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so that your preparation stays aligned with standard sources. And it doesn't look a new content.

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-how questions are twisted

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All The Best !

ART AND CULTURE - MASTER INDEX

Chapter / Theme	Topic
Theme 1	Buddhism-Doctrines,Sects,Literature,Art and Architecture
Theme 2	Jainsim-Doctrines,Sects,Literature,Art and Architecture
Theme 4	Indian Paintings-Murals,Miniatures,Folk and modern
Theme 5	Indian dance forms-Classical and regional
Theme 6	Indian languages and Literature
Theme 7	Indian philosophical systems-Orthodox and Heterodox



THEME 1: BUDDHISM-DOCTRINES, SECTS, LITERATURE, ART & ARCHITECTURE

Core Concepts

1. **Core Metaphysics & Epistemological Doctrines:** The foundational philosophy rests on the **Four Noble Truths (Arya Satyas)** and the **Eightfold Path (Ashtangika Marg)**. Metaphysically, Buddhism vehemently rejects the eternal soul (**Anatman/Anatta**) but accepts rebirth via **Pratityasamutpada (Dependent Origination)**—a massive chain of cause and effect. It also postulates **Kshanabhangavada (Theory of Momentariness)**, asserting the universe is in constant, microscopic flux. Epistemologically, brilliant logicians like **Dignaga** and **Dharmakirti** established that Buddhism accepts strictly **only two Pramanas** (means of valid knowledge): **Perception (Pratyaksha)** and **Inference (Anumana)**, aggressively rejecting Vedic verbal testimony.
2. **The Four Great Councils & Sectarian Schisms:**
 - * **1st Council (Rajagriha, 483 BCE):** Patronized by **Ajatashatru**; **Upali** recited the *Vinaya Pitaka* (rules) and **Ananda** recited the *Sutta Pitaka* (sermons).
 - **2nd Council (Vaishali, 383 BCE):** Patronized by **Kalasoka**; caused the first major schism over monastic discipline between the orthodox **Sthaviravadins** (Elders) and the progressive **Mahasanghikas** (Great Congregation).
 - **3rd Council (Pataliputra, 250 BCE):** Patronized by **Ashoka**; presided by **Moggaliputta Tissa** who compiled the philosophical *Abhidhamma Pitaka* and expelled heretics.
 - **4th Council (Kashmir, 72 CE):** Patronized by **Kanishka**; presided by **Vasumitra** and **Ashvaghosha**. Formally split Buddhism into **Hinayana** and **Mahayana**, and compiled the massive Sanskrit encyclopedia, the *Mahavibhasha Shastra*.
3. **The Vast Literary Corpus (Pali vs. Sanskrit):** Early orthodox texts were exclusively in **Pali**, forming the **Tripitaka**. The later **Mahayana** and surviving **Hinayana** sects (like Sarvastivadins) shifted entirely to **Sanskrit**. Key Sanskrit texts include the *Lalitavistara* (mythological life of Buddha), the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* (Perfection of Wisdom), and the *Buddhacharita* (the first epic poem, authored by Kushana court poet **Ashvaghosha**).
4. **Stupa & Rock-Cut Architecture (Chaitya vs. Vihara):** A classical **Stupa** is a cosmic mandala in stone. Its core elements include the **Anda** (hemispherical dome representing the cosmos), **Harmika** (square balcony on top representing the gods' abode), **Chhatra** (central umbrella signifying the *axis mundi*), **Medhi** (elevated circular terrace), and **Toranas** (intricately carved gateways).
5. In rock-cut architecture, **Chaityas** (e.g., **Karle, Bhaja**) are strictly arched **prayer halls** containing a central stupa at the apse. **Viharas** are quadrangular **residential monasteries** with individual cells surrounding a central courtyard.



A toranas

6. **Evolution of Sculptural Schools (1st-5th Century CE): Mathura School:** Fully indigenous. Utilized **spotted red sandstone** to carve fleshy, powerful, smiling Buddhas, typically in the **Abhaya Mudra**, heavily inspired by earlier Yaksha figures.

- **Gandhara School:** Patronized by Kushanas. Utilized **bluish-grey schist/stucco** with profound **Greco-Roman/Hellenistic** influence. Depicted the Buddha with wavy Apollo-like hair, muscular features, and heavy toga-like drapery.



Chaitya



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Mathura School vs Gandhara school

- **Amaravati School:** Patronized by **Satavahanas/Ikshvakus** in the Vengi region. Utilized luminous **white marble** for incredibly dynamic, densely packed, and sensuous narrative reliefs of *Jataka* tales.
- **Sarnath School (Gupta Era):** The classical zenith. Utilized **Chunar sandstone** for highly refined, spiritualized, and introspective Buddhas featuring completely transparent, clinging draper.



Amravati
School



Sarnath School

PYQ Bullseye

1. **Milinda Panha's Dialogue:** The text *Milinda Panha* (Questions of Milinda) is a profound philosophical dialogue written in **Pali**. It records the theological conversations between the Indo-Greek King **Menander I** and the Buddhist monk **Nagasena**, resolving complex queries on the nature of the self (*Anatman*) and the mechanics of rebirth without a soul. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
2. **The Bodhisattva Pantheon:** Central to **Mahayana**, a Bodhisattva deliberately **delays their own Nirvana** to help all sentient beings achieve salvation. Key figures: **Avalokiteshvara/Padmapani** (infinite compassion, holding a lotus), **Vajrapani** (spiritual power/protector, holding a thunderbolt), **Manjushri** (supreme wisdom, wielding a flaming sword to cut ignorance), **Maitreya** (the prophesied Future Buddha), and **Kshitigarbha** (guardian of purgatories/hell realms). (UPSC CSE Prelims 2016)
3. **Sects of Buddhism (Lokottaravada & Sammatiya):** The **Lokottaravadin** sect (an offshoot of the Mahasanghikas) argued for the "supramundane" (deified) nature of the Buddha, asserting his earthly life was a mere cosmic illusion. The **Sammatiya (Pudgalavada)** sect controversially believed in a **Pudgala** (a transmigrating, semi-permanent personal entity), directly challenging the strict *Anatman* doctrine. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
4. **Mara Vijaya at Ajanta:** Powerfully depicted in both the paintings of **Cave 1** and the massive rock-cut sculptures of **Cave 26 at Ajanta (Vakataka patronage, 5th Century CE)**. The *Mara Vijaya* depicts the exact moment of enlightenment, showcasing the demon **Mara's** army attacking and daughters seducing Siddhartha, who steadfastly touches the earth (**Bhumisparsha mudra**) to witness his victory. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
5. **Pala Patronage & Mahaviharas:** The **Pala Dynasty (8th-12th Century CE, Eastern India)** heavily patronized **Vajrayana/Tantric Buddhism**. They established and expanded massive monastic universities (*Mahaviharas*) like **Nalanda, Odantapuri, Somapura**, and the famous **Vikramashila** (founded explicitly by **King Dharmapala** to counter the decline of Nalanda). (UPSC CSE Prelims)

Prelims Traps

1. The Ashokan Sanchi Architecture Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Emperor Ashoka built the entire grand Sanchi Stupa with its famous carved stone gateways.
- **The Reality: Emperor Ashoka (3rd Century BCE)** only built the original, much smaller **brick core** of the Great Stupa. The massive stone casing, the balustrades, and the four intricately carved **Toranas** (gateways) were added centuries later by wealthy merchant guilds during the **Sunga and Satavahana** periods.



Stupa and its parts

2. The Symbols vs. Human Form Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming the Buddha was always worshipped in human form in ancient Indian art.
- **The Reality:** In early Buddhist art (**Bharhut and early Sanchi**), the Buddha is **never** depicted in human form. His presence is indicated strictly through aniconic symbols: the **Empty Throne**, **Bodhi Tree**, **Footprints (Chatuskam)**, **Dharma Wheel**, and **Stupa**. Human depictions only began in the **1st Century CE (Kushana era)** under Mahayana influence.



Buddhapada-aniconic phase

3. The Hinayana vs. Theravada Language Trap:

- **The Trap:** Using the terms Hinayana and Theravada interchangeably, assuming all Hinayana sects used Pali.
- **The Reality: Theravada** (Doctrine of the Elders) is technically the *only surviving* conservative school of the broader, now-extinct **Hinayana** umbrella. Crucially, Theravadins wrote exclusively

in **Pali**, while other massive extinct Hinayana schools (like the **Sarvastivadins** in Kashmir) wrote their foundational canons entirely in **Sanskrit**.

4. The Chaitya vs. Vihara Architectural Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming both terms simply refer to generic, interchangeable Buddhist temples.
- **The Reality:** A strict architectural distinction exists. **Chaityas** are strictly arched **prayer halls** designed exclusively for congregational worship and circumambulation around a stupa. **Viharas** are purely residential **monasteries**, built as quadrangles with a central courtyard and surrounding individual cells for monks to live and study.



Vihara

5. The Vajrayana Evolution Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Buddhism remained a strictly austere, philosophical monastic order until it disappeared from India.
- **The Reality:** By the **8th Century CE**, Buddhism evolved into **Vajrayana** (Thunderbolt Vehicle). It completely absorbed esoteric **Tantric** practices, focusing heavily on magical spells (*Mantrayana*), intricate mandalas, and the supreme worship of female savior deities like **Tara**, heavily deviating from the original simple, rational teachings of Gautama.

