CHAPTER - II

2.1 Culture and identity

Culture is very dynamic and what we are today, the culture has defined by many scholars in various ways in many scriptures and books and culture and art is very much interconnected both influence on each other. Culture can be understood as past and present life of human race. From thousands of years people around the world experimented, practiced, and lived based on their climate, resources, habits and using the availability of materials. Through art and artifacts we can study and understand the past culture. Earlier it was quite difficult to know the culture of another country because of the lack of communication and awareness. Today we have many ways to know the culture of different countries in better way. The credit goes to anthropologists, scholars, and many different field experts with the help of new technologies. Many experts have defined culture in many ways. Being in 21st century it is astonishing to know the great wealth of diversified cultures around the world. Culture is practiced, evolved and developed for many reasons such as survival, living, war, security, worship, knowledge.

Figure: 2.1. Gulammohammed Sheikh, Alphabet Stories, Gouache, crayon, on paper, 2000 (Catalogue- palimpsest 2001:11)
Singam Points out that Culture is consciousness; primarily, an unprejudiced comprehension of one’s own civilization (Singam 1979:38). We have acquired the culture and identity through the family, society and the country we belong and the world. Culture and identity are interlinked with each other like two sides of the same coin. Both develop and change by its application in learn and unlearn in the social life. ‘Culture’ with manners, good taste, and a refined way of thinking, speaking, and behaving, culture also describes a society’s images, its ideas and attitudes, its customs, its skills, and its arts—things to which we are exposed every day, things that shape our culture, things that are passed along from generation to generation (Rathus 2012:6). The cultural context has a strong impact on the creation of art.

Most artists are actively engaged with diverse aspects of culture and society and maintain a sustained level of interaction with the art world. Philosophical ideas, scientific discoveries, and personal friendships affect artists and their work. Even those who work alone in their studios are not detached from their cultural context (Costache 2012:39). Culture plays an important role on artists practice and their production.

Figure: 2.2. Arjuna's penance, Mahabalipuram
It is one of the examples for the cultural product
In the process of living the mankind has created many cultural products which are tangible and intangible with the help of art, science inventions. Material culture deals with tangible aspects and the Non- material culture consists of norms, values, artifacts, traditions, heritage, symbols, beliefs and languages shared by the members of society. Non material culture is considered as the carriers of culture. Language influences our ways of perceiving, behaving and feeling and thus tends to define and shape the world around us. Culture may also be a particular people or group, with their own ideas, customs, and arts (Lazzari, Schlesie 2012:19). Through Art the culture has constructed so many dimensions in life. Similarly art practice has gained various qualities and enriched its manifestations.

Culture is enlivened and experienced in different ways through many centuries. It is referred by different means, and to different people. It is life style, habits, food, clothing, rituals, education, work, art and communication, behavior and habits are largely culturally determined but not genetically. Culture is also dynamic and have tendency to grow and expand. Culture is stored knowledge transferred to one generation to another. Newly acquired knowledge is then added to the stocks of knowledge as it passes through the process of transmission. One of the principle sources of change is diffusion which involves borrowing or transfer from one culture
to another. One of the functions of culture is it provides way and means to regulate human collective existence. Environment, isolation, technology, diffusion, can affect the cultural conditions\(^1\).

We can find many categories in culture those are inter disciplinary, multi disciplinary, cross disciplinary in nature. Sometimes culture has been taken for granted. People are unaware of culture. Culture can be looked thematically as stratification, spirituality, power and politics, poverty, education, work and leisure, organization, family, women and society, knowledge attainment, religion, trade, history, arts, literature and technology etc.

It is also beliefs and values or customs and traditions. Festivals, celebrations people celebrate in different ways in different places. Primitive art fashioned many animal symbols, such as dragons, serpents, crocodiles and monsters which need not be regarded as magical offerings in order that the hunting tribe might be successful in the chase of the figured animals (Mukhaerjee 1948:135). As Mukhaerjee mentions that the habitats of tribal people deal with their own symbolism and visual qualities in their culture.

![Figure: 2.4. Srinivas Prasad, Igloo, 2011 mixed medium (courtesy: Gallery Ske)](image)

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2.1.1. Art works and Cultural Identity

Art work will be constructed by the individual artist or community at large. Art is a byproduct of the culture and its creator who is cultured person. Culture used the art as a weapon for its aims and aspirations. Art comes under the visual culture and Culture plays a greater role in individual performance and it shapes the individual, artist also individual in the cultural domain. Art has the capacity to shape and alter our minds (Roald, Lang 2013:7). The artist responds to culture and its dynamics. He inspires and resources from the culture and constructs himself as an artist with identity awareness. Culture shapes him and he shapes the culture. Cultural influence becomes very important for the art works. He observes, study, interpret ate, and expresses his emotions and feeling.

