including religion, nature, and societal practices.
Pathuppattu (Ten Idylls)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thirumurugarruppadai: A devotional guide to the abodes of Lord Murugan, reflecting religious practices and beliefs. Pattinappalai: Describes the prosperity of Kaveripoompattinam, highlighting economic activities and trade networks. Porunararruppadai, Sirupanarruppadai, Perumpanarruppadai, Mullaippattu, Nedunalvaday, Maduraikkanji, Kurinjippattu, Malaipadukadam: These poems explore themes from heroism and war to nature and love, providing a comprehensive cultural context of the era.
Thirukkural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authored by Thiruvalluvar, this ethical treatise consists of 1330 couplets divided into sections on virtue, wealth, and love, offering timeless moral guidance and reflecting the ethical framework of Sangam society.
Epics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silappadikaram: An epic by Ilango Adigal, narrating Kannagi's quest for justice, reflecting the sociocultural dynamics and legal systems. Manimekalai: A sequel by Sattanar, focusing on Buddhist teachings and ethical dilemmas, emphasizing the period's religious and philosophical thought.

Archaeological Sources

Student Notes:

Category	Details
Excavations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arikamedu: This ancient IndoRoman trade center reveals extensive trade relations through the discovery of amphorae, beads, and Roman coins, providing archaeological context to the maritime trade described in Sangam literature. Kaveripoompattinam (Puhar): Excavations uncover docks, warehouses, and artifacts, offering insights into the city's role in ancient maritime trade and urban planning.
Megalithic Burials and Pottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These burials and pottery artifacts coincide with the Sangam Age and provide tangible evidence of burial practices, material culture, and the use of iron, corroborating descriptions found in Sangam poems.
Hero Stones (Nadukal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hero stones commemorate warriors who died in battle, offering direct evidence of the valor and martial traditions celebrated in Sangam literature, thus providing historical markers of societal values placed on bravery and sacrifice.

Dimensions of Sangam Age Literature and Language

Aspect	Details
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Tamil and Script: The Sangam literature was composed in early Tamil, showcasing a rich vocabulary and complex grammar, reflecting linguistic sophistication. Early Tamil literature exhibits minimal influence from Sanskrit, emphasizing a distinct linguistic identity. TamilBrahmi Script: An adaptation of Brahmi used to write Tamil. Found in rock shelters and caves, primarily in the Madurai region, dating back to the 2nd century BCE and early centuries CE.
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolkappiyam: The oldest surviving Tamil grammar authored by Tolkappiyar. It also provides insights into the political, social, and economic conditions of the Sangam period.
Akam (Love Poetry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Themes and Style: Explores love and personal relationships, using natural imagery. Different landscapes symbolize stages of love (e.g., kurinji for clandestine love, neithal for longing). Social Context: Reflects societal norms and customs, providing a window into private and emotional lives. Cultural Significance: Highlights the emotional and cultural dimensions of the Sangam people.
Puram (War and Public Life Poetry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Themes and Style: Focuses on war, heroism, and public life, celebrating warriors' bravery, kings' responsibilities, and loyalty. Provides detailed descriptions of battles and conduct codes. Political and Social Context: The conflicts and alliances of Chera, Chola and Pandyas are well-documented in the war poems of the <i>puram</i> literature

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Relevance: Essential for reconstructing the historical narrative, offering firsthand accounts of events, personalities, and sociopolitical dynamics.
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Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas in the Sangam Period

Kingdom	Details
Cheras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory: Western coast, modern-day Kerala. • Capital: Vanji. Ports: Tondi and Muchiri. • Trade: Engaged actively with Romans, notable for Muziris (near modern Kochi) housing Roman regiments. • Political Landscape: Constant warfare with Cholas and Pandyas.
Cholas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory: Modern-day Tanjore and Tiruchirapalli districts. • Capital: Uraiyr, later Puhar (Kaveripattanam). • Naval Power: Commanded a strong navy, controlled maritime trade routes. • Political Landscape: Frequent conflicts with Cheras and Pandyas.
Pandyas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territory: Southern tip of the Indian peninsula, including Tirunelveli, Ramnad, and south Travancore. • Capital: Madurai. Port: Korkai. • Patronage: Supported Sangam academies, fostering literary culture. • Political Landscape: Engaged in continual warfare with Cheras and Cholas.

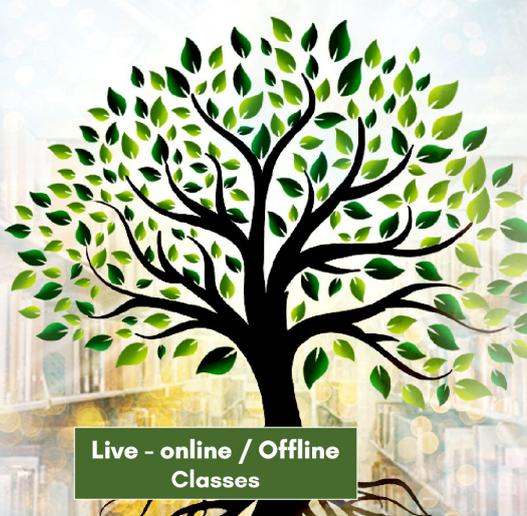
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29 JULY, 1 PM | 30 JULY, 9 AM | 31 JULY, 5 PM

GTB Nagar Metro (Mukherjee Nagar):
30 AUG, 5:30 PM | 19 JULY, 8:30 AM | 23 JULY, 5:30 PM

AHMEDABAD: 20 AUG

BENGALURU: 21 AUG

BHOPAL: 5 SEPT

CHANDIGARH: 18 JULY

HYDERABAD: 12 AUG

JAIPUR: 21 AUG

JODHPUR: 11 JULY

LUCKNOW: 5 SEPT

PUNE: 5 JULY

7.1. Society and Economy of the Sangam Period

Student Notes:

Society and Culture

Aspect	Details
Social Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sangam society was organized around the concept of <i>tinai</i>, which divided the land into five ecological zones: <i>kurinji</i> (mountains), <i>mullai</i> (pastoral lands), <i>marudam</i> (wetlands), <i>neital</i> (coastal regions), and <i>palai</i> (arid zones).People in the <i>kurinji</i> engaged in hunting and gathering, while those in the <i>mullai</i> practiced animal husbandry.The <i>marudam</i> supported agriculture, the <i>neital</i> sustained fishing and salt-making, and the <i>palai</i> drove its inhabitants to raiding.
Caste and Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">While the four-fold <i>varna</i> system was known, it hadn't become the defining feature of Sangam society.Social divisions were more fluid, with status determined by occupation and clan (<i>kuti</i>) affiliations.The <i>kuti</i> system of the Sangam period was a clan-based social organization where status and identity were determined by clan affiliations rather than a rigid caste hierarchy.
Role of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Women held significant status in society, contributing to literature, education, and economic activities like paddy cultivation and cattle rearing.Notable female poets included Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, and Kakkaipadiniyar.Love marriages were common, but practices like Sati (<i>tippayadal</i>) and hardships for widows also existed.
Religious Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The society worshiped indigenous deities and nature spirits, with some scholars suggesting early Jainism and Buddhism influencing local practices.Religious beliefs were deeply intertwined with the environment and daily life.
Art and Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The period saw the beginnings of temple architecture and megalithic structures.Early temples were simple but significant, and burial practices included constructing large stone monuments, indicating advanced construction techniques.

Economy

Aspect	Details
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agriculture was the backbone of the Sangam economy, with paddy (rice) and millets as primary crops.Advanced irrigation techniques, including tanks and dams, supported agriculture in the non-perennial riverine system of the region.
Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal trade thrived with goods transported via well-maintained roads and secured marketplaces.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Periplus of the Erythraean Sea</i> mentions Indian exports like spices, textiles, precious stones, and pearls. Roman gold coins discovered in south India corroborate this trade.
Crafts and Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaving was a major industry, producing fine textiles frequently mentioned in Sangam literature. Metallurgy was significant, with advanced iron and steel production for tools and weapons. Bead making was a well-developed craft, often used in trade.
Urban Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thriving trade fueled the growth of urban centers like Puhar (Chola), Muchiri (Chera), and Madurai (Pandya). Archaeological evidence, though sometimes limited due to continuous habitation, supports the literary accounts of these vibrant urban centers.

