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THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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CHAPTER 2
THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Any worthwhile cultural pattern attaches great importance to the dynamism and vitality of social, political and economic growth (V.K.Gokak, 1994). Among the early cultures, the Greek and Roman cultural systems stood in addition, for the development of the rational, ethical and aesthetic faculties in man. In India, spirituality- not an anaemic but a dynamic and all embracing spirituality – has been the dominant strain in her culture from its very dawn. Ancient Indian culture stood for an infinite variety of symbols and rituals. The fine arts were valued in ancient India primarily for their capacity to reveal something of the beauty and sublimity of the Divine. Sri Aurobinda has brought out beautifully in the Foundations of Indian culture, “The representative Indian attitude, as expressed in the Vedas, was not one of an anaemic spirituality.”

India is the only country with the largest and most diverse mixture of tradition and culture. The fascinating nation is so enticing where the exotic monuments and enchanting destinations speak volumes about the tradition and culture of Indian people. India is home to many of the finest cultural symbols of the world which includes temples, churches, mosques, forts, performing arts, classical dances, sculptures, paintings, architecture, literature etc., Some of the prestigious and spectacular World Heritage Sites in India are the Hampi, Khajuraho, caves of Ajanta and Ellora, Konark Sun Temple, Taj Mahal, and Brihadeswara Temple in Tanjore.

The culture of India is one of the oldest in the world which is rich and diverse. Culture is everything in a particular society and Indian culture is no easy composite of varying styles and influences. Indian culture was moulded throughout various eras of history. It is a medley of amazing diversities and startling contradictions, but above all, it represents the multifaceted aspects of India as a whole. India is the birthplace of renowned
religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism, which have a strong prevalence and influence not only over India, but also the whole world.

India has managed to preserve its culture and traditions through the ages, all the while absorbing customs, traditions and ideas from both invaders and immigrants. Many cultural practices, languages, customs and dances are examples of this co-mingling over centuries. Thus, Indian culture is a composite mixture of varying styles and influences. It would not be an exaggeration to note that all diverse in nature encompass to form the culture of India. Very few countries in the world have such an ancient and diverse culture as India.

India’s cultural history of several thousand years shows that the subtle but strong thread of unity which runs through the infinite multiplicity of her life, was not woven by stress or pressure of power groups, but the vision of seers, the vigil of saints, the speculation of philosophers and the imagination of poets and artists, and that these are the only means which can be used to make this national unity wider, stronger, and more lasting.

2.2 ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN CULTURE

“Indian culture has a long and continuous history. It extends over 5000 years. India developed a way of life, which she modified and adjusted as and when she came into contact with outside elements. In spirit, however, it was quite in keeping with the indigenous doctrines and ideas. This accounts for the long and continuous period of Indian culture. It is this characteristic of Indian culture that enabled it to withstand many vicissitudes, and to continue to mould the life of Indians” (Murthi P. Kamath, 1976).

The most outstanding feature that has made Hindu culture a living force is the tradition of tolerance. Indian culture is primarily and fundamentally religious. The religious note generally permeates all the intellectual and artistic creations of the Hindus. Hinduism believes in Universal toleration and accepts all religions as true. The Hindu mind is all-embracing. This is seen in the word manavadharma or manavasamskriti or human culture which the Hindus gave to their culture. Indian culture is comprehensive and suits the needs of everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It has universal appeal and makes room for all. It has the modesty to admit the propriety of other points of view. This
idea has been beautifully developed in the Jaina theory of ‘Syadvada or the theory of may be’. According to this theory no absolute affirmation or denial is possible. As all knowledge is probable and relative, the other man’s point of view is as true as anybody’s. In other words, it suggests that one must show restraint in making judgements. This is a very healthy principle. One must know that the judgements are true only partially and can by no means be regarded as true in absolute terms. It may be likened to the story of the seven blind men “trying to make out the form of an elephant, by each feeling a different limb. They are convinced that the elephant is like a pillar, or a snake, or a hard substance, or a wall, or a brush with a flexible handle, accordingly as each in turn touches its leg, or trunk or tusk or body, or tail.” It is this understanding and catholicity of outlook that have been largely responsible for the advancement of Indian culture. This attitude has helped to bring together the divergent races with different languages and religious persuasions. And this spirit explains the existence of a common culture from the Himalayas in the North to Cape Comorin in the South.

