

**Department of History**  
**Multi-Disciplinary Course (MDC) (GEC)**  
**Semester IV (STUDY MATERIAL)**  
**Historical Trends in Indian Culture**

**Mauryan, and Gupta periods Literature**

**UNIT-I**

The Gupta period marks a decisive phase in the evolution of what is known as Classical Sanskrit. After experiencing a relative decline during the time of Ashoka—when Buddhism received strong royal patronage and literary activity flourished in vernaculars such as Pali, Prakrit, and Ardhamagadhi—Sanskrit regained prominence under the Guptas. The Gupta rulers consciously adopted Sanskrit as the official language of administration and court culture, and all their inscriptions were composed in it. This deliberate encouragement restored Sanskrit to a position of prestige and authority. Gradually, it replaced earlier popular dialects in inscriptions, religious literature, and even on coins. Its revival was so complete that even Mahayana Buddhist scholars and Jain intellectuals, who had previously preferred Prakrit, began composing their philosophical and religious works in Sanskrit. Texts such as the *Nyayavatara* and *Tattvarthadhigama Sutra* illustrate this linguistic shift. As a result, Sanskrit once again became the dominant intellectual and cultural language across northern India.

The Gupta rulers extended generous patronage to scholars, poets, dramatists, and intellectuals, fostering an environment of exceptional literary and intellectual growth. Ministers in the Gupta court were not merely political administrators but also accomplished scholars and poets. Harishena, for instance, composed the celebrated *Prayaga-Prashasti*, an inscription praising the military conquests and achievements of Samudragupta. Similarly, the panegyric inscription on the Mehrauli Iron Pillar is attributed to Virasena, a court poet and minister of Chandragupta II. Although the Guptas favored Brahmanical religion, their policy was not one of religious intolerance. While Buddhism no longer enjoyed the status of a state-supported faith, it was not persecuted; archaeological evidence of Buddhist monasteries and images from this period confirms its continued vitality. Thus, the age was marked by cultural synthesis and religious coexistence.

This era witnessed a remarkable flowering of Sanskrit literature, often described as a golden age. Among its most illustrious figures was Kalidasa, one of the “navaratnas” or nine luminaries of Chandragupta II’s court. His dramatic works, including *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, and *Vikramorvashiyam*, as well as his poetic compositions such as *Raghuvamsham*, *Kumarasambhavam*, *Meghadutam*, and *Ritusamharam*, exemplify literary refinement and emotional depth. *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* achieved worldwide recognition and was among the earliest Indian literary works translated into European languages. *Meghadutam*, a lyrical poem of love and separation conveyed through the metaphor of a cloud messenger, stands as one of the most exquisite expressions of romantic imagination in Sanskrit literature. Kalidasa’s mastery over language, imagery, and human emotion set a benchmark rarely equaled.

Other distinguished writers also enriched the literary tradition. Bhasa composed thirteen plays; Bhairavi authored *Kiratarjuniyam*; Vishakhadatta wrote the political drama *Mudrarakshasa*, centered on Chanakya’s diplomacy; and Shudraka’s *Mrichchhakatika* portrayed urban life and romantic themes with unusual realism. Vatsyayana’s *Kamasutra* examined the concept of kama within the broader framework of social and ethical life.

Amarsimha's *Amarakosha* became a foundational lexicon of Sanskrit and continues to be studied even today. These works collectively reflect the sophistication of courtly culture and the intellectual vibrancy of the period.

Religious literature also underwent significant development. The Gupta and post-Gupta periods saw the redaction and final compilation of many Puranas, including the *Vishnu Purana*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, *Markandeya Purana*, and *Brahmanda Purana*. Originally part of bardic traditions, these texts were reshaped by Brahmanical authors to incorporate theological glorification of the Trimurti—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were also given their definitive forms during this time. The *Mahabharata*, traditionally attributed to Vyasa, expanded to nearly 100,000 verses and attained the revered status of the "Fifth Veda." Numerous Smritis, such as those attributed to Vishnu, Narada, Yajnavalkya, Katyayana, and Brihaspati, were composed to regulate moral, social, and legal conduct. These texts sought to systematize what is often described as neo-Hindu philosophical and ethical thought.

Beyond literature, the Gupta age was characterized by remarkable achievements in science and intellectual inquiry. The conceptualization of zero and the development of the decimal place-value system represent groundbreaking contributions to mathematics. Scholars such as Aryabhata, Varahamihira, and Brahmagupta made pioneering advances in astronomy and mathematics. Aryabhata's *Aryabhattiyam* explored arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, and he boldly asserted that the Earth rotates on its axis and revolves around the Sun—an idea far ahead of its time. Varahamihira's *Brihat Samhita* and *Panchasiddhantika* integrated astronomical knowledge, including elements influenced by Greek science. Medical science also progressed, as seen in the enduring works *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, while Palakapya's *Hastyayurveda* demonstrated systematic knowledge of veterinary medicine.

Philosophical discourse flourished as well, with sustained engagement in the six orthodox schools of Indian thought: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Jain scholars such as Bhadrabahu II composed commentaries known as *Niryuktis* and *Churnis*, reflecting the dynamic nature of intellectual debates. Overall, the Gupta period stands as a landmark in the history of classical Indian civilization. It not only revived and refined Sanskrit into a highly ornate literary medium but also fostered unparalleled advancements in literature, philosophy, science, and culture. For these reasons, it is widely regarded as the Golden Age of ancient Indian intellectual and artistic achievement.

