

ANALOG IAS INSTITUTE



☎ 8494990066

✉ ias.analog@gmail.com

🌐 www.analogeducation.in

Subject : Art & Culture

Duration : 1 Hour

Paper Code : S202602016

Date : 1st Feb 2026

1. Answer : (c)

Explanation : There is no archaeological evidence to link the earliest rock-cut architecture in India to the Indus Valley Civilization. The oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India are the Barabar caves which date to the Mauryan period and were commissioned by Ashoka.

Harappan architecture relied on brick, mudbrick and stone construction, not rock excavation.

Let's have a look at other options:

- **Option (a) is correct:** One of the most remarkable features of Harappan architecture is the uniformity in brick size and construction technique across distant sites such as Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira and Kalibangan. Burnt bricks were standardized in a fixed ratio and used extensively in walls, drains and platforms.
- **Option (b) is correct:** Most Harappan cities were divided into two clearly demarcated zones: an elevated citadel and a lower town. The citadel housed important public structures such as granaries, assembly halls and the Great Bath, indicating administrative, ritual or elite functions, while the lower town contained residential quarters.
- **Option (d) is correct:** Harappan drainage system represents one of the earliest examples of planned urban sanitation. Individual household drains were connected to larger ones which were laid along main roads. These drains had removable stone or brick covers which allowed regular inspection and cleaning.

2. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Ellora represents the final phase of Jain rock-cut architecture in India. While Ellora is famous for its Hindu, Buddhist and Jain caves, the Jain caves (Caves 30–34) were excavated last, between the 9th and 12th centuries CE. Indra Sabha (Cave 32) and Jagannath Sabha (Cave 33) are the most celebrated Jain excavations here, known for their refined sculptures, intricate pillars and emphasis on Tirthankara iconography. Ajanta and Karla are exclusively Buddhist sites, while Badami is primarily associated with early Chalukyan Hindu and Jain structural temples, not late Jain cave complexes.

3. Answer : (c)

Explanation : In Buddhist stupa architecture, the medhi is a raised circular or square terrace surrounding the anda (hemispherical dome), used for ritual circumambulation (pradakshina). It often has a stone railing and forms an essential architectural and ritual component of stupas.

- Option (a) is correct since the harmika is a square fence-like structure placed atop the dome which symbolizes the heavenly abode and enclosing the yasti, which represents the cosmic axis.
- Option (b) is correct because toranas are elaborately carved gateways marking cardinal entrances to stupas and are not load-bearing elements.
- Option (d) is also correct as both Sannati and Amaravati belong to the Andhra–Deccan Buddhist sculptural tradition associated with the Satavahana period, characterised by narrative reliefs, medallions and fluid stone carving.

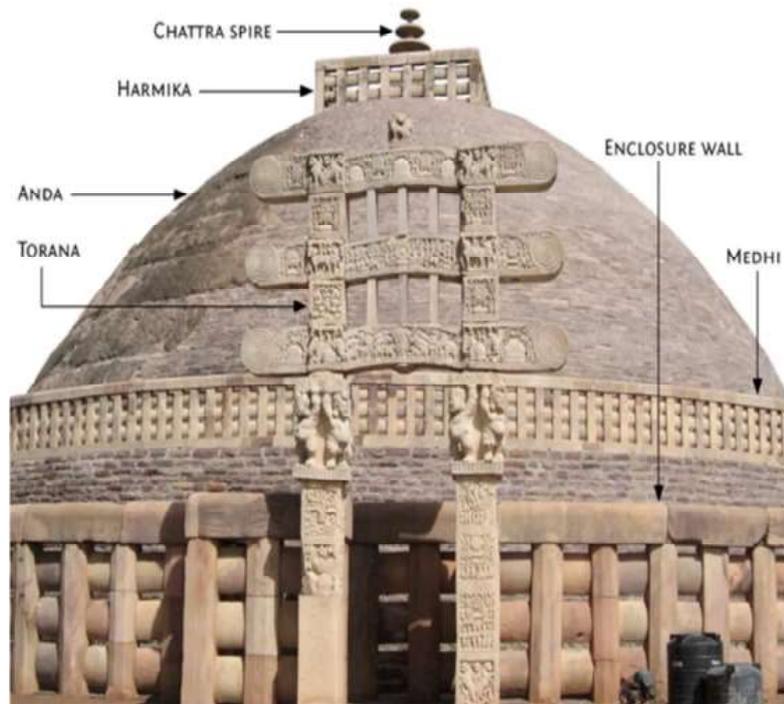


Image: Buddhist stupas and its Components

4. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Devi-Chandraguptam which was written by Vishakhadatta narrates the accession of Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty, not Chandragupta Maurya;

- Mrichchhakatikam is notable for its social realism, depiction of common people, courtesans, gambling and urban ethics, making it distinct from elite-centric Sanskrit drama.
- Buddhacharita by Ashvaghosha traces the Buddha's journey from birth through renunciation to enlightenment and the first sermon at Sarnath.
- Vikramankadevacharita, authored by Bilhana, is a court epic celebrating the achievements of Chalukya king Vikramaditya VI.

5. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Siddhesvara Mahadeva Temple at Barakar is the earliest among the given monuments, dating to the 9th century and representing early Pala-period Nagara architecture with a curving shikhara and amalaka.

- Modhera Sun Temple follows next, built in the early 11th century (1026 CE) by Bhimdev I of the Solanki dynasty and noted for its grand Surya Kund.
- Konark Sun Temple comes later, constructed around 1240 CE under Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, famous for its chariot-shaped plan and collapsed shikhara.
- Kamakhya Temple, although ancient as a Shakti site, attained its present structural form mainly in the 17th century under the Koch rulers, making it the latest in this sequence.

