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INDIAN ART AND CULTURE

*For Civil Services and other
Competitive Examinations*

NITIN SINGHANIA

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**INDIAN
ART and
CULTURE**

**FOR CIVIL SERVICES AND OTHER COMPETITIVE
EXAMINATIONS**

Third Edition

About the Author



Nitin Singhania is an IAS officer of 2013 batch in West Bengal Cadre and is presently posted as Joint Secretary under Government of West Bengal. He is a graduate and post graduate in Economics from Presidency College, Kolkata and is also a Chartered Accountant and Company Secretary. Earlier he has worked as Assistant Secretary in Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and as Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Purba Bardhaman District.

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McGraw Hill Education (India) Private Limited



Published by McGraw Hill Education (India) Private Limited
444/1, Sri Ekambara Naicker Industrial Estate, Alapakkam, Porur, Chennai -
600 116

Indian Art and Culture, 3e

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This edition can be exported from India only by the publishers,
McGraw Hill Education (India) Private Limited.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 D101417 23 22 21 20 19

Print Book Edition

ISBN (13): 978-93-5316-819-3

ISBN (10): 93-5316-819-8

E Book Edition

ISBN (13): 978-93-5316-820-9

ISBN (10): 93-5316-820-1

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Typeset at The Composers, 260, C.A. Apt., Paschim Vihar, New Delhi 110 063 and printed and bound in India at

Cover Designer: Neeraj Dayal

Cover Printer:

Visit us at: www.mheducation.co.in

Write to us at: info.india@mheducation.com

CIN: U80302TN2010PTC111532

Toll Free Number: 1800 103 5875

*To
Dadiji and Dadaji
and
Maa and Papaji*

Additions to Third Edition

- **02 New Chapters -**
 1. *India through the eyes of foreign travellers.*
 2. **Buddhism and Jainism**
- **01 New appendix -** Current Affairs related to India Art & Culture.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 1:** Details of **important IVC** sites like Chanhudaro, Kot Diji, Suktagandor, Balu, Daimabad, Kot Bala, Kerala-no-dhoro and Maand. Details of **Badami Cave temple** architecture, prominent temples outside India, Derasar and Basadis, **Whispering Galleries** in India, **Awadh Architecture**.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 2:** Gudahandi and Yogimatha Rock Shelter under Prehistoric paintings, **Ganjifa Cards**, **Tikuli Art**, newer and more relevant images, more flow charts.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 3: Important details of more sarees like -** Uppada Jamdani Saree, Venkatagiri Saree, Kotpad Saree. **Table on Important Metal crafts** like - Aranmula Kannadi (Metal Mirror), Netturpetti jewellery boxes, Chandi Tarkashi, Swamimalai Bronze, Leather crafts - Konglan Stitched Boots, Paabu Stitched Boots, Kolhapuri chappal, Katki chappal, Tilla Jutti, Mojari, Multani Khussa. **Table on important Wood crafts** like - Nirmal Painting, Kashtakari wood carving, Santalum (Sandalwood carving), Khatamband Woodcraft, Sikki Grass Craft, Shital Patti Grass mat, Khunda - Bamboo staves, Kawad Mobile shrines, Choktse Tables, etc. Embroideries like Khatwa Applique work, Lambani, Sozni (or suzani), Gara, Kimkhab, Dongaria Scarf - Kapragonda, etc. **Variety of Weavings in India** - Pata Weaving, Mashru Weaving, Bohra Cap weaving, Patku Weaving, Pattu Weaving, Wangkhei Phee, Shaphee Lanphee, etc. **Durrie (Floor mat) Weaving** in India - Musallah Rug, Namda Felted Rugs, Kaleen, Khabdan, Navalgund Durrie, Jamakalam, etc. Extensive table on **Tie & Dye, Cloth Painting and Cloth Printing** varieties with new additions like - Paagadu Bandhu Tie &

Dye, Tehlia Rumal, Ajrakh Printing, Mata Ni Pachedi, Thigma, Pichhwai, Dabu, Muthangi, Tangaliya Shawl, Dhalapathar Parada & Fabrics, Kani Shawl, etc. Table on other famous handicrafts of India.

