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INDIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

In the first lesson, we have discussed the meaning of culture, the concept and different characteristics of culture. This lesson will tell us about the cultural heritage of our country. The knowledge of our past traditions and practices is very important because by understanding these, we can understand our present culture. Our food, dress, languages, music and art forms etc. are all parts of our culture are transmitted from one generation to the next over years. All these are woven into an integrated whole and lend Indian culture its distinctiveness.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to

- explain the meaning of cultural heritage;
- explain what is enculturation; and
- state different facets of culture from ancient to modern times.

33.1 MEANING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

A nation is recognised through its achievements – past and present. The past achievements, which survive the onslaught of time pass into the realm of heritage. Thus heritage is that item of culture which is inherited by the posterity collectively. The Sun temple of Konark, the pyramids of Egypt, the Kumbha Mela, many rituals and beliefs associated with day-to-day life and the *Vedas* are some examples of Cultural Heritage.

We, the people of India, are the successors of a rich cultural heritage, created and left for us by our ancestors in different walks of life.

India's cultural heritage is not only one of the most ancient, but it is also one of the most extensive and varied.

Throughout its history, people of diverse cultures have either temporarily come into contact with India or have permanently settled here in to evolve a distinctive Indian Culture. As a matter of fact, Indian Culture presents a synthesis of several ways of life. Over several generations, material components and intellectual give India its unique identity as a nation visible in many aspects of our culture like food, dress, ornaments, architecture, sculpture language, literature, science, technology, dance and music, art and painting, values and practices etc. The achievements in all these areas of activity that have come down to us defying the ravages of time, are termed as our heritage. In the following section, we shall discuss some of them.

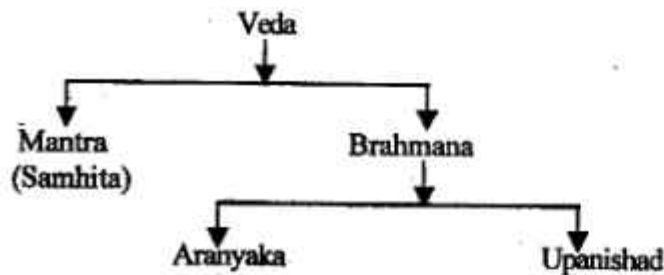
33.2 THE HERITAGE LITERATURE OF INDIA (BHARAT)

We, Indians, are the beneficiaries of a unique body of literature called 'The Vedas', the world's earliest literary heritage. It is carbonated to 1500 B.C., though Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, on the strength of astronomical evidence dates the earliest part of the Veda to about 2000 B.C.

The term *veda* is coined from the root '*vid*' meaning knowledge. The contents of the *vedas* were handed down through generations orally/audially. Because of this practice, the *Veds* are also designated as *Sruti*, meaning something that is 'heard or revealed'. It is believed that no one authored the Vedas. The contents were revealed to the rishis; or they were flashed before their minds eyes in the depth of their mystical experience; They were only the media to transmit to posterity the insight which they received. The transmissions were carried through verbally and were received audially. This is why, *veda is synonymous with 'Sruti'*.

The vedas are four in number. These are: the Rig, the Yajur, the Sama and the Atharva. The Rig-veda is said to be the oldest scripture of the world. It is a heritage, not of Bharat alone, but of the humanity, as a whole.

The Rig-veda is largely a book of prayers. The Yajur veda deals with sacrificial rites. The Sama is a repetition of a part of the Rig-veda, set to music, to be sung at appropriate stages during the sacrificial rituals. The Atharva Veda contains what later has come to be known as Science as well as morals and ethical codes to guide human behaviour.



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Each veda is divided into two parts: The Mantra and Brahmanas (liturgies in prose). The Mantra part is also called 'Samhita'. The Brahmanas teach the 'know-how' of sacrificial rites. The Aranyakas teach meditation based upon the symbolical interpretations of the liturgical rites. The Upanishads may roughly be described as philosophical treatises dealing with the ultimate problems of life and after life. By the term Veda we mean only the Mantra or Samhita Part. Each Samhita has its own Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads having different and independent names.

Each Samhita is divided into a number of parts -- a part is called a "Mandala". A Mandala is divided into "Suktas" (a group of related Mantras) and a Sukta contains a number of stanzas/mantras.

