

Cultural Heritage of India : Traditional Handicraft and Fine Arts

India is a country of rich cultural heritage. It includes materialistic and genetical heritage. A child inherits physical and mental characteristics from the parents by birth is known as ‘genetic inheritance.’ Whereas house, land, estates like properties obtained from ancestors is called ‘material heritage’. Similarly, whatever man obtains or creates with his intellect and skill is generally called cultural heritage. In the same manner traditions, customs, rituals and especial types of life style adopted by our ancestors is also known as cultural heritage. In addition other matters like education, farming, trade, rules and regulations for daily life, festivals, entertainment, art and handicrafts, beliefs and skills are also included in cultural heritage.

India being an ancient country of the world, has its best traditions, social values, dogma, customs and family system. So it is our duty to preserve our cultural heritage. There are references of 64 arts in our ancient literature. They are handicraft, workmanship (skills), kasab, art, drawing, music, dramatic art and dance etc. Our ancient currencies were also valuable. Prosperity of India was main attraction for visitors to attack India. Today the education of Yoga has been considered as a part of cultural heritage, which has been accepted by the whole world. Consequently 21 June is celebrated as the ‘World Yoga Day’ in the whole world.

In this chapter we will learn about varied art and craft of India.

Art of Indian Artisans

The beauty of Indian cultural heritage is lying in traditional art of its artisans. They have skillfully developed varied life style of people through their remarkable art and handicraft industry. Weaving and embroidery, wooden art, clay work, drawing, painting, leather industry, enamel work, sculpture, architecture, akik work, diamond related artistic workmanship and knitting work have their unique identity in India.

Art Clay Work

Man and clay have been closely associated since ancient time. The whole life of men revolves around it from the cradle to the grave. Before the invention of metal, clay things were used abundantly. Toys, pots, pitchers, earthen lamps, clay stove (chulha), clay wares were made by the potters to store grains, milk, ghee, curd and buttermilk. Maximum kitchen wares were made up of clay. The walls of the houses, kubas (huts) were plastered by the paste of cowdung and clay. We have got many clay utensils of red colour that belonged to Lothal, Mohan-Jo - Daro and Harappa culture of ancient time. Potter’s wheel is considered to be the best device for clay-work in ancient India. In present time also we can see garba (Pitcher having holes containing earthen lamp inside) in Navratri.

India was famous for producing the baked utensils of baked clay as well as unbaked clay (terracotta) since ancient time. This is known by seeing remains of old and handmade clay utensils found from Nagarjuna kaunda in South India and Laghnaj (Mehsana district).

Art of Weaving

The art of making long threads using small pieces of cotton from cotton balls (swab) and joining them together is called art of spinning. We all know that Gandhiji has given it a special importance as a cottage industry and joined it with swadeshi to make us self reliant under the banner of freedom movement, which has created a new history.

Hand Weaving : Since ancient time, India is known for its textile know-how. It is well-known that the whole piece of cloth of a particular size (Taka) of fine muslin of Dhakha could easily pass through a ring



2.1 Hand-woven Carpets

and could be adjusted in a match box. Moreover, carpet (Galicha) of several regions, knitting work on attires and artistry etc. occupied a prominent place. Amongst them Patola of Patan, Kanjivaram and Banarasi sarees, Bandhani of Rajasthan are unique identity of India.

During the golden period of Solanki era, Gujarat had progressed in this field. During the reign of Siddharaj Jaysingh many artisans (weavers) came and settled in Patan. The Patolas of Patan became world famous, due to their skills. This art of Patan is more than 850 years old. Only handful of artisans have the skill for such a complicated and time consuming art. The silk ware (Bevad Ikt) produced in Patan is called Patola of Patan. Ikt means weaving. This type of saree is designed in such a manner that it can be worn on either side. This type of patola variety has a good durability and its original colours remain intact. There is a saying in the same reference. - ‘પડી પડોળે ભાત, ફાટે પણ ફીટે નહિ’. - The design laid down in Patola shall never fade even if the cloth may be torn.

Art of Embroidery :

The work of embroidery can be seen on the clothes of the idols and statues which were found during the excavation of Harappa and Mohan-Jo-Daro. The art of weaving on the clothes of men, women and children is very famous from ancient time. This art of embroidery, was seen on the clothes of men, women and children in Sindh, Saurashtra and Kutch region at the time of the Indus civilization. Similarly, Kashmiri (kasab) work of Kashmir is also well-known.