- **New Topics in Chapter - 4: Map** at the end of the book, updation of 02 more recently declared UNESCO heritage sites.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 5:** Early exponents of **Carnatic music**, Trinity of Carnatic music. Addition of important **folk songs** - Jhumair, Borgeet, Jhoori. Musical instrument Santoor & an institution Prayag Sangeet Samiti.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 6: Important Folk Dances** Hulivesha, Tippani, Garadi, Tera Tali, Hojagiri, etc.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 11:** Details of Kumbha Mela as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 13:** Qissa-i-Sanjan, prominent **Synagogues** in India, elaborate details on **types of Jews** in India. Details of **other prominent religions** like Sanamahism, Ayyavazhi, Sarnaism, Bahai faith, etc.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 15:** Elaborate Zoroastrian literature, Ardas in Sikh literature, Champu style of writing, additions in Medieval literature, etc.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 20:** Hindu festivals now placed in easy table format. Important festivals Nabakalebar, Moatsu Mong, Yemshe, Losar, Khan, etc added.
- **New Topics in Chapter - 21:** Inclusion of important Bharat Ratna awardees, completely new set of Mock Questions.
- **New Topics in Appendix - 02: Flow chart** on bhakti movement, elaborate table on bhakti saints.
- **New Topics in Appendix - 04:** Recent Geographical Indications added category wise and in a table format.

Also, the Previous Year's Questions of 2018, 2019 and a new set of Practice Questions have been included in the required chapters.

Along with such huge changes as mentioned above, **more relevant images** have been added in the book considering the need of aspirants and toughness of Civil Services and other competitive examinations.

Additions to Second Edition

Two New Chapters:

1. Coins in Ancient and Medieval India

2. Indian Culture Abroad

Appendix 05: Recent Geographical Indications in India

Furthermore, many relevant topics have been added in the existing 22 chapters and four appendices to make the title more focused and comprehensive.

An illustrative list of the **new topics** is given below:

New Topics in Chapter - 1: Various mudras related to Buddha, Greek and Roman art under Gandhara School, Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves, ancient inscriptions and edicts, ancient universities, extensive list of Buddhist and Jain pilgrimage sites, list of Sun temples and fire temples, list of other important temples in India and abroad and 12 jyotirlingas, Shershah's contribution to medieval architecture, architecture in Jammu and Kashmir, contributions by Charles Correa, etc.

New Topics in Chapter - 2: Bhimbetka rock paintings, Jogimara cave paintings, Murals at Badami cave temples, Phad painting, Cheriya Scroll painting, Pithora painting and Saura painting.

New Topics in Chapter - 3: A detailed list of traditional regional sarees, a list of embroideries and a list of various region specific floor designs.

New Topics in Chapter - 5: Mando and Kollatam folk music, extended list of other folk music traditions, list of prominent folk instruments and various regional communities related to music.

New Topics in Chapter - 6: More detailed information in each of the eight classical dances, extended list of folk dances, etc.

New Topics in Chapter - 7: Characters in ancient Sanskrit plays, extended list of folk theatres, Modern Indian theatre, and recent additions to the UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage.

New Topics in Chapter - 12: Detailed note on Prakrit, Pali and Apabhramsa languages, an illustrative list of ancient scripts in India.

New Topics in Chapter - 13: Detailed note on various concepts under Buddhism and Jainism, sub-sects of Jainism and Buddhism, prominent bodhisattvas and ascetics, cults and sects under Hinduism, various avatars of Vishnu and a brief note on Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

New Topics in Chapter - 15: Buddhist literature, Jain literature, Zoroastrian literature, Sikh literature.

New Topics in Chapter - 17: A brief note on South Indian Cinema.

New Topics in Chapter - 19: Detailed notes on different eras.

New Topics in Chapter - 20: Festivals related to Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism and an extensive list of fairs held in India.

Preface to Third Edition

I feel honoured to place before the readers a thoroughly revised and updated third edition of *Indian Art and Culture*. I am grateful to the readers for their positive reception and constructive feedback on the previous editions.

With each new edition, I am challenged and invigorated to present the knowledge of rich Indian culture and heritage in a more comprehensive, crisp and readable style.

