

Topics Covered:

- Introduction to culture
- Prehistoric culture
- Chalcolithic culture
- Art & Architecture of Harappan Civilisation
- Architecture of the Vedic Period

CULTURE

Culture refers to the **shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions, practices, arts, literature, language, and way of life** of a particular group of people. It encompasses the entire social heritage of a community, which is passed down from generation to generation. Cultural elements include **festivals, rituals, clothing, cuisine, music, dance, language, and religious beliefs**, among others.

Understanding a society's culture is crucial for various reasons:

- **Identity:** Culture defines a community's identity and provides a sense of belonging.
- **Social Cohesion:** It fosters unity and social cohesion among community members.
- **Tradition and Innovation:** It balances tradition with innovation, allowing societies to adapt while preserving their heritage.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Cultures interact and influence each other, leading to a rich tapestry of global cultural diversity.

Heritage:

Heritage encompasses the **tangible and intangible aspects** of a society's culture that are **inherited from past generations**. It includes historical sites, monuments, artefacts, art forms, folklore, traditions, and cultural practices. Heritage is a **way of preserving and celebrating** a community's history and traditions, ensuring that they are passed on to future generations.

Understanding heritage is crucial because:

- **Preservation:** Heritage preservation ensures that historical sites, artefacts, and traditions are conserved for future generations.
- **Tourism:** Heritage sites often attract tourists, contributing to the economy and promoting cultural exchange.
- **Cultural Roots:** Heritage connects people to their cultural roots, fostering a sense of pride and identity.
- **Education:** Studying heritage provides valuable insights into the history, art, and traditions of a society.

Culture and Heritage: Interconnected Foundations of Identity

Culture and heritage are deeply intertwined aspects of human society, shaping the collective identity and individual experiences of a community. They are intricately connected and often influence each other in various ways:

1. **Cultural Expression Through Heritage:** Heritage encompasses the tangible and intangible aspects of culture passed down through generations. Cultural traditions, art, language, rituals, and artifacts constitute a society's heritage. These elements are expressions of the culture they originate from, embodying the beliefs, values, and practices of a community. For example, historical monuments, traditional music, and indigenous crafts are all parts of heritage reflecting specific cultural practices.
2. **Preservation of Cultural Identity:** Heritage acts as a vessel for preserving cultural identity. It encapsulates the collective memory of a community, helping future generations understand their roots. Through heritage, cultural practices, folklore, and historical events are remembered and celebrated, ensuring the continuity of cultural values. Heritage sites and museums serve as repositories of a community's cultural wealth, allowing people to connect with their history and traditions.
3. **Transmission of Cultural Knowledge:** Heritage serves as a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge and wisdom. It includes oral traditions, folklore, and historical narratives that are passed down from one generation to another. Through stories, rituals, and artefacts, cultural values and lessons are imparted, enriching the cultural fabric of a society.
4. **Cultural Diversity and Heritage:** Different cultural groups contribute to the overall heritage of a nation or region. The coexistence of diverse cultures within a society creates a rich tapestry of heritage, reflecting various customs, languages, cuisines, and art forms. Cultural diversity enhances heritage, making it dynamic and multifaceted.
5. **Influence on Social Behaviors:** Cultural values embedded in heritage influence social norms and behaviours within a community. Traditions and customs passed down through heritage guide interpersonal relationships, family structures, and societal expectations. Cultural heritage can shape attitudes toward education, gender roles, ethics, and social interactions.

Promotion of Tourism and Cultural Exchange: Cultural heritage, including historical sites, festivals, and traditions, attracts tourists and fosters cultural exchange. Visitors from different parts of the world engage with local heritage, leading to cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. This interaction can also influence the evolution of local traditions, creating a blend of global and indigenous elements.

Indian Culture

Indian culture is a vibrant and diverse tapestry woven from a rich history spanning thousands of years. Here's a brief overview of its key aspects:

1. **Diversity:** India is a land of immense cultural diversity, with 22 officially recognized languages and numerous regional dialects. Each region has its unique traditions, cuisine, art forms, and languages.
2. **Religion:** India is the birthplace of major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It's also home to substantial Muslim, Christian, and other

religious communities. Religious festivals are celebrated with great fervour across the country.

