Art plays an important role as a vehicle for ideas and principles of religion. The depiction of the deity in human form could be termed as a striving to give form to the formless and to make tangible which is intangible. Sculptural images are in fact aids to meditation upon the deity which will bring the devotee closer to the divine (Guy 2007). This urge provided basis for the sculpture making and temple building activity in North Konkan as well as in other parts of India.

Flourishing rock-cut activities in North Konkan during Satavahana period slowed down later due to political crisis, cultic confusion and other reasons. The traces of some stray activity in the period of this hypothetical hiatus could be noticed which is represented by two gigantic Buddhas at the entrance of cave no. 3 at Kanheri. The Mahasutasoma Jataka depicted on the stupa in cemetery area of Kanheri could be taken as the example of pictorial narratology of this transitional phase at Kanheri, along with Kanheri, intrusive sculptures were also added to Mahakali caves. Other evidences of rock-cut cave art during this Traikutaka- Maurya phase can be noticed at Magathane and Lonad. During this phase the Mauryas might have patronized the Brahmanical art activities in the North Konkan, examples can be given of Jogeshvari, Elephanta and Mandapeshvara. No remains of structural temples are found belonging to this period in the region. During 7th century CE the Chalukyas from Badami defeated the Mauryas and established their rule in North Konkan.

Specimens of sculpture, belonging to the Chalukyan rule, and the two succeeding centuries, are extremely rare. Ravages of time and human vandalism have spared very few sculptures to us. A unique wooden image of Tara discovered in the Kanheri caves or metal images belonging to the period under discussion is also considered.
According to Romila Thapar, ‘kingdoms of western Deccan maintained the historical role of acting as the bridge between the North and South and facilitating the transmission of ideas from one area to the other (Kanitkar 2013: 50). Occupying, geographically, an intermediate position between the North and the South. The tenth century onwards Gujarat, Rajasthan, Malwa also show their influence along with Karnataka on the art of North Konkan. Meanwhile around 9th-10th century CE Pala style of eastern India emphasizes its presence in North Konkan through few stray specimens of Buddhist association presumably through political and trade activities during Rashtrakuta over lordship. Though very few specimens of Jaina sculptures and architectural fragments are found in the region belonging to this period there are references in the literary records of the past and present time. They were actively patronizing temples.

If a sculpture of Brahma from Elephanta, Brahma from Walkeshvara, Vishnu from Nagaon (Alibaug) datable to the seventh century CE, and a few broken or damaged pieces from all over the region can be relied upon as furnishing indications, it seems the region belonged to the common denomination of the contemporary art of Karnataka. These cult-images, both Buddhist and Brahmanical, are characterised by same physiognomical type and form, the same precision of features that distinguish the stone sculptures of contemporary Karnataka. Of course the soft and smooth lines and curves and subtle plasticity of volume of the earlier period continued in subdued vigour.

**7th -8th Century CE**

### 7.1.1 Buddhist reliefs, Kanheri

The Kanheri caves were occupied for nearly a thousand years continuously starting from Satavahana period. After a halt back of few centuries, few caves were excavated in the later period, in 6th and 7th century CE. During this phase sculptures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas were carved on the walls of the viharas including the older ones.
Among them we also see goddesses like Tara and Bhrikuti, *Dhyani* Buddhas and eleven headed Avalokitesvara which indicate that the religion of the Buddha was undergoing a paradigm shift. It shows that the Vajrayana ideas were being introduced (Dhavalikar 2016: 89). It is very difficult to date these sculptures in the absence of corroborative inscriptions. But too stylized and extreme slender figures of Avalokiteshvara flanked by two goddesses (Fig.     ) could be workmanship of 7th century CE instead of 6th century CE. Dipa Tara (Fig.     ) also for that matter could be included in the same group.

7.1.2 Brahma, Elephanta

Four huge Vaishnavite sculptures, one image of Mahishasuramardini and another of Brahma (Fig. 3) were recovered from outside the main cave at Elephanta. Though mutilated they are wonderful evidence of skilled craftsmanship. It seems that Western Indian idiom is blended with other regional varieties evidently brought by itinerant artists. The Brahma of this group stylistically belongs to the later phase, i.e., Chalukya period while the rest of the sculptures could be attributed to Maurya period. All these sculptures are housed in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

This fragmentary image of four-headed standing Brahma has his *jatamukuta* adorned with jewels, wear necklaces, a torque, *yajnopavita* and the black antelope is seen on his left shoulder. Face is damaged. Arms and legs are missing. The Brahma is four-faced, pot-bellied, wearing *yajnopavita*, *Mrigajina* and *Jatamukuta*. His attributes emphasize his association with sacrificial rituals. He generally holds *shruka* and *shruva* but here both are missing as hands are broken. Unlike Shiva he is wearing chain like girdle. The pedestal found nearby this sculpture is having traces of two webbed feet each containing three claws of the goose. Remnants of goose are also significant in the identification of this image as Brahma.
The striated pattern which is more stylized than somewhat naturalistic rendering of Shiva’s *jatamukuta* at the Great Cave at Elephanta and Parel gives Brahma a later date than other Elephanta sculptures of the group. Considering its lean chiselled face, its jewellery it could be placed even after Elephanta caves (figures which are having broad faces, full lower lips) in chronology. It resembles hair style of some figures of Badami and Malegitti temples of early Chalukya period (Michell 2015: 66). Its south Indian flavor cannot be denied. Again the inscription on the pedestal of the image though illegible now is said to have written in old Kannada script which corroborates conjecture. His features, jewellery are slightly inclined towards early Chalukya style. The image could be ascribed to early 7th century CE. The influence of Chalukya style of Karnataka is striking in this case. The inscription doesn’t help much as it does not give name of ruling authority of the region during the creation of this image.

### 7.1.3 Brahma, Walkeshvara

The image most probably of Brahma (Fig. 4) of which upper portion up to chest is remaining was recovered from Walkeshvara or Malabar hill by Edward Moor. It closely resembles Elephanta Brahma. It also indicates Chalukya influence on the sculptural style of this region. The slender figure with delicate face and chiseled features is akin to many Chalukya sculptures of the Badami Chalukya period (Dwivedi and Mehrotra 2006: 52). It could be compared with the sculpture of ‘Varuna with Varunani’ (Fig. 5) in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

### 7.1.4 Vishnu Nagaon, Alibaug

The fragmentary sculpture of Vishnu (Fig. 6) was recovered from Arabian sea at Nagaon in Alibaug district. It is a sthanakamurti of Vishnu in basalt. Vishnu is wearing *kiritamukuta* adorned by *kirtimukha* motif reminiscent of post-6th century CE style. He is wearing *ekavali*, a single necklace of beads probably of pearls and ear-rings and arm-lets. He is having two arms. Right hand is holding *chakra* and left hand is holding *shankha* with spiral side upward. *Vanamala* can be seen just above the knee.
The sculpture is carved in high relief. It has comparatively small, delicate face than Elephanta cave sculptures. Style of holding *shankha* and *chakra* help to date this image to 7th century CE with influence of Karnataka style of Badami Chalukya period.

### 7.1.5 Hanging lamp in Bronze, Jogeshvari

The bronze hanging lamp (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10) is also in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai. A long link chain holds an oil container in the form of the elephant riders (Fig. 7), which must have been fixed to a flat lamp with grooves provided at the bottom. The chain has two hooks on the top. The most decorative one is cast in the shape of a snake-head ending with a broad *kirtimukha* decoration. The link chain has three figures at intervals; a male dancing drummer (Fig. 8), a female dancer (Fig. 9), and a male dancer playing cymbals (Fig. 10). The male dancers are in typical south Indian dance posture, the legs bent at the knees and both the feet positioned in the *trysra* pose in which the feet are placed sideways joining both the heels. The female dancer’s hands are in *gajahasta* and the movement of her legs is suggested by the *kunthita* pose, the foot supported on the toe. Her elegant body contours and her costume are typical south Indian. The stately figure of elephant-rider is holding an *ankusha* in his hand and is seated under a *prabha*, which provides a loop on top to be fixed to the lamp chain. A tiny but lively *chauri* bearer, is seated on the elephant behind the rider is looking around. The elephant is decorated with a rope with bells tied to both ends. The front left leg has an opening to pour oil inside the hollow elephant (Desai 2002: 253). Dr. K. Desai has attributed this lamp to 7th century CE South Indian style on the basis of the features, hairstyle, costume, physique of the images as well as the poses based on typical south Indian classical dance postures.
9th -10th century CE

7.2.1 Tara, Bhabha Atomic Research Center

The beautiful bronze image of the Buddhist goddess of mercy, Tara, (Fig. 11), was found, few years back, in the precincts of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay. It was presented to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai. The goddess is shown seated with her left leg folded and the right resting on a foot rest (pada-pitha) in the savya-lalitasana style. She wears a lower garment while her bosom is covered by a stanottariya. She wears adequate jewellery and her hair is combed in the dhammilla fashion. Her eyes and the forehead (tilaka) mark are silver inlays. Her right hand rests on her right thigh while the left one holds a lotus flower (of which only stem is left) which is her distinctive attribute (Dhavalikar 2016: 150). It could be ascribed to 9th century CE.