From the earliest times, India followed a policy of ‘live and let live’. She was not averse to contact with foreign cultures. In fact, it is her contacts with the outside elements that have added to the richness and variety of her culture. Besides the earliest races like the Negritos, Proto-Austroloids, Dravideans and Aryans, who have contributed a good deal to her composite culture, India saw the advent of many foreign hordes like the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians or the Sakas, the Pahlavas or the Parthians, the Kushans, the Huns, the Gujars and others from the second century B.C. She welcomed them and absorbed their best elements in her culture. In the words of Murthy and Kamath (1976), “In medieval times, the advent of Islam into India created many cultural complications. For a time India stood surprised. But it is to the credit of Indian culture that it Indianised Islamic culture by absorbing the best elements. Today there are about seventy million Muslims living in India. It is gratifying to note that in spite of the political complications arising out of the secession of the predominantly Muslim provinces and their constitution into a separate State, India has successfully upheld her tradition or religious and social toleration by her unbending insistence on the secular character of the state and her stern refusal to convert into a Hindu nation.

India also gave shelter to the Jews and the Zoroastrians who were forced to leave their lands. They still live in India today quite in harmony with other communities by
pursuing their avocations without any let or hindrance. The same may be said of the Christians who are seen in Indian society since the second century A.D. Their numerical strength increased with the political domination of India by the European powers.

It is this spirit of accommodation that accounts for the continuity of Indian culture. As Pratt aptly remarks, “The tendency of Hinduism to absorb its children and the urge felt by its rebelling children to fall back into the family fold has been illustrated many times in Indian history. The process is going on today.” This has been the rock-bottom basis of Indian culture. “Humayun Kabir is correct in remarking that “today whatever is Indian, whether it be an idea, a word, a form of art, a political institution or social custom, is a blend of many different strains and elements” (Suniti Chatterji, 1966).

Yet another characteristic feature of Indian culture is its harmony with nature. Indian culture is vibrant due its incredible understanding of the nature of man and his relationship with other beings in the universe. The association of man with the bio-diversity is indicative of a healthy attitude towards nature. The same holds true of mountains and rivers, which are treated in a higher pedestal in Indian life. The influence of the majestic Himalayas in shaping the life of Indians is worth mentioning. Many holy places like Amarnath, Badrinath and Kedarnath are situated in the mountains. The rivers are also considered sacred and venerable. Indians have a strong belief that a dip in the waters of holy rivers wash off all sins. River Ganga plays an important role in the religious life of the Hindus. On the banks of the sacred rivers numerous religious congregations and celebrations are held drawing hordes of pilgrim tourists participating with lot of verve and devotion. Even trees occupy a significant place in the religious life of Indians, for instance, Aswattha or the pipal tree is revered in the modern day. The Bodhi tree under which Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment is worshipped and treated with awe and respect. The practice of ‘totemism’ i.e., worshipping trees and plants by considering them as ancestors was prevalent in India. Indian culture, thus takes into its fold all nature. Of course, Indian culture holds significance as a living culture. The present generation, taking inspiration from the strong foundation erected by the eminent personalities need to further broaden the spiritual heritage of nation.

“It is the “profound knowledge of ourselves” that mainly characterizes Indian culture” (Suniti Kumar Chatterji, 1966). All that there is in Indian culture of lasting value, is based on the deeper knowledge of man and the universe. The Indian word for culture is sanskriti,
from a root which means to purify, to transform, to sublimate, to mould and to perfect. As per belief it is discipline or sanskara that raises us to a higher status in life.

Drastic changes have taken place in the research methods as regards history, making the approaches more analytical and objective, and as a result more new evidences and elaborations have been employed to examine the past with rationality. Historians are more aware now about the socio-political ethics of recording history during early times. Without compromising on the authenticity and veracity, historians are able to contribute more to the social milieu (Romila Thapar, 1976). Modern Indian history has developed during the past two centuries. The distorted versions of history due to certain mindset and theories have bit the dust. Indian history has to overcome the colonial hangover and the controversies that surfaced because of it. India need to develop confidence to critically evaluate our historical aspects and culture. Romila Thapar has reiterated in her works that Indian ‘Sanskriti’ is beyond the advocacies of Sanskrit language. The essence of Indian culture is assimilated by many factors outside the ambit of Sanskrit language, literature and records.