The third edition has been **largely overhauled with relevant important additions** in almost all the chapters (*illustrative list of additions has been provided at the beginning of the book*).

Moreover, observing the trend of questions being asked in the competitive examinations, two new chapters along with an appendix have been added, namely :

New Chapters

- 1. India through the eyes of foreign travellers**
- 2. Buddhism and Jainism**

New Appendix

- 1. Current Affairs on Indian Art and Culture**

Also, the previous years' **questions of 2018 and 2019** and **new set of practice questions** have been included in the required chapters.

To make the preparation of aspirants easier through mind mapping, a **holistic map** on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India has been attached at the end of the book. I hope it would serve the purpose of the aspirants.

I am sure readers will find the **additions** in this revised edition more useful. Their kind suggestions through email will be of great help to me in making this book even more relevant and meaningful.

Sincere Regards !!!

September, 2019

NITIN SINGHANIA

e-mail: [**nitinsinghania.ca@gmail.com**](mailto:nitinsinghania.ca@gmail.com)

Acknowledgements

It is a matter of immense pleasure to know that the handwritten notes developed by me in the past years have received such appreciation amongst the readers involved in the preparation of Civil Services and other competitive examinations.

I am indebted to my parents, my wife Sudipta, and siblings Nancy and Noyal for allowing me time away from them I needed to research and write.

“Maa and Papaji, my deepest respect and gratitude to both of you for being my idols. When the time got demanding, your support and encouragement were the only pillars of strength for me.”

My sincere thanks to Ms. Sonia Wigh, Shri Shounak Chakraborty and Shri Ankit Jalan without whose assistance this book would not have been possible.

I also offer my appreciation to the learning opportunities provided by Shri R.S. Agrawal (Ranker’s Classes), Vajiram and Ravi, ALS and Vision IAS which motivated me to write this book. Acknowledgements are also due to various scholars of repute whose valuable works along with many e-sources helped enrich my knowledge in developing this piece of work.

The contribution of Gandhi Smriti Library, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie and Atul Photostat, Mukherjee Nagar had been immense as they also provided me the sources to enrich my thoughts and ideas. I also thank UPSC for providing previous year’s questions on their website which have been included in this book.

For this third edition, I am particularly indebted to Shri Neeraj Rao, Shri Aritra Mondal and Ms. Nancy Singhania for their kind assistance and support. Feedbacks received from a large number of aspirants were helpful too. I am thankful to each one of them.

Finally I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Shri Tanmoy Roychowdhury, Ms. Shukti Mukherjee, Ms. Jyoti Nagpal, Ms. Malvika Shah, Ms. Anjali Chakravarty, and the entire support team of McGraw Hill

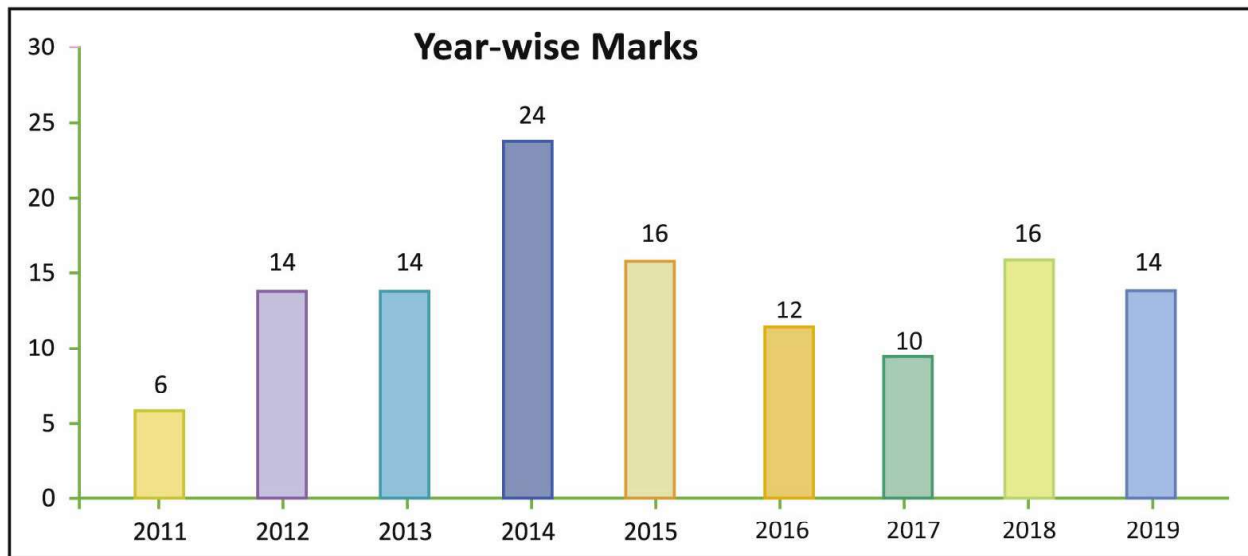
Education, India for their unstinted cooperation and support in making this task interesting and as trouble-free as possible.

