

Indian History and Culture



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Structure of the Talk

- Understanding of Culture- Distinct features
 - Religion
 - Architecture
 - Sculpture
 - Paintings
 - Ramlila
 - Music
 - Dance
 - Food
 - Conclusions
- 



What is culture?

- ▶ When we talk of culture, we refer to the knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, cuisine, social habits, music, art, architecture, philosophy and religion.
 - ▶ Culture is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of time.
 - ▶ Culture is is never fixed. It is essentially fluid and constantly in motion.
 - ▶ How do we sum up the culture of India through the five thousand years in a matter of an hour ?
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Diversity of India

- ▶ India, a vast country with a lot of diversity in her physical and social environment.
 - ▶ People speak different languages, have different religions and practice different rituals.
 - ▶ Diversities in their food habits and dress patterns, music and dance forms.
 - ▶ But within all these diversities there is an underlying unity which acts as a cementing force.
 - ▶ The intermingling of people has been steadily taking place in India over centuries. A number of people of different racial stock, ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs have settled down here.
 - ▶ The composite and dynamic character of Indian culture is a result of the rich contributions of all these diverse cultural groups over a long period of time.
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Civilization

- ▶ Civilization is sometimes used as just another word for culture.
 - ▶ As a matter of fact, civilization is that stage in the cultural development of a people when they begin to live in large habitations called cities, which represent a higher level of material life or a higher standard of living.
 - ▶ Indian culture is made up of two different aspects, the individual mind and the social mind.
 - The Indian mind, comprises of the common outlook, the common temperament.
 - The social mind, which is the intellectual influences of various movements and cultures which have been incorporated over a period of time.
 - ▶ It is that cultural community which makes the Indians, despite regional limitations and variety of faiths and languages, regard themselves as a single integrated whole.
 - ▶ It is this concept of a single national entity that forms the ingredients of national integration, which is nothing but the spirit of cohesive co-existence between diverse cultural and linguistic communities.
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Continuity and Diversity

- ▶ There are two important features that stand out as far as our culture is concerned and these are continuity and diversity.
 - ▶ Indian culture has survived the ravages of time, and we have preserved and propagated our cultural heritage in spite of military invasions and political upheavals.
 - ▶ Indian literature, art and architecture and the rich historical and cultural heritage are a proof of this.
 - ▶ These were transmitted to posterity through a sound system of education which was an oral tradition to begin with, and was commuted into writing much later and this was responsible for the heritage of India to survive.
- 



A Unity in the diversity

- ▶ There is, a diversity in our culture and yet in spite of this diversity, there is an essential unity which can be seen through the ages.
- ▶ Each and every group or society that came to India added to this rich tapestry. The soul of India is, as evidenced through the ages, overcoming and assimilating or adorning and adapting to her peculiar conditions from every foreign influence with which she came in contact or conflict.
- ▶ Despite major changes and upheavals significant threads of continuity can be traced throughout the course of Indian history right up to the present day.
- ▶ It is amazing that even today the pattern of a housing, agriculture, marriage rituals and festivals are a continuation of the earlier period and India has a living culture.




Intermingling of people

- The reason for the variety in our culture is the intermingling among various ethnic groups.
- Since time immemorial, people from far and near have been coming and settling here.
- We find people belonging to different racial stocks like the Proto-Australoids, the Negroids and the Mongoloids living in India.
- Various ethnic groups like Iranians, Greeks, Kushans, Shakas, Huns, Arabs, Turks, Mughals and Europeans also came to India, settled here and intermixed with the local population.
- The people belonging to other cultures brought their cultural habits, thoughts and ideas, which got amalgamated into the existing culture.

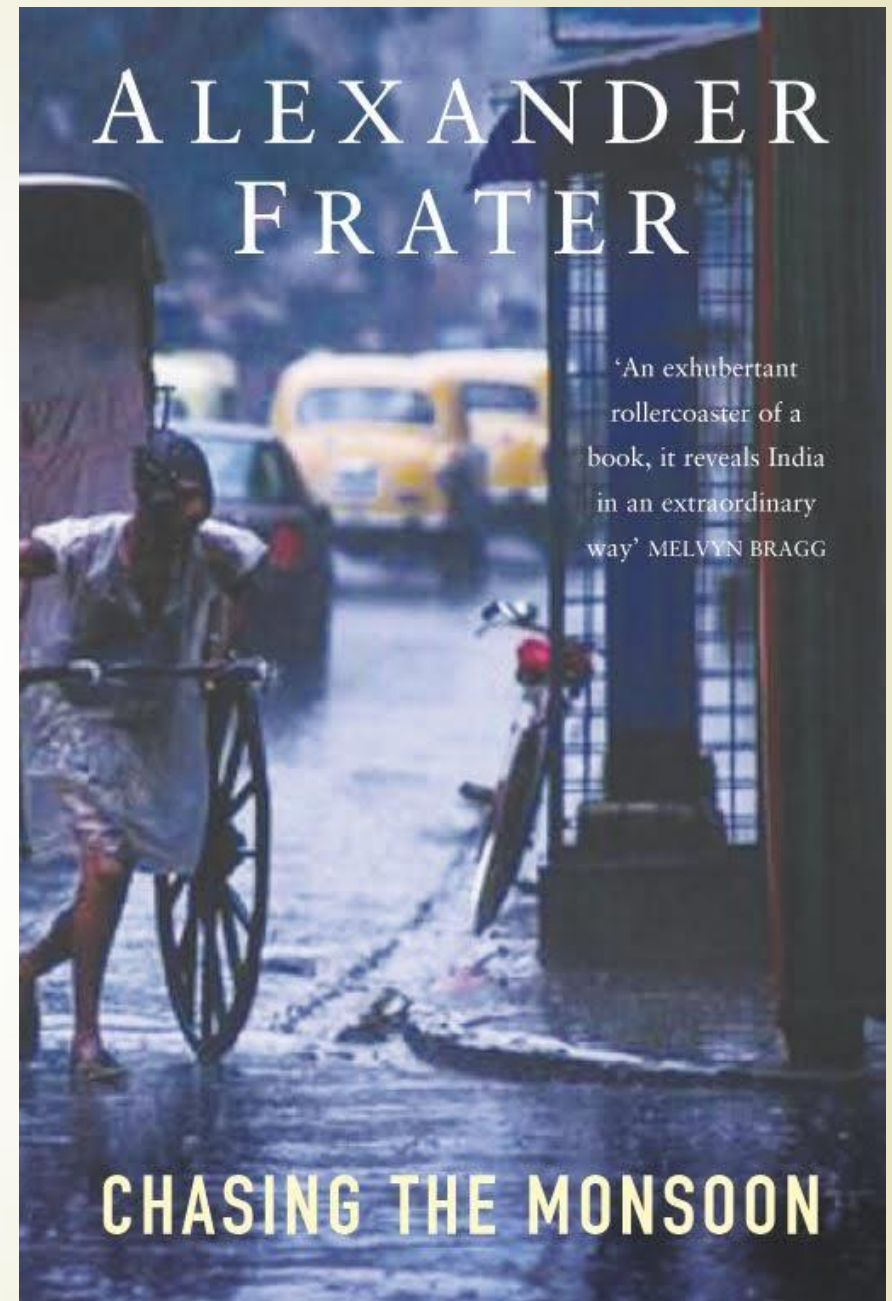


Travel among Indians

- ▶ In spite of physical barriers, Indians used to travel from one part of the country to another for trade or pilgrimage.
 - ▶ Some regions were joined together through conquests or by alliance.
 - ▶ As a result, people transmitted cultural habits and thoughts from one part of the country to the other.
 - ▶ Military campaigns too took people from one place to another. This helped in exchanging ideas.
 - ▶ Despite geographical diversity and climatic variations, where we have high mountains, low lands, forests, deltas, deserts, semi arid tropics, Climate and the landscape has also been a unifying factor.
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The Monsoon's

- ▶ The system of monsoons is the most important component of the Indian climatic pattern.
- ▶ This gives unity to the whole country.