Next in importance is the Bhagavad Geeta. It is an integral part of Mahabharata, set in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna (believed to be an incarnation of God Vishnu) and Arjuna, a warrior prince. The dialogue took place in the midst of a battlefield. It contains discussions on problems of life and death, duty, devotion, knowledge, meditation and solutions there to. Manliness and selfless devotion to duty are the keynotes of this great treatise. Distinct from the Sruti, there is a body of literature known as Smriti, meaning 'remembered'.

Deriving their authority from the Sruti, the Smriti explain, elaborate and illustrate the fundamental teachings of the Sruti. They provide codes to regulate society. The chief among the smritis, is that of Manu. The others are by Parasara, Yajnavalkya, Vasistha, etc. These are more than one hundred.

Then there are Ramayana and Mahabharata, technically called 'the Itihas', they contain the history of two most important ruling families, the Kuru and Ikshvaku, that shaped the destiny of Bharat. Though they deal primarily with the story of Rama and that of the Kuru dynasty, they are respected as the basic foundations of Bharatiya Culture.

Then, there are the Puranas -- 36 in number, 18 Mahapuranas and 18 Upapuranas. These are stories woven around some historical event or personality to inculcate



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basic human values through concrete evidences. The Jataka tales of Buddhism, Jaina literature move around several incarnations of Buddha and also address the inculcation of values guiding healthy human relationship.

There is another body of literature known as "Agama". These are sectarian scriptures dealing with the worship of particular God and Goddess and prescriptions of discipline for the worshipper.

There flourished six systems of Philosophy in different times of ancient Bharata. They are known as *Darsana* meaning visions of truth. They are *Nyaya* of Gautama, *Vaisesika* of Kanada, *Sankhya* of Kapila, *Yoga* of Patanjali, *Mimansa* of Jaimini and *Vedanta* of Badarayna or Vyasa.

The treatises on Nyaya and Vaisesika are around the atomic theory of creation. Sankhya propounds the animate soul and inanimate matter as the basic factors in creation. Yoga deals with the control of the mind and the body. Mimansa upholds the Vedic ritualism. Vedanta, meaning the culmination of the Vedas, is based upon the Upanishads.

The Geeta, Brahmasutra (of Vyasa) and the Vedanta are known as 'Prasthan Traya', meaning three basic scriptures, leading to the highest goal. The Vedanta offers rational solutions to the fundamental problems posed by the Darshana.

Apart from these fundamental scriptures which are supposed to have regulated the Hindu way life for millenia, there are other literary creations of the ancient India, surpassing time and space. They are 'the Panchatantra by Vishnu Sharma, Rajatarangini by Kalhana, Kadambari by Bana Bhatta, Meghadoota by Kalidasa, Artha Sastra by Chanakya, Astadhyayee (a treatise on Grammar) by Panini, Natya Sastra by Bharata, etc. There are also treatises on various branches of science, such as *Charaka* and *Susruta Samhitas* on Medicine and Surgery, *Brihat Samhita* on Astronomy by Baraha Mihir etc.

Down in the recent history, the Mughals were great patrons of literature and gave a considerable impetus to its development in different branches. Not only emperors but the ladies of the royal households from Humayun's mother to Zebunnisa, the famous daughter of Aurangzeb, were patrons of art and literatures. Babar and Jahangir wrote their own memoirs. Many thinkers and scholars flourished and wrote interesting and important works under the patronage of Akbar. At Akbar's court gathered a galaxy of poets and men of literature. Abul - Fazl, was Akbar's "friend philosopher and guide" has written "Deen - I - Akbari". The scholar Prince, Dara translated the principal Upanishads into Persian. There had been drastic changes towards the latter half of the 19th century commencing from the time when India came in contact with the west.



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Great Indians, such as Raja Rama Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekanand and Mahatma Gandhi and many others turned their attention to a critical examination of Indian social practices, such as Brahminical rituals, caste rigidity, plight of the widows and women and came out with ideas to weed the Indian culture from its dead wood. These led to great social and religious awakening and produced literature in different regional Indian languages. Many Sanskrit works have been translated into English and other Indian languages. Widespread English Education has also introduced new ideology and western thought into the literature of regional languages. Various branches of literature - novel, story, drama, essay, and poetry - were enriched. With the advent of 20th century, national awakening and freedom struggle introduced the sentiment of patriotism into Indian literature. Today we see in our literatures, an attitude of realism and an enlarged global vision. National spirit and patriotism deeply impressed the evolution of modern literature and consequently some of the best works were composed in this period. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Subramanyam Bharati, Dinkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, to name only a few, belong to a galaxy of powerful writers whose works have already entered the realm of heritage was the pioneer in this field.