“A peculiar type of culture and civilization, utterly different from any other type in the world, has been evolved among the diverse peoples of India” (B.N. Luniya, 1980). This culture has a fundamental unity. In spite of different languages, customs and political disunity, a uniform cultural stamp was printed upon the literature and thought of all the different units of India. There has been a basic unity of literary ideas, philosophy, conventions and outlook upon life throughout the country. The cultural unity and homogeneity is also reflected in the social ceremonies and the religious rites, festivals and modes of life which are the same in both, the north and the south. The sanctity of the family, the rules of the castes, the sanskars(for example, the Namaskaran sanskar), the rite of cremating a dead body, the cleanliness of kitchen, etc, are common to all the communities and sects. The Rakshabandhan, Dussehra, Diwali, Holi and Ramdan are celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the country mostly in a uniform way.

2.3 THE DIMENSIONS OF INDIAN CULTURE

“The two different sets of theories about the origin of culture are the idealistic and the materialistic. Both the theories recognize the part played by physical environment in the evolution of culture, though they assign varying degrees of importance to it. The
concrete element of culture, which is represented by physical environment and social conditions, may be more or less important than the ideational element (represented by ideas, theories and beliefs), but it is really that which gives local colour to a culture and thus constitutes the special national element. The common national temper and mind is the most important source of the common national culture” (S. Abid Husain, 1978). Amongst other sources are the new religious or philosophical movements which take their birth in the country from time to time, or the culture of people who have come from outside and settled in that country, or of those with whom that country has come into contact in war or trade and commerce. India’s national culture also consists of these two elements: the common temperament and outlook which constitutes the Indian mind and the intellectual influences of various movements and cultures which have been incorporated harmoniously with the national mind. Amongst these are included cultures which existed in India in the prehistoric period, those with which the country had a temporary contact, those which came from outside and made India their home, and lastly the revolutionary intellectual movements which developed in the country itself from time to time. Perhaps, the most prominent feature of India’s geographical configuration is the fact that, barring the mountainous regions of the north and the Eastern and Western Ghats of the southern peninsula, the whole country consists either of plains or low plateaus, watered by big rivers. Leaving aside a few cold regions, the climate in the entire country is temperate during one part of the year and hot during the other part. Likewise, the nature of the soil differs enormously from place to place, with the result that practically all kinds of vegetable and mineral products are available in the country.

“From time immemorial, agriculture has been the main occupation of the people in India. Under the influence of the physical features and forces, India’s economic life developed on an agricultural pattern and this had a marked influence on the shaping of her culture as a whole” (S. Abid Husain, 1978). It stressed the values of peace and constructive activity more emphatically than those of wars and destruction. Manifestations of this spirit can be met throughout the history of Indian culture. The influence of climate and economic resources on the material aspects of culture, eg. food, dress, modes of living, etc, is too obvious to need any discussion. No one would deny the fact that the material aspect of Indian culture is also moulded on the pattern of its physical and economic environment.
Thought has always had a high place in the scale of values in India’s cultural history. But, it was not purely abstract or speculative but emotional thought, i.e., not a mere conception of the universe but its direct intuitive apprehension in which the thinker finds himself steeped in love and reverence for the object of this thought. Such thinking is more religious than philosophical. That is why religious philosophy has always occupied a central place in India’s cultural life.

The cultural history of India can be divided into three periods: the ancient, the medieval and the modern. The ancient period in India begins about 5000 B.C and continues up to the end of the tenth century AD, the medieval period continues up to the start of the eighteenth century, and so the modern period is only about three centuries old. About a thousand years after the beginning of the ancient period, a national culture was for the first time established in India. This was the Vedic Hindu culture which came into being as a result of the interplay of the Vedic Aryan and the pre-Aryan cultures. After some time there was a reaction against certain aspects of this culture and Buddhism formed the basis of the new national culture. Although Buddhism had a deep influence over Indian mind, the culture based on it did not last as the national culture for any length of time. Its decay was followed by the rise of a new Hindu culture which was again the result of harmonizing many conflicting tendencies in the cultural life of the country. To distinguish it from the earlier Vedic Hindu culture, it may be called the Puranic culture. It the end of the ancient period, long before the advent of the Muslims, the cultural life of India had again become disorganized. But after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, the process of assimilation and fusion started afresh and by the time the Mughal period commenced the great edifice of a Hindu-Muslim culture, the Hindustani culture, had been erected.

