

# Cultural Pattern and Developments in Medieval Period of India

Ashok Kumar

Research Scholar, Dept. of History, MDU Rohtak

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**ABSTRACT:** Any beneficial cultural pattern connects extraordinary significance to the dynamism and essentialness of social, political and monetary development. Among the early societies, the Greek and Roman social frameworks remained likewise, for the advancement of the levelheaded, moral and tasteful resources in man. In India, most profound sense of being not an iron deficient but rather a dynamic and sweeping otherworldly existence – has been the predominant strain in her way of life from its extremely first light. Antiquated Indian culture remained for an endless assortment of images and customs. The expressive arts were esteemed in old India essentially for their ability to uncover something of the excellence and sublimity of the Divine. Sri Aurobinda has brought out perfectly in the Foundations of Indian culture, "The agent Indian disposition, as communicated in the Vedas, was not one of a weak deep sense of being."

**Keywords:** Medieval Period, history, India, culture, period, music, dance, art, architecture etc

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## INTRODUCTION

India is the only country with the largest and most diverse mixture of tradition and culture. The entrancing country is so alluring where the extraordinary landmarks and charming goals say a lot about the convention and culture of Indian individuals. India is home to a significant number of the finest social images of the world which incorporates sanctuaries, holy places, mosques, posts, performing expressions, established moves, figures, depictions, engineering, writing and so forth., Some of the esteemed and fabulous World Heritage Sites in India are the Hampi, Khajuraho, holes of Ajanta and Ellora, Konark Sun Temple, Taj Mahal, and Brihadeswara Temple in Tanjore. The way of life of India is one of the most established on the planet which is rich and differing. Culture is everything in a specific culture and Indian culture is no simple composite of changing styles and impacts. Indian culture was shaped all through different periods of history. It is a variety of stunning assorted varieties and startling inconsistencies, yet most importantly, it speaks to the multifaceted parts of India all in all. The Medieval Period of Indian History includes a long stretch, traversing from sixth century i.e after the fall of the Gupta Empire to the eighteenth century, i.e the start of pilgrim control. Present day students of history, for the comfort of concentrate the state and society of medieval India, more often than not partition the period into Early Medieval Period and Late Medieval Period. As indicated by them the Early Medieval period allude to the period of Indian history that extends from the fall of the Gupta Empire to the start of the Sultanate time frame in the thirteenth century. The period that includes principally that of the rules of the Sultanate and the Mughal period is for the most part considered as the late medieval period, obviously with territorial varieties. The idea of state in the early medieval period is set apart by the nearness of a substantial number of provincial and neighborhood powers, without a foremost power in the nation. Notwithstanding, this period saw the nearness of imposing political elements, frequently described by specific students of history as 'provincial majestic kingdoms'. But in the late medieval period, particularly in the Sultanate and Mughal rules, abnormal state of centralization of energy is recognizes, that too in the real parts of the Indian sub mainland. Patriot historiography attempted to see the whole medieval period as one and furthermore endeavored to build up the presence of brought together domain, as a continuation of the old realms, along these lines nullifying the components of changes that occurred in the idea of state amid the period. They took after the 'tripartite' division of the frontier students of history, with certain subjective movements. The Marxist historiography as a rule worried on the characteristics of decentralized divided strategy amid the period under dialog, which itself indicated certain

auxiliary changes in the political existence of the country. The notable component of the Marxist approach is to recognize the foundation of 'arrive stipends' as the key specialists of progress acquiring parcelled sovereignty. In this point of view the early medieval period is likened with primitive nation. This clarifies the variety of political powers in India, particularly amid the early medieval period. The medieval model was to a great extent developed on the premise of Puranic and Epigraphic information relating for the most part to North India thus it is censured by another model. The 'Segmentary State' drawing data from a huge assortment of South Indian Inscriptions. Albeit, medieval and segmentary models are commonly incredulous of each other, there is a shared characteristic in their methodologies. The two models accentuation's on the divided political expert and in this manner contended for political emergency and custom power.

