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Chapter IV
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Concept of Attraction

Tourism marketing gives emphasis on consumer orientation and satisfaction. The concept of consumer orientation however makes it necessary to understand the components of tourism product from the point of view of consumer. Even though tourism product is composite product as sum total of tourist attraction, transport, accommodation and facilities. The most important among these components is attraction for consumer satisfaction. The existence of attraction is of paramount importance. The facilities and accessibilities can be developed later accordingly.

Attractions form key components of tourism product. They are the draw cards for luring tourist, both domestic and international to a destination. Without attractions, there would be no need for other tourism services. Tourism would not exist if it were not for attraction.

Attractions of a destination constitute the most powerful component of the supply side of tourism. They make energizing power unit of tourism industry. They provide the pull movement. Service businesses are facilitators, not major cause of travel. Without attractions, these services may not be needed except for local trade. Attractions provide two major functions. First, they lure, entice, and stimulate interest in travel as people in their residential locations learn about attractions of the destinations. Second, attractions provide visitor satisfactions, the reward from travel-the true travel product.

Thus attraction attributes of Tourism Product Ellora and Ajanta are focused in this study and presented below.
Ellora as Tourism Product

Ellora caves are carved in the Charanadri or Indradri of Satmala range of Sahaydri Mountain. The carving is done in basalt rock which is the characteristic feature of Western Ghats. The artists and sculptors created life in rock. The Sculptures represent the period of one thousand five hundred years back and it is experienced when the tourists enter in the cave. The sculptures take us not only in the society of the bygone area but also refreshes mind by offering rich heritage of that period.

General Description of Ellora Caves

Location—Ellora is also called as Verul or Elura. The ancient name of Ellora was Elapura, Ellora is in Maharashtra State. It is situated at latitude 20°21' N and longitude 74°15'E. Ellora is about 29 kms of North-East of Aurangabad. Ellora has largest, finest & varied examples of cave architecture. It has caves of three different religions. All these caves are famous for carving. The sculptures are related to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. The caves are richly carved & are unique because of three religious association and hence they are rewarded the status of world heritage site by UNESCO. The caves are scattered on two km area.

The excavation of Ellora caves were started in 3rd century A.D and completed in 11th century A.D. It was period of almost five hundred year.

Ellora, situated as it was on the land and sea bound Indian trade routes of ancient times, turned out to be a focus of all cultural influences coming from the north and flowing back from the south. Ellora, therefore, became the prism through which the early medieval Indian art traditions refracted in all directions. Ellora has its ancestors, fraternities and descendants spread all over the Indian continent. Ellora sculptures hence represent the microcosm of early medieval art of India. Ellora caves offer approximately 1200 examples of sculptures carved in different style having influence of Megadha of North, Saurashtra from west and Mandapa of Mahabalipurum.
The earliest recorded reference to Ellora is found in the copper plate inscription of Rastrakuta prince Dantidurga which is dated 741 AD. As it was located on an ancient trade route that connects Paithan and Devagiri with the other eminent Indian towns and cities, Ellora has always attracted attention of writers and travellers of ancient and medieval times. This is due to various reasons as near to the caves are the one of the Jyotirlinga temple, which is very important reason for Hindus. The second important reason is the caves are complex of Buddhism, Jainism & Hinduism. The caves at Ajanta was probably unknown because of propagation of Buddhism was almost stopped in 7th century & Buddhism started declining & Hinduism sprang & spread fastly on vast territory. At the same time Jainism acted as one of the growing religion in the Deccan.

**History of the caves**

It was period when sea-trade to foreign country was predominant in Central Maharashtra. Ellora, Ajanta & nearby places were progressive in trade from 2nd century B.C. Satavahana was ruler of western India, Pratisthan was capital of Satavahana. They were very powerful rulers. Buddhism in Deccan was spread in the period of Satavahana. They patronised various architectural and religious activities though they were Hindus. The rock-cut architecture especially in Deccan begins in this period. Then Wakataka ruled this area & the rulers promoted the art of rock cut excavation & it can be seen through the cave 16 & 17 of Ajanta.

In the Deccan plateau the caves were excavated for almost 1000 years. The first period was associated with Satavahana and Wakataka (2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.)

The second period of 5th century A.D. to 12th century is related with the excavation of Ellora caves. Chalukyas of Badami ruled Deccan from 6th century A.D. They were lovers of art & literature along with wellknown quality of intellectual & powerful ruler. Chalukya had remarkable cultural treasure at Badami, Aihole & Pattadakal. Cave 21, 29, 17, 14 are from this
period. In addition to it cave, 3, 4, 8 and 9 are also considered from Chalukyan period and so Ellora caves have impact of Chalukyan architecture. Under Rastrakuta king Krishna I in 8th century AD excavation of cave 16 started. Then Jain caves were excavated.

According to Susan L. Huntington, the history and origin of Kailasa can be traced back by from the time "control of the Deccan was taken from the early western Chalukyas around 750 by the Rashtrakutas, who in this way began a hegemony that was to last more than two hundred years, until about 973. The Rastrakuta were dominant and powerful ruler in western part. Their political power was well known. They too were interested in art and architecture. The principal site associated with these rulers was Ellora where several excavations were carried out, but no doubt, the most ambitious and most impressive of these excavation indeed, not in India but in all of South Asia is Cave 16 'Kailasnatha temple. This is one of the last important Hindu excavations. The first Rastrakuta raja, Dantidurga defeated Chalukya of Badami in 753 A.D. and established an empire which was dominated in Deccan. His uncle who succeeded him, Krishna I (757 -783) not only enlarged the royal territory to the south but also created the most famous of all Rastrakuta monument the rock cut wonder, the Kailashnatha temple. The Kailasa (cave) temple has a complex design, it is said that it is copy of free standing Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal, (740 AD), which in turn was a copy of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, of the early eighth century. The excavation of the cave might have taken almost a century.

**Peculiarities of Ellora caves - Architecture and Sculptures**

Ellora caves are famous for architecture and sculptures. All the caves are nothing but temples excavated to propagate religion. The caves "are the manifestations of highest acme of artisanship" Ellora caves are the masterpieces indicating the high skill in carving as well as in architecture. Before going in further details of the caves the study of architecture, art and sculptures is presented here under.
Architecture of Ellora caves

Architecture deals with plan of the caves, pillars and some times super structure of the caves. Following are the main architectural elements of Ellora caves

**Plan** - There are various types of plans used in excavation of Ellora caves. All these plans are the modification of original plans. Some of the caves have original plan. For example cave, 1, 2, 3 are with halls with pillars in the centre.

Cave 4, 8, 14, 17 are with the shrine chambers separated from the back wall, cave 11 and 12 are three storied caves where as cave 29 has three entrances. The cave 16 is unique in cave architecture where in the entire cave temple is separated from the mountain. The plan is in some extent repeated in Chotta Kailash (cave 30).

In between the first and last groups of excavation at Ellora are found all types, styles and levels of artmanship. Some complex exercises are found in world famous miracles of art at Ellora. The caves were cut to make halls chambers, Pavilions, shrines and pendals. The plan in the beginning was simple and the final manifestation is the Ellora cave 16 - Kailasa temple.

**Pillars:** As discussed in elements of cave architecture the pillars do not have any functional use as of structural building. The cave architecture imitates the conventional concept of pillars and beam and wood at the roof of caves. The pillars are found in great variation in Ellora caves and used as the medium for sculpture.

The monuments of Ellora display a rich gallery of pillars of different shapes and sizes with beautiful decoration. The pillars are plain, square or octagonal, Kumbh-valli, Kalasa topped showing different design.

The pillars create an impression of structural stability within the rock cut shrines. They fulfill the psychological function along with they are used as
medium that act as platform for foliate design and decorations, auspicious figures and erotic play. The celestial and earthy creatures and florid forms of anthropomorphic figures, birds and animals make these medallions on the pillars attractive. We find pillars with female figures on the brackets. Some pillars have dwarfs who play flutes, drums and carry heavy loads.

The two imposing dhawajastamba of cave 16 are especially noteworthy because of their highly stylized decorative designs and novel conception. Their square shape, carving in low relief and tapering character make them unique examples of Indian temple pillars.

The free standing Manas-stambha found in front of cave 32 is an elegant example of kalasa topped type.

**Superstructure:** - Ellora temples offer very few super structures over mandapas of the main shrine. The main example is superstructure over the main shrine of cave 16. It is from Dravidian style. It is marvellous, most fascinating and magnificent. The mandapa is with three large doorways and niches on the walls of the sanctum, The shikara developed into miniature replicas of the shikara of the main shrine.

The cave 30 is carved as that of cave 16. The other elegant superstructure can be seen in front of cave 32 is Chaumukhmanapa though it is miniature replica of cave 16 but on close observation we find Chaitya window designs and the conch blowing bhutas.

The third important super structure is from Buddhist cave 10. It is unique. A relief carved over the opening at the centre of the wall, made up of three arches. It has a highly developed decorative design that is resembles the one carved over the lintel of Gupta temple at Deogarh. The remaining two reliefs over the niches at earlier end of the wall are more architectural in character. The northern niche has prominent Chaitya window designs.

The elements of earlier Indian temple are also available in caves at Ellora. They are hanging cornice (Kapota) with scroll - work at the corners, Chaitya window designs, toranas or arches over the niches.
The torana is of special mention. They are of three types. Makara, patra and Chitratorana.

The style of architecture displayed by them is Indo-Aryan intermingled with Dravidian. Thus caves at Ellora serve as landmarks in the development of Indian Architecture and sculpture. They are the product of the harmonious welding together the Aryan and Dravidian cultures.

**Sculpture**

The caves at Ellora are famous for architecture and sculptures too. Sculptures are the national art of India. Sculptures in India are an adjunct of architecture. The artistic skill executed in these caves is superb. The visitors are struck with wonder after seeing huge, grand, proportionate figure which are skillfully carved in most difficult places with ease and elegance.

Ellora is rich in architecture but it is richer in sculpture. The monuments themselves in their excavations are sculptures on a grand scale. The caves are nothing but carved and hollowed parts of hewn mountains out structures. In caves we find various shapes are given to these structures such as gateways, doorframes, pillars, roofs and towers which are utilized more for decorative purposes than for functional ones. Thus the entire rock-cut architecture at Ellora is therefore a structure on magnificent level.

Ellora presents some of the boldest geotechnique composition in world. The unique and remarkable examples of the boldest geotechnique is nothing but Kailasa cave, cave 16 and the cave 10 Chaitya cave and cave 32 and 33. In these cave the sculptures are in large number which not only depicts the religions but also are of ornate nature. These caves itself are the sculptures which are carved out of plain mountain.

The sculptures of Ellora were imitated all over India. The superb work of Ellora artist can not be compared. Their perfect use of unsounded depth of rocks and nebulous world of light and shade for powerful and effective sculptural representations, modulation of light and shade and the vibrating
atmosphere of rock-cut shelters render magic touch to the sculptures of Ellora.\textsuperscript{13} The balanced use of techniques which is only possible after having the knowledge of sunlight, the directions and the depth which resulted in modulation of light. All these can be experienced when tourist moves in Ellora caves. The experience of feeling of seeing colossal tableaux of sculptures in the rock cut caves where light and shadow chase each other. The sculptures glow with lively movement. Only few world sculptures can show such an artistic creativity.

It takes thousand years to achieve such excellence. A dramatic consummation of this tradition was achieved at Ellora.

Ellora caves show the gradual evolution of expression through the distinctive styles of architecture, sculptures and mural paintings. All this reflects the influence exercised by three major religious faiths of India-Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism.\textsuperscript{14} Mastery of carving in basalt and a desire for multiplicity of design variation within a unified architectural format naturally gave rise to several adaptations in format and idiom. It is only in the central phase under the Rastrakutas that we see rich variety in design and spatial treatment on a scale not attempted in rock cut art anywhere else. Three dimensional presentations, both of panel sculptures and wall reliefs like mithunas and vidyadharas, virtually emanating out of the rock in full blooded vigour, were the sequel.\textsuperscript{15} At Ellora in some caves the sculpture are the main attraction. In more than one sense Ellora caves are the finest sculpture galleries of early medieval Indian art. The Kailasa shrine is the place where tourists witness the stupendous work of rock-cut architecture and sculpture. The other cave which is famous for sculpture and architecture is Indra shabha. The noteworthy amongst these are the sculptures of cave 27 which reflect the synthesis of early Chalukyan and early Gupta tradition. The figures were plumb, effete, restrained in their movement. The sculptures in cave no. 15 and 16 may belongs to eight century where in the figures are more slender when compared to their plump predecessors. They are powerful and virile; their movements are
vigorouss and agitated. In fact the sculptures in this period exhibit the qualities which are similar to those of sculptures of the early Pallava period and of eighth century temples of Pattadakal.

The true Rastrakuta style of art can be seen in the sculptures of Lankeshwara the icon of the gallery in the rear of cave 16 and the sculpture of the river Goddesses found in the Kailasa temple.

The sculptures of the Jaina caves may be assigned to the ninth-tenth centuries. There are beautiful mithuna figure carved above the image of Parshvanatha on the façade of the cave in cave 32. Other examples are the beautiful figures of Yaksha and Yakshi with their vehicles.

**Themes used in Ellora caves: Religious monuments**

Ellora caves are an example of harmonious relationship existing since 5th cent A.D. Three religious monuments are situated in one site which were the predominant Indian religions have monuments in Ellora. Obviously all these caves have different themes.

