CHAPTER II

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

If we look back at the socio-cultural history of the Eastern and the Western regions of India from the 11th century till the late 17th century A.D., we realise that the geographical situation of these two regions played an important role in deciding their respective destinies through the centuries. To make the point clearer, it is necessary to take note of the geographical details of the two regions, separately.

Geographical Situation of the Eastern Region of India

1. Bihar It is bounded on the east by west-Bengal and on the west by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. To
the south lies Orissa and to the north the independent Kingdom of Nepal. It is a part of the Indo-Gangetic plain connected with the Ganges delta region. 'Bihar is situated in the lower Gangetic valley which is one of the main natural division of ancient Jambudvīpa Tala'.

The position of Bihar has favoured it with roads leading to various directions. The Grand Trunk Road connects Bihar with northern India on one side and Bengal on the other, from where roads lead to Assam and beyond.

2. Assam

Assam was known in various periods of Indian history by different names. It embraces the two river valleys of Assam, those of the Brahmaputra and the Surma, which are separated by a semi-circle of hill ranges forming the present hill districts of Assam. There is a drop between the Nāgā and the Jaintiya Hills through which flow the Kapilā and Dhansirī from the north to the south, thus joining the valley of the Lauhitya and the Surmā. Assam was connected with Bengal by three routes. The first one followed Brahmaputra along its north bank that reached the eastern extremity of Assam. Secondly, by Gāro Hills along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, it was possible to enter Assam from eastern Bengal. The third route followed upstream of the Kapilā and Dhansirī
rivers. This route also led to the south bank of the Brahmaputra. The Kingdom of Assam was thus, bounded by a range of mountains on the north, on the east by another line of hills on the west by Maññah river, on the south by the Garo, Khāsi, Nāgā and Paṭkoi hills. The kingdom was about 500 miles in length with an average breadth of 60 miles.5

The Kingdom of Assam corresponded to five districts of the Brahmaputra valley divisions - Kāmarūp, Darrāng, Nowgong, Sibsāgar, Lakhimpur and the portions of Sadiya Frontier Tract. Although Assam is geographically a part of Indo-Gangatic plains, its climate is more typical of maritime region under the influence of monsoon.

3. Bengal Bengal forms the part of Indo-Gangetic Delta region. It is humid region and its climate is that of a maritime region affected by the monsoon. Bengal 'stretches from the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the South and from the Brahmaputra, the Kangsa, the Surmā, and the Sajjuk rivers in the east to the Nāgar, the Barākar, and the lower reaches of the Suvarṇarekhā in the west'.6 It has no deserts and no hills or ridges except on the fringe in the extreme north, east and west.
The two mighty rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, with their numerous branches have played an important part in shaping its destiny. But 'frequent changes in the courses of rivers have been responsible for the ruin of many old places, at times by washing them off and more often by making them unhealthy and inaccessible'.

4. **Orissa**

Orissa belongs to the eastern coastal area of the peninsular plain and comprises the region of the Mahanadi Delta. Like Bengal, Orissa has a fertile region, dominated by the plateau which deteriorates seaward into swamps and lagoons. Southward, it is situated between the sea and that portion of the plateau which gives upon the passes of the circars. These passes form a corridor, a source of strife over the ages, which roughly defines the boundaries between the Aryan-speaking northern region and that of the Dravidian-speaking south. The country of Kalinga which is now known as Orissa, was particularly co-extensive with Bihar, and possibly portions of Godāvari. 'The Godāvari-Krishna Doab, especially that part of it which lies at the bottom of the Eastern Ghats, was the marshland between the Kalinga and the Andhra country. An account of Orissa must therefore, necessarily be an account of Kalinga or Greater Orissa.
as she originally was until the last days of her independence. Orissa originally extended up to the modern districts of Medinipur and Howrah in Bengal, and has an area of 40,000 square miles. The northern boundary of this Oriya speaking zone runs from a point on the sea-shore at the north-east corner of the district of Balasore to the north-west corner of the feudatory state of Gangapur, by demarcating the southern boundary of the districts of Midnapore and Ranchi.

The above is a synoptic definition of the provinces, in terms of their geographical situations, included in the conventional geographical frame referred to as eastern India. Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam - the four major provinces of India forming its eastern sector - not only share common and sometimes overlapping frontiers, they show a near proximity in the climatic condition, and this has largely contributed to the similarity of culture that flourishes in these regions. Thus, the otherwise geographical 'eastern India' has a cultural connotation too. In the Indian Art historical studies, therefore, 'eastern India' has often been accepted as a unit of reference.
Let us take note of the topographical specifications of each of the areas included in it.

1. Malwa: This territory is connected with the plateau in Madhya Pradesh and has been called Malwa since the 7th century A.D. It denoted a wide region consisting of some part of north-eastern Gujarat. Malwa comprises the whole of western Madhya Pradesh, the Vindhyas in the South, Sagar-Bamoh plateau and Bundelkhand in the east, Guna-Shivpuri region and Rajasthan in the north and Gujarat and Aravallis in the west covering an area of 47,760 square kms.