6. Answer : (a)

Explanation : The description precisely matches Ashvaghosha who flourished in the 1st century CE under the patronage of Kushan ruler Kanishka. His work Saundarananda is a didactic kavya that narrates the transformation of Nanda, the Buddha's half-brother, from a life of sensual attachment to one of spiritual discipline, with a clear structural division between worldly life and Buddhist doctrine.

- Option (b) is incorrect because Kalidasa belonged to the Gupta period (4th–5th century CE) and is known for classical Sanskrit poetry and drama rooted in Brahmanical traditions such as Abhijnanasakuntalam and Meghaduta.
- Option (c) is incorrect as Bhasa is associated mainly with plays based on the Mahabharata and royal intrigue.
- Option (d) is incorrect because Banabhatta was a 7th-century CE court poet of Harshavardhana and authored Harshacharita and Kadambari.

7. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Mansehra, located in present-day Pakistan, is a well-established site of Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts. Along with Shahbazgarhi, it represents the north-western group of edicts and is written in the Kharosthi script.

- Shahbazgarhi, also in Pakistan, is another prominent Major Rock Edict site. The inscriptions here convey Ashoka's Dhamma and administrative instructions and are among the most important sources for understanding Mauryan governance in the north-west.
- Jaugada, located in present-day Odisha, is one of the two Major Rock Edict sites in the region, the other being Dhauli. The edicts at Jaugada are inscribed in Brahmi script and are significant for their emphasis on moral governance and public welfare.
- Maski, in Karnataka, is associated with a Minor Rock Edict, not a Major one. Its importance lies in the fact that it explicitly mentions the personal name "Ashoka," instead of only the title Devanampiya Piyadasi.

8. Answer : (d)

Explanation : The description clearly matches Ustad Abdul Karim Khan. He revolutionized khayal singing by emphasizing slow, contemplative alap, purity of swaras and emotional depth. His music deeply influenced audiences beyond traditional courts, particularly in South India and left a lasting impact on Indian musical sensibilities. These traits are the defining hallmarks of the Kirana Gharana.

- Agra Gharana is traditionally associated with a powerful and forceful style of singing rooted in dhrupad aesthetics. Its prominent exponents emphasized voice strength, rhythmic solidity and structured compositions rather than inward-looking melodic meditation.
- Gwalior Gharana, founded by Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan, laid the foundation of khayal singing and is known for its balanced and straightforward presentation of ragas. While it values clarity and raga purity, it does not prioritize prolonged slow alap or emotional introspection to the degree mentioned.
- Jaipur–Atrauli Gharana, shaped by Ustad Alladiya Khan, is highly intellectual and technically complex, focusing on rare ragas, intricate taans and advanced layakari. Its aesthetic appeal lies in cerebral mastery rather than emotional accessibility or meditative calm.

9. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: Amir Khusrau occupies a unique position in the cultural history of medieval India as a bridge between Indian and Persian traditions. Living during the Delhi Sultanate and being closely associated with the Chishti Sufi order, he consciously blended Persian melodic structures, Arabic poetic forms and Indian raga-based music. Rather than replacing Indian traditions, he enriched them by introducing new rhythmic patterns, musical aesthetics and themes rooted in Sufism. This synthesis laid the foundation for what later evolved into Hindustani classical music.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Dhrupad is much older than Amir Khusrau and cannot be attributed to him as its originator. The roots of Dhrupad lie in ancient India, particularly in the chanting traditions of the Samaveda and early temple music. While Dhrupad became systematised and highly refined during the Mughal period, especially under Akbar, it was not created by Khusrau.

Statement 3 is correct: Although ghazal and qawwali existed in Arabic and Persian traditions before Amir Khusrau, he was instrumental in naturalising them in the Indian cultural milieu. He introduced Indian emotional depth, local imagery, vernacular expressions and Sufi devotional elements into these forms. His qawwalis became central to Chishti Sufi practice and his ghazals popularised the genre beyond elite Persian-speaking circles. This is why he is often referred to as the “father of Indian ghazal and qawwali”, even though he was not their original inventor.

10. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: Dhrupad is fundamentally a serious, spiritual and devotional form of Indian classical music. Its thematic content includes praise of Hindu and Islamic deities, philosophical reflections, descriptions of seasons and spiritual love. Linguistically, Dhrupad compositions are primarily written in Brajhasha, Avadhi, Hindi and related dialects, which allowed the form to connect sacred ideas with regional cultural expression. This devotional orientation distinguishes Dhrupad from romantic or expressive genres like Thumri.

Statement 2 is correct: Dhrupad reached its artistic zenith during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century. Akbar’s court provided unparalleled patronage to musicians such as Tansen, Swami Haridas and Baiju Bawra, allowing Dhrupad to evolve into a highly structured and classical form. Statement 3 is incorrect: Dhrupad recital always begins with Alap, which is slow, meditative, unmetered and completely free of percussion. This alap is meant to gradually unfold the raga and establish its emotional and spiritual mood. Percussion is introduced much later using the pakhawaj, not the tabla.

11. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: Mimamsa Darshan treats the Vedas as eternal, authorless (apaurusheya) and infallible. Its primary concern is the correct interpretation of Vedic injunctions related to rituals and sacrifices. It holds that the performance of prescribed duties (dharma) rather than speculative knowledge of God (Metaphysics) which leads to happiness and liberation.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Sankhya Darshan does not recognise God as the creator of the universe. It is a dualistic and largely non-theistic system, positing two independent realities: purusha (pure consciousness) and prakriti (primordial matter). Evolution of the universe is explained through the interaction of purusha and prakriti without invoking a creator God. Liberation (kaivalya) is attained by discriminative knowledge of their distinctness.