To elaborate the view themes of Ellora caves, Carmel Berkson says,"The single purpose of all the carving the temples at Ellora is to prepare the votary for the discovery of that which is immanent and pervasive amidst all the phenomenal activity of gods and goddesses depicted here. The caves are a sort of orgiastic head-on encounter with all aspects of human experience"16

Thus Berkson Carmel rightly expresses the sculptures at Ellora that unfolds in flowing, continuous, determined progression which can be apprehended by the observer who searches for the totality by the investigating the properties of each statue or panel individually. It is not an exaggeration to claim that infinite lithic representations at Ellora co-ordinate into the greatest concentration of the sculpture, wrought at a single site, in diverse styles; that art history has ever witnessed or is likely to again. The artists compelling, generative will towards form proliferation is astonishing and bewildering and the complicated revisions and radical
innovations in the style during fifth centuries expresses a vast range of
experience. This experience is not isolated one, as the art of Ellora as a
whole represents a dynamic sections of entire evolution of Indian
sculptures, traceable backward a millennium. Within a relatively short
span of time, the artists managed to give plastic form to a multitude of
psychic conditions, gifting these permanent works of arts to the world in a
multiple array of style.\textsuperscript{17}

All the aspects related to daily life, Gods and goddess, myths and rituals
and that too related all the three religion are exhibited in Ellora through
architecture and sculptures.

In most of the caves, however, the focal points are centred round the
figures of divinities - Buddha, Shiva and Thirthankar. Music, dancing and
erotic plays of all the carved and painted creatures turn to the central
figures of divinity. Devas and Devatas, Apsaras and Gandharvas,
Vidyadharas and Kinnaras, Dwarfs, Makaras, Vylas, Elephants and Bulls
whether they are in the main hall or in the side chambers. In porches, in
balconies, in galleries, whether they are standing or flying, the entire world
of these artistically drawn devotees are found switching their attention, to
the central figure of divinity in the main shrine Buddha, Shiva or
Tirthankar.\textsuperscript{18} At Ellora esoteric mysteric of the festival of love co-mingle
with the longings for moksha, nirvana and mukti.\textsuperscript{19} The representation of
Gods, demigods in the devotional quality explains the visitors the universal
concept of moksha, nirvana and mukti. This concept is uniform and
highlighted by all the three religions.

The theme reflected in Ellora art has been enriched by a wealth of erotic
themes. This is the reason of presence of mithuna couples in many caves.
The sculpture is so varied and rich seems that the entire Indra's paradise
has came down to Ellora. These are the heavenly in origin but they
possess the eloquence (expressive language) of earthy charms.

Rastrakuta sculptures of the early to mid-eighth century also show that
artists has been educated to diversify themes to suit the dynamic with the didactic, following new trends in puranic stories circulating among the religious communities.

The puranic stories in Rastrakuta were of all related Hinduism. They selected this immortal mode of expression to communicate the message of victory of good over evil. This can be seen through the display of Vishnu's exploits on the southern wall of dasavatara cave reveals a careful selection of dynamic episodes which has powerful impact like Govardhanahari, Gajendravarada, Varaha, Trivikrama and Narasimha highlighted by the counter poised is Anantasayi (creation of myth) panel set amidst these.

The mode of display of Hiranyakasipu in combat with God Narsimha is post 7th century creation in Chalukya and Pallava territory and it is found at many places in Rastrakuta monument at Ellora.

Ellora more than any other like efforts depicts the inherent universalism of the Indian artist who was partisan promoter of a limited religious doctrine, but rather was at tireless articulator of the basic grandeur of spiritual cosmos in which opposed facets of vigour, beauty, love, conflict and compassion, jostle to produce and interacting framework whose keynote was as human and natural as its eventful transformation into a divine aura was truly supernatural. 20 Another important theme used in the form of feature was the apparent or suggested intention to allow the dominant unit of the panel to overflow the hypothetical framework within which the panel was set. This deliberately introduced in the image a sense of dynamism and omnipresence. 21 This feature is introduced after 7th century and found mostly of the carving of Rastrakuta which is of 8th century. This feature can be explained with the help of Jatayu’s encounter with Ravana (Cave 16) at Ellora. It exemplifies the above cited features, both of bipolar forces where in the moral legitimacy of the role of the vulture is shown in this significantly enlarged size. The Jataya carving comes out of panel frame.
This become a speciality in later medieval times in the miniature painting of upper India and is interpreted by Art historians, as a special merit. Thus Rastrakuta art broke new rounds in the enunciation of spirit, power and composition.\textsuperscript{22}

The daily life styles in contemporary world are reflected with the wealth of hairstyles, ornaments, costumes etc.

Thus the themes of Hindus sculptures are varied. But most of the Hindu caves are Shaivites. The themes are often based on puranic stories pertaining to Shiva. The most frequently depicted is panel is marriage of Shiva and Parvati. The theme in Buddhist caves are Buddha and Bodhisattva in various iconographic styles. Jain caves largely depict the Tirthankaras and Gomteshwars.

**Brief Description of selected Ellora Caves**

Almost all caves at Ellora are worth visiting only few of them are not accessible. Few caves left incomplete as the rock quality was not suitable for carving and hence they are as hallow carved in the rock with incomplete sculptures.

Given below is the brief description of selected caves 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21, 29, 30, 32 and 33 representing unique qualities of art and architecture.

**Buddhists Caves**

The cave no 1 to 13 are Buddhist monasteries and shrines, 14 to 29 are Brahmanical excavation and 30 to 34 are Jain caves.

After the excavation of Buddhist site namely Pithalkhora, Nasik, Kanheri and decline of power of ruling dynasty, Buddhist community in search of suitable site moved to Ellora and Aurangabad. They were first to excavate caves at Ellora. Buddhism was one of influential religion in the region from 5th to 7th centuries at that time Brahmanism was introduced again and it become strong.
Cave 5 - This is the largest cave in Ellora. The cave has a long hall with twenty four Kalasa topped pillars. It is earliest Buddhist cave at Ellora. The rectangular hall is about 35 meters in length. The interesting feature of this cave is two parallel rows of stone-cut benches that might serve as seats of Buddhist monks who used to assemble for religious purposes. Such benches are typical of the seating pattern used in ritual recitation in later Tantrism and Zen Buddhism outside India and suggest that benches made of ephemeral materials might possible have been used in vihara and chaitya type caves or free standing building for centuries, but that their memory is preserved only in the rock cut example at Ellora and Kanheri. As the cave had at least twenty cells for the monks these were probably either the low tables of their refectory, or it may possibly have been a sort of benches, the reading desks of the scholars or it may have been that they served both the purpose. A shrine is cut in the back wall of hall, has a statue of Buddha in preaching posture with attendants. Huge dwarpalas standing on lotus are on either side of the doorway of the Shrine. There are nineteen cells caved in the side walls.

Cave No. 10 It is only chaitya in Ellora. This cave represents the final phase of the development of rock-cut Chaitya in Western India. It is known as ‘Vishwakarma’ cave after the Gods of Architecture. It is also as ‘Sutara chi Jhopadi’ or ‘Carpenter's shop’. The carpenter believing the huge image of Buddha in the cave to be that of Vishwakarma who constructed the whole Universe used to offer their prayer to him. Carpenter's cave is the suitable name as the entire cave is imitation of wooden architecture. The cave must have been excavated in the later half of 7th century because perpendicular pillars style, a number of figure sculptures and impact of Tantrism. It shows great imagination and skill of the architect of the period.

Unlike Ajanta Chaitya which open directly into the rock face, Vishwakarma has a courtyard, an exterior, Gallery and balcony decorated with galaxy of sculptures. The sun window is different. It is horse shoe in shape and on
two sides has been introduced a new decorative element which gives it a trefoil shape. On the two side of sun window are carved beautiful flying Apsara and Gandharvas who have come to offer their prayer to the Buddha. Their dress is flying in air, which is showing movement. They are moving about in mid air. The female figures wear close fitting garments revealing the beauty of their forms.

Below the sun window is a door which leads to Gallery. On the parapet wall of the gallery are number of panels, all beautifully carved. The best amongst them is music Gallery with dancing girls.

The roof of cave seems like an elephant back. In the centre is Stupa, on which itself a huge image of Buddha is carved under an arch formed by Bodhi tree and figures. Buddha is in preaching attitude. The noteworthy feature of this cave is the sun window carved in such a way as the sunrises in the sky, the rays of sun fall on the divine face of Buddha. This gives the figure a great charm and dignity. The face of Buddha shines as result of rays of the sun falling upon it; the light in the hall itself is diffused and creates a serene atmosphere for worship.

The Pillars in the hall are vase and foliage shape. Burgess James considers this cave as the Cathedral temple of Buddha caves. The entire atmosphere in this cave is very serene and create an impact on the visitors.

**Cave 11**: This cave locally known as Do Tal, but actually it is a three storied Buddhist monastery. Its ground floor was covered under debris. Cave 11 and 12 are only three storied Buddhist excavation in India.

This cave has a courtyard. The ground floor has shrine with image of Buddha in the Dhyani mudra, attended by Padmapani and Vajarapani, the attendant of Buddha. They are also known as Bodhisattvas. There is a female goddess Tara’s sculpture along with Bodhisattva Avalokitesvaras sculpture on the outer wall.

The first floor has three shrines. All shrines have an image of Buddha in
bhumisparsha mudra. On the south wall is an image of preaching Buddha attended by Bodhisattva. The second floor carved deeper into the cave, has a pillared varandah and pillared vestibule at the centre that leads to a hall. In the sanctum, is huge preaching Buddha in Pralambhapada pose. In the shrine to the north has an image of Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra. There are several figures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

**Cave 12.** It is locally known as Teen Thal or Teen Tal and is chapel cum monastery.

This cave is the biggest excavation of the Buddhist in Ellora. On a close observation of the plan it seems like this cave may also have been used as hostel. The ground floor hall is L-shaped hall having figures of seated Padmapani flanked by Tara. There are several Buddha and Bodhisattva carved on the wall surface. A deep niche in the eastern wall contains a seated Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra and two standing Buddhas in varad mudra and on the wall of niches are carved Bodhisattva.

The presence of three stories or levels is one of the most significant features of this cave.

In the sanctum is a preaching Buddha and at the entrance of shrine are a seated Padampani and Manjushri. The noteworthy feature on sanctum wall is a group of four seated Bodhisattvas and above each of the group is a group of five seated Buddha.

On the first floor is a shrine with Buddha in the Bhumisparasa mudra. Other noteworthy sculptures are figure of Jambala, Avalokiteshwara and Tara.

The two interesting panels in this cave is Vajrasattva, the sixth Dhyani Buddha with Padmapani and VajraPani on either side. This is only representation of Vajra sattva at Ellora and is therefore unique. (He always carries a bell and heavily ornamented)

The uppermost floor consists of a verandah and a magnificent pillared
hall. The wall to the north has carving of seven Manushi Buddha each seated and the arch covering made up of specific tree in Dhyani mudra.

Other important sculptures are three seated figures of Tara and other female Bodhisattva and five seated Buddhas etc. In the sanctum is a large figure of Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra.

This cave has pradikskina path. (Circumbulatary path). The surrounding wall have Buddha attendants, four standing Bodhisattvas and five seated Buddha carved in them. The figure of Tara and Jambhala is noteworthy. The traces of painting are seen on figure, walls and ceiling.

The cave 12 is last cave from Buddhism. Here the Buddhist art of excavation and sculptural representation almost stopped in western Deccan. The span for development was around two hundred and fifty years. It was rapid and dynamic. The fast development can be according to Huntington Susan, " In the shrine area alone, the format changed from a simple image in the centre of a shrine to one where the central image was moved to the rear wall of the cell additional Buddhas were brought into the shrine, the shrine itself was surrounded by a pradakshina path, secondary shrine appeared, female imagery became prominent and finally, a series of caves was arranged vertically and a new group of Bodhisattva was introduced in shrine. Clearly the developments in Buddhism as documented in these caves must have been extremely rich, fostered perhaps by an active lay patronage and natured by the suitable environment and context created in the monasteries themselves. The tendency over time was to include greater and context created in monasteries themselves. They tendency over time was to include greater and greater specificity in communicating Buddha’s doctrines and beliefs thus leaving less and less to the interpretation of the practitioner.27
Hindu caves

Cave 14, 15, 16, 21 and 29 are from Hinduism. From 7th century A.D. Brahmanism was prevalent in the region. But in the initial excavation Hindu followed the Buddhist model and then they developed their own which reached its zenith in Kailasa (cave 16) dated middle of eighth century.

Cave 14 - This cave is locally known as Ravana-Ki-Khai. It is first cave of Brahmanism or Hinduism excavated at Ellora. The large hall is supported by sixteen Pillars. The shrine is without idol but pradakshina path is round it. It must be a temple dedicated to devi as two panels of four armed Durga and Mahishasurmardini are on the both corners at the opening of the cave.

The side walls of this cave contain some of the finest sculptural panels at Ellora. Vaisnavite sculptures are at one side of the wall and Shaivite are on other side. The Gajalaxmi, Varahavatara, Vishnu with Shri and Bhudevi, Andhakasura vadha, Ravana shaking Kailasa are some of the themes of the powerful sculptural expression in this cave and noteworthy is Natarajashiva. It is nothing but Siva dancing the Tandava. It is an expressive panel and reflects performing art.

On the back side of this cave has a beautiful Saptamatrika Panel. Once entire cave was painted.

Cave 15. This cave was locally known as Dasavatara. It is two storied cave with large courtyard in which Nandi mandapa is excavated.

