SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMERY

In this thesis an in-depth study of the works of Ramkinkar Baij with special emphasis to his open air sculpture was conducted. Ramkinkar was an artist of incomparable genius, a pathfinder of a novel art style in the realm of modern Indian sculpture. His unique original art works are considered as invaluable wealth in the Indian art treasure. A mention must be made that before Ramkinkar began his profession as a sculptor, Indian sculptural practices were purely traditional in character and fulfilled primarily the demand of the Indian temple architecture.

The first chapter discusses about the richness of Indian traditional sculpture, for which survey and study was conducted staring from Indus Valley Civilization. Indian Sculptures never drifted like rootless moss since they provided authentic documentation of the aesthetics beauty, essence and individual identity. As obvious, due to the invasion of different rulers in India the sculptural dimension also did not remain static and fulfilled the requirements as per the demand of the rulers. For example during the period of Ashoka a lot number of Buddhist Images was traced, as per the wish of the ruler. Also, when the Islamic rulers invaded India there was a radical change in the zoner of art and architecture. Therefore, with the change of rulers there was a change in the scenario of art and architecture. Although, the demands changed according to the taste of the socio-religious factors sculptural practices were going on in different places through the hands of traditional artists as a part of their traditional profession.

During the colonial era, due to the influence of the west, the vision of Indian traditional artists changed into a broader perspective. There were factors for the change; one such was because the Europeans established various art institutions to educate Indian artists in the field of realistic study, to know more about the study of perspectives in visual art and to groom them with the concept of light and shade which was not at all known by the traditional Indian artist till. Another factor was that they wanted to prepare some craftsmen for their required jobs. In other way their aim gave a new way for the Indian sculpture towards modernity. But during that time
Indian sculpture was mostly dominated by the European academic realism. Only with the Midas touch of Ramkinkar, Indian sculpture got the taste of freedom and stepped up to the arena of modernity because he went against all the traditional norms of Indian art. Along with the background the study highlighted and answered in the thesis the objectives which were taken into consideration. The review of literature also tried to justify the study.

The second chapter of the research discussed about the historical background of modern Indian sculpture. In addition, the study traced about how the Indian sculptural field was transformed from pre-independence to post independence era and what was the contribution of the British to reform the entire perspective of Indian sculptures. In the colonial era, number of Indian sculptors were working with great passion, amongst which the most devoted were; Hiranmoy Roy Choudhury, Debi Prasad Roy Choudhury, G.K Mahtre, V.P Karmarkar etc. Even if they had curved their own identity in their respective field but they were still bonded with the flavour of the western concepts and learning, therefore, was not too successful to free themselves from the European influences. They had an extraordinary talent and skill, but could not overcome the invisible bindings imposed by the Britishers. The research study faithfully justified that it was only Ramkinkar who brought a new era in the Indian sculpture during late 1920s which can be classified as 'modern'. The way of experimentation with different mediums and subject matters started through the hands of Ramkinkar who acted like a means and showed a 'newness' to the generation next, who followed his path in the post independence period by experimenting with machine, tools and scientific application and thus found a new platform in the sculptural field in India.

Chapter III entitled ‘Open Air Sculptures of Ramkinkar Baij: Transition from Conventionalism to Modernity and Beyond’ can be considered as the vital part of the research because it highlights about the open air sculptures of Ramkinkar Baij. Undoubtedly, Ramkinkar can be considered as the "father of modern Indian Sculptor" because the transition of Indian art from traditional to modernity is introduced by him and a changing trend in the Indian sculptural world is indisputable. He successfully transformed the conventionalism to modernity through his sculptures. His Open Air Sculptures are very close to nature. The relation between sculpture and nature in the context of Ramkinkar’s open air sculptures have been discussed in details. Ramkinkar’s significance lies in the fact that he was not traditional or
academic in an age that was guided by the conventional, but built up a style and a body of work that is essentially individualistic, based and rooted in his own personality and environment. He was free from dominating Bengal School’s influence. Ramkinkar studied the entire ‘ism’s that were existed in his time but never followed any art theory blindly. His experience, sensitivity of life and Mother Nature guided him to do open air sculpture, which opened up a new door for the Indian sculpture. What he did, it was purely his personal taste and liking. His works did not reject traditional importance, but his style-technique was purely modern and in some cases his works crossed the limitations of modernism also.

