



# A Study of the Hindu Period (500 CE – 1500 CE)

## Art and Culture

Jaidev Dasgupta

## ARCHITECTURE

Multiple forms of Temple architectures,  
Forts & Islamic Monuments

## SCULPTURE

Heavily Decorated Temples  
New Trends in Medieval Sculpture

## PAINTING, DANCE, FASHION

Diversity in Painting Styles  
Variety in Clothes, Jewelry, Hairdos, Textile patterns  
Classical & Folk Dance Galore

## POETRY & MUSIC

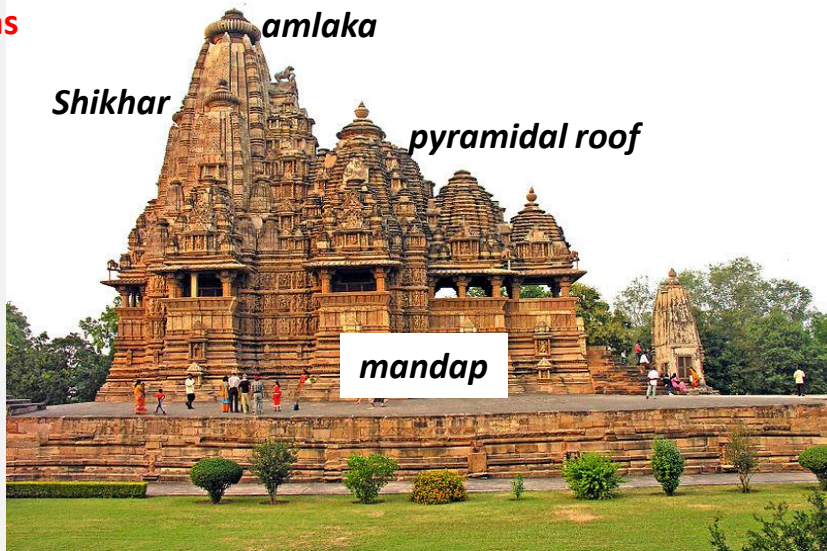
Shift from Sanskrit to Regional Languages  
Classical and Folk Music

# MEDIEVAL ART & CULTURE: Rich, Diverse & Creative

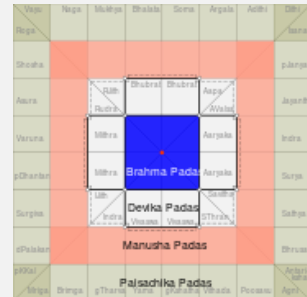
- **Culture includes everything we do:** Art, customs, traditions, rituals, behavior, knowledge, beliefs, purpose of life, food, morals, religion, law, and so on.
- **Art is an expression of culture through** - architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, poetry, dance, drama, music, singing, etc. - a subset of **64 forms of Kalā** (Sanskrit term for art).
- The long list of kalās ranging from – flower arrangement, personal grooming, head dressing to gardening, sensual art, slight of hand, magic...to archery, architecture, gymnastics, logic, chemistry and minerology – implies that:
  - **kalā means “the right way of doing something,”** and
  - It is involved in many aspects of life.
- Manuals e.g. Natya-shastra, Kavyadarsha, Shilpa-shastras, Vastu-shastras, Kama-shastras were written, instructing on rules and standards for practicing different kalās.
- In the medieval era, creativity flourished in **diverse forms of art** in **different regions** of the country, leading to a **highly rich and diverse culture of India**.
- The foundation of diversity in modern India was laid in the medieval period.

# ARCHITECTURE: Temples- Nagar & Dravida styles

**Nagar/Northern forms**



*Vishvanatha Temple, Shaiva, Khajuraho, ~1000 CE.*



Manduka Mandala - Hindu Temple 64 padas

*Temple plans built per vastu shastra*

**Dravida /Southern forms**



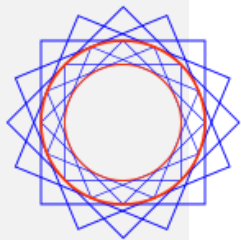
*Brihadishvar, Thanjavur, Shaiva, Chola, 1010 CE* ↑