3. **Family and Community:** Indian culture places a strong emphasis on family values and close-knit communities. Respect for elders and strong family bonds are integral parts of social life.
4. **Art and Architecture:** India boasts impressive architectural wonders like the Taj Mahal, ancient temples, and intricately carved caves. Various forms of traditional arts, including classical dances like Bharatanatyam and Odissi, and classical music, enrich the cultural landscape.
5. **Festivals:** India is known for its vibrant festivals, including Diwali (Festival of Lights), Holi (Festival of Colors), Eid, Christmas, Durga Puja, and many more. These festivals are celebrated with enthusiasm and grandeur, often involving music, dance, and elaborate decorations.
6. **Cuisine:** Indian cuisine is diverse and flavorful, characterized by aromatic spices and a wide range of dishes. Each region has its specialities, and Indian cuisine has gained international acclaim.
7. **Clothing:** Traditional Indian attire includes sarees for women and dhotis or kurta-pajamas for men. However, Western clothing is also prevalent, especially in urban areas.
8. **Yoga and Spirituality:** India is the birthplace of yoga and meditation. These ancient practices have gained global popularity for promoting physical and mental well-being.
9. **Traditional Medicine:** Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine, emphasizes natural healing and holistic wellness.
10. **Language:** Hindi is the official language of India, but the country is multilingual, with various states having their own official languages.
11. **Modern Influence:** India is rapidly modernizing, with a booming technology sector, a thriving film industry (Bollywood), and a strong presence in literature and arts on the global stage.

ARCHITECTURE & SCULPTURE

Architecture :

- The term 'architecture' finds its roots in the **Latin word 'tekton,'** signifying a builder. As humanity embarked on constructing shelters, the foundations of architectural science were laid.
- The origins of architecture are far from modern; they date back to the early days of humanity. As soon as **primitive humans ventured out** of their natural habitats within dense jungles, the need for shelter led to the birth of architecture.
- With the awakening of artistic sensibilities and the quest for more spacious and aesthetically pleasing abodes, humans began constructing shelters. This practice combined essential needs, creative imagination, the skills of builders, and the capabilities of labourers, giving rise to the ancient art and science of architecture.

Sculpture:

- Sculpture, originating from the **Proto-Indo-European root 'kel,'** meaning **'to cut or cleave,'** encompasses **smaller artistic creations,** crafted by hand or tools.
- Unlike architecture, sculptures are **smaller in scale,** allowing artists to **focus on minute details and artistic expression.**
- While architectural creations often require meticulous engineering and precise measurements to ensure structural stability, sculptures primarily emphasize artistic beauty, storytelling, and emotional depth.
- As expressive art forms, **sculptures transcend mere physical forms;** they evoke emotions, convey narratives, and capture the essence of the human experience.

Distinguishing Architecture from Sculpture

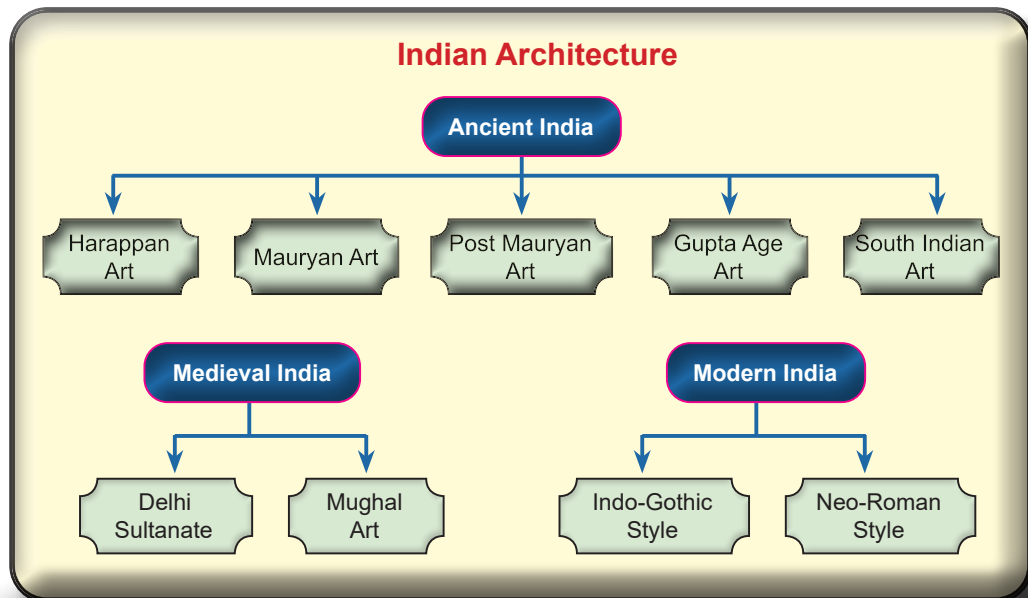
| Property | Architecture | Sculpture |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Size and scope | Large-scale, often complex structures | Relatively smaller, self-contained works of art |
| Material used | A variety of materials, including stone, wood, glass, metal, and concrete | A single type of material, such as marble, bronze, or wood |
| Principle | Involves the study of engineering and mathematics to create structures that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing | Involves creativity and imagination to create works of art that express the artist's vision |
| Example | Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Eiffel Tower | Michelangelo's David, Rodin's The Thinker, Venus de Milo |