7.2.2 Avalokiteshvara, Bhabha Atomic Research Center

This is an image of Avalokiteshvara Padmapani (Fig. 12) was found at Anushakti Nagar building complex at Deonar in 1976. It is a fragmentary sculpture, in grayish basalt, was unearthed during work in Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Mumbai. Identification was based on lotus stalk held in lower left hand combined with Dhyani Buddha Amitabha in jatamukuta. Dr. A. P. Jamkhedkar dated it stylistically to 10th century, supporting the probability that Buddhism was still extant in this region in 10th century CE (Jamkhedkar 1981: 99). It is a four-armed figure holding stalk of full blown lotus in his lower left hand. Slender figure with delicate face and wide open eyes are noteworthy features.

7.2.3 Seven Buddhas and Maitreya, Sopara

Rare group of bronzes, depicting Seven Mortal (or Human) Buddhas and the Future Buddha Maitreya, all displaying different mudras and under their respective Bodhi trees, was found in the relic stone coffer from the stupa at Sopara. These eight bronzes
of Vipasyi, Shikki, Vishvabhu, Krakuchchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa, Shakyamuni and the future Buddha Maitreya were discovered in 1882 by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji, and are now preserved in the Asiatic Society of Mumbai. The brick stupa at Sopara, from which the bronzes were found, was built in about the 2nd century CE. Stylistically, the bronzes belong to a later date; presumably, they were placed in the relic coffer when the stupa was opened up for repair.

The circular stone coffer, in which they were arranged, was placed in a three-foot square brick chamber with the support of eight bricks. This brick chamber was located in the center of the stupa with its walls in the four cardinal directions. The bronzes were arranged on the eight points of the compass and formed a circle or mandala around a copper casket, which was placed in the centre of the stone coffer. The copper casket contained within it four other caskets, placed one within the other, viz., those of silver, jade, crystal and finally gold. A thin gold plaque depicting the Buddha in dharmachakra-mudra was found inside the copper casket.

The Maitreya image from Sopara has been compared by S. Gorakshkar with some Jaina bronze figures from Ranjnapur Khinkhini in Vidarbha belonging to the Deccan Karnataka Style (compared to Nolamba style from Karnataka), and is dated to the 9th century CE. Dr. Devangana Desai drew attention to some of the Deccan features particularly as developed in Western Chalukyan and early Rashtrakuta art in regard to the facial features of figures, the crown of Maitreya and the arrangement of the upavita (sacred thread) and udarabandha (waistband).

Dr. Desai observes the representations of the Seven Manushi Buddhas can be seen in the Hinayana art of Bharhut and Sanchi, and nearer Sopara in the Mahayana art of Ajanta (Painted door lintel, Ajanta (Cave XVII) and Kanheri; and also in the art of Ellora and Aurangabad associated with Vajrayana influence. She states that Maitreya has been given great importance at Sopara. He sits on a higher pedestal and is the largest among the Sopara bronze. Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji suggested he faces west "because on gaining Buddhahood, he will pass through the eastern gateway, open the
relic chamber, and from the gold casket, take out the fragments of Sakyamuni's bowl". He records a belief that Sakyamuni's bowl had passed earlier from one Buddha to another, as a symbol of the office of the Buddha. So the other Buddhas are present to witness the event of Maitreya's entering the relic coffer to get his begging bowl from Sakyamuni, his predecessor (Desai 1985:7-14). These images are also evidences of considerable Buddhist activities in the Mumbai region apart from the cave precincts.

7.2.4 A wooden Image of Tara, Kanheri

A small wooden image of Tara was found at Kanheri, forty five years ago. Seated in vajraparyankasana with a distinctive triangular profile its proportions are most reminiscent of Tara in Ellora cave 12.1 and the Dharinis in cave 12.3. It would appear on stylistic grounds to be of early 8th century date (Sankalia 1984: 84). This figure has influence of Pala art. Most probably belongs to the Bengal region. Dated by Prof. H. D. Sankalia to 10th century CE. This figure is seated in lotus. Because of weathering, details are not clear (Pandit 2002: 124).

7.2.5 Head of deity, Thane

Head of deity (Fig. 13) is wearing Jata-mukuta. It could be Shaivite deity but due to absence of context it cannot be identified. It is originally discovered from Thane. The details of the location are not known. Could be attributed to 9th-10th century CE on the stylistic ground. Its hairstyle closely resembles that of sculptures from Ellora.

11th -13th Century CE

7.3.1 Buddhist Goddess, Gas (Sopara)

An image of a deity (Fig. 14) recovered from a pond in Gas, near Nalasopara is published by Dr. Kumud Kanitkar. It is a sculpture of a goddess carrying a child on her hip. Her elephant mount is standing by her right side. In her right hand she is
holding a ghanta with a vajra at the top. It could not be identified as a Brahmanical Indrani as she is holding bell. A female attendant holding ankusha stands on her left. According to Dr. Kanitkar, the image could have been a part of the Buddhist Vajrayana pantheon existed in this region. Dr. Kanitkar quoted Henry Cousens in her article according to which construction of a large Brahmanical temple was abandoned in Sopara due to the discovery of more ancient Buddhist stupa on the site. When H. Cousens found the relic casket it was empty. Henry Cousens also came across fragments of structural temple at Devi-ka-Para in Borivali area having Buddhist symbols carved on it. According to Dr. Kanitkar, there is also a possibility of existence of structural Buddhist temple in the area of Gas, Sopara. Her face is obliterated but a very realistic, natural treatment given to the sculpture and her pose reminds one of sculptures at Ambarnath with similar rendering like Markandeyanugrahamurti of Shiva. Owing to the resemblance this sculpture of the goddess from Gas can be attributed to 11th century CE (http:// independent.acadenia.edu/KumudKanitkar).

7.3.2 Heads of presumably Jain Goddesses, Gas (Sopara)

There are two fragments (Figs. 15, 16) of sculptures more precisely just heads housed in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai. They are peculiar as made of white marble in the midst of trap rock sculptures from the North Konkan region. The disrupting presence of various iconoclastic Muslim invaders, such as Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025 CE, motivated many local Jains to donate images for religious merit to over three hundred new temples in an attempt to ensure salvation for themselves and their families (Pal 1995: 172). The facial features of both the heads closely akin to the face of Sarasvati (Fig. 17) in the collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA. According to the inscription this Sarasvati from Gujrat is carved by the sculptor Jagadeva in 1153 CE. On stylistic ground the two heads from Sopara can be attributed to 12th century CE. The influence of Gujarat- Rajasthan style cannot be overlooked. It is to be noted that Portuguese also have broken many sculptures in the vicinity. Dr. J.G. Dacunha has mentioned some sculptures of Jaina Tirthankara from Sopara region. These sculptures also stylistically identified as
belonging to Rajasthani idiom. Which particular site these two heads have come from is just a matter of conjecture in the present state of knowledge and need further investigation. One more thing need to be added here is Dr. Dacunha has mentioned Jaina caves at Caranja so during 12th century CE there was remarkable Jaina presence who patronized construction of temples and making idols of Jinas in North Konkan.

Dr. Dacunha observed, “On Tungar hills- which like those of the Caranja Island-having sculptures of Tirthankara or Jina…The cells appeared to be work of Jainas and probably date from the same period as the other Jaina excavations of Western India, being the most modern of all, belongs to Shaka 1146, 1234 CE, or thereabouts.” Fragments were scattered on the site when Dr. Dacunha noticed them. He further observed, “The other objects of the antiquarian curiosity on the Tungar hills are the sculptured figure of a Tirthankara, the fragments of which were transferred to some other spot. The stone which is of trap, was about three feet square, and had, besides the figure of a Jaina saint in the centre, some worshipping figures around. The style of drapery and the head-dress appear to be of Rajaputana origin. It was broken into pieces” (Dacunha 1876: 260-261).

7.3.3 Brahma and Brahmi, Nirmal

Many broken or incomplete sculptures and the remains of a partially completed temple platform stylistically belonging to Shilahara period have been reported by Henry Cousens (Cousens 1898, Para. 26). He has published line drawings of few sculptures from Sopara or nearby area. Among these there are two sculptures at Nirmal, more precisely, in front of temple of Shuleshvara (locally known as Suleshvara) in Bassein. Brahma (Fig. 18) is carved in trap rock. It is a standing figure of three-headed god and perhaps was destined to be cult icon. Embedded in the earth it is partially visible. His beard, headdress, earrings, necklaces point towards Rajasthani workmanship of 12th century CE.
Along with Brahma there is another image. It is of four armed goddess (Fig. 19) standing erect. And lavishly decorated with ornaments. Various strands of necklaces, multi-stranded waistband with hanging chains beautifully arranged, armlets, bangles connect this sculpture with contemporary Solanki style of Gujarat and Rajasthan. But this is sculpted in black stone or trap rock unlike sculptures from Gujarat and Rajasthan mainly carved in marble. The peculiar head-dress of the goddess associates her with contemporary Karnataka style. This sculpture could be dated to 12th century CE on stylistic grounds.