(Photographs of Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore and Vivekanand Dinkar may be given)

33.3 DANCE AND MUSIC

Dance and Music have always been popular in Indian Culture, patronized by kings and nobles. However, Mohammad Shah liberally patronised music in the first quarter of 18th Century. Talented musicians like Adarang and Sadarang were famous for their Veena playing. Raja Tuljaji of Tanjore (of South) himself was a well - versed musician, patronised, musicians liberally. He has written a famous book on music "Sangeet Saramrit". The bhajans (devotional songs) of Tyagraj of Tanjore were very popular in South India. Together with music, dance was encouraged during modern India. The traditions of *Kathkali*, *Manipuri*, *Bharat Natyam* and *Odissi* have been popularised by great artists like Rukmini Devi, Menaka, Gopinath (Bharat Natyam), Madame Simaki (Kathakali), Raj Kumar and Priya Gopal (Manipuri), the couple of Raghunath Panigrahi, Sanjukta Panigrahi (Odissi) and the latter's Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra have popularised both dance and music throughout India and abroad.





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India is full of folk - dances and folk - lore. They are flourishing together with the classical dances. The popular and well known folk dances are Bhil- Nritya, Santhal- Nritya, Naga - Nritya, Gajar (Bengali), Kajri (U.P. and Bihar) and Ahir - Nritya (U.P), the Chau of Orissa have been entertaining the people of India from times immemorial. The martial dance with sticks & words and strings are also popular throughout India. Dances of some tribal communities are stunningly colourful.

A large number of books have been published on folk - dances and other dances of India. "Shantiniketan" several institutions like of West Bengal have been contributing immensely to both song, dance and other forms of art. The music is woven into the texture of the dance patterns. The Government of India has also been doing a good deal in this direction. The Sahitya Academy (the National Academy of Letters), Sangeet Natak Academy (Academy of Music Dance and Drama) and Lalit Kala Academy (Academy of fine arts) are some of the prominent Academies established by the Government of India for the development of Art and Culture.

(Photographs of various dancers are to be given)

INTEXT QUESTIONS 33.1

Match column 'A' with column 'B'

A	B
1. Adarang and Sadarang	Odissi
2. Raghunath Panigrahi and Sanjukta Panigrahi	Kathakali
3. Rukmini Devi	Veeena
4. Madame Simak	Bharatnatyam

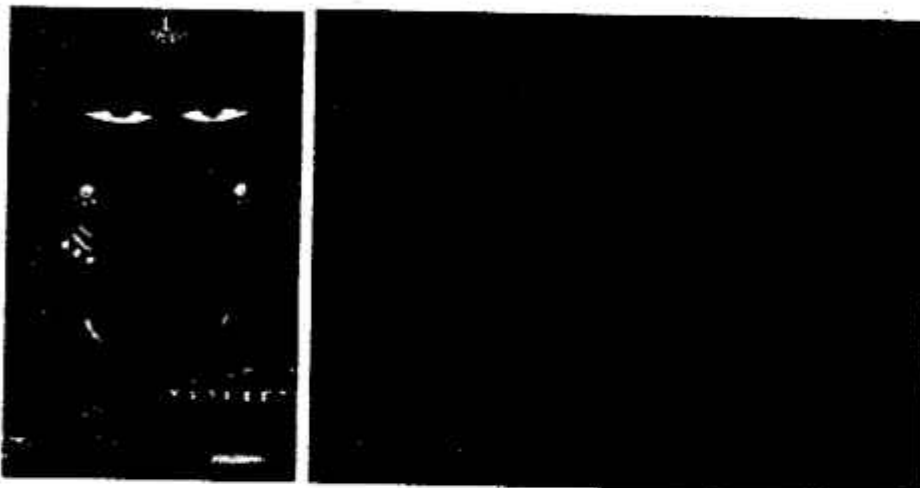
33.4 ART AND PAINTING

The paintings of ancient India are master-pieces of all times. The fresco paintings on the walls and ceilings of the Ajanta and Ellora caves and those at Bagh in Gwalior in the style of Ajanta still attract admiration. The most important compositions are the procession of elephants and a dancer with women musicians. The Madhubani paintings of Madhubani of Bihar and *Patta* Painting of Orissa are some good examples of ancient art and painting. The Rajput paintings are sensitive, delicate and serene. They show close association with religion.