This cave is has impressive sculpture. There are number of Shaivite and Vaishnavite panels, different subjects are very vividly and graphically portrayed. They are full of expression like love, anger, fear, joy, terror and ecstasy.
The upper storey has a large hall. In the wall is Shivalinga shrine. The flanking sides show one of the finest galleries of Indian sculpture depicting Shaivite and Vaishnavite themes. The famous sculptures in these panels are cosmic dance of Shiva, Andhakasurantaka, Shiva, Narasimha incarnation of Vishnu, among the miracles of Indian Plastic art.

Description of cave 16 is given separately in detail.

**Cave 21**- Locally called as Rameshwara and is datable to the 8th century A.D. It is excavated on a raised platform and has an extremely beautiful facade and a small parapet wall.

Outside the cave on the side walls are figures of river Goddesses. The figure of Ganga to the left standing on makara is really a masterpiece of Ellora art. Ganga is carved as she is gracefully standing, placing her weight on her left leg. The slight bend of her body has lent a charm to the whole figure. The smile on her face, her beautiful hairdo, the costume is all superbly executed.

The facade has four short pillars and apsaras carved on it. These are bracket figure showing influence of Chalukyas of Badami (6th-7th centuries). The upper portion of the facade has a freeze showing creeper and ganas figuring in alternative panels. The beautiful Lakulisa is excavated just above the entrance.

In the gallery to the south are saptamatrikas with Veenadhari Siva and Ganesh on the back wall and dancing Siva on the east. Shiva and Parvati playing dice watched by Gods and demigod are depicted outside.

In the northern gallery main sculptures are scenes from the story of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati. Kartikeya flanked by a goat faced attendant is sculpted on the western wall. On the eastern wall is a sculpture of powerful Mahishasuramadini with demon and on the exterior of the cave has sculpture of Ravana shaking the kailash mantap.
Cave 29. This cave is called as Dumarlena.( Sita Ki Nahani). This cave is dedicated to Shiva. The plan of the cave is similar with Elephanta cave. It is datable to the 8th century A.D. The hall is a cruciform shape with entrances on south, west, and north. At the entrance are figures of lions and elephants guarding its steps. The Nandi platform is in front. Each of the three entrances is flanked by large sculptures that are beautifully executed.

A magnificent sculpture of Shiva Pravati marriage is on the South entrance. In it Shiva's crown is very elaborate and his necklaces are also rich in design. Parvati's hair dress is beautiful while her ornaments are very striking.

Saraswati is carved in larger than life size to the south of the panel of Shiva and Parvati.

Sculptures of Shiva and Parvati playing dice, Brahma, Vishnu and Nandi, beautiful representations of dikpalas on their mounts are important in this cave. Other sculptures are of Ravana shaking Kailasa, Andhakari, Lakulisa seated on a lotus supported by Nagarajas. The most impressive sculpture is of depiction of powerful dance of Shiva. The shrine is in the rear of the cave. It has linga inside it in the form of phallic emblem of Shiva. There is spacious pradakshina path which give four side accesses to the shrine. All four doors of shrine are guarded by huge dwarpalas accompanied by female attendants.

The female attendants are very richly ornamented with crowns, they wear necklace, patrakundalas, beautiful armlets and thin clothes reaching to their feet. The dwarpalas are also heavily ornamented.

Cave 16 – Kailasa.

The cave is named after mountain abode of Lord Shiva.

The cave was hewn form a mass of rock obtained by cutting three big trenches in the three sides of the hill. The outer screen wall has several
vertical compartments containing magnificent sculptures of dikpalas, dancing Shiva, Vishnu on Garuda, Lingodhova Shiva, Trivikrama, Narsimhha and Bhuvarah.

It represents not only the most striking cave temple of the more than thirty at the site of Ellora but also the culmination of rock cut architecture in South Asia. The style of carving, its boldness suggest that the centuries of tradition in which carving techniques and understanding of the rock medium were developed which helped the craftsmen to push the architectural type to its limits.

The Kailasnatha temple is more than simply a building; it is a complex with all the essential elements of contemporaneous free standing southern-type temple units, including a main building, Nandi Shrine, gateway, surrounding cloisters and subsidiary shrines. Pant Pratinidhi rightly said in this context that "Kailasa temple though a carved cave has all the features of a temple built in the open, because it is carved free from the rock both from inside and outside. That is a peculiarity unique in itself, and we have not heard of any such free-standing carved temple in any part of the world."

The great art critics, James Fergusson and Dr. A Coomarswamy, pointed out "Kailasa is itself one of the most singular and interesting monuments of architectural art in India. The floor of the whole temple is 280 x 160 ft. In the rectangular court stands a V Rimana of 96 ft high, in front of which is a large porch supported by 16 columns. "The Kailasanatha cave has been decorated with some of the finest and boldest sculpture compositions in India. In no other art, geotectonic conceptions have been visually realised with any such power as here."

Kailasa without doubt is an architectural wonder. It is a unique example of structural temple carved out of single rock and it is so perfect in its design and decoration so correct in its plan and so skillful in its execution. What Fergusson says about Cholas comes apt to the mind, "the Hindus
conceived like giants & executed like jewellers”. What is most surprising is that Kailasa had no rock cut structural tradition behind it. Without the strength of tradition the Hindus conceived the excavation of huge structural temple out of a solid mass of rock and having conceived it executed it like master architects. For there is no doubt that in the richness and audacity of its plan, in the flawlessness of its technical details, in the variety of design the diversity of its decorative motifs and superb mastery in execution, Kailasa has no parallel in the world. 31 Kailasa the key attraction in Ellora is the largest monolithic structure in the world. 32 The caves group at Ellora unique in site, planning, sculptures and architecture but amongst these kailasa more important in respect choice of the site and the rock, by the grand design said by the patient carvers, by the bold mythological themes depicted on walls, roof etc by the devotion which have prompted and motivated artist to carve the designs and motivated the kings to pour money like water for accomplishing these things in art.

The creative imagination that first visualised such a great temple as that of Kailasa in the rough solid block of granite at Verul must have belonged to that of a mastermind. The hands that actually wrought the idea out of with the patient skill of gold-smiths and brought shape to such a monument are well worthy of the highest laurels in the work of art. 33 The Kailasa cave temple at Ellora is the world Heritage site, has worked as a crown achievement in the Indian architecture. The temple which was excavated on the instruction of the Rastrakuta emperor Krishna I. The excavation was a huge task given to the artists who were having traditional knowledge of carving still it was very difficult where in the rock has to be separated from the mountain. With this the concept of cave temple was transcended for the king was not satisfied with a mere hallow in the rock. The entire rock face was cut away and a splendid temple carved like a statue from the hillside, complete with shrine-room, hall, gateway, votive Pillar, lesser shrines and cloisters, the whole adorned with divine figures and scenes large and small of a grace and strength rarely seen again in
Indian art. In this connection Dehejia Vidya says, 'A first view of the kailasa temple is opt to leave one breathless with astonishment, unfortunately, the camera is unable to capture the grandeur in its entirety. The whole temple has been quarried out of the hill side. In the praise of Ellora Craven Roy E. writes, "Elura is undoubtedly one of the greatest of all Indian sites for sculpture, and masterpiece at Elura is the Kailasanatha Temple, a monolithic sculpture in the form of an elaborate temple of Shiva, carved from the hillside between 757 and 790. Through size also Kailasa is a temple carved on a large scale. The spectrum & Ellora's art is the most wide ranging statement & the evolution of religion aesthetic art in south India between A.D 600 and 900. It exhibits coexistence, coalescence, contrast and composition, exuding the aroma of multiple regional art styles of the time. It partakes of all the canonical, textual and temporal guidelines of the age. Its grammar of structured spatial formulae, in the stages of its efflorescence, cannot be faulted. It achieved emancipation from the restrictive and unhelpful rock medium, one is hardly aware of the massive manual efforts but instead, partakes of the exultation of spirit writ large on it. It spans the age of crucial transformation of Indian art from the post classical to the pre-medieval. It is the substantiation of all the strides achieved in structural architecture and canonical iconography. It is extravagant without being vulgar, rich in craft without being laboured. It has a power which is extraverted and a robustness which is elemental. It shows the uniqueness, position and significance of Kailasa temple in Indian Architecture.

The cave 16, Kailasa Temple is an excellent example of Hindu architecture where in the features of Pallava, Chalukya & Rastrakuta architecture intermingled harmoniously. These can be seen in various sculptures at Ellora. The Pallava & Chalukya type of architecture reflected in sculpture are also available in abundance. This makes it world heritage monument.
Unique qualities of the Kailasa.

Till the time of Rastrakuta all the caves which are spread across all over India was example rock cut in architecture. Here in case of Ellora a new technology or attempt was that the mass removed from the mountain and was used as the medium for cave temple. From this mass the cave temple was carved. The work started from the top. The process of excavation was in the beginning was roughly hewing the mass of rock into shape. This was followed by sculptures that completed each portion of the carved detail. They used to proceed downwards. The movement from top to downward avoided the need of scaffolding.

It was the zenith point of cave architecture in western India.

It is obvious that the entire plan of temple, its dimensions, the location of the halls, the pillars, the staircases, the panels to be carved, the sikharas etc. must have been planned before actual excavation began. The artist who worked at the site of Ellora had a clear idea of their work and knew how to do it. They were confident about the chisel which was driven into rock with hammer and with every stroke the mass of rock began to take shape. They worked from the top to downward.

The Kailasa temple at Ellora built in the time of Krishna and representing the boldest attempt in the field of rock-cut architecture reproduces all the details of a structural temple in the intricacies of rock excavation. About 100 ft in height, the temple lies in a courtyard 30 feet square detaching by a trench from the live rock. Architecturally it consist of Gopuram, an enterance, nandimandapa,a portico, a mahamandapa, an antarala, and a garbhagriha. It is surrounded by a wide open terrace accommodating five subsidiary shrines. The main temple is supported on a raised plinth, 25 feet high, which offers ample vertical space for depicting the denizens of the primeval forest and deadly combats between lions and lifesize elephants both the sculptures and the architecture of the Kailasa temple bear eloquent testimony to the victorious power of Rastrakuta. The
surrounding scrap has been further hallowed out to form deep recesses for shrines with a fine rock sculptures.\textsuperscript{38} It is considered to be the world’s largest monolithic sculpture. It was supposed to have been sculptured from rock by 7000 labourers over 150 years period. \textsuperscript{39} Though carved in rock the Kailasa temple possesses various part of the functional temple like entrance, assembly hall, shrine etc, which is generally present in temples & the part are functional element of temple architecture. The shapes, sizes, utility varies according to the regions. In this connection Craven Roy C. adds, “like, its model the kailasnath temple is composed of four basic units. First there is high entrance gate (gopuam) which screens the sacred precinct from the outside world. The gate is followed by a shrine for the Nandi, the mount of Shiva. A statue of Nandi is traditionally located before Shaivite temples”.\textsuperscript{40} All the mentioned features show a strong influence of Dravindian style on Kailasa where devotedly transfixed, he contemplates the Shiva lingam in the temple’s cell. At Ellora the Nandi shrine is flanked by two monolithic stone shafts or towers, 60 feet high which originally supported trident symbol of Shiva. Also nearby, at either side are caved two life size stone elephants, Beyond the Nandishrine, the living stone looms upward into an elaborated mass of architectural & sculptural at details. This massive, unified volume actually, contains the last two of the four basic architectural units. These are the columned assembly hall & with the highest volume of the main tower the major sanctum. The shikara centred over the cell containing the lingam rises to a climax 96 feet above the covered courtyard floor. This cell and tower unit is strikingly borne on the back of rows of covered elephants.

If we took a round, the vastness of massive excavation seems more elaborate. It is astonishing, the courtyard is 276 feet deep and 154 wide and at the back the vertical incision into the hill drops 120 feet. The dimension of the courtyards proves that it might possible approximately three million cubic feet of stone were excavated from the hillside to create this massive work of sculpture. All the excavation and carving demanded
most sophisticated planning. It is not dependent on conventional architecture norms of what was added but rather more difficult what was removed.

Thus such a massive achievement as the Kailasa could ever be repeated was inconceivable even to the legendary architect, responsible for its completion. It is admitted that "it could only be magic that it could have constructed even this one". 41 That magic truly was never repeated, the Kailasa, was to be the great and glorious swan. It is song of rock architecture in India.

**Theme of Kailasa Temple :-**

The cultural exchange between south and the Deccan was the result of wars, and the Ellora shrine represents the extreme northern point of penetration by the south architectural style.

The entire Kailasa cave is excavated on the theme of Shivleela. Many stories of Shiva charita, Shivamahima and Shivbakti are narrated in the form of rock. 42 The Kailasa (Shiva's Paradise.) at Ellora stand in a class by it self. Architect Percy Brawn in this context said, 'It is an example who kept all previous conventions & boldly undertook to reproduced in the virgin rock to a very larger scale and in full details of structural temples of the period. Truly has it been said "The Indian artist had an extra ordinarily developed plastic sense. No other people have even dreamed of sculpting such great temples out of solid rock as he has. Indeed, Indian architecture proceeds, not as ours, according to the principles of the construction, it is rather conceived as an object cut out of a solid material as a very figure might be "43

**Some important sculptures in Kailasa.**

The various sculptures carved in the temple are not there by accident, but by deliberate design. Every sculpture has a meaning and a purpose. This cave is a masterpiece and a poem in rock. It contains galaxy of Gods and goddess."44
All the sculptures serve different purposes but they all are tuned harmoniously. They appear full of life and ready to start narrating their feelings. Some of the special panels are described as follows.