7.3.4 Uma-Maheshvaralinganamurti, Chakreshvara

Few sculptures are lying in the premises of Chakreshvara temple at Sopara. They display stylistic variations and could be dated variedly. One of the sculptures is the depiction of Uma-Maheshvaralinganamurti (Fig. 20).

The display of the alinganamurti of Shiva-Shakti has become much popular among the artists of the medieval period. The Shilpa texts like the Vishnudharmottara purana and rupamandana prescribe elaborately the norms to carve such images. Such images have been categorized as saumya aspect of Shiva in the Shaiva-agamas. This sculpture represents Uma-Maheshvara in alinganamudra. Uma is seated on the left side of the Lord in embrace. This well-adorned couple suggests much Karnataka influence as kirtimukha motif in jatamukuta of Shiva and on the waist band, udarbandha high close to chest of the god and curly hairstyle of Uma indicates. Stylistically it resembles Uma-Maheshvara or sculpture depicting ‘Gauripata’ (Fig. 21) originally from Karnataka and at present is in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

7.3.5 Harihara, Chakreshvara

An interesting image which was found at Sopara is that of Harihara (Fig. 22). It depicts the combination of Siva and Vishnu and is thus a syncretistic icon. The left half of the god is that of Vishnu and that on the right that of Siva as can be determined from the
kirita-mukuta of the right side and the jata-mukuta on the left. The god wears necklaces, ear ornaments, and anklets, the details of the broad girdle, particularly the clasp are also noticed. He is flanked by couples consorts and mounts of Vishnu (Lakshmi and Garuda) and Shiva (Uma and Nandi) respectively on left side and on right side. The image is stylistically similar to that of Brahma from Nirmal (Fig.18) and Surya from Chakreshvara (Fig. 23) and is clearly the product of the same atelier. It can be safely assigned to the 12th century CE.

7.3.6 Surya, Chakreshvara

It is standing figure of a Sun god (Fig. 23) with his retinue. He is flanked by Usha, Pratyusha and dandin. His charioteer Aruni is also shown controlling the seven horses representing seven days of the week. The jewellery costume, figure suggests workmanship of Karnataka style of 12th century CE. It is close to Vishnu image (Fig. 24) from Navalghad in Karnataka attributed to 12th century CE. It is in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

7.3.7 Brahma, Chakreshvara

It is a beautiful image of Brahma (Fig. 25) recovered from Sonarvat area in Sopara. It is flat at the back. The god is standing straight in the samabhanga posture. He has four hands, fortunately all intact. In the lower left is a water vessel, the upper left has a manuscript, the upper right holds sruk or a ladle and the lower left is in the position of varada-mudra or granting boon. He wears a tall gem set crown and a broad torque around the neck; the armlets are inordinately broad and have gem studded crests, but the bracelets are plain. The lower garment reaching the ankles is secured on the waist by a jeweled girdle. At the back is an oval prabhavalaya or halo (Dhavalikar 2016: 149). Stylistically, it can be placed in the 12th century CE. But it may be stated that it is entirely different from the Brahma image from Sopara described above. It was probably the handiwork of an artist from the region of Karnataka. This sculpture is closely akin stylistically to the image of Sarasvati from Dharwad, Karnataka presently housed in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.
7.3.8 Varaha incarnation of Vishnu, Chakreshvara, Sopara

It is stylized figure of third incarnation of Vishnu. It is an anthropomorphic Varaha (Fig. 26) with boar head. He is facing the right side. Gada in his upper right hand is visible as is chakra in his upper left hand. His lower left hand is perhaps holding the Earth goddess who is not clear in this case. Varaha is standing under torana. It shows much Karnataka influence and could be ascribed to late 12th century CE.

7.3.9 Surasundari with parrot, Chakreshvara, Sopara

It has been favorite theme of the authors and sculptors alike. It is not clear what exactly the purpose of this composition is. But elaborately decked sensuous lady talking to a parrot (Fig. 27) about her lover may be the best explanation one can offer. The figure could be closely linked with the Karnataka school of sculptural art of late 11th century CE.

7.3.10 Gajalakshmi, Chakreshvara, Sopara

In the premises of Chakreshvara temple there are few loose sculptures belonging to different periods in chronology as well as different stylistic idioms. Dr. Kumud Kanitkar has tried to find out symbolism, of an enigmatic sculpture of Gajalakshmi (Fig. 27 a) and the entire composition. According to her composition of panel is unusual and meaningful. The central motif is a goddess lustrated by two elephants which makes probable her identification as ‘Abhishekakalakshmi’. But here in this composition the elephants are supported on slabs that divide the picture horizontally. Ganesha appears in the lower half on the true right of the goddess. On the true left appear Kubera and the four armed goddess mounted on a lion can be seen. He raised upper hands holds an unidentifiable object above her head. Dr. Kanitkar has identified the Kubera by the ‘nidhis’.
The composition brings to mind images at Pipad (Pipar, Rajasthan). At Pipad the sanctum of the small ancillary shrine near a kunda, has broken image of Kubera, Mahishasuramardini Durga and Ganesha. The inscription at Sakrai (between Jaipur and Mathura) invokes the same triad Ganapati, Chandrika and Dhanada. The inscription refers to the mandapa that was commissioned by a committee of eleven bankers who combined large scale commerce with the banking. As triad was worshipped by bankers the relative importance of Ganesha and Kubera can be understood. It is interesting to note the complete presence of merchants at Sopara (Kanitkar K. 2014-2015: 111).

**7.3.11 Ambika, Chakreshvara, Sopara**

This is an outstanding figure of Ambika (Fig. 28) among the sculptures lying in the premises of the Chakreshvara Shiva temple due to its Jaina affiliation. Sopara was a holy place of pilgrimage. Jinaprabhasuri of the 14th century CE regarded Soparakaka as one of the eighty-four places of the Jianas (Vividhatirthakalpa or Guide to various pilgrimage places). There is Soparaka gachcha which originated in Sopara. Though Jainas were affluent and religious people during Shilahara period in North Konkan very few Jaina sculptures are now spared by the iconoclasts and are available for study.

Ambika enjoys significant position Jaina pantheon. She is yakshi of 22nd Jina or Tirthankara, Neminatha and also shasanadevata. She has lion as her mount. She is shown accompanied by her sons who suggest her mother goddess status. She is also associated with mango tree and is always depicted sitting under mango tree. This four armed goddess is holding lotus and branch of mango tree in her two upper hands. Her lower right hand is in varadamudra and with lower left hand she is holding one of her sons who are sitting on her lap. Another son is just shown in front of her playing with the lion. Her crown, drapery, costume everything suggests late 13th century CE date for her.
7.3.12 Fragmentary sculptures from Parol- motha tankya or Vaidyanatha Shiva temple

Few figures are found on the site of Vaidyanath Shiva temple at Parol. There are fragments of a larger panel depicting Brahma, Ganesha, Vishnu, Surya and Kartikeya. Four armed Ganesha is seated in lalitasana. All of his arms are broken. He is wearing karandamukuta, earrings, armlets, necklaces and udarabandha. He is flanked by ascetics (Fig. 29).

An image of Kartikeya could be identified by his mount peacock. All of his four arms are broken. He is wearing karanda mukuta. This is well ornamented image but the details are not clear due to the paint. An ascetic is also depicted in this panel (Fig. 30). Image of Vishnu could be seen as mounted on Garuda. All of his four arms are broken hence attributes are not clear. The mukuta is typical of Gujarat-Rajasthan idiom of 12th century CE (Fig. 31).

Brahma is seated on lotus. Vaikakshaka, necklaces are visible. jatamukuta and beard of this three headed god are discernible. All four arms are broken but part of shruk is depicted in upper left hand (Fig. 32). Another significant figure is that of Sun god who is seated also on a lotus. His four arms are also broken (Fig. 33). All these gods are actually depicted under niche. They are flanked by the ascetics keeping with the Gujarat style of architecture. These ascetics are depicted in various poses (all standing but holding different types of attributes).

There is also a saptamatrika panel (Parol, Vasai Tehsil in Thane district of Maharashtra) (Fig. 34, 35, 36). Brahmani is identified by her three heads and Jatamukuta. Next is Vaishnavi with Gada and Chakra in her hands. Maheshvari is also identifiable by her attributes Naga and trident. Chamunda is easily identifiable by chhurika and kapala in her hands. Between two saptamatrikas there is Surasundari in similar dancing posture (Fig. 37). All these figures are well ornamented. The sculptures are stylistically akin to sculptures from contemporary Gujarat and
Rajasthan. On stylistic grounds the sculpture could be ascribed to 12th century CE. Another noteworthy sculpture is possibly a fragment of dvarashakha. A female chauri bearer and a male attendant are shown individually standing under a niche. The pillar has got bell and chain motif typical of Gujarat- Rajasthan style (Fig. 38-39). There are other fragmentary sculptures like that one of Tapaswini Parvati (Fig. 40) who is flanked by two attendants on each side and is much obliterated because of which though features are not clear suggests affinity with sculptures from Gujarat- Rajasthan region of 12th century CE.

