

## Component-I (A) – Personal details:



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Subject: **Indian Culture**



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Paper : **Museology**  
Module : **National Museum, New Delhi**



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये



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### Component-I (B) – Description of module:

Subject Name	Indian Culture
Paper Name	<b>Museology</b>
Module Name/Title	National Museum, New Delhi
Module Id	I C/ MUS/ 31
Pre requisites	Knowledge in National Museums in India and their significance.
Objectives	To know the history, collections, exhibition and its National importance.
Keywords	National Museum/ Delhi / Exhibition

### E-text (Quadrant-I):

#### 1. History of the Museum

The majestic National Museum building is situated in the corner of Janpath and Maulana Azad road of New Delhi. The National Museum, New Delhi, as we see it today, has an interesting beginning. The blueprint for establishing the National Museum in Delhi was prepared by the Maurice Gwyer Committee in May 1946. An Exhibition of Indian Art, consisting of selected artefacts from various museums of India was organized by the Royal Academy, London with the cooperation of Government of India and Britain. The Exhibition went on display in the galleries of Burlington House, London during the winter months of 1947-48. It was decided to display the same collection in Delhi, before the return of exhibits to their respective museums. An exhibition was organized in the the Rashtrapati Bhavan (President's residence), New Delhi in 1949, which turned out to be a great success. This event proved responsible for the creation of the National Museum.

The success of this Exhibition led to the idea that advantage should be taken of this magnificent collection to build up the nucleus collection of the National Museum. State Governments, Museum authorities and private donors, who had participated in the exhibition, were approached for the gift or loan of artefacts, and most of them responded generously.

The National Museum was formally inaugurated by Shri. C.Rajagopalachari, the Governor – General of India, on the auspicious occasion of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1949 and it was announced that till a permanent building for housing the National Museum was constructed, the Museum would continue to function in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Museum continued to grow in its collections year after the year and it received several gifts, but the artifacts were acquired mainly through its Art Purchase Committee.



The foundation stone of the present Museum building was laid by Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1955 and the new elegant two-storeyed building has been handed over to the Museum authorities in June 1960. The first phase of the National Museum building was formally inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the Vice President of India, on December 18, 1960 and open to public. The second phase of the building was completed in 1989. The Museum presently holds approximately 2,00,000 objects of a diverse nature, both Indian as well as foreign, and its holdings cover a time span of more than five thousand years of Indian cultural heritage.

The National Museum was initially looked after by the Director General of Archaeology until 1957, when the Ministry of Education, Government of India, declared it a separate institution and placed it under its own direct control. At present, the National Museum is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

## 2. Vision and Mission

- To collect art objects of Historical, Cultural and Artistic significance for the purpose to display, protection, preservation and interpretation (research).
- To disseminate knowledge about the significance of the objects in respect of history, culture and artistic excellence and achievements.
- To serve as cultural centre for enjoyment and interaction of the people in artistic and cultural activity.
- To serve as epitome of national identity.

## 3. Museum Collections and Exhibitions

The Museum has in its possession of about 2,00,000 works of exquisite art of diverse nature, both Indian and foreign and its holdings cover a time span of more than five thousand years of our cultural heritage.

The splendid chronological and scientific display of selected art objects in the various Galleries has enhanced the image of the Museum. The other activities like, screening of educational films related to art and culture, guided tours, gallery talks by experts, special lectures and training programmes, facilities for photography and access to the Reserve collection Rooms and library hall for the study, and advice on identification of art objects have brought immense laurels to the Museum.

The Conservation Laboratory had made its existence felt even in other countries. The Art Exhibitions sent abroad from this Museum have further enhanced the image of Indian art and culture throughout the world. A variety of standard publications, including the Guide Book on the Museum, brought out by the Museum during the last 45 years of its existence, have been appreciated by one and all.

### ❖ GALLERIES

The east facing National Museum has got several Galleries devoted to multiple themes in both the floors like Art, Archaeology, Anthropology, Arms and Armour, Decorative Arts, Central Asian Antiquities, Pre- Columbian art, Jewellery, Manuscripts, Numismatics etc.

### 3.1 Pre-History & Archaeology

All the Pre- historic objects are on view in the first Gallery on the ground floor of the Museum. At the entrance on the left are two big vertical showcases exhibiting the stone tools belonging to the Lower Paleolithic period to the Neolithic age and also copper hoard objects. While the collection of pebble stone tools is from Guler and Soan valley, Acheulian hand axes are from Attirampakkam (Tamilnadu), Middle Paleolithic Mousterian stone tools from Narmada Valley,

Microlithic tools of Mesolithic period from Birbhanpur, Kotdigi, and Langhnaz and Neolithic tools from South India are also displayed.