Apart from embroidery, Bandhani of Jamnagar, Jetpur, Bhuj and Mandvi of Gujarat are very popular. The traditional style of Bandhani with all its luster and due to the beautiful designs of elephant, puppet, dice and pitcher is very popular today. Cottage industry was taken over by the women of Kutch and

Saurashtra regions of Gujarat. The traditional art of embroidery, torans, chakda, pillow cover, bed sheets, shakh, todaliya, clothes like kediyas are well-known even today. Embroidery work is also carried out on quilt and shawls with different designs. Embroidery work of 'Jat' community of Banni area of Kutch is unique in itself.

Leather Industry :

Skin of dead animals was used for various purposes in ancient India. After the death of animal its skin was processed in a traditional manner. Leather was prominently used for making 'Masak' (a leather bag for fetching water) and kos, drum, dholak, tabla (musical instruments) and the bellows used by blacksmiths and various types of footwear, leather belts to tie animals etc. Leather was also used to prepare shield which was used during wars.

Leather industry had a Prominent place in ancient India. Well-knitted Mojadi of Rajasthan, shoes, leather knitted purses, belts and other things made out of the leather for horse and camel like saaj, palan, lagaam and whip were very much in use.

Diamond - Bead work and enamel work :

India has 7517 km. long coastline surrounding all three directions : East, West and South. So, diamonds and beads are available in plenty. There has been a wide use of gems and diamonds since ancient times. Since ancient time, trade of diamond and beads was carried out through sea routes with different countries across the sea. Diamond studded ornaments have been in a great demand in foreign countries since long. The world famous diamonds like 'Kohinoor' and 'Great Mughal' were found from India only. As Indians are fond of diamond and beaded ornaments, variety is found in great deal. Earlier rich and royal people used to wear diamond jewellery apart from gold ornaments.

Diamonds, rubies, beads, emerald and topaz were used to adorn and beautify the thrones and crowns and jewellery like bracelet and garland etc. of kings. Bead work is also found prominent in Gujarat. The beautiful bead 'Torans pachhit, pots, Bari (door grills - frames) 'chakda' (a traditional wall piece), decorative coconut used at the time of ceremonies (Lagna na nariyel) 'Indhoni', 'Modiya' (a net which covers the mouth of a bullock, horns) handfans, animal back cover (Jhool) etc. are knitted in a unique artistic way.

India has been a leading country in jewellery, since time immemorial. India is the only country in the world where expertise can be seen in enamel work, apart from the gold and silver work. Enamel work means the artistic skill of inlaying the bright colours like red, green and blue in the gold silver ornaments like rings, bangles, earrings, key chain, chain etc. Experts of enamel work are seen especially in Jaipur, Delhi, Lucknow, Varanasi and Hyderabad.

Jari work :

Jari work is seen in India since ancient time. Golden and silver threads are woven with clothes and embroidery is done with gold and silver threads to decorate the clothes. Surat is a prominent place for jari work. Knitting and embroidery of Jardoshi work, have a unique beauty. Even artisans of Surat could make beautiful dresses like saree, panetar, gharchola etc. bordered with Jari if needed.

Metal Work : (Engraving)

Metal work is also a very old form of an art of India. Metal age began and developed after stone age. The artisans of Lothal made different weapons like sickle, drill (curved saw) and needle etc. with copper and bronze. Moreover, they prepared utensils, idols and pots. Arms and ammunition for wars were made up of metal. Gold and silver were used for making ornaments, copper, brass and bronze were used to make utensils and idols whereas iron was used to make instruments and weapons.

Wooden Art :

Man, trees and forests are closely associated with each other. Initially wood was used as a fire wood, later on for making weapons, construction of buildings and other construction work. Gradually wood was used for different purposes like for making idols, toys for children, wooden pillars, windows and doors, small huts on top of the terrace, thrones, chairs and grills. In this way, wood carving was developed. Wooden furniture like swings and toys of Idar and Sankheda in Gujarat are well-known.

Inlay Work :

Inlay work is considered to be very ancient art of India. Indian kings, emperors, rulers and royal people of that time used to wear ornaments as necklace, bracelet, crown, ring, nose ring, Damni (Tiko) etc. were studded with precious gems like diamonds, pearls, rubies etc. Artisans were experts in the work of inlay art. Bikaner area of Rajasthan is more popular for inlay ornaments.