Statement 3 is correct: Vedanta Darshan, based on the Upanishads, teaches that ignorance (avidya) causes bondage by making the individual identify with the body and mind instead of the true self. Liberation (moksha) is achieved through knowledge of the identity of atman and Brahman, leading to the dissolution of ignorance and illusion (maya). Knowledge, not ritual action, is the direct means to liberation in Vedanta.

12. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Pair 1 is Incorrect: Aryadeva was a renowned Buddhist philosopher of Mahayana tradition.

He was a direct disciple of Nagarjuna who is considered one of the most influential figures in Mahayana Buddhism. He made significant contributions in advancing the Madhyamaka (Middle Way) philosophy which emphasizes the concept of “emptiness” (Shunyata). His notable work, Catuhshataka (The Four Hundred Verses) critiques non-Buddhist philosophies while elaborating on Nagarjuna’s teachings. Aryadeva’s influence was so significant that he is often referred to as “the second Nagarjuna” within Buddhist circles.

Pair 2 is Correct: Born in South India, Dignaga’s most influential work is Pramanasamuccaya (Compendium of Valid Cognition) which systematized the theories of knowledge (pramana) within Buddhist philosophy. His logic which focused on perception and inference as the two valid means of knowledge, was revolutionary for its time and had a lasting impact on the intellectual traditions in India and Tibet.

Pair 3 is Correct: Nathamuni is most well-known for his efforts to recover and compile the Nalayira Divya Prabandham, a collection of 4,000 Tamil hymns composed by the Alvars, who were saint-poets devoted to Vishnu. Nathamuni is also credited with establishing the foundations of the Srivaishnava community and its rituals, practices and theological underpinnings.

13. Answer : (d)

Explanation : ● A. Vidyashankara Temple: It is located in Sringeri, Karnataka. This temple combines both Dravidian and Hoysala styles of architecture. It was built in the 14th century in memory of the pontiff Vidyashankara by the rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire. The temple is known for its astronomical significance and beautifully sculpted pillars.

- B. Rajarani Temple: It is located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This 11th-century temple is known for its stunning architectural style and is often referred to as a “love temple” due to its erotic carvings. Unlike many temples in Odisha, it does not have a presiding deity, making it unique. The name “Rajarani” is derived from the local sandstone used in its construction which is known as Rajarani.
- C. Kandariya Mahadeo Temple: It is one of the largest and most ornate temples in the Khajuraho Group of Monuments in Madhya Pradesh. It was built around 1025–1050 CE during the reign of the Chandela dynasty. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is famous for its intricate carvings and the iconic erotic sculptures.
- D. Bhimesvara Temple: It is located in Draksharama, Andhra Pradesh. It is one of the Pancharama Kshetras which is sacred to the worship of Lord Shiva.

14. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Appar (also known as Tirunavukkarasar), was a prominent Nayanar saint. His hymns were compiled into Tirumurai by Nambiyandar Nambi during the Chola period. Appar’s compositions stress personal devotion to Shiva and rejection of rigid ritualism.

- **Option (a) is incorrect:** Nammalwar was one of the most important Alvar saints, belonging to the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of South India. He was devoted to Lord Vishnu and is traditionally credited with composing a substantial portion of the Divya Prabandha, the canonical text of Tamil Vaishnavism. His hymns emphasize complete surrender (prapatti) to Vishnu and form a theological foundation for later Vaishnava philosophy.

- **Option (b) is incorrect:** Thiruppaan Alvar was also an Alvar saint who is known for composing devotional hymns associated with the Srirangam temple, focusing on the physical and spiritual beauty of Vishnu. His inclusion among the twelve Alvars places him firmly within the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition.
- **Option (d) is incorrect:** Andal was the only female Alvar saint and a devoted follower of Lord Vishnu. Her compositions, especially the Tiruppavai, occupy a central place in Vaishnava devotional literature.

15. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: The passage clearly refers to Nagarjuna, a 2nd-century Indian Buddhist philosopher who is regarded as the founder of the Madhyamaka school of Mahayana Buddhism. His philosophy focuses on the middle path (Madhyama Pratipad) and the doctrine of emptiness (Shunyata) of all phenomena.

Statement 2 is correct: Nagarjuna's principal philosophical work is the Madhyamika Karika (also called Madhyamaka Shastra). As given in the passage, this treatise consists of 27 chapters and elaborates Nagarjuna's arguments establishing the emptiness of all phenomena through logical reasoning.

Statement 3 is incorrect: According to the Mahasanghika tradition, which influenced Mahayana thought, the Buddha is considered transcendental, eternal, and infinite, not merely a historical and finite being. Therefore, the statement contradicts the philosophical position associated with the school described.

Statement 4 is correct: The dialectical method and philosophy developed by Nagarjuna are associated with Prajna Paramita which emphasizes supreme wisdom and the realization of emptiness. The Madhyamaka dialectic is closely linked to this tradition and followers of Nagarjuna's philosophy are known as Madhyamikas.

16. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Manjusri is the Bodhisattva of wisdom (prajna). He is traditionally depicted as a male Bodhisattva holding a flaming sword, which symbolizes the cutting away of ignorance and illusion. Manjusri is closely associated with the philosophical traditions of Mahayana Buddhism, particularly teachings related to emptiness (shunyata) and insight.