The Medieval period is considered as a time of extraordinary social union in India. Amid this period another period of social advancement was started. The Turks and Mughals presented crisp thoughts and caused in offering ascend to new highlights in the ranges of religion, reasoning and thoughts, Language and Literature, Styles of engineering and utilization of building material, Painting and Fine expressions, Music and performing expressions. India as of now had an exceptionally rich social custom in all circles. The blend between various societies brought forth new philosophical and religious customs, thoughts, structures and styles in all circles' of culture. new religious developments like Sufism and Bhakti, ascent of Sikhism as another religion, development of Urdu and Persian dialect and writing, development of writing in different Indian dialects, the engineering of the Sultanate and Mughals with provincial varieties, new types of music, the Mughal painting and other new styles that rose in India.

### **ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN CULTURE**

"Indian culture has a long and continuous history. It extends over 5000 years. India developed a way of life, which she modified and adjusted as and when she came into contact with outside elements. In spirit, however, it was quite in keeping with the indigenous doctrines and ideas. This accounts for the long and continuous period of Indian culture. It is this characteristic of Indian culture that enabled it to withstand many vicissitudes, and to continue to mould the life of Indians" (Murthi P. Kamath, 1976). The most outstanding feature that has made Hindu culture a living force is the tradition of tolerance. Indian culture is primarily and fundamentally religious. The religious note generally permeates all the intellectual and artistic creations of the Hindus. Hinduism believes in Universal toleration and accepts all religions as true. The Hindu mind is all-embracing. This is seen in the word manavadharma or manavasamskriti or human culture which the Hindus gave to their culture. Indian culture is comprehensive and suits the needs of everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It has universal appeal and makes room for all. It has the modesty to admit the propriety of other points of view. This idea has been beautifully developed in the Jaina theory of 'Syadvada or the theory of may be'. According to this theory no absolute affirmation or denial is possible. As all knowledge is probable and relative, the other man's point of view is as true as anybody's. In other words, it suggests that one must show restraint in making judgements. This is a very healthy principle. One must know that the judgements are true only partially and can by no means be regarded as true in absolute terms. It may be likened to the story of the seven blind men "trying to make out the form of an elephant, by each feeling a different limb. They are convinced that the elephant is like a pillar, or a snake, or a hard substance, or a wall, or a brush with a flexible handle, accordingly as each in turn touches its leg, or trunk or tusk or body, or tail." It is this understanding and catholicity of outlook that have been largely responsible for the advancement of Indian culture. This attitude has helped to bring together the divergent races with different languages and religious persuasions. And this spirit explains the existence of a common culture from the Himalayas in the North to Cape Comorin in the South. From the earliest times, India followed a policy of 'live and let live'. She was not averse to contact with foreign cultures. In fact, it is her contacts with the outside elements that have added to the richness and variety of her culture. Besides the earliest races like the Negritos, Proto-Austroloids, Dravideans and Aryans, who have contributed a good deal to her composite culture, India saw the advent of many foreign hordes like the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians or the Sakas, the Pahlavas or the Parthians, the Kushans, the Huns, the Gujars and others from the second century B.C. She welcomed them and absorbed their best elements in her culture. In the words of Murthy and Kamath (1976), "In medieval times, the advent of Islam into India created many cultural complications. For a time India stood surprised. But it is to the credit of Indian culture that it Indianised Islamic culture by absorbing the best elements. Today there are about seventy million Muslims living in India. It is gratifying to note that in spite of the political complications arising out of the secession of the predominantly Muslim provinces and their constitution into a separate State, India has successfully upheld her tradition or religious and social toleration by her unbending insistence on the secular character of the state and her stern refusal to convert into a Hindu nation.