Malwa is drained by three rivers; the Chambal, the Betwa and the Narmada. To the west and north-west of this plateau are the Aravalli hills. In the south it is bounded by the Vindhyas which are known as mountains but are in fact a series of steep slopes overlooking the valley of Narmada. South of the Vindhya mountains but are in fact a series of steep slopes overlooking the valley of Narmada. South of the Vindhya mountains and roughly parallel with them are the Satpura mountains. To the north-west of Malwa are the Bundi hills.
This region is largely covered by black soil which is very fertile. It can be described as consisting of an undulating and inclined plain, which is open and highly cultivated and which is varied by small conical hills and low bridges. It is watered by numerous rivers and small streams and favoured with a rich and highly fertile soil and mild climate.\footnote{14}

From earliest times, this region remained in touch with the different parts of India by means of several routes. These routes of communication led to the development of commerce and trade and to an exchange of cultural traits.

2. **Māṇḍu** : During the medieval period, Māṇḍu was merged with Māḷwa.\footnote{15} Māṇḍu bears the same physical feature as of Māḷwa.

3. **Gujarat** : Gujarat is the region where the alluvial plain broadens. Stretching northwards from the banks of the Nerbudda, a range of hills connecting the Vindhyas with the Aravulle mountains forms the eastern and northern barrier of Goozerat, and separates it from Māḷwa, Mewar and Marwar. The Gulf of Kutch and a salt, and sometimes partially inundated desert called
the Runn, are the boundaries of the province on the north-west and west; the Arabian sea and Gulf of Cambay, wash its southern and south-western shores. The north-west part is sandy plain that intervenes between the desert and the foot of Mount Abu. 'Southward is Maharashtra, a coastal strip some 37 miles long, consisting of rolling hills and valleys and dominated by the steep slopes of the Ghats which drop more gently toward the Deccan plateau traversed by rivers, only two of which, the Nerbuda and the Tapti, flow into the Gulf of Oman'.

Gujarat was the point of juncture, because of its situation, for the highroads leading from the eastern coast through Nagpur and Tapti valley's Khandesh, from Mathura through Malwa, and from Delhi through Rajasthan.

4. **Jaunpur**: Jaunpur is a portion of Uttar Pradesh and geographically a part of it comes into the western region of India. Physical features of this part do not have anything distinctive. No mountains and rivers cross this region. It came into importance during the Muslim period.
After analysing the geographical features of the eastern and the western regions of India, we come to realise that the eastern region of India was surrounded by mountains and rivers. This region had a net of rivers facilitating trade and communication with outer regions. Thus, the culture of eastern India not only was exposed to that of the other regions, the influences from exterior sources also got an easy access to it. On the contrary, the western region of India, which has comparatively less number of rivers and which has tough routes, succeeded in maintaining the seclusion of its culture and traditions for a longer period.

The geographical situations and the physical features of these two regions have considerably influenced not only the cultural but the political history as well of these two respective regions. They have affected the lives and habits of the people, influenced their character, and invested them with distinctive characteristics, thus deciding their respective destinies through the centuries.

**Historical Background** :

Talking about history, the period starting from 1000 A.D. was fateful period for India, the eastern
and the western regions in particular. But 'unless the period is viewed from a right perspective, its true picture cannot possibly emerge; nor would it be possible to assess the factors which, coming into existence during this period, affected the life of the people through the intervening centuries and which still confront it with unsolved problems'.

In the 10th century A.D., two dynasties became very powerful in these two regions: the Chalukyas in the western and the Pālas in the eastern region of India. These dynasties patronised two different religions, namely, Jainism and Buddhism, respectively by the Chalukyas and the Pālas.

The Chalukya dynasty was established by Mūlarāja in Gujarat. Although two other dynasties are known to have existed in Gujarat who also called themselves Chalukyas, it is not certain whether there was any relationship between these three dynasties. 'There were also many other families called themselves either Chalukya, Chulika or Chaulukya. These are often known to us from a single or two inscriptions which do not enable us to fix their descent, nor to establish their
relationship, if any, with the four main royal houses whether the Chalukyas of Badami were the parents of all these families, or whether there was a parent stem, of which in the present state of our knowledge cannot be answered with any degree of certainty'. So we shall confine our attention exclusively to the activities of the dynasty established by Mālarāja.