7.3.13 Fragmentary sculptures from Parol- lahan tankya or Nageshvara Shiva temple

Few fragments of Nageshvara mandir at Parol are right now embedded in the walls of newly constructed temple on the probable site of original ancient temple. One of the dvarashakha (Fig. 41) shows four armed male attendant standing in tribhanga. He is holding damaru, gada in his upper and lower right hands respectively. Upper left hand is holding khatvanga while his lower left hand is broken. He is flanked by two females one of them is holding chauri. His counterpart (Fig. 42) is holding trident and gada in his upper and lower right hands respectively. Deer is held in his upper left hand. His mount Nandi is shown at his feet. He is flanked by two females, one on each side.

A beautiful sculpture of sthanaka Ganesha (Fig. 43) who is holding lotus and modakapatra in his hands. Though he is four armed the rest of the arms are broken. He is well ornamented, depicted with necklaces, udarabandha and other type of jewelry.

Very intriguingly Saptamatrikas are treated individually here and not accommodated in one panel. Brahmani (Fig. 44) is four armed, standing in tribhanga posture, holding shruk and akshamala in her upper and lower right hands respectively. Her upper and lower left hands are holding lotus and water pot respectively.
Maheshvari (Fig. 45) is depicted with trident and naga. Her other attributes are not clear as the figure is painted badly. Mount Nandi is shown prominently at her feet.

Indrani (Fig. 46) is standing. She is holding vajra, amkusha, akshamala and water pot. Her mount elephant is depicted at her feet.

Kaumari (Fig. 47) is also present her standing in tribhanga. All the arms are broken of this four armed goddess. Attributes are all lost to us. Her mount peacock (or rooster?) is shown at her feet.

Chamunda (Fig. 48) is four armed goddess holding damaru and chhuriks in her upper and lower right hands respectively. She is holding kapala in her lower right hand. Her upper right hand is in vismayamudra, khatvanga is curiously visible though could not be found out which hand is holding this attribute of much significance. Inquisitively if noticed it seems to have held in the fold of her upper left arm. It is quite distinct norm. Dog is depicted at her feet looking up at the mundamala she wears. She is pretavahana.

There is sculpture of Vinadhara Shiva (Fig. 49) who mainly accompanies these goddesses along with Ganesha. He is shown in dancing pose. Damaru is held in his upper right hand, vina is held in his lower right hand and upper left hand. Attribute in his lower left hand could not be identified due to the gross paint work. His mount Nandi appears at his feet.

Along with the abovementioned sculptures one more fascinating sculpture is found on the site. It is alidhasina Mahishasuramardini (Fig. 50) depicted with four arms. Her upper right hand is brandishing sword. Lower right hand is forcefully piercing neck of the buffalo demon with a trident. Her upper left hand is holding a khetaka or shield. Her lower left hand is holding mouth of the demon. Her mount lion is active by participating in the battle by attacking buffalo demon. Peculiarity of her head dress,
costume with *kuchabandha*, and her jewelry connects this *Mahishasuramardini* and the whole group with Malwa idiom (Fig. 51) of 11th century CE.

In front of the temple is *stamha* (Fig. 52) with *kirtimukha* and bell with chain motif which was quite popular in Rajasthan and Malwa idiom of 11th century CE. There are other stray sculptures lying around the temple. Numerous architectural fragments denote their north Indian connection. Apart from these many more sculptures were recovered later including the three beautiful images of Ganesha, *Mahishasuramardini* and Vishnu which were accidently discovered in 1964 while cleaning a stable at Jondhali Baug on the Bombay-Agra road at Thana (Desai 2002: 243). The sculptures can be stylistically assigned to 11th century CE.

7.3.14 Ganesha, Jondhalibaug, Thane

Ganesha (Fig. 53) is adorned with a flat *karanda mukuta*. He is holding his broken tusk, a lotus bud and a bowl of sweets in his three hands while the upper right hand is broken (probably held *parashu* or battle-axe). He is also wearing a serpent as his *upavita* tied with a knot on his fat belly. His mount mushaka is shown prominently on the pedestal. This exquisitely modeled sculpture shows stylistic affinity with the *Chaturbhuja* Ganesha from Roda (8th century CE) (Shah 1960: 91). The modeling of fat and chubby body, attributes, *asana* everything connects this Ganesha to Gujarat.

7.3.15 Mahishasuramardini, Jondhalibaug, Thane

The four-armed goddess (Fig. 54) is extremely beautiful. She is depicted in the act of killing the demon *Mahishasura*. Her lower right hand is shown piercing the body of *Mahisha* with a trident while the upper right is shown brandishing a sword. The demon in the form of buffalo his shown with his head severed and is kneeling before the goddess. In human form he is springing from his buffalo body and trying to protect himself from the thrust of the trident. The Goddess with smile on her face is effortlessly killing the demon. Her upper left hand is holding a shield and lower left
hand is holding head of the Demon by his hair. Her mount lion is attacking the buffalo-demon from the back.

The goddess wears *jatamukuta*, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, girdle with dangles, anklets. Her jewellery is carved with intricate designs. The style of her drapery especially *kuchabandha*, design of her attributes and her stance suggest affinity with Chandela *Mahishasuramardini* (Fig. 55) from Khajuraho published by Dr Devangana Desai (Desai 1996: 132; Fig. 135).

Aesthetically and technically also the Shilahara goddess shows balanced composition. Depiction of minute details in carving is noteworthy. It cannot be forgotten that this image is carved in Deccan trap and not in sandstone like Chandela sculptures.

### 7.3.16 Vishnu, Jondhalibaug, Thane

This sculpture of Vishnu (Fig. 56) represents one of the twenty four forms of Vishnu. He is holding a lotus, a disc, a mace and a conch (From lower right to lower left hand). Surprisingly his lower right hand is shown in *varada mudra* and holds both lotus and *akshamala* at the same time. Finely chiseled facial features, strands of hairline on forehead, high *kiritamukuta*, necklace, bracelets, *yajnopavita*, girdle, anklets and others along with his drapery reminds one of contemporary sculptures of *Sheshashayi* Vishnu and Garuda from Dohad in Gujarat (now in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya) Mumbai. Many of his ornaments like armlets look unfinished.

A *prabha- mandala* has been shown with the design of lotus petals typical of Madhya Pradesh sculptures. This stylistic similarity is surely no coincidence. Depiction of *katisutra* far above the navel- the feature developed during Chalukya dominion of the region, necklace made of chain-links, necklace worn tightly around the neck certainly depict local traits. But still the imported stylistic conventions cannot be ignored. On the right side of the Vishnu figure, anthropomorphic Garuda with beak-shaped nose is
shown in *anjali mudra*, a wing sprouted from the back of his right shoulder is visible. A serpent is depicted around his neck. A halo shown behind his head speaks of his divine origin. In front of him *Chakrapurusha* is shown holding a disc. On the left side of the Vishnu his consort Lakshmi is depicted rather awkwardly standing and holding a *padma* and a fruit probably *bijapuraka* in her hands. A halo behind her head doesn’t fail to mark her divinity. In front of her is shown Shankhapurusha holding a conch. All these figures make a symmetrical composition.

This figure can be identified as *Shridhara* according to the classification of *Roopamandana* (3-17) and *Aparajitaprriccha* (21-217). It is iconographically significant as it is a unique example of Vishnu depicted as *Shridhara* with a rosary in his hand while his consort holds a *Bijapuraka* - the feature not supported by any known *Shilpa* text. The strict adherence to the rules prescribed by *Shilpa* texts normally shown in the depiction of such icons seems to have been relaxed by the *Shilpin*. He might be at liberty to carve out his own fancy. The main image of *Shridhara* suggests work of experienced hand while the other figures suggest the work of an uncertain and inexperienced artist. Lack of sufficient space for the depiction of lotus in Lakshmi’s hand further indicate the uncertainty of the artist. This sculpture is left unfinished. The panel for *parikara* is left uncarved except for a lion and a *vyala* on the left side. The lion and *vyala* motif could be traced back to Gupta period as is seen in Mirpur Khas (Fig. 58).

Another edifice of the period is much damaged temple at Ambarnath. The construction of the temple must have also provided scope for attracting talent.

### 7.3.17 Shiva Temple, Ambarnath

The town of Ambarnath is located about four miles south east of Kalyan, in Thana district of Maharashtra. The medieval temple of Shiva at Ambarnath (Fig. 59) is considered to be the oldest dated *bhumija* temple in Maharashtra. *bhumija shikhara*
could be influence of Malwa. It is the earliest dated bhumiya temple. The date of the temple is given as 1060 CE in the inscription right now embedded in the wall.