Major Buddhist Philosophical Sects

Sect	Key Characteristics	Subsects / Key Features
Hinayana	• Orthodox, conservative. • Focuses on Arahantship (individual salvation). • Rejects Buddha's deification and idol worship.	• Sthaviravada: Strict adherence to original teachings. • Sautrantika: Emphasized Buddha's discourses.
Theravada	• Developed in Sri Lanka (~3rd BCE). • Preserves the Pali Canon. • Focuses on Vibhajjavāda (analysis-	• Key Text: Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa. • Practiced in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos.

	based teaching).	
Mahayana	• Liberal, focuses on Bodhisattva path and universal salvation. • Introduced Buddha deification and idol worship.	• Madhyamika: Founded by Nagarjuna; emphasizes śūnyatā (emptiness). • Yogacara: Consciousness-Only Doctrine.
Vajrayana	• Evolved from Mahayana (~5th CE). • Incorporates Tantric rituals, mantras, meditation.	• Prominent in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan. • Features deities like Tara, Avalokitesvara. • Focus on esoteric enlightenment.
Zen Buddhism	• Offshoot of Mahayana. • Focuses on meditation and direct spiritual experience over doctrines.	• Popular in Japan. • Practices include Zazen (seated meditation) and simplicity.

Major Buddhist Philosophical Sects

Philosophical Sect	Sub-Branch Of	Key Founder(s)	Core Epistemological/Metaphysical Doctrine
Vaibhashika (Sarvastivada)	Hinayana	Vasumitra	Strict realists. Believed that all phenomena (dharma) exist objectively in the past, present, and future simultaneously (<i>Sarvam Asti</i>).
Sautrantika	Hinayana	Kumārāśīla	Critical realists. Rejected the <i>Abhidhamma</i> ; relied strictly on the <i>Suttas</i> . Believed external objects exist but are known only through inference, not direct perception.
Madhyamika (Shunyavada)	Mahayana	Nagarjuna	The "Middle Way". Asserted the doctrine of Shunyata (Emptiness) . Absolutely everything is devoid of inherent, independent existence; all phenomena are merely relative and conditionally arisen.
Yogacara (Vijnanavada)	Mahayana	Asanga & Vasubandhu	Subjective idealism. Asserted that the external material world is a complete illusion. Only consciousness/mind (Vijnana) is absolutely real.

Core Buddhist Mudras & Iconography

Mudra (Gesture)	Visual Identifier	Theological Significance / Life Event
Bhumisparsha Mudra	Right hand reaching down to touch the earth, palm inward.	The " Earth Witness " posture. Depicts the defeat of the demon Mara at Bodhi Gaya right before enlightenment.
Dharmachakra Mudra	Both hands held at chest level, forming intersecting circles.	Represents " Turning the Wheel of the Law ." Symbolizes the First Sermon delivered at the Deer Park in Sarnath .
Abhaya Mudra	Right hand raised to shoulder height, palm facing outward.	The gesture of fearlessness, reassurance, and protection . Very prominently featured in early Mathura school sculptures.
Dhyana Mudra	Both hands resting in the lap, right hand over the left, palms up.	The gesture of absolute meditation and deep concentration. Associated with the final phase of intense meditation under the Bodhi tree.
Varada Mudra	Right arm hanging naturally down, palm facing outward.	The gesture of charity, compassion, and boon-granting . Indicates the Buddha's dedication to the salvation of all sentient beings.
Vitarka Mudra	Right hand raised, thumb and index finger touching (forming a circle).	The gesture of teaching, intellectual discussion, and transmission of the Dharma without the use of words.

THEME 2: JAINISM IN GREAT DETAIL (DOCTRINES, SECTS, LITERATURE, ART & ARCHITECTURE)

Core Concepts

1. Epistemological Relativism

(Anekantavada & Syadvada): Jainism strictly avoids philosophical absolutism. **Anekantavada** is the metaphysical doctrine that reality has infinite, complex aspects. **Syadvada** is the epistemological counterpart—the "theory of conditioned predication"—asserting that all human judgments are only partially true and must logically be preceded by "**Syat**" (in a certain sense / maybe). This is further categorized into **Nayavada** (the theory of partial viewpoints).

Jain tirthankara in Kayotsarga Posture

2. **Panpsychism & Material Karma:** Unlike other orthodox or heterodox schools, Jainism believes that absolutely everything possesses a soul (**Jiva**), including seemingly inanimate objects like rocks, water drops, and fire. Furthermore, **Karma** in Jainism is not an abstract action; it is a literal, microscopic **material substance** (atomic particles) that physically clings to the soul due to human passions. Liberation (**Moksha/Kaivalya**) requires stopping the influx of new karma (**Samvara**) and burning off existing karma through extreme asceticism (**Nirjara**).



3. **The Great Magadhan Schism:** The monolithic Jain order formally split following a severe 12-year famine in **Magadha (3rd Century BCE)**. The orthodox faction, led by **Bhadrabahu**, migrated south to **Shravanabelagola (Karnataka)**, maintaining the original strict rule of absolute nudity to form the **Digambaras** (Sky-clad). The progressive faction that stayed in Magadha, led by **Sthulabhadra**, convened the First Jain Council at Pataliputra and adopted white robes to form the **Shvetambaras** (White-clad).



Shvetambara vs Digambara

4. **Agamic Literature Compilation:** The canonical texts of Jainism (*Agamas*) were orally transmitted for centuries. The Shvetambara canon (comprising **12 Angas, 12 Upangas, and Prakirnakas**) was written in

the vernacular **Ardha-Magadhi Prakrit**. It was finally codified and permanently committed to writing at the **Second Jain Council of Valabhi (5th Century CE)**, presided over by **Devardhigani Kshamashramana**. The Digambaras completely reject this canon, claiming the original, unadulterated teachings were irrevocably lost.

5. **Jain Art & Ayagapatas:** Early Jain art is prominently found at **Mathura**, running entirely parallel to early Kushana Buddhism. A unique architectural hallmark of Jain Mathura art is the **Ayagapata**—intricately carved votive tablets or slab-shrines specifically used for offering and meditation.

Jain Ayagapata



6. In rock-cut architecture, the **Udayagiri-Khandagiri Caves in Odisha** (patronized by the great Jain **King Kharavela, 1st Century BCE**) are strictly residential monasteries (**viharas**), notably completely lacking the massive central worship halls (**chaityas**) found in contemporary Buddhist cave architecture.



Udayagiri Caves

PYQ Bullseye

1. **The Sthanakvasi Sect:** A major sub-sect of **Shvetambara** Jainism founded in the **17th Century** by the merchant **Lavaji**. It is defined by its absolute rejection of all idol worship and temple rituals. Instead, Sthanakvasis pray solely in austere community halls (**Sthanaks**) and focus entirely on meditating upon the ancient scriptures. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2018)
2. **The Yapaniya Sect:** An extinct, highly syncretic medieval Jain sect once prominent in **Karnataka**. They cleverly bridged the Great Schism by uniquely adopting the **Digambara practice of total monastic nudity** while simultaneously accepting the **Shvetambara theological belief that women can attain liberation** (a core concept that strict Digambaras absolutely deny). (State PCS / UPSC Prelims)
3. **Sallekhana / Santhara:** The ultimate, highly revered Jain vow of voluntarily and gradually fasting to death. It is undertaken strictly when the body is terminally diseased, excessively old, or no longer capable of sustaining rigorous spiritual practices, distinguishing it completely from conventional, emotion-driven suicide. (UPSC CSE Prelims)



Interior of Dilwara Marble Temple

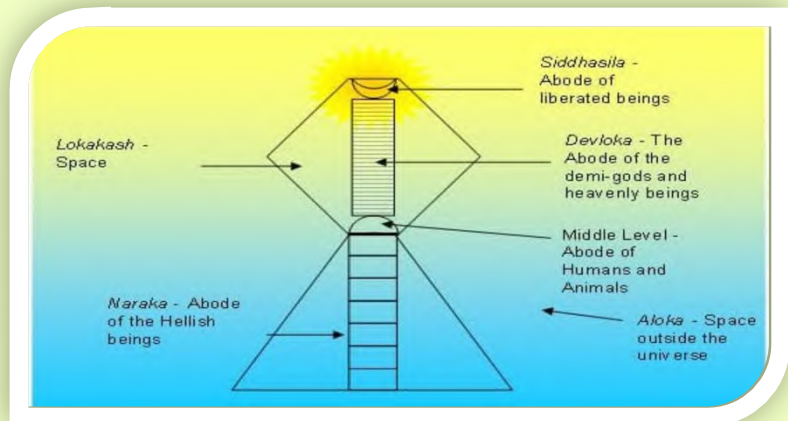
4. **Dilwara Marble Temples (Mount Abu):** Built between the **11th and 13th Centuries CE** under the royal patronage of the **Chalukyas (Solankis) of Gujarat** (specifically by ministers **Vimal Shah** and **Tejpal**). They are world-renowned for their pristine white marble, unimaginably intricate ceiling filigree, and heavily sculpted pillars, despite having deliberately plain, unadorned external facades to prevent looting. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
5. **Assimilation in Hindu Texts:** Demonstrating ancient religious fluidity, the **1st Tirthankara, Rishabhanatha (Adinatha)**, is explicitly mentioned with deep reverence in the orthodox **Vishnu Purana** and **Bhagavata Purana**, where he is assimilated directly into the Hindu pantheon as an incarnation (avatar) of Lord Narayana. (UPSC CSE Prelims)

Prelims Traps

1. The Creator God Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Jainism, being a deeply ritualistic religion, believes in a Supreme Creator God who judges karma.
- **The Reality:** Jainism is strictly **non-theistic regarding creation**. It asserts that the universe is eternal and uncreated, operating autonomously on universal cosmic laws.

While gods (**Devas**) do exist in Jain cosmology, they are mortal, subject to karma, and occupy a significantly lower spiritual status than the enlightened human **Jinas (Tirthankaras)**.