![Figure: 2.5. Sudarshan Shetty, No Title(from "this too shall pass")](image)

Throughout the history many art works are created in the shadows of the culture. Artists have used various themes, materials, symbols, and metaphors to construct the works of art in the form of murals, sculptures, objects, weapons, artifacts and other devices. As an individual inherits various perceptions and visions to look at the world around him, he has created many tools inspired by culture for his needs. In a society artist played as laborer, worker, craftsman, shaman, instructor, and also as an entrepreneur. We can fine enormous varieties of art works in every society as per their cultural conditions. Many innovations took place in the process of art. New ways of
expressing forms, colours, compositions, subjects, visuals and structures are explored through experimentation. Artists were patronized, commissioned, dictated to create aesthetic objects. Thus artists have adopted new techniques, methods and technologies in their process of art making. They have carved, painted, scribbled, sculpted, performed, and acted, casted and welded as per their aesthetic norms. Through which they gained the need. Artists had many identities like cultural, religious, national, community oriented, personal, private and global. In contemporary times the artists project their identity through works by using their own style, medium, visuals and presentations.

![Image](image-url)  

**Figure: 2.6.** Krishnaraj Chonat, My hands smell of you, e-waste, sandal soap, wood, mirrors various dimensions, 2010 (courtesy: Gallery Ske)

Artists are exploring themselves by through new communication, travel and interaction. As culture changes he also adopted the changes in his expressions and representations through creative efforts. Because style, theme, process, and medium are all affected of the artist’s “self”, which resulted in the importance of identity in artist’s creation which is obvious. But knowledge of the artist’s “self” is also vital to experiencing art, especially now that artists have gained the freedom to craft their own
identity instead of upholding traditional roles. (Weintraub 2003:194). Lazzari explains that Creativity is often thought to have two essential ingredients. The first is innovation, or the making of something that is new (Lazzari, Schlesie 2012: 10). Identity is the individual personality or characteristics of a human being. Every person has their own identity and no two are the same. It can be inferior or superior in nature. Many lost and gain dynamically.

Cultural identity has developed dominantly by cultural patterns and social institutions. Individuals develop their perceptions, traits, and ideals across the life span. Individuals have freedom to choose their destiny. Socio political and economical and geographical conditions influence on the individual development and change. Discovering new talents and traits helps for the evolution of identity. By growing with new experiences within the culture or with other culture reflect in the individual identity. Even different types of participation in the cultural contexts the individual identity of an individual develops. The individual chooses an activity or work to build his or her identity in his society or community.

Berger mentions that Human development is plastic, fluid, and holistic; occurs within multiple contexts; and is often bidirectional because skills gained during one time period may be lost in another (Berger, 2008), in this context of discussion, the opinions expressed by Dempsey sums up the importance of the identity of society in terms of groups and sub groups. In his words "the cultural identity of a society is defined by its majority group, and this group is usually quite distinguishable from the minority sub-groups with whom they share the physical environment and the territory that they inhabit." Sometimes the group of artists looks for an identity. Impressionists frustrated with the continual exclusion of their work from the official salons, joined together to hold their own exhibition (Dempsey 2002:14). The identity is very important for everyone and similarly for the artists too. As an individual continuously struggle with his or her acquired skills present in the society in smaller way or bigger way and gain the identity. Art is one of the domains to gain identity by trying out many experiments with alternative ways.

Another important factor for the change or alteration takes place is through the communication, information, technology, government policies the old form of identity of culture changes and gains fresh sensation. In such situation people develop their identity through temperament, passion, and concern. Community politics, stratification, sidelining, underestimating, partiality, group politics, and many unhealthy strategies also can stimulate the individual to gain identity. Identity of the individual can simultaneously be both stable and variable (Kupiainen, Sevanen, Sttesbury: 13). Dempsey explains that for example Art Povera artists used non-art materials in their installations, assemblages and performances. They used wax, gilded bronze, copper, granite, lead, terracotta, cloth, neon, steel, plastic, vegetables and even live animals many materials employed are not inexpensive and have a rich tradition in other disciplines. Art Povera works are characterized by unexpected juxtapositions of objects or images, by the use of contrasting materials and by the fusion of past and present, nature and culture, art and life (Dempsey 2002:268). Art Povera artist introduced materials in making of art instead of paints and pigments.

Based on the culture and the time, period the art works are constructed or created in all parts of the world, causing to shape the visual language of the artists. Identity is very common quality of any individual so also of an artist. Every art work will have certain qualities of particular culture through its symbolism, materials, structure of the work, methods used in the works along with the subject matter. The influences of culture, sociopolitical changes, economic factors and life style can structure the identity of an artist. Sometimes technological changes and developments crafts the artist’s thinking process and references.