Additional differences:

- Architecture is typically created by a **team of people,** including architects, engineers, and construction workers. Sculpture is typically created by a **single artist.**
- Architecture is often designed to **serve a specific function,** such as providing shelter, housing businesses, or serving as a place of worship. Sculpture **does not** have to have a **specific function.**
- Architecture is typically **permanent or semi-permanent,** while sculpture can be **portable or ephemeral.**

Indian Architecture:

The evolution of Indian art and architecture, from the **ancient Harappa Valley civilization to British rule,** reflects a rich tapestry of cultural fusion and historical shifts. The evolution of Indian architectural styles has been intricately intertwined with the rise and fall of **great empires and dynasties.** Each era, marked by its unique cultural and political milieu, left an indelible imprint on the architectural landscape of the subcontinent.



PREHISTORIC CULTURES IN INDIA

Paleolithic Age:

- **Religious Life:** No evidence of religious practices. No burial customs were observed.
- **Cultural Life:** No architectural developments. Limited artistic expression through primitive tools and artifacts.

Mesolithic Age:

- **Religious Life:** Still limited evidence of religious practices. Burial practices started to emerge.
- **Cultural Life:** Basic shelters constructed using bamboo and grass. Limited artistic expression is seen in pottery, tools, and ornaments.

Neolithic Age:

- **Religious Life:** Burial practices continued, indicating a growing sense of spirituality.
- **Cultural Life:** Settlements near riverbanks. Introduction of agriculture and domestication of animals. Use of sun-dried bricks in housing construction. Artistic expression is seen in pottery with intricate designs.

Chalcolithic Age:

- **Religious Life:** Evidence of religious practices, including veneration of animals and Mother Goddess. Terracotta artifacts depict religious beliefs.
- **Cultural Life:** Creation of black and red ware pottery using wheel-based techniques. Artistic expression in ornaments made of beads, copper, carnelian, and terracotta.
- **Architecture:** Houses constructed with mud bricks, especially near rivers. The lack of advanced architectural features is seen in the absence of burnt mud bricks.

Differences between Chalcolithic People and Harappans:

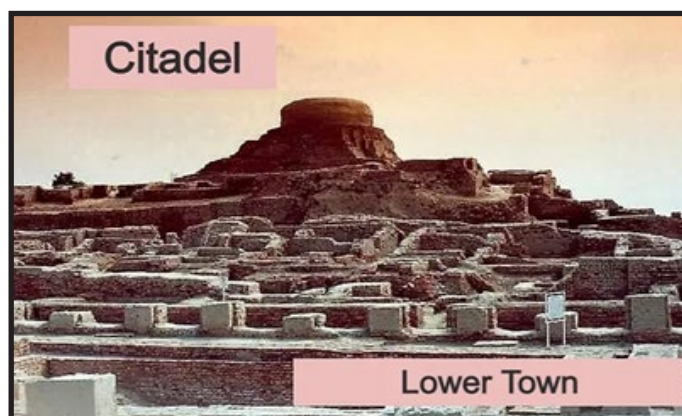
| Characteristic | Chalcolithic People | Harappans |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Writing System | Limited knowledge | Developed writing system (Indus Script) |
| Metal Working | Relied on copper tools, lacking strong metals like bronze | Mastered bronze technology for tools and artifacts |
| Urbanization | Did not develop urban centers | Created well-planned urban centers with advanced drainage systems |
| Architecture | Absence of advanced architectural techniques like burnt bricks | Implemented advanced architectural techniques, including burnt bricks |

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF HARAPPAN CIVILISATION

- **Ancient Origins:** The earliest architectural remnants in India can be traced back to the Harappan or Indus Valley civilization, including sites like Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Ropar, Kalibangan, Lothal, and Rangpur. This culture emerged approximately 5000 years ago during the third millennium B.C.
- **Advanced Urban Planning:** The Harappan cities showcased impressive urban planning. They employed burnt bricks, constructed wide roads, used well-organized drainage systems, incorporated corbelled arches, and even developed bathing facilities. Despite the advanced planning, the fragmentary remains do not reveal much about their architectural aesthetics.