2. The Agricultural / Ahimsa Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Jain *Ahimsa* (non-violence) simply means following a basic vegetarian diet like many orthodox Hindus.
- **The Reality:** Jain *Ahimsa* is extraordinarily radical. It explicitly prohibits agriculture and ploughing because turning the soil inevitably kills microscopic organisms (**Nigodas**) and earthworms. This unique, strict theological restriction historically pushed the Jain community exclusively into urban trade, commerce, and banking.

3. The Kaivalya vs. Nirvana Trap:

- **The Trap:** Using Buddhist and Jain salvation terminology interchangeably.
- **The Reality:** While Buddhists seek *Nirvana* (the blowing out of desire/existence), Jains specifically seek **Kaivalya (Absolute Omniscience)**. A Jain who attains *Kaivalya* becomes a **Kevalin**. Furthermore, the chief enlightened disciples of Mahavira are called **Ganadharas**, which are entirely distinct from Buddhist *Bodhisattvas* or *Arhats*.

4. The Basadi Architectural Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Jains use the exact same architectural terminology (Vihara/Chaitya) as Buddhists across all of India.



Gommateshwara

- **The Reality:** While early Jains used *viharas*, in peninsular and South India, Jain monastic establishments and temples are specifically and exclusively termed **Basadis (or Bastis)**. For example, the colossal monolithic statue of **Gommateshwara (Bahubali)** at **Shravanabelagola** is surrounded by numerous ancient *Basadis*.

5. The Early Mauryan Patronage Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Emperor Ashoka was the only Mauryan to heavily patronize a heterodox sect (Buddhism).
- **The Reality:** Ashoka's grandfather, the formidable founder of the empire **Chandragupta Maurya**, famously abdicated his throne to embrace Jainism. He migrated south with the monk **Bhadrabahu** and performed *Sallekhana* at **Chandragiri Hill (Shravanabelagola)**, establishing a massive royal precedent for Jain patronage in the deep South.

Major Sub-Sects of Jainism

Primary Sect	Major Sub-Sects	Crucial Theological & Ritual Identifiers
Digambara (Sky-Clad, South India, Strict Nudity)	Bisapanthi	Worship idols of Tirthankaras using elaborate rituals, fresh flowers, fruits, and fire (<i>aarti</i>). They rely heavily on religious clerics called Bhattarakas .
	Terapanthi	A reformist offshoot that rejects the authority of Bhattarakas . They worship idols but strictly use dry substitutes (like sand, rice, and dry coconut) instead of fresh flowers and green fruits to prevent violence

		to plant life.
	Taranpanthi	Founded by Taran Svami. They completely reject all idol worship , instead revering and worshipping the sacred Jain scriptures directly in their shrines.
Shvetambara (White-Clad, North/West India, Robed)	Murtipujaka (Deravasi)	The largest Shvetambara sect. They are strict idol worshippers who physically adorn the idols of Tirthankaras with rich clothes, jewelry, and prominent metal eyes.
	Sthanakvasi	Founded in the 17th Century. Strictly aniconic (rejects idol worship) . Monks wear the <i>muhapatti</i> (white cloth over the mouth) permanently to avoid inhaling microscopic life.
	Terapanthi	An 18th-century offshoot of the Sthanakvasis founded by Acharya Bhikshu . Highly organized under a single supreme leader (Acharya). Also strictly rejects idol worship.



THEME 3: INDIAN PAINTINGS-MURALS, MINIATURES, FOLK, MODERN

Core Concept

1. **Prehistoric Rock Art Pigments (Bhimbetka):** Discovered by **V.S. Wakankar (1957–58)**. The **Mesolithic period** holds the largest concentration of rock paintings in India. Artists created colors by grinding natural minerals: **hematite (geru)** for red and **chalcedony/limestone** for white. Crucially, they utilized **plant leaves and tree sap** as a binding agent (glue) and brushes made from plant fibres.



Bhimbetka Rock art

2. **Ajanta's Chronology & Technique:** Out of 29 caves, paintings survive predominantly in Caves **1, 2, 9, 10, 16, and 17**. The figures in **Caves 9 & 10** belong to the earlier **Satavahana period (1st Century BCE)**, while the detailed masterpieces in **Caves 1, 2, 16, 17** belong to the **Vakataka period (5th Century CE)**. The artists exclusively utilized the **Fresco-Secco (dry plaster)** technique, never true wet fresco.



Ajanta Mural

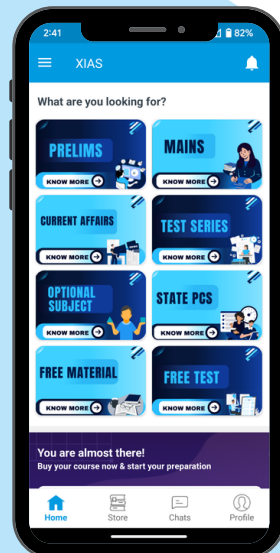
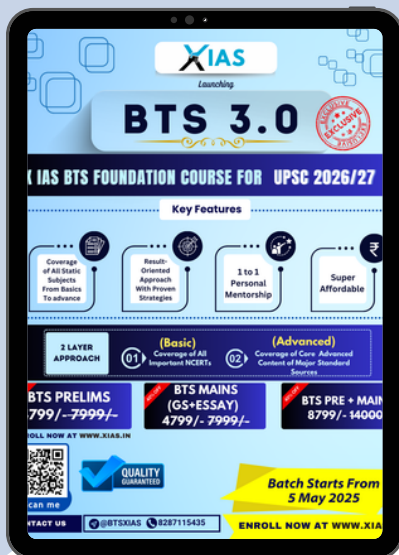
3. **Badami Cave Murals (Karnataka):** Patronized by the **Chalukya King Mangalesha (6th Century CE)**, these are primarily found in **Cave 4** (a Vaishnava cave). A specific prominent mural showing King Mangalesha seated with his courtiers watching a dance scene represents the **earliest surviving Brahmanical (Hindu) murals** in India.





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4. **Pala vs. Western Miniature Schools: The Pala School (8th–12th Century, Eastern India)**

was the earliest miniature tradition, exclusively utilizing **palm leaves (*Tala Patra*)** to illustrate **Vajrayana Buddhist** themes. In stark contrast, the **Western/Jain School (Gujarat/Rajasthan)** transitioned to **paper in the 14th Century**, heavily utilized **gold and lapis lazuli**, and introduced the hallmark "**protruding further eye**" in profile faces.

5. **The Vijayanagara Decline (Lepakshi):** Found in the **Virabhadra Temple (Andhra Pradesh, 16th Century)**, the Lepakshi murals mark a stylistic decline from earlier classical periods, characterized by stiff figures, heavily outlined profiles, and angular features. Their most unique identifier is the **complete absence of primary colors** (red, blue, yellow), relying entirely on earth tones like ochre and black.



PYQ Bullseye

- **Bodhisattva Padmapani & Vajrapani:** The most iconic murals of Indian art are located in **Cave 1 of Ajanta**. **Padmapani** (holding a blue lotus) represents infinite compassion, while **Vajrapani** (holding a thunderbolt) represents spiritual power, both painted in the classic **tribhanga** (three-bent) posture. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2017)



Bodhisattva Padmapani and Vajrapani

- **Kalamkari Tradition:** A highly specialized hand-painted cotton textile tradition found in **Andhra Pradesh** (Sri Kalahasti and Machilipatnam). Deriving its name from *kalam* (pen), it exclusively uses **natural vegetable dyes** to depict elaborate, continuous narrative scenes from Hindu epics. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2015)
- **Bani Thani Masterpiece:** Painted by **Nihal Chand** under the patronage of **King Savant Singh (Nagari Das)**, this painting is the crown jewel of the **Kishangarh School (Rajasthani)**. It is instantly recognizable by highly idealized facial features: elongated faces, sharply arched eyebrows, and lotus-petal eyes. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2018).



Bani Thani

- **Mural Painting Locations:** Ancient Indian mural paintings with significant continuous narrative structures are prominently found in the caves of **Ajanta** and the Veerabhadra temple of **Lepakshi**. However, the **Sanchi Stupa** is known purely for its stone sculptural gateways (*toranas*), **NOT** for mural paintings. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2013)
- **The Bengal School of Art:** Spearheaded by **Abanindranath Tagore**, this modern movement aggressively rejected the European realism popularized by **Raja Ravi Varma**. It drew inspiration from Ajanta and Mughal miniatures, and adopted the Japanese '**wash technique**' to create a distinctly nationalistic Indian art style. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2007)



Bengal School of art illustration

Prelims Traps

1. The Ajanta vs. Ellora Religion Trap:

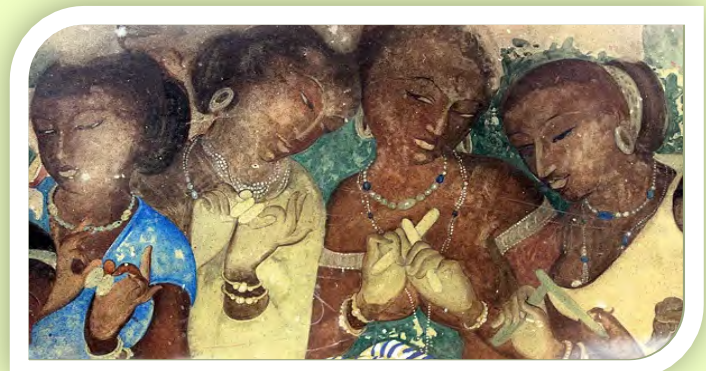
- **The Trap:** Assuming both Ajanta and Ellora host multi-religious cave paintings.
- **The Reality:** The caves and murals at **Ajanta** are **EXCLUSIVELY Buddhist** (spanning both Hinayana and Mahayana phases). Conversely, **Ellora** is unique for hosting **Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain** monuments together in one complex.