It includes a garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum), an antarala (vestibule), and a mandapa (hall). The small but beautifully designed hall consists of a rangamandapa, and three mukhamandapas leading to porches on north, west and south sides. The temple is west facing. The adhisthana has khura, padma, kumuda, kirtimukhathara, gajathara, narathara, upana and padma layers (Fig. 60). The influence of Solanki architecture in Gujarat can be noticed. The layout is saptaratha. A garbhagriha at Ambarnath has three bhadras. There is Mahakali on north bhadra Some fragments of shukanasa are now in left. The north shukanasika has image of Chamunda and south shukanasika has image of Nataraja. The images below shukanasika or gavaksha are of other principal divinities: syncretic Surya on north, Brahma on east and Vishnu on south.

Instead of miniature shrine (latin shikhara) models the bhumiya shikhara of the Ambarnath temple is a combination of the pillar component ‘stambha’ and the ‘kuta’ component (Fig. 61), spirelet similar to ghanta samvarana roof. It is considered as ‘Dravidakarma’ a blending a southern feature, stambhakuta, with the northern style shikhara (spire). Curiously, in the mandapa, miniature shikhara models are carved on the pillar in the hall as pillar decoration but such mini-shikharas are not used as ‘bhumis’ on the spire. ‘Dravidakarma’ was preferred instead. The ghantasamvarana roof of the hall is almost intact. Here too the master architect’s touch is seen in the design. Dvarashakha is too eroded to identify but centre of udumbara has a long stemmed full blown lotus, a symbol of dispassion of the bhakta. The udumbara leading to the steps of the garbhagriha has a delicate band of swans (Fig. 62). The uttaranga portrays the main deity in the centre. The north porch entrance has five rathikas (niche to shelter an image) on the lintel. Shiva is central image with Brahma and Savitri to his right and Vishnu and Lakshmi to the left. The lintel of the entrance to the sanctum, by contrast, has only male Shaivite figures. The central figure is Shiva Yogishvara (Kanitkar 2013: 78).
Ambarnath temple has a ‘lati jangha’ where main images are flanked by stri-yugmas (a surasundari on either side of the image). A variety of postures, attitudes and ornaments of these celestial beauties, sometimes a coquettish glance over the shoulder, a haughty demeanour, elaborate hairdos or a simply but neatly plaited braid add to the viewing pleasure. The salilantaras, recesses that serve as a water run-offs have ascetics in selected and specific places and surasundaris in others. Aparajitaprichcha, a western vastu text prescribes ascetics in the salilantara, whereas Shilpaprakasha, an eastern text, prescribes surasundaris in various attitudes. So it is a blend of eastern and western Indian tradition, at Ambarnath.

Texts (Ishanashivaguruvevepaddhati, Kriyapada, III: 344) on temple architecture ascribe the construction of a temple to the collaborative efforts of three key persons-the acharya (preceptor priest), the Yajamana (patron), and the sutradhara (the main architect). Images of all three seem to be portrayed at Ambarnath. Both symmetry and Shaiva-siddhanta theology seem to have played an important role in the iconographic placement at Ambarnath temple. Dr. K. Kanitkar has given some examples of the adherence to shilpashastras in the planning and execution of the temple at Ambarnath. The images on the ghanadvaras of the Ambarnath temple seem to follow directional aspects of a chaturmukha linga. In a chaturmukha linga, according to Vishnudharmottara purana, the four aspects of Shiva depicted on four sides are, Mahadeva, the most important, in the front (east); Umavaktra on the north, Nandivaktra at the back and Bhairava on the south. These Shaiva aspects are also known as Tatpurusha, Vamadeva, Sadyojata and Aghora respectively. The view of the north bhadra shows image of Mahakali on the jangha and image of Chamunda in the round ‘gavaksha’ (window), at the base of the spire. Both are depictions of the Umavaktra aspect (Kanitkar 2013: 67).

The images of the gods and goddesses are also based on the prescriptions provided in the shilpashastras. Their identification is possible on the basis of their ayudhas/lakshanas (attributes) their vahana (mount), their talamana (iconometry / relative proportions) and their placement on the walls of the temple. Dr. Kanitkar has further
proved that placement of images at Ambarnath has followed mirror symmetry about the east-west axis of the temple. In some cases, placement also seems to be governed by the attribute of complementarity (Kanitkar 2013: 94-106).

The syncretic image of ‘Hari-Hara-Pitamah-Surya’ (Fig. 63) is placed on the main (east) bhadra. Ishanashivagurudevapaddhati (III chapter XII 27-29) says that such an image is in support of meditation on Sadashiva and its place is of special importance on a temple of Shiva. Pierre Sylvain Filliozat in his article on ‘Surya worship in Shaivasiddhanta’ quotes that both Somashambhupaddhati and Aghorashiva’s Kriyakramayotika prescribe worship of Surya as a preliminary rite to the daily worship of Shiva. There was also a temple of Lavanaditya at Lonad in Kalyan (Kanitkar 2013: 109-110).

The narathara of Ambarnath temple provides glimpses of daily life. It has a figure dressed in Arabic clothes (Fig. 64). Arabs were established on the Konkan and Gujarat coast in Shilahara times. The figure is clad in full length garment and footwear. The man seems to be shearing three animals, possibly sheep. There are many scenes that represent social activities such as dancing, playing music and others. There are also few depictions of nude females or orgy. Kartikeya is shown without consort while Ganesha is shown along with Siddhi. It is local belief that Kartikeya is brahmachari. Besides daily life, rituals, customs and beliefs are often reflected on the temple walls. There are two scenes with ‘kumbhikabandha’ (stacked round pots). First is scene on north bhadra triptych. Another panel at Ambarnath in narathara shows a man and a woman on either side of what seems to be a kumbhikabandha (Kanitkar 2013: 81-81). A similar pile of round pots frames the Gauri-Hara puja performed by the bride prior to the muhurta (auspicious moment) in weddings in Maharashtra.

Scenes from Brahmanical or Hindu mythology also find place on temple walls as seen in earlier chapter on mythology. These are not narratives where a particular story or myth is depicted in series of scenes. These are actually synoptic in nature where one scene is selected from mythological narrations to depict on temple wall. Sectarian
issues are also reflected in the selections of icons. Though there are examples of syncretic images of Hari-Hara-Pitamaha-Surya, Ardhanarishvara and Hari-Hara as combining deities of two or more sects promoted tolerance the syncretic images also convey the supremacy of Shiva by assigning lesser talas to the other gods. Lingodbhavamurti shows Brahma and Vishnu with folded hands acknowledging the supremacy of Shiva whereas Sharabhesha is an obvious threat to Vishnu as Narasimha.

Hierarchy in the contemporary society is also reflected in the sculptural art at Ambarnath. The master architect portrayed at Ambarnath does not wear a sacred thread. Samaranganasutradhara, chapter 45, lists the sixth among eight abilities (angas) required of a master architect is knowledge of four classes (chaturvarna). Chapter 7 of Samaranganasutradhara, in its entirety, is devoted to the division of society according to class and stages in life. It shows that social structure was still regulated by ancient laws which list possible occupations for different classes; architecture is listed as a choice for vaishyas. In chapter 56, verse 36, it is emphatically stated that if the patron is kshatriya, the architect must be vaishya for a Meru prasada, if a kshatriya is appointed, though well qualified, it will lead to total loss (Kanitkar 2013: 153-154).

7.3.17.1 Selective sculptures, Ambarnath

Almost all the images are carved in high relief. The images of Shiva in human and hybrid forms are built on the basis of Pauranic and Agamic legends. The texts like Samarangana Sutradhara, Yuktikalpataru and Aparajita Prichchha, besides the norm for raising temples, do prescribe the rules for displaying the images of the divinities in different parts of the temples.

Sthanakamurtis of Shiva are displayed following the prescribed norms of the texts on the mandovara specifically on the lata and usually in the shurasenakas. The display of the images of other deities of Shiva’s family like Ganesha (Fig. 65), Kartikeya (Fig.
66), Mahishamardini, Parvati (Fig. 67) and Chamunda (Fig. 68), on the exterior of the temples confirms the faithful follow up of the textual prescriptions. An image of sthanaka-Shiva has been noticed holding the objects like the akshamala, trishula, naga and kamandalu at several places. Another murti shows four-handed Shiva holding naga and damaru with both of his upper hands while his lower hands are broken. Shiva is profusely ornamented with well decorated jatamukuta, chakrakundala, hara, chchannavira, katimekhala and kativastra. Nandi, the mount of the god is also present. Similarly another image of four armed Shiva depicts him holding khatvanga, naga, kamandalu, and the remaining one hand is in varadamudra.