- **Option (a) is incorrect:** Vajrapani represents the power and strength of the Buddha. He is often depicted as a fierce protector figure holding a vajra (thunderbolt), symbolizing spiritual power rather than wisdom. In Mahayana iconography, Vajrapani complements Manjusri and Avalokiteshvara by representing power, not intellect.
- **Option (c) is incorrect:** Vasudhara is associated with wealth, prosperity and abundance. She is especially popular in Nepal and is worshipped for material and spiritual prosperity, not for wisdom. Option (d) is incorrect: Ksitigarbha is known for his compassionate vow not to attain Buddhahood until all hells are emptied. He is depicted as

17. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: The Kalinga style, a regional variant of the Nagara architectural tradition, flourished in present-day Odisha, especially in Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark. These temples are marked by a curvilinear shikhara (rekha deula), a distinct assembly of structures (vimana, jagamohana, natamandira), and heavy sculptural ornamentation.

Statement 2 is correct: Vijayanagara temples represent an imperial and expansive architectural vision. They are characterised by:

- Towering gopurams (gateway towers),
- Vast pillared halls (mandapas),
- Rich sculptural narratives from epics,
- Integration of temples into urban ceremonial spaces.

Examples include the Virupaksha Temple and Vijaya Vittala Temple at Hampi.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The Vidyashankara Temple at Sringeri is not purely Dravidian. It is syncretic structure, blending:

- Dravidian elements (vimana form),
- Hoysala/Vesara influences (ornamentation),
- And a unique astronomical orientation, where sunlight falls on zodiac symbols inside the temple according to solar movement.

Statement 4 is correct: The Kandariya Mahadeo Temple at Khajuraho is the finest example of mature Nagara architecture. It features:

- A soaring curvilinear shikhara,
- Clustered subsidiary spires (urushringas),
- Dense sculptural decoration integrated into architectural rhythm.

18. Answer : (b)

Explanation : ● **Zardozi embroidery:** It is a rich and elaborate form of metallic embroidery that flourished in India under Mughal patronage. Although its origins lie in Persia, it became deeply rooted in Indian court culture, particularly in Lucknow, which emerged as its most prominent centre. The craft involves the use of gold and silver threads to create ornate patterns and was traditionally practiced for royal garments, wall hangings and ceremonial textiles.

- **Kantha embroidery:** It is a traditional folk craft practiced primarily by rural women of Bengal. It is characterized by simple running stitches made using threads pulled from old cloth, reflecting sustainability and everyday life. The motifs often depict flowers, animals, folk symbols and scenes from domestic life.
- **Kasuti embroidery:** It is a folk tradition of Karnataka, closely associated with the cultural and architectural heritage of the region. The designs are highly intricate and geometrical, often inspired by temple gopurams, chariots, palanquins and animals. A distinctive feature of Kasuti is that it is done using a single thread, with both sides of the fabric appearing almost identical.

19. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Dhokra is a non-ferrous metal casting tradition that employs the lost-wax (cire perdue) technique, one of the oldest known metal casting methods in the world. In this technique, a wax model is first created, then covered with layers of clay. When heated, the wax melts away, leaving a hollow cavity into which molten metal—usually brass—is poured. Once cooled, the clay mould is broken to reveal the final metal object. This craft is traditionally practiced by tribal communities such as the Gonds, Ghadwas, Ghantaras, Sithulias and Jharas, mainly in Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The Kathodi tribe of Gujarat is not associated with Dhokra casting, making option (b) the only correct statement.

20. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Sharangadhara Samhita which was composed by Sharangadhara in the 13th century, is a classical text of Ayurveda. It focuses on medical science, especially diagnosis, pharmacology, formulation of medicines and therapeutic procedures. Hence, option (c) is correct.

21. Answer : (d)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: Ashokan pillars, dating to the 3rd century BCE, were erected as independent, free-standing monolithic columns across the Mauryan Empire. Their primary purpose was didactic, carrying Ashoka's edicts to propagate Dhamma (moral law). In contrast, Achaemenian pillars of the 6th–4th century BCE were architectural supports, used in grand palaces and audience halls such as the Apadana at Persepolis, and were not meant to convey inscriptions or moral messages.

Statement 2 is correct: Scholars widely accept that Ashokan capitals—especially the bell-shaped base, abacus designs and animal figures—show influence from Achaemenian-West Asian traditions, likely transmitted through Mauryan contact with the Persian world. However, the highly polished Mauryan sandstone, monolithic construction and refined animal realism represent indigenous Indian craftsmanship, marking a synthesis rather than direct imitation.

Statement 3 is correct: Ashokan pillars were ideologically rooted in Buddhism, emphasizing non-violence, tolerance and ethical governance. In contrast, Achaemenian pillars reflected imperial authority, royal ceremony and Zoroastrian-Persian cultural values, often expressed through capitals featuring twin bulls, griffins or mythological creatures, symbolizing power and cosmic order.

22. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: The first discovery of prehistoric rock paintings in India was made in 1867–68 by archaeologist Archibald Carlley, well before the discovery of the Altamira cave paintings in Spain in 1879. This fact is significant because it establishes India as one of the earliest regions where prehistoric art was scientifically identified, even before some globally famous European sites.

Statement 2 is incorrect: This statement incorrectly assigns Mesolithic characteristics to the Upper Palaeolithic phase. At Bhimbetka, Upper Palaeolithic art (Period I) is primarily marked by large animal figures, linear and symbolic representations and limited human activity shown as stick-like figures. The sophisticated depiction of group hunting with bows, arrows, barbed spears, traps and snares belongs to the Mesolithic period (Period II).

Statement 3 is correct: Mesolithic phase (Period II) at Bhimbetka shows a clear expansion of social life and cultural complexity. Paintings from this period depict community dances, group hunting, food gathering, honey collection, family scenes and playful activities involving children, along with the use of advanced tools like bows, arrow and barbed spears.