Apart from these, the education, migration, travels and communication modifies the identity of an artist. Perception also constructs or changes the identity of an artist. Sometimes artists may not intend to show his identity in particular times, or sometimes he deliberately looks for identity in his works. Particularly modern and contemporary artists were consciously in search and also retained their identity in their creations. If we observe historically the identity has reflected through religion, customs, and politics, and regional and local levels. Adaptation and traditional practice are another factor can cause the difference in identity. Under certain conditions a close and continuous interaction between different cultures may produce
a situation in the cultures shape each other strongly and create new sort of cultural combinations. Shifting to one culture to another or migration and travelling shapes the artistic expression with its own traditional and modern approaches.

The identity is illustrated in the works of art directly as in above picture, or sometimes metaphorically represented in the works of art the way the artist has handled the medium on surface. For example the new way of printing, cameras, chemical colours, plastics, fibers, new textiles, computers, electronic tools, automation, advertising, new communication devices like TV, films, cell phones, mechanical production etc.

![Figure: 2.7. Artists Gulammohemmed sheikh and Jyoti Bhat using digital applications in their work](image)

2.1.2. Visual culture and Identity

Visual culture is one of the major aspect bridging the identity and culture, which emphasis on materials because more meaningful works are created on the basis of the availability of material in particular religion or class of people. Wood, metal, glass, and plastics were used to represent working class. Constructivism backed by communist party by 1920-21, a political division developed in constructivist circles between those who believed that artists should maintain a personal involvement with the creative process, and those who believed that artists were “intellectual workers”. This led to some artists leaving Russia for the west to make art “pure art”, while those who stayed placed their talents at the service of the new regime’s economic and political requirement (King 2008:462). Some time the individualism makes the artists to take firm decisions to find suitable environment to work.
Identity is complicated and the media provokes us to explore our identity. It has long been understood that people we call ‘artists’ make artworks in order to express, or communicate, something about their lives, feelings or experiences (Gauntlet 2007:3). Identity demands attention in a group or community and it is quite important for every individual. Sometimes the individual strives due to frustration, competition and survival. Personal identity, social identity, cultural identity, religious identity, gender, race identity, professional identities are being found in day to day life.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure: 2.8.** Ravi Kumar Kashi, Photographic Image, Idea of representing Gandhi (Courtesy:artist)

The art works express the visual culture of society that the artist is influenced in the process of art creation. The individual behavior, social connections helps, the marriage system, the way the individual communicates reflect the identity. Individuals have multiple identities, depending on the circumstances. Identity may also change over a period of time. The intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual characteristics that comprise ones uniqueness of one’s identity, all these show the role of social control in shaping of the identity of an artist.
2.1.3. Contemporary art and identity

Contemporary art practice bit complex and diverse in nature. Many times it is quite difficult to find identity and artists struggle to reflect their identity through material or representation or concept handling. In modern art the identity has been explored and executed in many ways through different mediums by using unique techniques, colour treatments and compositions. With these efforts many styles have born like cubism, abstraction, Dadaism, Surrealism and many. Many genres have explored like murals, drawings, mixed media forms, installations and performances.

![Figure: 2.9. Illustration to show the material in art making for finding identity](image)

Identity can be defined as individual characteristics by which a person is recognized or known. Artists construct their identity through the works of art by using style, medium, material and strategies. As Weintraub addresses the artists are always free to explore their creativity in their cultural environment with innovative methods (Weintraub2003:8). Thus the discussion which connects culture, Art and identity can be summed up in this way, as there are numerous artists who explore identity in a variety of ways and some are subtle than others. This is because identity can be explored in so many different ways. Identity can be seen as a national identity, community identity, cultural, physical, professional, individual, sexual-orientation or
Identity becomes very important for the artists in present complex situation.

Figure: 2.10. The artists working in alternative mediums

2.2 Alternative and identity

Identity means a something different from others or different from one culture to another in character or practices. These elements signify the identity of individuals in society. Artist retains his identity by exploring with new approaches in the process of his creation and looks for the fresh views. Unless the artist tries the alternative approaches in his process he cannot sustain in the field. So deliberately the artist look for alternative with the effect of changes in his symbolism, metaphors, associations, and personal and public issues with global awareness and local fragrance he presents to retain his identity. When the individual or a group is isolated they starve and make efforts to gain the identity. With alternative approaches by applying in their production or creation they achieve the identity. Alternative approaches play very important role in gaining identity, for artists retaining or finding identity become constant challenge with introducing alternative outlook in their works.

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From pre-historic period man has developed the aesthetic sense to understand and celebrate the creation of nature. The artists have used the various methods and approaches to express their thoughts and ideas in their cultural context. For primitive man artistic creation meant to escape from the arbitrariness of life. He lived from day to day and from hand to mouth, in the exact meaning of the phrases. There was no permanency in his life, no sense of duration ((Read 1956:57). The artists in the prehistoric times obtained the colours from mineral extracts, mixed with animal fat or blood based on the availability of the material.