Festivals

Vaisakhi in Punjab,

Nabanna in Bengal,

Magh Bihu in Assam,

Pongal in Tamilnadu,

Onam in Kerala,

Nuakhai in Odhisa

Sankranti in Telangana/Andhra Pradesh

All are celebrated as harvest festivals.




Unity of Political Form-Ancient

- ▶ This Unity is reflected in our political forms as well.
- ▶ Humans used to move from place to place in search of pastures. But as these people started practicing agriculture, they settled down. This settled life led to community development and growth of towns which needed rules and regulations
- ▶ Thus emerged a political organisation. Several tribal or the clans based assemblies such as the Sabha, Samiti, Vidatha, Gana are mentioned in the Vedas. They exercised deliberative, military and religious functions
- ▶ In course of time, the concept of *rashtra* emerged and possession of territory became the new measure of power.
- ▶ The period from sixth to fourth century BC is known as the age of Mahajan padas in India. Subsequently large empires were also established with emperors, such as Ashoka, Chandragupta Maurya , Samudra Gupta exercising absolute powers.



Medieval Period


- ▶ On the political front the thirteenth to sixteenth century saw the decline of an all powerful state and the rise of a number of provincial and regional states.
 - ▶ This period saw an economic organization which was considerably superior to the earlier one.
 - ▶ In 14th century there was a growth in towns and expansion in craft production and commerce.
 - ▶ The increase in commerce can be seen in the increase of coinage as a result of the transfer of stored silver and gold into minted money.
 - ▶ The Mughals also established a vast empire in India and brought in a lot of influence of Persia in our art and culture.
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The British

- ▶ The East India Company played its part in expanding the territories. When the British established themselves in India from 1858, India became a part of the British Empire.
- ▶ The British period saw a release of forces to fight the foreign power and an upsurge of nationalism reflected in political mobilization, literary revival and the pride in our religion and culture.
- ▶ In 1947, we were able to gain our freedom after a long struggle, though the pains of partition and the division of the country into two left a scar.
- ▶ Today India is a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic and a uniform system of government prevails over the length and breadth of the country and democracy has taken strong roots.



Religion in India

- ▶ India's artistic traditions are ancient and deeply rooted in religion. Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world.
 - ▶ Hinduism is world's third largest religion after Christianity and Islam. Also known as "Sanatan Dharma" or the everlasting religion.
 - ▶ Hindu religion is based on the concept that human and animal spirits come back to earth to live many times in different forms. The Hindus believe that a soul moves up and down hierarchy on the basis of behavior.
 - ▶ There is a huge diaspora of Indians in US, U.K. Canada, Africa, Australia and many other countries.
 - ▶ The evolution of Hinduism is not a linear progression from a founder through an organizational system, with sects branching off. It is rather the mosaic of distinct cults, deities, sects, ideas and the adjusting, juxtaposing or distancing of these to the existing ones.
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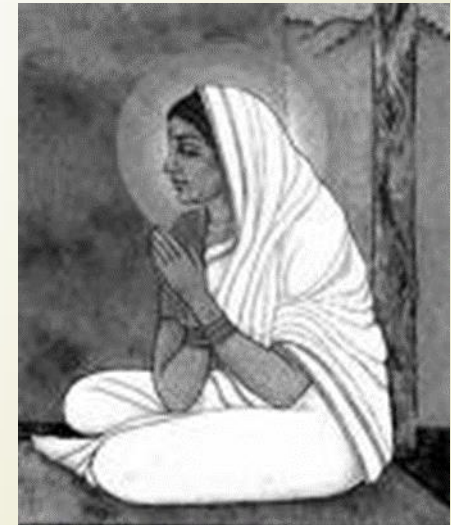
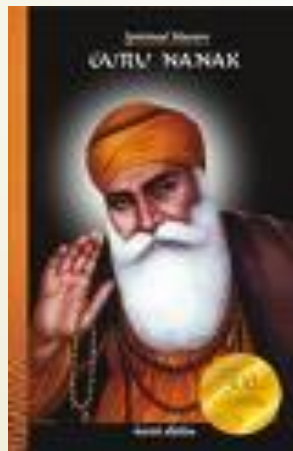
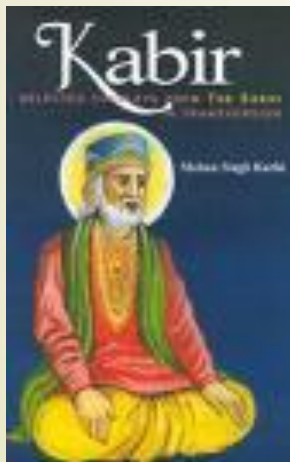
Beginnings of religion

- ▶ The beginning of Indian religion can be seen in the Indus River Valley Civilization nearly 5000 years ago where we have found evidence of public worship, some figurines of Gods and Goddesses.
- ▶ This was further developed as Sanatan Dharma, when the Aryans enter 4000 - 3500 years ago. The Vedic Tradition 3500 – 2500 years ago. It has many rituals and many gods (polytheism) sacred texts (Vedas) social stratification (caste system)
- ▶ Upanishads (metaphysical philosophy) 2800 – 2400 years ago. Vedic Tradition develops into Hindu thought and philosophy.
- ▶ A very important aspect of Indian religion and the performance of one's duty in this life was considered as fourfold,
- ▶ **Dharma**, the discharge of one's duty as rationally conceived as an aspect of social ethics
- ▶ **Artha**, the ordering of one's worldly concerns so as to conduce to happiness;
- ▶ **Kama**, the enjoyment of pleasures, sensual as well as sensuous ; and
- ▶ **Moksha**, the disentangling of oneself from ephemeral pleasures and joys unto infinity.

Hinduism

- ▶ Hinduism can never be viewed as one monolith tradition.
- ▶ It is polytheistic(belief in more than one God), monotheistic (belief in one God)and monistic (one single concept related to existence).
- ▶ Many Gods and Goddesses are worshipped, some of them in forms that are at a considerable distance from Sanskritic textual depictions. Visnu, Shiva and Devi are the principal deities but they have many forms and there are many more deities.
- ▶ Through out history there have been various independent reform movements which questioned the authority of the Vedas and created an alternative religious space through various mean.
- ▶ The bhakti and Sufi movements were such movement in medieval India .
- ▶ Movement by newly emerging social groups.

Bhakti Saints



Sufi Movement


- Sufi Saints also preached the essential oneness of God and that all men and women are equal in the eyes of God.
- They practiced the exercises ascetics, contemplation, renunciation and self-denial.
- Although Bhakti and Sufi movements could not eliminate the gap between Hindus and Muslims, they have certainly achieved the necessary harmony between different religious groups.
- These movements have fostered an agreement between Hinduism and Islam, and respect for others.