Cultural Legacy of Sangam Literature on Modern South Indian Society

Aspect	Details
Language and Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation of Tamil Language: Shaped the Tamil language with rich vocabulary and grammar found in works like the Tolkappiyam. Literary Themes: <i>Akam</i> (love) and <i>puram</i> (heroism) continue to inspire contemporary literature and culture.
Cultural Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamil Identity: Emphasizes strong Tamil identity, showcasing unique cultural traditions. Interaction with Sanskritic Culture: Demonstrates familiarity with Mahabharata and Ramayana. Tolkappiyam notes Arya-introduced marriage rituals, while hero stones reflect indigenous traditions.
Social and Religious Traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rituals and Beliefs: Details rituals involving sacred forces like <i>ananku</i>, influencing modern practices. Hero Stones and Memorials: Concept of <i>nadukal</i> (hero stones) commemorating fallen warriors, still revered in Tamil Nadu.
Development of Vernacular Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of Vernacular Languages: Emphasis on Tamil played a crucial role in the prominence of vernacular languages in South India, challenging Sanskrit's dominance.

The Keezhadi Findings

The Keezhadi excavations in Tamil Nadu have yielded significant archaeological evidence linking the site to the Sangam period. Key findings include numerous **potsherds with Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions**, indicative of early literacy and the **use of the Tamil script prevalent during the Sangam era**.

The site has revealed **advanced urban planning** features such as brick structures and ring wells, mirroring descriptions of urban centers in Sangam literature. **Cultural artifacts** such as Black-and-Red ware pottery, spindle whorls, and iron tools reflect the economic and cultural activities detailed in the texts. These findings not only **corroborate historical narratives** found in Sangam literature but also **suggest the Sangam era might be older than previously thought, potentially dating back to the 6th century BCE**.

8. Art and Architecture Themes

8.1. Ancient Indian Schools of Art

The earliest schools of art in India were inspired by religion. The schools at **Gandhara** and **Mathura** were connected with Mahayana Buddhism and produced many **Buddha and Bodhisattva images**. The **Amravati** school, patronized by the **Satavahanas**, created narrative art depicting scenes from the life of Buddha.

Budget Announcement for Developing Amaravati as the Capital of Andhra Pradesh

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a special package of **Rs 15,000 crore** for Andhra Pradesh in the Union Budget of 2024-25, which would be key to developing Amaravati.

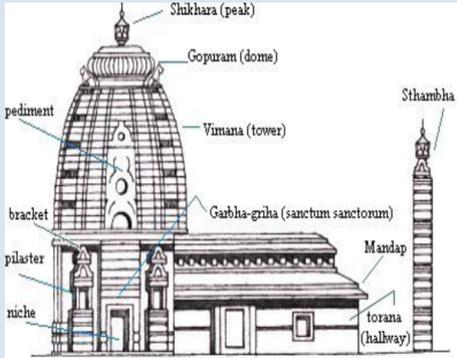
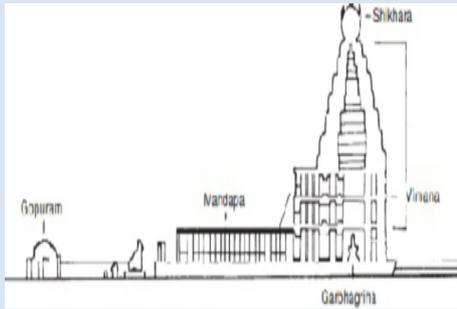
They could be summed up under the following heads:

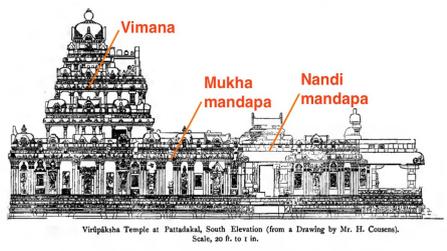
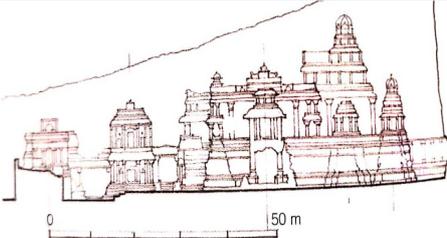
Aspect	Gandhara School	Mathura School	Amaravati School
Flourishing Period	Late 1st century to 3rd century CE	1st century CE	150 BCE to 350 CE
Location	Afghanistan-Gandhara region.	City of Mathura, present-day Uttar Pradesh.	Andhra Pradesh
Artistic Influence	Fusion of Indian and Graeco-Roman traditions due to the region's exposure to Indian and Western cultures during the Kushana Empire .	Predominantly indigenous style rooted in earlier Indian artistic traditions.	Developed under the patronage of the Satavahanas and Ikshavaku rulers, with a focus on narrative art.
Material Used	Blue-gray schist.	Red sandstone with black spots.	White marble stone.
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusion of Styles: Incorporates Hellenistic features like flowing drapery and curly hair. • Greco-Buddhist Style: Combines Western artistic conventions with Buddhist themes. • Sculptural Details: Often depicts the Buddha with realistic, human-like features and elaborate, detailed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Sensibilities: Emphasizes local artistic traditions with less influence from outside cultures. • Voluptuousness: Sculptures exhibit a noticeable voluptuousness (lifelike presentation) and sensuality. • Diverse Themes: Encompasses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Style: Focuses on depicting stories from the Buddha's life. • Dynamic Medallions: Carved in a dynamic style that captures the essence of Buddhist narratives. • Naturalism: Presents scenes in a naturalistic manner, engaging viewers by visually unfolding stories. • Architectural Elements: Art

	<p>attire reminiscent of Roman styles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconography: Influenced by Graeco-Roman deities and iconography, with a focus on naturalism and anatomical accuracy. • Architectural Context: Sculptures often adorned stupas, monasteries, and temples, enhancing the religious and cultural landscape. 	<p>Buddhism, Jainism, and Brahmanical traditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female Figures: Notable for beautifully carved female figures like yakshinis and apsaras, reflecting a more expressive representation of the human form. • Material: Primarily used locally available red sandstone with black spots, adding a distinctive aesthetic. 	<p>predominantly found on railings, plinths, and other architectural components of stupas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material: Uses white marble-like stone, enhancing the visual appeal and intricacy of the carvings.
Significant Contribution	Integration of Graeco-Roman elements with Indian art , influencing regions beyond its geographic boundaries.	Influenced later artistic developments in India, including the Gupta style known for its graceful and spiritual sculptures.	Left a significant impact on artistic traditions in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia , highlighting the role of cultural exchange in shaping regional artistic traditions.
Notable Works	Sculptures depicting the Buddha with Hellenistic features .	They often feature the Buddha in both human and symbolic forms, carved female figures such as yakshinis and apsaras .	Medallions vividly capture Buddhist narratives .
Art Example			

8.2. Temple Architecture

Style, Geographical Spread and	Temple Plan	Key Features

<p>Examples</p> <p>Nagara Style</p> <p>Northern India</p> <p>Examples: The Mahadeva temple at Nachana Kuthara (7th century) and the brick Lakshmana temple at Sirpur (both in MP). Khajuraho Group of Temples</p>		<p>General Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temples built on stone platforms with steps leading up to them. • Typically lack elaborate boundary walls or gateways. • Earliest temples had a single tower (shikhara). • Later temples often featured multiple shikharas. • Garbhagriha (sanctum) is always located directly under the tallest tower. <p>Subdivisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina or Rekha-Prasada: The most common type, with a square base and walls that curve or slope inward to a point at the top. • Phamsana: Broader and shorter than Latina, with roofs composed of several slabs rising gently to a single point. • Valabhi: Rectangular buildings with roofs that rise into a vaulted chamber.
<p>Dravidian Style</p> <p>Southern India, especially Tamil Nadu.</p> <p>Examples: Brihadeeswarar Temple at Thanjavur, Meenakshi Temple at Madurai.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vimana: Pyramidal tower over the garbhagriha. • Gopuram: Large, ornate entrance gateways. • Enclosed Compound: Temples within walls, outer wall integrating gopurams. • Pillared Halls: Mandapas for various purposes. • Water Tank: Common inside the temple complex for rituals.
<p>Vesara Style</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Chennakesava Temple at Belur, Hoysaleswara</p>	<p>Includes various subtypes of Chalukyan, Rashtrakuta, Hoysala and Vijaynagar Architectures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of Styles: Merges Nagara and • Dravidian styles, often star-shaped platforms. • Decorative Elements: Richly decorated with sculptures and friezes.