1. The entire temple complex is an encyclopaedia of sculpture. At the entrance are the guards of directions in one compartment in the outer screen wall which is recessed and other vertical compartment has magnificent sculptures of dancing Shiva, Vishnu on Garuda, Lingodbhava Shiva, Trivikrama, Narshimha and Bhuvarah.

2. A large sculpture of Gajalakshmi stands facing the gateway. It is the first sculpture to be seen by the visitors. It was the architects desire to emphasize kingly prosperity which is required for such a voluminous work. Gajalakshmi is symbol of prosperity. Two elephants one each side are busy pouring the water of prosperity over Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth.

3. The left corridor wall had a panel showing victory of Good over Evil, which is shown very frequently in Hindu cave architecture. The demon Mahisha represents Evil, the Goddess Durga represents Good. In the struggle between Good and Evil, the Good always triumphs. The victory of Good makes the world happy at the same time the guardians of quarters feel happy and are relieved. They come in all their strength to offer her their thanks for relieving the world from Evil. The mind of devotee is thus prepared for the temple entry and makes him a partisan of Good.

4. Another important panel is River Goddesses. It is excavated on a high platform. They are Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati.

Saraswati is standing inclined on a lotus in dwibhanga pose. She wears a crown necklace and a griddle. Her costume hangs gracefully between her two legs. In the center is Ganga standing erect on Makara. She wears crown, necklace, armlets and griddle and to the left is Jamuna standing in dwibhanga pose on a tortoise.
All the three river Goddesses have been purposefully carved. They are the representation of various aspects, like devotion, knowledge, purity and prosperity. Ganga stands for purity, Jamuna for devotion and Saraswati for knowledge. It is with Devotion, purity of mind and with knowledge that the Good ultimately triumph, that the devotee begins his circumambulation round the Divinity. A person equipped with these attributes alone can understand the meaning of divinity. The Hindu begins his circumambulation from his left. It is for this reason that the shrine of river goddesses are carved on the left side and the temple as one enters. The river goddess panel indicates the power and rule of Rastrakuta which had reached the confluence of the three rivers, the Triveni Sangam at Prayaga and it is remark of power. On the way to Kailasa, it is necessary to geographically to go to Prayaga.

5. The next important sculpture in the courtyard attract attention is a huge elephant. The elephants are representative of kingly supremely and power.

6. The two Dhawajastambh as in the courtyard are indication of power of Rastrakutas as free standing pillars of victory. The pillars too are carved very richly. It seems it might be holding Shiva’s trident and flag of saffron colour.

7. Lankeshwara Temple is on the left side. It has number of interesting panels. Ganesha, Narsimhavatar of Vishnu, Gods of Hindu Trinity Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, Panchganij-murti of Parvati, Vishnu as Varaha, Surya, Uma Maheshwara playing dice to name a few. All the sculptures are richly ornamented and well proportionate. Other important sculptures are of river Goddess, Maheshmurti showing three aspects of life viz creation, preservation and destruction. At Ellora twenty-eight figures of Maheshmurti are carved. Ravanannugriha murti of Shiva, Uma Maheshwara Shiva, Ardhanariswar murti of Shiva, Mahsharsur Mardini are other important sculptures in found in this cave.
8. The parapet wall of Lankeshwara has twenty three mithuna couple executed with great skill showing union of male and the female of Purusha and Prakriti which is responsible for creation.

The north of Temple is Northern or left side Gallery. It has twelve panels which are carved on its back wall. They are extremely beautiful, full of expression and well in proportion. These panels are mostly related to Shiva and few of them are of Vishnu. Each and every panel expresses some or other aspects of human life and some quality possessed.

9. The panel of Ravana offering his heads in sacrifice to Shiva stresses the requirement of sacrifice, devotion that is necessary to reach God.

10. Uma Maheshwara playing dice is another important panel which show clear expression of victory in the game as Shiva lost the game Shiva face shows the desire to stop the game where as Uma naturally feels elated and happy.

11. In the eastern Gallery there are nineteen panels in the eastern Gallery. The most important sculpture in Eastern Gallery is Siva Kalyansundara murti .It is marriage scene of Shiva and Parvati. The panel is full of expression Brahma is also seen in this panel. He has three heads and four hands.

12. Andhakasuravadha Murti of Shiva- It is a panel narrating the story of Andhakasur. Here kali is seen with bowl to catch blood drops of demon as every drop fallen on the earth would given birth to new demon, Parvati is also seen in this panel. The other Tripurantaka panels include Siva as Tripurantaka, Uma Maheshwara, Kevala Shiva, Lingodbhava Murti, Umasahita-Murti, Harihara, Brahma, Shiva and Parvati etc.

13. The southern Gallery. There are twelve panels in southern Gallery. The first and most important is Ardhnarishwara , it is story of Brahma's efforts at creation. First he created man and waited for creation. He waited and nothing happened. He approached Shiva, Shiva took the form of half male and half female. Brahma understood the mistake for creation man was not enough. The right half is male and left half is female. They ornament are carved accordingly.
14. Narsimha Avatara of Vishnu - It is about incarnation of Vishnu taken to his young devotee Prahlada. Narsimha is half lion and half man. He has four hands. Two hands are engaged to tear the stomach of Prahlada's demon father Hirenayakashapu. Narsimha looks very furious. His breast is reflecting the anger. The entire panel is terrible. The artist has fully conveyed the story with full force and sculpture has gained in vitality.

15. Seshasahi Narayana - Vishnu in sleeping position Vishnu sleeps on the serpent-king Ananta. His head is protected by the hoods of Cobra and bed is made of coils of serpent. From his navel a lotus sprang on which Brahma is sitting.

16. Vishnu as Trivikrama: This panel narrates the story of Bali who became the Lord of Earth, Heaven and Sky. The god lives in terror of him. Inspite the great power Bali was extremely charitable person. Vishnu wishing to destroy him took a form of dwarf and asked a gift of as much land as his short legs could cover within three paces. After granting gift the dwarf assumed a giant form and covered the whole earth, heaven and sky in two paces and with the third pushed Bali into nether world.

The face of Trivikrama looks serene the Brahmin Vamana is seen below. The entire episode composition reveals the skill of the artist. A great symmetry is seen in the Gallery.

17. On the plinth of the Rangmandir a world famous sculpture of Ravanugrihamurti is carved. This sculpture has three dimension effects. It is fullest of expression. Each and every figure carved to expresses various rasas. This panel tells the story of Ravana shaking Kailasa abode of Shiva. To the right side is "The Hall of sacrifice". On the pillar, well proportionate two female figures with beautiful hairstyle are carved.

There are beautiful sculptures in this hall, but the most noteworthy is Saptamatrika with Ganesh in full relief with their respective Vahana / vehicle. Inside the Shrine is sculpture on the back is of Shiva Parvati.
The main Temple- Ranga Mahal-

The main temple is approached through two stair cases which lead to the portico of the Kailasa temple. On the ceiling is a lotus flower and number of painting which belongs to 9th and 10th centuries. The door frame is decorative. On two sides of the door are two female dwarpalikas with attendants. On the door jamb are number of mithuna figure. Again two male dwarpalas are carved. They are Shivas with three eyes and four arms, wearing decorative crowns necklaces garland and waistbands. They are holding serpents. On the left side of portico of Mahamandapa is Gangadhara-murti panel and on the right side is the sculpture of Lingodhava.

Main Hall : It is 57 by 55. It has sixteen beautifully carved pillars. They are of two types. The pillars are fully carved and decorated with the carving of Chaitya type false windows, mithuna couples, figures of gods, Goddesses, yakshas, yakshinis, floral and animal designs.

On the ceiling of the hall is a beautiful panel depicting Shiva dancing in Lalitam. Shiva is shown with six hands. With two hands he is holding huge serpent. One hand is in gajahasta pose, one hand hangs gracefully one side and another goes up on while dancing.

On pilaster of Mahamandapa on the right wall is an interesting frieze. In it is a woman is seen listening to a learned discourse and another panel shows a woman freely discussing with men. These panels tell us about the great freedom that women enjoyed in ancient India.

Another scene depicts ancient ashram scene of the sage Valmiki. He is seen discoursing on left disciples are seated in front and taking notes.

Ante Chamber - The walls of antechamber is fully carved with figures of Nandi, Uma, Maheshwara. On the ceiling is a beautiful carved figure of Annapurna wearing crown, earrings, neck lace etc. On her two sides above are two flying Vidyadharas. On her left is Brahma and right is Vishnu.
The Shrine:

The door of the shrine is very decorative. The door jambs are carved with geometrical patterns and human figures. On two sides of the door are female dwarpalikas. These are nothing but Ganga and Jamuna. In the shrine is a lingam. On the ceiling of the shrine is carved a beautiful lotus flower.

The main hall of Kailasa has two porticos. One opens into the northern courtyard and other in the southern courtyard. The panels in northern portico are of Shiva as Bhairava, Vishnu on Garuda. Mahishasurmardini in a niche. In Southern portico has two dwarpala. On the left, outside, on the wall of Rangmahal is the famous Jatayu panel.

There is a beautiful painting of Shiva dancing on the ceiling of portico. The shrine has a circumambulation passage from outside and it is approached by two doors. A number of figures are carved on the outside walls of the shrine. They are related mostly Shiva and flying gandharva. There are five temple situated in the pradakshina passage.

Adjoining the front portico of the Kailasa is the Nandigriha. In the centre is a big figure of Nandi. There is a way leading to an opening on the Southern side. From the corner of this opening an impressive view of Kailasa can be obtained. For a correct architectonic effect, this is a happy view point.

From the pradakshina path, on coming back to the base by staircase, two huge panels are seen just below the front portico of Main Hall. On the western wall is Shiva as Bhairva and on the eastern Siva as Mahayogi.

20. Shiva as Bhairava - It is panel depicting Gajasura vadha. It is on the western wall. Shiva takes a violent form to rid the world of Evil. The Evil is symbolised by Gajasura. The artist has used great skill in carving the figure of Bhairva. Shiva is the God of Destruction. Shiva is shown with ten hands. The hands indicate great strength. He wears earring, three necklaces, garland of human heads. Parvati is shown with Shiva. In
between the legs Shringi is shown with Shiva. In between the legs Shringi is shown dancing with joy. Bhringi is also shown by artists. The seven female figures can be interpreted with Saptamatrikas.

21. Shiva as Mahayogi - Shiva is shown in deep meditation. To distract him, on his two sides musicians are shown playing music loudly. Two sadhus on either side of Shiva are trying to meditate. This panel shows Shiva is creator, protector and Destroyer. Shiva is sitting on lotus in padmasana. We wears a very decorative crown, has eight hands. The astadikpalas are also seen in this panel.

22. Mahabharata panels - Various panels carved on the Sabha mandapa of Kailasa depicts scenes from the great epic Mahabharata. The seven rows depict the episodes of Krishna, Bakasura, Abhimanyu, Arjuna’s Penance.

23. Ramayana Panel: - There are seven rows. It narrates episodes of Ramayana from Rama’s departure from Ayodhya till the fight between Rama and Ravana.

Thus Kailasa leaves one dumb. The visitor overwhelmed by the richness and variety of its sculpture and the spaciousness and beauty of architecture. It is mixture of many schools of art, architecture and sculpture. The Hindu caves are rich in the variety of male and female figure, animal, floral, geometrical designs.

R.S. Gupte reightly said "Kailasa is an epic in stone. If poetry can be written in stone, this is it. For all the muses that be seem to have accomplished to conceive the miracle Kailasa. More than this man can not achieve. Perhaps human genius might still be capable of such conception, but it is doubtfull whether it would be equal to the task of executing it. Well may the architect who conceived it and executed it exclaim, "Oh ! Has this been achieved by me? How could ever accomplish a thing like that ". Ever the Gods in heaven would be astonished by this miracle created by the genius of man.
Jain caves
The last group of caves in Ellora is Jain caves. They are five in number and situated on the north of cave 29. Cave 30 is small, replica of Kailaas. The Jain caves are significant for elaborate plan and decoration in it. They date back to 8-9th century to 12th century.

Cave 30 – It is popularly known as Chota Kailash. Like the Kailash it is separated completely from the surrounding rock and has gopura design. Though the gopurum is not-impressive, the side wall of gopurum has Chauri bearer with beautiful ornaments. The other panel is of Gandharva, musician with mridanga, Jhanja and other musical instruments. Other important sculptures in this panel are Yakshini, Yaksha and noteworthy in the main hall twenty two thirthankaras.

Cave 32. This cave is known as Indra Sabha is the most interesting among all the Jain caves. It has a pillar called manastambha like Kailasa cave. The shrine detached from the neighbouring mountain by a small court yard. There is elephant in better condition to the right side. Inside the shrine is statue Mahavira. The ceiling has beautiful lotus.

On the same floor i.e. ground floor other important panels are Matanga and Siddhaiki, both the figures are rich in ornamentation and beautiful hairdress, Mahavira on lion thorn, Parashwanatha and Gomateshwar. The first floor is characterised by a big hall and a big veranda measuring 54 by 10. At each end of this veranda are colossal figures of Matanga and Siddhika seating on elephant and lion respectively. The foliage over Siddhika's head reveals figures of parrots, other birds and monkeys. The hall measure 55 by 78 is supported by twelve of extremely decorative pillars. The shrine on the back wall contains figures of Tirthankaras with two darpalas on either side. The figure of Gomateshwara carved to the right is the best Gomesteshwara figure at Ellora Jain caves. Other details are exactly carved, his body is entwined by creepers, which is surrounded by all kinds of animals like deer, serpent, rats, scorpions and dogs.