Sufis in India





Efflorescence of Indian Culture through Art /Religion

- ▶ India occupies an exalted position in the realm of art of the ancient world.
 - ▶ If the Greeks excelled in the portrayal of the physical charm of the human body,
 - ▶ the Egyptians in the grandeur of their pyramids and
 - ▶ the Chinese in the beauty of their landscapes,
 - ▶ the Indians were unsurpassed in transmitting the spiritual contents into their art.
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Art/Architecture

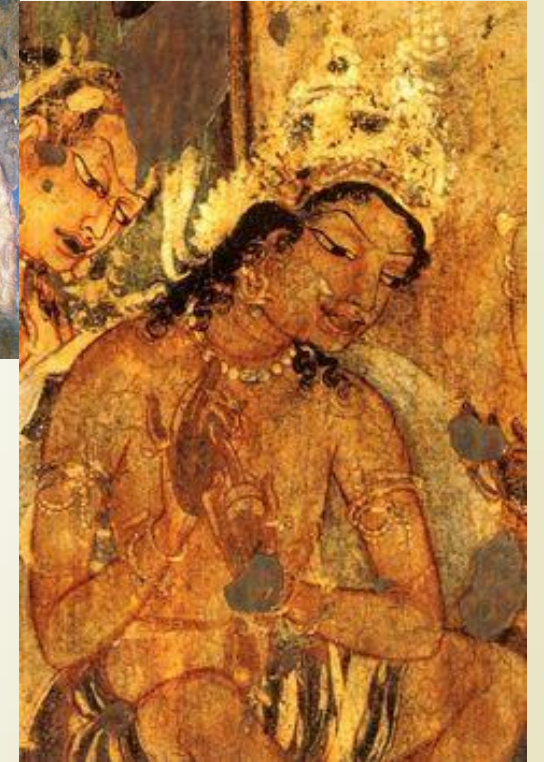
- The architecture of the various temples and the exquisite sculptures and paintings is a testimony to the beauty of Indian art.
- The Indian artists visualized the qualities of various gods and goddesses as mentioned in their scriptures and infused these qualities into their images.
- A sense of narrative a taste for decoration, keenness of observations are clearly brought out in each sculpture. Indian art is a blend of symbolism and reality, spirituality and sensuality.
- Indian art is the greatest lesson of continuity from pre-historic times to the present age. The epics Ramayana /Mahabhara have inspired most of our Indian art.
- This was further developed as secular form in the Fresco and miniature paintings.
- This art then spread to the neighboring regions and outside the boundary of India.

Ajanta Caves

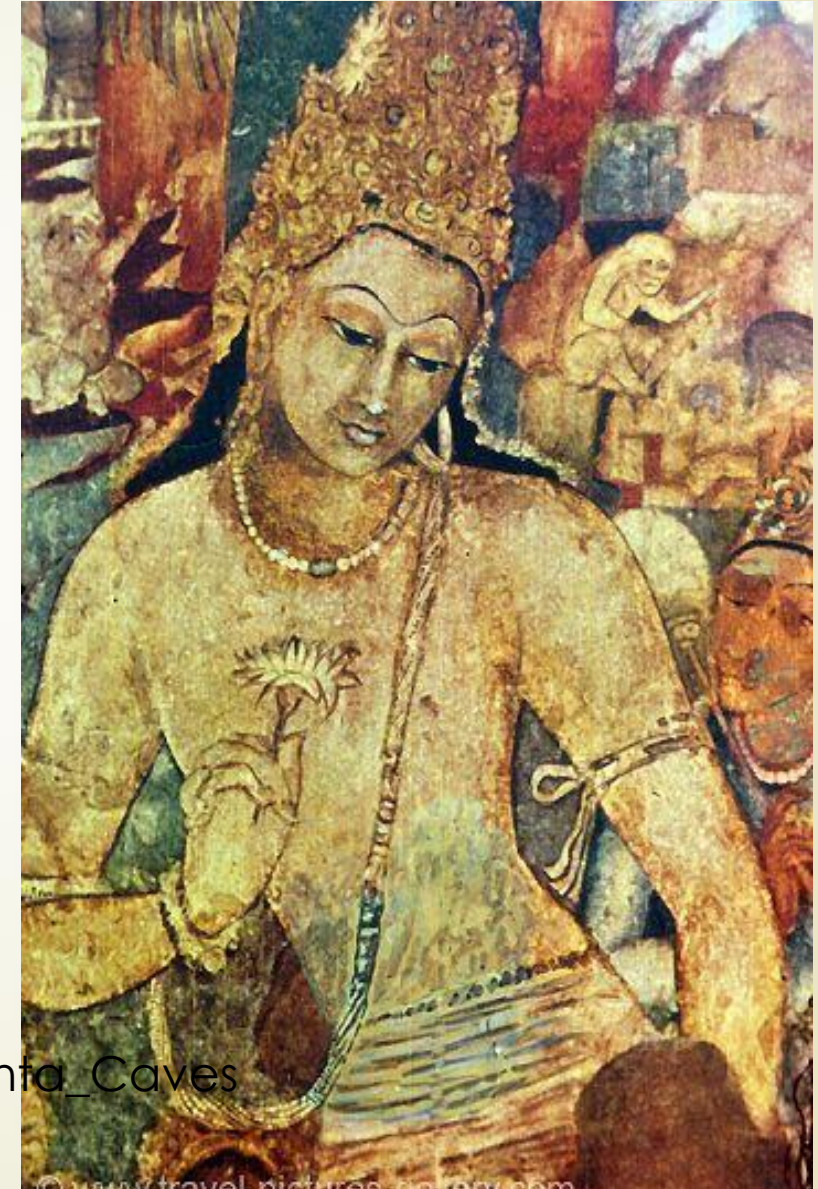


Ajanta paintings

- ▶ A glance at many paintings in Ajanta caves and sculptures of the early period will confirm that earlier Indians wore clothes which were unstitched.
- ▶ The coming of Kushans, Sakas and Parthenian brought in stitched cloth to India.
- ▶ India through the ages has shown a remarkable capacity for assimilation of ideas.
- ▶ This has contributed to the variety and richness of our culture.



Ajanta Paintings



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajanta_Caves

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Indian Sculptures in Temples



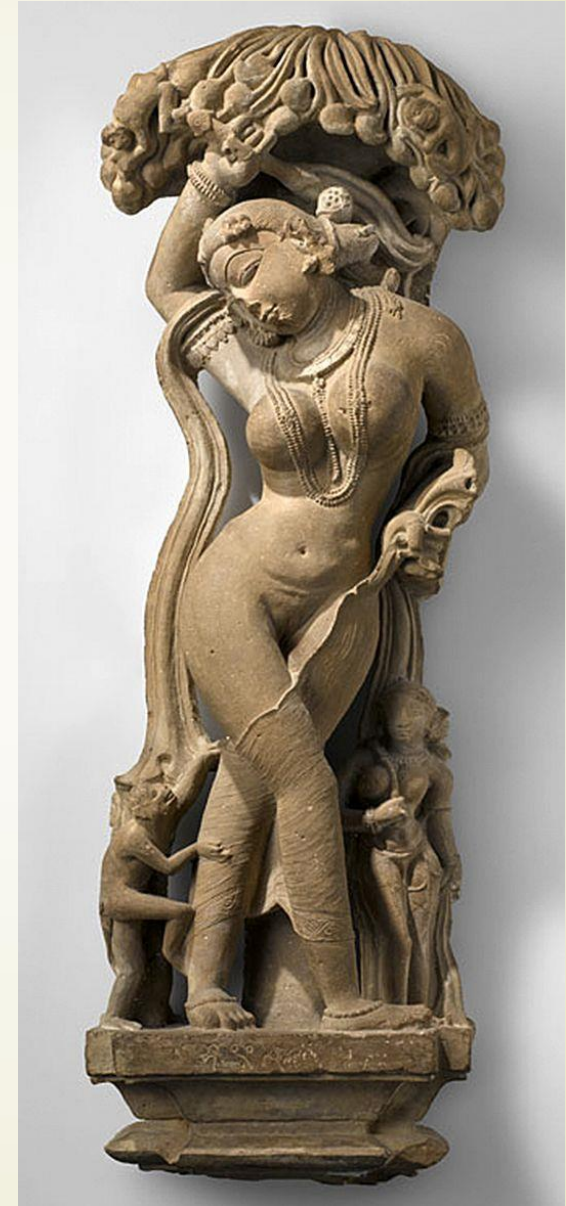


Didarganj Yakshi, Patna Museum

This life-size standing image is tall, well-proportioned, free-standing sculpture is made of sandstone with well polished surface.