7.3.17.2 Asanamurtis of Shiva

A good number of seated images of Shiva have been noticed on the temple walls. The four armed lalitasina Shiva holds the trishula, naga, rosary and kamandalu.

Lingodbhavamurti Shiva: This murti is located on the east face of south bhadra. Here a column of fire is visible in the middle. It is flanked by three headed, bearded Brahma in anjalimudra on right side and Vishnu on its left, also in anjalimudra. Identifiable as he is wearing kirita mukuta and holding gada. On the column tiny figure of Brahma can be seen in the act of flying while tiny figure of Vishnu in the form of Varaha is in the act of diving deep down in his search for the end of that fiery column. Shiva is portrayed as the great yogi at the bottom of the column. This sculpture is unique in its composition.

7.3.17.3 Samharamurtis of Siva

I. Gajantaka Shiva: This fragmentary sculpture is located on the south bhadra. The god Shiva is wearing ornaments like necklaces, udarbandha, kamarabandha as usual in Shilahara sculptures. Shiva is holding aloft the hide and the head of the demon Gajasura, whom he has just slain. His Mukuta of Naramunda or human skulls on his jatas (matted locks), fangs projecting from his mouth and ferocious look on his face are noteworthy. It is in atibhanga posture. This superb
sculpture has striking resemblance with a *Gajantaka* sculpture from Lakkundi in Karnataka, at present in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

II. **Yamantaka Shiva:** This theme is depicted on the south-west *karna*. Here is an example of a sculptor who has brought the episode of Markandeya (Fig. 69) to life very dramatically. In the words of Kanitkar ‘the towering fury that is Shiva, the frightened Markandeya- who was clinging to the *linga* for protection but is now emboldened enough by the protector’s presence to take a peek at the defeated adversary (death himself), *Yama* abjectly submissive to the all-powerful Lord, are all a pure work of art.

This sculpture was portraying *dashabhuja* Shiva whose all arms are now broken. Left leg is also broken. *Jatamukuta*, armlets, necklaces and *udarabandha* are clearly visible. He is emerging from *Linga* of which only *pitha* is visible. *Yama* is depicted at his right foot, his head is missing though. *Yama*’s mount buffalo is also shown nearby. Shiva is attacking the *Yama* while tiny figure of *Markandeya* is peeping from behind Siva’s right leg. The sculpture could be compared with Ellora’s *Markandeyanugrahamurti*. Influence Karnataka style is visible.

III. **Bhikshatana Shiva:** This sculpture is located on the east wall of the *garbhagriha*. Shiva is portrayed here, in the guise of naked wandering ascetic or *Bhikshatana* form. He is shown naked, has disheveled *jatas*, and the forehead is adorned with a band of skulls. The only extant hand (upper right) holds a *damaru*, raised as far as the right ear. The upper left arm is missing but part of the *danda* (staff), which would have been held in it, is seen on the god’s left shoulder. The other end of *danda* with the dangling decorations and the skull of the victim can be seen above the right shoulder. He is adorned with ear-rings, necklaces, *chhannavira* and *udarabandha* made of ghantikas. Although *Bhikshatanamurti* is not commonly found in Maharashtra, it is common in most Shiva temples of the south. Another dreadful form of Shiva is *Bhairava*. 
IV. **Sharabhesha Shiva**: This sculpture is located on the south face of east bhadra. Only body of lion is visible whereas comparatively smaller figure of Narasimha is shown with folded hands.

V. **Virabhadra or Dakshavadhamurti**: Various depictions of the same theme can be seen on the south-east jangha, north face of the south-east pillar. In these panels depicting the episode of Dakshavadha (Fig. 70) the magnificent god in comparatively much larger proportion. He is depicted in the act of beheading his victim Daksha. A small female figure probably Prasuti or Virini, Daksha’s wife is also shown in the panel.

In the panel inside, three of the eight arms of the god are intact. It clearly shows that the god is holding Daksha in a grip with his right leg, bending Daksha’s body backwards and pressing Daksha’s face with his lower left hand. The gods raised right hand has a drawn sword, the upper left, a shield. The story in the purana narrates how Daksha’s yogic powers render the sword futile, leading Virabhadra to wrench the head from the body with his bare hands.

On the outside panel, the deity has eight arms but they are all broken. The head of Daksha is lost. The right foot of the god can be seen below the arm of Daksha. The body of Daksha is bent and the head must have been shown bent back as conjectured from a lighter patch where it would have been. It is very dynamic composition; one can almost feel the violence and the wrath of god. The small, seated figure of a lamenting woman could be of Virini, wife of Daksha (Kanitkar 2013: 130).

VI. **Andhakantaka Shiva**: Sculpture (Fig. 71) is located on the north face of kapili. It is a popular episode also depicted at Elephanta and Ellora. Shiva is killing Andhakasura by impaling him with the trident.
VII. **Tripurantaka Shiva:** This sculpture (Fig. 72) is located on the north face of *kapili* and also on north-west pillar. Shiva is wearing usual ornaments and *jatamukuta*. He is shown multi-armed. Of his weapons trident, bow and arrow are visible. He is depicted in the act of releasing arrow, determined to destroy three castles of auras with a single arrow. Another depiction of the same theme could be noticed on the pillar in the hall.

7.3.17.4 **Representation of Devi**

*Mahishasuramardini:* The goddess (Fig. 73) is wearing *Karanda mukuta*. Supposed to be *dashabhuja* but only fragments of her arms are visible. Fist of one of her hands is holding some indistinct object perhaps handle of *gada* which is now missing. All other weapons are also destroyed. This is also example of *atibhanga* posture. She is shown in the forceful act of killing the buffalo-demon.

The *Mahishasuramardini* image is full of dramatic action and vehement movement. Even a twist of nearly 180 degrees between hips and shoulders cannot destroy the perfect harmony of the group. A highly skilled sculptor designed this image in order to achieve maximum action within the narrow panel frame (Kanitkar 2013: 123).

*Chamunda, Vagishvari, Lakshmi* are the other goddesses of significance at Ambarnath.

7.3.17.5 **Loose sculptures, Ambarnath**

Gana: A gana (Fig. 74) is seated with left leg bent. He has smile on his face. Pot belly, hair arranged in short curls are his other features. He is wearing circular ear-rings and necklaces. His hands and legs are damaged.
7.3.17.6 Sculptured panels, Ambarnath

A large fragment of a sculptured panel (Fig. 75) which probably belongs to the Siva temple at Ambarnath, near Kalyan. It is much damaged, the faces are mutilated, heads are smashed, all that was possible to destroy it has been done by the iconoclasts. In the left half it shows a male deity standing in a stylized \textit{makara-torana}. The central male figure is flanked by female attendants, one each on either side, which are tall and hefty. They stand in the \textit{tribhanga} posture. Some of their details can be made out.

The other female on the left is almost identical but for the portion below the knees which is broken, the left breast is cut and the face is obliterated. On extreme right is a male standing under a \textit{makara-torana} which, however, is smashed. The head of the male is chopped off but it is identical with that on the left.

Another fragmentary panel (Fig. 76) depicts a standing male figure holding a mace within a decorated niche. On his either side stand a female \textit{chauri} bearer. The niche is decorated with \textit{makara-torana}. Beginning from the first panel with a woman stands in a playful attitude in second panel male figure with a mace stands within a niche, In the third panel stands a female in \textit{tribhanga} pose, in a fourth panel another male figure stands within a niche.

The panels appear to be a part of a design which once adorned the exterior (mandovara) of the Ambarnath temple.

The style of sculptural art at Ambarnath and Parol can be described as ‘flowing but firm lines, quicker flexions and tough but round, modelling of plastic volume sturdier than the earlier ages. These sculptures are tremendously influenced by the sculptures from Ellora thematically and stylistically aided by the influence of Madhya Desha, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Karnataka.
Ambarnath temple was located at the crossroads, geographically and culturally, presenting an aesthetic blend of many styles. It has a Bhumija shikhara found in temples built by the Paramaras of Malwa. The portal jambs and the ceiling of the antarala (vestibule) reveal Chalukyan influence whereas the lintel, the faceted pillars in the central hall and the grasapatti on the pitha (platform) show similarity to the temples built by the Solankis of Gujarat. Stylistic similarities are also evident in the sculptural art. The central image of Mahakali on the north bhadra at Ambarnath compares well with an image of Kali from Gurgi (Rewa) now in the Allahabad museum. One of the three important branches of Shaiva-siddhanta was located at Gurgi. Kumarashiva, guru of Mularaja Solanki belonged to the Gurgi branch which also established a branch at Varanasi (Kanitkar 2013: 176-177).