The second vertical showcase displays the copper hoard weapons covering a period from 2500 BCE. to 1500 BCE. The specimen includes rare cult objects, i.e. an anthropomorphic figure from Chandausi (Muradabad), two lugged shoulder axes from Sitapur, weed chisels, harpoons shoulder axes of various types and flat axes ( All from Uttar Pradesh), Antennae swords from Gujarat etc. In the table -type showcase at the entrance are groups of Lower Paleolithic quartzite and flint tools from Kenya and England.

The Museum possesses about 200 copper hoard weapons belonging to Eastern group consisting of items belonging to Bihar, Bengal and Odissa, the flat axes type objects ranging between 2000 BCE. to 1200 BCE., while the second group have their origin from Western U.P, and Western India and have variety of antennae swords, harpoons, lugged swords, lugged shoulder axes originated from West Asia. Contemporary to Harappan and ochre coloured pottery dated between 2500 BCE. to 1500. BCE.

On the right side of the entrance, some of the rarest artefacts from Indus Valley sites have been displayed in the three windows showcases. This group includes a bronze dancing girl, buffalo, steatite seals depicting Pashupati (Lord of beasts) from Mohenjodaro, a grey colour male torso of red jasper from Harappa, few terracotta objects, including the mother goddess and the humped bull. In the other showcase, there are few decorative items of ivory and shell from Harappa.



On the left side along the wall are five rectangular showcases displaying the items like bronze, terracotta, weights of chert, and a rare ivory scale from Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Chanhudaro. The other showcases on the other side presents Harappan pottery, storage jars, few copper and clay utensils, pots of plain and red colour. The Indus valley is wheel made, well-fired on high temperature and bears decoration of black painting on red

background. There are copper and bronze implements like flat axes, chisels, knives, saw, swords and spearheads belonging to Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The other showcases have displayed Harappan steatite seals bearing animal figure like the bull, the elephant, the unicorn, and short inscriptions. In the five rectangular wall showcases, terracotta figurines, squirrels in semi-precious stone, shell bangles weights, and potteries from Harappa and Mohenjodaro have been displayed.

The second half of this Gallery has visible reserve collection which include polychrome pottery from Nal, Kullimehi and Shahi Tomb (Pakistan), Chalcolithic material from Nevasa, Pakistan, Cemetery H megalithic pottery from South India, painted Grey Ware and silver and copper objects from Nal and Paleolithic tools from South and Central India

### **3.1.1 Archaeology**

In this Gallery there are about nine thousand sculptural art objects representing all major regions, Schools and periods of India. This collection includes sculptures carved in stone, bronze, gold, silver, bone, ivory, terracotta, and stucco figures from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE. to the 19<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.

The world famous and the monumental image of Surya from the Sun temple, Konarak, greets the visitors in this Gallery.

Eight pillars, surrounding the Surya image, present beautiful female figurines standing in different postures belonging to Mathura art (2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. CE.) and 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE. Four railing pillars from Mathura carved with various damsels performing various functions, a lady taking bath under a spring, mother carrying a child, Sri Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, a Jaina Saraswati from Rajasthan, etc are on view.

On either side of the reception counter, the visitor can see two-well known sculptures of Indian art –a superb image of Shiva in Vamana form from Mansar (5<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.), and a rare exhibit of Yaksha from Pithalkhora, Maharashtra (2<sup>nd</sup> cen. BCE.) carved by a goldsmith, Kanhadasa, as is evident from the epigraph

### *3.2 The Corridor*

The outstanding specimen includes Mohini from Gaday and the lintel from Abaneri-both known for meticulous carving. The inner rotunda on ground floor shows two large sized horizontal lintels from Hampi( Karnataka ) and Warangal (Telangana) representing Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and one more than life size image of Bodhisattva from Mathura (Uttar Pradesh)

### *3.3. Maurya-Sunga-Satavahana-Gallery*

In this Gallery can be seen few stone sculptures and terracottas belonging to Maurya, Sunga and Satavahana art (3<sup>rd</sup> Cen. BCE. to 1-2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. CE).The sculptures of Sunga period were meant primarily to decorate the Stupas at Bodh Gaya, Bharhut, Sanchi etc and depict the life events from Buddha or his Jatakas. The folk dieties like Yaksha, Yakshini, Salabhanjika etc are also form important items of Sunga art. Besides, the Yaksha and Yakshini images from Mathura, Mehrauli Amin and Bulandshahar are also fine specimens. In the Deccan, the Satavahanas have produced large number of rock cut caves in Maharashtra and built number of Stupas and Viharas in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka etc. They have also added four gateways to the Great Stupa at Sanchi, which was enlarged during the Sunga period .Two sculptures exhibited in this Gallery belonging to the gateway of Sanchi witness the monumentality of Sanchi Stupa. At the end, a few Kushana sculptures in red sandstone like Bodhisattva Maitreya inscribed with the name of the deity, the ivory carvings from Kapisa (Begram in Afghanistan) are the loveliest examples of Kushana art as they demonstrate the delicacy and intricacy of the Kushana workmanship.

