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Riyasat IAS Mentorship

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Q The Mauryan Empire, particularly during the reign of Ashoka, marked a significant turning point in the evolution of Indian art and architecture. Examine the key features of Ashokan art and architecture and assess its lasting impact on India's cultural heritage.

The Mauryan Empire (312 - 185 BC) marked the first vast empire after Indus valley civilization. It laid down foundation of Indian art & architecture that played key role in its advancement.

Ashoka's reign marked turning point

① Political Stability: Under Ashokan rule the empire was stable

② Peace & Security: After Kalinga war Bherighosha turned to Dhamma

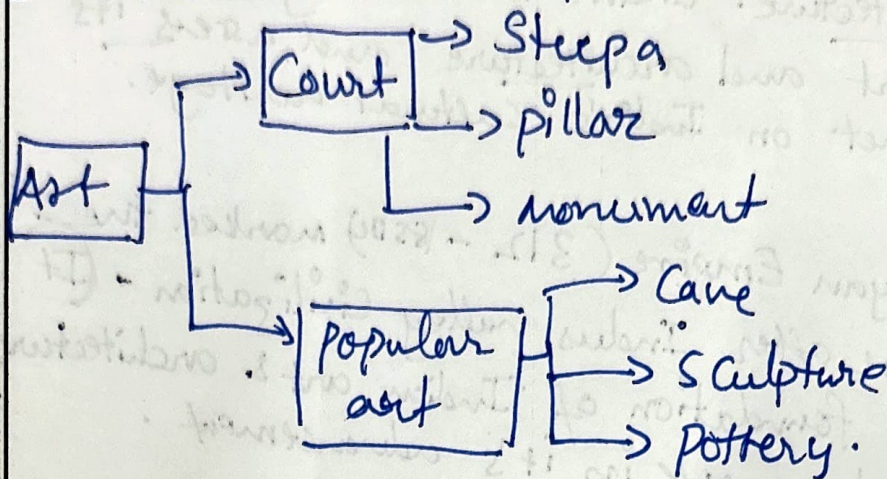
③ State patronage to art: Ashoka patronized art, architecture & literature (ex: Sanchi Stupa in MP)

④ Influence of outside factors: Like Persian empire & Indo Greeks were prominent.

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Key features of Ashokan art & architecture

① Both Court art & Popular art were present



② Material used: Both Stone & wood were used [EX] Kumraha Palace of Mauryas

③ Highly polished & lustrous finishing, EX: Pillars were well polished [EX] Laubian - Nandgarh pillar

④ Purpose: wide purpose; like victory symbol or State Summons [EX] Sarnath pillar → Dharma Chakra परिवर्तन.

⑤ Blend of indigenous & foreign elements: Magantheres, Kumraha Palace was highly inspired by Persian architecture.

⑥ Carvings & wooden work: Beautiful Carving were being made in Palaces, on Totems & Stupas.

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- ⑦ Pottery: was highly polished Black ware, highest level of pottery.
- ⑧ Caves: used mostly as viharas for buddhist & Jain monks.
- ⑨ Philosophical basis of art: Inspired by religious philosophy [EX] Stupa's and representing world taking refuge in Buddha.

Impact on Indian Cultural heritage

- ① Precedence & inspiration: For later development of art & architecture [EX] Shunga dynasty added beautiful Torans to Stupas.
- ② Influence on regional art & architecture: Influenced local architecture [EX] Satvahana architecture.
- ③ Contemporary influence: National Emblem is the Capital of Sarnath pillar.
- ④ Insight into India's past & Society: Edicts, Pillars, Paintings give insight into Indian past Society & history.