## Vedic Literature

### Introduction

Vedic literature is the earliest body of sacred and secular knowledge in India and forms the foundation of Indian civilization, religion, philosophy, and culture. The term "Veda" is derived from the Sanskrit root *vid*, meaning "to know." Thus, the Vedas are regarded as the ultimate source of knowledge. They are considered *Shruti* (that which is heard) and are believed in the orthodox tradition to be of divine origin (*apaurusheya*), meaning not composed by human beings but revealed to ancient sages (rishis). Historically, however, they evolved gradually over several centuries through oral composition and transmission.

Vedic literature reflects the social, political, economic, religious, and intellectual life of the early Indo-Aryans. It is broadly divided into four main Vedas—Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda—each consisting of four parts: Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. Together, they form a vast and layered corpus representing different stages of religious and philosophical development.

### **Classification of Vedic Literature**

Vedic literature is traditionally divided into two broad categories:

1. **Shruti Literature (Revealed Texts)**
  - The four Vedas and their four components.
2. **Smriti Literature (Remembered Texts)**
  - Later texts based on Vedic traditions such as the Vedangas, Sutras, Epics, Puranas, and Dharmashastras.

The Shruti texts form the core of Vedic literature and are the primary focus of study.

The Rigveda is the oldest and most important of the Vedas. It is a collection of 1,028 hymns (*suktas*) divided into ten books called *mandalas*. These hymns were composed by various sages and dedicated to different deities.

#### **Main Features:**

- Written in early Vedic Sanskrit.
- Composed approximately between 1500 BCE and 1200 BCE.
- Contains hymns praising natural forces personified as gods.

#### **Important Deities:**

- **Indra** – God of thunder and war.
- **Agni** – God of fire.
- **Varuna** – God of cosmic order.
- **Surya** – Sun god.
- **Usha** – Goddess of dawn.
- **Soma** – God associated with a sacred ritual drink.

The Rigveda reflects a pastoral society where cattle wealth was central. Political organization was tribal, and society was relatively simple. Philosophically, it contains early speculations about creation, as seen in the famous *Nasadiya Sukta* (Hymn of Creation).

### **Samaveda**

The Samaveda is essentially a collection of hymns taken mostly from the Rigveda but arranged for musical chanting during sacrifices.

#### **Main Features:**

- Contains about 1,875 verses.
- Focuses on melodies (*saman*).

- Laid the foundation of Indian classical music.

It was primarily used by priests known as *Udgatri* during sacrificial rituals. While it does not add much new content, its importance lies in the development of liturgical music and ritual chanting.

### **The Yajurveda**

The Yajurveda contains prose mantras and instructions for performing sacrifices (*yajna*).

#### **Two Main Branches:**

- **Shukla (White) Yajurveda**
- **Krishna (Black) Yajurveda**

#### **Main Features:**

- Provides detailed sacrificial formulas.
- Guides priests (Adhvaryu) in ritual procedures.
- Reflects a more complex ritualistic society.

The Yajurveda indicates the increasing dominance of priestly authority and elaborate sacrificial rituals in later Vedic society.

### **The Atharvaveda**

The Atharvaveda differs significantly from the other three Vedas.

#### **Main Features:**

- Contains spells, charms, and magical formulas.
- Deals with healing, domestic rituals, and everyday concerns.
- Reflects popular beliefs and superstitions.

It provides insight into the daily life of ordinary people, including fears of disease, evil spirits, and enemies.

### **The Four Parts of Each Veda**

Each Veda consists of four layers representing gradual intellectual evolution:

#### **1. Samhitas**

These are collections of hymns and mantras. They form the oldest part of the Vedas.

#### **2. Brahmanas**

Prose texts explaining the meaning and procedure of rituals. They emphasize sacrificial ceremonies and priestly duties.

### 3. Aranyakas

Known as “forest texts,” these were composed for hermits and ascetics. They mark a transition from ritualism to philosophical thought.

### 4. Upanishads

The Upanishads represent the philosophical culmination of Vedic thought.

#### Key Concepts:

- **Brahman** – Ultimate reality.
- **Atman** – Individual soul.
- **Karma** – Law of action.
- **Moksha** – Liberation.
- Unity of Atman and Brahman.

Major Upanishads include:

- Isha
- Kena
- Katha
- Chandogya
- Brihadaranyaka
- Mundaka

They shifted focus from external rituals to internal knowledge and meditation.

#### Vedangas (Auxiliary Disciplines)

To preserve Vedic knowledge accurately, six auxiliary sciences developed:

1. Shiksha (phonetics)
2. Chhanda (meter)
3. Vyakarana (grammar)
4. Nirukta (etymology)
5. Kalpa (ritual)
6. Jyotisha (astronomy)

These disciplines ensured precise transmission of Vedic texts.

#### Social and Political Ideas in Vedic Literature

Vedic texts provide valuable historical information.

#### Early Vedic Society:

- Patriarchal and pastoral.

- Tribal assemblies: Sabha and Samiti.
- Simple social divisions.

### **Later Vedic Society:**

- Agricultural expansion.
- Rise of monarchy.
- Emergence of the Varna system (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra).
- Increasing ritualism and priestly dominance.

### **Religious Ideas**

- Polytheism gradually moving toward monism.
- Sacrifices (Yajnas) central to religious life.
- Concept of Rita (cosmic order).
- Later emphasis on spiritual knowledge.

### **Importance of Vedic Literature**

1. Foundation of Hindu philosophy.
2. Source of Indian religious traditions.
3. Basis of Sanskrit language development.
4. Provides earliest historical information.
5. Influenced later Epics and Puranas.
6. Contributed to music, science, and mathematics.