During the Mughals, fine art rose to a standard of considerable excellence. Being lovers of fine art, the mughal kings patronised new styles and techniques where one can notice a happy mingling of Persian and Indian elements. This synthesis has left a deep impression on painting, architecture, embroidery, jewellery and metal work of the age. Painting made remarkable progress during the time of Akbar. His personal interest in painting, generous aesthetic temperament, sympathetic attitude towards foreign artists, his religious tolerance and active association with Hindus are noticeable in the paintings of his times. The best work of painting were undertaken when Akbar was staying at his new capital Fatepur Sikri. All artistic creations of this period breathe an air of luxury.



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After the decline of the Mughals, the traditional continuity disappeared. The creative power and the faculty of appreciating real art had also declined. The paintings and writings which ushered in a new beginning during the early decades of the 20th century mainly done by the Bengal Renaissance. Then gradually it spread to other parts of the country. Mention can be made of artists like Ravi Verma and M.F. Hussain (Photographs) who are acclaimed internationally in the field and painting.

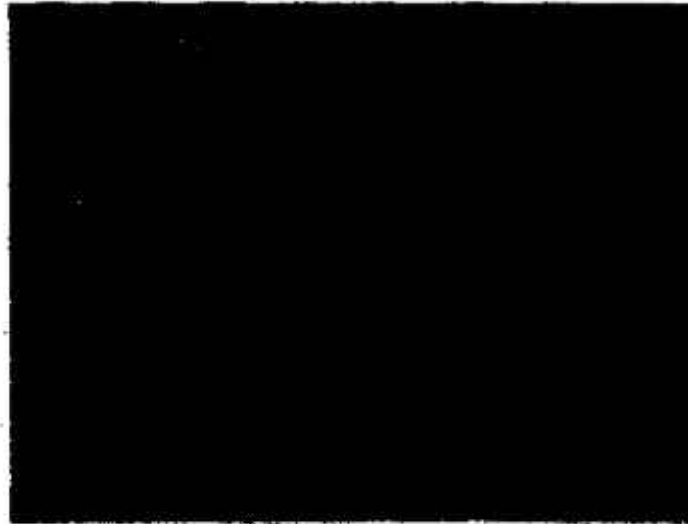
33.5 ARCHITECTURE

Ancient India was as rich in the domain of sculpture and architecture as in the field of art and literature. The Vishnu temple at Deogarh, the Sun temple at Konark, the famous temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri are admired as gems of ancient Indian architecture. Khajurajo temples in Bundelkhand built of buff - coloured sandstones are still standing as loud witness to the outstanding architecture of ancient India. The Jain Dilwara temples of Mount Abu exhibit sculptural decoration of most marvelous richness and delicacy. The temples of Orissa have special place in the field of Indian architecture. The Orissan temples are characterized by the absence



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of pillars in the halls, an adorned interior and a lavishly adorned exterior. Among the finest of these are Lingaraj temple, Mukteswara temple and Rajarani temple at Bhubaneswar besides the Sun temple of Konark and the Jagannath temple of Puri. The strong and magnificent forts of Chittorgarh, Gawalior, the grand fort of Jodhpur the Hawa Mahal, and Amar Palace of Jaipur, the palaces of Jaipur, Udaipur and Gawalior, and the towns like Jaisalmir, Kota and Udaipur are some of the examples of architectural skill of India.



Sun temple of Konark

With the advent of Mughals, Indian architecture entered a new phase in which the rugged and simple work of the earlier Sultans of Delhi is softened and beautified by Persian influence. Architecture under the Mughals attained a very high peak. Mughal architecture reveals a happy blending of Persian and Indian style. The Gol Gumbaz at Fatepur Sikri, the Taj Mahal in Agra, the Red-Fort, Diwan - i - Am and Diwan - i - Khas and the Jama Masjid represent this style. The Mughals were famous for gardens. As per the Persian style, the gardens were to be geometrical in design containing, artificial lakes, channels, tanks and water - falls, which were freely provided. Another important innovation was the making of terraces at different levels.

During the British rule, the western architectural styles became popular and spread all over the country. In the beginning of 20th century, two distinct schools emerged in Indian architecture :

- a. Revivalist school which aimed at the revival of indigenous architecture and

- b. The progressive and modern school which inclined toward the western models.
The latter had been more popular.

The constructions of Victoria Memorial in Kolkata and at New Delhi were designed by Engineers. In spite of expansion of western architecture, many Indian Princes and Nawabs constructed a few structures in traditional Indian design. The modern magnificent buildings at Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Mysore and other places are the best specimens of the art of Indian master-builders. The bathing Ghats of Haridwara, Ujjain, Varanasi and Maheswar, the temples at Mathura, the Jain temple of glass at Indoor and the Birla temple at Delhi and the Vishnu temple at Nagda in Madhya Pradesh are those which were least influenced by the western ideas. They are the brilliant examples of Indian architecture set in modern times.