7.3.18 Shiva Temple, Lonad

There are two subshrines adjacent to the rangamandapa on both sides. Different types of ardha-stambhas in sub-shrines. One type has little bit ornamentation while another is plainer. Lack of human figures is striking. One has square base for capital of the pillar another has circular. The more finished pillar is in the mukhamandapa. It has grasapatti and floral motif at the middle and niche with deity under canopy at the base. One of the pillars has Ganesha at the base while another has figure of an ascetic. There is bell motif on the pillars. The capitals brackets are without kichakas they are actually rendered in Ionic style. There is spacious rangamandapa and passage to garbhagriha can be termed as antarala or vestibule. There is flight of steps for entering into garbhagriha where Shiva linga is worshipped. The uttarranga (Fig. 77) or lintel of garbhagriha contains images of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti and Surya inside devakulika or niches. Shiva is placed in the center is noteworthy. Ganesha could be seen on lintel as lalatabimba indicating Shaivite affiliation of the shrine. Vajra or ratna or diamond design is shown alternatively, i.e. each diamond between two devakulikas. The pillars of the doorframe are plain in style. Surprisingly no kichakas to be seen as brackets even here. The mukhamandapa do not have gajathara. It has rows of triangular motif and diamond motif.
Shaivite figure with *damaru* is seated below the arch is now smeared with *shendur*. Niche on one of the adjacent walls has got modern Ganesha. The design of *udgama* also shows Shilahara style. The pillars of the niche are plain. *Ganesha* is noticed under spiral canopy, smeared with *shendur*. *Pranalaka* is of *simha-mukha* or lion head pattern. Octagonal design for with circular bands, floral motifs like lotus pattern in the center can be noticed. The brackets can be seen in the corners of the *garbhagriha*.

Female attendant on each side of the door with *padaswastika*. There is plain circular threshold in the centre flanked by *grasamukhas*. On it there is sculptural frieze depicting human figure worshipping Shivalinga, a seated cross-legged ascetic and *uttanapada* female or *Lajjagauri* (Fig. 78). The *shikhara* seems to have collapsed long back. Small part of *Nagara shikhara* is noticed on the *garbhagriha*.

The outer wall of the shrine shows *gajathara* consisting of projecting elephants. Projections can be noticed in the walls. On the niche on one of the walls has dancing *dashabhuja Mahishasuramardini* (or Kali? image is not clear) is shown. Much weathered figure of *Nataraja* (Fig. 79) is seen inside niche on wall behind the *garbhagriha*. Nearby sculptural frieze (Fig. 80) depicts female figures in various poses- one is seated, one is dancing, one is looking into mirror, one is fragmentary. Another frieze shows dancers and musicians- one is playing flute, a female is dancing, and two males are playing on *dholaka*. Though bracket figures are absent in the *devalaya* there are few lying nearby could be ascribed to Shilahara phase. Part of ceilings, pillars, *amalaka* and numerous slabs carved dancers and musicians are lying near the temple. Image of *Lajjagauri* is presently worshipped in nearby shrine. Feet of the deity probably Vishnu with 2 male attendants (*chakrapurusha, shankhapurusha* and *Garuda*) and female (*Lakshmi*) could be noticed nearby.

Along with the above mentioned sculptures *Uma-Maheshvara ailinganamurti* is found nearby which is worshipped by the local people. Architectural fragments are also found scattered on the site.
7.3.19 Loose Sculptures, Kaupineshvara Temple, Thane

7.3.19.1 Brahma with attendants

Fragmentary panel (Fig. 81) with three-faced Brahma in lalitasana holding a book in his lower right hand and water vessel in lower left hand. In second panel on his left stands an old man leaning on a pole and in the third panel a female musician is playing on the drum. Her head is missing. Each of the three figures is separated by pilaster. 12th century CE. This sculpture is presently housed in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

7.3.19.2 Yama

It is an architectural fragment. Four-armed male deity (Fig. 82) is depicted standing within a decorated niche, the upper hands hold unidentifiable ayudhas, and the object in the lower left hand is indistinct. The lower right hand is broken. Circular halo behind his head is of very peculiar kind. The sculpture could be dated to 12th century CE. In fact, this figure could be identified as Dikpala Yama as the figure under consideration is holding, pasha, danda, kamandalu which are prescribed attributes of Yama. This sculpture is also presently housed in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

7.3.19.3 Varahi

Four-armed Varahi (Fig. 83) is seated in lalitasana. She is depicted with a child seated on her lap. The buffalo, her vahana is seen on the pedestal towards the left. The sculpture could be ascribed to 12th century CE. This sculpture is also presently housed in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai along with other two above mentioned sculptures.
7.3.20 Brahma, Siddheshvara Lake, Thane

The image of Brahma (Fig. 84) is carved in the round and all the four heads can be clearly seen. The back side is also completely carved. It is quite elegantly fashioned and does credit to the artist. It is shown standing in the samabhanga position and is four armed, but all of them are broken. The god has a halo at the back and his crown of the karandamukuta variety. He has a short beard and the eyes are half closed as if in meditation. The god also wears large garlands reaching up to the knees, and yajnopavita. The lower garment reaches up to the ankles and its tuft at the front is seen dangling between the legs. Anklets too are seen. At the bottom of the stele are shown two swans, his mount, behind who stand Sarasvati and Savitri. The image may be placed in the 1000-1200 CE time bracket.

7.3.21 Shrined sculptures, Shrivardhana

7.3.21.1 Vishnu, Dive Agar

This is a sculpture of Vishnu (Fig. 85) known as Rupanarayana from Dive Agar. It carved in green Chlorite schist and can be ascribed to 12th century CE Karnataka style of Chalukyas. It is image of Keshava form of Vishnu. The positions of the attributes here, starting from the lower right hand, clockwise- padma or lotus, shankha or conchshell, chakra or discus, gada or mace- identify the sculpture as a Keshava form of Vishnu.

The figure is carved in the round with an elaborate parikara. A winged Garuda with folded hands stands at the foot of the image to the god’s right while Lakshmi is on the left. The ascetics Bhrigu and Markandeya are also portrayed. This Uttama or top class image must have been the main icon in the Vishnu temple.

The Matsya, Kurma, Vamana, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki incarnations of Vishnu are shown in small size, not in sequence, appearing wherever space is available. The inclusion of Brahma is unusual observes Dr. Kanitkar. Staunch Krishna devotees
consider Krishna was not an incarnation of Vishnu but Vishnu himself. So, Balarama identified by the canopy of hooded snake, is depicted here as 8th incarnation of Vishnu. Varaha and Narasimha are shown in larger size and given more importance. Parashurama and Rama are of the same size as Garuda and Lakshmi and occupy positions by their side on the pedestal, suggesting their relative importance locally as compared to the other incarnations. According to the legend Konkan is bhumi of Parashurama as it is reclaimed by him from the Sea with his prowess. It is well ornamented image shaped in contemporary Karnataka style. Moreover the costume and ornaments of Lakshmi are also in southern Indian fashion.

The name ‘Rupanarayana’ is actually one of the epithets of Shilahara Gandaraditya (1108-1138 CE) who was ruling over south Konkan and Kolhapur. In late 1120s, the Kadamba king of Goa, Jayakeshi II invaded north Konkan and defeated and killed Shilahara king Anantapala. King Gandaraditya sent his army headed by his son Vijayaditya to help Shilaharas of North Konkan. Vijayaditya defeated the Kadamba ruler and established on the throne of North Konkan, Aparaditya, son of Anantapala. The original shrine perhaps was built in honour of Gandaraditya which explains the name ‘Rupanarayana’ and further explains the southern influence on features and ornaments. The Shilaharas of Kolhapur were associated with the Kalyani Chalukyas by matrimonial alliances ((http//: independent.acadena.edu/KumudKanitkar).

7.3.21.2 Lakshmi-Narayan, Shrivardhan

This Vishnu image (Fig. 86) is flanked by Laxmi on left side and Garuda on right. Tiny figures of Ayudha Purusha also visible at the feet of the god. The God is holding Chakra in upper right hand, Padma in lower right hand as well as Gada in upper left hand and Shankha in lower left hand. The ayudhas are shaped in the fashion of 12th century CE Hoyasala style from Karnataka. At the center of the Prabha and top of the Mukuta Kirtimukha symbol is visible. Out of the ten incarnations, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha and Vamana are shown on the right side of the lord, carved on the Prabha and Parashurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki are shown on the right.
side on the Prabha. Vishnu is wearing usual jewellery carved in south Indian fashion especially the Karanda mukuta. Winged Garuda is standing in Anjalimudra and Laxmi is holding Padma as in usual iconography. All figures show a somewhat mechanical grace and conscious perfection. The sculpture can be ascribed to 12th century CE on stylistic ground. It is akin stylistically to the Hoyasala Ganesha in the collection of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai.

7.3.21.3 Loose sculptures from Shrivardhana

Uma-Maheshvara, Kusumeshvara, Shrivardhana: This ailinganamurti (Fig. 87) shows the divine couple standing in tribhanga. They are flanked by chauri bearers each on either side. Nandi is shown on right side and Ganesha on left side of the couple. Both are depicted in much smaller scale. They are standing below the torana with kirtimukha in the centre and ornate pilasters on both sides. The position of his upper left hand suggests him holding trident which is not clearly visible. Lower right hand is probably holding akshamala which is also very difficult to make out. Lower left hand is probably embracing Uma. Lord Shiva might have more than four arms but not visible in a current status. Parvati is depicted holding mirror. Though most of the features are worn out this sculpture suggests influence of Karnataka idiom of 12th century CE.