### **Conclusion**

Vedic literature represents the earliest intellectual expression of Indian civilization. Beginning with simple hymns to nature gods in the Rigveda, it gradually evolved into profound philosophical reflections in the Upanishads. The movement from ritualism to spiritual inquiry marks a significant transformation in Indian thought. Its influence extends beyond religion into philosophy, social organization, political theory, language, science, and art.

The Vedic corpus stands not only as a religious scripture but as a comprehensive record of early Indian life and thought. Even today, its hymns are chanted, its philosophical ideas are studied, and its cultural legacy continues to shape Indian society.

## **UNIT-II**

### **The Delhi Sultanate: Literature and Architecture**

#### **Mughal Paintings and Architecture**

- Arch, dome, vaults and use of lime cement, the striking Saracenic features, were introduced in India.

- The use of marble, red, grey and yellow sandstones added grandeur to the buildings.
- In the beginning the Sultans converted the existing buildings to suit their needs.
- Qutb-uddin Aibak's Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque situated adjacent to Qutb Minar in Delhi and the Adhai din ka Jhopra in Ajmer illustrate these examples.
- A Hindu temple built over a Jain temple was modified into Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.
- Adhai din ka Jhopra was earlier a Jain monastery before being converted as a mosque.
- With the arrival of artisans from West Asia the arch and dome began to show up with precision and perfection.
- Gradually local artisans also acquired the skill.
- The tomb of Balban was adorned with the first true arch and the Alai Darwaza built by Ala-ud-din Khalji as a gateway to the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque is adorned with the first true dome.
- The palace fortress built by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and Muhammad bin Tughlaq in Tughlaqabad, their capital city in Delhi, is remarkable for creating an artificial lake around the fortress by blocking the river Yamuna.
- The tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq introduced the system of sloping walls bearing the dome on a raised platform.
- The buildings of Firuz Tughlaq, especially his pleasure resort, Hauz Khas, combined Indian and Saracenic features in alternate storeys, displaying a sense of integration.

**Qutb Minar, originally a 72.5 metre tower when completed by Iltutmish, was increased to 74 metres by the repairs carried out by Firuz Shah Tughlaq. The Minar is facilitated by 379 steps and it is magnificent for the height, balconies projecting out marking the storeys, the gradual sloping of the tower and the angular flutings creating a ribbed effect around the tower**

### **Literature**

- Amir Khusrau emerged as a major figure of Persian prose and poetry.
- Amir Khusrau felt elated to call himself an Indian in his Nu Siphir ('Nine Skies').
- In this work, he praises India's climate, its languages – notably Sanskrit – its arts, its music, its people, even its animals.
- The Islamic Sufi saints made a deep literary impact.
- The Fawai'd-ul-Fawad, a work containing the conversations of Sufi Saint Nizam-ud-din Auliya was compiled by Amir Hassan.
- A strong school of historical writing emerged with the writings of Zia-ud-din Barani, Shams-ud-din Siraj Afif and Abdul Malik Isami.
- Zia-ud-din Barani, emerged as a master of Persian prose.
- Abdul Malik Isami, in his poetic composition of Futuh-us-Salatin, records the history of Muslim rule from Ghaznavid period to Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign.

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- Persian literature was enriched by the translation of Sanskrit works.
- Persian dictionaries with appropriate Hindawi words for Persian words were composed, the most important being *Farhang-i-Qawas* by Fakhrud-din Qawwas and *Miftah-ul-Fuazala* by Muhammad Shadiabadi.
- *Tuti Namah*, the Book of Parrots, is a collection of Sanskrit stories translated into Persian by Zia Nakshabi.
- Mahabharata and Rajatarangini were also translated into Persian.
- Delhi Sultanate did not hamper the progress of Sanskrit Literature.
- Sanskrit continued to be the language of high intellectual thought.
- The Sanskrit schools and academies established in different parts of the empire continued to flourish.
- The classical Sanskrit inscription (Palam Baoli) of 1276 in Delhi claims that due to the benign rule of Sultan Balban god Vishnu sleeps in peace in the ocean of milk without any worries.
- The influence of Arabic and Persian on Sanskrit literature was felt in the form of translations.
- Shrivara in his Sanskrit work *Kathakautuka* included the story of Yusuf and Zulaika as a Sanskrit love lyric.
- Bhattavata took Firdausi's *Shah Namah* as a model for composing *Zainavilas*, a history of the rulers of Kashmir.

## **MUGHAL PAINTING AND ARCHITECTURE**

The Mughal period (16th–18th century) represents one of the most brilliant phases in the cultural history of India. The Mughal rulers not only established a vast political empire but also laid the foundation of a rich artistic tradition. Among their most remarkable contributions are **Mughal Painting** and **Mughal Architecture**, which combined Persian, Central Asian, and Indian elements to create a unique Indo-Islamic style.

The artistic achievements of the Mughals reflected royal patronage, religious tolerance (in varying degrees), imperial ideology, and refined aesthetic taste. Painting flourished mainly in royal ateliers (*Karkhanas*), while architecture expressed power, spirituality, and artistic perfection through forts, palaces, mosques, and mausoleums.

### **PART I: MUGHAL PAINTING**

#### **ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Mughal painting originated during the reign of **Babur**, but it developed systematically under **Humayun**. When Humayun was in exile in Persia, he came into contact with Persian miniature painting. He invited Persian artists like Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad to India. These artists laid the foundation of Mughal miniature painting.