Culture cannot be dissociated from the lives and daily activities of Indians. In the long period from the Bhakti movement of the Middle Ages down to the gaining of Independence, barring a few exceptions, the harmony that developed in the day to day lives amidst multi-faceted diversity of languages, castes, religions, sects, etc has eroded very fast. In the Middle Ages, this harmony was religion-cultural, the ideological dimension, and the Freedom Struggle, with its multifaceted struggle of national consciousness against British imperialism, transformed it into a united national political mainstream. Emphasising the intelligent social understanding of culture, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his ‘Discovery of India’, “Despite racial religious and linguistic differences of diversity, the life of Indian
people is connected to a single cultural spirit” (All India Peoples Science Network, 2002). Romilla Thapar says that the past is devoid of the presence of any homogenous religious community, which can be identified as Hindu. The pre-colonial society was so riven with sub-castes and local beliefs that it did not allow the emergence of a larger religious faith.

2.4 INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Art, is a very precious heritage in the culture of a people. “It is more so in India, where the story of art is as old as the history of the race- a panorama of five thousand years. The essential quality of Indian art is its preoccupation with things of the spirit. Art in India did not aim at objective presentation of the human or social facets of life. It was primarily the fruit of the artist’s creative meditation and effort to project symbols of divine reality as conceived and understood by the collective consciousness of the people as a whole. It is a vast, unending social and religious endeavour of devotees to depict the forms of the gods and goddesses they worshipped.

Any tourist desirous of understanding the real significance of Indian art should be prepared patiently to go to the length and breadth and savour deep of the symbolic meanings that make up a world of their own. “Indian religion does not yield its secret to one who only skims the surface; and of the same mysterious, secretive essence is the art of India” (Agrawala, 1976). The essential truth in the art of India is the tribute to the abstract and unmanifest power behind the material world, the primeval source of all things.

Agrawala (1976) enumerates four elements of Indian art for its theme, namely, the divine principles, the cosmos in its two fold manifestation of good and evil, man and the material world. The Indus Valley people were prolific in the arts of house-building, stone and clay statuary, bronze-casting, making of ornaments of gold and silver, and cutting of beads in various semi-precious stones like agate, carnelian, chalcedony, ivory-carving and weaving. The beautiful objects of domestic use that have been unearthed reflect the refined taste of their makers.

The symbolism of Indian art attained its highest expression in the Saranath capital, which is as much Buddhist as Vedic in the significance of its several parts. The tradition of folk art was supplemented in the Mauryan period by a court art of great vitality and technical competence. Mauryan art is notable for the bewildering variety of its
creations – there are pillars, railings, parasols, capitals, animal and human sculptures and several other motifs. It was during the Sunga age that sculpture and architecture witnessed a new efflorescence. Art was developed at many centre and the two great stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi give evidence of almost a continental planning. A similar art movement flowered during the Kushana period and Mathura emerged as the new centre of art. This art movement was the offshoot of the aesthetic endeavour that started in full swing. During the period of the Kushana emperors an exceedingly active school of sculpture and architecture flourished in Gandhara, that is, from Taxila to the Swat Valley.

During the Saka-Satavahana period, an aesthetic movement of great magnitude expressed itself in the form of several monumental stupas loaded with sculptures and bas-reliefs of exquisite beauty. The stupas of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda have produced art specimens of matchless beauty.

There was a grand upsurge of the national art during the golden age of the Gupta emperors. Gupta art is beautiful in both its outer form and its inner inspiration. Beauty and virtue seved as the ideals of the age. The best examples of Gupta images are the standing Buddhas from Mathura and the seated Buddha delivering the first sermon at Sarnath. Pottery constituted an equally noteworthy part of the artistic productions of the Gupta age.

The master piece works of Chalukyan art comprises the group of temples at Badami and Aihole. Both the sculpture and architecture of the kailasha temple at Ellora bear testimony to the creative spirit of the Rashtakruas. The Pallavas were great patrons of art, especially cave and temple architecture. In the southern region of Karnataka a distinctive style of architecture was developed during (1050-1300A.D) known as the Hoysala style. The greatest achievement of Hoysala art is the temple of Hoysaleshvara at Halebid, Agrawala, (1976) marks the climax of Indian architecture and its most prodigal sculptured magnificence. The Pala school of sculpture and architecture which Taranatha refers to as the Eastern school flourished in Bihar and Bengal from the 8th to the 13th centuries. It was a vital and creative effort which handled stone sculpture, architecture, bronzes and paintings with equal facility. Nalanda was its greatest and most active centre during the 9th and 10th centuries. The Khajuraho group of temples were erected under the patronage of the Chendela kings dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and the Jaina pontiffs.
The arrival of Islam in 1206 revolutionised Indian architecture. The Muslim monuments in India comprise mosques, mausoleums, palaces, citadels and cities. Their special features include the dome, arch, perforated Jail work, inlay decoration as well as artistic calligraphy.