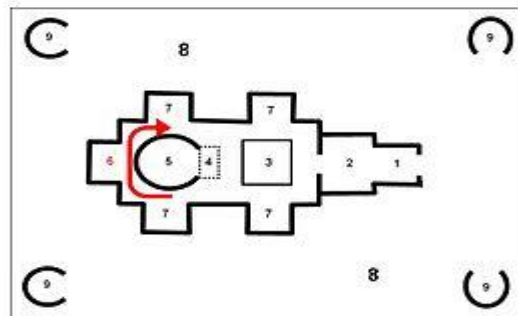
*Shore Temple, Shaiva, Pallavas, 700-728 CE, Granite blocks* →

**Art and Culture**

Hindu Period



*Rotating circles plan for shikhar around the core*



- 1. Ardha mandapa
- 2. Mandapa
- 3. Maha mandapa
- 4. Antarala
- 5. Garba griha
- 6. Pradakshina
- 7. Transepts
- 8. Jagati
- 9. Subsidiary shrines

Plan of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple

# ARCHITECTURE: Temples- Vesar & Unusual forms

## Vesar/ Blended forms



*Pattadakal temple complex, Hindu and Jain, Chalukya, 7-9<sup>th</sup> CE*

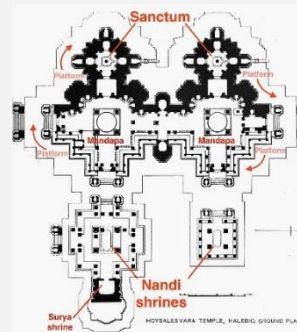
## A few unusual forms



*Martand, Sun Temple;  
Kashmir; 8<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Hoysaleswara, Halebid, double shrine, Shaiva, Hoysala, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Chausath yogini temple; Circular plan; Morena, MP; 11<sup>th</sup> CE*

# ARCHITECTURE: Forts and Palaces



**Gwalior Fort, MP, 8<sup>th</sup> CE**  
*Image credit: Anisng7*

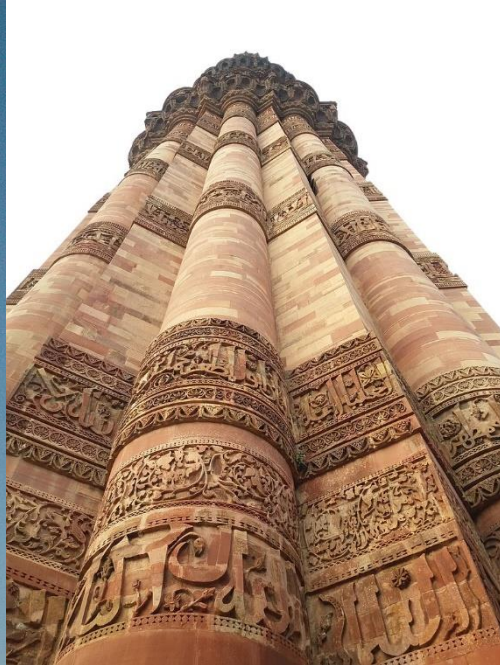


**Jaisalmer Fort, Rajasthan, 1156 CE**  
*Image credit: Garrett Ziegler*

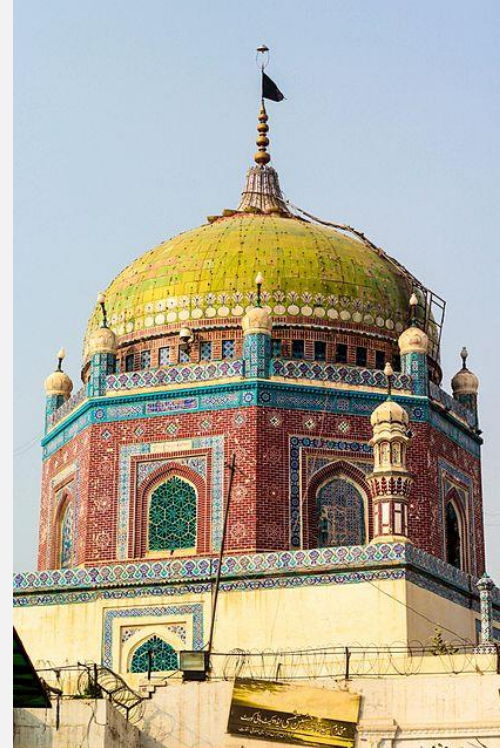


**Mehrangarh Fort, Rajasthan, 1460 CE**  
*Image credit: Fulvio Spada*

# ISLAMIC MONUMENTS: Introduction of New Forms



**Qutub Minar + Alai Darwaza  
(left)**  
**Calligraphy on Qutub Minar  
(above)**  
**Qutub-ud-din Aibak/ Iltutmish  
1192-1220 CE (Delhi Sultanate)**