<p>Temple at Halebidu</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lathe-turned Pillars: Intricately carved. Ceiling Art: Elaborate carvings on ceilings.
<p>Chalukyan Architecture</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Virupaksha Temple, Papanatha Temple, Lad Khan Temple</p>	 <p>Virupaksha Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub type of Vesara Style/combination of Nagara and Dravida styles. • Star-shaped plans with projecting angles.
<p>Rashtrakuta Architecture</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Kailashnath Temple at Ellora, Jain Temple at Pattadakal</p>	 <p>Kailashnath Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub type of Vesara Style/combination of Nagara and Dravida styles. • Has rock cut temple architecture.
<p>Hoysala Temple Architecture</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Chennakeshava Temple at Belur, Hoysaleswara Temple, Kesava Temple in Somanathpura</p>	 <p>Hoysaleswara Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub type of Vesara Style/combination of Nagara and Dravida styles. • Star-shaped platforms, intricate sculpture work. • Material used is Soapstone.
<p>Vijayanagara Architecture</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Virupaksha Temple at Hampi, Hazara Rama Temple</p>	 <p>Hazara Rama Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of Chola, Hoysala, Pandya, and Chalukya elements, has Indo-Islamic influences. • Highly decorated with geometric patterns and carvings. • Taller surrounding walls and pillars with mythical creatures.

<p>Kalinga Style</p> <p>Odisha</p> <p>Examples: Jagannath Temple in Puri, Lingaraja Temple in Bhubaneswar</p>	 <p>Jagannath Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Main Parts: Deula (sanctum), Jagamohana (assembly hall), Natamandira (festival hall). • Rekha Deula: Tall, curvilinear shikhara. • Pidha Deula: Pyramidal roof resembling a stepped pyramid. • Khakhara Deula: Barrel-like roof for female deity shrines.
<p>Maru-Gurjara Style</p> <p>Rajasthan and Gujarat</p> <p>Examples: Dilwara Temples at Mount Abu, Sun Temple at Modhera.</p>	 <p>Sun Temple at Modhera</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ornamentation: Intricate carvings, both exterior and interior. • Mandapa Feature: Significant for rituals and ceremonies. • Ceiling Designs: Elaborate carvings depicting deities and geometric patterns. • Jain Influence: Dense carvings in Jain temples. • Bhumija Towers: Miniature spire motifs.
<p>Hemadpanthi Style</p> <p>Maharashtra</p> <p>Examples: Amruteshwar Temple in Ratanwadi</p>	 <p>Amruteshwar Temple in Ratanwadi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material Used: Locally sourced black stone and lime. • Design Features: Simple and durable structures with star-shaped plans. • Temple Architecture: Pyramidal shikhara and robust construction.
<p>Kadamba Style</p> <p>Karnataka</p> <p>Examples: Madhukeshwara Temple in Banavasi</p>	 <p>Madhukeshwara Temple in Banavasi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early indigenous style with pyramid-shaped shikharas. • Material and Construction: Brick and mortar, with square sanctums and porches. • Decorative Elements: Simpler compared to later Dravidian temples.

<p>Himalayan Style Architecture</p> <p>Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himalayan regions</p> <p>Examples: Hidimba Devi Temple in Manali, Kedarnath Temple in Uttarakhand</p>	 <p>Hidimba Devi Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden Structures: Extensive use of wood for resilience against earthquakes. • Sloping Roofs: Steep, gabled roofs to prevent snow accumulation. • Pagoda Style Elements: Tiered roofs blending aesthetics with functionality. • Carvings and Motifs: Intricate carvings of local flora, fauna, and deities.
<p>Buddhist Architectural Developments</p> <p>Across India</p> <p>Examples: Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhgaya, Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Nalanda University</p>	 <p>Ajanta Caves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaityas: Prayer halls with a stupa at one end. • Viharas: Monastic complexes for monks' residence. • Rock-cut Caves: Carved from cliffs, featuring intricate carvings and sculptures.
<p>Jain Architectural Developments</p> <p>Across India</p> <p>Examples: Dilwara Temples at Mount Abu, Shravanabelagola, Jain temples at Ellora and Khajuraho.</p>	 <p>Statue of Gomateshwar (Baahubali)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temples: Prolific builders of temples with intricate marble work and detailed carvings. • Pillars: Highly ornate and often featuring mythological scenes. • Statues: Large statues of tirthankaras (spiritual teachers), such as the statue of Gomateshwar (Baahubali) at Shravanabelagola. • Rock-cut Caves: Similar to Buddhist architecture but distinct in style and iconography.

8.3. Art and Architecture: Other Important Themes

Pala Art

Palas ruled **Bengal, Bihar, and parts of Bangladesh** between the **8th and 12th centuries CE**. They are renowned for **Buddhist art and architecture**. Under rulers like **Dharmapala** and **Devpala**, the

period saw flourishing of various art forms, including sculpture, painting, and terracotta.

Architecture:

- **Somapura Mahavihara:** This grand monastery at **Paharpur**, constructed during Dharmapala's reign, exemplifies the architectural achievements of the Pala period.



Somapura Mahavihara

Sculpture:

- **Characteristics:** Pala sculpture is noted for its perfection in **carving and bronze casting**. Originating from late Gupta traditions, it developed a distinct style characterized by **slender, elongated, and rounded figures**.
- **Materials:** Predominantly crafted from **black basalt stone**, these sculptures often depict Buddhist deities.
- **Distinct Features:** The sculptures feature strong, emotionally expressive faces, differentiating them from the earlier Gupta style.
- **Notable Contributors:** The artisans **Dhinman** and **Bitopal** significantly contributed to Pala sculpture, as mentioned in **Tibetan Lama Taranath's** accounts.



Pala Stone Sculptures

Painting:

- **Tradition:** Although pre-Pala paintings from Bengal are scarce, the Pala period witnessed a flourishing tradition of painting.
- **Artistic Prowess:** **Dhinman** and **Bitopal**, known for their sculpture, were also masters of painting.
- **Manuscript Illustrations:** Buddhist manuscripts, particularly from the **Vajrayana and Tantrayana traditions**, provide insights into the Pala painting style.
- **Palm Leaf Paintings:** These were created on leaves measuring about 2.5 to 3 inches, using vibrant colors like red, blue, green, yellow, and white, with outlines in black or red.



Palm Paintings

Terracotta:

- **Popularity:** The Pala period marked a high point for terracotta art in Bengal.
- **Plaques:** Found at sites like **Paharpur**, terracotta plaques served both decorative and instructional purposes, adorning walls and doorways of religious structures.
- **Depictions:** The plaques illustrated a wide range of subjects, from **Buddhist and Hindu deities** to **scenes of everyday life**.

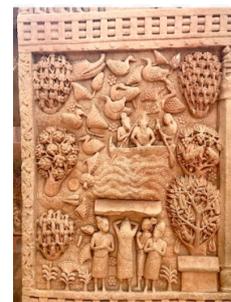


Terracotta Art of Palas

Buddhist Stupas and Contemporary Narratives

Early Buddhist stupa art effectively intertwined folk motifs and narratives to illustrate Buddhist ideals, making these teachings accessible to people of all backgrounds.

- **Jataka Stories and Symbols:** Artists incorporated **narratives from the Buddha's life**, known as Jataka stories, and other folk tales.
 - Instead of directly depicting the Buddha, they used symbols like the wheel, the empty throne, footprints, or the **Pipal tree** to evoke his presence.



Various folk motives at Sanchi Stupa

- This practice likely stemmed from reverence and the belief that a direct portrayal could be sacrilegious or misleading.
- **Fusion with Indian Traditions:** Stupa art incorporated elements from pre-existing Indian traditions, including figures like **yakshas, yakshis, nagas, and nagis**, as well as **animals** like lions, elephants, horses, and bulls.
 - These motifs were carefully chosen to resonate with the teachings of dhamma. For example, the lotus symbolized purity, while the lion represented the Buddha.
- **Transition to Anthropomorphic Depictions:** The transition to depicting the Buddha in anthropomorphic form occurred around the 2nd-3rd centuries CE, as seen in sites like Nagarjunakonda.
- **Accessibility and Engagement:** The fusion of folk elements with Buddhist narratives in stupa art was a conscious effort to **make the teachings more accessible**.
 - Carved onto railings and gateways, these narratives transformed the stupa into a visually engaging chronicle of Buddhist principles.



Yakshini art at the Eastern gate of the Sanchi Stupa

Early Buddhist stupa art utilized **pre-existing folk traditions** and storytelling to communicate Buddhist ideals. By drawing on shared cultural understanding, stupa art evolved from **mere religious artifacts into accessible narratives that promoted the understanding and acceptance of Buddhist teachings** among the populace.

Indian Philosophy and Tradition in Monuments and Art

Indian philosophy and tradition profoundly influenced the conception and development of monuments and art, as evidenced by various sources.