The art reached its golden phase under **Akbar**, and continued to evolve under **Jahangir** and **Shah Jahan**. During the reign of **Aurangzeb**, royal patronage declined, leading to the dispersion of artists to regional courts.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF MUGHAL PAINTING**

1. Miniature style (small, detailed paintings)
2. Use of bright colors and fine brushwork
3. Realistic human figures
4. Naturalistic representation of flora and fauna
5. Portrait painting
6. Court scenes, battles, hunting scenes
7. Influence of Persian style blended with Indian themes

## **MUGHAL PAINTING UNDER DIFFERENT RULERS**

### **1. Babur (1526–1530)**

Babur loved gardens and nature. Though his reign was short, his autobiography, the **Baburnama**, reflects his interest in art and nature. However, no major painting workshop was organized during his time.

### **2. Humayun (1530–1540; 1555–56)**

Humayun invited Persian artists and established the foundation of Mughal painting in India. The earliest important illustrated manuscript was the **Hamzanama**, which depicted stories of Amir Hamza. It contained large-size paintings with bold colors.

### **3. Akbar (1556–1605)**

The real development of Mughal painting took place under Akbar.

#### **Important Features:**

- Large royal workshop (Karkhana)
- Indian artists participated along with Persian artists
- Themes expanded to Indian epics and history

Important illustrated manuscripts:

- **Akbarnama**
- **Razmnama**
- **Ramayana**

Style:

- Dynamic movement
- Detailed battle scenes
- Use of perspective
- Rich colour combinations

Akbar's period marks the fusion of Persian technique with Indian themes.

#### **4. Jahangir (1605–1627)**

Jahangir was deeply interested in painting. His autobiography, the **Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri**, mentions his love for art.

##### **Characteristics:**

- Emphasis on portrait painting
- Naturalistic style
- Scientific study of plants and animals
- European influence (halos, shading)

Famous artists:

- Ustad Mansur (famous for bird and animal studies)
- Abul Hasan

One famous painting: **Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings**

Jahangir's period is considered the Golden Age of Mughal painting.

#### **5. Shah Jahan (1628–1658)**

Painting under Shah Jahan became more refined and decorative.

Features:

- Formal court scenes
- Rich costumes
- Decorative borders
- Less dynamism compared to Akbar

#### **6. Aurangzeb (1658–1707)**

Aurangzeb showed little interest in painting. Royal patronage declined, and artists migrated to Rajasthan, Punjab, and Deccan, leading to the development of Rajput and Pahari schools.

### **THEMES OF MUGHAL PAINTING**

1. Historical events
2. Court life
3. Hunting scenes
4. Religious themes
5. Nature studies
6. Portraits
7. Festivals and daily life

## **CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE**

- Fusion of cultures
- Development of portrait art
- Influence on Rajput painting
- Preservation of historical events
- Contribution to manuscript tradition

## **PART II: MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mughal architecture represents the peak of Indo-Islamic architecture. It combined Persian elements (domes, arches, iwans) with Indian elements (chhatris, jharokhas).

Major features:

- Red sandstone and white marble
- Large domes
- Minarets
- Symmetry
- Charbagh garden pattern
- Pietra dura inlay work

### **ARCHITECTURE UNDER DIFFERENT RULERS**

#### **1. Babur**

Important buildings:

- Kabuli Bagh Mosque (Panipat)
- Aram Bagh (Agra)

Babur introduced the Charbagh garden system.

#### **2. Humayun**

Most important monument:

- **Humayun's Tomb**

Features:

- First grand Mughal tomb
- Double dome
- Charbagh garden
- Red sandstone with white marble

It inspired later architecture, especially the Taj Mahal.

### **3. Akbar**

Major works:

- **Agra Fort**
- **Fatehpur Sikri**

Features:

- Massive red sandstone structures
- Hindu and Islamic architectural fusion
- Buland Darwaza
- Panch Mahal

### **4. Jahangir**

Important monument:

- **Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah**

Features:

- Extensive use of white marble
- Pietra dura (inlay work)
- Delicate carvings

### **5. Shah Jahan**

Golden age of Mughal architecture.

Major monuments:

- **Taj Mahal**
- **Red Fort**
- **Jama Masjid**

Features:

- White marble
- Perfect symmetry
- Bulbous dome
- Slender minarets
- Pietra dura decoration

The Taj Mahal is considered the finest example of Mughal architecture.

## **6. Aurangzeb**

Important monument:

- Bibi ka Maqbara (Aurangabad)

Architecture became simpler and less decorative.

### **FEATURES OF MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE**

1. Charbagh garden
2. Large domes
3. Arches and iwans
4. Minarets
5. Marble inlay work
6. Calligraphy decoration
7. Symmetry and balance

### **DECLINE OF MUGHAL ART**

After Aurangzeb:

- Reduced patronage
- Political instability
- Rise of regional kingdoms
- Emergence of Rajput and Pahari schools

### **CONCLUSION**

Mughal painting and architecture represent the zenith of medieval Indian art. While painting flourished in royal workshops and reflected courtly elegance and realism, architecture manifested imperial grandeur through majestic monuments. The Mughal contribution created a lasting legacy in Indian art. The Taj Mahal remains a symbol of eternal love, and Mughal miniature paintings continue to inspire artists and historians alike. Thus, Mughal painting and architecture stand as remarkable examples of India's cultural synthesis and artistic excellence.

## **UNIT III**

### **Nationalism and cultural identity: Role of literature and the arts in the freedom**

#### **Struggle**

India's struggle for independence was not confined to political negotiations, protests, or confrontations with colonial authority; it also unfolded as a profound cultural transformation driven by art and literature. The freedom movement was as much a battle of ideas and imagination as it was of strategy and sacrifice. Creative expression became a powerful instrument through which people articulated resistance, asserted identity, and envisioned a sovereign future. Through poetry, novels, songs, theatre, and visual arts, Indians found ways to communicate dissent, nurture unity, and inspire courage under foreign domination.