**Sufi Shrines in Multan, Punjab**

**Shah Shams-ud-din Sabzwari,  
1330 CE (left)**

**Shah Yousuf Gardezi, 1150s CE  
(below)**



# SCULPTURE: Impact of Medieval Period

1. The classical period reached its peak in uniting artist's vision and craftsmanship; rules for sculpting including iconography were canonized in the *Shilpa Shastras*.
2. The medieval era experienced high demand for large scale production of temple art.
3. Sculptures were largely a part of temple architecture and decoration.
4. New regional styles developed, with focus on extensive temple wall decoration, ornamentation of images, extreme body flexion and explicit erotic scenes.
5. Sculptures became more representational than symbolic.



# SCULPTURE: As decorations on temple walls



Khajuraho, 10-11<sup>th</sup> CE u17494029 www.fotosearch.com

*Both religious and secular images used for ornamentation*



*Hoysaleswara, Hoysala, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Secular images with details on garments, ornaments, headdresses, dance forms, musical instruments, and scenes from daily life*

*Sun Temple, Konark, 13<sup>th</sup> CE*

**Art and Culture**

# SCULPTURE: Emphasis on ornamentation & representation



*Varah-Hoysaleswara, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Krishna lifting Govardhan, Keshava temple, Belur, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Mahishasuramardini, Natraja temple, Chidambaram, 12-13<sup>th</sup> century*

## SCULPTURE: In Bronze



*Parvati, Chola, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*

<http://www.artfixdaily.com/artwire/release>

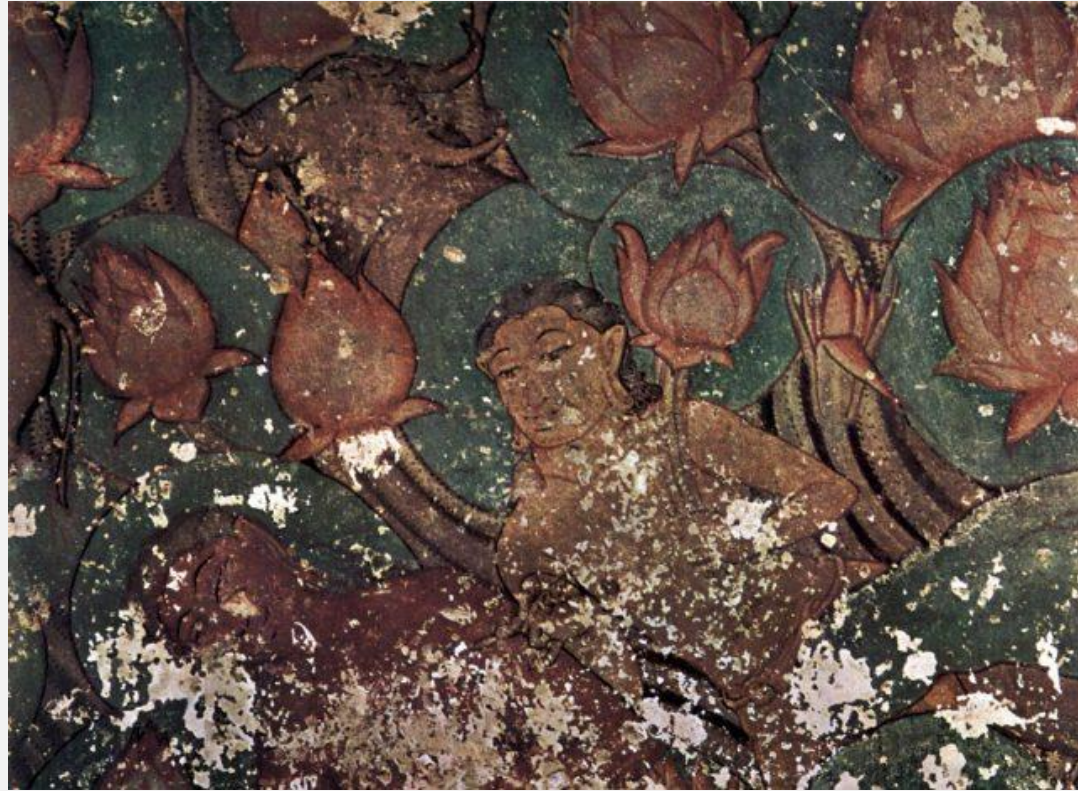
*Exquisite metal sculptures were produced both in North and in South. The Chola bronze sculptures are specially famous.*