I hope that this book will help readers in gaining a better understanding of the Culture of India.

NITIN SINGHANIA

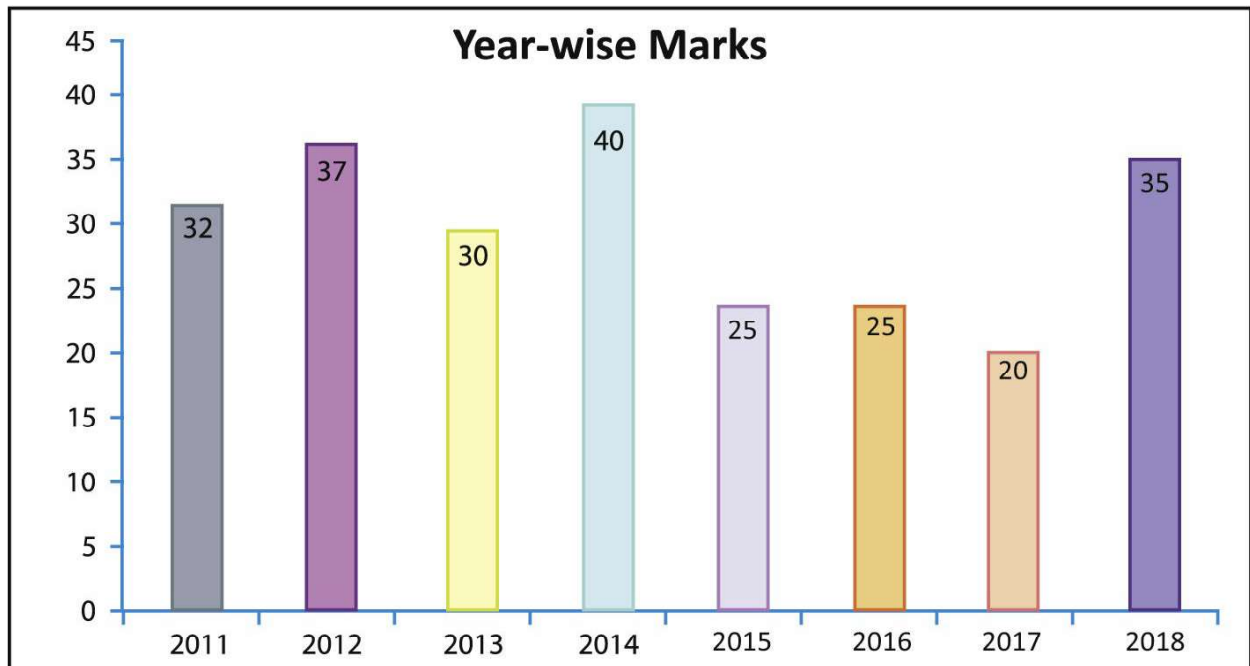
TREND ANALYSIS

Year-wise Marks in Preliminary Examination



Note: In 2011, UPSC changed the pattern and syllabus of the preliminary examination. In the new scheme, Indian Art and Culture is included in General Studies Paper-I where every question carries 2 marks each.

Year-wise Marks in Main Examination



Note: In 2013, UPSC changed the pattern and syllabus of the main examination. In the new scheme, Indian Culture and Heritage is included in General Studies Paper-I which carries 250 marks.