## DIMENSIONS OF INDIAN CULTURE

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

## CULTURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

Cultural tourism in India is the predominant factor behind India’s meteoric rise in the tourism segment in recent years, because from time immemorial, India has been considered the land of ancient history, heritage and culture. The Government of India has set up the Ministry of Tourism and culture to boost cultural tourism in India. The Ministry in recent years has launched the ‘Incredible India’ campaign and this has led to the growth of cultural tourism in India. India has had many rulers over the centuries and all of them made an impact on India’s culture. The influence of various cultures can be seen in dances music, festivities, architecture, traditional customs, food and languages. It is due to the influence of all these various cultures that the heritage and culture of India turns out to be exhaustive and vibrant. This richness in culture goes a long way in projecting India as the ultimate cultural tourism destination. Among the various states for cultural tourism in India, Rajasthan is the most popular. The reason for this is that Rajasthan is famous for its rich cultural heritage. The state is renowned for many magnificent palaces and forts which showcase the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan. The various folksongs and music also reflect the cultural heritage of the State. A large number of festivals and fairs are held in Rajasthan such as the Camel festival, Marwar festival and Pushkar festival. All these attract many tourists to Rajasthan for they get to see the rich culture of the state. Tamil Nadu is also famous for cultural tourism in India, for it shows the Dravidian tradition and culture. It has many temples which mirror the rich cultural heritage of India. Uttar Pradesh, too, has a lot of tourist places which also testify to the rich culture of the country. Cities like Varanasi, Allahabad, Vrindavan and Ayodhya in UP attract large number of tourists for they encapsulate beautiful vignettes of India. Uttaranchal is also famous for cultural tourism in India. This state has the Himalayas which is called the ‘abode of the Gods’. Many ancient temples are found in the Kumaon and Garhwal region of the state. Indian culture is a medley of amazing diversities and startling contradictions, but above all, it represents the multifaceted aspects of India as a whole (Princy Vij, 2008). The performing arts culture of India is a fusion of the arts, an aesthetic sensibility shared between music, dance, drama and literature. India, the glorious land of rich culture and heritage is known for ages for its unique performing arts, whether it be dance, music and theatre, or the modern forms like cinema. Indians, traditionally have always transcended the barriers in the way to cultural development. India is a large and populous country with a great past and a great tradition. It can boast of some four thousand years of civilized life, and as such it must be ranked as one of the great civilizations whose traditions arise directly from its past. For these reasons, for any foreigner a visit to India must have a profound cultural impact and in this first and broadest sense, all tourism in India involves at least an aspect of culture contact and is therefore potentially cultural tourism. The significance of this broad definition is at once apparent, as it will include the great majority of foreign visitors of the wealthier categories, able to stay in first class hotels and to spend considerable sums of money. Thus, cultural tourism in India

has a part to play as a foreign exchange earner. On the other hand, the cultural interests of such visitors, by and large, are likely to be limited to visits to one or two major monuments only.

### **Culture, Music and Dance**

The Mughals appreciated music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was adorned by famous musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan was fond of vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatta. But Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. However, ironically, the largest number of books on classical music was written in his reign. Dance Kathak is recognized as one of the 8 classical dance styles of India. Kathak originated and is most popular in northern India. The name of this unique dance form comes from the word "katha" which literally means "story". Kathak dancers were known as 'kathakars or storytellers who presented religious and moral instruction in narrative form. Music, mime, and dance became important features of their technique and when this mingled with the decorative dance styles introduced by the Moguls (14th-17th centuries) Kathak became a complex movement form capable of dealing with the themes of Hindu myths as well as more contemporary subjects. Subsequently its narrative content became highly refined (that which remained dealing primarily with the stories of Radha and Krishna) and dancers focused on music and rhythm. Kathak performers are noted for their virtuosic fast turns and stamping footwork, whose rhythms, exaggerated by ankle bells, develop into highly complex metrical sequences. The story of Kathak begins in ancient times with the performances of professional story-tellers called kathakars who recited or sang stories from epics and mythology with some elements of dance. The traditions of the kathakars were hereditary and passed in an oral tradition. There are literary references from the 3rd and 4th centuries BCE which refer to this kathakars. By the 13th century a definite style had emerged and soon technical features like mnemonic syllables and bols developed. In the 15th-16th century at the time the Bhakti Movement, Rasalilas had a tremendous impact on Kathak. The form of dance even made its way to the Kathavachakas who performed in temples.