### *3.4. Kushana, Mathura, Gandhara and Ikshvaku Gallery*

The art of the Kushana, Mathura, Gandhara and Ikshvaku has flourished side by side in the first three centuries of Christian era. Among the Gandhara sculptures, the youthful Buddha and Maitreya images, a few sculptures depicting the life events of Buddha and a large number of stucco images in showcases are to be noted especially for they bear certain degree of Graeco-Roman influence. In Mathura sculptures, the female figure of “ Bachanalian Scene from Maholi, a Chaturmukha Linga, pot bellied Kubera from Ahichchatra are some of the note worthy examples of Mathura art. Besides few sculptures of Buddha and Jaina sculptures, Ayagapata from Mathura, are the best examples of this School. Among the Ikshvaku art, presented here is a casing slab depicting four scenes from the life of Buddha –casting of Horoscope, Child Buddha’s welcome by the four cardinal directions, Asita’s visit to king Suddhodhana and the visit of child Siddhartha to the tutelary deity and few silver and bronze items and pottery .

### *3.5 Gupta Art Gallery*

The Gupta period was one in which religious thought and iconography developed a great deal and several new iconographic images came into being. A Nataraja from Nachana appears to be the earliest image of dancing Siva, Ekamukha Sivalinga from Khoh, Chaturmukha Surya representing Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and Surya, a Vishnu image from Mathura are the master pieces of this Gallery.

Several Buddhist sculptures from Saranath, panels from Ramayana and Mahabharata from Deogarh are the other exhibits.

A large number of terracotta figures found from Mathura, Ahichchatra, Bhitargaon, Kausambi, Life sized images of the Ganga and Yamuna, terracotta plaque from Ahichchatra displayed here are unparalleled in the realm of Indian terracotta art. The influence of Gupta terracotta art spread to regions beyond the Gupta empire such as Akhnoor in Jammu, the Maitraka rulers of Vallabhi in Gujarat(6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.). A few of them are displayed in this Gallery are the most eloquent examples of this art.

### *3.6 Early Medieval Gallery*

The disintegration of the Gupta empire resulted in the growth of regional offshoots of art of India with the emergence of local powers like the Palas in the East, Maitrakas in West, Vardhanas and Pratiharas in North, and Pallavas, Cholas, and Chalukyas in the South. This Gallery presents the representative examples of various art styles which flourished side by side in different regions of the country between 7th and 10th century. CE. Vishvarup of Vishnu of the Maitrakas, a lintel from Chittorgarh depicting the Navagrahas in wood Pratiharas, a image of the Ganga, standing on a crocodile representing the Rashtrakuta art from Ellora Caves, a stone plaque from Aihole depicting a pair of flying Gandharvas, Siva as Bhikshtanamurthy, Somaskanda, and Vishnu sculptures of the Pallava and Chola period are the best and superb specimen in this Gallery.

### *3.7 Late Medieval Gallery*

The Palas and their successors in the East, the Hoyasalas, Cholas, Vijayanagar rulers, and Nayakas in the South and the Gahadavalas, Paramaras and Chandellas in the North continued to encourage the temple art and architecture during this period. Four portraits of king Narasimhadeva of Pala art from Konarak, a beautiful image of seated Vishnu in Yogasana of Chandela art from Khajuraho, the sculpture of Durga of Paramara art, and the bust of Vajra Tara of Gahadavala art are the excellent examples of this period. A few of the sculptures of Pala and Sena rulers in dark basalt stone, mostly Buddhist stelae are on show in this Gallery. The most famous marble image of Saraswati from Bikaner belonging to Chahmanas, Neminatha, the Jaina Tirthamkara from Rajasthan are on display here. The rare sculptures of Hoyasalas, the portrait of a huntress, Krishna as Kaliyamardhana and several others which are intricately carved, are the best examples of this period. Siva as Lingodhbavamurthy, Jaina Parsvanatha, Dwarapala are the best examples of Chola art, a lintel showing the Trinity of the Kakatiya art of Warangal, and few sculptures belonging to Vijayanagara period have also been exhibited.