Akik Work :

Akik is a kind of precious stone, especially found in valley areas of the river. It is chiefly chalcedonic mixed with silica blue or white stone. Carnelian is main stone with semi-transparent quality and beautiful red in colour. In Gujarat various precious stones are available in big and small size at Ranpur and Surat. All these stones are sent to Khambhat to mould into various beautiful ornaments with various designs. Beads and garland of stones are prepared by them.

Painting :

Of all the arts, painting is the foremost one. Painting is an art which can be expressed through lines and colours. The aim of this art is to express emotions by imitating the animate and inanimate objects of nature through lines and colours. We have evidence of Indian art of painting from the remains of 5000 years old Harappan culture. Various models of painting have been found out many times by the archaeological Department during excavation work. We have traces of the pictures of animals and birds in the cave painting of primitive man of Stone age at Bhimbetka (M.P.). People used to draw geometrical designs and sketches. Elephant, Rhinoceros, Deer are notable among them. Ajanta - Ellora are incomparable specimens of such paintings. Drawing the sketches of swastik, Pitcher, Ganesha at the time of festivals and celebration is an old tradition of India. Rangoli making is also a very old tradition in some of the regions of India.



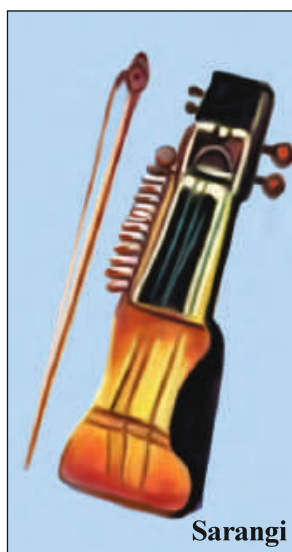
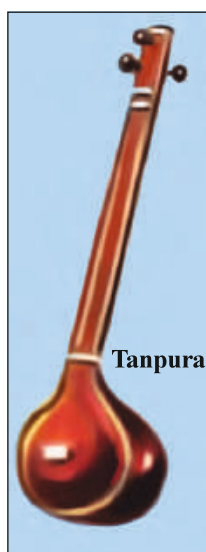
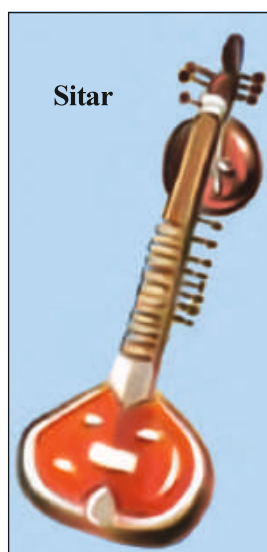
2.2 Padma-Pani Ajanta

Fine Arts of India :

Singing, playing, dancing and performing roles of different characters is a unique feature of Indian culture. Entertainment with moral education has been imparted since ancient times through dramas based on the greatest scriptures like Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Music :

Indian music is unique in the world from the point of view of tune, rhythm and harmony and so it is different from the music of other countries of the world. Samveda, one out of the four vedas, is considered to be associated with music. Richas of Samveda are sung with tune and rhythm of music. Music involves both singing and playing. SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI are the seven vowels of music. Indian music can be divided mainly into two parts : classical music and folks music. We have five main ragas in classical music. (1) Shree (2) Deepak (3) Hindol (4) Megh (5) Bhairavi. It is believed that all these ragas naturally came out of the Panchmukh of Lord Shiva. In ancient India many texts were written on music out of which the introduction of three : Sangeet Makarand, Sangeet Ratnakar and Sangeet Parijat is given below.



2.3 Musical Instruments

Sangeet Ratnakar as the most authentic book on music. ‘Sangeet Ratnakar’ is believed to be unique in understanding all the aspects of music.

(3) Sangeet Parijat : ‘Sangeet Parijat’ is a very important book on music. Pandit Ahobale had written this text in 1665, on Northern Hindustani music. He had noted one important characteristic feature of all the ragas saying that the ragas have their own individual identity and characteristic. He has described 29 types of tunes.