Historians differ in ascribing dates to the rulers of the Chalukya dynasty succeeded by Vaghela dynasty. In order to avoid any confusion, we have relied on the dates given by A.K.Majumdar. The chronological sequence is as mentioned below:

1. Mūlarāja I - V.S.998-1053 (941-996 A.D.)
2. Chāmuṇḍarāja - V.S.1053-1066 (996-1009 A.D.)
3. Durlabharāja - V.S.1066-1081 (1009-1023 A.D.)
4. Nāgarāja, son of Chāmuṇḍarāja rules for some time but his exact dates are not known.
5. Bhīma I - V.S.1088-1122 (1051-1065 A.D.)
7. Jaysimha Siddharāja V.S.1150-1200 (1093-1143 A.D.)
8. Kumārapāla - V.S.1200-1229 (1172-1175 A.D.)
10. Mūlarāja II - V.S.1232-1235 (1175-1178 A.D.)
12. Tribhuvanapāla  -  V.S.1299-1302 (1242-1245 A.D.)
13. Visaladeva  -  V.S.1302-1318 (1245-1261 A.D.)
15. Sarangadeva  -  V.S.1331-1353 (1274-1296 A.D.)
16. Karna II  -  V.S.1353-1360 (1296-1303 A.D.)

Karna was the last Hindu ruler of Gujarat. In 1299 A.D. Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, two generals of Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī took the whole of Gujarat from Karna.

All the above mentioned rulers of the Chalukya dynasty, who ruled over Gujarat, were Gurjaras arrived at from the fact that it was since their settlement that Gujarat came to be called after Gurjaras'.

There were two hordes of this tribe which emigrated at two different periods. The first came forth in the last quarter of sixth century A.D. The 2nd emigrated about the middle of the 10th century A.D. from Kalyaṇaṇakalaka, i.e. Kanauj, but did not go south beyond Gujarat. It was generally known by the name of Chalukya of Solāṇki.

In the eastern region of India, during the end of the 10th century A.D., Mahipāla I was ruling, who ascended the throne after the death of his father.
Vigrahapāla II in about 988 A.D. The dates of the rulers of the Pāla, Sena and the Varman dynasties, as suggested by R.C. Majumdar are given below:

1. Vigarihāpala - last known date is 988 A.D.
3. Nayapāla - V.S.1083-1112 (1026-1055 A.D.)
4. Mahipāla II - V.S.1127-1134 (1070-1077 A.D.)
5. Harivarman - V.S.1127-1187 (1070-1130 A.D.)
6. Harivarman - V.S.1134-1187 (1077-1130 A.D.)
7. Gopāla III - V.S.1182-1201 (1125-1144 A.D.)
8. Govindapāla III - V.S.1201-1219 (1144-1162 A.D.)
9. Lakṣmanasena - V.S.1235-1262 (1178-1205 A.D.)
10. Gomīndrapāla - V.S. end of 12th century A.D.
11. Gauḍēśvara Madhusena - V.S.1346 (1289 A.D.)

The period starting from 1000 A.D. was very important from social, cultural, religious and historical points of view. The whole of India experienced a new change because it was during this period that Mahmud Ghazni first invaded India. After this several times the Muslims came and brought destruction in India till it was finally conquered by them.
In the western India, till the 12th century A.D., Muslim attacks were repulsed by Gujarat rulers. Mūlarāja II defeated Turkish army in 1178 A.D. This may be the reason why Turks did not enter India through the western region. Gujarat, being situated at a long distance from Delhi with the important territory of Rajputana intervening between the two, got the benefit of keeping itself away from Muslim invasions.

Muslim could not be resisted for very long period and by the 13th century they dominated over major parts of India. And after the 13th century A.D., the Muslims ruled supreme for at least a couple of centuries.

At this time when the country was threatened with a grave problem which required immediate solution, the Hindu rulers unfortunately engaged themselves in mutual fighting. This exhausted and weakened their power. The degraded level to which common people were pushed down made them indifferent to country-wide dangers and furious problems. The enormous wealth of the country was spent in building and decorating the temples which they were not even able to protect. It was the fabulous wealth of these defenceless temples
and other beautiful monuments which attracted the Muslims and thus, these temples contributed greatly to bring the consequent disaster.

During the 10th-14th century A.D., the Muslims had permanently settled in large parts of India. The effects of Muslim domination were felt for the first time during the 14th century and afterwards when Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī established Muslim rule over nearly the whole of India. Now, besides the two empires under the Khaljī's and Muhammad-bin-Tugluq, there was no Turkish Muslim empire of India.

'Among the states that arose out of the ruins of these two ephemeral empires, six may be regarded as really very powerful. Three of these, namely, the Bahmani Kingdom in the Deccan, Gujarat in the West and Bengal in the east were ruled by Muslims while their rivals and neighbours, namely, Vijayanagara in south India, Mewar in Rajputana and, Orissa along the eastern coast were ruled by Hindus. The remnant of the Delhi Sultanate and two other Muslim states, Jaunpur and Māīwa, also occasionally played an important role'. 30 The constant rivalries and struggles between these three states, which were generally, but not invariably, grouped on
religious lines, form the main feature of the political history of this period from the 14th till the late 16th century A.D. These struggles led to no decisive result but weakened all these three powers. The intrigues within the Delhi Sultanate and its quarrels with the minor states in the north-west paved the way for the Mughal conquest under Babur.