### *3.8 Bronze Gallery*

The bronzes were mainly religious in character and this craft spread to every part of the country. Two Buddha images from Phophnur, Jaina Tirthamkaras from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Pala bronzes from Nalanda, known for their excellence are on display.

A number of images belonged to Sunga, Kushana and Ikshvaku periods from 2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. BCE. to 2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. CE. Western Jaina Tirthamkaras mainly from Rajasthan and Gujarat are usually stereo-typed and devoid of beauty and charm. The North India is represented here by the bronzes from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, Vishnu Vaikuntha of Kashmir art, Swachchanda Bhairavi from Chamba are immense value. In this showcase Nepalese bronze of Vasudev-Kamalja (Half Vishnu and half Lakshmi) is superb example of Nepalese bronze art.

Bronzes from South India demonstrate the development of this art in that area from the 7th to 17th century CE. Siva as Nataraja is a unique creation, while many forms of Siva like Uma Sahita, Alingana, Chandrasekhara, Tripurantaka, Nandikeswara etc of Pallava and Chola art have been displayed. They have also produced magnificent images of Vishnu like Krishna Avatara of Vishnu like Kaliya-Mardhana, Bala-gopala, Nritya – Gopala etc have also been exhibited here. These bronzes are characterized by a fluid movement, delicate and detailed mouldings of the human form and a lively suppleness. Vijayanagara bronzes and few Nayaka bronzes like Tiruvarangulam Nataraja, Kaliya-Krishna and Tripurantaka are well known for exquisite beauty and rare charm have also been displayed in this Gallery.

### *3.9 Buddhist Art Gallery*

This is the first thematic Gallery commenced in the year 1990 consisting of all the three major Schools of Buddhism-Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana—representing various Buddhist deities have been exhibited in this Gallery. The development of Indian Buddhist art is reflected in the sculptures ranging from 2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. BCE. to 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.

The Hinayana phase is represented by three sculptures presenting the worship of his Symbols like Buddhapada and Jataka tales.

The Mahayana phase produced some of the most beautiful images of Buddha and Bodhisattva. The image of Buddha from Phophnyr, Buddha head from Sarnath, a slab depicting scenes from the life of Buddha are of special interest and magnificent examples of Buddhist art.

Vajrayana phase is marked with a number of Tantrik gods and goddesses like Marichi, Chunda, Tara, Manjushri, Simhananda, Lokeshvara etc.

Besides their images, important Buddhist sites like Sarnath, Nalanda, Bharhut, Nagarjunakonda etc have also been represented by various sculptures. A number of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh region practice Buddhism and their ritualistic objects used in the daily worship are placed on the altar in order to give a glimpse of the Buddhist temples.

The silk paintings and stucco heads in the Gallery remind us the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia.

The bronze images of Maitreya, Avalokitesvara and stucco heads from South-Asia, life size Buddha head from Java are the impressive collection.

Tibet and Nepal are represented by Thankas painted with Buddhist themes in this Gallery.

A modern Buddha image in wood with gold wash from Burma, a large number of ritualistic objects such as the wheel, ambrosia etc are also displayed and are the added attraction to the visitors.

### *3.10 Relic Caskets of Buddha*

The focal point of this Gallery is the display of the relics of Buddha in the two relic caskets excavated from Piprahwa in Basti district of U.P by the Archaeological Survey of India. Piprahwa has been identified as Kapilavastu, the hometown of Gautama Buddha. Buddhists from all the Buddhist countries visit this Gallery and pay homage to the relics of Lord Buddha.

### *3.11 Manuscripts*

The National Museum has acquired about 14,000 manuscripts in various languages and scripts, covering a large number of subjects such as history, literature, miniature paintings, art of calligraphy, philosophy, science, biography, geography, genealogy, archaeology, medicines, religions etc representing various schools and provinces. The material is valuable for the history and covers a long period more than one thousand years.

The earliest manuscript on birch bark in Sharada script of Kashmir and Sanskrit language dealing with astrology in the collection belongs to the 9<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE and is a rare specimen of the art of writing.

The Prajnaparamita in proto-Bengali language written on palm-leaves datable to 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE., another palm-leaf manuscript Panchraksha composed in the reign of Ramapaladeva, the Pala ruler, belonging to 11<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE. are the earliest palm-leave manuscripts of India.

The Balabodhini of Jagaddharbhatta written on birch bark in Sharda script is another rare manuscript providing commentary on Sutras of Sanskrit grammar.

