people is connected to a single cultural spirit” (All India Peoples Science Network, 2002). Romilla Thapar says that the past is devoid of the presence of any homogenous religious community, which can be identified as Hindu. The pre-colonial society was so riven with sub-castes and local beliefs that it did not allow the emergence of a larger religious faith.

2.4 INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Art, is a very precious heritage in the culture of a people. “It is more so in India, where the story of art is as old as the history of the race- a panorama of five thousand years. The essential quality of Indian art is its preoccupation with things of the spirit. Art in India did not aim at objective presentation of the human or social facets of life. It was primarily the fruit of the artist’s creative meditation and effort to project symbols of divine reality as conceived and understood by the collective consciousness of the people as a whole. It is a vast, unending social and religious endeavour of devotees to depict the forms of the gods and goddesses they worshipped.

Any tourist desirous of understanding the real significance of Indian art should be prepared patiently to go to the length and breadth and savour deep of the symbolic meanings that make up a world of their own. “Indian religion does not yield its secret to one who only skims the surface; and of the same mysterious, secretive essence is the art of India” (Agrawala, 1976). The essential truth in the art of India is the tribute to the abstract and unmanifest power behind the material world, the primeval source of all things.

Agrawala (1976) enumerates four elements of Indian art for its theme, namely, the divine principles, the cosmos in its two fold manifestation of good and evil, man and the material world. The Indus Valley people were prolific in the arts of house-building, stone and clay statuary, bronze-casting, making of ornaments of gold and silver, and cutting of beads in various semi-precious stones like agate, carnelian, chalcedony, ivory-carving and weaving. The beautiful objects of domestic use that have been unearthed reflect the refined taste of their makers.

The symbolism of Indian art attained its highest expression in the Saranath capital, which is as much Buddhist as Vedic in the significance of its several parts. The tradition of folk art was supplemented in the Mauryan period by a court art of great vitality and technical competence. Mauryan art is notable for the bewildering variety of its
creations – there are pillars, railings, parasols, capitals, animal and human sculptures and several other motifs. It was during the Sunga age that sculpture and architecture witnessed a new efflorescence. Art was developed at many centre and the two great stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi give evidence of almost a continental planning. A similar art movement flowered during the Kushana period and Mathura emerged as the new centre of art. This art movement was the offshoot of the aesthetic endeavour that started in full swing. During the period of the Kushana emperors an exceedingly active school of sculpture and architecture flourished in Gandhara, that is, from Taxila to the Swat Valley.

During the Saka-Satavahana period, an aesthetic movement of great magnitude expressed itself in the form of several monumental stupas loaded with sculptures and bas-reliefs of exquisite beauty. The stupas of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda have produced art specimens of matchless beauty.

There was a grand upsurge of the national art during the golden age of the Gupta emperors. Gupta art is beautiful in both its outer form and its inner inspiration. Beauty and virtue seved as the ideals of the age. The best examples of Gupta images are the standing Buddhas from Mathura and the seated Buddha delivering the first sermon at Sarnath. Pottery constituted an equally noteworthy part of the artistic productions of the Gupta age.

The master piece works of Chalukyan art comprises the group of temples at Badami and Aihole. Both the sculpture and architecture of the kailasha temple at Ellora bear testimony to the creative spirit of the Rashtrakuas. The Pallavas were great patrons of art, especially cave and temple architecture. In the southern region of Karnataka a distinctive style of architecture was developed during (1050-1300A.D) known as the Hoysala style. The greatest achievement of Hoysala art is the temple of Hoysaleshvara at Halebid, Agrawala, (1976) marks the climax of Indian architecture and its most prodigal sculptured magnificence. The Pala school of sculpture and architecture which Taranatha refers to as the Eastern school flourished in Bihar and Bengal from the 8th to the 13th centuries. It was a vital and creative effort which handled stone sculpture, architecture, bronzes and paintings with equal facility. Nalanda was its greatest and most active centre during the 9th and 10th centuries. The Khajuraho group of temples were erected under the patronage of the Chendela kings dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and the Jaina pontiffs.
The arrival of Islam in 1206 revolutionised Indian architecture. The Muslim monuments in India comprise mosques, mausoleums, palaces, citadels and cities. Their special features include the dome, arch, perforated Jail work, inlay decoration as well as artistic calligraphy.