The above is an account of the political situation of the country during the period between the beginning of the 11th century to the establishment of the Mughal dynasty. In Eastern India, during the period, the situation was the same. The weak successors of Pāla dynasty were unable to defend their kingdom, and they miserably failed to resist the onslaught of Muslim power and culture. This not only resulted in the quick change of political authority, but also in overall fabric of the institution of culture that existed in this part of the country through the centuries. This amounted virtually to the subversion of the tradition. Those who could neither resist it, nor, at the same time, could bear with this, had to flee from the country to take refuge to the neighbouring countries like Nepal, which still retained traditional roots on its soil firmly, thanks to its natural defence of formidable mountains and hills.
Religious Perspective

Under such circumstances, all existing institutions and systems could not but be affected. The state of religion during this period has to be studied in this perspective. This is important because, like all previous periods of Indian history, this too saw the art of following the course of the religious changes and developments. It is important, therefore, that we take note of the salient points in respect of the religious history of the country during these centuries. The extermination, so to say, of Buddhism from eastern India was the most crucial development that seems striking in this period.

Buddhism declined from eastern India by the arrival of Muslims towards the close of 12th century. The destruction of Buddhist monasteries by the Muslims gave a mortal blow to the religion. These monasteries in Bihar and Bengal formed the stronghold of Buddhism.

Buddhism flourished in the kingdom of Paṭṭikera (Comilla, now in Bangladesh) early in the 13th century A.D., when Muslims had not yet penetrated into that region. A Buddhist king Madhusena was reigning as
late as 1289 A.D. in some parts of Bengal, as is clear from an illustrated Buddhist manuscript which was executed during his reign period as is indicated by the colophon of the manuscript. Records at Bodh-Gaya prove that Buddhist pilgrims visited the holy place down to the 15th century which indicates the popularity of Buddhism till that period. So Buddhism could not altogether disappear without leaving some traces behind and it partly survived but in disguise of a modified form in various medieval religious cults in Bengal. It found a refuge in Nepal.

After the 12th century A.D., countless Buddhist monks and their associates including artists and craftsmen must have gone to Nepal, carrying with them manuscripts, paintings and other such things, in order to keep strictly to their faith and their way of life. Or otherwise one cannot fully explain such profusion of Buddhist texts, paintings, icons etc. stored in many Buddhist monasteries established in eastern India and Nepal; the fact of the destruction of the monasteries of Nalanda and Vikramasila and Oddantapurī by the Turks at one point of time can explain a social phenomenon which led to consequences' spread over a considerable period of time.
In western India, under the patronage of the Chalukyas, Jainism maintained, for long, a position in Gujarat. It is partly due to the fact that Jainism suffered less from the iconoclastic fury of the early Muslim invaders. The Chalukyas were not Jains but Jainism received support of the Chalukya Kings almost from the very beginning of this dynasty. Kumārapāla was, according to all accounts, the greatest supporter of Jainism in Gujarat. After him, Jainism no longer received direct royal patronage, but the days of Jainism were not over and the support of merchant princes like Vāstupāla and Tejhpāla was compensation enough for that loss. But now Jainism had its stronghold only in one corner of India and that corner was Gujarat. But this was only till Ala-ud-dīn Khaljī came on the scene.

Thus, we see that the political disturbance, which was the outcome of Muslim invasion, affected the religious life of eastern and western regions of India. Buddhism, the prevailing religion of eastern India was uprooted comparatively earlier than the western India's Jainism, though Buddhism did never die, instead, it migrated to Nepal and other neighbouring countries. Jainism which persisted for a longer period, gradually gave way to Brāhmaṇical and other religions.
These two regions kept the religious institutions as the most cherished and sacred ones. Both Buddhism and Jainism formed the very basis of their respective cultures as the key-note of life. So, with the decline of these two religious institutions, the two cultures based on them lost their stability.

Buddhism was more flexible in its outlook and so was silently merged into Brahmanical religion. Even today, images of Buddha are worshipped as Śiva or Vishnu in many places in Bengal.35

Jainism was also affected by the Brahmanical religion but to a much less extent than Buddhism. Rigidity and conservative character of Jainism enabled it to maintain its special characteristics to a certain extent through Brahmanical religion.

Besides, Jainism remained comparatively free from contaminating influence of Tantric ideas which proved ruinous to Buddhism.

Social Conditions:

During the first two or three centuries, the Muslims had permanently settled in large parts of India and formed an important community. Now there were two
communities: Hindu and Muslim, forming two entirely separate religious and social ideas and political and civil rights. The political and religious conditions under which the Hindus were made to live, raised a great barrier between the two communities. But there was no major problem of peaceful existence. During these centuries, thousands of Muslims came and lived in Gujarat, Bengal and other parts of India for varying periods and followed peaceful profession such as trade. Indians never confused between the two types of Muslims: the invaders and the rest. While trying their utmost to drive away the invaders they offered the Muslim traders warm hospitality and helped them pursue their religion.

It was during the 11th century, when India was fighting with Muslim invaders, that a Muslim scholar, Al-Beruni, was travelling in India. He was not assaulted physically. He lived in India for several years and was helped by Indian scholars to acquire learning in vogue in India at that time.