Town Planning

- Harappan towns, like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, featured an impressive sense of town planning.
- Town layouts followed a rectangular grid pattern with roads running north-south and east-west, intersecting at right angles.
- Main roads divided the cities into blocks, while smaller lanes connected houses and apartments to the main roads.
- **Types of buildings:** Three main types of buildings were discovered in excavation sites: **dwelling houses, public buildings, and public baths.**
- Burnt mud bricks of standardized dimensions were used for construction, with well-baked bricks joined using gypsum mortar.
- The houses were usually one-roomed and had private wells and bathrooms. Some had stairs, suggesting double-storied structures.



Public buildings

- Cities were divided into two parts: an upraised citadel in the western part and the lower city.
- The citadel housed large structures like **granaries, administrative buildings, and pillared halls**, possibly for rulers and aristocrats.
- The granaries were well-designed with strategic air ducts and raised platforms for grain storage and pest protection.

Public Baths in Harappan Cities

- One remarkable feature was the widespread presence of public baths, reflecting the cultural significance of ritualistic purification.
- These bathing facilities were complemented by a network of surrounding galleries and rooms.
- The 'Great Bath' within the excavated remains of Mohenjo-daro stands as the most famous example of a public bath.
- What truly underscores the exceptional engineering prowess of the Harappan civilization is the absence of any cracks or leaks in the Great Bath.



Great Bath, Mohenjo-Daro

Drainage system

- The Harappan civilization had an advanced drainage system with small drains from each house connecting to larger drains alongside main roads.
- The drains were loosely covered to facilitate cleaning and maintenance, and cesspits were placed at regular intervals.
- Emphasis on personal and public hygiene was notable, as indicated by the advanced drainage and well systems.



Harrapan Drainage System

Sculptures of the Harappan Civilization

Seals:

- Harappan sculptors created numerous seals of various shapes and sizes.
- **Steatite** was the most common material used for making seals, but agate, chert, copper, faience, and terracotta seals were also found.
- Some seals were made of **copper, gold, and ivory**.
- Most seals featured inscriptions in a **yet-to-be-deciphered** pictographic script.
- Inscriptions were written mostly from right to left, with bi-directional writing also observed.
- Seals often featured animal impressions, with common motifs including the unicorn, humped bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, buffalo, bison, goat, markour, ibex, and crocodile.
- Seals were primarily used for commercial purposes and communication, particularly in trade. Some may have been used as amulets.
- Mathematical images were found on some seals, possibly used for educational purposes.
- Some seals featured a 'Swastika' design symbol.

Examples of Seals:

- **Pashupati Seal:** This steatite seal features an intriguing depiction of a cross-legged human figure, often identified as a deity and referred to as Pashupati. What makes this figure remarkable is the distinctive three-horned headgear adorning Pashupati, accompanied by the presence of various animals in the composition. Notably, an elephant and a tiger grace the left side of the figure, while a rhinoceros and a buffalo are positioned on the right. Below the seated deity, two antelopes add to the symbolism and intricacy of this ancient artefact.

- **Unicorn Seal:** Another type of seal featuring various motifs.



Seals Of Harappa

Bronze Figures:

- The Harappan civilization widely practised bronze casting using the “lost wax technique” or “Cire Perdue.”
- In this technique, wax figures were coated with wet clay, heated to melt the wax, and then filled with liquid metal.
- Once the metal cooled and solidified, the clay coat was removed, leaving a bronze figure.
- Examples include the Bronze Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-daro and the Bronze Bull of Kalibangan.
- **Bronze Dancing Girl:** Considered one of the world’s oldest bronze sculptures. This four-inch bronze figure captures the image of a young girl, unclothed but adorned with ornaments. Her left arm carries bangles, and on her right arm, she wears an amulet and bracelet. The figure stands gracefully in a ‘tribhanga’ dancing posture, characterized by a slight deflection at the hips, with her right hand resting on her hip.



Bronze Dancing Girl

Terracotta:

- Terracotta sculptures were made from fire-baked clay.
- These sculptures are less in number and often have a crude shape and form.
- They were primarily found in Gujarat and Kalibangan.
- Terracotta was used for making toys, animal figures, miniature carts, wheels, and more.
- Examples include the Mother Goddess and masks of horned deities.