Statement 4 is correct: The remarkable longevity of Bhimbetka paintings is largely due to the use of mineral-based pigments such as haematite (red), chalcedony (green), limestone (white), which were mixed with water and possibly organic binders like animal fat or tree resin. These pigments underwent chemical reactions with the rock surfaces, allowing the paintings to survive for thousands of years.

23. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Statement 1 is correct: Badami cave paintings, executed during the early Chalukya phase when Badami was the capital (6th century CE), are stylistically linked to the Ajanta tradition. This is evident in the use of sinuous lines, fluid forms, volumetric faces and restrained colour palettes. The resemblance in facial modelling and compositional rhythm clearly places Badami murals as a continuation and regional adaptation of the classical Ajanta idiom.

Statement 2 is correct: The Vishnu Cave at Badami, also known as Cave No. 4, was sponsored by Mangalesha, the younger son of Pulakesi I. An inscription in this cave explicitly dates it to 578-579 CE and dedicates the image of Vishnu. This epigraphic evidence firmly establishes both the chronology and religious affiliation of the cave, making it a key reference point in early Deccan mural history.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Pallava mural paintings do not show a complete departure from earlier sculptural traditions. On the contrary, while Pallava paintings—such as those at Panamalai and Kanchipuram—display increased ornamentation, rhythmic lines and elongated torsos, they still retain continuity with earlier sculptural conventions. Facial roundness, volumetric treatment and bodily modelling show evolutionary refinement rather than abrupt stylistic rupture.

24. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Chitrastotra, found in the third Khanda of the Vishnudharmottara Purana (5th century CE), is the most important ancient Indian text on painting. It explains Pratima Lakshana (canons of image-making), techniques of drawing, proportions, expressions, perspective, colours and the six limbs of painting—making it a foundational theoretical source for Indian visual art.

- Option (a) is incorrect because the Natyashastra primarily deals with performing arts such as drama, dance, music, and aesthetics (rasa theory), not the technical principles of painting or image-making.
- Option (b) is correct because Brihat Samhita is an encyclopedic work covering astrology, architecture, town planning and iconography.
- Option (d) is incorrect as Abhijnanashakuntalam is a Sanskrit drama and literary masterpiece, not a treatise on art or painting.

25. Answer : (b)

Explanation : • Kalpasutra is one of the most important Jain texts used for artistic representation. It narrates key episodes from the lives of the 24 Tirthankaras, especially Mahavira, such as conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, first sermon and salvation. Because of its ritual importance during Paryushana, it was repeatedly copied and richly illustrated. Ī% Kalakacharyakatha is a narrative Jain text that tells the adventurous story of Acharya Kalaka by blending history, legend and moral instruction. Its dramatic storyline made it highly suitable for visual depiction and it appears frequently in illustrated Jain manuscripts.

- Uttaradhyana Sutra is a canonical Jain text that records Mahavira's teachings on ascetic discipline, ethical conduct, and monastic life. Though doctrinal in nature, it was also illustrated to aid religious instruction and meditation, especially in manuscript traditions of Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- In contrast, the Natyashastra is a Brahmanical treatise on dramaturgy and performing arts attributed to Bharata Muni. It is unrelated to Jain religious literature and does not belong to the Jain manuscript painting tradition.

26. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Perini Sivatanavam is an ancient dance form that flourished during the Kakatiya period and was traditionally performed by warriors before going to battle. The dance is dedicated to Lord Shiva as Nataraja and is marked by powerful movements, rhythmic footwork and masculine energy. It is a distinct folk-classical dance tradition of Telangana, often referred to as the "Dance of Warriors."

27. Answer : (a)

Explanation : • Yakshagana is a traditional dance-drama form of Karnataka, especially prevalent in the coastal districts such as Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada. It combines dance, music, dialogue, and elaborate costumes and draws its themes mainly from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. The performers wear distinctive headgear and facial make-up and the narration is done through songs called prasangas.

- Nongkrem is a significant tribal dance of Meghalaya, performed by the Khasi community during the Nongkrem festival. It is essentially a ritualistic dance linked with fertility, prosperity and good harvest, performed in honour of the deity Ka Blei Synshar. The dance involves both men and women and reflects the matrilineal structure of Khasi society, making Meghalaya its correct match.
- Purulia Chhau belongs to West Bengal, particularly the Purulia district. It is one of the three major Chhau dance traditions of India, the other two being Seraikella Chhau (Jharkhand) and Mayurbhanj Chhau (Odisha). Purulia Chhau is distinctive because of its large colourful masks and martial and vigorous movements, often depicting episodes from Hindu epics and local folklore.
- Chakyar Koothu is an ancient temple theatre tradition of Kerala, performed by members of the Chakyar community inside temple premises. It is unique for its blend of Sanskrit classical drama, Malayalam commentary, humour and social satire. The performer narrates stories from epics and Puranas while engaging directly with the audience.

28. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● The painting Noah's Ark belongs to a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the Divan-i Hafiz, dated around 1590, produced during the reign of Emperor Akbar, when Mughal miniature painting reached a high level of technical and narrative sophistication. The work is attributed to Miskin who was one of Akbar's leading court painters.