The essential feature of the Indian social system is based on the rights and duties as well as the status of four castes as laid down in the Smritis. The historical records of this period, though fragmentary,
throw light upon this aspect of the contemporary society. The four castes are the Brāhmaṇas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras.

The learned Brāhmaṇas stuck to the strict discipline enjoined upon by their scriptures. They are referred to in the royal and other land-grants as well as in the general literature. A number of historical instances of individual Brāhmaṇas and Brāhmaṇa families following the occupations of Kshatriyas are also known. Brāhmaṇas were not exempted from punishment. The commentaries and digests contain references to unworthy Brāhmaṇas who neglected their ordinary duties and obligations. References to degraded Brāhmaṇas are also found in the contemporary records. The commentaries and digests, following the authority of the Smritis, repeatedly place the degraded Brāhmaṇas under a social ban.

The Kshatriyas were the ruling families. A king was the master of all with the exception of the Brāhmaṇas. The ruling families were afterwards called as Rājpūts. Legends of origin of the Rājpūt clans were invented with a view to their affiliation to the two great Kshatriya stocks of epic and purānic tradition, namely, the Solar and the Lunar races.
The Vaisyas or Kayasthas were the tradesmen. Their origin can be traced back, with the help of literary and epigraphic records, to the latter half of the 9th century. In the 11th century and the following centuries, individuals of this caste rose to the highest public offices in different tracts.

The lowest caste was the Śūdra which was completely dependent upon the Brāhmaṇas. But exceptional cases of some Śūdras gaining name and fame of their own are not unknown altogether. The people of the Śūdra caste, however, could listen to the discourses of the religious texts, but they were not allowed to recite them. Thus, they remained as parasites in the cultural pursuits of the then society.

Although the caste system was very strictly followed, there are references of inter-caste marriages. Marriage with the girl of different caste was permissible only after his marriage with the girl of the same caste. Even a Brāhmaṇa could marry a Śūdra woman if he is already married to the girl of the same caste.39

The ancient institution of slavery was a very well-known feature of Indian social system.
The commentaries and digests agree with the śrūti rules, relating to food and drink habits. Bhavadeva of Bengal, keeping in consideration the regional sentiment on food habits, adopts a very liberal attitude towards eating meat and fish. But by contrary to the food habits of Bengal, the people of Gujarat ate no flesh and drank no wine.

The historical records throw light upon the high standard of living which prevailed atleast among the upper classes. It reached a level of magnificance among the Kings. The panels of sculptures of the 'Lingarāja' and 'Konārk' temples in Orissa contain various depictions of royal court scenes and scenes of royal procession of that time.

Through these representations of their time, we get details regarding the dresses and ornaments and so many other accessories to make the picture complete. Kings and other royal and rich men wore jackets and tight-fitting short trousers which were embroidered or printed materials. The trousers were tied by ornamental belts displaying paṭkās. On their shoulders, the men wore an Uttarīya. The dress of a man, when visiting a temple, consisted of short dhoti upto the knees and the shoulders
were covered by Uttariya which was held in its place by the arms. While riding an elephant or horse, a man wore a crown-like head-dress, a long tight-fitting coat and Uttariya. Along with it, he wore pointed slippers. The beard was not very common but they kept moustaches and wore bracelets, armlets, earrings and necklace of three strings.

The monks used to wear a white dhoti and an Uttariya. The dress of the Jaina nun consisted of a sārī, loose tunic and an Uttariya. Many illustrated manuscripts confirm this.

The rich ladies attired themselves with colourful dresses. They wore sārī, tight-fitting half-sleeve or full-sleeve bodices and petticoat which were richly ornamented and painted. They wore patkās whose colour would match with that of the sārī. This was their general costumes. But sometimes, we find interesting examples where the woman is dressed differently. For instance, there is an interesting picture of a woman, in one of the illustrated manuscripts, dressed in a short skirt and a bodice. She is wearing shoes also.

The dancing girls usually wore half-sleeved bodice and tight shorts called chalanaka which was richly
embroidered or printed with flower designs.

The common articles of dress include a muffler called kanṭhakunčhli, which was tied round the neck and worn with a knot. Handkerchiefs, which were called hastašātaka, were also in use.

Reference to the luxurious toilette of the court-ladies of Gujarat and Bengal is found in various inscriptions and commentaries and also in illustrated manuscripts of these regions. Various kinds of cosmetics such as agaru, sandal, kum-kum etc. were in use. The most important part of the toilette for both ladies and men was the tāmbula or the betal-leaves.

References are also made of the popularity of dancing, music and dramatic performances. In the sculptures of the Bhuvaneśvara temple in Orissa, we have representations of various musical instruments such as vīnā, the drum, the flute and the trumpet. These were the sources of amusement. Besides, gambling was very popular among all the classes of the people in Gujarat. But while the amusements of the common people were varied in character, those of kings and other royal men reached a level of exceptional variety. They were: military exercises, elephant sports, wrestler’s contests,
literary exercises, fights of birds and beasts, hunting etc. There are some of the accounts of a king's recreation in the Manasollasa.