2. The Fresco vs. Fresco-Secco Trap:

- **The Trap:** The Ajanta paintings are often incorrectly termed "Buon Fresco".
- **The Reality:** Ajanta employs the **Fresco-Secco** technique. True *Buon Fresco* involves painting on wet plaster so the pigment binds chemically. Ajanta murals were painted on **dry plaster**, which is why they have suffered significant flaking and degradation over centuries.

3. The Miniature Definition Trap:

- **The Trap:** Believing any small-sized painting qualifies as a historical "miniature".
- **The Reality:** To officially qualify as a classical miniature, strict technical dimensions apply: The painting must be **less than 25 square inches** in total size, and the subject matter must be depicted at **no more than 1/6th of its actual, real-world size**.



Bagh Cave murals

4. The Bagh Caves Subject Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Bagh Caves (**Madhya Pradesh, 5th–6th Century CE**), being Buddhist *viharas*, exclusively feature ascetic religious murals like Ajanta.
- **The Reality:** The Bagh cave murals are overwhelmingly **secular** in nature. They focus heavily on

contemporary royal lifestyle, elephant processions, female musicians, and group dancers (*Hallisaka*), rather than purely ascetic Buddhist motifs.

5. The Warli Subject Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Warli tribal paintings depict standard Hindu mythology.
- **The Reality:** Executed by tribal women in **Maharashtra** using a simple **white rice paste** on mud walls, Warli art **completely avoids Hindu deities**. It focuses entirely on daily social life, hunting, the *Tarpa* dance, and the central square motif of the **Palaghata** (Mother Goddess).



Folk & Regional Paintings

Painting Style	State of Origin	Crucial Identifiers & Artistic Nuances
Madhubani (Mithila)	Bihar	Complete absence of empty space (filled with birds/flowers). Employs two styles: Bharni (color-filled) and Katchni (line-drawn). Traditionally executed by women using natural pigments and twigs.
Pattachitra	Odisha	Executed on a treated cloth base (<i>patta</i>). Heavily centered on the Jagannath Cult and Vaishnava themes. Distinct floral borders, bold lines, and absolutely no preliminary pencil sketches are used.
Phad	Rajasthan	Long scroll paintings on cloth depicting the heroic deeds of local folk deities like Pabuji and Devnarayan. Serves as a mobile, portable shrine for traditional wandering singers known as <i>Bhopas</i>.



		
Thangka	Sikkim / Ladakh	Tibetan Buddhist scroll paintings executed on cotton or silk appliqués. Highly geometric, strictly adhering to canonical proportions. Used purely for meditation and spiritual instruction. 
Tanjore (Thanjavur)	Tamil Nadu	Flourished under Maratha patronage (18th Century). Famous for an embossed, three-dimensional effect created using gold foil, glass beads, and semi-precious stones. Primarily depicts deities with rounded faces. 
Pithora	Gujarat / MP	Highly ritualistic wall paintings executed by the Rathwa and Bhilala tribes. Deeply associated with vows made to the horse-riding tribal deity, <i>Baba Pithora</i>. Painted by specialized artists called <i>Lakhadas</i>.



THEME 4: INDIAN DANCE FORMS (CLASSICAL & REGIONAL/FOLK)

Core Concepts:

1. **The Core Triad of Dance:** Ancient texts like the **Natya Shastra** (by **Bharata Muni**) and **Abhinaya Darpana** (by **Nandikeshvara**) divide dance into three specific elements: **Nritta** (pure rhythm and abstract body movements), **Nritya** (expressive dance conveying emotions/rasa), and **Natya** (dramatic storytelling combining dance, speech, and acting).
2. **Tandava vs. Lasya Dynamics:** Classical dances synthesize two distinct energies. **Tandava** represents the masculine, vigorous, and destructive aspects associated with **Lord Shiva**. Conversely, **Lasya** represents the feminine, graceful, and erotic aspects associated with **Goddess Parvati**.
3. **Temple Prostitution & The Devadasi Legacy:** Several classical dances originated in the sanctums of temples before facing British colonial stigma. **Bharatanatyam** evolved directly from the **Sadir** solo dances of **Devadasis** in Tamil Nadu. **Odissi** evolved from the **Maharis** (female temple dancers) and **Gotipuas** (young boys dressed as women who danced outside the temple).
4. **The 20th Century Revivalist Movement:** Following the British **Anti-Dance Movement**, classical arts were resurrected by elite cultural titans. **Rukmini Devi Arundale** and **E. Krishna Iyer** purged the stigma around Bharatanatyam, while **Vallathol Narayana Menon** founded the Kerala Kalamandalam to rescue Kathakali from extinction.
5. **Sopanam Sangeetham:** Breaking the strict binary of Hindustani and Carnatic music, dances from Kerala—specifically **Kathakali** and **Mohiniyattam**—rely heavily on **Sopanam**, a highly unique, slow-paced, and ritualistic singing style developed in the sanctums of **Kerala's temples**.

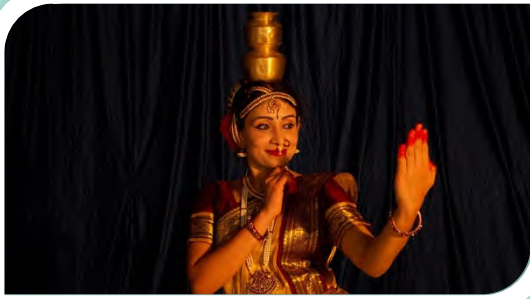


Tandava vs Lasya Dances

PYQ Bullseye

1. **Manipuri's Unique Elements:** Deeply rooted in the **Vaishnavite Sankirtana** tradition, Manipuri is utterly distinct because the dancers **do not wear ankle bells (ghungroos)**. The performance often incorporates the vigorous **Pung Cholom** (drum dance) alongside graceful, fluid movements. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
2. **Sattriya's Monastic Roots:** Introduced in the **15th century** by the Vaishnava saint **Sankaradeva** in **Assam**. It was originally performed exclusively by celibate monks (**Bhokots**) within monastery halls called **Sattras** as a medium for religious propagation. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2014)





3. **Kuchipudi's Tarangam:** Originating in **Andhra Pradesh**, a defining technical feature is the **Tarangam**, a breathtaking sequence where the dancer balances a pot of water on their head while executing complex footwork exclusively on the sharp edges of a **brass plate**. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2012)

4. **Kathakali Facial Colors:** Elaborate facial makeup is used to convey precise character traits (Gunas): **Pacha (Green)** indicates noble, virtuous heroes; **Kathi (Knife/Red marks)** indicates arrogant or evil royalty; and **Thadi (Beard)** is used for destructive, primal characters. (State PCS)

5. **Odissi's Tribhanga Posture:** Odissi is heavily characterized by the **Tribhanga** (a three-part body bend at the neck, torso, and knees). This sculptural posture heavily draws inspiration from the ancient temple reliefs of the **Brahmeswara** and the **Sun Temple at Konark**. (UPSC CSE Prelims)



Prelims Traps

1. The Manipuri Expression Trap:

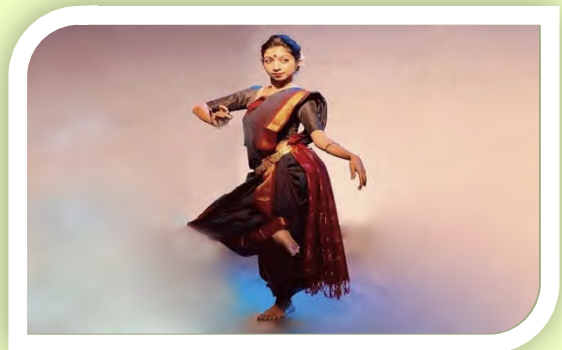
- **The Trap:** Assuming all classical dances rely on hyper-expressive facial movements (*Abhinaya*).
- **The Reality:** Unlike Kathakali or Bharatanatyam, **Manipuri dancers must keep their faces completely blank and expressionless**. The storytelling and emotion are conveyed purely through the fluid, serpentine movements of the body, never through facial contortions.

2. The Kathak vs. Kathakali Music Trap:

- **The Trap:** Confusing the musical and structural accompaniments due to similar names.
- **The Reality:** **Kathak (North India)** is strictly accompanied by **Hindustani classical music** and is structured around regional **Gharanas** (Lucknow, Jaipur, Benares). **Kathakali (Kerala)** uses **Carnatic/Sopanam** music and completely lacks the Gharana system.

3. The Bharatanatyam Posture Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Bharatanatyam relies on fluid, curved postures like Odissi.
- **The Reality:** Bharatanatyam avoids fluid curves. It fundamentally relies on the rigid **Aramandi** (a deep half-sitting posture with knees turned outward) and emphasizes **fire-like**, highly geometric, and sharply angular body movements.



4. The Mohiniyattam Costume Trap:

- **The Trap:** Expecting brightly colored, multi-hued costumes typical of other classical dances.
- **The Reality:** Mohiniyattam strictly mandates the **Kasavu saree**—a completely **white or off-white attire with a distinct golden brocade border**, reflecting the simple, austere aesthetics of Kerala.

5. The Chhau Mask Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming all variants of the martial Chhau dance heavily utilize masks.
- **The Reality:** While **Purulia Chhau (West Bengal)** and **Seraikella Chhau (Jharkhand)** strictly use elaborate, heavy masks to depict characters, **Mayurbhanj Chhau (Odisha)** explicitly **forbids the use of masks**, relying entirely on raw body movements.