*Lost wax method used for producing images.*

*Usually, at least two types of alloy were used-*

- 1. Northern- 8 metals (gold, silver, tin, lead, iron, mercury, zinc and copper)*
- 2. Southern- 5 metals (copper, silver, gold, tin and lead)*

# RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS: In Caves and Temples



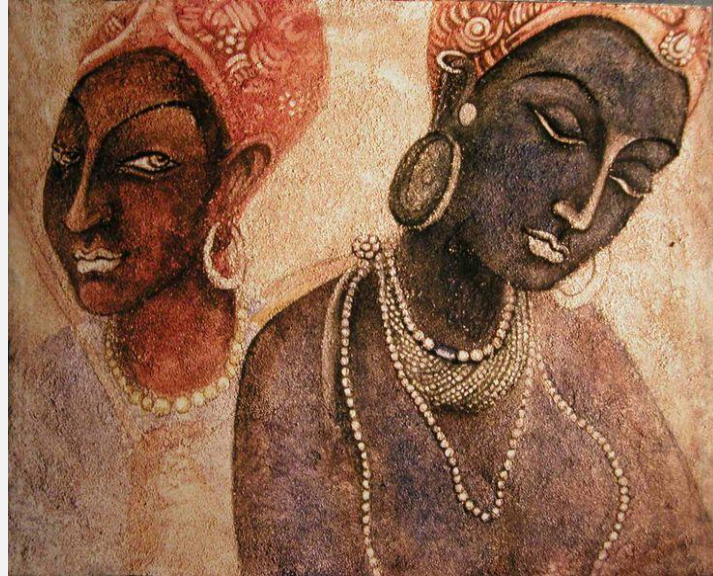
Jain temple, Sittanavasal Cave, Tamilnadu 7-9<sup>th</sup> CE  
<https://www.wondermondo.com/sittanavasal-cave/>

*Distinct styles of painting  
flourished*

*Gaja Laxmi, Mural, Chola, Brihadishvar, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*



# SECULAR PAINTINGS: In Caves & Temples



*Kailashnath temple, Ellora, 8<sup>th</sup> CE*



*Paintings, Veerbhadra temple, Lepakshi-16<sup>th</sup> CE*

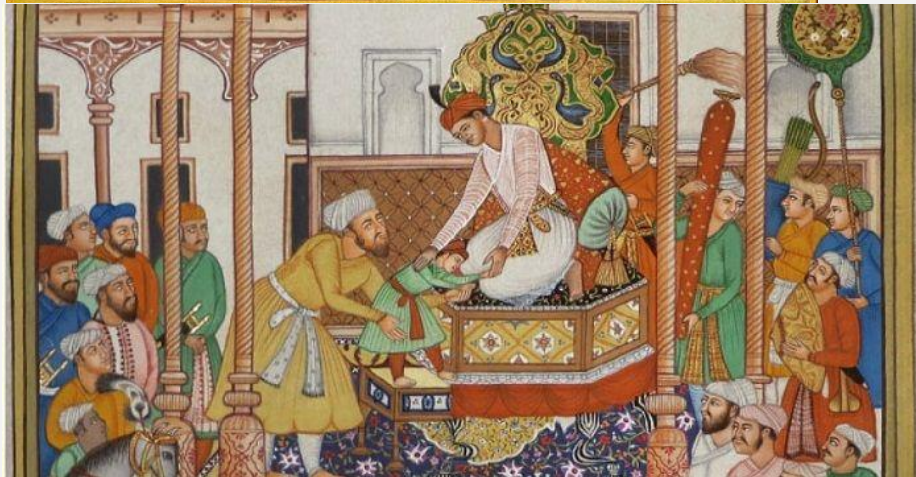


*Dancing girls, Brihadishvar temple, 12<sup>th</sup> CE*

Secular paintings are a rich source of information on life style, hairdos, jewelry, costumes, textile patterns, social hierarchy, dance forms, etc.