7.3.21.4 Vishnu, Kusumeshvara, Shrivardhana

This is another sculpture (Fig. 88) on the site of Kusumeshvara temple. It is sculpture of standing or sthanaka Vishnu beautifully carved in the past but much weathered now. Lord Vishnu is standing under torana framed by pilasters providing niche for him. All the arms are broken of this supposed to be four-armed god. Garuda is depicted on his right and Lakshmi on left side. Ayudha purushas are standing in front of them. The sculpture could be attributed on stylistic ground to 12th century sculptural style of Karnataka.
There are fragments of earlier temple scattered on the site.

7.3.22 Loose Sculptures from Usargaon, Tala

I. This is very beautiful image (Fig. 89) of four-armed, *lalitasina* Ganesha. Attributes can be seen as *parashu* and *mulaka* held in his upper and lower right hand respectively. He is holding pasha in his upper left hand and *modakapatra* in his lower left hand. His trunk is placed on the *modakapatra* as he is enjoying the sweets. That motif makes the sculpture lively. He is well decked with necklaces, *sarpayajnopavita, udarabandha* and *kamarabanda*.

II. *Uma-Maheshvara Alinganamurti*: Here the composition shows Uma sitting on the lap of Maheshvara (Fig. 90). Of Shiva’s attributes only trident is visible. This is much weathered sculpture hence features are not clearly visible. It must have been very beautiful work of art when it was created. Besides the above mentioned sculptures there are few fragmentary works of art scattered here and there. Those consist of even fragments of ancient temple. A prominent *kirtimukha* and few others.

7.3.23 Uma-Maheshvara Alinganamurti, Chandore, Mangaon

Dr. Kurush Dalal and his team of the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies (CEMS), University of Mumbai and the India Study Centre (INSTUCEN) excavated a site at Chandore, Mangaon (mu.academia.edu/Kurush Dalal) and discovered few significant sculptures in 2012-2013. A four-armed Shiva is seen here seated on Nandi with Parvati, his consort on his left (Fig. 91). Shiva his holding here trident and Naga with his right and left hand respectively. He has embraced Parvati with his principal left hand and his principal right hand is broken. Two armed figure of Parvati has embraced her lord with her right hand and her left hand rests on her lap. Parvati can be termed as Haravaktravalokini as her pose suggests that she is observing face of her lord. Tiny figures of Ganesha and Kartikeya mounted on peacock are shown beside to complete the ideal picture of family. In India marriage is termed as ‘*kalyana*’ or auspicious and
widowhood believed as curse so no wonder that such types of images were demanded by the society. Due to weathering features of the image are not very clear by the figures can be ascribed to 11th century CE.

7.3.23.1 AnantashayanaVishnu, Chandore, Mangaon

Another significant sculpture from the site of Chandore is Anantashayananamurti. Vishnu (Fig. 92) is resting here (supine pose) on spacious bed of the divine serpent Ananta. The serpent’s hood is shown over Hari as providing him chhatra. To add to the luxury Vishnu is depicted with his left leg folded and his right leg is kept on the lap of his consort, Lakshmi who is probably massaging his foot. Interestingly Lakshmi has always been portrayed in mythology as fickle minded or ‘chanchala’ the goddess of wealth and prosperity is here messaging foot of her lord like an obedient or dutiful wife. That could be one of the demands from pativrata lady. Rest of the figures are worn out and features are not visible. This sculpture also can be ascribed to 11th century CE.

7.4 Memorial Stones

Majority of the antiquities scattered all over North Konkan are actually memorials erected in honor of the warriors who died on battle fields. Veeramarana was highly praised in sacred texts. Religious tenets influenced and inculcated martial spirit among the people. Subsequently hero cult and hero worship were integrated into the social and cultural life of the period. The next great variety is of the sati-stones. They serve as the reminders of glorious self-sacrifice of sati to the future ages. Very often we come across combined Hero-Sati stones. These are mostly in the form of rectangular stone slabs or cubical pillars.

Most of these memorials reveal Shaiva affiliation of the heroes. Few have Buddhist (Fig. 93) affiliation also (Jamkhedkar 1986: 35-37). Normally they bear three horizontally laid panels depicting reliefs of battle-scene at the base in lower panel, apsara (celestial nymphs) carrying the dead hero in the middle and worship of Shiva
linga in the topmost panel (Fig. 94). The Eksar virgals (Fig. 95) depict a naval battle the depiction of such is rarely found on hero stones.

7.5 Summary

Though traders, intellectuals, architects and sculptors travelled from one region to another owing to professional interests and seeking patronage. There are important historical events leading to cultural interaction.

Shilahara king Arikesarin or Keshideva I is said to have taken part in the campaign of Paramara ruler Sindhruraja in Chhattisgarh region when he was a prince. He then marched with his army to Saurashtra and worshipped the god Someshvara or Somanatha and offered his conquests to the god. Again one of the inscriptions mention donation to god Somanatha. This Gujarat connection of Shilaharas may explain the stylistic influence of Gujarat-Rajasthan idiom on the sculptures of North Konkan mainly from Thane and surrounding region. Sopara also shows Gujarat-Rajasthan features mainly because trading communities who patronized temples.

During the reign of Arikesarin north Konkan was invaded by the Paramara king Bhoja in 1020 CE. He occupied the region for some time and celebrated his victory shows his Betma plate. (Epigraphia. Indica Vol. XVIII 1925: 322; 1911 Vol. XI: 182). This basically vivid cause for the influence of Malwa style. Many sculptors come with the army probably settled here and carved temples in the region. Nageshvara temple at Parol or Jondhalibaug sculptures vividly show close affinity with Malwa style.

During the reign of Aparajita Tailapa of the Later Chalukyas captured the throne of the Rashtrakutas and established his power. Throughout the career of all the Shilahara rulers could be noticed that they never accepted suzerainty of the Chalukyas for a long time. The Chalukyas did their best to control north Konkan power but whenever they could, the Shilaharas overthrew Chalukya supremacy. Their interaction with Kalyani
Chalukyas and Kadambas might have brought influence of Karnataka style on the sculptural art of North Konkan region.

Post-Rashtrakuta period they always tried to proclaim their independence. The almost simultaneous decline of three powers, Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas marked this period. Many petty kingdoms arose to fill up the gap. They more emphasized their individual identity from other regions. Made cultural life more region-oriented. Their competitive spirit tried to attract talent even from other regions. Just to show superiority they accepted grandiloquent sounding *birudas* or epithets. They lavishly spent money on donations, constructing water reservoirs and erecting temples as spacious and ornate as to suit their *ishtadevatas*. It was considered as *rajadharma* to work for the welfare of the people. Under influence of Smriti literature they employed themselves in ‘*purtakarma*’ for the benefit of others and acquiring merit for themselves and their near and dear ones.

Art usually flourished near urban centers or important trading centres engaged in internal as well as overseas trade. The north Konkan prosperity could owe much to the international trade which is a gift of the natural ports. For establishing supremacy on trade routes and ports this region was invaded by many Imperial powers throughout the history of the region, bringing variations in the sculptural style of the region. Soddhala of Lata was employed in the court of the three Shilahara brothers, Chittaraja, Nagarjuna and Mummuni while Bilhana, the Kashmiri poet resided in Kalyani in the royal court of Vikramaditya VI of the Later Chalukyas, Tejakantha of north Konkan, and ambassador of Aparaditya I Shilahara decorated the court of king Jayasimha of Kashmir is mentioned in the *Shrikanthacharita* of Mankha.

There are some temples like Ambarnath flourished in the remote area probably due to the special instruction of *acharyas* of Shaiva-Siddhanta sect as the place was suitable for meditation and imparting education to students residing in the mathika attached to the temple. Many a time religious institutions were attached to the temple and the temple authorities looked after the administration. The Shilaharas provided for these
religious establishments, *mathas* or *mathikas*. The portrayal of the preceptor priest, the king and the master architect of the temple emphasized the role played by these people in the construction of the Ambarnath temple.

This period could be termed as revival of *Advaita siddhanta* with the religious conquests of Shankaracharyya which is spread to the region to region. The worship of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, *Shakti*, and Surya in Shilahara temples may be because of influence of this philosophy. Many syncretic images found their place on the temple walls trying to establish cordial relationship between various sects. But there was also rivalry between the sects. People wanted to place their *ishtadevata* higher than the other deities in the hierarchy. In the period when Indian feudalism was firmly rooted hierarchical placement of the deities giving their *parivara-devatas* subordinate place was inevitable. The entire range of the deities if viewed with their hierarchical placement reminds of the royal court of the sovereign full of different levels of feudatory rulers, courtiers, *paricharikas* seated or standing according to their status and role.