Folk & Regional Dances

Dance Form	State of Origin	Crucial Identifiers & Ritual Significance
Kalbelia	Rajasthan	A sensuous dance performed by the snake-charming tribe. Dancers wear flowing black skirts, mimicking the movements of a serpent. Recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. 
Raut Nacha	Chhattisgarh	A vibrant dance performed primarily by the Yadav community (cowherds) during the festival of Diwali, heavily featuring scenes from the life of Lord Krishna. 
Hojagiri	Tripura	Performed exclusively by women of the Reang tribe. The signature element involves highly complex balancing acts, often dancing while balancing an earthen pitcher on the head and a bottle on a prop.

		
Tippani	Gujarat	Originating from the Saurashtra region, women perform this dance by powerfully beating the floor with long wooden sticks (tippanis), originally a method to press lime into the foundations of houses. 
Karakattam	Tamil Nadu	A precarious balancing dance performed to praise the rain goddess Mariamman. Dancers balance decorated brass pots filled with water and unhusked rice on their heads without using their hands. 
Ghoomar	Rajasthan	Originally developed by the Bhil tribe and later adopted by Rajput royalty. Characterized by women executing fast, sweeping pirouettes in long, flowing skirts (<i>ghaghharas</i>), moving in and out of a wide circle.

**Bihu****Assam**

A joyous spring festival dance characterized by brisk, rapid hand movements, rapid stepping, and the rhythmic swaying of the hips, celebrating the agricultural harvest.



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THEME 5: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES (TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE)

Core Concepts

1. Evolution of Rock-Cut UNESCO Sites:

India's rock-cut architecture evolved significantly across three major UNESCO sites.

- **Ajanta (2nd Century BCE to 5th Century CE)**, patronized by **Satavahanas** and **Vakatakas**) is exclusively Buddhist.
- **Ellora (5th to 11th Century CE)**, patronized by **Rashtrakutas** and **Yadavas**) marks the synthesis of Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain caves.
- **Elephanta Caves (6th Century CE)** are exclusively Shaivite, famous for the colossal 20-foot high **Maheshmurti** (three-headed Shiva representing creation, protection, and destruction).



Elephanta Caves-Maheshmurti

- #### 2. The Great Living Chola Temples:
- This UNESCO grouping comprises three majestic 11th-12th century temples: the **Brihadisvara at Thanjavur** (built by **Rajaraja I**), the **Brihadisvara at Gangaikondacholapuram** (built by **Rajendra I**), and the **Airavatesvara at Darasuram** (built by **Rajaraja II**). They represent the absolute zenith of the **Dravida** style, characterized by soaring, pyramidal *vimanas* built entirely of precisely interlocked granite stones without binding mortar.

- #### 3. Khajuraho's Spatial & Sculptural Design:
- Built by the **Chandela Dynasty** between **950–1050 CE**, these temples belong strictly to the **Nagara** style (Central Indian sub-style). Uniquely, they lack traditional enclosure walls and are elevated on massive stone terraces (*jagatis*). The world-famous erotic sculptures (*mithunas*) are strategically carved **only on the exterior walls** to symbolize auspiciousness and human desires, while the inner sanctums (*garbhagrihas*) remain completely unadorned and austere.



Brihadisvara temple



Khajuraho temple exterior walls

4. Kerala's Intangible Twin

Traditions: Kerala hosts two deeply ritualistic UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage elements.

- **Kutiyattam** is the oldest surviving Sanskrit theatre, performed by the **Chakyar** and **Nambiar** communities, utilizing the sacred **Mizhavu** drum.



Kutiyattam

- **Mudiyettu** is an intense ritual dance-drama performed in Bhagavati Kavus (temples) strictly to enact the mythological battle between the Goddess **Bhadrakali** and the demon **Darika**.



Mudiyettu

5. Vedic Chanting vs. Buddhist Chanting:

UNESCO recognizes both distinct oral traditions. The **Tradition of Vedic Chanting** involves an incredibly complex, mathematical system of memorization (like *Krama* and *Jata* patha) to preserve the exact tonal phonetics of the Vedas over millennia without written texts. In contrast, **Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh** involves the recitation of sacred Tibetan texts by monks of the **Mahayana** and **Vajrayana** sects in the trans-Himalayan region, using bells, cymbals, and trumpets



1. Sankirtana's Ritual Mechanics:

Recognized as an Intangible Heritage from **Manipur**, Sankirtana encompasses the ritual singing, drumming, and dancing heavily centered around **Vaishnavism** (life of Lord Krishna). Crucially, male performers play the **Pung** (drum) and **Kartal** (cymbals) while dancing. However, it does **not** involve the traditional martial art of *Thang-Ta* within its core ritual format. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2017)

Sankirtana



2. **The Sun Temple at Konark:** Built by **King Narasimhadeva I** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty** in the **13th Century**. It is architecturally conceived as a massive, sweeping chariot of the Sun God (**Surya**) with **24 intricately carved wheels** drawn by **7 horses**. Because its dark stone towers historically served as a navigational landmark for European sailors, it was dubbed the **Black Pagoda**. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2014)

Sun temple Konark



3. **Fatehpur Sikri's Triumphant Arch:** Built by **Emperor Akbar** in the **16th Century** as his capital, the complex houses the monumental **Buland Darwaza**. This massive gateway was constructed specifically to commemorate Akbar's successful military conquest over **Gujarat** and showcases a masterful blend of red sandstone with intricate white marble inlay. (UPSC CSE Prelims).

Buland Darwaza



4. **Mahabodhi Temple Brick Architecture:** Located at **Bodh Gaya**, the original shrine was built by **Emperor Ashoka** (3rd Century BCE), but the current soaring pyramidal structure dates back to the **Gupta period** (5th–6th Century CE). It is historically monumental as it is one of the earliest and largest surviving Buddhist temples built almost entirely out of **brick**. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
5. **Mahabalipuram's Monolithic Marvels:** Developed by the **Pallava Kings** (notably **Narasimhavarman I and II** in the **7th–8th Century CE**), the site includes the **Pancha Rathas** (monolithic rock-cut temples shaped like chariots) and the **Shore Temple** (a structural temple). It famously houses the world's largest open-air bas-relief, the **Descent of the Ganges (Arjuna's Penance)**. (UPSC CSE Prelims 2014, 2021)



Pancha Rathas

Prelims Traps

1. The Classical Dance Intangible Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming highly popular classical dances (like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, or Odissi) are on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.
- **The Reality: None of the 8 classical dances** recognized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi are officially listed under UNESCO's Intangible Heritage. India's listed dance forms strictly belong to regional/ritualistic traditions like **Chhau, Kalbelia, Mudi yettu, and Sankirtana**.

2. The Khajuraho Religion Trap:

- **The Trap:** Believing the Khajuraho monuments are an exclusively Hindu temple complex.
- **The Reality:** The Khajuraho complex, patronized by the Chandelas, notably features both **Hindu (Shaivite and Vaishnavite) AND Jain (Digambara)** temples (e.g., the famous **Parshvanatha Temple**), emphasizing a deep regional tradition of religious coexistence and shared architectural guilds.

3. The Qutb Minar Construction Trap:

- **The Trap:** Ascribing the entire construction of the Qutb Minar in Delhi to Qutb-ud-din Aibak.
- **The Reality: Qutb-ud-din Aibak** only initiated the construction and built the first storey. It was expanded by **Iltutmish** (next three storeys), and the topmost storeys were rebuilt and added by **Firoz Shah Tughlaq** in the **14th Century**, which is visibly evident through the distinct mix of white marble and red sandstone at the top.

4. The Dholavira Urban Planning Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming all Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) UNESCO sites feature the standard, identical Harappan bipartite urban layout.
- **The Reality:** Unlike most Harappan sites which have a bipartite division (Citadel and Lower Town), the UNESCO site of **Dholavira (Gujarat)** is entirely unique for its **tripartite division** (Citadel, Middle Town, Lower Town) and an exceptionally sophisticated **stone-built water-**

harvesting and
reservoir
system.

Dholavira

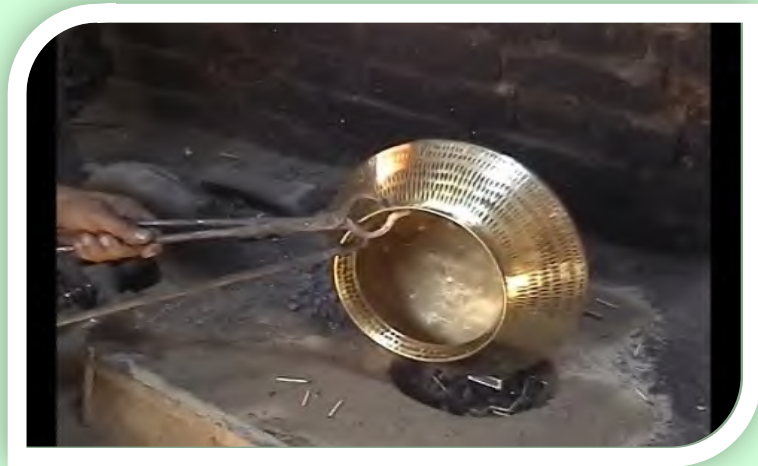
5. The Kumbh Mela Location Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming the Kumbh Mela (an Intangible Heritage) is celebrated uniformly across random sacred rivers in India.
- **The Reality:** It is celebrated cyclically at exactly **four specific locations** based on astrological alignments: **Haridwar** (on the Ganges), **Prayagraj** (at the confluence of Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati), **Ujjain** (on the Shipra), and **Nashik** (on the Godavari).



UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages

Intangible Heritage	Region / State	Crucial Identifiers & Ritual Significance
Ramman	Uttarakhand	Religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas (Chamoli district). Dedicated to the local tutelary deity Bhumiyal Devta . Highly localized and distinct from the standard North Indian Ramlila. 
Traditional Brass/Copper Craft	Punjab	The craft of the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru . It is the only craft form from India on the UNESCO list, recognized for its traditional technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils for health benefits.

**Chhau Dance****Eastern India**

A martial-arts based dance form with three sub-styles: **Purulia (West Bengal)** and **Seraikella (Jharkhand)** use elaborate masks, whereas **Mayurbhanj (Odisha)** explicitly prohibits the use of masks.

**Navroz****Pan-Indian (Parsi)**

The celebration of the **Zoroastrian (Parsi) New Year**, occurring on the vernal equinox (March 21st). Symbolizes the renewal of nature and is shared transnationally with countries like Iran and Afghanistan.

Durga Puja**Kolkata (WB)**

Recognized recently, it involves massive public installations (*pandals*), artisan craftsmanship in creating clay idols of **Goddess Durga**, and the socio-cultural immersion (*Bisarjan*) process in the Hooghly river.

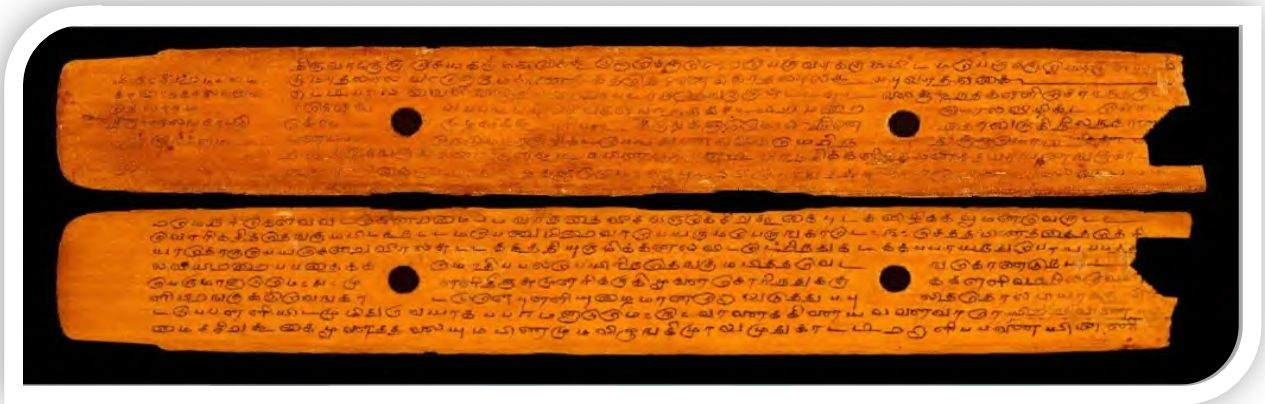
Garba**Gujarat**

The most recent Indian addition. A devotional dance performed in concentric circles around a perforated earthen pot (*Garbo*) or a lamp, heavily honoring the feminine energy (**Shakti**) during the Navaratri festival.

THEME 6: INDIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

Core Concepts

1. **Criteria for Classical Languages:** A language must satisfy ultra-rigid criteria to be classified as 'Classical': High antiquity of its early texts (**1500–2000 years**), a body of ancient literature considered a valuable heritage by generations, and crucially, an **original literary tradition** that is not borrowed from another speech community.
2. **The Sangam Duality (Aham vs. Puram):** The secular Sangam literature (**300 BCE – 300 CE**) is strictly categorized into two thematic groups. **Aham** (inner life) poetry deals strictly with human emotions, abstract love, and romance in specific landscape settings (*Tinai*s). **Puram** (outer life) poetry deals with martial heroism, public life, statecraft, and the tragic glorification of war and death.



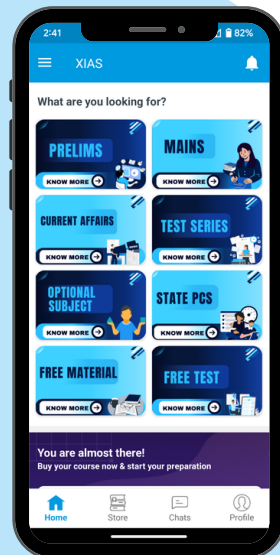
Sangam Literature manuscript

3. **Prakrit's Regional Dialectical Split:** Prakrit was not a single uniform language but an umbrella of regional dialects. **Shauraseni** was spoken in the western and central regions (Mathura); **Magadhi** was the language of the eastern Mauryan court; **Maharashtri** (the most literary Prakrit) dominated the Deccan; and **Pali** became the specific vehicle for Theravada Buddhist canons.
4. **Secular Realism in Sanskrit Drama:** While most Sanskrit dramas focus on myth and royalty, **Sudraka's** masterpiece *Mricchakatika* (The Little Clay Cart) is exceptionally unique. Written around the **2nd Century CE**, its protagonist is an impoverished merchant (**Charudatta**), and its heroine is a courtesan (**Vasantasena**), providing a rare, realistic glimpse into the urban socio-economic life of ancient India.
5. **The Indo-Persian Synthesis:** Following the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Persian became the court language. **Amir Khusrau (13th-14th Century)** was the monumental figure who pioneered the *Sabaq-i-Hindi* (the Indian style of Persian poetry) and heavily experimented with **Hindavi** (the precursor to Hindi/Urdu), blending indigenous Indian syntax with Persian vocabulary.



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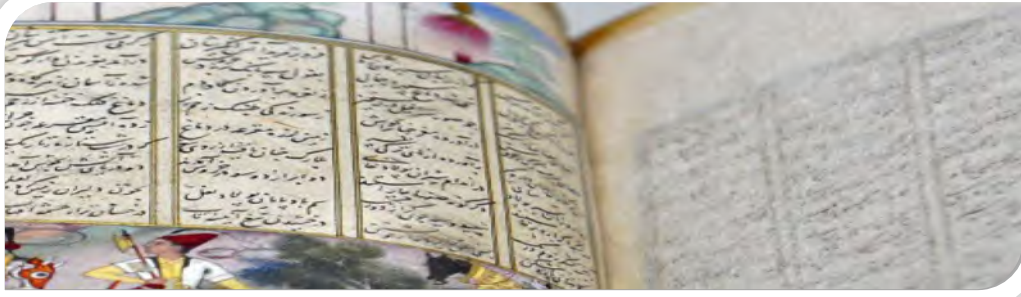
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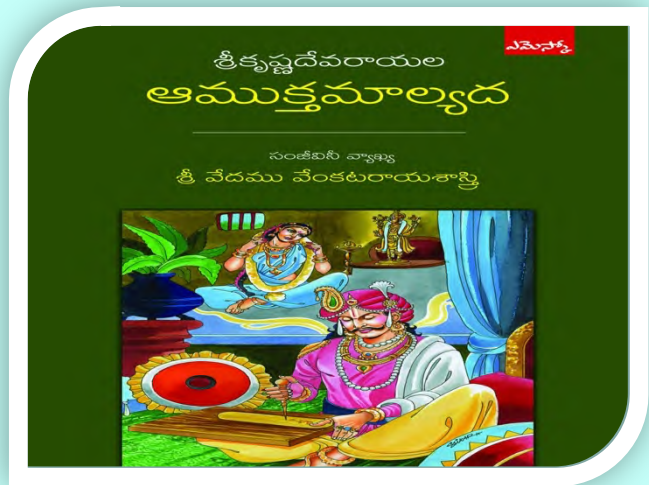
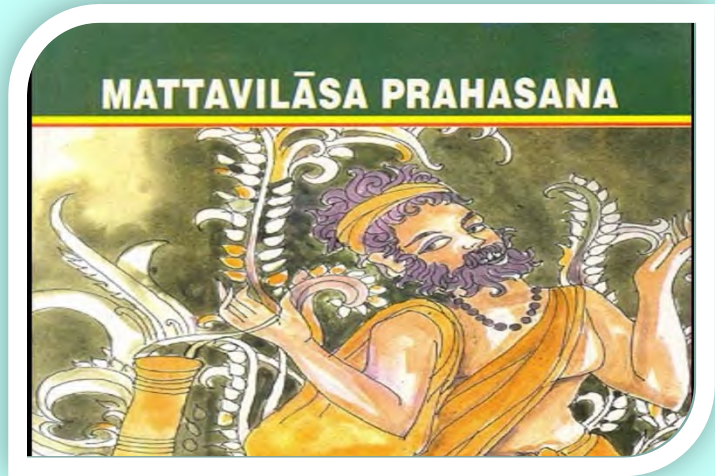
Indo persian Literature

PYQ Bullseye

1. **Mahendravarman's Satirical Farce:** The **Pallava King Mahendravarman I (7th Century CE)** authored the renowned Sanskrit play **Mattavilasa Prahasana** (The Farce of Drunken Sport). It is a rare political satire that fiercely mocks the degenerated practices of the **Kapalika** and **Pasupata** Shaivite sects, as well as Buddhist monks. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
2. **The Mitakshara vs. Dayabhaga Divide:** Two dominant legal treatises governed ancient Indian inheritance.
 - **Mitakshara**, written by **Vijnaneshwara (11th Century)**, applied across India and allowed a son a birthright in joint family property.
 - **Dayabhaga**, written by **Jimutavahana (12th Century)**, strictly applied in **Bengal** and stated that sons claim rights only *after* the father's death. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
3. **Krishna Deva Raya's Multilingual Mastery:** The greatest **Vijayanagara** emperor was not just a patron, but a masterful author. He wrote the celebrated Telugu text on statecraft, **Amuktamalyada**, and a notable Sanskrit drama, **Jambavati Kalyanam**, establishing the climax of Telugu literature's **Prabandha** period. (UPSC CSE Prelims)

Amuktamalyada

4. **The Earliest Kannada Text: Kavirajamarga** is recognized as the earliest available work on Kannada rhetoric, poetics, and grammar. It was authored by the highly scholarly **Rashtrakuta King Amoghavarsha I** in the **9th Century CE**, proving the deep antiquity of formal Kannada literature. (UPSC



CSE Prelims)

5. **Hemachandra's Literary Brilliance:** The eminent **Jain** polymath **Hemachandra** served in the court of the **Chaulukya kings of Gujarat (Kumarapala)**. He authored the epic poem **Trishashthishalakapurushacharita** (Lives of Sixty-Three Illustrious Men) and the Prakrit lexicon **Desinamamala**. (State PCS)

Prelims Traps

1. The Ashokan Edict Language Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming all of Ashoka's edicts were written in the Brahmi script and Prakrit language.
- **The Reality:** Ashoka pragmatically adapted to local demographics. While the majority were in **Prakrit/Brahmi**, his edicts in the extreme North-West (modern Pakistan/Afghanistan) were written in **Aramaic and Greek** languages using the **Kharoshthi** script.