During the time of Allauddin Khilaji, talented Amir Khushroo was very famous. Due to his contribution in the field of music and poetry, he was known as Tuti-e-Hind (Parrot of India) in Indian history. Bhakti movement started in India in 15th and 16th century. Bhakti sangeet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Kabir, Tulsidas, Mirabai and Narsinh Mehta etc. was very famous. The disciples of Swami Haridas, Baiju Bavra (Bajinath), Tansen and duet girl - Tana-Riri are considered as rare jewels of music of 15th century.



Art of Dance :

The word ‘Nritya’ has been derived from the original Sanskrit word ‘Nrit’. Dance is one of the mediums of realizing beauty, with ‘Taal’ and laya (rhythm and harmony) for the realisation of aesthetic joy. Shiva, the originator of dance is the lord of Dance. Shiva is therefore also said to be ‘Nataraj’. He was the first to bring down music from the heaven to the earth to teach this art of dance to the people. India has wide variety of traditional classical dances - Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Kathakali, Odissi, and Manipuri.

2.4 The God of Dance : Nataraj

Bharatnatyam :

The origin of Bharatnatyam is believed to be Tanjor, a district in Tamilnadu. There are two books - ‘Natyasashtra’ by Bharatmuni and ‘Abhinav Darpan’ by Nandikeshwar, which are the original sources of Bharatnatyam. Apart from Gopi Krishna and Mrinalini Sarabhai, the actresses like Vijayanti Mala and Hema Malini etc. are considered to be the preservers of this heritage.



2.5 Art of Bharatnatyam

Kuchipudi :

This style of dance was created in 15th century. It is mostly based on the description of women’s beauty. Different poses and gestures performed by male and female dancers are woven in the foundation of this dance. Kuchipudi is famous in Andhrapradesh. Guru Prahlad Sharma, Raja Reddy, Shobha Naidu etc. are the well-known dancers who have preserved this ancient tradition.

Kathakali :

This style of dance is very famous in Kerala. The word Kathakali has been derived from the dramas based on ancient epics-Ramayana and Mahabharata and mixed dramas of Sanskrit and Malayalam. The characters of this art wear beautiful plaited attires. We have to read their facial expression to recognise the characteristics of the character. The crown they put on is very artistic. The character performs his/her dance with facial expressions and poses of hands to introduce the characters of ‘Trilok’, they come in front of the curtain with the light of earthen lamp only. Poet of Kerala Shri Vallathod (founded Kalamandal Kathakali) Kalamandalam, Krishnaprasad and Shivaraman etc. have earned great fame in the nation and world wide.

Kathak Dance :

The line ‘Kathan kare so Kathak kahave’ is related to the Kathak dance. The Kathak dance narrates the life events and incidences of Lord Krishna. It is observed that it has developed with ‘Shrungar Bhakti’

of Vaishnav community. In this style of dance, dancer turns around on one leg and shows references of dance. Women wear narrow trousers and frilled (frock) attire. This style of dance has been kept alive by

Pandit Shri Birju Maharaj, Sitara Devi, Kumudini Lakhia etc.



2.6 Manipuri Dance style

time silk blouse and a belt are put on around the waist. Guru Amobisingh, Atomboosingh, Guru Bipin Sinha, Nayna Zaveri, Nirmal Mehta etc. have gained worldwide fame.

Manipuri Dance :

The people of Manipur dance on every occasion and festival. This dance style is chiefly based on Rasalilas and Bal Lila of Shri Krishna. Manipuri dance is divided into two types : Lasya and Tandav. The plaited green coloured petticoat is known as 'Kumin' and at the same

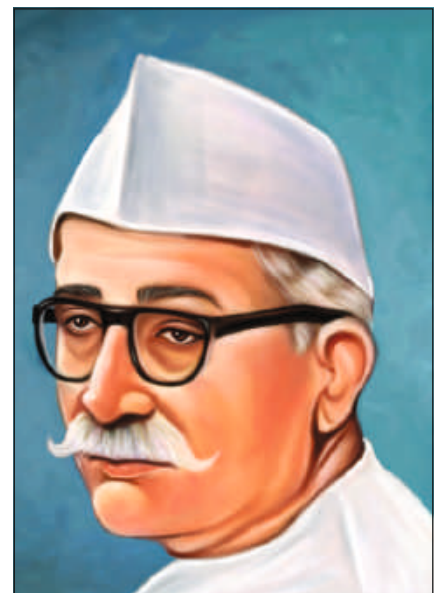
Dramatic Art :