The Manasollasa also refers to education as the important part of king's training. We get interesting glimpse into methods and principles of princely education that was in vogue. According to the Manasollasa princes were instructed not only in Vedas but also in military science. The students of the upper classes received their education at the residences of Brahma teachers. Side by side with this ancient institution of Brahma 'guru' teaching his pupils at his residence, there grew up in India from early times, larger or smaller establishments which were patronised by kings mostly for the promotion of education. In eastern India, the great Buddhist monastic university of Nalanda flourished. Other monasteries like Somapura, Vikramasila, Jagaddala and Uddantapura were also important centres of learning.

Education of this type was meant for men only. The commentaries and the digests repeat the old rules which indicate the religious and social inferiority of women. But, on the other hand, a number of instances show how the queens and other royal ladies sometimes
exercised a commanding influence upon the administration of the State.

In Gujarat, a remarkable feature of local administration of the Chalukyas was the appointment of ladies to the governorships of provinces and minor administrative divisions. We have an instance of a Chalukya queen administering a group of 12,000.

Thus, after analysing the salient features of the society, prevailing in India, eastern and western region in particular, we come to conclude that the whole country was experiencing the same social pattern with minor differences. The local customs and beliefs which differed regionally were the product of local situations and circumstances. Since the dominant religion was different in the two regions, expectedly some differences existed in the details of the social customs, but the overall similarity of the society was the same throughout the country.

Art Factors:

A major part of the wealth of the country was spent in building and decorating the temples. The political disintegration which led to so many ugly
developments, yielded some indirect results. The most important was the development of provincial style which increased both the variety and the productivity in art. At first the development of art was limited both in character and extent. The end of the Chalukyas and the Vaghelas in the western region, and the Pālas and the Senas in the eastern sectors was followed by the wholesale destruction of temples and monasteries by the Muslim invasion. It nearly uprooted the culture by destroying the sources.

But on the other hand, it is remarkable that in western India, the vast output of art was during the rule of Muslim Sultanates in Gujarat, Mālwa, Jaunpur. Except in this region, Jainism had no stronghold over the rest of the north.

The chronicles and the inscriptions record great temple building activities on the part of the rulers of the Chalukya dynasty. These temples of Gujarat were called Solāṇki temples as the Chalukya dynasty of Gujarat was called Solāṇki dynasty. Complete form of the typical Solāṇki temple appears to have received by the end of the 10th century or may be the beginning of the 11th century A.D. The general scheme of a Solāṇki temple differs very little from that of any other regional expression of Nāgara temple.
Fundamentally, the composition consists of the sanctum and the pillared hall called *mandapa* combined usually in axial length. The exterior walls are broken up by vertical chases, projected and recessed alternately. The chases are attained usually by a system of *ratha* projections, as in temples of Nagara style. Sometimes in the larger conceptions, a detached hall, Sabha-*mandapa*, and a *kirti-torana* are added in front of each. Sometimes, a sacred reservoir with flagged steps form an important element of the temple complex. The larger temples have the *mandapa* halls disposed in more than one storey, but the examples are too damaged to give any clear understanding of the arrangements.

In elevation, the scheme of the Solanki temple reproduces the same fundamental divisions along the vertical axis as in other regional types of the Nagara temple. The temple rises from a high *pitha* above which is the wall surface upto the entamblature called *mandovara*. The entamblature serves as a transition to the next division, the superstructure with crowning, elements. The *pitha* consists of a series of mouldings, sometimes plain but normally ornamented with repetitive motifs in an order specifically fixed by tradition. The
wall surface has a threefold division, corresponding to those of the early Nāgara temples. No further sub-division is to be found in Solāṇki temple. The first of three divisions, called pabhāga, consists of a series of mouldings and the second, the Jaṅghā (wall face), shows a grouping of sculptures in the vertical chases. The third, the varānda, usually consists of a cornice or double cornice, extending in the form of a sloping cave called chhājjā, in the frontal parts. Above this rises the super-structure, the tall curvilinear sikhara surmounting the sanctum cella and a low pyramidal roof, composed of diminishing horizontal courses, covering the mandapa hall. The sikhara has clusters of aṅga-sikharas round its body, each a replica of the main tower. The roof of the mandapa also reproduces a similar motif in the repetitions of rooflets in tiers all round.