Different scripts used in Ashokan edicts

2. The Padmavat Chronology Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming Malik Muhammad Jayasi wrote the epic *Padmavat* during the actual reign of Alauddin Khalji (14th Century).
- **The Reality:** **Malik Muhammad Jayasi** authored the Awadhi masterpiece *Padmavat* in the **16th Century** during the reign of the Afghan ruler **Sher Shah Suri**—more than 200 years after Alauddin Khalji's siege of Chittor.

3. The Silappadikaram Religion Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming the foundational Tamil epic *Silappadikaram* (The Tale of an Anklet) is purely Hindu because it centers on the chastity of Kannagi.
- **The Reality:** Authored by the prince-turned-monk **Ilango Adigal**, the epic is fundamentally rooted in **Jain philosophy**, highlighting the inescapable nature of karma and the transience of human fortunes.

4. The Tulsidas Era Trap:

- **The Trap:** Placing **Tulsidas** (author of the *Ramcharitmanas*) in the early medieval Bhakti movement alongside figures like Ramananda or Kabir.
- **The Reality:** Tulsidas was a late medieval figure. He composed the epic in **Awadhi** during the **16th Century** and was a direct contemporary of **Emperor Akbar**, completely bypassing the earlier Sultanate era.

5. The Gita Govinda Patronage Trap:

- **The Trap:** Believing that **Jayadeva**, the author of the intensely lyrical *Gita Govinda* (which

popularized the Radha-Krishna cult), was a Rajput court poet.

- **The Reality: Jayadeva** flourished in Eastern India during the **12th Century**. He was the most celebrated court poet of **King Lakshmana Sena** of the **Sena Dynasty of Bengal**.

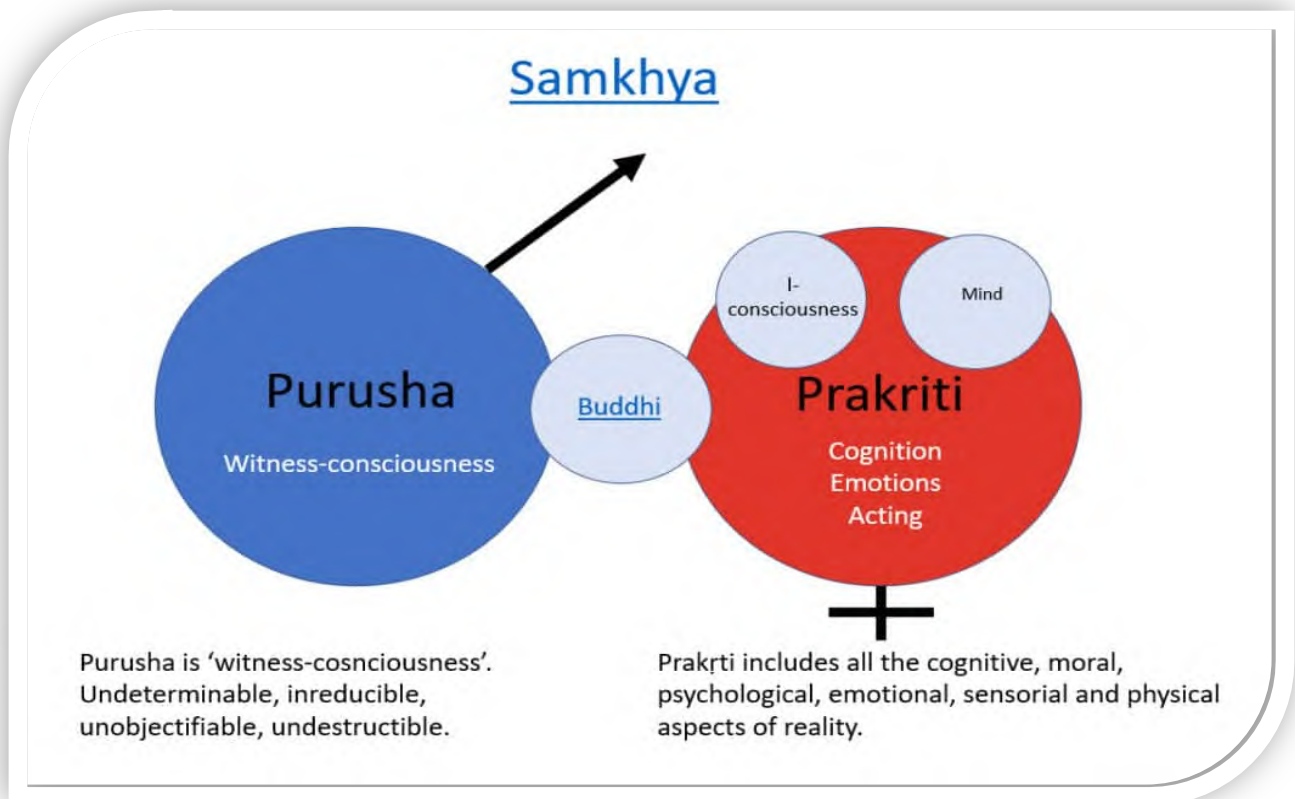
Ancient & Medieval Literature

Author	Text	Language	Subject Matter & Significance
Vishakhadatta	<i>Mudrarakshasa</i>	Sanskrit	A highly secular historical play depicting how Chanakya defeated the Nandas and established Chandragupta Maurya's rule. Utterly lacks a romantic female lead.
Somadeva	<i>Kathasaritsagara</i>	Sanskrit	("Ocean of the Streams of Stories"). An 11th-century collection of Indian legends and fairy tales compiled for the Queen of Kashmir.
Bilhana	<i>Vikramankadevacharita</i>	Sanskrit	An 11th-century epic poem serving as an administrative and historical biography of his patron, the Western Chalukya King Vikramaditya VI .
Kalhana	<i>Rajatarangini</i>	Sanskrit	Written in the 12th Century , it is considered India's first truly objective historical text. It systematically details the dynastic history of the kings of Kashmir .
Banabhatta	<i>Harshacharita</i>	Sanskrit	A 7th-century romanticized biography of Emperor Harshavardhana . It provides immense sociological data about the daily life, army, and administration of the period.
Chand Bardai	<i>Prithviraj Raso</i>	Braj Bhasha / Apabhramsha	A 12th-century epic poem detailing the life and heroic battles of Prithviraj Chauhan . It is considered one of the earliest foundational works of Hindi literature.

THEME 7: INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS (ORTHODOX & HETERODOX)

Core Concepts

1. **Samkhya's Atheistic Dualism:** Founded by the sage **Kapila**, Samkhya is the oldest orthodox philosophy. It postulates two independent, eternal realities: **Purusha** (pure, observing consciousness) and **Prakriti** (the primal material matrix). Originally, it was strongly **atheistic/non-theistic**, arguing that the creation of the world is purely a result of the evolutionary proximity of these two forces, without any requirement for a creator God.



Samkhya philosophy of creation

2. **Vaisheshika's Atomic Theory:** Founded by **Rishi Kanada**, this school propounds a highly scientific, physical theory centuries before the Greeks. It states that all physical matter in the universe is made up of indestructible, microscopic particles called **Paramanu** (atoms). It categorizes all of reality into exactly **nine substances (dravyas)**, including earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, soul, and mind.
3. **Mimamsa's Theory of Eternal Vedas:** Founded by **Jaimini** (*Purva Mimamsa*), it posits that the Vedas are **eternal, uncreated, and authorless (Apaurusheya)**. It fiercely prioritizes the ritualistic **Karma-Kanda** over philosophical meditation, arguing that salvation is achieved exclusively through the flawless, mechanical performance of prescribed Vedic rituals (*Yajnas*).
4. **Charvaka's Materialistic Epistemology:** Also known as **Lokayata** (philosophy of the masses) and traditionally attributed to **Brihaspati**. It strictly accepts **only Perception (Pratyaksha)** as a valid source of knowledge, completely rejecting Inference (*Anumana*) and Testimony (*Shabda*). It aggressively denies the existence of the soul, karma, and any afterlife.