Mother Goddess:

- The discovery of mother goddess figures at numerous Indus Valley sites underscores their significance in this ancient civilization. These figures depict a standing female, characterized by her simplicity and striking features.
- The mother goddess is adorned with necklaces that drape over her prominent breasts, symbolizing nurturing and fertility. She is dressed in a loincloth and a girdle, emphasizing her role in fertility and abundance. Additionally, she wears a fan-shaped headgear that further accentuates her importance.
- It is believed that she was likely worshipped for her association with prosperity, fertility, and the well-being of the community. This suggests the existence of a goddess of fertility cult in the Indus Valley civilization, where the worship of female deities played a crucial role in ensuring the fertility and abundance of the land.

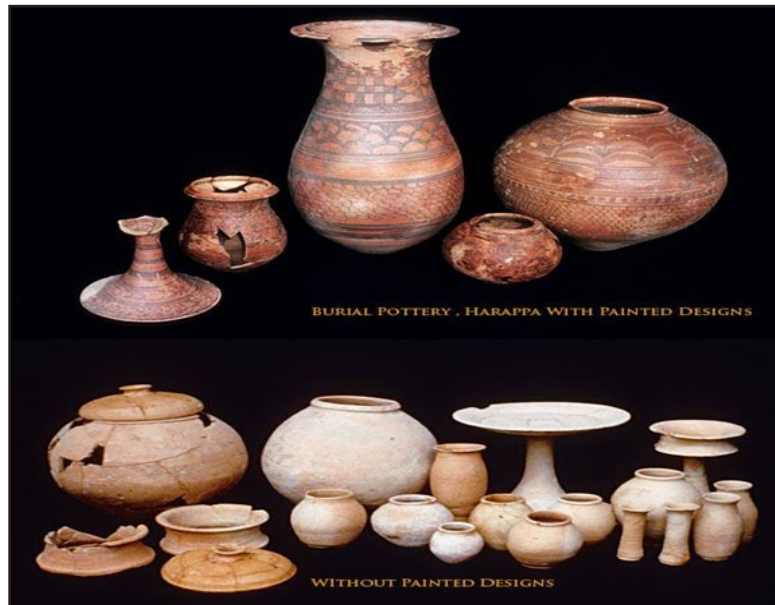


Mother Goddess

Pottery:

- Two main types of pottery: plain pottery and painted pottery (Red and Black pottery).
- Painted pottery used red as the background colour with glossy black paint for designs and figures.
- Common motifs included trees, birds, animal figures, and geometrical patterns.
- Most potteries were fine wheel-made wares, with a few being handmade.
- Polychrome pottery is rare.
- Uses of pottery:

- Plain pottery for household purposes, mainly for storage of grains and water.
- Miniature vessels (less than half an inch in size) for decorative purposes.
- Perforated potteries with holes for straining liquor.



Ornaments:

- Harappans used a variety of materials for ornaments, from precious metals and gemstones to bones and baked clay.
- Both men and women wore ornaments like necklaces, fillets, armlets, and finger rings.
- Women also wore girdles, earrings, and anklets.
- Popular bead materials included cornelian, amethyst, quartz, and steatite.
- Beads were produced on a large scale as evidenced by factories found in Chanhu-daro and Lothal.
- Fabrics were made from cotton and wool, spun by people from different social backgrounds.
- Spindles and whorls were made from both expensive faience and cheaper clay.
- Harappan people were conscious of fashion, as seen in various hair and beard styles.



Ornaments

Bearded Priest

- The man is draped in a shawl adorned with trefoil patterns, suggesting a sense of style and cultural significance in his attire.
- The figure's facial features are striking, with elongated eyes that appear to be half-closed, evoking a sense of meditation or introspection.
- The bearded priest wears an armlet on his right hand, adding to his regal or ceremonial appearance. Additionally, there is a plain woven fillet across his head, which could symbolize a form of headgear or a cultural ornament.



Bearded Priest

Red Sandstone Male Torso

- The male torso exhibits well-baked and well-defined shoulders, emphasizing strength and vitality. The prominent abdomen adds a sense of physical prowess and presence to the sculpture.
- Notably, there are socket holes in the neck and shoulders of the figure. These holes were likely used for attaching the head and arms, suggesting that this sculpture might have been part of a more extensive work or ensemble.