In the arrangement of the interior, the Solāṇki temple displays notable features. The mandapa hall is definitely peristyler in character and richly carved pillars constitute an essential element in its composition. As in the elevation of the temple outside, the pillars are also divided into three main sections: a moulded base; an elegantly carved shaft further sub-
divided into decorative horizontal zones, and the top which is generally referred to as an 'attic portion' consisting of the capital with its entablature and other elements. In the earlier temples, the pillars are arranged along the sides of the mandapa hall, while in the later temples they are grouped octagonally in the centre of the hall, thus, dividing it into a central nave and lateral aisles, the latter sometimes having additional complements of pillars. The square hall projects on the outside, the projections being left open; that to the front is meant for entrance, while those on the two sides usually accommodate windows and alongside Kakshāsanas with leaning parapets. The done is supported on an octagonal frame of architraves over the pillars and rises in oversailing concentric courses, each course richly carved, terminating at the apex in a pendant of exquisite beauty. Every element of the composition has been masterly conceived so that the interior is as rich and effective as the external design of the temple. In external design, the Solāṇki temple has its compeers in other zones of the Nāgara style; but in interior arrangement the Solāṇki temple, or its parallel, the Rājpūt, is without any equal.\(^{48}\)
In Eastern India, there was a type of temple called the exotic type. The excavations at Paharpur in Bangladesh have laid bare the remains of a temple whose type is entirely unknown to Indian archaeology. Its huge structure 356' - 6" from north to south and 314' 3" from east to west occupies nearly the centre of the immense quadrangle forming the monastery, the famous Somapura of the old times. The grand plan consists of a huge square cross with angles of projection between the arms. The temple rose in general terraces, with a circumambulatory gallery, enclosed on the outer side by a parapet wall around the monument, in each of the two upper terraces. Access to the first and second terraces was obtained by the extensive staircase provided on the north. This apparently complex plan becomes very simple when the monument is examined from the top downwards. A hollow square pile in the centre, shooting high up above the terraces, provides the pivot round which the entire plan of this stupendous monument has been conceived. The walls of this lofty central unit form a sharp square and in order most probably to relieve this monotany, provision was made in the second upper terrace for a projection, consisting of a chamber
and an ante-room, on each face, leaving out a portion of the whole length of the square at either corner. This arrangement resulted in cruciform shape with one projecting angle between the arms of the cross. The circumambulatory passage with the parapet wall was made to run parallel to the outline of this plan. A similar rectangular projection on each side was also added on the first, i.e., the next lower terrace thus variegating the plan still more. The basement conformed to the alignment of the first terrace structure with the result that the angular projections in the plan of the first terrace and that of the basement were three each between the arms of the cross to which an additional projection was added by the staircase landing just in the middle of the northern arm. An enclosure wall, strictly conforming to the basement plan, with only a slight deviation near the main staircase, runs round the monument. "An earlier prototype of the Paharpur temple has been reported to have been discovered at Lauriya Nandangarh in north Bihar." But so far as can be gathered from the published records and reproductions the angles of the Nandangarh monument appear to be purely decorative and to have originated from a different plan.
The Paharpur monument is said to have its own distinctive characteristics and no exact parallel has so far been found in India. The existing basement of a later structure within the monastic quadrangle at Paharpur seems to be a close replica of the main temple. Here the plan is more perfect and symmetrical with the provision of approach-steps in all the directions, instead of in the north only as it is in the main temple.

The main fabric of the temple belongs to a single period of construction. But now the form of the superstructure, the method of roofing and other details are difficult to make out.

The temple at Paharpur is more or less similar in general to the 'Sarvatobhadra' type of temple as described in Indian texts on architecture. From the standpoint of elevation with a tiered roof of several stages surmounted by a curvilinear tower as the crowning superstructure, the Paharpur temple seems to have combined two distinctive features of two of the prominent types of Indian temple architecture, the 'Bhadra' and the 'Rekha' as they are called in Orissa and may be described as Bhadra-Rekha type of temple. From the representation of similar temples in the sculptures and
paintings, the type may be taken to have been characteristic of eastern India.\textsuperscript{51}

Pre-pala sculptures of Bengal are mainly Brāhmical in subject-matter and so Pāla Buddhist art had to begin on the basis of Buddhist sculpture of the Sāranāth School found in east Bengal.

The more important specimens of eastern Indian sculpture are all cult-images working more or less on the rules set by authors of the 'Dhyānas'. Nevertheless they maintain, in varying degrees in different regions and at different times, a classical dignity and serenity but at the same time their charm and sensuousness have a spell of allurement that is physical as well as spiritual. During the 9th-10th century, the form is not much thinned and superficial.

There is boldness of composition, more noticeable in the stone sculptures than in the bronzes. The end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century transform the vigour and strength of bodily form into one of gracefulness and elegance. A slender bodily type comes to be appreciated.
In the 12th century the slender body-type with formal treatment is retained but the modelling gets petrified. This period of art reveals the attitude of material exuberance that can be noticed in Sena Sculptures. Art is full of charm and grace. The central attention is on the human figure, in its full bloom of youth, radiant and vibrant and combining in itself both spiritual and physical suggestiveness. This sensuous suggestiveness of a really spiritual mood may be due to an inner experience derived from tantric inspirations.