Artistic and literary works did not merely mirror the conditions of colonial rule—they actively shaped public opinion and national consciousness. They stirred emotions, challenged injustice, and gave form to the abstract idea of freedom. In an era when political speech was often censored, art and literature served as subtle yet potent channels for awakening patriotism and mobilizing collective action.

### **The Emergence of Nationalist Literature**

The roots of literary nationalism in India can be traced to the nineteenth century, when colonial rule intensified and intellectual currents began to shift. Indian writers increasingly moved away from exclusively mythological and devotional themes toward works that reflected social realities and political aspirations. Literature became a medium to critique foreign dominance and to call upon Indians to reclaim their cultural pride and autonomy.

A seminal figure in this transformation was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. His composition “**Vande Mataram**,” included in his novel *Anandamath* (1882), became a defining anthem of the nationalist movement. The song personified the motherland as a divine figure and invoked devotion, sacrifice, and unity. It resonated deeply with readers and listeners, transforming literary expression into political inspiration. “Vande Mataram” evolved from a poetic creation into a rallying cry that united diverse communities in the common cause of liberation.

Another towering literary figure was Rabindranath Tagore. His literary and musical contributions carried a profound message of unity, dignity, and spiritual freedom. Tagore’s song “**Jana Gana Mana**,” later adopted as India’s national anthem, articulated a vision of inclusivity that transcended divisions of caste, creed, and region. His essays, poems, and novels emphasized self-respect, moral courage, and cultural renewal. Through his works, he nurtured a sense of shared identity among Indians and encouraged them to imagine themselves as part of a sovereign nation.

### **Poetry as a Revolutionary Voice**

As nationalist sentiment intensified in the early twentieth century, poetry emerged as one of the most effective vehicles for political awakening. Its rhythm, imagery, and emotional intensity made it accessible to people across educational and social backgrounds. Recited at public gatherings and circulated in print, poems became tools of resistance.

Subramania Bharati was one of the most dynamic voices of this era. Writing in Tamil, he infused his verses with passion, urgency, and spiritual fervor. His poetry called for social reform, gender equality, and national freedom. Bharati’s words challenged colonial authority directly and encouraged Indians to shed fear and embrace self-determination. His compositions ignited patriotic feeling, particularly in South India, and remain symbols of revolutionary zeal.

Similarly, Sarojini Naidu, often celebrated as the “Nightingale of India,” used lyrical elegance to convey patriotic devotion and empathy. Her poem “The Gift of India” paid tribute to Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during World War I, subtly highlighting the irony of colonial exploitation. Through her poetry and political activism, Naidu bridged art and action, demonstrating how creative expression could strengthen the moral foundation of the freedom struggle.

## **Prose and Social Realism**

While poetry stirred emotional resolve, prose—particularly novels and short stories—provided a detailed examination of social realities under colonial rule. Fiction writers portrayed the lives of peasants, workers, and marginalized communities, revealing how political subjugation intersected with social inequality.

Premchand stands out as one of the foremost literary voices of this period. His novel *Godan* (1936) depicted the harsh exploitation of rural peasants and the crushing weight of poverty. Through realistic storytelling, Premchand connected the national struggle with everyday suffering. His narratives underscored that independence was not only about political freedom but also about social justice and human dignity.

Mulk Raj Anand, influenced by progressive and Marxist ideas, addressed both colonial oppression and entrenched caste discrimination. His novel *Untouchable* (1935) brought the plight of Dalits into national discourse, exposing systemic inequality. Anand's work expanded the scope of nationalist literature by insisting that liberation must encompass social transformation alongside political sovereignty.

## **Theatre and Public Mobilization**

Theatre emerged as a dynamic medium capable of reaching audiences beyond the literate elite. Performances in cities, towns, and villages dramatized contemporary injustices and historical episodes of resistance. Street plays and public performances transformed public spaces into arenas of political education.

A significant development in this realm was the formation of the Indian People's Theatre Association in 1943. IPTA used drama, music, and performance to highlight issues such as famine, exploitation, and communal harmony. Its productions emphasized solidarity and resilience, presenting art as a form of collective resistance.

Dramatizations of events like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre intensified public anger against colonial brutality. By reenacting such tragedies on stage, theatre fostered emotional engagement and reinforced the urgency of the independence movement.

## **Music and National Unity**

Music played an equally powerful role in sustaining morale and unity. Patriotic songs were sung at protests, meetings, and marches, reinforcing solidarity among participants. Melodies combined with evocative lyrics to create shared emotional experiences.

In addition to “Jana Gana Mana,” Tagore composed “**Amar Sonar Bangla,**” which later became the national anthem of Bangladesh. These compositions symbolized devotion to the land and cultural pride. Folk songs, passed down orally, also conveyed messages of defiance and hope, especially during movements such as the Quit India Movement of 1942. Music's accessibility ensured that even those without formal education could participate in the cultural dimensions of the struggle.

## Visual Art and Cultural Assertion

Visual art provided another compelling language of resistance. Through paintings, illustrations, and posters, artists conveyed nationalist symbolism and celebrated India's heritage. Art became a means to counter colonial narratives that depicted Indian culture as inferior.

Abanindranath Tagore, a leading figure of the Bengal School of Art, infused his work with themes drawn from Indian history and mythology. His portrayals of heroic figures symbolized resilience and pride.