Presenting sanskar with entertainment is the unique feature of Indian dramatic art. Apart from this anchor and funny pair of clowns entertain audience. 'Natyashastra' by Bharatmuni is well-known in the field of art. Dramatic art, writing of drama and performance of drama along with audio-visual aids, this trio holds the capacity to entertain the people of all age group. Dramatic art is an amalgamation of all the arts. Describing it Bharatmuni says, "There is no book, there is no sculpture, there is no knowledge, there is no deed which is lacking in dramatic art". The first drama of Bharatmuni was 'Devasur Sangram' In Sanskrit literature, we have various well renowned dramatists. Bhas is the poet of poets among them. He has bequeathed us dramas like 'Karnabhar', 'Urubhanga', 'Dutvakyam' based on Mahabharata. Whereas Kalidas the foremost poet gifted us plays like 'Abhigyan Shakuntalam. Vikramorvashiyam and Malvikagnimitram. Apart from above, many dramatists came and enriched the dramatic art of Sanskrit literature.

The name of 'Jayshankar Sundari' is foremost in the dramatic art of Gujarati. Besides Amrut Nayak, Bapulal Nayak, Dina Pathak, Jashwant Thakar, Upendra Trivedi, Pravin Joshi, Deepak Gheewala etc. are remarkable playwright. There is a greater contribution of regional and other drama institutions in this field.

Bhavai :

Script writers have said that 'Bhavai' is emotion oriented drama. It is special dramatic art that started 700 years ago by Asait Thakar. This art which has been providing public education along with entertainment at the economical rate, promoted during Solanki Era. It was chiefly performed without curtains, with light humour and with the music playing on trumpet. Characters disguised in the form of Ramdev, Jhanda Jhulan, Kajoda etc. are the main features of Bhavai. Theme of Bhavai includes protest against social vices. The characters



2.7 Jayshankar Sundari

like Rangla-Rangli are used to promote the programme like girls' education, save the girl-child etc. Those who perform this Bhavai play trumpet and pray to the Goddess by reciting hymn.

Folk Dances of Gujarat :

There are varied dance forms belonging to different communities of Gujarat. These dance forms are according to the traditions and customs. Among them are tribal and folk dances, garba, rasa and many more folk dances. Such art of dance can be seen at the time of festivals, marriages and fairs.

Tribal Dance :

Tribal dance of Gujarat is seen at the time of festivals, marriages, fairs and to please the God-Goodesses. Most of dances are performed by forming a circle along with various traditional musical



instruments like drum, traditional manjira, thali, dholak with songs in regional language. In the dance form known as chado, characters imitate different bird creatures like peacock, squirrel and Sparrow. Dance like - 'Mali No Chaalo' and 'Thakryo Chaalo', are seen in Dang. Whereas 'Tippani Dance' of labourers (Shramhari) performed by Bhil and Koli communities Dancers perform dance in group on the set of thick sticks which are joined with small sticks stuck to the ground.

2.8 Tribal Dance

Garba :

The word Garba is derived from the word 'Garbh deep'. Earthen lamp is placed in a holed earthen pot Dancers keep it on their head and move around in circle Garbas are performed during navratri festival (In Hindu month - Aso Sud Ekam to Aso Sud Navmi or somewhere upto Dasam or on Sharad Poonam) in all part of Gujarat. Gujarati people perform and sing garba to worship and pray Adhya Shakti (Goddess of power) mother Jagdamba. Generally, it is performed in the open ground encircling to the Mandvi' kept in the centre of the ground along with the strokes of hands and beats of drums.

Gujarati poetry known as Garba and Garbi are chiefly associated with Krishna Bhakti. Gujarati poet Dayaram wrote poems in Gujarati which masde ladies sing the colourful and emotional garbi of Lord krishna's love.

Rasa :

Rasa is a dance to be performed in circle along with singing. There is a story that Lord Krishna had shown 'Rasa Lila' to devotee (Bhakt) Narsinh Mehta. Rasa is mostly performed in Gujarat during navratri

and Janmashtami festivals. Dandiya Rasa is one of its types. But some people perform rasa by placing earthen pot on the head. Due to increasing influence of Vaishnav sect, rasa has become more popular. Women wear traditional dresses like embroidered chaniya-choli and men wear embroidered kediya-dhoti when they perform (play) rasa.