# MINIATURE PAINTING



- *Apparently, this style of painting originated in the 8<sup>th</sup> century during the Pals rule in eastern India.*
- *Initially, Buddha's images were painted next to religious texts on palm leaves; hence the images were small. Later, paper was also used.*
- *Colors were derived from vegetables, indigo, precious stones, gold and silver.*
- *In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, this style was introduced in the West during the Chalukya dynasty.*
- *Usually the themes were religious or mythological.*
- *During the Moghul period miniature painting reached its zenith; and new, secular themes were introduced.*
- *Many schools – Pala, Deccan, Jain, Odhisa, Moghul, Rajasthani, Pahari – flourished in later years.*
- *Each with its own style, color combination, and theme.*

**Art and Culture**

## DANCE AND DRAMA: Classical Dance



www.shutterstock.com • 696473041



Kathakali



Sattriya

- *Dance, drama and music have been **associated** with **religious rituals** since ancient times*
- *The **Natya-shastra** codified rules for evoking specific **rasas** (sentiments) in audience through different **bhavas** (gestures, postures and mudras) of the performer*
- ***Dance forms were displayed in Indian temples in reliefs and sculptures***
- *Various dance forms flourished in the **Medieval Period** – Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Manipuri, Sattriya, and Mohiniyattam – now known as the **Classical dance of India**. They follow Natya-shastra.*
- *These are **dance-dramas** in which the **dancer uses gestures to act out a story** based on Hindu mythology.*
- *Classical dance forms added to the **growing regional identities** in art & culture of the medieval era*

Art and Culture

# DANCE: Folk and Tribal Dances



Garba, Gujarat



Thirayattam, Kerala



Dollu Kunitha, Karnataka

- **Different socio-economic environments** gave rise to various **regional or local forms of dances**; unlike the classical dances, these **folk dances were energetic, vivacious and simple forms.**
- Folk dances are performed **during festivals**. Several are **associated with the fertility cult** of tribal areas, e.g., Chhattisgarh, MP.
- Dancers wear **colorful clothes** and often **paint their faces with vibrant colors**
- **Men and women dance in separate groups or dance together**, and sing **folk songs** while performing.
- Presently, about **140 folk and tribal dances exist** – some of which may have their origins in the medieval era.
- Folk and tribal dances greatly **enriched the culture of India**

Art and Culture



# MEDIEVAL POETRY: A Sample of Literature – Increasing trend in regional languages

Poet/Period/Language/meter	Major works	Significant/Type of Literature
<b>Gorakshanath (950-1050CE) Baba and Sheikh Farid (1173–1266CE): Punjabi Poetry,</b>	Kanphata Yogi, Gorakh Samhita (Collections of Gorakh), Vernacular poetry and Poetry of Farid.	Yoga, Mystic Poetry and Sufi poetry
<b>Jayadeva (1200CE):</b> Sanskrit, Songs, eight moods: Ashta Nayika, metrical irregularities,	Gītagovinda: Songs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in musical mode (rāga) and rhythm (tāla)	Vaiṣṇavas (Krishna an incarnation), Dasavatara, Odissi dance, Guru Granth Sahib / Divine Romance
<b>Allama Prabhu (Kannada: 1200CE)</b> Vachana poet of Kannada,	mystic-saint; also promoted Akka Mahadevi, a woman poet	Propagated consciousness of Self and Shiva / Secular and Philosophical
<b>Ameer Khusrow (1300CE):</b> Language: Urdu / Hindavi (Hindi)	"If there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this."	Devotional music form of Sufis/Ghazal, Qawwali, Ruba'i, Tarana
<b>Guru Nanak (1400- 1500CE):</b> Punjabi: metaphorical language	958 hymns, words from Sindhi, Marathi, Persian, and others	Metaphysical and Devotional / Gurubani
<b>Narsimha Mehta (1414-1480CE),</b> father of Gujarati poetry, Vaishnava, "pada (verse)",	"Govinda Gamana: and "Sudama Charita" bhajan: Vaishnav Jan To	Family tradition Shaivism, but also promoted Vaishnava /Devotional and Secular
<b>Kabīr (1500 CE),</b> a mystic poet of vernacular Hindi, Avadhi, Braj; devotion and mysticism	Kabir Bijak, Kabir Parachai, Sakhi Granth, Adi Granth (Sikh), Kabir Granthawali,	Bhakti movement, critical of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam / Secular and Philosophical
<b>Pattuppāṭṭu</b> (ten poems)oldest surviving works of <b>Tamil</b> poetry	interplay of human emotions and sentiments.	Secular Tamil Literature / Emotional Interplay
<b>Hemachandra/Somachandra (1200CE),</b> Sanskrit	Trishashtishalakapurusha-charita, Deeds of the 63 Illustrious Men	History of the world as understood by Jain teachers / History a perspective