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33.6 SCULPTURE

The Mathura and Sarnath schools, paid special attention to the physical charm of the statues and to the dignity of their poses. Statues of Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha and other gods and goddess were sculptured in minute details. All the statues found inside the temples of Orissa (Puri, Konark, Bhubaneswar etc.) are characterized by a highly developed sense of rhythm and beauty.

Modern India have maintained the sculptures of ancient and medieval India but there is no significant mark of advancement in sculpture in contemporary India.

INTENT QUESTIONS 33.2

Write the name of the places where the following are situated :

- a. Sun Temple

- b. Victoria Memorial

- c. Hawa Mahal

33.7 NORMS AND VALUES

Every culture contains a large number of guidelines which direct individual and groups conduct themselves in particular situations. A norm is a specific guide and action which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviours and particular situations.

Values, on the other hand provide more general guidelines. A value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important, worthwhile, and worth striving for.

Many norms can be seen as reflections of values. A variety of norms can be seen as expressions of a single value.

Certain norms and values are essential for the operation of human society.

A great deal of attention was directed by the thinkers of ancient India to provide specific guidelines to individuals to conduct their inter-personal relationships in specific situations.

The values and practices of ancient India were of great importance. These practices could be easily seen in institutions like marriage and rituals and languages. For example the *Grhya Sutras*, lay down that the following rituals are essential for the marriage ceremony: *Kanyadana*, *Agnisthapana*, *Homa*, *Panigrahana*, *Lajja Homa*, *Agni Parinayana* and *Saptapadi*. These rituals form an integral part of the traditional marriage ceremony. In addition to these, *Lokachara* or the customs prevailing in the community are observed. In case there is any doubt about these, old-women are normally consulted. This too has been the practice all along.

All human societies have their own rituals which are considered important by their members. In Indian society, the emphasis on rituals seems to be a bit high. There are numerous practices connected with rites *de passage*, festivals, pilgrimages besides the daily worship of gods and goddesses. For example millions of people from all corners of India congregate on specific occasions such as *Kumba* on a specific placelike *Haridwar* and *Allahabd* without any invitation or announcement. The values / beliefs attached to this practice is the same as these were years back. The religious practices and values associated with Indian culture are constantly striving towards "*Samanvaya*" i.e. reconciliation and concord. Cultural practices have been modified from time to time, but different environments, diversified racial contribution have not basically affected the continuity of Indian culture associated with its values and practices.



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33.8 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In ancient India, the study of the Veda in addition to subjects like astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic medicine and surgery (Ayurveda), agriculture military science (Dhanurvedya).etc. were also studied with considerable interest. Sacrifices had to be performed as the sine-qua-non of the vedic way of life on an altar of prescribed size and shape. This requirement gave rise to the science of geometry. The priests formulated rules for constructing squares equal in area to oblongs and oblongs to squares; and, methods for making triangles equal to squares and oblongs and circles equal to squares; etc. Baudhayana, was the Mathematician. Virddha Garga, Lagdha Aryabhata the astronomers, have had a lasting impact on science in India. Aryabhata authored two great scientific works "Aryabhatiya" - and "Surya - Siddhanta". He was first to enunciate that the earth is round and revolves round the sun. He also explained the movements of the stars and analysed the causes of the solar and lunar eclipses. Moreover, Aryabhatiya deals with algebra, geometry, arithmetic and trigonometry. It also throws light on the numbers. The concept of zero has been his everlasting contribution to science and mathematics.

Varahamihira was another great scientist of this age. He was the author of the famous book "Brihatsamhita deals with astronomy, botany, geography and many other subjects. But its main subject is astronomy, a work still considered to be an authority.

Besides astronomy and mathematics, the science of medicine also flourished in the Gupta period. Vridha - Vagbhatta was perhaps the greatest physician of this age. The system of medicine that he adopted and propagated was the same as that of Charaka and is considered an authority on the ancient system of medicine. Dhanavantari was another great medical authority in the science of Ayurveda system of medicine.

Brahmagupta was another famous mathematician of this period. He is credited with the discovery of the use of the zero and the profounder of the decimal system. These two discoveries revolutionised mathematics.