The art of metal casting always received great attention in India and is of the highest antiquity. The southern school of Indian bronzes, which flourished between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, was of such aesthetic quality and creative abundance that it is regarded as representing that art at its best. One of the great creations of Indian art is Shiva Nataraja.

Indian painting has a history of over two thousand years and presents a comprehensive record of the religious and emotional life of the people. The art of painting was widely cultivated in the Gupta period and is best known through the paintings surviving in the Ajanta Caves, and also in the Bagh caves. “The artist in the Indian tradition had long been exploring man’s inner experiences and his creative energies. The aesthetic enjoyment in the Indian tradition was based on, and aimed at, an art experience which took place in the citta – the creative centre where the appropriate shape/form of an image was determined” (Pran Nath Mago, 2000). It was, therefore, necessary to activate the citta shakthi to revivify the experience, shape its rupa (form) and give it a nama (name).

Ancient India understood that art form change according to time and place, and according to the period of history and region. It also understood that there should be no reproduction of nature except as seen through ‘intuitive absorption of trance’. Art in India has been intimately concerned with the experience of ramanyata-the beautiful. It is said to release the flow of creative energies in a person’s being. It constitutes the core of the aesthetic state which vitalizes the individual consciousness of man. An artist’s work is an explosion of the human spirit- revealing beauty and bliss.

India is the custodian of valuable traditions, social, moral and artistic. The concept of traditional culture, introduces new complexities. It implies that what is traditional is always worth conserving. The tradition in folk art reflects the continuous play of line and colour which is native to the mind of India. Aurobindo Ghosh pointed out that “All Indian art is a throwing out of a certain profound self-vision formed by a going within to find out the secret significance of form and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one’s deeper
“Artists were drawn to folk-art not from a desire to identify with the ethos of the people who created it, but from the growing awareness of the beauty and characteristic vitality of the basic design elements in the innumerable variety of folk forms.”

The growing number of private art galleries in the metropolitan cities of India has played a significant role in the promotion of contemporary art. The Lalit Kala Academy and the State Academies subsidized by the government do undertake the promotion of contemporary art. Contemporary Indian art is yet to attain the level of greatness of ancient Indian art” states Pran Nath Mago. The creative scene and the art market in modern India, particularly in big cities, seem to have converged, with the blossoming of successful artists, seeking the limelight of the market place. However, it is not only art awareness that has contributed to the growing interest in ‘acquiring’ works of art. The market for contemporary Indian art has grown as a result of economic changes, an open economic policy and the growth of the private sector.

Indian art is an immediate expression of Indian civilization as a whole. It represents beliefs and philosophies, ideals and outlooks, the materialized vitality of the society and its spiritual endeavours in varying stages of development. To understand the art of India (Shanti Swarup, 1967), “it is necessary to estimate the formative influences that have gone into the moulding of the aesthetic sensitiveness of the people.”

A comprehensive approach is necessary to understand and identify the many examples of India’s past art that survive and continue into India’s historical present. The art of Dhulichitra (a form of painting with powders), as one of the many examples, can be placed in its cultural setting today as a continuity of a great tradition of the past (Clifford Tones, 1981).

2.5 CULTURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

Cultural tourism in India is the predominant factor behind India’s meteoric rise in the tourism segment in recent years, because from time immemorial, India has been considered the land of ancient history, heritage and culture.

The Government of India has set up the Ministry of Tourism and culture to boost cultural tourism in India. The Ministry in recent years has launched the ‘Incredible India’
campaign and this has led to the growth of cultural tourism in India. India has had many rulers over the centuries and all of them made an impact on India’s culture. The influence of various cultures can be seen in dances music, festivities, architecture, traditional customs, food and languages. It is due to the influence of all these various cultures that the heritage and culture of India turns out to be exhaustive and vibrant. This richness in culture goes a long way in projecting India as the ultimate cultural tourism destination.

Among the various states for cultural tourism in India, Rajasthan is the most popular. The reason for this is that Rajasthan is famous for its rich cultural heritage. The state is renowned for many magnificent palaces and forts which showcase the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan. The various folksongs and music also reflect the cultural heritage of the State. A large number of festivals and fairs are held in Rajasthan such as the Camel festival, Marwar festival and Pushkar festival. All these attract many tourists to Rajastan for they get to see the rich culture of the state.