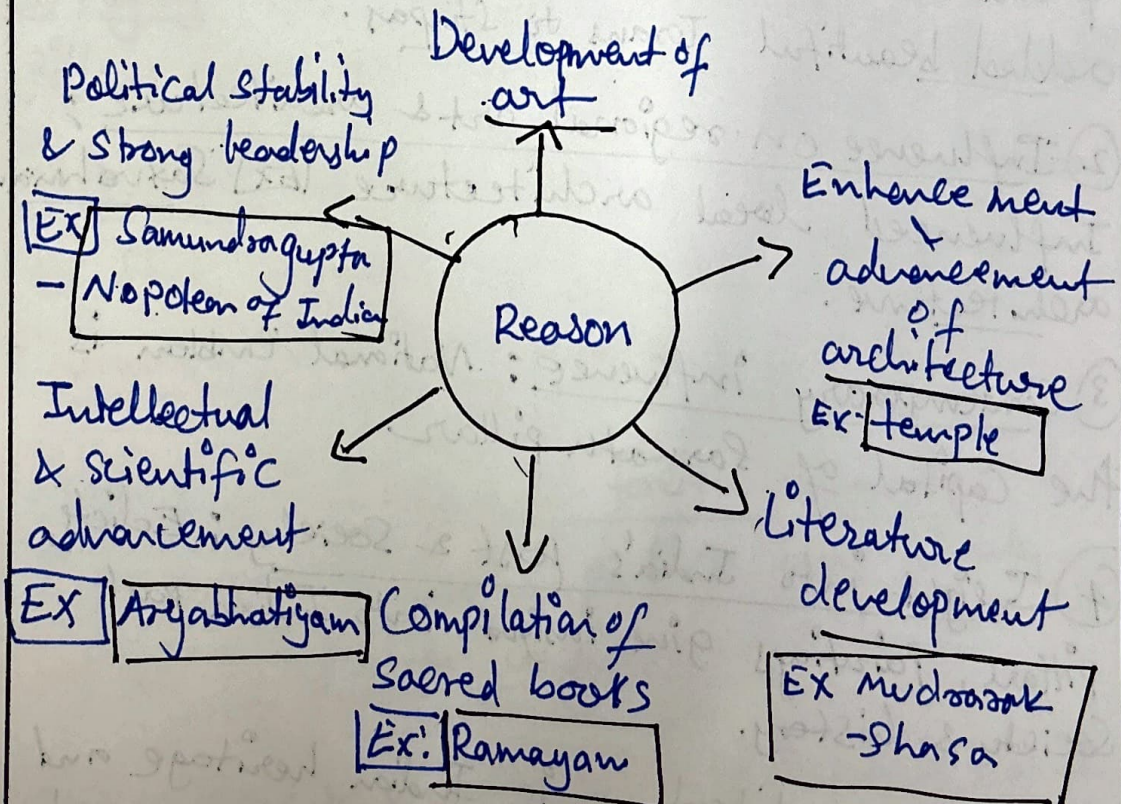
Maueryan architecture is Indian heritage and it is important to protect it. Article 49 provides for the protection of Indian heritage.

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Q The Gupta period is often regarded as the "Golden Age" of ancient India. Critically examine the developments in art, architecture and literature during the era. How did these cultural advancements shape the identity of classical India civilization?

Gupta period lasted for over 2 centuries from (320-550AD) and is often regarded as the "Golden Age" of Indian art & culture. Played key role in Indian classical art & literature.

The "Golden Age"



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Development in art & architecture

- ① Cave art & paintings: Beautiful murals in Ajanta & Ellora Caves [EX] The dying prince
- ② Sculptures: Development of new schools [EX] Sarnath Buddha in Chunar Sandstone
- ③ Temple architecture: Advancement of temples architecture & development of Nagara School
- ④ Carvings & Statues: Beautiful Carvings & Sculptures especially in temples [EX] Pashupata temple in Deogarh

Development in literature

- ① Compilation of religious texts [EX] Purana & Mahabharata, Ramayana
- ② Compilation in playwrights & stories [EX] Mudrasaksasa by Vishnu Gupta
- ③ Compilation of poetry [EX] Kumar Sambhara by Kalidasa

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④ Development in Scientific literature:

EX Bhaskaracharya by Bhaskar Varma & Aryabhata by Aryabhata.

⑤ Haven of literary jewel: Kalidasa, Banabhatta, Vishnu Sharma etc.

Fact: Kalidasa Abhijanam Shakuntalam was first Indian work to be translated into European language.

Impact & role in Shaping identity of Indian civilization

① Urban Society: with large towns & urban or city bred people (Nagrik).

② Caste based society: Dalits being shown speaking Prakrit & other caste Sanskrit.

③ Role of women: large patriarchal societies yet condition was not very bad.

④ Advancement in science & scientific thinking:
Work like Aryabhata's point towards this.

⑤ Advancement in material culture: iron numismatics & coinage can be seen.

Gupta Empire marks the climax of Indian art & architecture, played an inspiring role in later advancement in the area.