The art of metal casting always received great attention in India and is of the highest antiquity. The southern school of Indian bronzes, which flourished between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, was of such aesthetic quality and creative abundance that it is regarded as representing that art at its best. One of the great creations of Indian art is Shiva Nataraja.

Indian painting has a history of over two thousand years and presents a comprehensive record of the religious and emotional life of the people. The art of painting was widely cultivated in the Gupta period and is best known through the paintings surviving in the Ajanta Caves, and also in the Bagh caves. “The artist in the Indian tradition had long been exploring man’s inner experiences and his creative energies. The aesthetic enjoyment in the Indian tradition was based on, and aimed at, an art experience which took place in the citta – the creative centre where the appropriate shape/form of an image was determined” (Pran Nath Mago, 2000). It was, therefore, necessary to activate the citta shakthi to revivify the experience, shape its rupa (form) and give it a nama (name).

Ancient India understood that art form change according to time and place, and according to the period of history and region. It also understood that there should be no reproduction of nature except as seen through ‘intuitive absorption of trance’. Art in India has been intimately concerned with the experience of ramanyata-the beautiful. It is said to release the flow of creative energies in a person’s being. It constitutes the core of the aesthetic state which vitalizes the individual consciousness of man. An artist’s work is an explosion of the human spirit- revealing beauty and bliss.

India is the custodian of valuable traditions, social, moral and artistic. The concept of traditional culture, introduces new complexities. It implies that what is traditional is always worth conserving. The tradition in folk art reflects the continuous play of line and colour which is native to the mind of India. Aurobindo Ghosh pointed out that “All Indian art is a throwing out of a certain profound self-vision formed by a going within to find out the secret significance of form and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one’s deeper
self.” In the words of Pran Nath Mago “Artists were drawn to folk-art not from a desire to identify with the ethos of the people who created it, but from the growing awareness of the beauty and characteristic vitality of the basic design elements in the innumerable variety of folk forms.”

The growing number of private art galleries in the metropolitan cities of India has played a significant role in the promotion of contemporary art. The Lalit Kala Academy and the State Academies subsidized by the government do undertake the promotion of contemporary art. Contemporary Indian art is yet to attain the level of greatness of ancient Indian art” states Pran Nath Mago. The creative scene and the art market in modern India, particularly in big cities, seem to have converged, with the blossoming of successful artists, seeking the limelight of the market place. However, it is not only art awareness that has contributed to the growing interest in ‘acquiring’ works of art. The market for contemporary Indian art has grown as a result of economic changes, an open economic policy and the growth of the private sector.

Indian art is an immediate expression of Indian civilization as a whole. It represents beliefs and philosophies, ideals and outlooks, the materialized vitality of the society and its spiritual endeavours in varying stages of development. To understand the art of India (Shanti Swarup, 1967), “it is necessary to estimate the formative influences that have gone into the moulding of the aesthetic sensitiveness of the people.”

A comprehensive approach is necessary to understand and identify the many examples of India’s past art that survive and continue into India’s historical present. The art of Dhulichitra (a form of painting with powders), as one of the many examples, can be placed in its cultural setting today as a continuity of a great tradition of the past (Clifford Tones, 1981).

2.5 CULTURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

Cultural tourism in India is the predominant factor behind India’s meteoric rise in the tourism segment in recent years, because from time immemorial, India has been considered the land of ancient history, heritage and culture.

The Government of India has set up the Ministry of Tourism and culture to boost cultural tourism in India. The Ministry in recent years has launched the ‘Incredible India’