The fourth chapter of the research tried to search the importance of Ramkinkar’s Open Air Sculpture in the contemporary art scenario. The study reflects that, Ramkinkar departed from the stereo-typed notion that art is a slave to the convention and that sculpture must serve its patrons. His obstinate and almost reckless yet powerful experimentation in the area of sculpture- with its form, concept, material and technique made way for the broad avenue for modern Indian sculpture and experimentation in this field still continues. His open air sculptures gratified a new form of art in the Indian context. We can consider him to be the first Indian sculpture to bring out the keen relationship of a piece of sculpture with its surrounding nature. For the first time in India, as a sculptor he represented the life of common people in the field of sculpture and he made his open air sculptures on the spot, which had created keenness with the surroundings. In all the way he had opened up a new world of thought for the future artist. Thus, he blended the natural surrounding with that of his creation providing an oneness with the atmosphere.

5.2 CONCLUSION

From the evidence traced in the different chapters it is seen that Indian Sculptures have traveled through a long journey crossing different time period. The contributions made by the different rulers and there impacts was truthfully studied. In addition the changing concept of the post independent era till the modern time was authentically documented. The contribution of Ramkinkar Baij in the history of modern Indian sculpture is justified by tracing the root of his different forms and ways of creating his creations which made him a distinguished and immortal persona
in the Indian art scenario. However, more specific conclusions pertaining to different aspects of the study are as follows:

- Before 19th century Indian sculpture was purely traditional and conceptual but after the colonialism, Indian sculpture got a touch of modernity.

- By the pre-independence period new trends in Indian Sculpture emerged out due to the influence of European academic realism.

- It was only by the late 1920’s that Indian sculpture could find a new point of departure from the existing stereotype forms through the process of experimentation. New mediums and new techniques were encouraged in the field of sculpture.

- With the knowledge about the modernist school of western sculpture and different ‘ism’s, a new trend was visible amongst the works between 1925 to 1950 which included the concepts of Debi Prasad Roy Choudhury, S. Pansare, V. P. Karmarkar and Ramkinkar Baij. Their followers like Pradosh Das Gupta, Dhanraj Bhagat, Sankho Choudhury, Amarnath Sehgal and Chintamoni kar too retained this eagerness and open-mindedness for the new.

- 1930 marks the rise of Ramkinkar Baij, the modern maestro of Indian sculpture, who brought in a new age in Indian Sculpture. He was the Pathfinder of a new and unexplored horizon through his experiments with form, concept, medium and working process. He did not follow the dominating Bengal School trend and what he made; it was fundamental and purely his personal.

- During the post- independence period, ‘machines’ and ‘tool’ found a new place in industrial society. Then, artists and sculptors inclined themselves towards application of scientific techniques and industrial mediums.

- A monumental change is visible in Indian sculpture after the 1940’s. But, multifaceted variety and diversity in the personal thought process of Indian sculptors came to the notice of the critics only after the 1960’s. In this new technique and
concept many young sculptors’ mastered the works. In fact, this was a opening to a new generation artist.

- As an experimentalist, Pillo Pochkhanawalla, Mahendra Pandya, Somnath Hore, P.V. Jankiram, Meera Mukharjee gave a new speed and direction to the Indian sculpture by their new exploration of different medium, techniques and social themes.

- Before any academic training in art was there in India, there was a tradition of icon-making which cost an indirect influence at the beginning of modern Indian sculpture.

- Though the institutionalized art-schools founded by the British helped mostly the Indian Sculpture to rise from its mediaeval infancy to the modernist adulthood – those schools mostly emphasized on making statues.

- Sculpture found a new expression in India in the hand of Ramkinkar. Ramkinkar’s sculpture could bring out a different philosophy of content and style which was his own discovery.

- His main inspiration was his childhood in a rural setting, his tie with nature and its beauty, his training in the traditional form of icon-making the influence of Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose, the Santhal life that he always saw around and his observation of modern western models.