A small dark room can be accessed by few steps which are behind the figure of Matanga.
In the two niches are two carved figures of Goddesses, one is Siddhika who is bedecked with rich ornaments and other is Goddesses with four hands carrying Chakra and manuscript. She is also richly ornamented. This shows Hindu influence on Jainism.

To put it in the words of H. Zimmer, "The Indra sabha at Ellora suggest that the wonderful achievements and transformations of the Hindu style, which can be followed in the Chalukyan art of Badami, the Rastrakuta of Elephanta and Ellora and the Pallava at Mamallapuram had been allowed to pass unnoticed. A great technical skill, much patient labour and painstaking accuracy are evident in these solid and heavy pillars of the Indra Sabha."  

**Cave 33** - It is close to cave 32. It is known has Jagannathsabha can be approached by cave 32 as a passage and steps connect it with second story of Jagannath Sabha.

The varandah - pillars are all elaborately carved. At either end of varandah are Yaksha Matanga and Yakshini Siddhaika. The torana over their hands have been beautifully carved and foliage above their heads too is beautiful. Every flower and leaf is distinct. Birds and monkey can be easily seen. Parshwanatha and Siddhika are carved on the left and right wall. The door of the shrine in the back wall looks new and modern. Mahavira is seated in Padmasana and dhyana mudra inside the shrine. The pillars of the hall are intricately carved.

The upper floor is spacious and consists and varandah and a large hall with twelve pillar. The pillars are massive and ornate and are of different motifs. The shrine on the back wall has an ornamental facade with two figures of darpala. Within the shrine is a Jain tirthankara carrying chakra. (Sumatinatha) On the door jambs of the shrine are carved twenty four seated figures of twenty four thirthankaras. At the lower end two female figures are seen one on makara and other on a tortoise. The may be Ganga and Jamuna.
Thus important observations relating to various attributes of tourism product Ellora are presented as follows;

Ellora caves are unique instances of the cultural dynamics working towards a mutual synthesis and accommodation of the diverse impulsion of Indian spirit. It is an organic symbol of unity in diversity, underline the Indian culture.

The above description about the caves and the elements carved in the caves tell us the unique theme which is predominantly found only in Ellora caves is devotion. The artists who carved sculptures at Ellora have dedicated their entire life to their master, the master of universe.

The Myths, symbols, heroes of the religions associated with Ellora caves are different but yet they have much in common. The Yogis and Devis are equally close to heart of Buddhist, Brahmins and Jains. The celestial world of semi Gods, i.e. Apsaras, Yaksha, Gandharva, Kinnars, Vidyadhars is equally shared by all the religion. The common thing is the spirit of love.

The Cave 16 is a miracle of Indian rock-cut architecture. The rock cut technique of architecture at Ellora reaches its zenith in cave 16. It is considered to be the world’s largest monolithic sculpture. The entire shrine of Shiva is placed on 25 feet high platform. It needs a minute observation and skills which are inherited from the ancestors. Skill is very important here because there was no chance to correct the mistake if something went wrong as it is excavation and carving. The cave 16, Kailas cave is the crown achievement in Indian architecture.

**Ajanta as a tourism product**

Ajanta is the world heritage site declared by UNESCO. Ajanta is world famous cave temple. The caves at Ajanta are related to Buddhism only. These caves are famous for painting dating back almost 2000 years. The caves highlight various aspects of Buddhism which is one of the major religions in India and South East Asia.
General description of Ajanta

Location. It is located at (20°32' N and Long. 75°45' E). The caves are situated 101 km in northern direction from Aurangabad and 6.5 km from Fardapur, a small village. It is only 55 km from Jalgaon, a junction on Central railways. Ajanta is conveniently approached by motorable road from Aurangabad and Jalgaon. But many tourists prefer to come via Aurangabad because it is a base for other world Heritage sites Ellora.

The caves are excavated in Ajanta range of mountain. These are ranges of Sahayadri which gifts number of famous rock cut temples to Indian architecture. The caves are always located in scenic nature which adds beauty in the substance of the caves. Ajanta too is excavated in the semicircular scarp of a steep rock, which is 78 m high. The caves face a narrow sinuous gorge, through which river Waghora flows.

The selection of the spot was a result of artistic mind who was keen lover of nature. The caves are excavated for the monks as a rainy retreat (Varsh vasa). The valley in rainy season is at its best in beauty with the stream of river attains its utmost breath and volume, beautiful surrounding and completely away from the distractions of world.

The natural beauty, coupled with a perfect speculation, contributed to the serenity and calm contemplation of the monks was not an inconsiderable factor in promoting inspiration in the artist. All the above mentioned feature inspire the artist to excavate such a wonderstruck monument and gifted it to the world to propagate the religion through it.

The caves are horse shoe in shape and were linked with stream of river Waghora with stairs. There are total 30 caves some of them are unfinished. The caves are of two types chaitaya and vihara. In Ajanta five chaitya caves 9,10,19,26,29 can be seen. The rest are vihara or monastery. These caves are from two district phases of Buddhist rock-cut architecture. There is interval about four centuries. These caves are from both Hinayana and Mahayana type of Buddhism.
History of Ajanta Caves:

Ajanta lies in the Vakataka Empire, close to major trade route, cutting across the country from east to west. Wealthy traders and merchants used to move along this route. They have begun to break journey of Ajanta. The traders and merchant contributed in various ways towards decoration and expansion of the monastery. It aimed in gaining spiritual merit and as a part of success. The caves of Ajanta were excavated during the time of Satavahana (225 BC to 225 AD), the Vakataka (250 AD to 450 AD), the Gupta (320 AD to 500 AD) and Chalukyas (550 AD to 757 AD). Satavahana were considered as the lords of the Deccan and ruled present maratha country with their capital Pratisthana. It reached to zenith and its glory under Gotamiputra Sin Satakarni (72-95 A.D) and the earliest caves were carved in this period. The Deccan after the decline of Satavahana came under the Vakatakas with the capital Vatsagulma (Basim). Some of the most important excavations of Ajanta were executed during the time of Harisena (475-510 A.D.) and Varaheva the minister of the Vakataka king. Harisena dedicated cave 16 to the Buddhist sangha (475 - 500 A.D.). The Cave 17 was a gift of a prince feudatory to the same king.

Vakataka had matrimonial alliance with Gupta and thus Gupta impact on art and architecture is clearly seen. The glorious reign of Vakataka and Gupta is mirrored in social life of the area and period. There were change in tastes and fashions of the people. The simple life of the Satavahana period became rich and complex under the Vakatakas. Davalikar M.K. writes in this context, ‘In the world of Kalidasa which is reflected in the contemporary art and literature. It is only this unprecedented prosperity which would have made possible the artistic creations such as those at Ajanta which we admire today. The monuments of the Satavahana and the Vakataka-Gupta period bear eloquent testimony to this prosperity of which the murals at Ajanta are the crowning glory.'
It is of interest to note that the Chinese Buddhist travellers Hiuen Tsang and Fa Hien refer to Ajanta in account of their travels. Till the beginning of 19th century, these beautiful caves were completely unknown to the world. Ajanta caves were first discovered by British Officer in 1819. In the next hundred years, many people set out on the expedition and collected rich and authentic information about these pristine caves. Noteworthy endeavours were put in by several western art lovers like James Alexander (1834), James Fergusson (1843), Major Robert Gill (1857), Mr. Griffith (1896), Lady Harringham (1911) and John Marshall in 1928.

**Peculiarity of Ajanta caves**

Ajanta caves, a world Heritage site, located near Aurangabad attracts significant amount of tourist from all parts of the world and especially from the countries who has Buddhism as one the religion. The painting and sculpture and architecture of Ajanta are of Buddhism. Ajanta occupies a unique position among the monuments of India by superb symphony and architectural form, sculpture and painting. It is a site famous for view of three different aspects of culture. They are painting, sculpture and architecture.

In the painting world, Ajanta painting holds a very important place. The mural of Ajanta caves are one of the most vibrant, exuberant and vivacious murals in the world.

**Architecture at Ajanta**

The development of architecture is seen through two types of caves Chaitya or Vihara and Stupa.

**Chaitya** - Chaitya is excavated as imitation of structural from. The architecture of Chaitya is important. The most important part of the Chaitya hall is its facade which consists of screen. With a door way and a prominent arch window through which light is admitted in the hall.
There are five Chaitya halls at Ajanta, out of these two belongs to Hinyana period. They are cave 10 and 9. Cave 10 is oldest Ajanta group. It dates back to 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. There is no such sun window in other caves in Ajanta. It has a great semi-circular opening. The ceiling show great resemblance to wooden forms and the Stupa is simple.

The Chaitya cave 9 at Ajanta is from 1\textsuperscript{st} century B.C. and shows a sun window or Chaitya arch in the shape of semi circle and curve is more elaborate.

In the second phase which began some three centuries dates to 5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The Buddha image and lavish sculptures were introduced in this Mahayana Phase. Later development is seen through cave 19, and 26. The cave 10 of Ellora was remarkable as two new elements introduced in Chaitya architecture. As introduction of human faces in horse-shoe window and Buddha images in sanctuaries either seated or standing on the facade.

**Vihara** It is a residence or dwelling for monk some time it is with veranda opening into a big or small central hall with cells in the side-walls for habitation and mediation.

Both the examples of earliest and later development are found at Ajanta. The earlier vihara at Ajanta are cave 30, 8, 12, and 13. Cave 30 is very small. Cave 8, 12 and 13 have no pillars, absence of Buddha image, false window above cells.

Mahayana vihara at Ajanta are cave 11, 7, 6, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20 belongs to 450 to 550 AD. Cave 27 and 29 and 1 to 5 are from 625 A.D to 642 A.D. These caves belong to the Gupta and Chalukyan rulers.

Mahayana vihara is merely a dwelling for monks without a chapel attached to it. The Mahayana, who had started worshiping Buddha in the form of icon so image of Buddha and vast pantheon was created under foreign and Hindu influence, began their portrayal in store and other media. On the walls of cave are seen a number of god and goddess of Buddhist
pantheon as well a number of panels depicting the Jataka stories about the previous lives of the Buddha which brought life. In vihara caves 1, 2, 6, 16 and 17 the painting of Ajanta school attracts tourists and artists.

The later halls thus present a definite style of architecture, more flexible, sophisticated, and plastically ornate, than any which had hitherto prevailed. Much of this was brought about by the cultural sublimation which had developed in the consciousness of the people themselves whose experience had now become more matured; they were no longer mere imitators but had acquired a reasoned aesthetic sense. The Ajanta Mahayana rock-cut monastries display evidences of a growing appreciation of architectural values, and mark a distinct advance in the art evolution of the country.\textsuperscript{52}

**Stupa** In the Buddhist cave architecture stupa is an important aspect. The stupa developed according to the phase of Buddhism. In Hinya Chaitya cave 10, 9 the stupa is simple with circumambulation passage.

The stupa of 19 is with crowded sculptures and decorative motifs. It has assumed a definitely cylindrical shape. The stupa of cave 26 is lavishly carved with sculptures. The whole of the base of the stupa is covered with innumerable sculptures. A seated figure of Buddha on elephant and lion throne with his one foot below (pralambapada asana) is carved on stupa. On the two sides of Buddha are figures of flying gandharvas.

**Pillars**. In the beginning, Ajanta cave excavation the pillars were absent later pillars was simple. Then they were made of different shapes square, octagonal. Development of pillar took place in Mahayana phase like pillars with various shape and motif like pot and foilage (Ghatpallava), amalika etc. Painting on pillars are also available at Ajanta.

Structure engineering are owe struck by the sheer brilliance of the ancient master.\textsuperscript{53} Architecture reflecting through these elements is the best example of perfection of the sculptors and architects.
Ajanta Sculptures

The Hinayana phase was simple excavation in which chaitya and vihara were simple. The image of the Buddha was absent as Buddha was always represented symbolically.

After the rise of Mahayana sect and after the influence of the Hindu Bhakti cult encouraged and fostered the new tendency of image worship. It affected Buddhist art greatly. Mahayana activity had greatly increased under Gupta due to matrimonial alliances of Gupta with Vakataka resulted in impact of Gupta art in Ajanta sculptures. Gupta sculptures are characterised by a beautiful figures, a graceful pose and a charming expression.

Sublime idealism, combined with a highly developed sense of rhythm and beauty characterise the Gupta sculptures and there are vigour and refinement in their design and execution. The Buddha and other images of Ajanta show all the above mentioned qualities for example, Buddha's face shows the quality of serenity charm and great dignity. The faces of all the sculpture carved are very expressive. They show love and compassion. To elaborate this Gupte R.S. and B.D. Mahajan describe the expression of sculpture of Buddha as, "The faces are radiant with spiritual ecstasy, and the smiling countenance with downcast eyes adequately conveys the divine compassionate love (Karuna) of Buddha for all beings. It is to the Guptas that we owe the perfect visual image of the Buddha type of being, which has rightly been considered the greatest creation of the Indian artist. Some of the Ajanta Sculptures too reflect the above quality of compassion, smile, and spirituality. The most important among these are Naga figures, figure of Hariti and Panchika, Mahaparinirvana of Buddha, temptation scene of the Buddha etc.

The sculpture of the Nagaraja and Rani on the facade of cave No 19 though partially damaged still look beautiful. The temptation scene in cave 26 is very well executed. Every figure in this panel is beautifully cut.
The Mahaparinirvana of Buddha in the same cave is magnificent. The large of friezes, facade, pillars, capitals are rich in variety of their motifs and show great skill on execution and thus the sculpture of Ajanta is truly of Gupta tradition.