The subjects were animals and human figures to fulfill the ritual purposes in scared spots. Along with the paintings man has created the objects and sculptures with various materials like clay, stone, metals and ivory as per the need. In this way based on the knowledge and awareness they created the artifacts. Through the centuries man from various parts of the globe followed his culture and tradition and represented in his art works. Expression was important in the early stages, latter he found the methods and techniques to externalize his creations. Perhaps at first he merely reinforced the outlines of such images with a charred stick from the fire, so that others, too, could see what he had found (Janson 1965:21). Latter artist has refined his skill in developing various structures, patterns in creation of works of art. As history reflects the facts we can witness the changes in socio cultural, political and cultural
transformations. Art has been applied in various activities like functional, ritualistic, ornamental and pure aesthetic pleasure. As time changed the needs have changed. Many types of forms have evolved and cultural awareness has expanded through the trade and wars. The artists are looking for various alternative methods to fulfill their demands of expression.

One of the grand examples that occur immortality in this context is the name of great Italian artist of medieval times is Leonardo Davinci, he has developed the skill of perspective, realism, and naturalness in his expression during the time of renaissance. Leonard has developed various techniques in making of art. And he embraced the science as well as art. His note books filled with technical drawings of engineering projects and inventions. He was the one who looked for many alternatives in his creation. Similarly Michelangelo also similarly tried in numerous ways in his art process. He painted the ceilings with huge frescos, carved huge marble sculptures with great proportions. Jan Van Eyck has developed the glazing technique by building up layers of transparent paint.

For the centuries artists have discovered various techniques and materials with drastic modifications in use of space, form, composition of elements and colours. They have painted the religious themes, landscapes, portraits animals and various other themes. Some artists have changed the scale; some have focused on light and shade, some with textures, and some with the treatment of surface and modulation. Similarly enduring the same time even in the other parts of the world in other cultures also like eastern and middle east we can find different cultural products been produced. The mannerists broke with many of the classical conventions. Tension and drama were achieved by the use of elongated figures in exaggerated poses, bold colours and lighting, and a dramatic distortion of scale and perspective. Baroque style light, shimmering colours and forms were used with wit and elegance in painting, sculptures, and dazzling frescos for palaces and churches (King 2008:193). Technique plays an important role in building the identity of style or particular work.
Francisco Goya is another Spanish painter and printmaker with remarkable talent who produced outstanding work in the same time with political issues. William Blake has explored in printmaking, differently worked in watercolors with mythological characters. J.M.W. Turner created landscapes done in experimental use of materials. He used conventional oil paint mix, with walnut oil as medium

The artists of Realist movement had chosen the social subjects, peasants. Pre-Raphaelites had chosen the issues such as emigration, prostitution, and religious reform. Octavio mentions in Weston Richard’s book “Modernism is the expression by individual human beings of how they will live their own present, and consequently there are a thousand modernisms for every thousand persons.” (Weston Richard 1996:232). In modern period the artists have tried diverse mediums like scientists in their work.

Europe has witnessed the Pioneering zeal and enthusiasm of seeking endless alternatives. They are the Impressionists who campaigned against the influence of academic art have set out to paint the effects of light. They practiced their art outdoors for the first time and they focused on capturing the light. Edgar Degas worked in pastels. He selected the modern–life subjects. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec painted the posters. The popularity of photography and through the adaptation of photography their vision became very scientific. The perception changed in making of work of art. The colour theory was implemented due to that the act of painting changed. Subjects like landscapes, every day events etc. and coming out of studio is the major shift in their period. They started looking for alternatives in their creation. Fresh themes were explored, new found identity set up art establishment in a new way. It motivated the future art movements. They started looking for new identity and freedom.

This brief review of artist and their art practices show that the need and urge was felt by the artists belonging to the medieval times to 19th century looking for alternatives in the process of their creation. Every art movement has brought out certain alternative approaches which made the art movement interesting than mere Picture making.
2.3 Alternative Approach- A Historical Review from 1900 to 2000 A.D (100 years) The Transition in Art through Alternative Approaches.

Borev explains that Art exists in its concrete types such as literature, theatre, drawing, painting, sculpture, choreography, cinema, television (Borev1981:240). These concrete art forms are the creation of an artist or a craftsman or a group of artists and craftsman who their leave own feelings and thoughts in the work or project that they have undertaken.

The response to art is based on a number of objective and subjective factors. These include knowledge, taste, values, and tradition, as well as gender, education, emotions, and many more (Costache 2012:88). 19th century the artists have started creating art with a new perception. The notion of art changed. In every field in society has changed due to revolutions and industrialization. Artists stopped using religious themes. The realism artist painted the peasant themes in their paintings. The treatment of colors changed. They have used real life situation in representation. In the paintings, economic growth and the French revolution initiated the long process which sees the ultimate triumph of the bourgeoisie over the ancient region (Weston 1996:10). As changes in socio-political conditions the artists have changed their roles and representations in their works.