Other Dances of Gujarat :

(1) Gof Gunthan Dance : It is performed on drumbeats and taal and laya of music, tying rope with mandapa, pillar, tree and holding the other end in the hand. They perform dance in group holding the rope in one hand and dandiya in other. They make crisper like formation, going one inside and other coming outside. This is repeatedly done forming a circle. This way they make and open the Gunthan (plait). This style of dance is called Gof Gunthan dance.

(2) Dhamaal dance of Siddhis : Siddhis, presently residing in Jambur village, in the center of Gir, originally belonged to Africa, performs this dance. They perform dance by rhythmically striking Mashira (coconut shell containing earthen lamp inside, covered with a cloth), wearing peacock feathers and holding small drums in hands forming a circle. They dance with high and low pitch intonation of 'Ho-Ho' sound which echoes in the whole forest. They dance in a group imitating the voice of animals and birds.

(3) Merayo Dance, Padhar Dance and Kali and Mer dance : This type of dance is seen near the stepwell of Banaskantha region. Toran is woven with the tall grass of reed and Jhunjhadi. This dance is performed on drumbeats and sword tricks. This type of dance is called Merayo dance.

In Surendranagar region, the people of Padhaar community dance with taal and laya of dandiya and manjira. While dancing they generate scenes like sea waves or like a ship moving on sea waves.

Kolis of Saurashtra perform kolidance, holding madhrasio on head and head gear (turban) decorated with embroidery and mirrors tied with green coloured embroidered belt. They wear 'Bhet' on their waist to perform dance. Similarly Mer dance of Saurashtra and other dances of Bharwad tribe are wellknown.

As we discussed in the previous chapter, here also we find that Indian culture is universal assimilating all. As a result of arrival of various tribes, since ancient time to contemporary one, many changes occurred like growth and development of handicraft, home artistry, painting, dancing and various other fine arts. This shows rich and varied heritage of India and it leaves permanent impression of India on the horizon of world.

Excercise

1. Answer the following questions in detail :

- (1) Explain clay work of ancient Indian heritage.
- (2) 'Leather work is a very old art of India.' Explain the statement.
- (3) Give introduction of 'Sangeet Ratnakar'.
- (4) Give information about Kathakali dance.

2. Write answers of the following questions pointwise :

- (1) Explain the progress of Dancing Art in India.
- (2) Give information about Garba and Garbi of Gujarat.
- (3) Describe the art of Diamond, Bead work and Enamel work of India and Gujarat.
- (4) Describe tribal dances of Gujarat.

3. Answer the following questions in brief :

- (1) Name the writers of 'Sangeet Ratnakar' and 'Sangeet Parijat'.
- (2) What is the process followed in spinning ?
- (3) Name the items of metal prepared by the artisans of Lothal.
- (4) Which designs did artisans make on clay utensils ?
- (5) Write a short note on 'Bhavai'.

4. Answer the following questions choosing the correct option from those given below :

- (1) Which of the following is a work of Kalidas ?
(A) Urubhanga (B) Karnabhar (C) Meghdoot (D) Dutvakhyam
- (2) With which dance style are Vijayanti Mala and Hema Malini associated ?
(A) Manipuri (B) Kuchipudi (C) Kathakali (D) Bharatnatyam
- (3) Which veda is associated with music ?
(A) Rigveda (B) Samveda (C) Yajurveda (D) Athrvaveda
- (4) Who is known as Tuti-e-Hind in the field of Indian music ?
(A) Tansen (B) Tulsidas (C) Kabir (D) Amir Khusroo
- (5) 'Chhaddo' dance means which dance ?
(A) Tribal Dance (B) Dance of Bharvaad (C) Dance of Kolis (D) Dance of Padharaas
- (6) Siddhis, the dancer of Dhamaal dance were native of
(A) Rajasthan (B) Andaman (C) Africa (D) Thailand
- (7) On which day is the "World Yoga Day" celebrated ?
(A) 21 June (B) 1 May (C) 21 April (D) 5 September

Activity

- Take students to Ajanta-Ellora.
- Show videos of various dances to the students.
- Take students to Government owned handloom corporation.
- Visit the 'Handicraft Fair' organized in your locality and observe the products.