During the Swadeshi Movement, artists such as Nandalal Bose and Jamini Roy revived indigenous styles and motifs. Their works rejected European artistic conventions imposed under colonial education systems and affirmed cultural self-reliance. Posters and illustrations circulated widely, visually communicating calls for unity and boycott.

## A Cultural Foundation for Freedom

The Indian freedom struggle was thus deeply intertwined with artistic and literary expression. Creative works instilled pride, questioned injustice, and offered visions of a liberated future. They united diverse linguistic, regional, and social groups under shared symbols and ideals.

From the impassioned verses of Bharati to the social realism of Premchand, from patriotic songs to evocative paintings, art and literature fortified the moral and emotional core of the nationalist movement. They ensured that the struggle for independence was not merely political but also cultural and spiritual.

Even today, these creative legacies continue to inspire reflection on the values of freedom, justice, and unity. They remind us that cultural expression possesses transformative power—capable of nurturing resilience in adversity and shaping the destiny of a nation.

## Company School of Painting

The **Company School of Painting**, also known as *Company Painting*, was a unique artistic style that developed in India during the late 18th and 19th centuries under the patronage of officials of the East India Company. It represents a fascinating blend of traditional Indian miniature techniques with European artistic influences. The term "Company School" refers to artworks created by Indian artists for British officials and patrons working for the East India Company. As British administrators, soldiers, and travelers settled in India, they desired visual records of Indian life, culture, flora, fauna, architecture, and people. Indian painters adapted their styles to meet European tastes, giving rise to this hybrid art form. The movement began in the late 1700s and flourished until the mid-1800s, particularly before the advent of photography.

## Centers of Company Painting

Major centers where Company paintings developed include:

- **Calcutta (Kolkata)** – The earliest and most important center.
- **Murshidabad**
- **Patna** (famous for *Patna Qalam*)
- **Madras (Chennai)**
- **Delhi**
- **Lucknow**
- **Tanjore**

Each center developed its own variation, but all shared the fusion of Indian and European styles.

## Features of Company School Painting

1. **Combination of Indian and Western Styles**
  - Indian miniature techniques (fine brushwork, detailing).
  - European realism, perspective, and shading.
2. **Use of Watercolours**
  - Unlike traditional Mughal miniatures (which used opaque colours), Company paintings often used transparent watercolours.
3. **Secular Themes**
  - Daily life scenes (bazaar scenes, festivals, occupations).
  - Portraits of Indian rulers, nawabs, and British officers.
  - Castes and occupations.
  - Botanical and zoological studies.
4. **Realistic Representation**
  - Greater emphasis on naturalism and three-dimensional effects.
  - Scientific documentation of plants and animals.
5. **Documentation Purpose**
  - Many paintings were created as visual records for British officials.

## Subjects of Company Paintings

- Indian festivals and ceremonies
- Trades and occupations (barbers, weavers, potters)
- Local costumes and castes
- Court scenes and processions
- Indian monuments (like the Taj Mahal)
- Birds, animals, and botanical illustrations

These paintings became important historical documents of 18th–19th century Indian society.

## Patna Qalam

**Patna Qalam** was a regional style of Company painting that developed in Patna. It focused on common people and market scenes rather than royal themes. Artists used watercolours on paper and depicted daily urban life with simplicity and realism.

## **Decline of Company School**

The Company School began to decline after:

- The introduction of **photography** in the mid-19th century.
- The decline of traditional royal patronage.
- The growth of academic European art schools in India.

However, it played a major role in bridging traditional Mughal art and modern Indian painting.

## **Importance of Company School Painting**

1. Acts as a visual record of colonial India.
2. Shows cultural interaction between Indians and Europeans.
3. Represents transition from traditional miniature painting to modern realism.
4. Provides valuable historical and anthropological information.

## **Conclusion**

The Company School of Painting stands as a remarkable example of cultural exchange during colonial rule. It was neither purely Indian nor entirely European but a creative fusion of both traditions. Though born under colonial patronage, it preserved Indian artistic skills while adapting to new demands. Today, Company paintings are treasured in museums around the world as important records of India's social and artistic history.

## UNIT-IV

### **Rajasthani School of Paintings**

The **Rajput School of Painting** is one of the most vibrant and expressive traditions in Indian art history. Flourishing between the 16th and 19th centuries, this school developed in the royal courts of Rajasthan and parts of Central India. It reflected the cultural ethos, religious devotion, romantic imagination, and heroic ideals of the Rajput kingdoms. Deeply rooted in Indian traditions, Rajput painting emerged as a counterpart to the Mughal style, yet it maintained its own distinctive character shaped by regional aesthetics and devotional themes.

### **Historical Background**

The origins of the Rajput School can be traced to the political and cultural environment of medieval India. After the decline of the Delhi Sultanate and during the expansion of the Mughal Empire, many Rajput rulers maintained semi-independent kingdoms in Rajasthan and neighboring regions. These courts became important centers of artistic patronage.

While Mughal painting developed under imperial patronage with Persian influences and courtly realism, Rajput painting evolved in regional courts with a more indigenous spirit. Some historians suggest that the migration of artists from Mughal ateliers to Rajput courts—especially during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, when imperial patronage of painting declined—contributed to the development of this style.

The Rajput School was not a single unified style but a collection of regional styles, each reflecting local tastes and traditions. These styles include:

- Mewar
- Marwar
- Bundi
- Kota
- Kishangarh
- Jaipur
- Bikaner
- Malwa

Each had unique characteristics while sharing certain common features.