### **LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES**

**Sanskrit literature** The medieval period witnessed the growth of a rich corpus of literature that accompanied the development of new languages. The conventional view among historians was that the patronage of the Sanskrit language had declined because the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate led to the patronage of Persian. But this period witnessed the growth of a rich corpus of Sanskrit literature. This period is marked with composition of poetical works called the Kavya (poetical narrative) and the texts that codified laws called the Dharmashastras. During the first half of the medieval period Sanskrit received patronage from the numerous smaller political establishments in central and south India. In western India Hemachandra Suri was an important Jain scholar who composed works in Sanskrit, as was Chaitanya. There were also many dramas written during this period. A new style of writing called the champu also emerged during this period. It was a form that mixed both prose and poetry. Among the Sanskrit works that were written with the patronage of the Rajput kings were their family histories like the Prithvirajvijaya and the Hammirmahakavya. Among the historical poems of the period was the Rajavinoda that was a biography of Sultan Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat written by his court poet, Udayaraja. Another important work was Kalhan's Rajtarangini, which presented a history of the kings of Kashmir. It was written in the 12th century A.D. The second Rajtarangini was written by Jonaraja who wrote the history of the kings of Kashmir from Jayasimha to Sultan Zainul Abidin and the third was written by Srivara who wrote the history of the region till 1486. Apart from these there were the prabandhas which were semi historical texts written during the period. After the 15th century the patronage of the Sanskrit language was maintained in the southern courts of the rulers of Vijayanagar, Nayakas of Tanjor and the chiefs of Travancore and Cochin. The various genres of Sanskrit literature like Mahakavyas, Slesh Kavyas, Champu Kavyas, Natakas and the historical Kavyas continued. Among the important writers of this period were Govinda Dikshita (Sahitya Sudha and Sangitsudhanidhi being among his important works); Appaya Dikshita (in the court of the Nayaka ruler of Vellore); Nilanatha Dikshita (who was a minister in the court of the Nayaka of Madurai); Chakrakavi (who was patronized by the rulers of Kozhikode). The historical Kavyas gave a glimpse not just of the exploits of the various rulers but also a glimpse of the social perception of the writers. Some of the Mughals like Dara Shukoh also came to be mentioned in these Kavyas. The Mughal prince is also credited with the composition of a prasasti in honour of Nrisimha Sarasvati of Benaras. There were also a few works composed in the courts of the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda, but Sanskrit literature during this period began to decline.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural heritage of India dots a special place among the countries of the globe. With the passage of time, its significance is getting even more realized and recognized, to the extent of considering 'culture' as the mainstay of the largest democracy in the world. 'Incredible India' campaign has risen to a higher pedestal owing to the importance being given to the cultural symbols of the country. The socio-economic, political, legal, environmental and technological vibes of India are closely knitted to form part and parcel of the nation's culture- where in lies its strength and indomitable spirit. In the realm of domestic tourism too, the diverse cultural expressions have played a great role. Indian art and architecture are classic representations of aesthetic beauty and time-tested creativity. The backgrounds of artistic productions are unique to India. Several inspirational and influential factors could be attributed to art and architecture of India. Yet, the humility and unflinched commitment to the society, which were the hallmarks of early artists are depreciating in the 21st century. This is not at all a good sign for the cultural elation and dignity of the nation. On the basis of the pattern and direction of selective cultural adaptation that is taking place in India in the process of globalization of culture, and considering the historical features of its social structure and institutions it could be concluded that the Indian culture, whether local or national has sufficient resilience to succeed in preserving its cultural identity and also workout a successful and creative synthesis between the global and the local, regional and national levels of cultural styles, forms, and practices.

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