- Stylistically, the painting is marked by a subdued colour palette, dominated by white with restrained use of red, blue, and yellow, and features a convincing depiction of water, a technically demanding element in miniature painting. Importantly, the composition employs a vertical perspective, not a horizontal one, which enhances the dramatic tension and movement within the scene.
- Narratively, the painting goes beyond a simple Biblical/Quranic retelling of the flood. It includes the striking episode of Iblis (the devil) being expelled from the ark by Noah's sons, reflecting the Mughal artists' engagement with Islamic theological traditions. The ark carrying animals in pairs symbolizes divine preservation after punishment through the flood. Today, this significant Mughal miniature is housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

29. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Ramanujacharya (11th–12th century CE) was the most important philosopher-saint of Sri Vaishnavism and the chief exponent of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta (qualified non-dualism). He held that Brahman alone exists, but is characterized by plurality, where souls and matter are real and dependent on Brahman. For Ramanuja, bhakti (intense devotion to Vishnu) was the surest path to moksha, not dry logic or meditation alone. He was deeply influenced by the Alvars, integrated temple worship with philosophy and gave an inclusive social dimension to Bhakti. His major works—Sribhashya, Vedartha-Sangraha and Gita-Bhashya—provided a systematic philosophical foundation for devotional worship.

30. Answer : (b)

Explanation : ● Mathura School of sculpture is distinctly identified by its use of spotted red sandstone which was locally available in the Mathura region. This school developed on the banks of the River Yamuna and followed a purely indigenous artistic tradition, drawing inspiration from earlier Yaksha and Yakshini figures of the Mauryan period. The Buddha figures of Mathura appear muscular, energetic and smiling, reflecting an earthly and human form rather than an abstract spiritual ideal.

- Gandhara School, on the other hand, used bluish-grey or grey sandstone and was heavily influenced by Greco-Roman realism, especially in facial features, drapery, and hair style. It flourished in the north-western frontier region under Kushana patronage.
- Amaravati School developed in the Krishna–Godavari Valley under the Satavahanas and is known for narrative reliefs depicting the life of Buddha and Jataka tales, carved mainly in white marble, but it remained indigenous in character, without Greco-Roman influence.

31. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Pallavas of Kanchipuram were pioneers of monumental stone sculpture in South India. Their most celebrated contributions are the monolithic Rathas at Mahabalipuram and large narrative reliefs such as Arjuna's Penance (Descent of the Ganga) which display early experimentation with form, movement and storytelling in stone.

- Cholas, who succeeded the Pallavas, perfected the tradition of bronze sculpture, reaching artistic zenith in the iconic Nataraja image. This sculpture represents Shiva's cosmic dance, where he balances on one leg, crushes the demon Apasmara (ignorance), holds the damaru and fire, and dances within the jvala-mala, symbolising creation, preservation, and destruction.
- Rashtrakutas, ruling the Deccan, are best known for their rock-cut masterpieces, particularly at Ellora and Elephanta. The Maheshamurti sculpture, with three heads emerging from one form, represents Shiva as Sadashiva, Bhairava and Uma, capturing philosophical depth through sculptural form.
- Hoysalas developed a highly distinctive style marked by excessive ornamentation, intricate detailing and short & squat figures. Temples at Belur and Halebid exhibit sculptures that resemble lacework carved in stone where decoration dominates over bodily movement or natural grace.

32. Answer : (b)

Explanation : Chola dynasty (9th–13th century CE) perfected the tradition of bronze sculpture in South India. Their most iconic artistic contribution is the Nataraja sculpture, which represents Lord Shiva as the cosmic dancer. In this form, Shiva balances on one leg, suppresses the demon Apasmara (ignorance), holds the damaru (creation) and fire (destruction), and dances within the circle of flames (jvala-mala), symbolising the eternal cycle of creation and destruction

33. Answer : (d)

Explanation : ● The Qutub Minar, located in Delhi, is the tallest stone tower in India and one of the earliest monumental structures of the Delhi Sultanate.

- The foundation and first storey of the Qutub Minar were laid by Qutbuddin Aibak around 1199 CE, marking the establishment of Muslim rule in India.
- After Aibak's death, Iltutmish, his successor, completed three additional storeys, giving the Minar much of its present height and architectural form. The Minar during this phase was constructed primarily using red and buff sandstone, with inscriptions in Arabic and richly decorated balconies.
- In the 14th century, the Minar suffered damage due to lightning. Feroz Shah Tughlaq undertook major restoration work and rebuilt the top two storeys, using marble along with sandstone, which is why the upper portions appear stylistically different from the lower ones.
- Although Alauddin Khalji made significant architectural contributions to the Qutub complex, such as the construction of the Alai Darwaza and initiating the Alai Minar (which remained unfinished), he had no direct role in the construction, completion or repair of the Qutub Minar itself.

34. Answer : (b)

Explanation : ● The description clearly points to the Bara Imambara at Lucknow, constructed in 1784 by Asaf-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Awadh. The monument was built during a devastating famine and its construction served a dual purpose: it functioned as a Shia congregation hall as well as a large-scale famine relief project, providing employment to thousands.

- Architecturally, the monument is exceptional because it was constructed using interlocking bricks without the use of mortar, relying instead on lime plaster which enhanced durability and structural strength. This technique distinguishes it sharply from Mughal imperial monuments that typically used stone and marble with mortar.
- One of the most striking features of the Bara Imambara is its central hall, which is among the largest arched halls in the world without supporting beams. Above this hall lies the famous Bhool Bhulaiya, a complex network of narrow corridors and staircases, designed both for structural balance and security purposes.

35. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Mughal painting was highly specialised, with master artists known for distinct thematic strengths.

- Marriage Procession of Dara Shikoh reflects imperial grandeur and ceremonial detail typical of Haji Madni, who worked during Shah Jahan's reign and excelled in courtly narratives.
- Krishna Lifts Mount Govardhan belongs to the tradition of illustrating Persian translations of Sanskrit texts undertaken under Akbar by Miskin, a leading painter of Akbar's court.
- Falcon on a Bird Rest exemplifies the naturalistic style of Ustad Mansur, celebrated by Emperor Jahangir as Nadir-al-Asr for his unmatched skill in painting flora and fauna, especially birds.

36. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Indian martial traditions evolved in close connection with regional geography and warfare needs.

- Pari-khanda is correctly associated with Bihar; it is a Rajput martial tradition involving sword (khanda) and shield (pari), and its movements influenced the Chhau dance.
- Kalaripayattu, however, is incorrectly matched with Tamil Nadu—it originated and flourished in Kerala where training takes place in a kalari and includes both armed and unarmed combat.
- Mardani Khel is correctly matched with Maharashtra; it emphasizes swift sword techniques and the use of the pata, suiting the hilly terrain and famously employed by Shivaji.
- Thang-ta is also correctly matched with Manipur; it is a traditional Meitei martial art combining sword (thang) and spear (ta), later suppressed during British rule and revived after Independence

37. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● The Victorian and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai was inscribed in 2018 for its fusion of European architectural styles with Indian adaptations.

- The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas—temples dating to the 12th–13th centuries—were recognised in 2023.
- The Ramappa Temple, noted for its floating bricks and Kakatiya craftsmanship, was inscribed in 2021.
- Shantiniketan, founded by Rabindranath Tagore as a centre of humanistic education and art, entered the list in 2023.

38. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Garba is a ritualistic devotional dance linked to Navaratri and symbolises feminine energy, making Statement 1 correct.

- Chhau dance has three sub-styles, but Mayurbhanj Chhau does not use masks, making Statement 2 incorrect.
- Kumbh Mela is recognised for its rotational organisation at Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik, making Statement 3 correct.

39. Answer : (d)

Explanation : ● Rigveda Manuscripts are part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register,.

- Garba of Gujarat is an Intangible Cultural Heritage, inscribed for its ritual and communal significance.
- Jaipur is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network under Crafts and Folk Art.
- Khangchendzonga National Park is a Mixed World Heritage Site, qualifying under natural criteria due to its ecological diversity and sacred geography.

40. Answer : (c)

Explanation : The narrative refers to the rediscovery and documentation of Hampi, the former capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, in 1800. This work was carried out by Colonel Colin Mackenzie, a British army officer and surveyor employed by the East India Company. His efforts marked one of the earliest systematic attempts to study India's historical geography. He later became the first Surveyor General of India, institutionalising surveys, mapping and documentation.

- James Prinsep is known for deciphering Brahmi script
- Alexander Cunningham for founding the Archaeological Survey of India
- William Jones for linguistic and legal scholarship, making them unsuitable for this context.

41. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Mir Sayyid Ali was a Persian painter and calligrapher who played a foundational role under Humayun and Akbar, especially in the illustration of the Hamzanama. He was also known for his mastery of Nastaliq script, not European styles.

- Daswant was one of the most talented painters of Akbar's atelier. He worked on major imperial projects like the Hamzanama, Razmnama (Persian Mahabharata) and Akbarnama, which together reflect Akbar's policy of cultural synthesis.
- Basawan was among the finest painters of Akbar's court and was explicitly praised by Abul Fazl for his command over line and colour. His contributions to the Hamzanama, Baburnama, Akbarnama and Razmnama mark the transition of Mughal painting from Persian flatness to greater realism.
- Govardhan served under three Mughal emperors—Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. He excelled in portraiture and was known for advanced techniques such as shading, depth, perspective and foreshortening, which became hallmarks of later Mughal painting, especially under Jahangir.

42. Answer : (c)

Explanation : These three terms belong to Brahmanical temple architecture and classify temple shrines according to their structural plan, especially the provision of pradakshinapatha (circumambulatory path).

- Sandhara shrine lacks a circumambulatory passage.
- Nirandhara shrine includes an enclosed pradakshinapatha around the sanctum.

- Sarvatobhadra shrine is open and accessible from all four sides.

Such classifications became significant when Brahmanical temples, along with their principal deity images and Puranic narratives, gained prominence alongside stupas during the early historic to early medieval period.

43. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Chishtiya order, founded by Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, became the most influential Sufi order in India due to its emphasis on love, tolerance, sama (musical assemblies) and deliberate distancing from royal courts. This ideological choice helped it gain mass acceptance, especially among non-elite sections.

- Suhrawardiya Silsilah, established by Shaykh Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi, differed sharply from the Chishtis. It accepted state patronage, encouraged disciplined spiritual training, and maintained close relations with ruling elites, particularly in Bengal and parts of North India—an important UPSC contrast point.
- Naqshbandiya Silsilah, founded by Baha-ud-Din Naqshbandi, is doctrinally distinctive for its practice of silent zikr, insistence on orthodox Sunni Islam, and emphasis on engaging with society while remaining spiritually detached. It gained prominence in India during the Mughal period, especially under Aurangzeb.
- Qadriya order, though founded by Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, does not practice whirling dance (Sema). That ritual belongs to the Mevleviya Silsilah, associated with Jalaluddin Rumi - making Pair 5 incorrect.
- Finally, while the Mevleviya order is famous for Sema (whirling), it does not advocate extreme social withdrawal; instead, it promotes spiritual union through art, poetry, and music—making Pair 5 incorrect.

44. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Mahabhashya is the monumental grammatical commentary written by Patanjali, elaborating on Panini's Ashtadhyayi and Katyayana's varttikas. It is a foundational text of Sanskrit grammar and linguistic philosophy.