## **General Characteristics of Rajput Painting**

### **1. Religious and Mythological Themes**

The most dominant feature of Rajput painting is its deep connection with Hindu religion and mythology. Subjects were often drawn from:

- Ramayana
- Mahabharata
- Bhagavata Purana
- Krishna Leela
- Ragamala series
- Gita Govinda

Krishna, Radha, Rama, and other divine figures were frequently depicted. The Bhakti movement strongly influenced the themes, emphasizing devotion and emotional expression.

### **2. Bold Use of Colors**

Rajput paintings are known for their bright, vibrant colors such as red, yellow, blue, and green. Artists used natural pigments derived from minerals and plants. Gold and silver were also employed to enhance decorative effects.

### **3. Flat Perspective**

Unlike Mughal paintings that used shading and perspective for realism, Rajput paintings often displayed a flat, two-dimensional style. The background was decorative rather than realistic.

### **4. Stylized Figures**

Human figures were elongated with sharp features, large expressive eyes, pointed noses, and slim waists. Female figures were especially graceful and idealized.

## **5. Emotional Intensity**

The paintings aimed to convey emotions—love, devotion, valor, longing (viraha), and joy—rather than realistic representation.

### **Major Schools of Rajput Painting**

#### **1. Mewar School**

The Mewar School is considered one of the earliest Rajput styles. It flourished in Udaipur and Chavand during the 16th and 17th centuries.

##### **Features:**

- Bold lines and bright colors
- Simple compositions
- Strong devotional themes
- Influence of folk traditions

Mewar artists created beautiful illustrations of the Ramayana and Ragamala series. The paintings reflected deep Vaishnava devotion.

#### **2. Marwar School**

Developed in Jodhpur and surrounding areas, the Marwar style retained strong local flavor.

##### **Features:**

- Vibrant reds and yellows
- Depictions of court life and social customs
- Emphasis on heroic themes
- Folk influence

The paintings often portrayed Rajput rulers engaged in hunting, court ceremonies, and festivals.

#### **3. Bundi School**

The Bundi School is known for its lush landscapes and romantic atmosphere.

##### **Features:**

- Rich vegetation
- Dramatic skies
- Flowing water and monsoon scenes
- Refined architectural details

The Bundi style is particularly admired for its dynamic compositions and depiction of nature.

#### **4. Kota School**

Closely related to Bundi, the Kota School specialized in hunting scenes.

##### **Features:**

- Realistic animal figures
- Dramatic action scenes
- Royal hunts

These paintings highlight the valor and bravery of Rajput rulers.

#### **5. Kishangarh School**

The Kishangarh School reached its peak in the 18th century under Raja Sawant Singh.

##### **Features:**

- Elongated figures
- Graceful women with arched eyebrows
- Romantic and devotional themes

The famous painting “Bani Thani,” often called the “Mona Lisa of India,” belongs to this school.

#### **6. Jaipur School**

The Jaipur School combined Mughal influence with Rajput tradition.

##### **Features:**

- Decorative quality
- Court scenes and processions
- Architectural detailing

#### **7. Bikaner School**

This style shows strong Mughal influence due to close political ties.

##### **Features:**

- Fine detailing
- Subdued colors
- Persian influence

## **8. Malwa School**

Malwa paintings are simple and highly stylized.

### **Features:**

- Flat backgrounds
- Geometric compositions
- Bright colors

### **Themes in Rajput Painting**

#### **1. Krishna Leela**

Stories of Krishna's childhood and love for Radha were popular subjects. The Bhakti movement deeply inspired these paintings.

#### **2. Ragamala Series**

Ragamala paintings illustrated musical modes (ragas) as human figures and romantic scenes.

#### **3. Baramasa**

These paintings depicted the twelve months of the year and associated emotions.

#### **4. Nayaka-Nayika Bheda**

Classification of lovers, showing emotional states of heroines.

### **Techniques and Materials**

- Handmade paper
- Natural pigments
- Fine squirrel-hair brushes
- Gold and silver embellishments

The process required meticulous skill and patience.

### **Patronage**

Rajput rulers were the main patrons. Art was closely connected to court culture and religion. Kings commissioned paintings to illustrate manuscripts, decorate palaces, and express devotion.

### **Significance**

1. Preserves Hindu mythology visually
2. Reflects Rajput valor and romance
3. Demonstrates regional diversity
4. Represents Bhakti devotional art

## 5. Conclusion

The Rajput School of Painting stands as a magnificent expression of Indian artistic tradition. It is not merely an art style but a cultural legacy reflecting devotion, heroism, romance, and aesthetic brilliance. Through its vibrant colors, emotional depth, and symbolic imagery, Rajput painting continues to captivate art lovers and scholars alike.

### Fort Architecture of Rajasthan: Chittor & Ranthambore

#### Characteristic Features of Forts in Rajasthan

The forts of Rajasthan are outstanding examples of **Rajput military architecture**. They were built not only for defense but also as centers of administration, residence, and religion. Their characteristic features reflect strategic planning, adaptation to geography, and artistic excellence.

#### 1. Strategic Location

- Constructed on **hills, rocky cliffs, deserts, or near water bodies**.
- Elevated positions provided natural defense and wide visibility.
- Fort walls often followed the natural contour of hills.

#### 2. Massive Fortification Walls

- Thick and high stone ramparts.
- Multiple defensive layers.
- Strong bastions (burj) for archers and cannons.
- Parapets with loopholes for firing.

#### 3. Multiple Gates (Pols)

- Series of strong entry gates placed in zig-zag pattern.
- Designed to slow down enemy forces.
- Iron spikes on gates to prevent elephant attacks.
- Often beautifully decorated with carvings.

#### 4. Defensive Planning

- Narrow, winding approach roads.
- Watchtowers for surveillance.
- Secret escape routes.
- Moats in some forts.