- Ramkinkar established the basis of modern Indian sculpture. He made it clear that sculpture work could be done without any patronage, that sculpture work are not aimed at satisfying the royal pleasure, but like any other form of art. Sculpture too, is an artist’s self expression.

- The most significant contribution of Ramkinkar in modern Indian sculptures is his open air sculpture or eco-friendly sculpture. Therefore, he was the first among Indian sculptors to give vent to the idea that sculpture has a deep tie with nature. Their symmetry is always esthetical.
• In the open air sculpture works of Ramkinkar the contemporary reality and the common and down-trodden human life found an expression in the history of Indian culture which was unique and the first of its kind.

• The characteristics that mark the open air sculpture works of Ramkinkar are their monumentality, their course and harsh texture which almost unifies them with the nature outside and their dynamism, vitality and energy. And these sculpture works always reaches out to light.

• Ramkinkar was the pioneer to begin the trend of experimentation with open air sculpture. As regard to his style and technique, he was undoubtedly modern. He met up the scarcity of proper raw materials with whatever he founds within his reach—Cement, Sand, and pebble. His casting was done the most direct process of throwing.

• Ramkinkar was modern but not in the typical western sense. He was modern in a true Indian sense. He never hesitated to severe his ties with the tradition and yet he never neglected his tradition.

• Ramkinkar never talked much about new interpretations of art. His art work was a piece of art which speaks only about him and he also justifies that every piece of art need not convey a message. He believed that art should have a discourse with the surrounding reality while at the same time; art must transcend the ugliness and pettiness that are seen in actual life.

• Ramkinkar was an artist with a new inclining for art. He reputed the typical convention that was in vogue at Santiniketan and did oil painting and nude study. He never walked in a trodden path, but created his own path.

• But Ramkinkar’s art, his achievement cannot be seen in the light of modernism alone. He assimilated almost all ‘ism’s of his time. But his art never spoke of any ‘ism’. His art always spoke of real and vibrant human life, willingly or
unwillingly, Ramkinkar, therefore, had some kind of social commitment. He was a realistic—a pioneer in the field of sculpture to introduce realism.

- It is because of the experience one comes across by viewing Ramkinkar’s sculpture; one finds the Indian tradition getting elevated to the principles of modernism. He showed that mere imitation of tradition and following blindly in its footstep would not lead to any kind of liberation. When we find new direction, the self identity of a nation and the most ardent issues of contemporary life reflected in it, then only, there is a possibility to achieve overwhelming glory in its path of expansion.

- The basic and fundamental aspect of Indian life specifically the rural indigenous living is expressed most vividly by Ramkinkar Baij in his sculptures. And that is why we see a beautiful blend of classical and the primitive with the dynamic and rhythmic flow of everlasting life.

- We can say that the modernism of Ramkinkar in his thoughts, gesture and expression can be the modernism of Indian art particularly in sculpture. It is because in his work we first find the freedom of his personality along with the vibrant tradition embedded in him and the feeling that lies underneath the reality together making a statement of conviction and faith. It can also be said that this modernism is quite different from modernism that we see in Europe.

- The greatest contribution of Ramkinkar is his open air sculptures. Through the works like Sujata, Santhal Family which are open air sculptures he gave a new dimension towards concept, thought and understanding, to sculptural tradition of India.

- During the Mughal rule, in India, one can find no significant work in sculptural tradition. And whatever sculptures were brought and installed by the Britishers, they were only for their own personal needs and glorification of the empire.
For a long time sculptures had the tradition to glorify the higher ordeals, like, gods and goddesses, stories related to mythology and sacred text. That could quite profoundly increase the grandeur of temples and architectures for ages in India. After the advent of the Britishers, their colonial rule was given much impetus and so does the power to dominate. And therefore the sculptures which were being transported to India, glorified the individual patrons more distinctly. But through the hand of Ramkinkar, the sculptural pieces were immediately independent, unobliged and socially documenting. It lyrically expressed the passionate feeling of the creator. Sculpture was not understood in terms of concept before. He broke this misunderstanding and give birth to Santhal Family as a monumental, three dimensional group sculpture whose concept was based on rural life. In fact it is for the first time, that a work of art did not pay homage to any individual. The sculpture was totally subject oriented, based on migration of labour. No one before him could think of such a subject.