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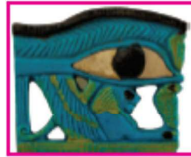
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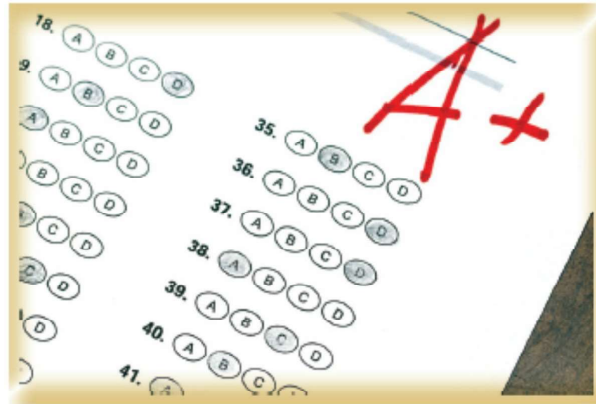
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2019

2019 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Preliminary Examination Questions - 2019

1. Which one of the following is **not a Harappan site**?
 - (a) Chanhudaro
 - (b) Kot Diji
 - (c) Sohgaura
 - (d) Desalpur
2. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions in **“Ranyo Ashoka”** (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?
 - (a) Kanganahalli
 - (b) Sanchi
 - (c) Shahbazgarhi
 - (d) Sohgaura
3. Consider the following:
 1. Deification of the Buddha.
 2. Treading the path of Bodhisattvas.
 3. Image worship and rituals.Which of the above is/are the feature /features of **Mahayana Buddhism**?
 - (a) 1 only

- (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
4. Building “**Kalyana Mandapas**” was a notable feature in the temple construction in the kingdom of
- (a) Chalukya
 - (b) Chandela
 - (c) Rashtrakuta
 - (d) Vijayanagara
5. Consider the following statements:
1. **Saint Nimbarka** was a contemporary of **Akbar**.
 2. **Saint Kabir** was greatly influenced by **Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi**.
- Which of the statements given above is / are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. With reference to **Mian Tansen**, which one of the following statements is **not correct**?
- (a) Tansen was the title given to him by Emperor Akbar.
 - (b) Tansen composed Dhrupads on Hindu Gods and goddesses.
 - (c) Tansen composed songs on his patrons.
 - (d) Tansen invented many Ragas.
7. Who among the following Mughal Emperors **shifted emphasis** from illustrated manuscripts to album and individual portrait?
- (a) Humayun
 - (b) Akbar
 - (c) Jahangir
 - (d) Shahjahan

Answers

1. (c)

Explanation: Chanhudaro (in Pakistan), Kot Diji (in Pakistan) and Desalpur (Gujarat) are the Harappan sites whereas at Sohgaura (near Gorakhpur in UP), a copper plate inscription in Prakrit language (written in Brahmi script) of the Mauryan period has been found.

2. (a)

Explanation: Kanganahalli (in Karnataka) is a Buddhist site of 1st century BC - 3rd century AD. The site contains a stone sculpture of Mauryan king Ashoka with a label "Ranyo Ashoka" written in Brahmi script. (The sculpture depicts the features of Amaravati school). The site also contains a massive stupa. At Sanchi (in MP), there lies a very famous Buddhist Stupa which is also a UNESCO heritage site. Shahbazgarhi (Pakistan) contains Ashokan rock edicts in Kharosthi script & belongs to 3rd century BC.

3. (d)

Explanation: Under Mahayana Buddhism, Buddha is considered a God and a disciple under Mahayana Buddhism follows or treads the path of Bodhisattvas. The doctrine also lays emphasis on image worship and performing rituals and ceremonies.

4. (d)

Explanation: Kalyana Mandapa (**or wedding pavilion**) is a prominent feature of Vijayanagara kingdom temples. Example - Kalyana Mandapa inside the Vittala temple complex at Hampi.

5. (d)

Explanation: Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) belonged to Naqshbandi Sufi order and opposed the religious ideas of Akbar. However, Kabir is a 15th Century saint and died even before the birth of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Moreover, Saint Nimbarka was not a contemporary of Akbar. There is a great disagreement among historians about his year of birth. However, modern historical research places him in the 13th-14th century.