**Paintings at Ajanta**

Indian painting is as old as epic. A number of references are made to painting in Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Vishnudharmottaram distinguishes the kinds of painting appropriate to temple, palace and private houses. It applies the theory of Rasa to painting. In it the paintings are classified as Satya, Vainika, Nagara, and Mishra and Dr. Commaraswamy interpret it as true, lyrical, secular and mixed. The Vishnudharmottaram lays stress strict adherence to canonical proportions in the portrayal of feature and limbs. Expression must be given to the movement of life (Chetana). It considers the knowledge of dancing necessary for a painter. All this is seen in the painting of Ajanta without which the artist would not be in a position to portray various panels highlighting performing arts at Ajanta.

According to Vatsyayana’s kamasutra six canons are required for painting (i) Rupa -Bheda- the distinction of form and appearance (ii) Pramanam- measurement, scale and proportion. (iii) Bhava-portrayal of sentiment and expression. (iv) Lavanya Yoganam- realisation and grace or beauty. (v) Sadrisham- likeness or resemblance (vi) Varnika-bhanga- the proportion of colours. The entire canon has been strictly followed in Ajanta painting.

**Technique**

The Technique used was very simple but it required a lot time and patience and most important skills. The surface of the stone was kept rough and prepared by coating of potter's clay, mixed with cow dung, straw and animal hair, fine rock powder. After applying this for thickness of half an inch to two inches, it was coated with a smooth, fine white lime
plaster. This plaster was medium for painting. The artist laid out their composition on damp wall of white plaster. They used red cinnabar to outline the pictures boldly and then defined the subjects with an undercoat of grey. For colour they used red and yellow ochre, tettavete, lime, kaolin, gypsum, lamp black and blue Lapis Lazuli. Only Lapis Lazuli was brought from out side. The blue colure was bright and was absent in earlier painting. All the basic colours are locally available. The binding medium has generally been identified as glue. Once the whole wall was completely coloured a brown or black line restated the drawing to finish the composition. A last burnishing with a smooth stone gave a rich lustrous surface. The colours were natural and water soluble. They consist of purple, brown, yellow, blue, white, green, red and black.

The artists worked in the dim caves by light reflected from outside by metal mirrors.

**Period of Painting**

As of the architecture and sculpture the painting too falls under two distinct periods. The activities at Ajanta might be stopped in between for almost three hundred years because of insurgence of Hinduism in the area. But then again it started.

The earlier paintings, the specimens of which have survived on the walls of 9 and 10 are from 2nd-1st century B.C. It was at par with the contemporary tradition of painting. The costumes of the figures especially the head gear and ornaments are similar to bas reliefs at Sanchi and Bharut.

Even these painting demonstrate an appreciable maturity, indicating considerable practice behind them, and surpass in excellence the contemporary plastic art. The painting from the earlier period were well defined depicting the world and the figures were well drawn, is full of life, and rich ornaments, the noteworthy point is some of the painting still survive.
The second period of painting started in about the 4th-5th century, it coincide with cave excavation and continued for next two-centuries. The earlier phase is associated with Vakataka dynasty. It was the time when painting reached the topmost position in art. Some good panels exist in cave 1, 2, 16 and 17 and even most of unfinished cave also contain painting from this period. Many artists from different regions worked at Ajanta, many authorities worked for it; still they maintain an exalted height and enthral the spectator by their rich beauty, superb expressiveness, colour scheme, balanced and effective composition, fine shading and highlights. All the above qualities bring plasticity in the painting. It also provides suppleness and sensitivity in modelling of the figures.

The bold outlines, delicate and artistic painting produced women with beautiful bodily features and in various poses and moods. These painting are highest art standard of painting.

Themes used in Ajanta caves

Ajanta painting is intensely religious in nature. As Ajanta is Buddhist caves the subject matter of painting revolves round the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and Jataka stories.

These paintings deal with themes impregnated with a philosophy of life very different from the various point of view of one present age, it is important, in seeing them, to understand the atmosphere of the time in which they were painted, the secret of their workmanship and the implications they have for the whole later tradition of the art of India after the early medieval period, in fact for the whole Asia. Ajanta had exclusive thematic goals and doctoral terms of references. The Ajanta style of painting is unique, a poetic dynamism set in motion. To this place of worship came many pilgrims during the years. Among them were also artists who carried their impression back to their own lands. The impact Ajanta had on them can be seen in caves, monasteries and paintings spread all over Srilanka, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, China and even Japan.
The Ajanta style of painting gave birth to new opening in the hands of the foreigners who came to share the same faith. As a prelude to mural painting in the whole of South-East and East-Asia it remained the parent both in technique and content. With inspiration from Ajanta, painting became the visual vehicle, sometimes carrying mainly itself as also Buddhism but more often carrying both to far away places as great art is contagious. The painting of Ajanta is masterpiece and it acted as a school of painting which inspired many artist and provided guide lines and all this resulted in emergence of new style of painting.

Ajanta painting is an example of Indian art. Benjamin Rowland noted in his work, “that the Ajanta cave painting illustrate the development of Indian Buddhism from the decoration of the earliest chaityas dedicated to Hinyana theme to the latest in the series entirely devoted to Mahayana ideals”.

The subject matter of the painting as of most of the surviving example from Ajanta is the various lives and incarnations of the Buddha and the Jataka tales. As in Flemish Renaissance painting, the stories are richly depicted in the setting of the artist’s world. The whole mood is one of life and activity and calligraphic lines give a flowing action to the contours of the figures, whose hand positions are most expressive. It may consider that Ajanta was university for teaching of Buddhist faith.

The paintings mostly depict the stories of the Buddha’s past lives as described in the Jatakas and Avadanas, in executing them in painting the artists very naturally depicted the contemporary life. In the words of Rothenstern, “On the hundreds walls and pillars of these rock carved temples a vast drama moves before your eyes, a drama played by princess and sages and heroes, by men and women of every condition against a marvellously varied scene, among forests and gardens, in courts and cities, on wide plains and deep jungles, while above the messengers of heaven more swiftly across the sky. All these emanates a great joy in
surpassing radiance of the face of the world, in the physical nobility of men and women, in the strength and grace of animals and loveliness and purity of birds and flowers and woven into this fabric of material beauty, we see the ordered pattern of the spiritual values of the universe. Thus it is the vision of the living world that the artists of Ajanta present and hence the painting constitute an illustrative documentary on the contemporary life.

Though painted for religious purposes, the murals of Ajanta bear rather a secular than religious message. Here even more vividly than at Sanchi, we see the whole life of ancient India in panorama. Here are princes in their palaces, ladies in their harems, coolies with loads slung over their shoulders, beggars, peasants and ascetics, together with all the many beast and birds and flowers of India, in fact the whole life of the time, perpetuated on the dim walls of the caves by the loving hands, of many craftsmen. Everything is gracefully and masterfully drawn and delicately modelled.

The religious depiction is related to Buddha and Bodhisattvas and Jataka stories which convey the moral message to the viewer. But in case of secular a varied topics were covered in the painting of Ajanta. The daily life of the common people found a place in Ajanta caves as of kings and queen. A variety of flowers and birds are also painted with the theme itself. It gives a glimpse of tradition of early Indian mural painting.

The murals of Ajanta joining influenced painting tradition in Ceylon china and other countries consequently Ajanta is called as the “palace of Asian Art”. The painting of this period also throws considerable light on the socio-economic conditions of deccan, woman’s place is generally inside the house, where she is shown behaving quite freely with her consort, but in court scene she is generally represented in bashful mood which is the dark princess is not looking towards her consort but in another direction showing a certain modest aloofness when appears in public. The central idea common to both Hindu and Buddhist though of the time that the world
is influx, is symbolised in art. The large painting full of teeming life becomes a miniature cosmos. In it the fluid brush strokes create colour, energies, rhythms and patterns which metamorphically suggest the stirring actions of the human comedy. The linear narrative is emphasised by expressionist gestures to dramatise the postures of various people, from princes to paupers, lovely queens and their sensuous charms which makes some of the pictures in Ajanta one of the most important achievements of India’s creative genius. 

Ajanta offered the painter an unlimited area to paint where they have unlimited scope for depicting the whole gamut of human life from birth to death, men, women and children all stations of life, from the king to the slave. The depiction from rich to beggar is also done with saint with the sinner. The various emotions too depicted in Ajanta painting like sublimity, coarseness, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, triumph and tribulation, compassion and ingratitude, pageantry and poverty, longing and death etc. The aspects are carved with intense religiosity. The paintings at Ajanta are mirrors of the contemporary life seen in palace, court, town, city hamlet and hermitage. These are settlement and the life is skilfully craved in Ajanta painting.

They are the illuminative documentary on the belief and usages, dress, ornaments, musical instrument utensils and weapons including modes of warfare. The painting presents us the figure with rich ornaments, heavily dresses. The war scene in various panels depict the weapons used, palace scene will give an idea of musical instrument used etc. Ajanta painting also shows people of different nationalities and races. Ajanta offers a glimpse of heavenly world through the pictures and gods and semi divine beings like Yaksha, Kinnars, Gandharva (divine musicians and Apsaras (heavenly dancers).

For the student of art and architecture Ajanta painting offers vast topic to study such as architecture reflected in the form of palaces, temples, city gates etc. In this connection Mitra Debla writes, the remarkable array of the varieties of temple, palaces, pavillons, city gates, ramparts, huts,
stupas and monastries from a precious mine of information to the student of architecture. Ajanta artists used skill as no frame divides one scene from the next but they blend one into another, the minor figures and the pattern skilfully leading the eye to the contest figures of each scene.

There is no perspective, but an illusion of depth is given by placing the background figure some what above those in the foreground. The effect of this convention is rather like that of a photograph taken with telescopic camera, and makes the figures stand out from the flat wall as though coming to meet the observer. Religious zeal and ardour and noble qualities of the heart such as sympathy for the oppressed, charity towards the indigent, mercy even involving personal sacrifice by the bestowed, love for entire creation, human beings as well as animals even reptiles are most effectively delineated the art of this period –Ajanta. The painting all on the ceiling are essentially decorative in character and open up a panorama of endless patterns woven with flowers plants, fruits, birds, beast and human and semi divine beings all permeated with naturalness freshness and grace and bearing the stamps of an unerring command over form.

The animal life too has been portrayed in great variety. Horses and elephants, bulls and lions, wolves, dragons, and monkeys are painted wall in different Jataka stories. Parrots, ducks, geese, cranes and doves are there to accompany. The plants e.g. are Ashoka, Fig, Sal, Banana, Pomegranate and Mango can be seen in their natural surrounding in palace gardens.

The painting on the ceiling of vihara is different than that of wall the arrangement consists of a number of rectangular panels filled with decorative motifs framed by smaller sequences with representations of fruit and floral forms some motifs are repeated which gives a effect of printed textile.
Thus not only the daily life but Ajanta exhibits the celebration, the orchestra conducted by women is seen at many places and female musicians are seen playing on dholakas, cymbals brass bells, mridangas, drums and flutes.

**Significance of Ajanta Caves**

The rock-cut cave temples and monastic dwelling in Maharashtra are amongst the greatest creations of Indian architecture and sculptures. No other area in India has such a large number of them. There are over one thousand excavated shrines, large and small, complete and uncompleted. The painting at Ajanta is always praised greatly because of their masterly line but their remarkable plasticity should never be overlooked.\(^72\)

The painting and sculptures at Ajanta which was excavated and painted in 2\(^{nd}\) century B.C. and the work was in continuation with an interval to 7\(^{th}\) century A.D. reflects the life from the period. Coomaraswamy (1969) says that ‘the frescoes of Ajanta preserve an infinitely precious record of Indian painting. This is the picture of halcyon age, where renunciation and intimacy are perfectly attuned, an art at once of utmost intimacy and reserve. Every gesture springs in godlike fashion directly from the natural disposition of the mind: this is not the self-betrayal of innocence, but utterance in terms of a supreme courtesy. It is no importance that we know nothing of painters names, and the art is the art of race and not of any individual’. James (1965) writes that ‘behind Ajanta lay a romantic mysticism in which the spiritual and the divine permeated life in all it manifestations, experiences and modes of expression as the ordered pattern of the spiritual values and realities of the universe. So great has been the artistic achievement of Ajanta and so varied, being not merely religious but dramatic, emotional, romantic and lyrical, that artists throughout the Buddhist world in south. Nowhere else in Indian art but at Ajanta do we find such a complete statement of indivisible union of what in the west is referred to as sacred.
and secular art. Like the poetry, the music, and the drama of Gupta India, this is an art of ‘great course charming the mind by their noble routine’ – all different yet united reflections of a luxurious aristocratic culture. As Coomaraswamy so admirably phrased it, ‘in the splendid setting of the Ajanta wall paintings the ‘Bodhisattva is born by divine right as a Prince in world luxuriously refined. The sorrow of transience no longer poisons like itself; life has become an art, in which the ultimate meaning of life is not forgotten but a culmination and a perfection have been attained in which the inner and outer life are indivisible; it is this psycho-physical identity that determines the universal quality of Gupta painting.\(^{73}\)

**Brief Description of the selected caves at Ajanta**

There are 30 finished and unfinished caves at Ajanta. Out of it five caves are chaitya caves 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29. Remaining twenty five are vihara or monasteries. Almost all the caves were painted once. The caves are the most priceless treasure of Indian art. The caves, being richly decorated with painting, very soon attracted the attention of the scholarly world. It is apparent that many of the caves were formerly embellished with paintings on their walls, but large number have since been lost due to the ravages of time & vandalism presently only a few caves (1, 2, 9, 10, 16 & 17) contain paintings yet they are sufficient to give us fairly good ideas of the achievement and ancient Indian artist.