Though India achieved remarkable progress in the field of science in ancient times, it received a setback in the medieval age. But the contact with the West and the Indian Renaissance made Indians realize that development of science, scientific inventions and discoveries were responsible for unprecedented progress and material prosperity of the west. Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose made discoveries on plant-life in 1897 and startled the world by his demonstration in short waves wireless. In 1902, Prafulla Chandra Ray wrote the history of Hindu Chemistry, which acquainted the West with our progress in the field of Chemistry. In 1911 the Indian Institute of Science was founded by Tata at Bangalore for all research



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work in physics, chemistry etc. In 1914, Indian Science Congress was started to promote the study and research in science, to acquaint people with the progress of science, to create interest in science and establish close contacts among the scientists. It has been doing admirable work in the field of science. As a result of this, Indians made remarkable progress in various branches of science and gained international fame. In 1918, Srinivas Ramanujam started the world by his talents in Mathematics, discoveries of Jagdish Chandra Bose in Botany, contributions of C.V. Raman to Physics in 1930 have all brought them international reputation and acclaim. In recognition of his researches, Raman received the Nobel Prize for Physics (1930). He established the Raman Institute of Science at Bangalore to promote the study of Physics. To further the cause of science the National Academy of Science was founded at Allahabad in 1930. As a result of these institutions and researches therein, science gained popularity. In colleges and universities it became a subject of higher studies.

After the political liberation, the Government of India had started a separate department to encourage scientific inventions and constituted an advisory body for it. Gradually, interest in the scientific inventions and discoveries increased and the people and the Government both moved in this direction rapidly. Consequently, a large number of technical scientific institutions were established. Among these, the National Physical Laboratory at Delhi, National Chemical Laboratory at Pune, National Metallurgical Laboratory at Jamshedpur, Fuel Research Institute at Jharia Coalfields, Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute, Institute of Radio Physics and Electronics at Calcutta, are well known. Besides these, Geological Survey of India, established in 1916, and Botanical Survey of India are doing praiseworthy work in their own fields. All these institutions have trained scientists and keep on making valuable contributors to various branches of science.

Also, we have famous nuclear scientists like Dr. Raja Ramanna who is known as the father of India's nuclear science. Our space scientists, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Kalpana Chawla have made commendable contributions in their field. (We are proud to have Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as the president of our country while recently we have lost Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian Woman who went to space).

INTEXT QUESTIONS 33.3

Fill in the Blanks:

- _____ was a noted mathematician of ancient India.
- _____ is the author of the two scientific works named as "Aryabhattiya" and "Surya Siddhanta".

- c. _____ received the Nobel Prize for Physics.
- d. Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore was founded by _____.



Notes



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- India has a rich cultural heritage.
- The second section of the lesson discusses the various aspects of culture like literature, architecture, sculpture, art and painting, music and dance as well as science and technology in order to understand Indian Cultural Heritage in a better way.
- Indian culture, has absorbed various ingredients of the Aryan, Dravidian, Persian, Greek, Chinese, Muslim and various other cultures, and has become very wide and assimilative.
- Today, we need such a human culture which may not only unify the ancient and modern Indian culture but also have synthesis of the East and the West. India is the only country where the East and West can interact happily and synthesize easily.
- We have to achieve a new synthesis in which the cultural heritage of our ancient land will be reconciled and enriched.
- Nothing is more advantageous and more credible than a rich heritage. But nothing is more dangerous for a nation than to sit - back and live on that heritage alone.
- A nation cannot progress if it merely imitates its ancestors ; what builds a nation is creative, inventive and vital activity.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Write briefly the meaning of Indian Cultural Heritage.
2. Discuss any two aspects of our culture to know the Indian Cultural Heritage.
3. Write notes on:
 - a. Norms and Values
 - b. Art and Paining.
4. Write about contributions of Indian scientist in brief.



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GLOSSARY

- a) Architecture - the art and science of designing and erecting buildings.
- b) Sculpture - the art or practice of shaping figures or designs as by carving wood, marble or clay etc.
- c) Heritage - to inherit something passed down from preceding generations.
- d) Norms - a standard model or pattern regarded as typical for a specific group of people.
- e) astronomy - the scientific study of the universe beyond the earth.
- f) Treatise - a formal account in writing systematically of some subjects.



ANSWER TO INTENT QUESTIONS

33.1

1. Adarang and Sadarang Veena
2. Raghunath Panigrahi and Sanjukta Panigrahi Odissi
3. Rukmini Devi: Bharatnatyam
4. Madame Simak: Kathakali

33.2 a. Konark b. Kolkata c. Jaipur d. Agra

33.3 a. Baudhayana b. Aryabhata c. C.V.Raman d. Tata