The BHAGAVATA PURANA, which is in the form of scroll on paper pasted on the cloth is scribed through the illustrations done in the lotus shape, has a brief description of the pictures in Sanskrit written in Devanagiri script.

Duwal Rani Khizr Khan (1567) the earliest dated manuscript illustrated in Akbar's period, originally written by Amir Khusrau during 13th Cen. on the love affairs of Duwal Rani and Khizr Khan, Princess of Gujarat Prince Khizr Khan, son of Sultan Alauddin khilji, Baburnama (1598-99) with 145 superb illustrations, an objective and truthful record of events faced in his life before and after becoming the founder of Mughal dynasty, containing the historical fragments, flora and fauna of Central Asia, Afghanistan and India, TUZK-I-JAHANGIR, another outstanding manuscript in Shikasta script, sprinkled with gold, decorated with floral and animal designs, believed to have been written by Jahangir himself etc are some of the rare manuscripts exhibited.

The Museum has also on its possession an important collection of the manuscripts and calligraphy written, illustrated and illuminated by the foreign scholars. The Museum possesses some rare manuscripts, scribed on parchment, silk paper and handmade papers, written, illustrated and illuminated abroad but imported in India by the scholars, poets and others during the Sultanate and Mughal periods.

### *3.12 Numismatics and Epigraphy*

The coin collection of this Museum is remarkable for the variety, rarity and antiquity of various classes of Indian coins from 6<sup>th</sup> Cen. BCE. to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century CE. The collection comprises 1,18,000 coins of gold, silver, copper and of the alloys—billon, potin and lead. These coins have been acquired as Treasure Trove, hoards, gifts, and through the purchases. The famous Parrukh Collection, Jhalan Collection, Nagu Collection, Vyas Collection, Desikachari Collection and few specimens of Gupta coins of Bayana hoard .Half of the collection represents the coins of Northern India from the earliest times to present day. Added to it, 310 copper plates with inscriptions of different periods also enrich the collection.

The Gallery displays about 204 coins and 10 copper plates in the seven showcases representing Punch—marked coins of 4<sup>th</sup> Cen. BCE., Tribal copper coins of the smaller kingdoms of North India.

The coins of Indo- Greek rulers with the bust of the king on the obverse and figure of the deity on the reverse are also on view. Kushana copper coins, few coins of Indo-Parthian, Western Kshatrapa, Nahapana and the coins re-struck by Gautamiputra Satakarni have also been displayed.

The other coins on display are the coins of Vardhana of medieval Rajputs, coins belonging to Delhi Sultans, Tughluks, coins of other provincial Sultans of Jaunpur, Gujarat, Bengal and Bahmanis, coins of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb and other Mughal rulers.

The coins of Mysore Sultans, Indo-British series, coins of Indian native states, South Indian coins of Vijayanagara rulers, Pandyas, Cheras, Cholas, Pallavas and Chalukyas bearing the images of Hindu deities, bull, boar, tiger, fish and lotus etc have been displayed in a showcase.

Zodiac series issued by Jahangir along with other coins is on the display in other showcase.

In the two big showcases, sets of copper plates in Nagari script, Nandi Nagariscrypt, mixed Kalinga script, Kannada, Telugu script and Sanskrit languages in Telugu script of Vijayanagara, Ganga, Eastern Chalukyas, Nayakas, etc are on show in another showcase. The gold coins of Guptas in a pot have been presented in a small showcase.

### *3.13 Paintings*

The Museum has in its possession the rich heritage of Indian paintings of over 17000 which have been acquired through purchases, and gifts. The miniature paintings are manifestations of



perfect physical forms with a celestial beauty of line and rhythm. The earliest known miniatures were painted in Eastern India on the strips of palm –leaf between 10th and 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.

In Western India, the Jaina paintings developed with a remarkable record over five centuries (1100-1600). The introduction of paper that later substituted for cloth and palm-leaf, brought about the rise of new schools of paintings. The Goddess Saraswati, painting on cloth, is a rare example of this style displayed.

Besides the Jaina paintings, the other important styles of Indian miniatures are known as Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahadi, and Deccani paintings. The Mughal school is associated with the court of the Mughal emperors, portraits of Kings, Nobles and Saints, birds and beasts, while the Rajasthani and Pahadi paintings have taken themes from the Epics and Puranas and are lyrical vivid and intense. The paintings of this school are full of passion, vitality, and poetic imagination, inspired by folk life, literature, music and love lyrics.

There is a good collection of Tibetan, and Nepal Tankas, Tanjore and Mysore paintings, Ganjifa cards drawings, cloth paintings and scrolls covering a period from 1600-1900. These paintings have been exhibited in three Galleries i.e. Painting Gallery (1st floor), Gallery of Tanjore and Mysore paintings (1<sup>st</sup> floor) and Tantra Art Gallery (Ground floor).