Red Sandstone Male Torso

Divergence from Later Indian Architecture:

- Notably, there appears to be little connection between the architectural achievements of the Harappan cities in the 3rd millennium B.C. and the subsequent architectural traditions that emerged in India over the next thousand years, particularly during the Mauryan period in Magadha.

Artistic Gap:

- The architectural and sculptural creations of the subsequent period, spanning roughly a thousand years, do not survive today due to their utilization of perishable materials such as mud, mudbrick, bamboo, timber, leaves, straw, and thatch.

Architecture of the Vedic Period: Practicality and Symbolism

- **Introduction to the Vedic Architecture:**
 - **Transition from Indus Valley Civilization:** With the decline of the Indus Valley civilization and its cities, the Indo-Aryan population settled in small dispersed villages in plains and forests.
 - **Distribution of Indo-Aryan Population:** The Vedic people primarily utilized easily accessible building materials like wood, bamboo, thatch, and later, brick. Their architectural endeavours were pragmatic, reflecting their nomadic origins and lack of monumental traditions.
- **Building Materials and Structures:**
 - Use of Wood, Bamboo, Thatch, and Later, Brick: Indo-Aryan structures during this period were simple, using materials readily available in their natural surroundings. Wood and bamboo were woven intricately to form shelters, and later, bricks came into use.
 - **Characteristics of Indo-Aryan Shelters:** The architectural structures of this era were modest, with an emphasis on functionality. They **lacked grandeur and permanence**, aligning with the practical needs of the community.
 - **Absence of Monumental Architecture:** Not having a background in colossal architecture, the Vedic people's constructions were primarily focused on fulfilling immediate needs and lacked monumental features.
- **Architectural References in Vedic Texts:**
 - **Fire Altars and Sacrificial Halls in Vedic Literature:** References in Vedic texts highlight the presence of fire altars and halls dedicated to sacrificial rituals, showcasing the religious significance in architectural practices.
 - **Shrines and Assembly Halls in Epics:** Epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata hint at the existence of shrines and assembly halls, underscoring the social and spiritual dimensions of Vedic architecture.
- **Vedic Village Layout:**
 - **Origin in Fortified Camps of Aryan Invaders:** The layout of Indo-Aryan villages traced its origins to the fortified camps of Aryan invaders. These settlements were rectangular in shape, with sides aligned to the four cardinal directions.
 - **Symbolism and Rituals:** The village plan was symbolic of the microcosm, representing the universe's elements. Gateways, dedicated to Vedic deities, marked specific positions of the sun in its heavenly course. Ritualistic

circumambulation around the village and metaphysical implications were integral to the architectural layout.

- **Influence on Later Architectural Forms:**

- **Continuation of Rituals and Symbolism in Buddhist Stupas:** The ritualistic aspects and symbolism associated with Vedic village layouts persisted in later Buddhist stupas, demonstrating the enduring impact of Vedic architectural concepts.
- **Adoption of Vedic Layout in Buddhist Architecture:** The layout of Vedic villages influenced the organization and structure of Buddhist monastic complexes, showcasing the seamless integration of Vedic concepts into subsequent architectural styles.
- **Integration of Vedic Concepts in Later Masterpieces:** Architectural marvels like the Ajanta Caves drew inspiration from the simplicity and practicality of Vedic architecture. Despite the transition of cultures, the Vedic legacy lived on in these masterpieces.

- **Southern India:**

- **Rock-Cut Tombs in Malabar Region:** In the southern part of India, rock-cut tombs found at places like **Mennapuram and Kolikode in Malabar** have roots in the Vedic period. These caves, intended for Aryan chieftains' burials, resembled Vedic round huts, showcasing a transition from wood and thatch to stone construction.

- **Legacy of Vedic Architecture:**

- **Architectural Science Development:** The Vedic period played a pivotal role in shaping architecture as a science. The pragmatic approaches of the Vedic people laid the foundation for future architectural innovations.
- **Enduring Impact on Hindu and Buddhist Architecture:** The architectural concepts developed during the Vedic period left an indelible mark on Hindu and Buddhist architecture. The metaphysical symbolism and ritualistic practices persisted, creating a thread of continuity in various architectural styles.
- **Practical Innovations Shaping Subsequent Architectural Styles:** The Vedic period's emphasis on practicality and functionality served as a template for subsequent architectural styles in the Indian subcontinent. The innovative use of materials and the incorporation of symbolic elements continued to influence architectural evolution for centuries.