5. **Ajivika's Absolute Fatalism:** Founded by **Makkhali Gosala** (a direct contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira). The school revolves entirely around the central doctrine of **Niyati (absolute determinism or unalterable fate)**. It argues that free will is a complete illusion; all living beings undergo a mathematically fixed cycle of rebirths and suffering that absolutely cannot be altered by karma, rituals, or human effort

PYQ Bullseye

1. **Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita:** **Ramanujacharya (11th Century)** propagated **Vishishtadvaita** (Qualified Non-Dualism). Unlike Shankara's concept of an illusory world, Ramanuja argued that the material world is real and the individual soul (*Jiva*) retains its distinct identity even after uniting with **Brahman**, heavily emphasizing devotion (**Bhakti**) over pure intellectual knowledge. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
2. **Nyaya's Logical Framework:** Founded by **Gautama**, Nyaya philosophy is the primary Indian system of logic and epistemology. It asserts that obtaining valid knowledge (**Prama**) is the only way to attain liberation, formally recognizing exactly four means of valid knowledge: **Perception, Inference, Comparison, and Verbal Testimony**. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
3. **Shankaracharya's Advaita Vedanta:** **Adi Shankara (8th Century)** established **Advaita** (Absolute Non-Dualism). He postulated that formless **Brahman** is the only ultimate reality, the perceived material world is a massive cosmic illusion (**Maya**), and the individual soul (*Atman*) is entirely and indistinguishably identical to Brahman. (UPSC CSE Prelims)
4. **Ashoka's Patronage to Ajivikas:** Despite being a devout Buddhist, **Emperor Ashoka** and his grandson **Dasharatha** excavated the highly polished **Barabar and Nagarjuni Caves in Bihar (3rd Century BCE)** specifically as monsoon retreats for the ascetics of the **Ajivika** sect, proving the sect's massive popularity and state patronage in the Mauryan era. (UPSC CSE Prelims)



Barabar Caves

5. **Yoga's Practical Application:** Founded by **Patanjali** (compiler of the *Yogasutras* in the **2nd Century BCE**). Yoga is theoretically identical to the Samkhya school in its metaphysics but fundamentally differs by incorporating the concept of a **Personal God (Ishvara)** as a focal point for spiritual liberation through the **Ashtanga (eight-fold)** practical path. (State PCS)

Prelims Traps

1. **The Nastika Definition Trap:**
 - **The Trap:** Assuming "Nastika" (heterodox) simply means atheism (denial of a creator God).
 - **The Reality:** In classical Indian philosophy, **Astika** (Orthodox) and **Nastika** (Heterodox) have absolutely nothing to do with believing in God. It strictly depends on **whether the school accepts the supreme authority of the Vedas**. For example, Samkhya is *Astika* but originally atheistic; Buddhism is *Nastika* purely because it rejects Vedic authority.
2. **The Vedanta Equivalence Trap:**
 - **The Trap:** Believing "Vedanta" exclusively refers to Adi Shankara's Advaita (Non-dualism).
 - **The Reality:** **Vedanta** (the end of the Vedas/Upanishads) encompasses several fiercely opposing sub-schools. While it includes Shankara's **Advaita**, it also encompasses Ramanuja's **Vishishtadvaita** and Madhvacharya's **Dvaita** (strict Dualism, which argues God and the Soul are

eternally separate entities).

3. The Charvaka Karma Trap:

- **The Trap:** Assuming that all ancient Indian philosophies accepted the fundamental laws of Karma and rebirth.
- **The Reality:** The **Charvaka (Lokayata)** school aggressively and explicitly **rejected the Law of Karma**, reincarnation, and the concept of a soul. They believed consciousness is merely a chemical byproduct of the four material elements combining, which is permanently destroyed upon physical death.

4. The Mimamsa God Trap:

- **The Trap:** Believing that because Mimamsa heavily focuses on strict Vedic rituals, it must feature a supreme creator God to receive those sacrifices.

Vedic Yajna Scene

- **The Reality:** **Purva Mimamsa** does **not** rely on a supreme Creator God. It asserts that the universe relies on the unchangeable, magical power of the **Vedic mantras** and rituals (*Yajnas*) themselves, which operate on an autonomous cosmic principle without needing any divine overseer.

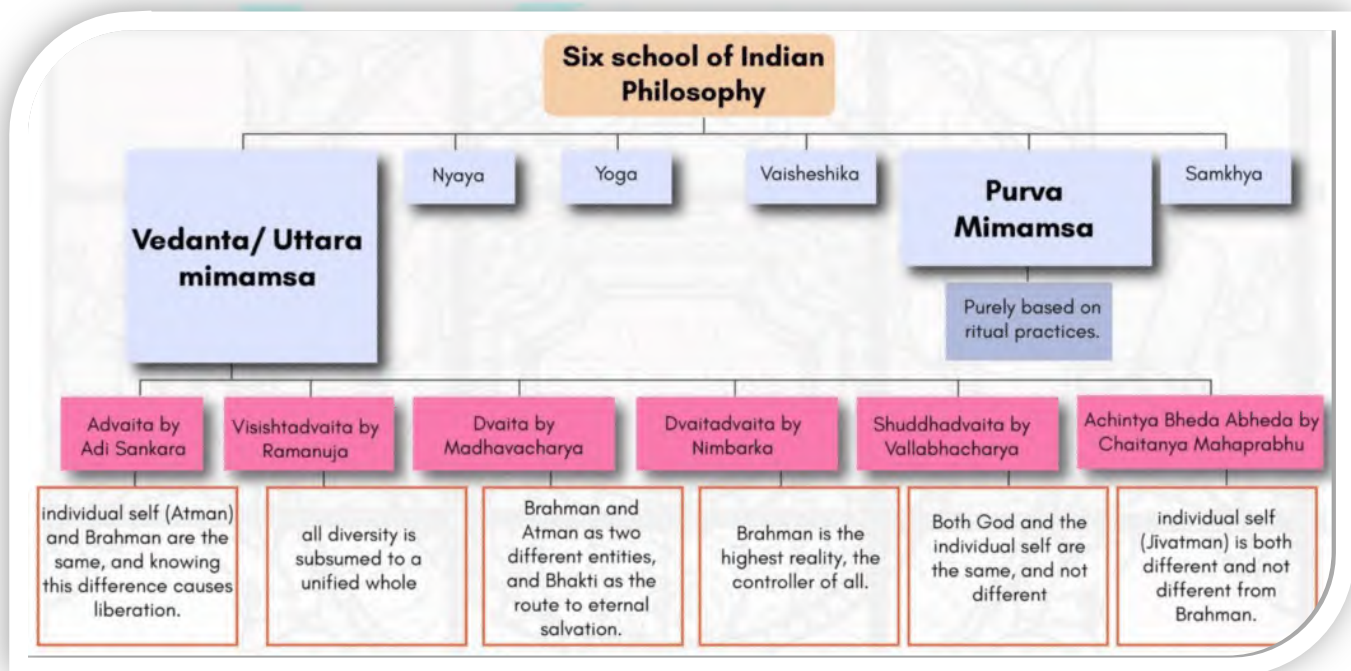


5. The Samkhya Evolution Trap:

- **The Trap:** Thinking evolutionary theory in India was introduced solely by modern Western science.
- **The Reality:** The **Samkhya** philosophy outlines a highly sophisticated, sequential theory of cosmic evolution. It argues the universe evolved not from a divine command, but from the disruption of the equilibrium of the three **Gunas** (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) within **Prakriti** upon coming into proximity with the consciousness of **Purusha**.

The Six Orthodox Schools (Shad Darshana)

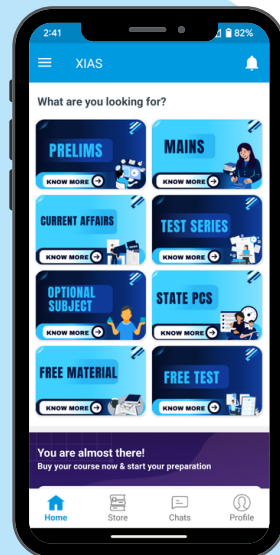
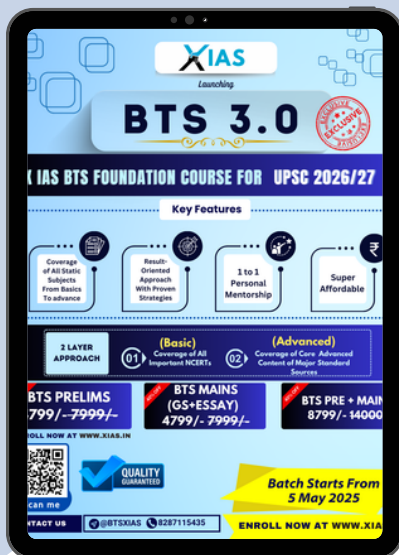
Orthodox School	Founding Sage	Core Philosophical Premise & Focus
Samkhya	Kapila	Dualism (<i>Purusha</i> & <i>Prakriti</i>). Atheistic in origin; focuses on acquiring knowledge of the self's separation from matter to attain liberation.
Yoga	Patanjali	Practical application of Samkhya. Introduces the concept of a personal deity (<i>Ishvara</i>) and focuses on physical and mental discipline (<i>Ashtanga</i>).
Nyaya	Gautama	The school of logic and epistemology. Focuses on the systematic rules of debate, logical inference, and obtaining valid knowledge (<i>Prama</i>).
Vaisheshika	Kanada	The school of physics and atomism. Focuses on the classification of the material universe into nine distinct substances built of <i>Paramanu</i> (atoms).
Purva Mimamsa	Jaimini	The school of Vedic ritualism. Focuses on the unquestionable authority of the Vedas and the precise execution of <i>Karma-Kanda</i> (sacrificial rituals).
Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta)	Badarayana / Vyasa	The school of Upanishadic philosophy. Focuses on the esoteric <i>Jnana-Kanda</i> , the nature of <i>Brahman</i> (the absolute reality), and the individual soul.



Six schools of indian Philosophy

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