Tamil Nadu is also famous for cultural tourism in India, for it shows the Dravidian tradition and culture. It has many temples which mirror the rich cultural heritage of India. Uttar Pradesh, too, has a lot of tourist places which also testify to the rich culture of the country. Cities like Varanasi, Allahabad, Vrindavan and Ayodhya in UP attract large number of tourists for they encapsulate beautiful vignettes of India.

Uttaranchal is also famous for cultural tourism in India. This state has the Himalayas which is called the ‘abode of the Gods’. Many ancient temples are found in the Kumaon and Garhwal region of the state.

Indian culture is a medley of amazing diversities and startling contradictions, but above all, it represents the multifaceted aspects of India as a whole (Princy Vij, 2008). The performing arts culture of India is a fusion of the arts, an aesthetic sensibility shared between music, dance, drama and literature. India, the glorious land of rich culture and heritage is known for ages for its unique performing arts, whether it be dance, music and theatre, or the modern forms like cinema. Indians, traditionally have always transcended the barriers in the way to cultural development.

The glorious past of India, as discussed at length in the present chapter, has ensured that the present and subsequent generations have plenty of historical and cultural
heritage to be proud of. The fascinating monuments and heritage sites in the country stand majestically today to retell their stories of joy, sorrow, courage and sacrifice. For centuries, people from different parts of the world migrated to India with their cultural attributes and traditions which later on synthesized with Indian culture giving birth to new facets of Indian cultural heritage.

The cultural heritage of India is a vibrant mosaic of lively and magnificent colors. Indian culture encompasses a unique blend of food, fashion, festivals, dance and music that spellbounds the four corners of the world with its euphoric nature.

India is a land of deep rooted heritage and history dating back to several centuries. The ancient heritage monuments narrate the multi hued heritage of India where one will find the saga of happiness, sorrow, love and betrayal, all woven together. India has a glorious past. It ensures that the present and subsequent generations have plenty of historical and cultural heritages to be proud of. It is pointed out that, the fascinating monuments and heritage sites in the country stand majestically today to retell their story of joy, courage and sacrifice, which are enchanting and singular (K.K. Sharma, 2004).

India is a large and populous country with a great past and a great tradition. It can boast of some four thousand years of civilized life, and as such it must be ranked as one of the great civilizations whose traditions arise directly from its past. For these reasons, for any foreigner a visit to India must have a profound cultural impact and in this first and broadest sense, all tourism in India involves at least an aspect of culture contact and is therefore potentially cultural tourism. The significance of this broad definition is at once apparent, as it will include the great majority of foreign visitors of the wealthier categories, able to stay in first class hotels and to spend considerable sums of money. Thus, cultural tourism in India has a part to play as a foreign exchange earner. On the other hand, the cultural interests of such visitors, by and large, are likely to be limited to visits to one or two major monuments only.

There is a second category of foreign visitor, who, though economically less uniform than the first but having very diverse interests. This category includes all those who come to India with some fairly explicit cultural interests in mind. Among those encountered or whose activities have been reported, several main varieties may be cited such as
a) The monumental heritage: art and architecture
b) The religious heritage
c) The natural heritage
d) Traditional arts and crafts
e) Music and dance
f) Gastronomy

(UNESCO Report on Cultural Tourism in India, its Scope and Development with special reference to the Monumental Heritage)

Cultural tourism in India has witnessed a lot of growth in recent years. For this growth to continue, the Government of India needs to take further pro-active steps and measures.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The cultural heritage of India dots a special place among the countries of the globe. With the passage of time, its significance is getting even more realized and recognized, to the extent of considering ‘culture’ as the mainstay of the largest democracy in the world. ‘Incredible India’ campaign has risen to a higher pedestal owing to the importance being given to the cultural symbols of the country. The socio-economic, political, legal, environmental and technological vibes of India are closely knitted to form part and parcel of the nation’s culture- where in lies its strength and indomitable spirit. In the realm of domestic tourism too, the diverse cultural expressions have played a great role. Indian art and architecture are classic representations of aesthetic beauty and time-tested creativity. The backgrounds of artistic productions are unique to India. Several inspirational and influential factors could be attributed to art and architecture of India. Yet, the humility and unflinched commitment to the society, which were the hallmarks of early artists are depreciating in the 21st century. This is not at all a good sign for the cultural elation and dignity of the nation.

On the basis of the pattern and direction of selective cultural adaptation that is taking place in India in the process of globalization of culture, and considering the historical features of its social structure and institutions it could be concluded that the Indian culture, whether local or national has sufficient resilience to succeed in preserving its cultural
identity and also work out a successful and creative synthesis between the global and the local, regional and national levels of cultural styles, forms, and practices.

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