The silent-guardians, to bring in peace, prosperity, fertility.

Shalbhanjika Yakshi, Khajuraho



Temple architecture, Badami



- Badami known as Vatapi in the earlier times, situated in North Karnataka, founded in 540 AD by Pulikeshin I.
- The groups of monuments located in the town of Badami and villages of Aihole, Nagarah and Pattadakal, of Bagalkot district, along Malprabha river is the contribution of the eastern Chalukya Dynasty (6th-8th century CE)

Kailash Temple



- ▶ The Dravidian or Pallava style was adopted by the Rashtrakuta Rulers also as can be seen in the famous Kailash Temple at Ellora near Aurangabad (Maharashtra).
- ▶ There are three groups of rock cut temples in Ellora – Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical. The Kailash Temple is a marvelous piece of rock architecture and sculpture .
- ▶ It was built by the Rashtrakuta King Krishna 1 in the 8th Century A.D.

KHAJURAHO



Khajuraho


Mahishasuramardini

- Durga killing the buffalo-demon Mahishasura .
- Represented in iconography in all the major sculptural traditions of India.





Constant flow of people and ideas

- ▶ Caravans of people and streams of thought constantly moved and flowed between India and Central Asia, resulting in intimate cultural relations between these two regions.
 - ▶ Indian medical ideas, herbs and methods of treatment were also transmitted from Baghdad to distant parts of the Caliphate.
 - ▶ Manaka who had cured Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, was appointed as an in charge of a bureau of translation for rendering Sanskrit works on medicine into Arabic.
 - ▶ The earliest works on medicine by Charaka and Su'sruta are frequently referred to by Razi and Ibn Sina in their works.
- 


Religious/ Secular Architecture

- ▶ Islamic architecture in India also has two aspects, religious and secular.
- ▶ Mosques and Tombs represent the religious architecture, while palaces and forts provide examples of secular Islamic architecture.
- ▶ Forts took an essentially functional design, complete with a little township within and various fortifications to engage and repel the enemy.

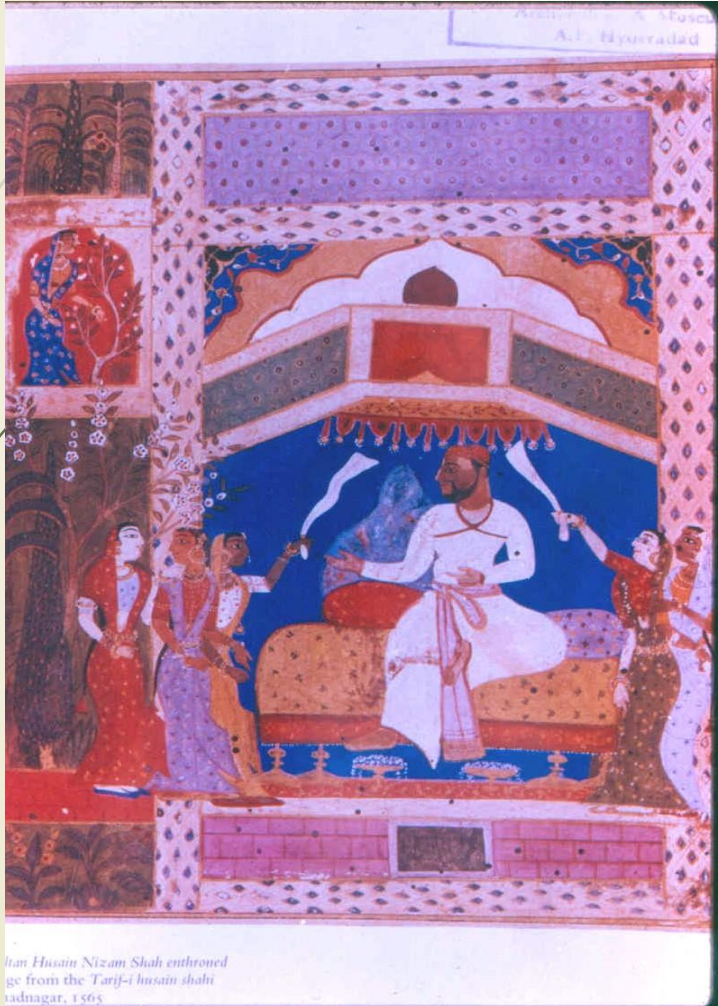




Meaning of miniature

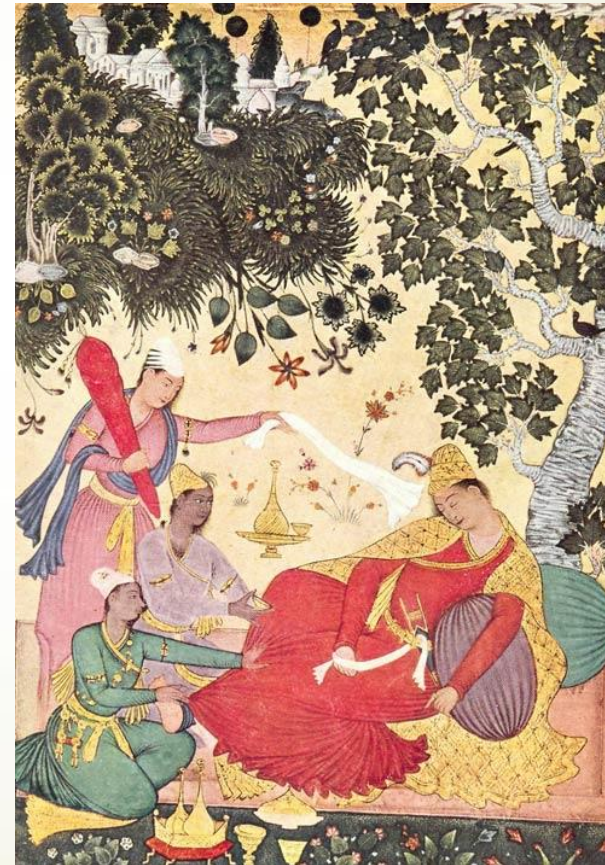
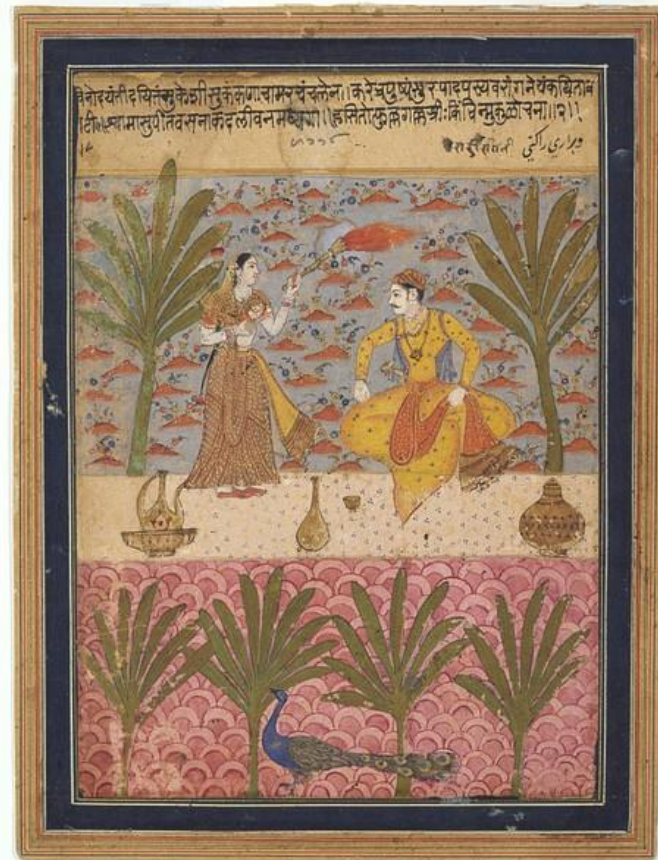
- ▶ From the Latin word, Minium, meaning red lead, for principal pigment.
 - ▶ Artist known as Miniatori.
 - ▶ Slowly any thing small in size.
 - ▶ Any painting on Vellum(fine skin), copper, ivory, paper, manuscripts.
- 

Sultan Husain Nizam shah on throne



- ▶ Imitation of the technique of fresco painting of Vijaynagar.
- ▶ On top the blue background, and yellow top becomes an alcove.
- ▶ Sensuous lines in depicting women.
- ▶ Woman seated one level below.