The artists are always been alternative ways in which the artists have created art works with non-traditional way and sometimes this refers to their technique, sometimes to their subject matter. Similarly in the modern period artists have tried many methods to create their art. The artists have an attitude to look outside the box because they think differently.

Lynton makes his observation regarding how the artists used alternative ways of expression by stating that “Artists had grown increasingly aware of alternatives to the western tradition. During this period passed papers, such as fragments of news papers or wall paper, were added bringing the world’s commercial culture and politics into the paintings. Picasso tried many alternatives in his creations made cut out card board sculptures cubism was based on collapsing perspective into overlapping planes artists have always used and also abused ideas they got from other artists” (Lynton 1997:52).
So also the art works of 20th century made shocking effect in searching for alternatives. Art without subject matter was a revolutionary concept in the early 20th c. the biggest leap of all removing any reference to the world of identifiable objects (King 2008:434). All these new expressions and movements represent a fundamental break with past traditions and the result has been an immense destruction of received art forms (Hunter 2000:13). Artists found innovation itself to be highly worked in the pragmatic way of science, industry or the opportunistic, capitalism, bourgeois metropolis, taking whatever lay immediately at hand –camera optics, Japanese woodcuts, “primitive” art, caricature and fashion. When photography was invented in 1840, somewhere convinced that it would rapidly usurp the role of painting. Instead, painters used photography as aids and also found in them exciting new effects of composition, light and space (Lynton 1997:55). Photographic tool has provided the artists to think of their image construction and compositions in a different way.

Figure: 2.12. Pablo Picasso in His studio with his experiments.
As Karmer points out “The creation of a work of art becomes a form of historical action” (Kramer 1957:27). From 1908 to 1914 Braque and Picasso, the two pioneers collaborated and created a Cubist movement by introducing Collage in their work. With the invention of papier colle’ (collage), cut and torn paper as well as found materials were layered and juxtaposed, often projectors from the support in a constructed relief, to realize subject. With the introduction of matter painting granular materials such as sand were brought into the paint mixture and applied to the working surface with unconventional tools creating low relief textural effects (Cyr 2009:8).

Hughes observed that Kandinsky’s view the main one was to propone people to think and see in terms of immaterial form, rather than perceived objects like apples or nudes (Hughes 2000:299). In expressionistic art a protest against academic art stands at the beginning of art history in the 20th century (Walther 2000:48).

The Modern Art movement was by far the most significant example of artists pushing beyond limitations, challenging the existing paradigm to discover a new language in which to communicate and define their existence in History. As Lisa L cry explains for the first time, representational narrative – based art and its ideas were put into question. New approaches in handling space and form, independent of nature, were being discovered. Renaissance- based pictorial theory was forever shattered, opening the floodgates to a new, more progressive ideology (Cyr.2009:8). Various industrial materials become medium for the artists to explore and express innovative way.

The 19th century had seen rapid developments in psychology and especially in the Psychology of perception. What sensory and thus also emotional effects different colors and structures have on us or contrasts of light and dark open space or cluttered closeness and so on, can be studied and measured in a move or less scientific manner (Lynton 1997:38). Thinking methods and psychological innovations supported to analyze the perceptional process.
Expressionism regarded technological progress as a scourge a horror, a historical monster as danger. It was a fruit of social dischantment. It simplified forms, introduced new rhythms and was wedded to intense colors and exaggerated emotionalism (Borev 1981:212). Paul Klee has experimented semi abstraction with water colors. He outlined his thoughts on the spiritual nature. Music provided a guide for abstract artists. Wassily Kandinsky painted completely non-representational works with complex compositions with only barely recognizable objects. In his book on the spiritual art in which he argues that colors and form can communicate without reference to subject matter. (King 2008:435). Abstraction is an alternative way of representing the visual forms and its structure.

In Site-specific works Artists have taken their art out of museums and into the streets and countryside as per their context. Site-specific works explore the physical contexts in which they are placed. In public art the work is no longer considered as a monument, but as a means of transforming a site, and emphasis is placed on the collaborative nature of projects which unite artists, architects, patrons and the public (Dempsey 2002:263). Three dimensional space usage with materials revealed interaction of artwork and spectator relationships with change.

Figure: 2.13. An Installation View
2.4 Art practice in India

Art practice in India has taken many turns and twists from centuries due to its sociopolitical changes. The early art of India in its tangible form is traced before 5000 years. After Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro Indian art opened to new influences from Greek and Roman cultures and latter to Mughals and Persians then finally to Colonial masters. For Indian artist many alternatives were there to chose in the form of Material, content, surface, and composition and modify to their conditions. All these changes can be found in many of the surviving monuments, architectural plans and Museum collections. During the time of colonial India, at approaching stage of independence the Bengal school evolved as an alternative to British Academic Schools. Poet Rabindranath Tagore founded the Shanthinikethan with national consciousness and swadeshi, ideology as the alternative to British education system.