- **Religious Art:** Religious themes dominate art, indicating a society where spirituality is deeply intertwined with everyday life.
 - Almost all extant art served religious purposes, suggesting that religious experiences were pivotal in artistic expression.
 - Examples include the **elaborate reliefs** at **Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati**, and the idealistic portrayals at **Ajanta**, which reflect profound religious experiences or "**sermons in stone.**"
- **Vibrancy of Life:** Some scholars argue that Indian art reflects the vibrancy of life, a "**sensual vitality,**" and the dynamism of the natural world.
 - They believe that while artists adhered to priestly instructions and iconographic rules, their work primarily expresses a deep appreciation for the world around them.
 - This can be seen in the **elaborate reliefs** at sites like **Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati**, where artists depicted lively scenes of flora, fauna, and everyday activities.
- **Temple Symbolism:** Temples were imbued with profound symbolism. The concept of the temple as a "microcosm of the world" mirrored the tradition of open-air sacrifices.
 - Temples housed depictions of all deities, symbolizing every facet of existence. This **fusion of the spiritual and earthly realms** is central to understanding the Indian artistic tradition.



Religious Buddhist Motives at Ajanta



Kailash Temple

- For example, the **Kailasa temple at Ellora** represents **Mount Kailash**, the mythical abode of **Lord Shiva**.
- **Cosmic Symbolism:** The belief that every element of a ritual had a corresponding aspect in the cosmos reflects the interconnectedness of all things. This is exemplified in the "**Hymn of Creation**," suggesting that the symbolism in art forms like temple architecture was a reflection of deeply held philosophical beliefs.
 - **Konark Sun Temple** in Odisha is a prime example. Built in the 13th century by Narasimhadeva I, this temple is **designed as a colossal chariot for Surya Bhagvan** which highlights its connection to cosmic and celestial themes.



A glimpse of Sun Temple at Konark

Centres of Learning in Ancient India

Taxila: Located in **present-day Pakistan**, was a prominent center for secular studies and attracted students from across the Indian subcontinent.

- Its reputation dates back to **before the 6th century BCE**, during the time of the **Buddha**.
- Taxila's strategic location facilitated the flow of **Iranian and Mesopotamian influences**, enriching its intellectual atmosphere.
- Notable figures associated with Taxila include:
 - **Panini:** A renowned grammarian from the 4th century BCE, known for his work, *Ashtadhyayi*, a comprehensive treatise on Sanskrit grammar.
 - **Kautilya (Chanakya):** Influential Brahmin minister of **Chandragupta Maurya** and the author of the *Arthashastra*.
 - **Charaka:** A prominent figure in Indian medical science, known for his contributions to the *Charaka Samhita*, a foundational text in Ayurveda.

How ancient people got university admissions?

Admission to Nalanda was highly competitive, involving rigorous entrance exams. The university was known for its strict discipline and emphasis on interactive learning through discussions, with Sanskrit as the medium of instruction.

Banaras (Kashi): Renowned during the **Buddha's time**, Banaras (now Varanasi) was a significant center for religious instruction. It continues to be a major pilgrimage site for Hindus.

Kanchi: Located in the south, gained prominence as a center of learning around the beginning of the **1st century CE**, coinciding with the decline of Taxila. This shift indicates a **geographical change in the centers of knowledge** in ancient India.

Nalanda: Established during the **Gupta period**, was a renowned **Mahayana Buddhist university** that flourished under the patronage of Gupta rulers and later, **Harshavardhana**. It attracted students from across India and Asia, offering a wide array of subjects:

- **Religious Studies:** Mahayana Buddhism, Vedas, Sankhya, and Yoga philosophies.
- **Secular Subjects:** Logic, Grammar, Astronomy, Medicine, and Art.



Inauguration of the new Nalanda University

Nalanda University: A New Beginning

- Recently, the campus of Nalanda University was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, situated near the ancient ruins in Rajgir, Bihar.
- Originally founded by **Gupta Emperor Kumaragupta in 427 CE**, Nalanda was a prominent center of learning for 600 years.
- It attracted scholars from across Asia, including China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Korea. Notable figures such as **Xuanzang** and **I-Tsing** studied here.
- The university was destroyed in **1193 by Bakhtiyar Khilji**, a general of the Delhi Sultanate ruler **Qutbuddin Aibak**.
- It was rediscovered in **1812** and later identified as the ancient university by **Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1861**.
- It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016**.

Additional Centers of Learning:

- **Buddhist Monasteries (Viharas):** Located particularly in Bihar, these monasteries provided structured learning environments focused on secular subjects. Notable institutions include **Vikramashila**, and **Uddandapura**.
- **Kashmir:** Emerged as a prominent center for education, particularly for Shaiva sects and centers of learning.
- **Southern India:** Important educational centers (*mathas*) were established in cities like **Madurai** and **Sringeri**.

These centers collectively contributed to the intellectual and cultural richness of ancient India, fostering diverse fields of study and facilitating knowledge exchange across the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

9. Miscellaneous Themes for Ancient History

9.1. Important Textual Sources of Ancient Indian History

Source	Description	Details
Megasthenes' Indica	Greek ambassador sent to the court of Chandragupta Maurya .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragments survive as paraphrases in works of Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, and Arrian. • Describes geography, animals, administration, and social customs.
Classical Accounts	Greek and Roman writings that provide glimpses into ancient India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes works by Arrian, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder. • The Periplus Maris Erythraei details maritime trade routes and commerce in the Indian Ocean.
Chinese Pilgrim Accounts	Accounts of Chinese Buddhist monks who traveled to India for Buddhist scriptures and knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable travelers include Fahian and Hieun Tsang. • Describes Buddhist practices and sites in 5th and 7th century CE India.
Arab Accounts	Writings of Arab scholars from the 9th and 10th centuries CE .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes travelers and geographers like Sulaiman, Al-Masudi, Abu Zaid, Al-Biduri, and Ibn Haukal.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes trade and aspects of Indian society.
Critical Perspective	Emphasizes the importance of approaching foreign accounts with a critical lens.	Foreign accounts provide valuable information but are shaped by the authors' cultural backgrounds and biases.

9.2. Role of Climate Change in Ancient Indian History

Migration Patterns in the Stone Age:

- During the **Pleistocene epoch**, **alternating dry and wet phases** significantly influenced early human migration and settlement patterns. **Favorable wet phases** supported **larger populations and permanent settlements**, while **dry phases** forced **migrations** in search of resources.
- In the **Neolithic period** (7000-2000 BCE), **early agricultural villages** emerged evidenced by the presence of both **wild and cultivated rice**. Further these remains indicate that these communities adapted their agricultural practices to the region's climate.
 - Mehrgarh**, located in Baluchistan, showcases the transition from a semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle to settled agriculture.

Rise and Fall of the Harappan Civilization:

- The Harappan Civilization (2600-1900 BCE) experienced **significant climatic challenges, including changing river patterns and prolonged droughts**.
- As water sources became less reliable, the population shifted towards smaller, more sustainable rural settlements, marking the end of the urban phase of civilization.

Influence on Vedic Period Agriculture:

- During the Vedic period (1500-500 BCE), agricultural societies flourished in the **Gangetic plains**.
- The **monsoon** climate played a crucial role in sustaining agriculture, influencing crop choices and the location of settlements.

9.3. Indian Ocean Impacting the History of India

Early Human Migration:

- The Indian Ocean's geography has significantly shaped early human migration, trade, and cultural exchange.
- Around 65,000-70,000 years ago, **early humans migrated out of Africa via the Bab-el-Mandeb strait**. They followed coastal routes, taking advantage of lower sea levels and fertile regions like the Persian Gulf Oasis.
- These **migrations extended to Southeast Asia and Australia**, leading to genetic mixing with local hominids and impacting local ecosystems.
- Additionally, the Indian subcontinent served as a **migration hub**, facilitating further dispersal and the development of diverse populations influenced by climatic changes and resource availability.

Catalyst for Trade and Cultural Exchange:

- The unique geography of the Indian Ocean has shaped human history through early maritime trade facilitated by **monsoon winds**.
- Significant **migrations** leading to cultural exchanges and extensive trade networks driven by **demand for spices and textiles** have a key role of the Indian Ocean.

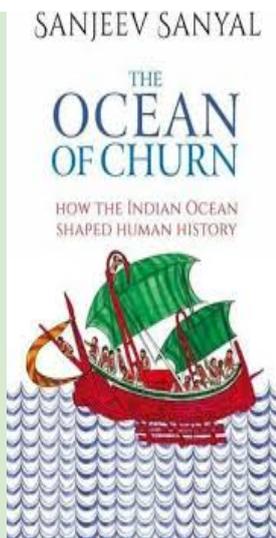
- The spread of major religions like Buddhism and Hinduism further connected cultures. **Emperor Ashoka** of the Mauryan Empire propagated Buddhism to Sri Lanka by sending his son, Mahinda, to convert the ruler of Anuradhapura.
- **European Colonialism** introduced new crops and facilitated the movement of people, leaving lasting cultural imprints.