Before Ramkinkar, sculptures were produced usually in studios and were brought from foreign lands and installed in India by the British rulers. But from Ramkinkar we find his sculptures to be site specific and is executed on the very spot of the location selected by the artist himself and would remain there as a part of the environment. In contemporary sculpture it opened a new vision, new path for the future generation and to art and its history in India.

The contribution of Ramkinkar is remarkable and awe-inspiring. His true love for nature and the complete devotion of his self towards nature and to the very source of eternal creation is at once personal as well as universal. It therefore has gone beyond time and space for the language it shares, represents not only the working class here in India but to all those who are suffering in different places on the earth.

The most important aspects of his artistic journey revolve around the inner essence, the dignified spirit that kindles inside an individual or a group or a community. It is this inner reality that he tries to embody and justify by creative means instead of merely going for formal arrangements. It is the beauty as well as the
truth to reality that could be seen emphasizing repeatedly in his work. One could see the drama in the overall arrangement but alongside this drama lays the pure and innocent vitality of rural simplicity and down to earth engagements. It was due to this that his works are closer to the common audience. His works were not overburdened by reasons or complexities that would grind the mind of the spectator.

- Ramkinkar Baij’s work has certain dual qualities in terms of formal structure, organic spontaneity of forms and expressionistic quality that forms the inner flame of his compositions. In his work one can find the joyous moments of youth, nature and life.

- The earlier sculptures mainly by the colonial rulers were installed in high pedestal thereby creating a big distance from the common viewer and its high placement quite assuring stresses the higher status, as authorities of power standing high above those who were being ruled. But, in Ramkinkar’s work we finds no such high pedestal and the figures seem quite naturally and quite flowing walk through the ground in perfect blend with nature. This can be seen in Santhal Family and Call of the Mill. Here instead of any individuality the subject of working class and class struggle are being emphasized with utmost feeling, care and determination

- Ramkinkar used cement, stone chips, sand that he could found locally to create his sculptures. It seems that these sculptures in their process of making were arising from the ground and walked forward and along with the local crowd. The surfaces of his sculpture have the rough textures that seem to cover all though the organic body thereby making the sculpture more palpable and animated. It is the rough coarse grain of the surface that seems to merge, with the rough scenario of Birbhum country side and so also with the harsh scenario of country life. It is this character that could not be seen in any sculpture of Indian tradition both classical and modern.

- The open air sculptures of Ramkinkar Baij is essentially site specific and related to the very situation of the place, delving deeply with the condition of labour migration of the period. It has risen from a definite concept and idea of the artist. This
led to the opening of new possibilities and ways for future generation of artist yet to come in the land.

- Ramkinkar was never actually occupied by any rigid academic schooling. He was an individual whose identity was never moulded by strong institutional regularity. He developed a more rich and versatile culture than the one he belonged to. Coming out from the dead academic practice of his time he presented a more contemporary view, the nascent truth, about his surrounding and thus realising it through method and practice, independent of school or institution. He was able to generate the innate spirit behind the existence of mankind through their daily struggle and suffering but which in turn got overcome by the strong will to survive and last eternally.

- He was never loaded by conservative ideology. Thus new subject content new medium and technique flamed through his vein like flow of a river that takes everything on its way to the sea. He was the first to show, the tendencies of experiment and the various processes in the making of art in contemporary sculpture in India. He adopted anything from anywhere according to his need and left anything that was unnecessary. He showed how much to take and how much to leave thus clarifying the urgent needs of an artist in practice.

- Ramkinkar was related to his subject matters in an intricate manner. He realized life according to his own way and understanding. Thus art was to him, a spiritual relationship that linked man, nature and his spirit together. Fame, wealth and self glorification never hold any significance to Ramkinkar more than his work. He was completely on his own thus making himself unaware of these materialistic where about. Creativity was everything to him. Ramkinkar could become a model of those artists who are quite concern about wealth and fame and commercialization of art.