2.4.1 Bengal school

Bengal School was the first modern Indian art School with self conscious identifiable principles. It also linked with the freedom struggle. Bengal School is one of the important Art School and movement in Indian Art scene. Bengal school was the parallel defense mechanism and swadeshi movement continues Colonialism in India. Bengal revivalism counter acted when British imposed British academic realism on Indian artists. India is not a single tradition but it is endowed with multiple traditions. The dominant characteristic of traditional Indian art and culture is its spirituality. Artists and craftsmen reared in a spiritual milieu instill their work with its essences, and many patrons in India, regardless of their specific religion, encouraged this tendency (Welch 1986:22). We had many classical traditions in India with diverse styles.

British established East India Company as a settlement, through that they had many projects. They replaced Gurukula systems. Calcutta School of art, Madras School of art and craft were established in the mid of the 19th C. (1850’s). Academic training Schools were established by replacing the guild systems. Skilled artists and artisans like wood carvers, stone carvers, metal artisans, were learning under the stapathi’s in gurukula system this was part of Indian system.
Academic art practice was introduced. Genre Painting still life, portraiture, landscape painting and life study etc. were introduced by replacing indigenous practices with colonial approaches. We need also to look closely at the tension between the personal and the professional, between creativity and training, which remain central to the realm of modern art, which are played out for the first time in the alternative circuits of art teaching, patronage and practice that emerge under the aegis of the movement. With this first movement arrives a new middle class art public, a new premium on the cultivation of tastes and initiation into art, new forums for exhibiting and viewing (Guha Tapati 2005: 91). Local Indian artists were assigned lots of art projects based on archeology, documentation, portraits, flora-fauna etc. Bengal revivalists became aware of this. E.B. Havel was appointed as principal of Madras School of art and Crafts. Then he transferred to Calcutta School. He mobilized Indian Artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, and Ananda Coomarswamy. They become aware of the British imposition. In the same time India was in the process of freedom struggle. Bengal School artists started looking at their own culture, idea of reviving and constructing the Pan Asian Ideology.

Figure: 2.14. Rabindranath Tagore (art and Deal, Aug, 2013:22)
Abanindranath was the first Indian artist to openly commit himself to a culture-specific modernism, the discontinuity in tradition helped him to selectively appropriate the past, foregrounding what agreed with his sensibility (Kumar 2002 :9).

Abanindranath Tagore painted first Bahrath matha, Rabindranth Tagore written Janaganamana National Anthem. Nandalal Bose designed Haripura posters. Abanindranath’s foremost pupil, Nandalal Bose, who emerged in his early career as one of the active proponents of the ‘Indian style’, before he launched an alternative trail of Indian painting at the Shantiniketan Kala Bhavan (Guha Tapati 2005: 72). All these activities centered in Calcutta. K. Venkatappa also was the part of this movement. Wash technique was introduced by boycotting the western oil painting methods. They used locally made handmade sheets, ink and gouache techniques in their art. These efforts were regarded as the alternative approach to counter the colonial art practices.

With the Swadeshi ideology they adopted Chinese and Japanese techniques of paintings like Ink on paper, ink on silk clothe, woodcut printing with locally made brushes. Some materials imported from Eastern countries rather than the Western origin. With these alternative materials the visual vocabulary and compositions changed. Rabindranath Tagore founded the Viswabharathi as an alternative to Calcutta School of art in Bholpur District named as Shanthinikethan. There many departments like Chini Bhavan, Hindi Bhavan, Kala Bhavan for arts and many more. The early faculty members of Kalabhavan were Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Binodbihari Mukharji and others. Ramkinkar Baij worked in many materials. One of the alternative medium was cement he used in his sculptures.

Ramkinkar produced very large scale works, public sculptures and few abstract sculptures created with rough treatment which is an alternative modernist language. The modernism was introduced to Indian art. Ramkinkar Baiz was aware of events in Paris, Post Impressionism movement in European scenario. Straight away they implemented in their work. Gaganendranath Tagore represented his work in cubist way, these outstanding approaches of the revivalist artists when analyzed today, they
appropriate the alternative Practices and stand significant in the study of alternative Practices adopted by Indian artists in early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

Rabindranath was the first Indian artist to openly commit himself to a culture – specific modernist He has written play Jatras based on mythological themes freely mixing different languages and dialects folk and elitist direction. Up to 1895, Rabindranath worked in European technique. He focused on textures in Krishna leela between 1900 and 1911 his style underwent another transformation. His encounters with the Japanese style of painting brought a radical change in his technique Bharath Matha painted in this phase. The alternate themes are used with references from Mughal history.