6. (a)

Explanation: Born in Gwalior, Tansen was one of the Navratanas in the court of Akbar. “Mian” was the title given to him by Akbar. Tansen was a proponent of Dhrupad music based on Hindu Gods and Goddess and created many new ragas. He also composed songs on his patrons such as Akbar.

7. (c)

Explanation: Till Akbar, the focus was on architecture and illustrated manuscripts. From the reign of Jahangir (he himself being a painter), a great emphasis was given to individual portrait paintings mainly **based on flora and fauna**.



Section-A
VISUAL ARTS



1

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE AND POTTERY

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INTRODUCTION

The word ‘**architecture**’ is derived from the Latin word ‘tekton’ which means **builder**. When the early man began to build his shelter to live in, the science of architecture started. Sculpture, on the other hand, is derived from Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root ‘kel’ which means ‘to bend’. Sculptures are small works of art, either handmade or with tools and are more related to aesthetics than engineering and measurements.

Difference between Architecture and Sculpture

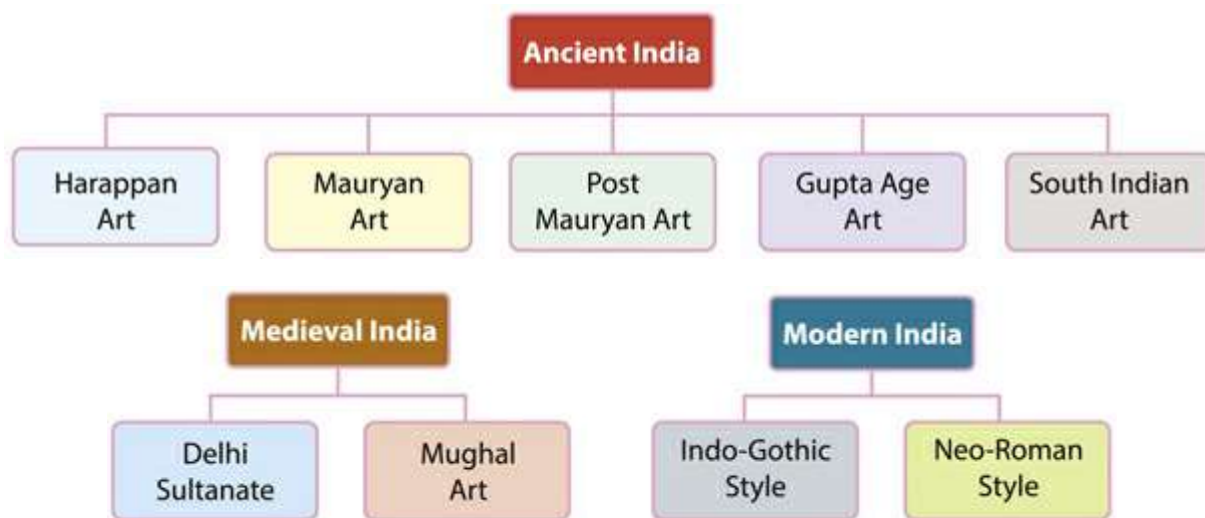
Point of Difference	Architecture	Sculpture
Size and Scope	Architecture refers to the design and construction of building.	Sculptures are relatively small 3-dimensional works of art.
Material Used	Uses a mixture of various type of materials like stone, wood, glass, metal, sand, etc.	A single piece of sculpture is usually made of a single type of material.

Principle	Involves study of engineering and engineering mathematics. It requires detailed and accurate measurements.	Involves creativity and imagination and may not depend as heavily on accurate measurements.
Example	Taj Mahal, Red Fort, etc.	Nataraja Image, Dancing Girl, etc.

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

The story of Indian art and architecture is a story of evolution. From the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation to the British rule, the buildings and sculptures have a narrative of their own. The emergence and decay of great empires, the invasion of foreign rulers who gradually became indigenous, the confluence of different cultures and styles, etc. are all reflected in the evolution of Indian architecture and sculpture.