The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History by Sanjeev Sanyal

"The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History" emphasizes the **interconnected and complex history of the Indian Ocean rim**, shaped by monsoon winds, geography, human migrations, technology, religion, and culture.

Through this work, **Sanjeev Sanyal has critiqued conventional, Western-centric narratives** and highlighted the importance of local perspectives, matrilineal customs, and the significant impact of seemingly minor events.

Through **historical stories**, the book gives a clear and detailed view of how the Indian Ocean has influenced human history.



Spread of Indian Civilization

- The spread of Indian civilization across the Indian Ocean was complex, with ideas and influences flowing in multiple directions.
- Early **maritime trade**, aided by monsoon winds, connected India with regions like Australia around 4,000 years ago.
- The **Indo-Iranian continuum** facilitated cultural exchanges, evident in shared religious practices between Vedic and Zoroastrian traditions.
- Indian maritime interactions established **Indianized kingdoms** in Southeast Asia, introducing the Pallava script and matrilineal systems.
- Empires like the **Mauryan and Gupta dynasties strengthened trade routes, accelerating cultural exchange**. This interaction was reciprocal, with Southeast Asian influences enriching Indian culture.

9.4. Evolution of the Role of Women in Ancient India

Women's roles in Indian society evolved significantly between prehistoric times and the Gupta period. **It is argued that initially, women had relative equality and actively participated in economic and social activities.** Over time, Dharmashastras texts such as the **Manusmriti** codified social norms, **limiting women's autonomy**. By the **Gupta period**, these **changes had become more explicit** with practices such as child marriage and sati reflecting increased control over women's life. A phase-wise transition of the role of women has been provided below:

Prehistoric Period

Aspect	Details
Egalitarian Family Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family structure in prehistoric societies was largely egalitarian, with both men and women having equal roles and responsibilities. • Archaeological findings suggest no significant difference in the roles of men and women, indicating women's crucial contributions in gathering food, caring for children, and preparing meals were essential for the community's well-being.

Access to Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of resources was likely communal, ensuring that everyone had access to necessary resources, with any possessions or property likely owned collectively.
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Harappan Period

Aspect	Details
Economy and Working Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were actively involved in economic activities such as weaving, pottery, and trade. Archaeological evidence shows that women contributed significantly to the economy through these crafts, supporting their communities' livelihoods.
Religious Duties and Rituals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women participated in religious rituals and were prominent in the worship of goddesses like the Mother Goddess. Seals and figurines depicting female deities suggest that women played important roles in religious practices and community ceremonies.

Vedic Period

Aspect	Details
Status in Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vedic household was patriarchal and patrilineal, with men holding primary authority. Women were respected as mothers and wives, but their roles were secondary to those of men.
Marriage and Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child marriage was uncommon, suggesting that perhaps it was allowed for women to reach maturity before marriage. Divorce was rare and not socially accepted, indicating that marriages were generally viewed as lifelong commitments.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls may have received formal education and participated in various social and religious activities until marriage. Notable women scholars like Gargi and Maitreyi indicate that women's education was valued, although some scholars argue it was limited by social hierarchies.
Economy and Working Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women engaged in professions such as weaving, teaching, and music. Their economic contributions were essential, producing goods and services for the community. This involvement indicates a level of independence and skill in various crafts.
Society and Caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Early Vedic society, women had access to education and could study sacred texts like the Vedas and Upanishads. There were women poets like Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa, and Lopamudra, who are attributed with composing Vedic Hymns. Despite this, the overall society was hierarchically influenced by their Varna, and women's status could vary significantly based on their social standing.

Later Vedic Period

Student Notes:

Aspect	Details
Status in Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family structure remained patriarchal, with increasing stratification and control over women's roles and activities. Women's status declined as societal norms emphasized male dominance and control within the household.
Marriage and Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The emphasis on chastity and pre-puberty marriages grew stronger. Divorce remained rare and was socially unacceptable, reinforcing the idea of lifelong marital commitments.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education for girls became increasingly limited, with early marriages curbing their opportunities for formal learning. The focus on preparing girls for domestic roles overshadowed their access to education and participation in broader societal activities.
Society and Caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The caste system became more rigid during this period, further restricting women's roles and freedoms based on their social standing. Women's activities and opportunities were increasingly defined by their caste, limiting their social mobility and access to education.
Inheritance and Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's inheritance rights were limited by laws such as those outlined in the Manusmriti. Property was typically controlled by male relatives, and women's rights to own and inherit property were restricted, diminishing their economic independence.

Maurya Period

Aspect	Details
Status in Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The patriarchal structure remained dominant, but royal women had significant influence within their families. The Arthashastra highlights the importance of women in maintaining family honor and lineage, reflecting their valued roles within the family unit.
Marriage and Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranged marriages were the norm, and child marriages became more common, particularly among the upper classes. Divorce was rare and highly stigmatized, with societal norms favoring lifelong marital commitments.
Politics and Ruling Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in royal families such as Chandragupta Maurya's wife wielded considerable influence. Emperor Ashoka's edicts mention the welfare of women, indicating some recognition of their roles in society. However, political power remained predominantly male, with few women holding formal positions of authority.
Economy and Working Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were active in various economic roles, including weaving, spinning, and other crafts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal women managed estates, while non-royal women contributed to the economy through agricultural and artisanal activities, essential for household prosperity.
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Post Mauryan Period

Aspect	Details
Status in Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manusmriti and other Dharmashastras further reinforced the patriarchal norms, emphasizing the subservient position of women within the household. • Women's roles were primarily focused on household responsibilities.
Marriage and Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manusmriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti emphasize marriage as a key social institution, advocating for arranged marriages and detailing various forms, including child marriages among higher castes. Women were expected to be loyal and obedient, primarily serving as caregivers and mothers. • Divorce was heavily stigmatized, with severe penalties for infidelity or separation. However, the Yajnavalkya Smriti acknowledged separation in extreme cases, allowing mistreated wives to seek redress or leave their husbands.
Society and Caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dharmashastras, including the Manusmriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti, detailed women's roles based on caste. • These texts reinforced the caste hierarchy, emphasizing adherence to caste-specific duties to maintain social and religious order.
Inheritance and Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's rights to inheritance and property remained limited. • Laws like those in the Manusmriti emphasized the control of male relatives over women's property, reducing their economic independence and reinforcing their dependence on men.

Gupta Period

Aspect	Details
Status in Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manusmriti mandated that women remain under the guardianship of male family members throughout their lives—first by their fathers, then their husbands, and finally their sons. • Gupta inscriptions, such as the Harisena inscription of Samudragupta, often mention women only in relation to male relatives.
Marriage and Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriages became more prevalent during the Gupta period, with young girls often married off to secure family alliances and ensure chastity. • The dowry system reinforced women's economic dependence on the family.
Women and Property Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women had limited property rights, primarily controlling stridhana (gifts received during marriage).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of stridhana expanded to include various categories, such as gifts received before the nuptial fire, during the bridal procession, etc. Broader inheritance rights typically restricted to male relatives, reinforcing women's economic dependence on their male family members.
Politics and Ruling Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were generally excluded from formal political power, but there were instances of queens acting as regents for their minor sons or wielding influence in state affairs. Notable examples include Prabhavati Gupta. Additionally, female rulers in other regions, such as Didda, the queen of Kashmir, maintained control by acting as regent for her sons. These instances suggest that women had some degree of agency in specific contexts.
Society and Caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gupta period witnessed the consolidation of the caste system, with Brahmanas occupying the top position and Shudras at the bottom. Women's status and roles were closely tied to their caste and varna, with those from upper castes experiencing greater restrictions. The practice of sati, where widows self-immolated on their husbands' funeral pyres, began to emerge during the Gupta period.

9.5. Ancient Indian Philosophies

Orthodox Schools of Philosophy: This school believed that the Vedas are the ultimate sacred texts containing secrets to salvation. They never doubted the Vedas' authenticity and had **six sub-schools** called the **Shada Darshana** (Six Philosophies).