\textbf{Figure: 2.15.} Coloured ink on paper by Rabindranath Tagore, 56.6 x 36.1 cm, (http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/r/rabindranath-tagore-poet-and-painter/17/3/2014)

Another important artist of Bengal Phase was Jamini Roy who had chosen folkish expression. He used tempera on paper and boards. He retained revivalist and modernist tendency in his works. For him Indian life was the subject matter. He abandoned foreign art materials and prepared his own organic materials as an alternative to his previous medium with the rising anxiety and ambition to Indian identity. With experimentation he remodeled his sources. The next generation of
artist include was Chittaprasad, Paritosh sen and others who were in progressive attitude with Marxist and communist ideology. They were looking for the upliftment of society, human suffering, and equality these were the themes used in their work. The present organization of artists in Calcutta is centered on the Society of Contemporary Artists, founded in 1960.

Ramkinkar Baij as sculptor and painter he has worked in many alternative mediums throughout his career. When other artists were working in indoor sculptures he started working outdoor sculptures with direct cement plastering to structure his work which is an alternative technique. His themes were the Santhal family life and tribal subjects. He was quite radical in terms of art making and he used some of the modernistic qualities in his works. In his paintings also one can find very bold strokes in tempera and oil mediums. He used abstract and semi abstract forms in his works. He is one of the pioneers of outdoor sculptures in India. Similarly Nandalal Bose also tried some collages in paper which is an alternative medium in his artistic journey. Latter many post Bengal School artists have tried some alternative methods in their works. Some artists adopted photographic techniques to enhance their imagery in paintings. Some are used printing techniques to change their symbolism and forms.

Figure: 2.16. Ram Kinkar Baij, Santhal Family, cement
(Catalogue, Ramkinkar Baij centenary, 2006:69)
These changes led to dawn of progressive thinking and in many artists with many ideologies. Communication was not that speed like today but artists could able to get exposure through traveling and exhibitions.

In Bombay in 1940’s Progressive Group formed by the artists like F.N.Souza, M.F.Hussain, S.H.Raza, Ara, S.K. Bakre and Gade. These artists aimed at greater freedom in their work and looked for alternative to existing modernism, for example Academic way of working. Tapti Guha mentions the move away from the nationalist past most dramatically culminates in these movements, in which internationalism was key agenda (Guha 2005:105).

![A newspaper clipping of the Bombay Progressive Artists’ Group,](Image from the making of modern Indian art book)

F.N.Souza developed distortions in his figurations with random and bold strokes in his paintings. Subjects also were personal and some are social with simplification. S.H. Raza chosen the Abstraction with tantric motives and painted with bright colours in geometrical divisions. Syed Hyder Raza worked with tantric and abstraction styles with limited hues in his works. Some of the artists started travelling to abroad and settled there. M.F.Hussain remained in India and worked in many alternative mediums in his creations. He adopted cubistic style in his paintings with bold strokes
through line prominence. He painted the themes on *Mahbharata* and *Ramayana* along with rural subjects. He also painted female goddess and political personalities and popular themes with simplified forms. He has worked in alternative mediums like video art, Installations and designed toys with wood in furniture factory.

![M. F.Husain’s wooden bullock cart made out of wood](image)

**Figure: 2.18.** M. F.Husain’s wooden bullock cart made out of wood

He devised his compositional structures and modified his forms from Indian Miniatures with modernistic approach. He became center of media attention with socio-political subjects. In 1992 he created an installation ‘Swethambari’ by using newspapers spreading like carpet all around the space to represent death, chaos and disorder.


**Figure: 2.19.** M.F. Hussain, Swethambari, 1991, Installation of clothe and newspapaers, at Jahangir art gallery, Mubai. (Dalmia 2001:123)
Hussain worked in diverse mediums like Jewellery, Photography, film making. He made film called Gajagamini with Madhuri Deekshit. He also made many serigraphy works and exhibited in his own galleries around the country. He was always looking for something new and fresh in creating his works with experimentation. In Calcutta, he painted six canvases of gods and goddesses under the glare of the ovic light. Then he wiped them blank and called visarjana (Dalmia 2001: 107). Hussain was always looking alternative ways to use even conventional medium with some issues or actions.

In similar way to progressive artists the Baroda school artists building their identity through art history and criticism focused in their practice. the Baroda group by establishing it has developed the Faculty of fine arts under M.S. University and it has become place for working and exploring their aesthetic innovations. Five major figures: Markand Bhat, N S Bendre, Sankho Chandhuri, V R Ambedkar, and K G Subramanyan (Sheikh 1997:59). In Faculty of Fine Arts they opened many departments like sculpture, Musiology, graphics, painting and ceramics. Which became an interdisciplinary and artists started working by amalgamating all these skills and techniques as an alternative way. K.G. Subramanyan, Gulammohammed Sheikh, Vivan Sundaram in painting, Parimo, Deepak Canal and Shivji Panikar in Art history and criticism, brought new changes in academic teaching.