Classification of Indian Architecture



Harappan Art and Architecture

A flourishing civilisation emerged on the banks of the river Indus in the second half of the third millennium BCE and spread across large parts of North-Western and Western India. This is what is known as Harappan

Civilisation or Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC). A marked feature of this ancient civilisation was the vivid imagination and artistic sensibilities exuded by the numerous **sculptures, seals, potteries, jewelleries**, etc. found at the excavation sites. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro – the two major sites of this civilisation – are among the earliest and finest examples of **urban civic planning**. The planned network of roads, houses and drainage systems indicate the planning and engineering skills that developed during those times.

Some of the **important sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation** and their **archaeological findings** are:

- **Harappa** in present Pakistan on the bank of River Ravi – 2 rows of six *granaries* with big platform, stone symbol of lingam and yoni, mother goddess sculpture, wheat and barley in wooden mortar, dice, copper scale and mirror. Moreover, sculpture of dog chasing a deer in bronze metal, and a red sand stone male torso have been excavated.
- **Mohenjo-daro** in present Pakistan on the River Indus – the citadel, the great bath, the great granary, post cremation burial, sculpture of bearded priest, the famous bronze statue of the Dancing Girl and Pashupati Seal.
- **Dholavira** in Gujarat – giant water reservoir, unique water harnessing system, stadium, dams and embankments, inscription comprising 10 large sized signs like an advertisement board. It is the **latest IVC city** to be discovered.
- **Lothal (Manchester of Indus Valley Civilisation)** in Gujarat – important site for naval trade, had a dockyard, rice husk, fire altars, painted jar, modern day chess, terracotta figures of horse and ship, instruments for measuring 45, 90 and 180 degree angles, practice of burial of cremated remains.
- **Rakhigarhi** in Haryana is considered to be the **largest site** of Indus Valley Civilisation. Granary, cemetery, drains, terracotta bricks have been found here. It is called the **provincial capital** of Harappan Civilisation.

- **Ropar** is located on the banks of River Sutlej in Punjab, India – Dog buried with human in oval pit burials, copper axe. Roper in the first Harappan site of independent India. First site to be excavated after independence.
- **Balathal** and **Kalibangan** in Rajasthan – bangle factory, toy carts, bones of camel, decorated bricks, citadel and lower town, fire altar.
- **Surkotada** in Gujarat – first actual remains of the horse bones.
- **Banawali** in Haryana on the dried-up Saraswati river – toy plough, barley grains, lapis lazuli, fire altars, oval shaped settlement, only city with radial streets and oval shaped settlements.
- **Alamgirpur** in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh on the banks of Yamuna – Eastern most site of IVC. Major findings are broken blade made of copper, ceramic items and Impression of a cloth on a trough.
- **Mehrgarh** in Pakistan, considered precursor to Indus Valley Civilisation. Pottery, copper tools have been found.
- **Chanhudaro (Lancashire of India)** located in present day Pakistan – only Indus city **without a citadel**. Bead making factory and use of lipsticks has been found.
- **Kot Diji** located in present day Pakistan. Tar, statues of Bull and mother goddess have been excavated from here.
- **Suktagandor** western most site of IVC, located in Pakistan. Bangles of clay have been found here.
- **Balu (Haryana)** various plant remains have been found. (earliest evidence of Garlic).
- **Daimabad (Maharashtra)** southern most site of IVC. Bronze sculptures including a Bronze Chariot has been discovered here.
- **Kerala-no-dhoro (Gujarat)** salt production centre during IVC.
- **Kot Bala (Pakistan)** earliest evidence of furnace.
- **Mand (Jammu and Kashmir)** Northern most site of IVC.

Other prominent sites of IVC include Mehrgar (Pakistan), Desalpur (Gujarat), Pabumath (Gujarat), Rangpur (Gujarat), Shikarpur (Gujarat), Sanauli (UP), Kunal (Haryana),Karanpura (Rajasthan), Ganeriwala (Punjab), etc.

Architecture in Harappan Civilisation

The remains of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro reveal a remarkable sense of town planning. The towns were laid out in a **rectangular grid pattern**. The roads ran in north-south and east-west direction and cut each other at **right angles**.