Two other paintings



Yogini painting from Bijapur



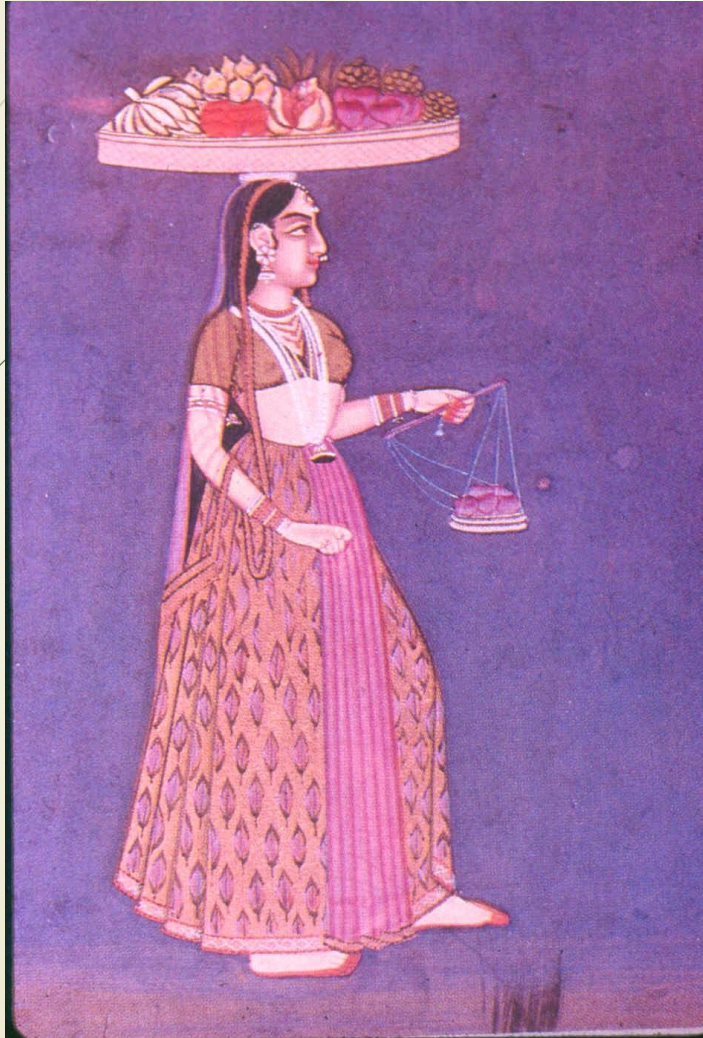
- ▶ Dt. 1605, by a Dublin painter.
- ▶ Extravagantly dressed, secretly communicating with a mynah bird. Has European features.
- ▶ Fantastic plants around her, a white palace behind like Renaissance painting. Treatment of rocks from Persian Kalams.
- ▶ Plants more like those on Chinese vases, which came to Deccan via sea ports, through Dutch merchants.

From Golconda



- ▶ Shows a courtesan wearing diaphanous robes of pink, while her veil and border of painting are green.
- ▶ Holds a bird in her left hand and wears necklace of pearls.
- ▶ Dress decorated with roses and has a sensuous form and overall impression is of sensuality.
- ▶ Covering is not to hide the flesh but to accentuate it.

Bijapur



- Maid carrying a fruit basket.
- Richly decorated and sensuous.

European Themes



- Madonna and child.
- No sexuality enhanced. The breasts are now a source of nutrition. Fully covered.

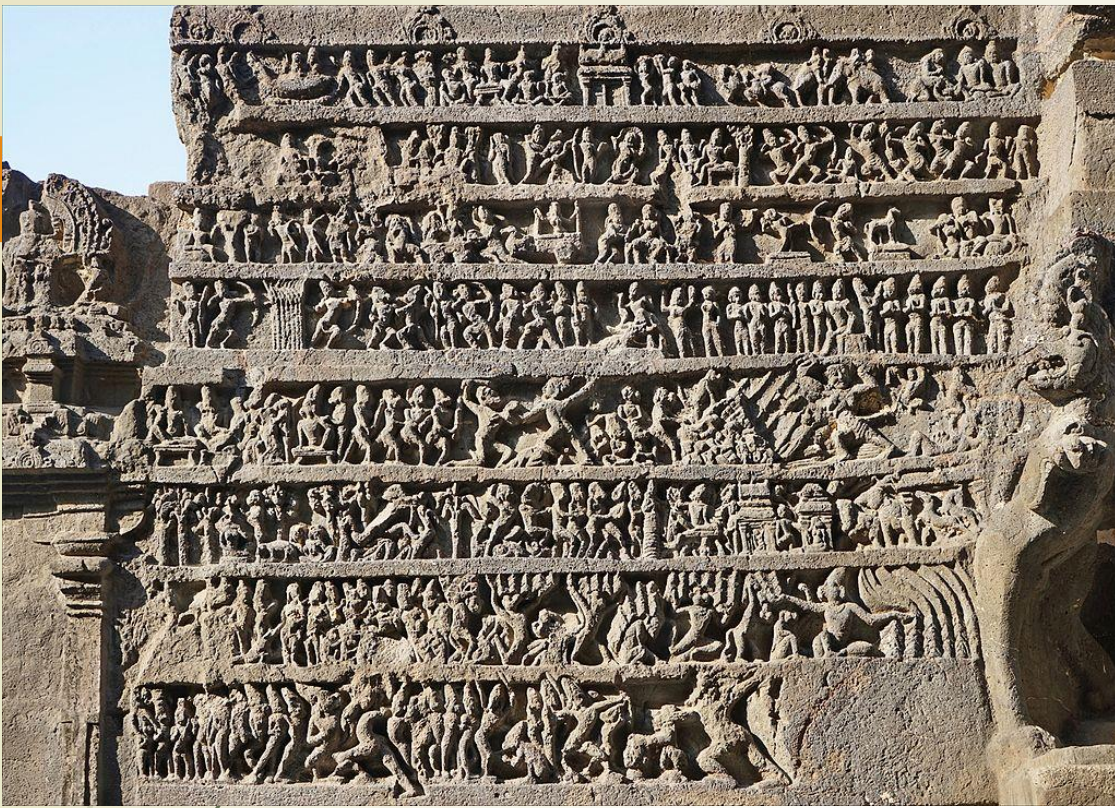
Madonna and child



- Again fully covered.
- Wears jewellery.
- Framed in a Border, with light yellow and orange colour.