It is not possible to give description and each and every cave. Following are the important caves which represent the other caves at Ajanta. They are famous for painting as well as sculptures, and are chaitya and vvara type. The cave 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 19, 26 are the selected caves for brief description.

**Cave - 1** This cave is a vihara. It dates back to beginning and 7th century A.D. It consists of a verandah, a hall, group of cells and a sanctuary. It is one of the finest monasteries at Ajanta. The distinguished feature of this cave is its decorative facade which is supported by six columns of different
designs. The door jamb of the door leading to the main hall has Yaksha and mithuna figures. On the central panel of the right pillar, the assault and temptation of Mara is depicted. Other important panel representing three out of four ominous sights is a sick man, an old man and a corpse which made him to take renunciation. The ceiling of main hall is supported by twenty beautifully carved columns. The bracket capital of the columns contain various motifs, including scenes from the life of Buddha, worship of the Stupa, Yaksha, God of wealth and groups of figure including animals. On the two central columns of the right raw have interesting sculpture of four deer with one head. It looks consistent and realistic. On the either side there is cell, fourteen in number which were used as residential quarters for Buddhist monks.

A small pillared antechamber opposite the entrance door leads into sanctum. It has a large (colossal) image of Buddha seated in the vajra paryankasana posture in preaching attitude (dharma chakra pravartana mudra) on either side is standing chamara bearer (fly whisk) - On the right wall the is Vajrapani Buddhisattva, holding Vajra in his left hand, profusely ornamented, and exquisitely drawn. The crown is very delicate and artistic. Two female flying figures can be seen with the garlands.

The features of Vajrapani show great nobility and serenity of expression. One lady holding a flower may be designated as the consort of the Bodhisttava.

The door jambs of the shine are elaborately carved with scroll work, floral motifs, nagas, couples, female figures etc.

The cave contains some of the master pieces of the paintings in the world. The figures of Bodhisattva Padmapani are the chef-d-auvre of the artists here of large dimension they are yet weightless fully bodied forth in solid rounded plasticity, they are yet melting in karuna and seemingly in motion in the midst of a radiantly moving and rejoining world, they seem to have become stilled into silence before great realisation with eyelids lowered. They withdraw themselves into their own depths. 74
The features of every figure in Ajanta are painted very carefully. It is always full of expression. The body composition, the eyes especially, the final expressions are the point which is of high merit in the world of painting. In this panel the eyes of Bodhisattva is full of Karuna, it also expresses mediation required.

To the left of Padmapani who is holding lily, a dark beauty brightened by the highlights on the nose and the lips.

To produce the effect of perspective some times black dots have been added with same object, as can be seen in the representation of Great Bodhisattva. The artist has painted the head of Bodhisattva in golden brown and the long hair which falls on his shoulder in jet black. The effect of perspective is further enhanced by a deep green background, the darkness of which has been increased by the black dots.\(^{75}\)

In the same panel, to the left corner are divine musicians, Kinnars, below it a couple in hilly retreat. A pair of peacock is crying in joyful mood. The figure of Padmapani shows character and youth. The expression on the face is very refined. It is a glorious tribute to the artists of Ajanta.

A detailed from the Mahajanaka jataka depicted shows prince Mahajanaka surrounded by a bevy of beautiful women, crowned and bejeweled and thus representing the epitome of princely life and possibly reflecting contemporary patterns of dress and life during Gupta and Vakataka times. The facial features of the figures, with the highly arched brows and elongated lotiform eyes, resembles the treatment of the bodhisattva at the rear of the cave and may reflect an ideal based on contemporaneous concepts of beauty. The animated position and stances of the figures lend liveliness to the composition, typical of the jataka representation at Ajanta in general.\(^{76}\)

Cave 2 - Cave 2 is a vihara. It dates back to 6\(^{th}\) century A.D. At the either end of verandah is small cell with a pillared porch in front. The central compartment on the right porch has naga king with his legs crossed and
queen accompanying him. He is wearing crown and necklace. To one side is one male and female attendant. In the next two panels are seated Yaksha and two attendants. In the varandah, a number of paintings are present. Kinnars and others are seen. To the right Indra is seen with Yakshas. The figure of Indra is artistically drawn. Two of the figures are clad like hermits. Floral and geometrical designs are present on the ceiling of the varandah and noteworthy are flowers, fruits, birds, jewellery designs etc.

One interesting panel is of a Brahmin and Persian exchanging cups of wine. Their socks are with stripes which show the prevailing fashions in the contemporary world.

Another interesting panel which reflects the practices followed in the daily life are of snake charmer wearing a lungi (cloth around the waist). Movement is shown with a flying couple. The female pair looks attractive. She is wearing necklace of pearl with a sapphire in the middle, earrings and bangles. The male is wearing armlets and necklaces.

There is a painting of male with dhoti which again shows the pattern of costume used at that time.

The doorways of this cave are richly carved the windows on either sides was used as entrance to the pillared hall. There are 12 pillars in the cave. The carving on the central pillars of the front and back rows are very minute. Total ten pillars are present in the cave.

The back wall of shrine has a figure of Buddha in teaching attitude with Chauri bearer. Beautiful figure of nayikas with attendants are carved on the base of the capitals of the central pillars, which shows us the knowledge of performing art form, Dance. On the both the sides has chapel has scene of Hariti and Panchika. The very important representation of the nature of the children at the school has done in the panel adjacent to Hariti an Panchika panel, the scene seems to be class room where a teacher warning the students with stick, three attentive boys
in the front engaged in writing, next two boys are boxing and last a group of five boys are goading two rams to fight. It is realistic representation of backbencher in the school or college and truants.

This cave is remarkable for the survival of most of ceiling painting of the hall, antechamber, shrine, chapels and verandah with side porches.

The painting on the ceiling is in the form of compartment filled with a variety of designs including floral patterns, birds, fruits, flying figures, fantastic and comic figures and geometric and ornamental motifs. The painted bands of concentric circles with spandrels filled in with different motifs, of which the flying figures are exquisitely rendered. The painting on the ceiling of the shine is one of the best specimens of the painter’s art at Ajanta. No one can but be struck by the painter in the delineation of the processions of twenty three geese in various attitudes which form a band of the ceiling painting of the chapel to the left of the antechamber. The noteworthy painting are of thousand Buddha’s in various attitudes and three large sized Bodhisattvas.

The cave also depicts scenes from life of Buddha- the nativity (Birth of Buddha) an entire episode till the Buddha take seven steps immediately after his birth, one of the miracles performed by Buddha.

The famous jataka found in this cave two are Hamsa Jataka, Vidhurpandita Jataka, Purna Avadana and Ksantivada Jataka. Often, scenes at Ajanta take on an almost secular character, although all may be justified as being part of a jataka or other Buddhist context. A woman on swings belongs to a depiction of vidurpandita Jataka and may be identified as Irandati, the naga princess central to the story. Here highlighting technique used freely at Ajanta creates the impression of a glow over the surface of her skin. The narrow waists, full of breasts and hips of the women in the composition display the same feminine ideal that is found throughout most periods and styles of Indian art as is true throughout most of the Ajanta painting the three-quarter of facial view is
preferred in this composition, creating a suggestion of depth and volume for the forms. The brownish red background strewn with flowers serves as a conventionalized landscape in this and other scenes, but as in most of South Asian art, the artist depends on the figures to tell the story, to create sense of life, and to carry the mood; architectural and landscape elements are employed only to add a setting or a structure to the scene, not to create an ambience or to stimulate the physical world. One of the scene with king in angry mood and before him is kneeling figure of court dancer. The dancer frightened and is begging forgiveness of the king, her master. The dancer has an extremely graceful figure. Through the transparent costume that she is wearing, the suppleness and beauty of her limbs can be clearly seen; the curves of her body are drawn with great artistry and grace. Her kneeling posture, her beautiful dress and rich jewellery lend charm to her figure. Thus this painting of dancer is really a master piece of Ajanta Art.

In this context Dey Mukul writes ‘every one from king to the boy is arrayed in jewelled robes, necklaces and arm bands. The drawing is very sensitive but strikingly strong and true of life and there is a shy realism throughout, notably in the delicate fingertips, the speaking eyes and the head and the pearl ornaments.’

All these suggest that the long forgotten artists of early dates possessed freshness of vision and freedom from conventionality and indicate that they were perhaps the moderns of their days.

Cave-09 - The cave 9 is Chaitya griha with small entrance and two windows. It dates back to 1st B.C. A number of Chaitya arches are found above the small entrance door. Chaitya window is very beautiful. There are two huge figures of Buddha in the varada hasta sculptured on side walls of the façade.

The chaitya hall is supported by 21 simple pillars. On the pillars standing Buddha figures are seen painted. In the interior, on the front wall four
devotees are seen with garlands and with cloth round their heads. From the head-dress serpent hoods are seen peeping out. In the background a number of trees may be noticed.

The cave 9 is Chaitya of Hinyana period, so it is plain. The Stupa is hemispherical in shape. The cave 9 has two layers of painting, the earlier going back to the period of excavation and the later superimposed on it. The traces of the two layers of paining can be seen on walls and pillars.

The prominent among this is the painting of Naga king seated under a tree and another is behind Chaitya on the back wall in one scene; Buddha is seen in dharmachakra mudra along with Padmapani and Vajrapani.

Cave -10 - Cave 10 is the oldest chaitya of the Ajanta caves. It is datable to 2nd century B.C. It is larger than cave 9. The ceiling was originally carved with a network of curvilinear wooden beams and rafters. There are thirty-nine octagonal pillars in the cave.

The ceiling of the aisles is half arch and having rock cut beams and rafter in imitation of wooden prototype.

The painting is in bad condition but we can trace the procession of Naga raja, the Shyama Jataka, Shad-danta jataka. Noteworthy is the scene from Shad-danta jataka in which a royal palace, a hunter and his companions are shown to have brought the tusks. The King and Queen of Benaras seated on throne. The Raja is supporting the Queen who has fainted at the sight of tusks. The figure of Raja is superbly drawn. A number of female attendants are seen around them. One of them is fanning the Queen, the other with a water vessel. The third one is seen offering drinks to the queen and fourth messaging the soles of the queen’s feet. Every figure in the entire scene is drawn in minute details. All figures contribute the same feeling of pathos. The whole jataka is artistically and ingeniously drawn. This is one of the most important paintings at Ajanta. The perfect technique, the imagination shown in drawing details and delicacy in delineation of the figures indicates a glorious tradition in art, which had
been developing for centuries. The stupa is oldest and biggest. It has round base and is plain and simple and hemispherical in shape. Being Hinyana chaitya no Buddha figure is sculptured anywhere.

**Cave-16** Cave 16, one of the most beautiful monasteries at Ajanta, combining elegance and architectural vigour. It dates back to 5th century A. D. It has verandah. The hall is big and has twenty pillars. The pillars of the front and back rows have bracket capitals; the front aisle is longer than the others. The ceiling of the cave is carved as imitation of wooden rafters and beams, their ends again supported by the brackets dwarfs (ganas), musicians and flying couples. The figures are shown in varied moods, few groaning under weight, some serious, others taking it lightly and still others enjoying it.

One bracket shows a pair of apsaras. The female figure, comfortably leaning against male counterpart, who has placed her hands on the shoulders of her lord. She is in beautiful hair dress and wears necklaces armlets and ring on the finger. This couple is especially interesting and noted for their graceful poise and features.

The important painting of this cave is of dying princess. It is on the wall of the left corridor. The princess has fainted at the sight of the crown held by the servant before her. The entire panel has been painted beautifully. The servant holding the crown has shown with twisted eyebrows and eyes filled with tears shows that he is greatly perturbed. To emphasize, the expression of pathos the artist has placed highlights on his nose and lips. Another attendant wearing ‘angarakha’ is explaining something to the princess. His facial expressions show that he is very much worried. The female attendant with curly hair holding a fan is in very graceful pose.

The princess leaning against a pillow is supported from behind by a maid servant. The fingers of the maid are delicately drawn. In the parting of her hair a ‘bindi’ can be seen, which shows the influence of north on the Ajanta painting.
The princess is not able to bear the sight of crown and so her head is shown downcast with grief. Her lifeless hands, legs and her face show that she is almost unconscious. Another attendant besides her is with ‘bindi and veni’ (flower garland) round the knot of her hair. Surprised attendant is shown with one hand on the breast as she is struck by the condition of her mistress. With the other hand she is feeling the pulse of the princess. The painting of the dying princess is masterpiece of Ajanta art. Right of the forth cell-door is one of the most adorned painting, the flying figures. It is a couple. Both are in flying posture. The male figure is drawn in black and white, the bold outline of the figure; the limbs, fingers and the graceful curve are perfect. He is shown with tray of flower with leaves. The female figure is beautiful and graceful which suggest fast movement through the posture. The flying female is notable for her movement and modelling.81

Another important painting is from Mahasadha Jataka, Buddha in teaching attitude, palace scene and elephant procession etc.

The influence of Persia is clearly seen through one painting depicting early life of Buddha. The scene is of prince holding a wooden tablet with a pen and ink-stand. The cap which is worn by the prince is interesting.