Philosophy Name	Features	Relevance Today
Nyaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Gautama. Emphasizes logic and reasoning. Uses four sources of knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony. Aims to remove human suffering through correct knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages critical reasoning skills useful in problem-solving and debates. Used in legal systems to establish truth through logical analysis.
Vaisheshika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Kanada. Atomic theory: universe made of indivisible atoms. Explains reality through six categories: substance, quality, activity, generality, particularity, and inherence. Believes in the cyclic creation and destruction of the universe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early form of atomic theory aligns with modern science. Emphasizes empirical observation and categorization, relevant in scientific methodologies.
Samkhya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Kapila. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights the mind-body connection, influencing modern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dualistic: two realities, <i>Purusha</i> (consciousness) and <i>Prakriti</i> (matter). • Universe evolves through interaction of these two. • Denies existence of God but believes in the cycle of rebirth and liberation through knowledge. 	<p>psychology and holistic health practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes self-awareness and introspection, useful in meditation and self-improvement practices.
Yoga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematized by Patanjali. • Practical discipline for physical, mental, and spiritual growth. • Includes eight limbs: <i>Yama</i> (ethical conduct), <i>Niyama</i> (self-discipline), <i>Asana</i> (postures), <i>Pranayama</i> (breath control), <i>Pratyahara</i> (withdrawal of senses), <i>Dharana</i> (concentration), <i>Dhyana</i> (meditation), <i>Samadhi</i> (absorption). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely practiced for stress relief, mental clarity, and physical fitness. • Techniques are incorporated into modern wellness and mental health programs, such as mindfulness and stress management courses.
Purva Mimamsa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded by Jaimini. • Focuses on rituals and duties as prescribed in the Vedas. • Emphasizes dharma (duty) and the power of mantras. • Believes in karma and performing rituals for liberation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stresses the importance of ethical conduct and social responsibility, relevant in community service and moral education. • Influences modern Hindu rituals and practices, promoting cultural continuity.
Vedanta (Uttar Mimamsa)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key figures associated: Shankaracharya, Ramanuja. • Based on Upanishads and Brahmasutras. Discusses nature of reality, Brahman (ultimate reality), and Atman (soul). • Believes in the theory of karma and rebirth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophical basis for many modern spiritual movements, fostering global interest in Indian spirituality. • Encourages self-inquiry and understanding of the nature of existence, influencing contemporary philosophical and psychological thought.

Heterodox (Nastika) Schools: These schools, prominent during the time of the Buddha, **rejected the authority of the Vedas** and developed independent systems of thought.

Philosophy Name	Features	Relevance Today
Charvaka (Lokayata)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key figure associated: Brihaspati. • Known for materialism and skepticism. Denied the existence of the soul, an afterlife, and the authority of the Vedas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents a counterpoint to spiritual philosophies in India. • Highlights diversity of thought in Indian philosophical traditions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasized direct perception as the only source of knowledge. Advocated for a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure in this life. 	
Jainism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Mahavira. Emphasizes non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), non-stealing (asteya), and non-attachment (aparigraha). Teaches that the universe is eternal. Liberation is achieved by freeing the soul from the cycle of birth and death through rigorous ethical discipline and ascetic practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant influence on Indian culture and ethical values. Promotes principles of non-violence and environmental sustainability.
Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Gautama Buddha. Emphasizes ethical conduct, mental discipline, and the pursuit of enlightenment. Teaches the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Identifies suffering as an inherent part of existence. Explains cessation of suffering through the elimination of desire and attachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread widely across Asia, evolving into various schools (Theravada and Mahayana). Influences modern mindfulness and meditation practices. Contributes to global philosophical and psychological thought.
Ajivika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Makkhali Gosala. Focused on determinism and predestination (<i>niyati</i>); rejected free will and karma; practiced severe asceticism; non-theistic with some theistic elements; opposed the caste system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents a unique perspective on fate and free will; provides historical context for the diversity of philosophical and religious practices in ancient India.

Divisions of Buddhism: Buddhism is broadly divided into three main branches: Theravada (Hinayana), Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Each of these branches has its own further divisions and schools.

Branch	Key Characteristics	Sub-Divisions
Theravada (Hinayana)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on monastic life and meditation. Focus on the Tripitaka as the primary scriptural authority. Goal is to become an Arhat, one who has achieved enlightenment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thai Forest Tradition: Emphasizes meditation and monastic discipline. Sri Lankan Theravada: Centers on studying the Tripitaka and traditional monastic practices.
Mahayana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on compassion and the bodhisattva path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zen (Chan in China): Emphasizes meditation and direct insight into one's true nature.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Mahayana sutras, which include texts not found in the Tripitakas. • Concept of emptiness (<i>shunyata</i>) and the belief in the potential for all beings to achieve nirvana. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pure Land: Focuses on devotion to Amitabha Buddha and the aspiration to be reborn in the Pure Land. • Jodo Shu: Emphasizes chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha (Nembutsu).
Vajrayana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of tantra (sacred texts and practices), mantras, and mudras. • Emphasis on the guru-disciple relationship. • Visualization of deities and meditation on <i>mandalas</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tibetan Buddhism: The most prominent form, practiced primarily in Tibet, Bhutan, and parts of Nepal and India. • Gelug: Emphasizes monastic discipline and philosophical study; the school of the Dalai Lama.

Divisions of Jainism: Jainism is divided into two main branches: Digambara and Svetambara. Each of these branches has further sub-divisions, reflecting different interpretations and practices within Jainism.

Branch	Key Characteristics	Sub-Divisions
Digambara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renunciation of all possessions, including clothing (monks practice complete nudity). • Emphasis on severe asceticism and self-discipline. • Belief that women cannot achieve liberation directly; they must be reborn as men first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bisapantha: Emphasizes the original teachings and practices, with strict adherence to traditional rituals and ascetic practices. • Terapanth (Digambara): A reformist sub-sect that focuses on simplifying rituals and promoting internal devotion over external rituals.
Svetambara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing simple white clothing (symbolizing purity). • More liberal interpretation of the Jain scriptures. • Belief that women can achieve liberation directly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murtipujaka: The largest sub-sect, focusing on idol worship and temple rituals. • Sthanakvasi: Rejects idol worship and focuses on meditation and internal spiritual practices.

Were Jainism and Buddhism Social Movements?

Aspect	Arguments for Jainism and Buddhism as Social Movements	Arguments against Jainism and Buddhism as Social Movements
Challenging Existing Social Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both religions emerged during a time of social and religious unrest, challenging the Brahmanical order and the caste system, including women from all castes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite criticism of the caste system, neither religion directly aimed to dismantle existing social structures. • They provided an alternative path without advocating for radical social upheaval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kshatriyas' and Vaishyas' resentment towards Brahmanical dominance contributed to their popularity. 	
Promoting Social Equality	The Buddhist Sangha included members from all castes.	Buddhist monastic rules restricted certain groups , reflecting existing social hierarchies.
Addressing Societal Problems	Sought to address social ills like violence, inequality, and suffering by promoting non-violence, charity, and simple living.	Primarily framed as paths to personal salvation , focusing on individual transformation and liberation from suffering.
Popular Support	Gained acceptance among commons, particularly the lower classes, due to their simplicity and rejection of elaborate rituals. Jainism found support in western India and among trading communities.	Their emphasis on personal salvation and spiritual liberation rather than explicit social reform limited their characterization as purely social movements.
Reflected Existing Social Biases	Provided innovative solutions to social and economic disparities and promoted inclusive participation in religious practices.	Despite their focus on equality, both religions reflected the social biases of their time, with Jainism showing a strong Kshatriya bias.

Jainism and Buddhism can be viewed as social movements challenging existing norms and addressing social issues. However, their primary focus on **personal spiritual liberation** and complex relationship with social structures suggests they were not solely social movements but multifaceted in nature and impact on Indian society.

9.6. Bharat- The Mother of Democracy

The **P20 summit** in New Delhi was held under the aegis of **G-20 Summit**. Its theme was "**Parliaments for One Earth, One Family, One Future**". It included the "**Mother of Democracy**" exhibition. It presented a **detailed document** containing how India was the cradle of democracy since ancient times.

The document provides for the following reasons of India being the Mother of Democracy:

- **Ancient Concept:** Democracy has a deep history in India, highlighting that democratic principles are long standing in the subcontinent.
- **Ruler and the Ruled Relationship:** The relationship between the ruler and the people was akin to a **father and his children**.
- **Dharma (Duty):** Central to Indian democracy, **Dharma** includes the responsibilities of the king (*Raja Dharma*) and the people (*Praja Dharma*).

Core Values of Democracy: The document mentions about the following values of Democracy which are different from the classic Western concept:

- **Key Principles:** Indian democracy is founded on harmony, freedom, acceptability, equality, and inclusivity, ensuring dignified lives for citizens. Regarded as the **soul of democracy**, **equality** has been emphasized by philosophers, saints, and poets across India for centuries.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Family structures reflected democratic values, with inclusive decision-making and women's participation in assemblies.