- Buddhacharita, an epic poem narrating the life of the Buddha, was authored by Asvaghosha, a major Buddhist intellectual of the Kushana period. His other works include Saundarananda and Vajrasuchi, reflecting both poetic mastery and Buddhist doctrine.
- Meghaduta, a lyrical poem structured as a sandesha kavya (messenger poem), is a celebrated composition of Kalidasa. It exemplifies classical Sanskrit aesthetics through refined imagery, emotion (rasa), and natural description.
- Arthashastra was not written by Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna is associated with Madhyamika Karika and Prajnaparamita philosophical texts. Arthashastra is traditionally attributed to Kautilya (Chanakya), making this pair incorrect.
- Gita Govinda, a devotional lyrical composition centered on the love of Krishna and Radha and foundational to Vaishnava Bhakti aesthetics, was authored by Jayadeva. It later influenced temple rituals, Odissi dance, and medieval devotional traditions

45. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Bathukamma is a floral festival of Telangana, symbolising femininity, ecology, and devotion, celebrated during the Dussehra period.

- Sarhul is a tribal spring festival of Jharkhand, especially among Oraon and Munda tribes, where Saal flowers are offered to village deities, marking the beginning of the agricultural cycle.
- Chapchar Kut is a major cultural festival of Mizoram, celebrated after clearing forests for Jhum cultivation, making it an agrarian–spring festival.
- Doongri Festival is celebrated in Manali (Himachal Pradesh) at the Hadimba Devi Temple, honouring Hidimba, wife of Bhima from the Mahabharata.
- Vishu, however, is not associated with Karnataka. It is the Malayalam New Year, celebrated in Kerala, marked by the Vishukkani ritual.

46. Answer : (c)

Explanation : Makar Sankranti uniquely marks the Sun's entry into the zodiac sign Capricorn (Makara), making it one of the few Indian festivals based on solar transition rather than lunar calendar. It is celebrated pan-India, though under different regional names—Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Lohri–Maghi in Punjab, Uttarayan in Gujarat, and Magh Bihu in Assam. The festival symbolises harvest completion, thanksgiving to nature and the Sun, and has deep astronomical significance, which distinguishes it from region-specific New Year or harvest festivals like Ugadi, Pongal, or Baisakhi.

47. Answer : (a)

Explanation : ● Zari or Zardosi embroidery is a luxurious decorative technique that uses gold and silver metallic threads, derived from Persian roots where zari means gold and dozi means embroidery. The embroidery often produces raised and ornate patterns, making it a hallmark of ceremonial garments.

- Chikankari is a delicate embroidery tradition centred in Lucknow, well known for its shadow work effect. This effect is achieved by working herringbone stitches on the wrong side of the fabric, producing a soft shadow on the front surface—an important distinguishing feature frequently tested by UPSC.
- Kasuti embroidery from Karnataka is technically demanding. It uses a single continuous cotton thread, requires precise thread counting, and avoids knots altogether. As a result, the design appears identical on both sides of the fabric, especially on Irkal sarees.
- Kantha embroidery, however, is characterised by a simple running stitch using cotton thread on layers of old saris or dhotis. It does not use metallic threads or chain stitch, making the given pairing incorrect.
- Phulkari embroidery is worked from the reverse side of the fabric, not the front, using darning stitches to create vibrant floral motifs. Hence, the statement that it is embroidered mainly on the front side is incorrect.

48. Answer : (d)

Explanation : ● The Government of India grants the status of Classical Language based on criteria such as high antiquity of texts, ancient literary tradition, and originality independent of modern languages.

- By October 03, 2024, five additional languages—Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali—were accorded Classical Language status. With this inclusion, the total number of Classical Languages in India became 11 by October 2025.
- The six languages granted Classical status earlier (2004–2024) are: Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Odia. Maithili, although recognized in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, has not been granted Classical Language status. Hence, it is the correct answer.

49. Answer : (b)

Explanation : String puppets, also known as marionettes, are controlled by strings attached to different parts of the puppet's body such as the head, hands, and back. They usually have jointed limbs, allowing greater flexibility and complex movements. These puppets are generally carved from wood and are accompanied by regional music and theatre traditions.

- Among the given forms, Kathputli (Rajasthan) is a classic string puppet tradition carved from a single piece of wood and manipulated using strings.
- Kundhei (Odisha) is another string puppet form, known for its multiple joints and string control through a triangular wooden prop.
- Gombeyatta (Karnataka) also belongs to the string puppet category and is heavily influenced by Yakshagana theatre, with several strings controlling highly stylized figures.
- Bommalattam, although it uses strings, is a hybrid form combining rod and string techniques, and hence is not classified as a pure string puppet form.
- Ravanachhaya is a shadow puppet tradition of Odisha made from deer skin and manipulated against a screen.
- Pavakoothu is a glove puppet form from Kerala, where the puppeteer uses hand movements inside a cloth bag.

Therefore, exactly three of the listed puppetry traditions are string puppets.

50. Answer : (a)

Explanation : Early Buddhist literature reflects both doctrinal development and regional transmission of Buddhism, especially in Sri Lanka and north-western India.

- The Dipavamsa is among the earliest historical chronicles of Sri Lanka, composed in Pali by Buddhist monks at Anuradhapura. It records the spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, including the arrival of the Bodhi tree and Buddha's visits, but it does not attribute authorship to a single individual, making it a monastic, collective composition.
- The Milinda Panho is a unique philosophical work structured as a dialogue rather than a narrative chronicle. It records conversations between the Indo-Greek king Menander (Milinda) and the Buddhist monk Nagasena, dealing with metaphysical and ethical questions, making its attribution distinctive.
- The Visuddhimagga ("Path of Purification") is a systematic Theravada doctrinal treatise written in the 5th century CE by Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka. It synthesizes meditation practices, moral discipline, and wisdom, and became foundational for Theravada thought.
- The Sarvastivada Vinaya belongs to the Sarvastivada school of Buddhism and lays down monastic disciplinary rules. It is traditionally attributed to Sanghabhuti, reflecting the scholastic traditions of north-western Buddhist sects.