The Deccani paintings, Malwa school, the Basholi school, the Kashmiri school, Sikh school, Nepal paintings are exhibited in the painting Gallery, while the Tanjore and Mysore schools depicting gods and goddesses have been displayed in Tanjore and Mysore Gallery, and the Tantra Art Gallery exhibits the paintings of Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism and Vaishnavism.

### *3.14 Arms and Armour*

The Museum has a fine collection of about 7000 Indian weapons ranging from the Pre-historic period right up to 19th century and include wedged weapons, projectiles, smashing weapons, armour for men and animals, ornamental, sacrificial, and ritual weapons and fire arms and war accessories.

Besides different varieties of bow and arrows made of cane, bamboo, metal and also those decorated with ivory, gold and silver are exhibited in a separate Gallery. The inscribed bow and Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal ruler is also on view in this Gallery.

After the discovery of iron (1000 BCE..), Indian swords show a variety of shapes. The type, design and artistic decorations clearly indicate the socio-economic conditions of the respective periods.

With the establishment of Sultanate and later the Mughal rule in India, the weapons underwent a significant change and we see some unique weapons introduced during the period. The Persian sword Shamsheer, the Arabian Zulfiqar, the Turkish Sailaba, the enameled sword of Jaipur, the Patta of Marathas, the Khanda of Rajputs, the Dao of Assam and some sacrificial and ceremonial weapons are other attractions on show in this Gallery.

The showcase of Historical Weapons containing the personal swords of Emperor Aurangazeb, Tippu Sultan, Nana Saheb Peshwa and Hamir Singh reminds us the past history and their deeds. The daggers also varied in size and shape and can be identified with separate names such as Jamadhar, Jambia and Khanjar of Mughals, the Chura of Afghans, the Khapwa of Rajputs the Qurauli of Sikhs and the Khurkari of Nepalis decorated with gold, silver and studded with precious stone and jewels and have ivory, jade, crystal and soapstone hilts, adorned with calligraphy are on show in this Gallery. Shield was the earliest movable object for defense carried on the arm followed by a helmet on the head, breast, and back armour, Bazub and, foot armour etc. The spears or javelins made of reed, bamboo, wood, metal etc with a pointed iron stone blade. The typical Maratha, Rajput, Pahari and Sikh weapons reveal the valour and bravery of the people who sacrificed their lives for the country.

The inventions of gun powder in the early 14<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE., opened a new chapter in the history of Indian arms. In 1526, Babur, had used cannons of considerable size in the Paniput war .These were drawn by bullocks, horses and camels. During the course of time, shoulder fire arms were developed which could be used by individuals and so were produced matchlocks, flint–locks and percussion cap muzzle loading guns. Such fire arms including pistols, revolvers and multi-barreled short arms are a few noteworthy specimens of this Gallery. The gun powder flasks enhance the beauty of the showcases. The Indian weapons, by and large, are inscribed, damascened, enameled, and embellished in many forms, and quite a few of them may be treated as excellent works of art.

### *3.15 Decorative Arts*

This Gallery in the ground floor displayed decorative arts like, wood, ivory, jade carvings, Bidri ware and carvings on glass.

Wood carving is the process in which a raw wood is carved and fashioned not only for everyday use but also for the beautification of sculptural, domestic and architectural objects. The craftsmen have used teak, deodar, sandal wood, ebony, walnut and black wood for the carvings in the round. Beautifully carved pillared and doors from a Sun temple at Konark, Almora of Uttar Pradesh exhibited in Late Medieval Gallery are the most important collection.

The excavations at Harappa and Mohen-jo-daro have yielded a number of ivory plaques, combs, inlay objects, seals, kohl-sticks etc. A variety of objects that has been discovered at Taxila (Pakistan), and Begram (Afghanistan) establishes the popularity of ivory carving during the Kushan period. The temple shrine is yet another excellent example of Delhi's craftsmanship in ivory, large Jali( screen ), seated Buddha figure, a tusk depicting the life scenes of Buddha are some of the unique objects on display. Jade carvings, two Huqqas, one belonging to Shahjan's period, studded plates, betel and spice boxes, cups, bowls, plaques, tumblers, a big Degcha with a dome shaped lid bearing inscription with the name of Shahjahan etc. are some of the notable collection. A portion of a temple from Gujarat is a fine example of repousse work. The Bidri ware utensils are a Huqqa, Sailabchi, Aftaba, box, candle stand tray, cot-leg, Ugaldan are some of the popular items .Glass was also used for decorative art medium and there are more than 10,000 works of decorative arts in the collection of the Museum.