- **Historical Foundation:** Rooted in history, Indian democracy emphasizes enduring principles guided by Dharma, shaping roles of both rulers and citizens.
- **Participatory Tradition:** Public involvement in selecting rulers underscores the importance of public consent, mirroring a father's care for his family.

Democracy has been traced throughout history in the following aspects:

Key Aspect	Details
Ancient Period	
Public Participation in the Vedic Era (6000 BCE - 1100 BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four Vedas include principles on political, societal, and educational systems. Rigveda and Atharvaveda mention representative bodies like Sabha, Samiti, and Sansad. • The Rigveda states, "<i>Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti</i>," meaning "The Supreme Reality is One, the sages call Him by various names."
Democratic Governance in Epics	The Ramayana and Mahabharata emphasize governance for people's welfare, highlighting the principles of Dharma, ethics, and morality.
Mahajanapada and Gantantra (7th and 8th Century BCE)	Governance models with collective people's governance, including 15 Kingships with a council and 10 Republics where the head was elected. Ashtadhyayi mentions Loktantrik institutions- <i>Gana, Puga, Nigama, Janapada</i> .
Jainism (7th Century BCE)	Promotes pluralism through Anekanatavada and advocates non-violence, aligning with democratic principles of coexistence and tolerance.
Buddhism (500 BCE)	Bauddha Sangha exemplified early democratic practices with open discussions and leader elections. Early participatory governance with the election of a Mahasammatta , a chosen leader in the Ganarajya .
Kautilya & Arthashastra (350 - 275 BCE)	Emphasizes the ruler's happiness and welfare dependent on the people's well-being.
Megasthenes and Diodorus Siculus' Records (300 BCE)	Ancient Greeks noted democratic governance in Indian states, with a custom of equal liberty and no slavery .
Ashoka's Governance (265 - 238 BCE)	Promoted peace and well-being through systematic elections every five years, symbolizing democratic governance. His ideals endure in India's national emblem, symbolizing democracy.
Fa Xian's Records (5th Century CE)	Observed Indian respect for people, Rule of Law, and public welfare.
Khalimpur Copper Plate (9th Century CE)	Gopala was elected by people to replace an unfit ruler, highlighting the principle of justice.
Uthiramerur Inscriptions (919 CE)	Inscriptions affirm democratic elections and local self-governance in South India.

Medieval Period	
Vijayanagar Empire's Governance	Emphasized self-governance at the village level with ' <i>Sarv-sammati</i> ' (agreement by all) as the foundation of participatory governance. Division into mandalams, nadus, and sthlas , emphasized self-governance at the village level.
Akbar (1556 – 1605 CE)	Practiced inclusive governance and introduced " Sulh-i-Kul " to combat religious discrimination, fostering harmony.
Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-1680 CE)	Advocated democratic governance with duties outlined for Ashtha-Pradhan, ensuring equal rights and maintaining a legacy of <i>Lokatantra</i> .
Modern Period	
The Constitution of India (1947 Onwards)	Crafted by the Constituent Assembly led by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar , establishing a modern, democratic Republic with equality and universal suffrage.
Elections in Modern India (1952 Onwards)	India has experienced numerous national, state, and local elections, with the Election Commission ensuring peaceful transfers of power.

Why Bharat Matters: Ancient Diplomacy and its Relevance Today

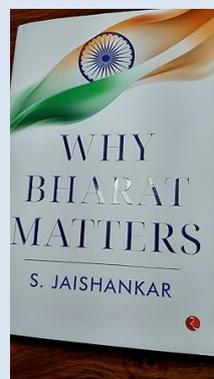
In his book "**Why Bharat Matters**," **Dr. S. Jaishankar** highlights that **ethical leadership, strategic diplomacy, public consent, and conflict resolution** are deeply rooted in Indian culture, drawing from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These principles continue to shape India's modern diplomatic efforts.

Learnings from the Ramayana:

- **Adherence to Dharma:** Lord Rama's commitment to his father's promise illustrates ethical leadership. Modern leaders can uphold **international laws and ethical standards**, ensuring justice and fairness.
- **Strategic Diplomacy:** Hanuman's mission to Lanka exemplifies **strategic diplomacy through intelligence gathering and establishing communication channels**. Modern diplomats use similar tactics to strengthen international relations.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Rama's mediation between Bali and Sugriva demonstrates **conflict resolution and alliance-building**, essential for regional stability and cooperation today.

Learnings from the Mahabharata:

- **Strategic Counsel:** Lord Krishna's guidance to Arjuna combines **strategy with ethics**. Leaders must balance strategic goals with moral considerations for effective and ethical decision-making.
- **Public Consent and Governance:** Yudhishtira's insistence on **public approval before claiming the throne** emphasizes the importance of public support. Modern governance relies on public consent and accountability through elections.
- **Ethical Diplomacy:** Bhishma's advice on governance and the **ethics of war** underscores the importance of **ethical considerations in diplomacy**, such as respecting human rights and upholding international laws for global peace.



9.7. India's Global Cultural Legacy

Historical Overview and Trade Routes

Ancient Trade Routes

Silk Road: The Silk Road was a vast network of trade routes that **linked India with Central Asia, West Asia, and Europe**. It facilitated the **exchange of goods, culture, and ideas** across these regions.

- **Segments and Pathways:** The Silk Road had two primary segments that met at Kashgar:
 - **Northern Route:** This pathway traversed through modern-day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, eventually reaching the Caspian Sea. It was a **critical corridor for caravans** transporting silk, spices, and other valuable commodities.
 - ✓ **Cultural Export:** Along this route, Indian cultural elements, such as art, architecture, and religious practices, spread to Central Asia. For example, **Buddhist monasteries and stupas were established in regions like Bactria and Sogdia**, where Indian influence is evident in the art and architectural styles. Artifacts such as **Gandharan Buddhist sculptures**, which display a unique blend of Indian and Greek artistic elements, have been found in these areas.
 - **Southern Route:** This segment passed through northern Afghanistan and merged with the northern route at Merv in Turkmenistan. It provided an **alternative pathway for traders**, enhancing the robustness of the Silk Road network.
 - ✓ **Cultural Export: Indian scholars, monks, and artists traveled along this route**, bringing with them knowledge of Indian philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy. The influence of Indian culture can be seen in the **spread of Buddhism**, with significant sites such as the **Bamiyan Buddhas** in Afghanistan, which are monumental statues carved into cliffs, demonstrating the reach of Indian artistic influence.

Connections and Additional Routes:

- **Afghanistan Routes:** Key routes from Afghanistan integrated with the Silk Road, passing through the Kabul Valley. These routes connected to significant cities in northwest India:
 - **Purushapura (Peshawar):** An ancient city and a vital center for trade and culture. It was a **hub** where Indian and Central Asian cultures mingled, leading to the exchange of art, literature, and religious practices. Peshawar became a significant site for the spread of Buddhism, with several monasteries and stupas.
 - **Pushkalavati (Charsadda):** Another important trade hub in the region, where artifacts such as **coins, pottery, and sculptures** reflecting Indian influence have been found.
 - **Taxila:** Renowned as a **center of learning and commerce**, Taxila was strategically located on the trade route. It became a focal point for the exchange of knowledge and culture, attracting scholars from various regions to study Indian sciences, medicine, and philosophy. **The University of Taxila** is one of the earliest known universities, where students from different parts of Asia came to study.
- **Kashgar to Gilgit:** An additional route from Kashgar went through Gilgit in Kashmir, further strengthening the connectivity between India and Central Asia.
 - **Cultural Export:** This route facilitated the movement of goods and cultural exchanges, linking diverse regions. Indian craftsmen and traders brought textiles, spices, and art, while also sharing religious and philosophical ideas. The influence of Indian culture is evident in the artistic and architectural styles found along this route. **The rock carvings and inscriptions in Gilgit and Baltistan regions display a mix of Buddhist iconography and local art, indicating cultural syncretism.**

Africa

Trade Routes:

- **Maritime Routes:** The maritime route from the **western coast of India to the East African coast was crucial**. Indian Ocean trade connected ports like **Muziris** and **Bharuch** in India with **Lamu, Zanzibar, and Mombasa** in East Africa.
- **Monsoon Winds:** The predictable monsoon winds were **essential for navigation** across the Indian Ocean, facilitating the regular exchange of goods and culture between India and East Africa.

Europe

Trade Routes:

- **Overland Routes:** Trade routes through **Central Asia connected India to Europe** via the Silk Road.
- **Maritime Routes:** The sea routes established by **European trading companies** connected Indian ports with Europe.
- **Strategic Ports:** Key Indian ports such as **Goa, Calicut, and Surat** became important centers for European trade.