Ramlila/ Continuities

- ▶ Rama is the seventh avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu and the central figure of the *Ramayana*, a Sanskrit epic that integrates performance arts with stories driven by ethical values.
- ▶ The epic text is dated to 1st millennium BCE, and Ramlila is an adaptation of those stories
- ▶ Most Ramlilas in North India are based on the 16th century secondary work on *Ramayana*, *Ramcharitramanas* a verse form composition in the regional vernacular language
- ▶ The Ramlila festivities were declared by UNESCO as one of the "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" in 2008.
- ▶ Performance arts are an ancient Indian tradition, with the Sanskrit Hindu text *Natya Shastra* explaining the importance of performance as follows:¹
- ▶ Let Nāṭya (drama and dance) be the fifth Vedic Scripture.
Combined with an epic story, tending to virtue, wealth, joy and spiritual freedom,
it must contain the significance of every scripture,
and forward every art.



- The *Ramayana* relief artwork in 8th century **Cave 16 of Ellora**.
- **Baluchari saree** from West Bengal



Chitrakoot Ramlila



- ▶ In Varanasi, around 477 years ago, was born the earliest Ramleela known to the world as Chitrakoot ground Ramlila.
- ▶ Celebrated for five days every year in the last week of February at Chitrakoot, beginning from the Maha Shivratri day.



Varanasi Ramlila

- The Ramlila festival (October-November) is celebrated with great fevour at Varanasi.
- Jhankis and pageants depicting scenes from the life of lord Rama are taken out.



235 year Old Ramnagar Ramlila



Ramlila at Ayodhya

- Ayodhya is popular for mandali Ramlilas.
- The performance is dialogue, based and presented on a platform stage.
- High standard of performance is complemented by songs and kathak dances and eyecatching décor.



Kumaoni Ramlila



- ▶ The festival of Dussehra is celebrated with great pomp and show all over Kumaon.
- ▶ Various Ramilas are enacted depicting the story of lord Rama's victory over the demon king, Ravana.
- ▶ The Almora Dussehra procession is unique with huge effigies of gods, heroes and demons paraded through the streets.

Garhwal Ramlila





Significance of Ramlila

- Ramlila not only about staging of the ancient Hindu epic – Ramayana, but is a social platform involving lakhs of people cutting across all political, caste, religious and economic barriers.
- Over the centuries, Ramlila has evolved into a highly venerated art form, and has travelled to far corners of the globe, through Indian Diaspora, not as acts of "cultural recovery", rather as fresh expressions of a persistent faith.
- Ramlila depicts the victory of good over evil, apart from providing a strong feeling of brotherhood and common bonding.
- Muslims participate in a large numbers.

Music

- Vedic Age (2000-1000BC) mentions a number of musical instruments
- Sama Veda gives three types of notes – *Udatta*, *anudatta* and *swaritha*
- Mention in Rig Veda of – *Veena*, *Vanshi* (Flute) and *Damaru*
- It appears that a form of music – *Jati* music came into vogue and Buddhist and Jain scriptures refer to it
- Kalidasa's *Abhignana Sakuntalam* clearly shows an attempt in blending poetry with Classical music



Jati Music and Dhrupad



- ❖ Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* ---has songs in the form of sonnet. These songs were in tunes based on jati music and were known as *Prabhandas*.
- ❖ Gradually Sanskrit poems rendered into *Bhraj bhasa*. Musical style- Dhrupad
- ❖ Reign of Aladdin Khilji – great development in Music
- ❖ His minister Amir Khusrau – credit of composing many melodies and great deal to the rhythmic patterns


Amir Khusru

- His greatest inventions were Sitar and Tabla musical instruments
- Known as father of **Qawwali**.
- Besides this attributed with , **qaul**, **qalbana**, **tarana**, **khayal**, **sohela** and **baseet**, and ragas such as **aiman**, **sazgeeri**, **ushshaq**, **bakharaz** and even talas such as **soolfakhta**.
- However, though having great interest in music he did not mention having invented anything in music, even though he boasts so much about his innovations in poetry and language.






Music under Mughals

- Great impetus to Bhakthi concept was given from the end of 15th century and this helped to the spread of Classical music to the masses....path to reach the Supreme
 - Sufism led to the introduction of musical instruments which were used in Qwwalis in praise of God – amalgamation of both the cultures
 - Under Akba, music reached its zenith. In his court there were thirty six experts in the art of music.
 - Chief among them were Tansen Baiju Bawra and Ramdas.
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Carnatik Music in South India

- References to Music could be seen in Sangam literature
 - Carnatic music – played a significant role in the courtly life of the kings – gave lot of impetus to dance and music
 - Bhakti movement – Post 10th century saw the growth of Hymn singing in temples as temples became a important cultural centers
 - Carnatic Music – gave scientific basis to classical Music
 - Hindustani Music – gave prominence to aesthetic aspect
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Vijayanagar Period

- ▶ Vijayanagar period saw the music at its zenith – Pillars of Hampi known as **saptaswaras**- give seven notes of music – **Sa ri ga ma pa da ni**
- ▶ Post Vijayanagar period saw the rise of Tanjore, Madurai and Mysore Nayakas
- ▶ Tanjore – famous as musical center



Classical and Folk dances

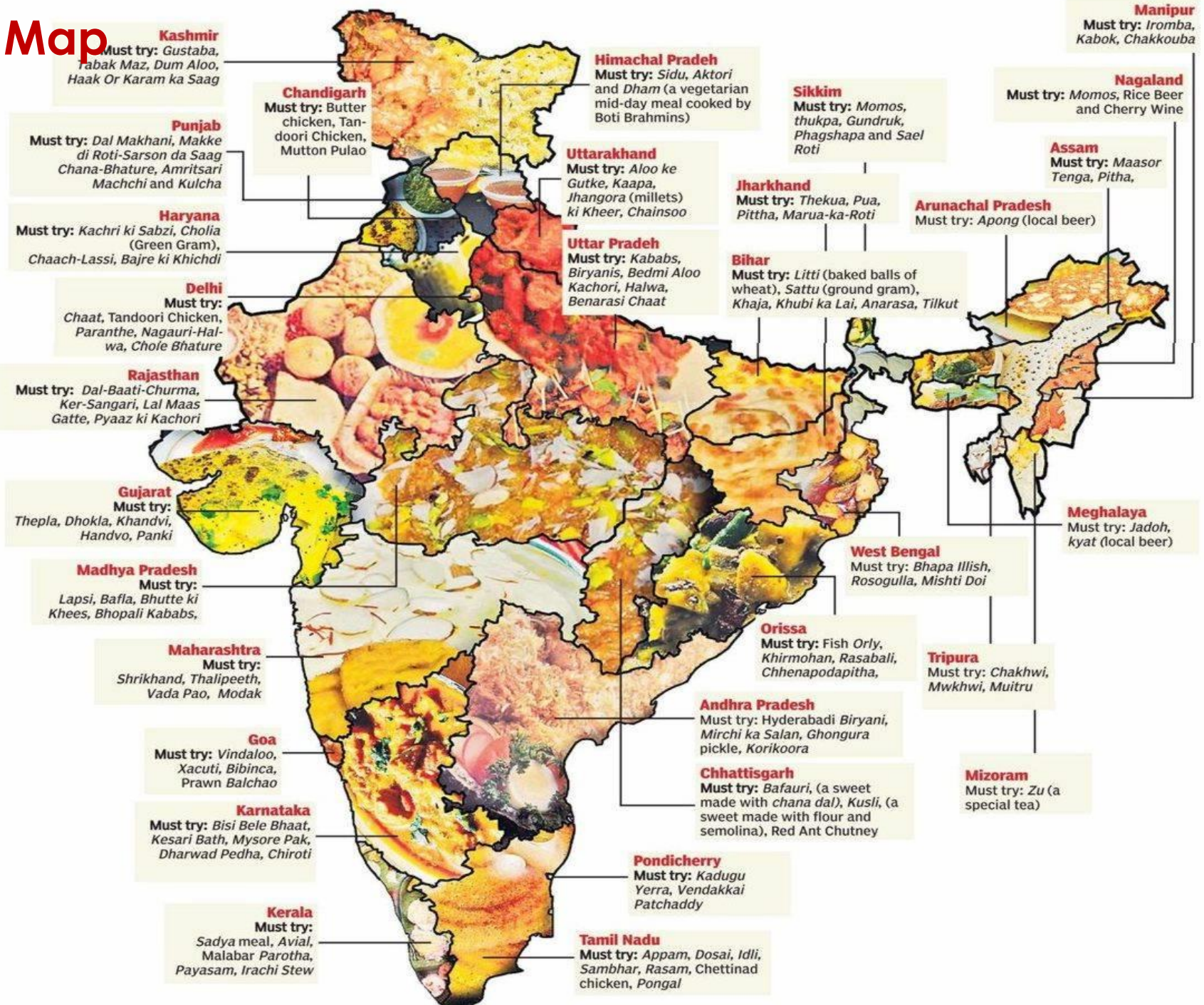
- ▶ As with other aspects of Indian Culture different forms of dances originated in different parts of India, developed according to the local traditions and also imbibed elements from other parts of the country
- ▶ Sangeet Natya Academy, recognizes eight traditional dances
- ▶ **Bharatanatyam**, from Tamil Nadu.
- ▶ **Kathak**, from Uttar Pradesh and western India.
- ▶ **Kathakali**, from Kerala.
- ▶ **Kuchipudi**, from Andhra Pradesh.
- ▶ **Odissi**, from Odisha.
- ▶ **Sattriya**, from Assam.
- ▶ **Manipuri**, from Manipur.
- ▶ **Mohiniyattam**, from Kerala.