The palace scene narrates the story of Buddha’s birth where in Raja Suddhodana and Rani Mahamaya is seen along with attendants who attentively listening to the conversation. Each of them is shown in a variety of poses. One of the female attendants is looking upwards. Her figure is sensitive and her face attractive. The foreign or aboriginal influence on features is also shown in a lady with a dark complexion, board and thick lips, short nose and wide nostrils. To emphasize the peculiar features of her figure the artist highlighted the nose, lips and chin. Another lady standing near the pillar has an oval face with refined feature and graceful pose. She is wearing a saree of some transparent material and is decked with jewellery. The expression on her face shows her calm and serene nature.
The door on the left leads to another apartment where the figure of Buddha is seen. He is conserving with a lady. Four maids can be seen behind the lady. They seem to very much anxious and worried. The panel reveals the intimate knowledge of the artist of the architecture of building of those times.

**Cave-17** - The cave 17 was excavated as the residence of Buddhist monks. The cave no.16 depicts the life of Gautama Buddha while this cave depicts the Jataka stories in which human virtues are inscribed.

The hall is square in shape and supported by twenty pillars. On the left wall of verandah is a wheel of Samsara, depicts scenes from rural life and live stock, the life of pleasure in towns, amorous couples etc. the wheel which is now much damaged. The left back wall of verandah shows a few scenes from Vishvantra Jataka. In the painting next to Vishantara some musician are seen. The next panel shows Madri, wife of Vishantara seated on his lap and he is offering her drink. Madri is looking at her husband with love filled eyes. The next scene shows Indra flying down to earth put Vishantara to test. He is accompanied by Apsaras.

Other important Jataka depicted are Shad-danta Jataka and Mahakapi Jataka. The most noteworthy panel for the students of architecture is a panel named, 'A king being tested' where in the roof and the cornices of the pavilion is beautifully painted showing all principals of architecture. The panel also depicts ladies with high order art of hair dresses. Next to Hamsa Jataka is some figures apsara and Buddha in dharamachakra mudra.

This cave which is full of Jataka, one of them is the story of the prince, devoted to Alms giving, ‘The Vishvantara Jataka’. In which the princess gives all his possessions, the horses and the chariot not even that his son. The last scene of the jataka is one of the master piece of Ajanta art. In this scene Jujuka, a Brahmin is seen at the court of king Sanjaya, the father of prince Vishantara and demanding ransom for the king’s grandson.
The figure of Jujuka drawn is a masterpiece of Ajanta art. His eyes show his enormous greed, his crooked eyebrows and nose, the lost tooth in front and the frightful growth of the beard give him a frightful aspect. Yazdani quotes on the figure, "the artist has delineated all the ugly features, the broken front teeth, the goat like beard, the bald forehead, the spiky hair at the back of his skull, the parrot like nose and the uncanny eyes combined with brightness which has come over his face at the jingle of money". The other noteworthy scene is from the story ‘The Buddha preaching In Tushita Heaven ‘in which Buddha is shown on richly carved chair in the teaching attitude. Procession of rajas and ranis and monks are shown on either side of Buddha.

In the adjacent panel, Buddha is seated at the centre on his beautiful and richly inlaid couch. Vajrapani and Padmapani are seen on left and right side respectively. On the right side of Buddha a number of foreigners are seen. The foreigners have beard and moustaches. Two of them wearing Persian caps. Tartars, Mongols, Scythians and Afghans are among the listeners. It shows that Ajanta artists got an opportunity to draw the figures of foreigners too.

One of the noteworthy paintings is of ‘Mother and Child’. Here Buddha is shown before his wife Yashodara and his son Rahula. The Buddha looks majestic in his long robe. His face is calm and serene. He looks full of love and compassion. The artist has drawn the figure of Buddha on a large scale intentionally to show his spiritual greatness as compared with ordinary human being. The Buddha is holding a begging bowl in his right hand. Yashodara is looking at her lord Buddha with love and sorrow. She is wearing only a lower garment and holding Rahul. Rahul is being goaded by his mother to demand form his father his ‘inheritance ‘. The rhythmic treatment of the different parts of her body, graceful pose and fine brush-work shown in her curves above her temples and locks spread over her shoulders,. This all features represent art of higher order which makes this fresco one of the finest portrayals of feminine elegance and the emotion.
The paintings at Ajanta are always praised greatly because of their masterly line but their remarkable plasticity should never be overlooked.  

In the shrine is Buddha in seating posture attended by well ornamented Boddhisattva . Yazdani describe this as, “the religious dignity of the sculptures of this vihara is in keeping with a sense of grandeur conveyed by its other adjuncts. These features combined with magnificence of its painting make it undoubtedly the finest monument of its kind in India and perhaps in the world”.  

On one of the pilaster is a very interesting figure might be a Yaksha or a Royal Guard. The figure is wearing a striped half-pant and very decorative belt with ribbon like loose ends hanging on the half pant. He holds a lotus in his hand and is inclined right. He is richly ornamented.

The other jataka found in this cave are Simhala Avadana, Mahisha jataka, Matripoksha jataka, the Sarabh Jataka, the Sutasoma Jataka, Mahakapi jataka, Hansa jataka, Shad-danta jataka etc.

‘The Great Miracle of Sravasti’, an episode related Buddha’s life is found in this cave.

The scene of high level of art is ‘A toilet scene’ . This scene is on pilaster. The figure of the black princess is superbly delineated. The suppleness of her body, the delicacy and firmness of her limbs, the graceful contours of her forms are all very deftly executed. The beautiful curve her body forms as she bends forward a little to look into the mirror, very well delineated. The princess is wearing three necklaces of pearls, which looks very real. The highlight shown on her chin, lower lip and nose have made this painting exquisite. The Princess is scantily dressed as compared to the all distinguished ladies of Ajanta. The dressing shows the grace of her form. The princess is looking into mirror which she is holding in her left hand with her right hand she is applying cosmetics.

The ceiling is also highly decorated with animal, human floral and geometrical patterns. Dwarfs with musical instrument can be seen on
pillars Lions, Horses, Deers, Elephants, Geese, Birds along with Globins, Ghosts, Goats and Fishes decorate the ceiling. Composite animals are also seen. The artist’s imagination has been given free rein here. One is really wonderstruck by the achievement of the master artists, the variety of the subjects and the power of imagination with which they have painted the cave no.17.

**Cave 19** - Cave 19 is a beautiful chaitya cave. It is small but well proportioned chaitya- griha. It is one of the most perfect specimens of the Buddhist rock-cut architecture. It is probably from 5th century AD. The chaitya cave has votive stupa. The imitation of wooden architecture is seen through the stone ribs of the vaulted ceiling. In the right hand chapel figure of Buddha is seen along with the Naga figures with folded hands. Flying couples are carved above. The cave 19 has extremely beautiful façade. On the left wall is the panel of Naga king and queen. The Naga king is seated in ardha paryankaasana. Seven serpents hood is above his head. He is wearing a crown and necklace. The Naga queen too has a serpent hood over her head and a lotus flower in her left hand. Behind the Naga king Chauri bearer is standing in Vismaya mudra. This is one of the best sculptural panels of Ajanta.

Other important relief on the façade includes the representation of nagaraja accompanied by his two nagini consorts. One of the loveliest images at Ajanta the central figure implies by his regal pose the comfortable and elegant attitude of the Ajanta patrons and sculptors towards the stately life. This cave is also famous for torana, lotus pattern and many figures of Buddha in different poses-mudras.

The Stupa of the cave 19 resembles like Chinese pagoda. The chaitya window is elaborately carved with Yaksha as dwarpalas. They are shown with curly hair and wearing crowns, wristlets, armlets, necklaces and griddles. The Buddha figures are also shown in friezes. There are also a number of mithuna figures.
The capitals of the pillars present inside the cave are lavishly carved with Buddha figures and the triforium is richly carved. The capital has flying figures, horses and elephants. These friezes are vigorous and true to tradition of Gupta art. The stupa is decorative and cylindrical in shape. On the Stupa Buddha shown seated cross legged in dharma chakra mudra. The umbrellas are three in number and the third reaches to the vaulted roof. A number of paintings of Buddha, mostly sitting and geometrical and floral design seen on the wall and ceiling of the aisles. On the left wall is a painting of ‘Mother and Child’.

**Cave 26** - This cave is Chaitya cave and is dateable to the 7th century A.D. the whole façade of the chaitya is profusely carved with Buddha figures in different attitudes. There are figures of dwarfs, kings and queens. The Chaitya window is profusely carved. It had two Yaksha in full relief on both sides wearing jewellery and with curly hair. The doorframe of the cave is richly carved with mithuna figures. There are two chapels at both ends of the verandah. On the left wall is the scene of Buddha’s Mahaparinirvana is full relief. Buddha is lying on his right side with head reclines on a cushion. The sculptures depicted the natural things through the cushion too. The cushion gives the impression of being pressed by weight of his head and folds can be clearly seen. The mourners are seated in profound grief seated below. Near the cot of Buddha, a stand, an oil-can and flower may be noticed.

Above the figure of Buddha Gods and Goddesses can be seen welcoming Buddha to heaven. This is one of the best sculptural panels of Ajanta. Buddha figure in Mahaparinirvana is of huge dimension.

The artists of Ajanta have succeeded in capturing this mood and in this they are true to the great art traditions of the period. The ability of catching moods of their subject makes the sculptors and painters of Ajanta so great and it was the time when they reached perfection in figure drawing and figure sculpture.

It was probably during the Guptan era that the colossal image of the
reclining Buddha was created. Mention of an oversize sculpture done by the Guptan – Mathuran artists Dina is found in the literary records. While extant example of the huge sculptured reclining Buddha are present at Ajanta. In the cave 26 both the icon of the dying Buddha and the narrative details of the event are sculptured while the important rear wall is occupied by a large Stupa with a Buddha at its front. In contrast to the large stone dying Buddha, the mourners in the background and in front of the couch are considered smaller. Another panel showing equal quality is, “Temptation Scene’. It is executed in masterly fashion. The Buddha is seated under the bodhi tree in Bhumisparsha mudra. Below are seen the daughters of Mara in various seductive attitudes. They look youthful and pretty. They are scantily dressed and expose their full bodily charms in order to tempt Buddha with the help of dance and music.

They are very heavily ornamented and their hairstyles are extremely attractive. Mara is standing on their right, on the two sides of Buddha is seen the army of Mara attacking Buddha. Demons and all kinds of fantastic creatures are seen in the army of Mara.

There are 21 panels showing figures of Buddha in Pralambhapada asana and in dharma chakra mudra. The stupa has as many as fourteen Buddha figures in varada hasta mudra on the base. On the stupa in front is a seated figure of Buddha in Pralambhpada asana on lion throne. The torana above him is extremely decorative and three-tiered. On the anda a part of stupa are carved the flying apsara.

Thus important observations relating to various attributes of tourism product Ajanta are presented below-

The caves of Ajanta are being adorned with sculptures and their walls covered with painting illustrating Buddhist legend.

Ajanta is site famous for view of three different aspects of culture. They are painting, sculpture and architecture.

Architecture reflecting through the elements like Chaitya (Cave 9,10,19
and 26), vihara (Cave 1,2,16 and 17) and pillars (in these caves, Chaitya and viharas) are the best example of perfection of the sculptors and architects.

It is observed that there is impact of Gupta art in the Ajanta sculpture. Gupta Sculptures are characterised by a beautiful figures, a graceful pose and a charming expression.

The Buddha and other images of Ajanta show all the above mentioned qualities for example, Buddha's face shows the quality of serenity charm and great dignity. The faces of all the sculpture carved are very expressive. They show love and compassion.

For example the figure of Buddha in sanctum of cave in 1, miracle of Shravasti,

The expression of the sculpture of Buddha when observed we feel that the faces are radiant with spiritual ecstasy and the smiling countenance with downcast eyes adequately conveys the divine compassionate love (Karuna) of Buddha for all beings. Other sculptures are Naga figures, figure of Hariti and Panchika, Buddha with his wife Yashodhara and son Rahula, temptation scene of the Buddha too reflect the above quality of compassion, smile and spirituality. The Mahaparinirvana of Buddha is magnificent creation of sculpture in Ajanta caves.

It is observed that at present only four caves preserved painting in good condition. (Cave 1,2,16 and 17) Ajanta painting theme are intensely religious in nature. As Ajanta is Buddhist caves the subject matter of painting revolves round the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and Jataka stories.

The painting at Ajanta present the whole gamut of human life from birth to death, men, women and children at all stations of life, from the king to the slave. The depiction from rich to beggar is also done with saint with the sinner. The various emotions too depicted in Ajanta painting like sublimity, coarseness, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, triumph and tribulation, compassion and ingratitude, pageantry and poverty, longing and death.
etc. These aspects are painted with intense religiosity. Thus the paintings at Ajanta are mirrors of the contemporary life seen in palace, court, town, city, hamlet and hermitage. These are settlement and the life is skilfully painted in Ajanta painting.

There is a display of vast drama of scenes in which princes, sages, heroes, men and women, animals, birds and plants are depicted.

The painting all on the ceiling are essentially decorative in character and open up a panorama of endless patterns woven with flowers plants, fruits, birds, beast and human and semi divine beings all permeated with naturalness freshness and grace and bearing the stamps of an unerring command over form.

The painting and sculptures at Ajanta is considered to be master pieces of both Buddhist religious art and of universal pictorial art. The painting in Ajanta is unique for the rich beauty, superb expressiveness, colour scheme, balanced and effective composition and fine shading.

In the sculptures as well as paintings of Ajanta, there is the same combination of the physically beautiful with the spiritual nature which is so characteristic of Indian concept of reality.
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