Baroda School evolved as an innovative and experimental character open to fresh ideas. Many faculties are studied outside the country and returned to institute. Kaneria has emerged from the period of intense preoccupation with welding and construction a superb craftsman in the art of welding. He builds his sculptures with bits of wire and rectangular pieces of sheet metal welded to each other with creative precision and order (vol.III No.4 Sunanda 2011:96). Baroda school encouraged the artists and students by supporting through fine arts faculty environment by conducting workshops and experiments in art.
Gulammohammed Sheikh was working initially in conventional medium later he tried using computers in his work, similarly Jyoti Bhat also. Many Artists travelled to many countries and came back and shared their fresh Knowledge to the student and encouraged them to practice freedom in their work with alternatives. New generation like Vasudevan Akkitam, B.V. Suresh, Natraj Sharma, Surendran Nayar, Rekha Rodwitya, Jayakumar Reddy and many others has extensively worked in alternative approaches with new concepts and mediums in their works and exhibited in India and abroad. Criticism became the core aspect with dialogues and discussions on the creation of art works. In 1987, a self-consciously radical group of painters and sculptors, predominantly from Kerala, mounted an aggressive attack on the narrative movement accusing it of continuing a tradition of colonial patronage and approval (Rajadhyaksha 1997:214). Many artists from different parts of India has studied and nurtured their creative potentiality in Faculty of fine art it may be radical way or experimental way which driven for alternative approaches.
In this Institution artists and art students come from different places and different cultural background to study with interaction. This school encourages for fresh ideas and methods to explore with alternative ways. This school has produced many best artists who are practicing in international standard with great popularity.

From this Institution many artists have spread to different places and established themselves by practicing and teaching. With similar model many other art institutions evolved around the country. In Karnataka College of Fine arts, Ken School of art, CAVA, Mysore, Visual arts Department, Bangalore University, Ideal Fine arts, Gulbarga and many other institutions can be mentioned around the country.
2.4.2 Cholamandal Artist Village

Figure: 2.22. Cholamandal art village (James 2004: 1)

Formation of Cholamandal Artist is completely an alternative idea where artists come together and live together and work. With the direction and motivation of K.C.S. Paniker many artists joined like S.G Vasudev, P.V. Janakiram, S. Dhanpal, K. Haridasn, and many artists constructed the artist village in 1964. These artists collaborated with the traditional craftsman with modernistic approach which is an alternative to existing models. They also focused on revitalizing the folk forms and techniques in search of Indigenous quality in the works.

Figure: 2.23. Gopinath Nath and Nandan in their studios at choalmandal (James 2004: 135, 229)
This artist village became model to sprout many art centers around the country like Kanoria Center for arts in Ahmadabad and many art residencies like Ishanti road, jaga, Samuha, sandharbh, Khoj and many alternative art spaces. The artists of Cholamandal village in a complete reversal of the Renaissance sense of perspective, began to treat space as an entity in itself on which were scripted words, symbols, horoscope chants, and fanatic diagrams (Dalmia 2001:227). The Cholamandal artists have explored various symbols in their visual vocabulary as Dalmia points out.

In present contemporary art practice we can find many artists practicing in alternative way with varied mediums and formats. In Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and many young artist are doing their practice in an International standard with alternative approaches and mediums like Installations, art performances, art interventions, video art and new media art.

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat also contributed in many ways with alternative activities like conducting workshops, Artists camps, and organizing art fairs like Chitrasanthe. This institution also produced many talented artists who are exhibiting internationally. M.S. Umesh is working in Earth Art and performances, Suresh Reddy doing art interventions and performances, Smith Kariyappa doing art performances, Srinivas Prasad works large scale installations with different mediums, Ravi Kumar Kashi works with paper pulp and many artists are practicing with alternative mediums.
Similarly ken School also contributed a lot to field of art by producing very talented artists like Sheela Gowda, Surekha and many artists. Sheela Gowda works in various alternative and non art materials like cow dung and other mediums, Surekha has experimenting with different mediums like video art, performance art, organizing art events etc. CAVA is another important Institution which gives freedom to students to explore in fresh ideas and mediums and many have become international fame. In Mumbai many young artists are experimenting with various mediums and developing their visual vocabulary through alternative mediums. Named like Bose Krishnamachari, Riyaz Komu, Sudarshan Shetty, and even many artists and art collectives like Raques media collective, Khoj in Delhi. With all these art activities the Indian art scene is quite dynamic and progressive with different alternative approaches.

In these chapters discussed about the historical background, trends and artists works. In the next chapter it will be discussed about the process and techniques applied by the artists in their works with alternative approaches. The way the artist fights for their identity through finding alternative methods and approaches in their practice. Artists work by influences, adaptations and permutations and combinations, trial and error methods how they establish their visual language to meet their demands.
Here a survey done on one hundred years of art in Western and Indian art scene and identified the alternative approaches how the artists have experimented with various strategies and discovered the fresh aesthetics in their works which led to many styles and movements by creating history. The generations of art practice and evolution of art schools and trends, various art activities and communities is discussed. The influences of theories and thought process on art are explored to investigate the alternative approaches adopted in the creations.