Folk dances and plays in India retain significance in rural areas as the expression of the daily work and rituals of village communities. Tribal Dances in India are inspired by the tribal folklore. Each ethnic group has its own distinct combination of myths, legends, tales, proverbs, riddles, ballads, folk songs, folk dance, and folk music.

Dances

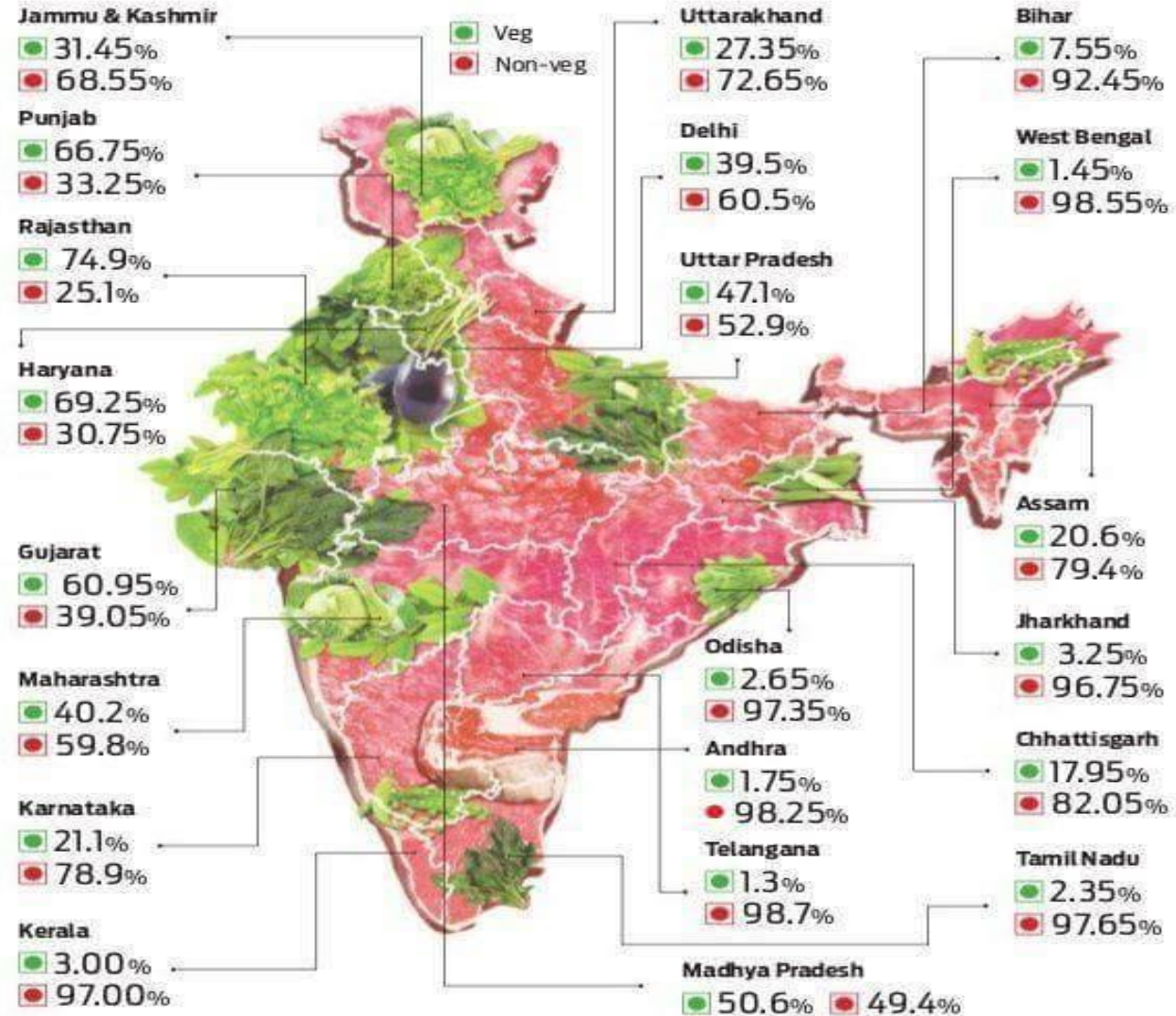


India's Food Map



Settling the debate forever on India's dietary preference being predominantly vegetarian, the data released by the Union government's Sample Registration System Baseline Survey has thrown open some interesting results. A look

HOW THE NATION EATS






Fusion and Food

- ❖ Today every very well-known Indian dish is the product of a long history of invasion and the fusion of different food traditions.
- ❖ The food that we Indians have been eating has been, over the millennia, steadily evolving both in variety and taste(Zayka)
- ❖ The food habits and preferences of Indians have changed in stages over the last 4000 years, from the Indus Valley days through the Vedic times and after the influence of Buddhist and Jain thought, and their impact on the Dharma Sutras and Arthasastra of around 300 BC, to Mughals, Europeans and British.



Philosophy of food

- ❖ According to the traditional Indian medical system Ayurveda, food is of three kinds.
 - ❖ **sattvic**
 - ❖ rajasic
 - ❖ tamasic
 - ❖ Depending on its character and effect upon the body and the mind.
- 

DELHI SULTANATE

- Delhi Sultanate rule comprised of many dynastic rule. (Slave Dynasty, Khilji's, Tughlaq, Sayyid and Lodhis).
- Sultans of Delhi generally sought to emulate the tradition of the Shah's of Persia.
- Generally food of aristocrat's include sweet sherbet, Nan i tandoori (bread filled with a sweet paste and dried fruit), roasted meat (shiwawoon), Sambusa or samosa, mutton, halvas, Sweet beverage, wine(fuqqa), and followed by the betel quid or Tambul.



➤ They have appointed Chasnigir,(taster of the food) Whose works was to ensure food cooked properly and free from poison. Most of the nobles also had their own private kitchens(Matbakhs).