- In true sense his works tried to express the then reality of his time. It was this reality, harsh and severe, brightened the flame of creative urge in his mind, as it did the mind of Rabindranath Tagore. Famine, riots, partition, war and all the social decay and massacre have influenced art. If art is to speak about the light in dark,
gloomy world of pain and suffering, then, Ramkinkar could be a role model to the artist of his time and to those yet to come.

5.3 SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

After the in-depth study it can be said that Ramkinkar had a multidimensional artistic personality. This study is concentrated on the open air sculptures carved out by Ramkinkar only. Within a limited period of time it is not possible to focus on all the aspects of various zoner of Ramkinkar Baij's artistic approaches; therefore, an immense scope for further research is possible. Although, Ramkinkar was the pioneer of modern Indian Sculpture, he was also known as a painter. He had developed his unique style of painting which was different from the style of Bengal School. Further research and in-depth study on his painting is possible. Ramkinkar had curved a number of portraits. Besides the physical form of a person he gave emphasis on the inner self of a person. The portraits made by Ramkinkar are some of the best sculptures in the history of modern Indian sculpture. Therefore, there is a possibility to research upon the portrait of Ramkinkar.

Ramkinkar was the inventor of new medium and technique. He used locally available material like, stone, sand and cement in his sculpture to give it a unique identity. A research can be further takes up on the technique and style of his sculpture. A scientific study can be made on the durability of the material, which was used in Ramkinkar's sculpture.

A comparative study can be possible on the paintings and sculpture of Ramkinkar's in the prospective of Western art. Besides that, the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore had a tremendous influence on Ramkinkar's artistic ideas, so, a survey can be conducted on the above mentioned topic as well.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS

After completing the study it was found that the features like joy, ecstasy, untamed liveliness and sensitivity with forceful dynamism was indeed the main aspect of Ramkinkar's sculpture. Without thinking about his personal needs and requirement financially, he never wanted that his creation be confined to any showcase of a sophisticated art corner or enthusiast as a status symbol. Rather, he
wanted his sculptures to remain open and free underneath the blue sky and enveloped with the natural environment and be a part of the life world. It is from this perspective/point of view did arose his concept of open air sculptures. But it was in Santiniketan, the land of his personal meditation and belief that we see in his open air monumental and gigantic sculptures being shaded by unattractive roofs. Fences are being given on all sides of his works. And thus, the infinite blue sky that was once the natural shade to these sculptures was reduced to omission. The fences too, thus, constricting them created a distance an isolation the gap of which separated the common life, to which it was once part of. Thus, restricting their speed, motion and forceful intention to move forward with joy, optimism and belief; therefore, if the sculptures are treated with more scientifically accurate approaches and method for their preservation and at the same time freed from all those obstacle, then the works would restore their former glory and lively spirit once again. With time goes by there is possibility that these works may get damaged, due to sun, wind and rain, as they are made of concrete. So the possibility of converting them to bronzes; as one of it has already been done recently, could be a better idea to make their way to immortality.

It is accepted by almost all that Ramkinkar is the pioneer of Modern art and sculpture in India. In spite of his individuality and originality by which, he created his sculpture and painting, it is his effort to bring out something new, incredibly faith and just, got a justifiable recognition and acquaintance among the general in society and the intellectual elites in particular. It is important to say that analyzing his life, thoughts and the works; it is difficult to find a proper number of books written on this great personality. We do find several books on the artists of his proceeding generations getting published. Most of the books about Ramkinkar were written in Bengali and published in West Bengal. Therefore, a need for more books to be written in English and the books published in Bengali can be translated in English as well as in other languages.

So, if more books, essays, discourses, lectures and seminars and catalogues are published on the artists on a national as well as international level then it would be beneficial for all. The artist would be the centre of debates, discussion, experiment and study for younger generation from different languages and states, who in turn may shade light on a new perspective and dimensions. If the books, essays and discussions written on him in Bengali are published in English and other national and
international languages, then, not only in India but elsewhere in the other countries also, he would receive honorable acclaim greatness and honor.