Southeast Asia

Trade Routes:

- **Maritime Routes:** The routes through the Bay of Bengal connected India with Southeast Asia, including ports like **Srivijaya (Sumatra), Malacca, and Champa** (Vietnam).
- **Straits and Seas:** The **Strait of Malacca** was a crucial passage for ships traveling between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.
 - **Gupta Dynasty** and Later Gupta Dynasties like **Pala** promoted maritime trade with Southeast Asia, leading to the spread of Indian culture and religion.
 - **Chola Dynasty:** Known for their maritime expeditions and trade dominance in Southeast Asia. They established strong trade links with kingdoms in present-day Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Cultural Export via Ancient Trade Routes

Spread of Buddhism

- **Buddhist Missionaries:** Indian Buddhist monks like **Kumarajiva and Dharmaraksha** traveled along the Silk Road, establishing monasteries and teaching Buddhist doctrines. This led to the **spread of Buddhism across Central Asia, China, and beyond**.
- **Art and Architecture:** Buddhist art, characterized by intricate sculptures and paintings, spread along the trade routes. The **Gandhara** school of art, which combined Greek and Indian artistic elements, flourished in regions connected by the Silk Road. Notable examples include the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the Buddhist manuscripts found in the Dunhuang caves in China, which show Indian influences.

Intellectual Exchange

- **Philosophy and Science:** Indian **philosophical texts, mathematical concepts** (such as the concept of zero and the decimal system), and **astronomical knowledge** were transmitted along the Silk Road. For example, the Bakhshali Manuscript, an ancient Indian mathematical text, contains early references to the use of zero, and its concepts were transmitted through these trade routes.
- **Language and Literature:** Indian **literary works**, including epic tales like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, were **translated and adapted** in various regions, influencing local literary traditions.

- **Fusion of Styles:** The interaction of Indian, Central Asian, and West Asian cultures led to a fusion of artistic and architectural styles. This syncretism is evident in the Buddhist stupas, sculptures, and frescoes found along the Silk Road.

Southeast Asia

Cultural Exports:

- **Religion and Philosophy:** Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism, influencing local religious practices and temple architecture. The **Chola kings**, particularly Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola I, expanded their empire through naval expeditions, establishing trade links and cultural ties with **Southeast Asia**. Similarly, empires like **Srivijaya and Khmer** are considered to be heavily inspired and influenced by Indian religious traditions.
- **Art and Literature: Adaptation of Indian epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata** into local literature and **performing arts**. Ex: **Kakawin Ramayana of Indonesia, Ramakien of Thailand**.
- **Architectural Inspirations:**
 - **Angkor Wat (Cambodia):** A Hindu temple complex influenced by Indian architecture.
 - **Borobudur (Indonesia):** A Buddhist temple complex showing Indian artistic influence.

9.8. Preserving Our Heritage

Importance of Safeguarding Indian Art & Heritage:

Aspect	Details
Cultural Identity and Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of Diversity: Encapsulates the rich diversity of the nation, including various regional traditions, languages, religions, and philosophies. Examples: Ajanta and Ellora caves. • Historical Context: Provides a tangible connection to India's past, offering insights into ancient civilizations. Ensures future generations can connect with their history.
Educational and Inspirational Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Resource: Serves as educational tools for schools and universities. Examples: Nalanda University ruins. • Inspiration for Creativity: Inspires contemporary artists and craftsmen. Examples: Madhubani paintings, Chola bronze sculptures.
Tourism and Economic Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Tourism: Attracts millions of tourists each year. Examples: Taj Mahal, Khajuraho Temples, forts of Rajasthan. • Job Creation: Creates jobs in tourism, hospitality, and conservation. Increases demand for traditional crafts and souvenirs.
Preservation of Traditional Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Practices: Ensures the preservation of traditional music, dance, and rituals. Examples: Bharatanatyam, Kathak. • Sustainable Practices: Embodies sustainable and eco-friendly principles. Examples: Traditional Indian architecture using natural materials.
Strengthening National Pride and Unity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Identity: Fosters a sense of national pride and unity. • Cultural Diplomacy: Enhances India's soft power and global standing. Examples: International exhibitions, cultural festivals.

Challenges in Preserving Indian Art Heritage

Student Notes:

Aspect	Details
Theft and Illicit Trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Theft: India has experienced numerous thefts of valuable artifacts from temples, museums, and private collections. Examples: Ancient Bronze Idols from Tamil Nadu temples. • Illicit Trafficking: Stolen artifacts often end up in international markets, complicating recovery efforts. Examples: Return of the Nataraja statue from Australia.
Environmental and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Disasters: Earthquakes, floods, and cyclones pose significant threats to heritage sites. Examples: 2001 Gujarat earthquake damaging the historical city of Bhuj. • Climate Change: Rising sea levels and changing weather patterns accelerate the deterioration of heritage structures. Examples: Coastal erosion at the Sun Temple in Konark.
Urbanization and Development Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Expansion: Rapid urbanization encroaches on heritage sites, leading to the destruction or alteration of historical landscapes. Examples: Unauthorized constructions and settlements in the vicinity of Purana Qila. • Infrastructure Projects: Large-scale projects displace or destroy cultural heritage. Examples: Construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam submerging historical sites of Nagarjunakonda.
Lack of Awareness and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Awareness: Insufficient public awareness about the importance of heritage preservation leads to neglect and vandalism. • Education and Training: Inadequate education and training programs result in substandard conservation efforts. Examples: Shortage of skilled conservators and archaeologists.
Financial Constraints	Funding Limitations: Significant financial investment is required for preservation and restoration, but funding of ASI and other institutions is often limited.
Bureaucratic and Administrative Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex Regulations: Overlapping jurisdictions of multiple agencies cause inefficiencies and delays. Ex: Conflicting views on bylaws of AMASR Act • Corruption and Mismanagement: Corruption and mismanagement within heritage institutions undermine conservation efforts.
Tourism-Related Pressures	<p>Overtourism: High visitor numbers cause physical wear and tear and strain on local resources. Examples: Taj Mahal, Qutub Minar.</p> <p>Infrastructure Strain: Inadequate infrastructure to handle large tourist volumes results in damage to heritage sites.</p>
Technological Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Techniques: Lack of access to modern conservation techniques and technologies hinders effective preservation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Preservation: Limited digital preservation efforts risk losing valuable information due to natural disasters or degradation.
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Comprehensive Strategy for Preserving Indian Heritage

Aspect	Details
Legal Framework	The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972: Regulates export and trade of antiquities; The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958: Protects national monuments; prohibits construction in protected areas.
Government Schemes and Initiatives	Adopt a Heritage Scheme: Involves public and private sectors in heritage site upkeep, HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana): Develops modern infrastructure and helps to conserve heritage in cities, Swadesh Darshan Scheme: Develops theme-based tourist circuits. Ex: Buddhist Circuit and NE Circuit.
Organizations Involved	Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)
International Cooperation and Artifact Repatriation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO: Protects world heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage. • INTERPOL: It helps to track and recover stolen artifacts. • Repatriation Initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ United States: Returned 157 artifacts in 2021 to India. ○ Australia: Returned 12th-century Nataraja statue in 2014 to India. ○ United Kingdom: Returned 15th-century bronze idol of Lord Rama in 2019 to India. ○ Germany: Returned 10th-century stone sculpture of Goddess Durga in 2021 to India.
Technological Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Documentation and Archiving: Uses 3D scanning, digitization, and blockchain for documentation. Ex: National Digital Library of India; DigitalHampi Project; Conservation Technologies: Employing laser cleaning, climate control systems, and structural reinforcement.

<p>46th Session of the World Heritage Committee Hosted in New Delhi</p> <p>It occurred from July 21-31, 2024 with notable attendees including UNESCO Director General. The session's logo is inspired by the stone chariot of Hampi's Vijaya Vitthala Temple.</p>	<p>Assam's Charaideo Moidam included in UNESCO World Heritage List</p> <p>The Moidams in Charaideo, Assam, are royal burial mounds of the Tai-Ahom dynasty, created over 600 years.</p> <p>Nestled in the Patkai Ranges, the site features 90 brick, stone, or earth vaults, containing royal remains and grave goods.</p>
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Agenda Highlights:

Inscription of New Sites: Evaluating and inscribing cultural and natural sites of Outstanding Universal Value on the World Heritage List.

Conservation Monitoring: Assessing the state of conservation of existing World Heritage properties.

Heritage in Danger: Deciding which properties to inscribe or remove from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

International Assistance: Reviewing and approving requests for assistance from the World Heritage Fund.



Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty

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