#### 5. Water Management System

- Large reservoirs, tanks, step-wells (baoris), and kunds.
- Rainwater harvesting techniques.
- Ensured water supply during long sieges.

## 6. Palaces within Forts

- Royal residences with courtyards and balconies.
- Zenana (women's quarters).
- Audience halls (public and private courts).
- Decorative interiors with mirror work and frescoes.

## 7. Religious Structures

- Temples, Jain shrines, and sometimes mosques inside forts.
- Reflect religious devotion of rulers.
- Often richly carved and ornamented.

## 8. Use of Local Materials

- Sandstone, marble, granite, and limestone.
- Materials suited to the climate and region.
- Harmonious blending with natural surroundings.

## 9. Artistic and Decorative Elements

- Jharokhas (ornamental balconies).
- Chhatris (domed pavilions).
- Intricate carvings and murals.
- Blend of Rajput and later Mughal architectural styles.

## 10. Self-Sufficient Complex

- Included markets, granaries, armories, and living quarters.
- Designed to withstand long periods of siege.
- Functioned like fortified cities.

Forts in Rajasthan are classified mainly on the basis of **location and natural surroundings**. Ancient Indian texts like the *Arthashastra* also mention different categories of forts depending on geography. The major types are:

### 1. Hill Fort (Giri Durg)

- Built on hills or mountain tops.
- Use natural height as defense.
- Steep paths and strong ramparts.
- Most common type in Rajasthan.

### Examples:

- Chittorgarh Fort
- Kumbhalgarh Fort
- Ranthambore Fort

## 2. Desert Fort (Dhanvan Durg)

- Built in desert areas.
- Thick sandstone walls to resist heat and sandstorms.
- Often golden in appearance.

### Example:

- Jaisalmer Fort

## 3. Water Fort (Jal Durg)

- Surrounded by rivers, lakes, or water bodies.
- Water acts as natural protection.

### Example:

- Gagron Fort

## 4. Plain Fort (Bhumi Durg)

- Built on flat land.
- Protected by strong walls and sometimes moats.

### Example:

- Junagarh Fort

## 5. Forest Fort (Vana Durg)

- Surrounded by dense forests.
- Natural vegetation acts as protection.

### Example:

- Ranthambore Fort (surrounded by forest area)

Rajasthan is famous for its grand forts, which symbolize **Rajput valor, resistance, and architectural brilliance**. Among them, **Chittorgarh Fort** and **Ranthambore Fort** are two of the most historically significant hill forts. Both are included in the UNESCO list of *Hill Forts of Rajasthan* and represent the military strength and cultural heritage of the Rajputs.

### Chittorgarh Fort

- Located in **Chittorgarh district**, Rajasthan.
- Capital of the **Sisodia Rajputs of Mewar**.
- Associated with rulers like **Rana Kumbha**, **Rana Sanga**, and **Maharana Pratap**.
- Witnessed three famous sieges:
  - 1303 by **Alauddin Khalji**
  - 1535 by **Bahadur Shah of Gujarat**

- 1567 by **Akbar**

Chittor became a symbol of Rajput bravery and sacrifice, especially because of the legendary *Jauhar* performed by Rani Padmini and other Rajput women.

### **Architectural Features**

#### **1. Hill Fort Structure**

- Built on a 180-meter high hill.
- Spread over 700 acres.
- Massive stone walls and strong fortifications.

#### **2. Seven Massive Gates (Pols)**

- Padan Pol
- Bhairon Pol
- Hanuman Pol
- Ganesh Pol
- Jodla Pol
- Laxman Pol
- Ram Pol

#### **3. Vijay Stambha (Tower of Victory)**

- Built by Rana Kumbha in 1448.
- Nine-storeyed tower.
- Dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
- Covered with intricate carvings.

#### **4. Kirti Stambha**

- Dedicated to Jain Tirthankara Adinath.
- Built by a Jain merchant.

#### **5. Palaces**

- Rana Kumbha Palace
- Rani Padmini Palace (associated with the legend of Padmini)

#### **6. Temples**

- Kalika Mata Temple
- Meera Bai Temple
- Kumbha Shyam Temple

#### **7. Water Management**

- Over 80 water bodies including reservoirs and step wells.
- Ensured water supply during long sieges.

### **Significance**

- Represents Rajput resistance and sacrifice.
- Combines military, religious, and residential architecture.
- A living symbol of Mewar pride.

### **Ranthambore Fort**

- Located in **Sawai Madhopur district**, Rajasthan.
- Built around the 10th century.
- Associated with the Chauhan Rajputs.

- Famous ruler: **Rao Hammir Dev Chauhan**.
- Captured by **Alauddin Khalji** in 1301.

Ranthambore was strategically important because of its location between North and Central India.

### **Architectural Features**

1. **Strategic Hill Location**
  - Situated 700 feet above ground.
  - Surrounded by dense forests (now Ranthambore National Park).
2. **Strong Fortifications**
  - Thick stone walls.
  - Massive gates and defensive bastions.
3. **Main Gates**
  - Navlakha Pol
  - Hathi Pol
  - Ganesh Pol
  - Andheri Pol
  - Sat Pol
4. **Palaces and Structures**
  - Hammir Palace
  - Badal Mahal
  - 32-pillared Chhatri
5. **Temples**
  - Trinetra Ganesh Temple (still active pilgrimage site)
  - Jain temples
6. **Water Systems**
  - Tanks and reservoirs inside the fort.

### **Significance**

- Important example of Rajput military architecture.
- Symbol of Chauhan resistance.
- Shows blend of religious and defensive structures.