### *3.16 Central Asian Antiquities*

The collection of Central Asian Antiquities with more than 11,000 objects from Sinkiang region of Chinese Turkestan, discovered by Sir Aurel Stein during his three expeditions in 1900-1901, 1906-1908, 1913 - 1916, is one of the most prestigious and rare collection of its type in the National Museum.

The selected objects on display in two Galleries on the first floor include murals, paintings on silk, ramie, paper and wood, terracottas, stuccos, wooden objects, Kharosthi documents, textiles etc. These objects range from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.

As one enters the Gallery, a beautiful Chinese bronze image of seated Buddha of Ming dynasty draws the attention. The walls of the two Galleries are occupied mostly by the Buddhist paintings, which are excellent in treatment of forms and colour schemes. These paintings, also known as banners, often bear the figure of donors and inscriptions in Chinese language. The painting depicting Buddha and his six monks from Miran (3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.), Mural from Balawaste showing Indra and Variochana (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE.) deserve special mention.

The terracotta art of Central Asia presents a variety of fine workmanship. The human and animal figurines on display from Khotan region are very interesting artefacts. Stucco was popular medium of artistic expression in Central Asia. The stuccos from Astana form a class of their own

as they were found in the graves. The strong Indian influence in the Central India is marked by the presence of Kharoshti script and the use of Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. Some other works of art and craft from Central Asia on display include coins, beads of stone and glass, seals, leather objects, wood carvings, pottery etc.

### 3.17 Pre – Columbian Art

The collection of Pre-Columbian art donated to the National Museum by Mr. & Mrs. Heeramanek is of high quality and represents all the principal cultures of Pre- Columbian world.



In 1492 Christopher Columbus discovered this new world which he thought of South Asia and gave the name “Indians” to its people. The collection includes pieces of art from Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and other countries of South America. The Olmec culture of Mexico generally dated to 1200 BCE. is characterized by colossal stone sculptures and small sculptures in jade and other hard stones. An early culture from Peru’s south coast, Paracas is distinguished by textiles some techniques of which were followed by the people of South Coast and that of Nazca, dated about 10<sup>th</sup> Cen. Gold, Silver ornaments, Copper ceremonial implements and weapons were also used by these people.

### 3.18. Other Non-Indian Artefacts

#### 3.18.1 Indonesian Art

Islam, Hindu, and Buddhism have influenced the art of Indonesia and this is discernible from the four sculptures displayed in this Gallery. The sculpture of Mahishasuramardini Durga, Ganesha and Bhatarguru demonstrate the Indian influence on Indonesian art. The Iranian art is reflected in the ceramics from Sialk and TepeGiyān and bronzes from Luristan. The Flemish art is represented by tapestry woven in wool and silk depicting a garden scene. The French art is represented by some sculptures and pages from a delicately illuminated Bible of 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 3.18.2 Goan Art

Few specimen of art and sculptures from Goa such as ivory and wooden sculptures of Christian Saints, painted in coloured wax, in shades of red deep blue and gold have been on show in this Gallery, apart from the non-Indian collection.

#### 3.18.3 Jewellery

This Museum contains about 243 objects in twenty seven showcases in this specially designed Gallery impart a bird’s eye view of Indian jewellery from 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE. to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each showcase narrates a story of its own and the specimen is proud of their age, workmanship, intrinsic value and antiquity.

The showcases contain a Gita chariot in gold and silver, Asokan capital in gold with platinum strips studded with 501 pieces of diamond, Indus jewellery in gold, semi-precious stones, steatite, serpentine and also fience .

The exhibits include a variety of necklaces, bangles, wristlets, girdles, pendants armlets, headpins, needles, earplugs, fillets, brooch etc. The Mughal jewelry is distinguished by bold designs, execution of minute details with perfection and depiction of flora and fauna.

Ornaments from the Princely States of India like Rajasthan, Delhi, Varanasi, Hyderabad in precious and semi- precious stones have also been exhibited here.

The South Indian jewellery is characterized by largeness and heaviness, use of rubies, precious stones, Rudraksha beads with gold strings, serpentine large braids (Nagachotis) etc. In a large showcase a silver chair the arms of which are shaped like lion (Simhasana) used by the king of Banaras (KashiNaresh) at the time of Delhi Darbar has been displayed

### 3.19. Anthropology

Anthropological collection of the Museum includes nearly 10,000 rare objects of ethnographic interest acquired through gifts from various states, exploratory expeditions in Tribal belts and rural areas, and through purchases from private collectors. The collection includes headgears, footwears, dresses, ornaments, musical instruments, terracottas, scroll paintings, Santhal paintings, Madhubani paintings, wood carvings, masks, weapons, metal images, leather puppets and a variety of other objects used in daily life.