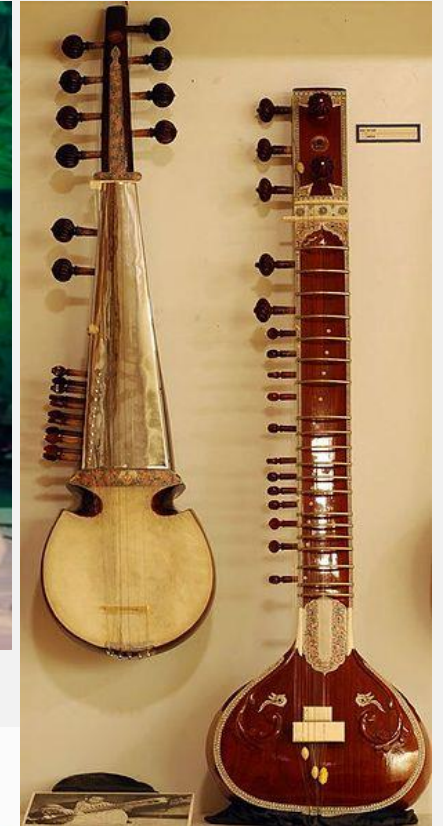
## MEDIEVAL MUSIC: Classical & Folk

- Indian music has its **roots in Vedic literature**- combination of three arts: recital (*vadya*), melos (*gita*), and dance (*nritya*)
- **Natya-shastra** (Sanskrit; 400 BCE-200CE) ascribed to **Bharat** is at the foundation of Indian music and dance
- **Sangit-Ratnakar** (Sanskrit; 13<sup>th</sup> century) by **Sarangadeva** – an authoritative treatise on music and dance. It discusses - swara, tala, raga, instruments, etc.
- **Genres of medieval Indian music** (800-1300 CE)-
  - *Classical music, Khayal and Thumri;*
  - Devotional music- *Bhajan* (North) and *Kriti* (South);
  - *Qawwali (sufi poems)* and *Ghazal* (by Amir Khusrau, 1300 CE)
- **Classical Music** – *Hindustani* (North) and *Carnatic* (South)
- **Folk Music**- About 17-30 forms exist over different parts of the country. Similar or different forms may have existed in the medieval period as they are-
  - Sung at the turn of seasons, religious festivals, and birth & marriage
  - With themes around love, nature and philosophy

# MUSICAL RECITALS & INSTRUMENTS



*Modern setting of a musical recital*



Art and Culture

# Bibliography & Credits

1. A. K. Coomaraswamy, The Dance of Siva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture, Dover Publications, New York, 1985.
2. A. K. Coomaraswamy, History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Dover Publications, New York, 1985.
3. A. L. Basham, The Wonder that was India, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, 1967.
4. R. Thapar, A History of India, Vol. 1, Penguin Books, 1990.
5. S. K. Saraswati, Art, Chapter XX in “The History and Culture of Indian people: The Struggle for Empire,” editor R. C. Majumdar, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2001.
6. U. Singh, A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Pearson Education, 2009.
7. V. Ions, Indian Mythology, Peter Bedrick Books, New York, 1986.
8. <https://commons.wikimedia.org>
9. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>
10. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multan>
11. <https://www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-photo-narasimha-avatar-sculpture-image23436795>
12. <https://www.heritagedaily.com/2017/05/15-historic-forts-from-india/114819>
13. <https://www.timemaps.com/history/south-asia>
14. <https://www.agefotostock.com/age/en/Stock-Images/Royalty-Free/WR0511994>
15. <http://www.artfixdaily.com/artwire/release/9605-exceptional-bronzes-sculpture-and-paintings-lead>
16. <https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-art/paintings/miniature.html>
17. <https://www.dreamstime.com/nayaka-painting-gajalakshmi-inside-wall-cloister-mandappa-brihadishvara-temple-thanjavur-tamil-nadu-nayaka-image118946658>
18. <http://wcdf-france.com/ajanta-ellora-painting/ajanta-ellora-painting-ajantha-ellora-paintings-12-best-ajanta-ellora-art-images-on/>