The sculptures from Orissa indicate the flow of Gupta classical tide that persists with consistent vigour. A new vigour from the 10th century onward is unmistakable in its plastic expression which retains the balanced proportion of classical form but, at the same time, lacks the cultured refinement but produces instead sturdier physiognomical type which is held within firm lines. Typical Orissan sculptural art can best be viewed and studied at centres like Bhubanesvara, Puri, Konark etc. As S.Kramrisch states "Architecture in Orissa is but sculpture on a gigantic scale". But in the monumental structural temples of Orissa, the relationship between the sculptures and the temple body is altogether of a
different order. Medieval trends in Orissa do not make their appearance before the 11th century A.D. and when they appear, as in certain reliefs of the Lingarāja and Brahmesvara temples and also in certain reliefs now stored in Konārāja museum, they often do occur side by side, or even in the same relief side by side with figures that are inspired by classical tradition.

In the Bihar sculptures, there is boldness of composition. Figures are heavy during the 9th and 10th centuries, and the western part of Bengal shares this trend for sometime out of soft fleshiness, controlled by definite outlines. In isolated examples, this is controlled by a strict discipline to such an extent that flesh seems to be petrified. But mostly this vigour spreads out on the surface only.

As in Bihar, Bengal and Orissan sculptures, till the end of 12th century A.D., work on a wavering line sometimes working in the favour of a fleshy form which is frankly sensuous. On the other hand, it works in favour of an abstract form which is equally sensuous, not frankly but suggestively. Both the tendencies worked within the strict rigours of canonical tradition.
Gujarat has been the worst target of Muslim iconoclastic frenzy. Almost all the older temples have been destroyed. But from the ruins of temples and temple-cities and the adjoining territories, ruled over by Chalukyas from the 10th century A.D., we can form an idea of the rich architectural and sculptural achievements of the region from about the 11th to about the 17th century A.D.

The important centres known for their sculptural art are Siddhapura, Modhera, Girnar, Satrunjaya, Dabhoi etc. Part of western Rajputana including Chittor and Mount Abu also formed culturally, a part of Gujarat during this period.

Medieval features which are so much present in book-illustrations are not to be seen in the sculptures. The line, though sharp, is still flowing in uninterrupted manner reminding of the classical tradition, and maintains the balanced poise of the same tradition. But if we go deep towards the west, we witness that the line has been seized by certain amount of nervousness under the stress of which the curves tend to be angular and concave. Due to the nervous sharpness of line and pointed angularity of movements, the composition break-up
into parts. Verticals, horizontals and diagonals are spread out over the surface without caring much for the plastic context. In appearance the figures are still graceful and smoothly treated but without their conveying much feeling.

Even the ornaments tend more and more towards flatness and grow increasingly rigid as the figures themselves without any indication of integral relationship with the body.

Thus, in eastern and western Indian sculptures, the medieval features were becoming more and more conspicuous though in eastern India the development was slow and gradual while in western India, this trend was picking up and getting more popular.

Besides the sculptural art, the eastern and western regions of India developed another form of art which was called manuscript painting. Before, there was tradition of mural paintings only. But small scale paintings called miniature painting developed during these centuries from the 11th. Mural painting was not in demand; instead book-illustrations received warm response.
In eastern India, records of mural painting are found in Sitabhinji, situated in Keonjhar district, Orissa. There are a few rock-shelters in the locality, one of which is called Ravanchaya. The underside of this rock, which is clean cut, stands 22' above the ground and projects forward 15' like a half-spread umbrella. Out of an originally painted surface 25' x 10' all that remains now is an area of 17' x 10'.

The subject matter of these paintings is a royal procession with an inscription below, which is also painted, reading "Maharaja Sri Disa Bhanja", we do not hear of any Disa Bhanja of 4th century A.D. in the Bhanja Dynasty of Orissa. But from the history we know about two Dig-Bhanjas - "one the brother of Netri (Netta) Bhanja II of the Khinjali-Manḍala branch, and another Dig-Bhanja, who was the son of Kotta-Bhanja of the Khijjinga-Kotta branch. But these two Dig-Bhanjas are not earlier than the eighth or ninth century A.D.".

But in India, we do not find early records of the Jain mural painting. Though we find Jain murals of the late Chola period of 13th century at Tirumalai: the scenes from the life of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra painted in the 14th century in the Vardhamāna temple at
Tirupparuttikanram, and incidents on the life of the Tirthankaras painted during 7th century in another temple at Tirupparuttikanram etc., there is no evidence of Jain murals in the whole of western India during the period from 11th – 17th century A.D.

Thus, after analysing the socio-cultural history of Eastern and Western region of India from the 11th to the 18th century A.D., we find certain similarities and at the same time certain dissimilarities also.

How far these similarities and dissimilarities are reflected in the visual documents represented by the miniature paintings of these two geographical and as such important cultural pockets of medieval India and how far these could be applied to in terms of the entire historic perspective, is the main premise of the study that will follow. The study could be effectively carried out if we could get hold of the problem and the tools, viz., the critical apparatus the foremost of which is the identification all basic data in terms of objective specifications of the visual and other related materials. This is what is proposed to be done in the subsequent chapters.
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56 As discussed in the next chapter.