The reorganized gallery of Tribal Life –Style of the North- East highlights the regional unity in cultural traits. The story of everyday life of the Monpa, Sherdukpen, Khowa, Apatani, Mishmi, Adi, Nocte, Wanchoo, Singhpho, and Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh, the Karbi and Bodo of Assam, the Thangkul and Kuki of Manipur, the Mizos of Mizoram the Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha and Konyak of Nagaland and the Riang and Tripuri objects are on show in this Gallery.

### 4. Education

The education activities and services of the Museum are looked after by a Keeper, which include free guiding, screening of films on art and culture, weekly Gallery talks, guidance to the school students, organizing seminars, workshops and symposiums for the scholars and academicians, special guided tours, illustrated lectures of prominent scholars, and programmes for the handicapped children, summer course for the school children in Hindi and English etc for inculcating the rich cultural heritage of the country among the wider section of the society.

### 5. Public Relations

The public relations of the Museum include providing general information about the Museum, correspondence with the institutions, educationalists, scholars, training programmes, permission for photography in the Museum, looking after the visits of V.I.Ps and guests, distribution of News Letters, sale of journals, replicas of masterpieces cast in fiber glass, picture post cards, calendars, coloured slides, and other related activities. It also provides admission tickets to the visitors, depositing of personal belongings, camera, and bags suitcases of the visitors.



### 6. Photography

The Photography Unit is well equipped to prepare black and white and coloured pictures of the art objects. It has already photo documented the collection of the Museum and has its own

storage and laboratory for processing black and white prints. It also supplies prints of art objects to the other Museums not only for documentation purpose but also academic and research purposes. The Photographer also imparts training to various trainees and students on their demand.

#### 7. Modelling

This Unit has been casting beautiful replicas of the select masterpieces housed in the Museum covering a period from Indus Valley Civilization to the 12<sup>th</sup> Cen. CE. It's also imparting practical training to the foreigners and to hundreds of personnel working in different Museums of the country.

#### 8. Publication

The National Museum is bringing out several publications for children, for common visitors, and for the scholars interested in the study of art, architecture, painting, sculptures, history, religion, culture etc. Besides bringing out publications on Indian Art and Culture, the Publication Unit also rolls out the Quarterly News Letters, a research journal, research publications, Guide books, Gallery sheets, brochures on exhibitions and galleries, catalogues, monographs etc.

Many of the publications of this Museum are comparable to the best art books published anywhere in the world and some of them have fetched Presidential award for their quality of production.

#### 9. Conservation Laboratory

The Conservation Laboratory of the National Museum is one of the best laboratories equipped with various sophisticated appliances, in the field of conservation and restoration of the art objects.



Besides keeping the vast and varied collection in good state of preservation as per international standards, it is also serving the other institutions, Raj Bhavan, and other public agencies in identification, examination, and restoration of oil paintings and other art works. It is also undertaking documentation of artefacts by keeping their written and graphic records, radiographic documentation, photography, analysis through automatic Absorption and X-ray diffraction equipment. This stored information helps in research oriented works.

Further the laboratory carries out regular surveys of art objects and gives treatment to them on priority basis. Simultaneously, it takes preventive measures against the factors that may cause damage to the artefacts. Major conservation Projects handled by the laboratory are (1) National Project of Restoration of Oil Paintings of Non-Indian origin and other works of art and (2) Conservation of Wall Paintings at Jhala Haveli, Rajasthan.

The Laboratory has organized a number of seminars, workshops and training programmes for the students, Curators and Conservators

#### 10. Conclusion

The National Museum Institute has been declared by Government of India as a Deemed University and it is imparting teaching to M.A. Conservation and Ph.D. programme.

The 50 years old National Museum is keeping up its reputation as a National Museum, with its rich repositories of rare relics and is fulfilling the needs of the modern society.

The Museum is discharging three major functions i.e. cultivation of awareness, dissemination of information and bringing a desirable change in the society through its manifold and invaluable collection and preservation of artefacts.

It is also imparting training in museum methods, restoration and preservation of the vast cultural property of not only India but also of several other countries to several Museums/ Institutions.

In its long existence, the National Museum has established links with many other academic institutions in India and abroad which are represented in its working methods and also in various museum collections. This Museum is discharging its noble role of an institution for preserving national heritage contributing to the growth of national consciousness in Indian Sub- Continent.