Mainly **three types of buildings** have been found in the excavation sites – *dwelling houses*, *public buildings* and *public baths*. The Harappans used **burnt mud bricks** of standardised dimensions for the purpose of construction. Many layers of well-baked brick were laid out and then joined together using **gypsum mortar**.

The city was divided into two parts—An **upraised citadel** and the **lower-part** of the city. An **upraised citadel** in the *western part* was used for constructing buildings of large dimensions, such as *granaries*, *administrative buildings*, *pillared halls* and *courtyard*. Some of the buildings in the citadel might have been the *residence of the rulers* and *aristocrats*. However, Indus Valley Civilisation sites do not have large monumental structures such as temples or palaces for rulers unlike Egyptian and Mesopotamian Civilisation. The granaries were intelligently designed with **strategic air ducts** and **raised platforms** which helped in storage of grains and protecting them from pests.

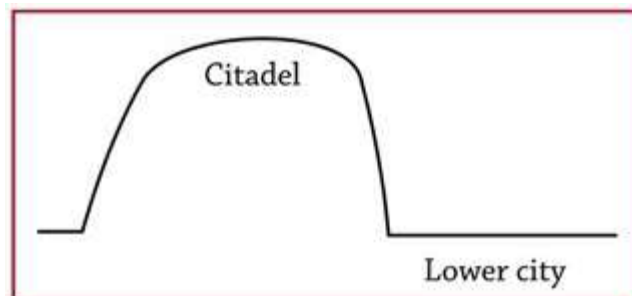


Fig. 1.1: Citadel and Lower City

An important feature of the Harappan cities is the prevalence of **public baths**, which indicate the importance of ritualistic cleansing in their culture.

These baths also had an array of *galleries* and *rooms* surrounding it. The most famous example of a public bath is the '**Great Bath**' in the excavated remains of Mohenjodaro.



Fig. 1.2: *The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro*

In the **lower part** of the city, small one- roomed houses have been found which might have been used as quarters by the *working class people*. Some of the houses have stairs which indicate they might have been *double storied*. Mostly buildings have private wells and properly ventilated bathrooms.

The most striking feature of Harappan Civilisation is the **advanced drainage system**. Small drains ran from each house and were connected to larger drains running alongside the main roads. The **drains were covered loosely** to allow regular cleaning and maintenance. **Cesspits** were placed at regular intervals. The importance placed on *hygiene* – both personal and public, is quite impressive. Presence of wells has also been observed at many sites.

Many scholars argue that the Mesopotamian people of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley called Indus Valley civilisation as 'Meluha'. Many Indus Valley seals have been found in Mesopotamia.

Sculptures of Harappan Civilisation

The Harappan sculptors were extremely adept at handling three-dimensional volumes. The most commonly found were seals, bronze figures and potteries.

Seals:

Archaeologists have found numerous seals of different shapes and sizes all across the excavation sites. While *most of the seals are square*, it was found that triangular, rectangular and circular seals were also being used. **Steatite, a soft stone** found in the river beds, was although the most common material used to make seals, yet agate, chert, copper, faience and terracotta seals have also been found. Some instances of gold and ivory seals have also been found.

Most of the seals have inscriptions in a **pictographic script** which is **yet to be deciphered**. The script was written mostly from right to left, but, **bi-directional writing style** i.e. right to left on one line and left to right on another line has also been found. *Animal impressions* were also there (generally five) which were carved intaglio on the surfaces. The common animal motifs were unicorn, humped bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, buffalo, bison, goat, markour, ibex, crocodile, etc. However, **no evidence of cow** has been found on any seal. Generally, the seals had an animal or human figure on one side and an inscription on the opposite side or **inscriptions on both the sides**. Some seals had inscriptions on a **third side as well**.

Seals were **primarily used for commercial purposes** and helped in communication. Discovery of various seals in Mesopotamia and various sites such as Lothal indicate that seals were extensively used for trade. Some seals with a hole on them have been found on dead bodies indicating its **use as amulets**, carried on the persons of their owners, probably seen as some form of identification. *Mathematical images* have also been found on some seals, which might have been **used for educational purposes** as well. Seals with symbol similar to ‘Swastika’ design have also been found.



Fig. 1.3: Unicorn Seal

Famous seals include: Pashupati Seal and Unicorn Seal.