Medieval Rulers

- Dastarkhan culture also becoming more popular in the Delhi Sultanate. (A Persian word means elaborate table cloth and a lavish meals of many dishes).
- Khichari(Indian dish which later becomes favorite of Mughals), Nahari(a meat stew with aromatic gravy).
- **Meals.** Pulao, Murg muslam, biryani, thin and round breads, meat cooked with onions, ghee, and green ginger.



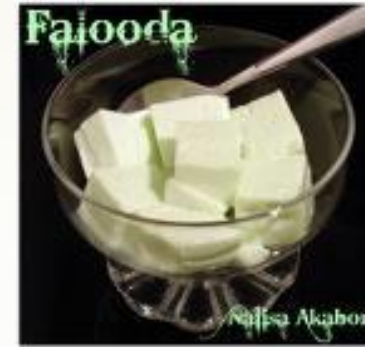
Kulfi the Mughal way

- ❖ Kulfi is a contribution of Mughals.
- ❖ The delicious cold kulfi was made at court by freezing a mixture of khoa, pista nuts and zafran essence in a metal cone after sealing the open top with dough. (The only modification today is to use aluminium or plastic cones with their own caps).



Falooda

- ❖ Jahangir, unlike his father, enjoyed meat, but will be remembered for popularizing falooda (a jelly made from boiled wheat strainings mixed with fruit juices and cream).





Commoners food

- The common people eat sufficient quantity of food for the survival and to keep up their strength to fight against the changes in the weather.
- They consumed so little as it seems that they survive by the air.
- Free eating houses on the basis of different communities.
 - a. Khairapurah (hindus)
 - b. Dharmpurah (muslims)
 - c. Jogipura (jogis)
- Even Bulghur Khana and Langar khana opened for all the people.



Portuguese

- ❖ During this period the Portuguese introduced foods from the New World.
- ❖ They brought potato, tomato, tapioca, groundnuts, corn, papaya, pineapple, guava, avocado, rajma (kidney bean), cashew, sapota (chiku), and of course capsicum and chilli in all its forms.
- ❖ Perhaps the cauliflower and cabbage came from Europe or Latin America too, but certainly a particular form of cottage cheese did come from the Portuguese.
- ❖ It was this that became the chhana of Bengal and Orissa — the base for many Bengali sweets (Sandesh in its modern form, and of course inventions called Rasogolla, Khirmohan, Mouchak, Pantua, Sitabhog, Chhena Puda, and so forth).

British attitude to Indian food

- ❖ Indian food, whether the robust fare of Punjab and the North East Frontier or the delicate, light flavours of the South Indian cuisine, remained essentially the "food of the natives" who, according to the foreign rulers, ate pungent, chilli-spiked curries and rice or rotis like some uncivilised pagans.
- ❖ The British were not in India to learn. They, as well as other Europeans, were here to "civilise" the backward masses of India and their looking down on the food of India was but a natural corollary.
- ❖ The *memsahibs*, whether they were British, French or Portuguese, employed Indian *khansamas*, cooks and bearers but taught them their own cuisines rather than eat Indian meals at their innumerable parties or in their family meals.
- ❖ Most British officers and civil administrators who came to India, looked upon the native cuisines of India as unhygienic and unpalatable because of the high content of spices and herbs.




Shiqar festivals

- ❖ The only concession they made was when they attended the shikar feasts of the *maharajas* or ceremonial royal meals in the opulent, chandeliered dining halls of the *riyasatis* where food was served by turbaned waiters from gem-studded gold or silver vessels.
- ❖ Throughout the colonial period too many new, hybrid cuisines developed because the *khansamas* of the *memsahibs* innovated food which combined some of the flavours of India with those of Britain, France or Portugal.
- ❖ Thus, as a legacy of the Raj era, we have the remnants of an Anglo-Indian, Indo-French or Indo-Portuguese cuisine.
- ❖ These flourish in parts of India and in Britain or Europe where nostalgic memories of the Raj linger on.



When the British left

- ❖ Clearly the sahibs and memsahibs fell in love with the flavors of India. When they returned to the homeland, they had their cooks grind up a mix of spices to sprinkle on their staid British staples.
 - ❖ The world now knows this as "curry powder" and whatever is cooked with it is "curry."
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British contribution to Indian food

- ❖ British made little contribution to Indian food.
- ❖ Fish and chips or Yorkshire pudding pale in comparison to what we got from the Arabs, Portuguese and Moghuls, but the British did sensitise us to at least one fruit, namely the apple.




Apples

- ❖ Local varieties of apple are recorded to have occurred in Kashmir (called amri, tarehli and maharaji), and Dalhara in 1100 AD talked about a "ber as big as a fist and very sweet, grown in North Kashmir", which is likely an apple.
- ❖ But it was the colourful Britisher Frederick "Pahari" Wilson who established a flourishing apple farm in Garhwal, where they grow red and juicy Wilson apples to this day.





After independence

- ▶ Only when Independence came, did Indians realise that they were one nation and that they would have to work above all towards a homogenous culture, lifestyle and national awareness.
 - ▶ The divide and rule days of the British were at last over.
 - ▶ The French had vacated Pondicherry, Mahe and Karaikal and the Portuguese were soon to be forced out of Goa, Diu and Daman.
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Food Revolution

- ❖ The first signs of the imminent, massive food revolution were visible when Mumbai, the most cosmopolitan city of India, welcomed hordes of Sindhi and Punjabi refugees who migrated to the city.
- ❖ They entered the building and film industries and began to assert their culture in the metropolis.
- ❖ Punjabi *dhaba* food from the North West Frontier became popular in Mumbai in the Sixties.
- ❖ Mumbaites, who had hitherto relished non-vegetarian food in the many street-corner Irani restaurants and *khanawals* serving the fish and meat dishes of the Konkan coast and Goa, pounced on the luscious *kebab* and *tandoori* cuisine which was new and exciting.

Spices

- ❖ Japanese sushi relies on the freshness of the meat
- ❖ Chinese food relies on the various sauces to impart the right flavor and taste
- ❖ Indian food relies on the spices in which it is cooked.
- ❖ Spices have always been considered to be India's prime commodity





Indian Policies and Philosophy

- ▶ The concept of coexistence is a central feature of our culture.
- ▶ It has not been confined to the geographical and political boundaries of the country.
- ▶ India has a universal outlook and it has been promoting the message of peace and harmony to the entire world.
- ▶ India has been raising a strong voice against racialism and colonialism.
- ▶ It has protested against the formation of power blocks in the world. In fact India became one of the founder members of the non-aligned movement.
- ▶ India is committed to the development of other underdeveloped nations.
- ▶ India has been discharging her responsibilities as a part of the world fraternity and has been contributing to the progress of the world.

Conclusions

- ▶ Indian culture, has been molded for thousands of years and it is not a monolith culture. It is liberal and has a lot of space for every one.
- ▶ From time to time we had various movements that questioned the existing hierarchies and achieved a space for themselves.
- ▶ There have been two guiding principles of our culture,
- ▶ **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**, a Sanskrit phrase found in Maha Upanishad, which means "the world is one family".
- ▶ **Vaishnava Jana to tene kahiye , Pir parayi jane re.**, a bhajan, written in the 15th century by the poet Narsinh Mehta. Call those people Vaisnava , who feel the pain of others.
- ▶ Help those who are in misery, but never let conceit enter their mind.



Summing up

- ▶ Contemporary India reverberates with the echoes of the past and gives them new shape and form each day.
- ▶ Indian culture is a composite culture, because it has been impacted by Hinduism on the one hand and Islam and other cultures on the other.
- ▶ From the past societies, to the present, it had accepted many ideas and influences from the different civilizations of the world, with which it came in touch and adopted many features of these as its own.
- ▶ India is a secular country with different religions, faiths, ideas, belief systems etc.
- ▶ We need to protect this in the interest and vibrancy of our culture.

