

## **Arts of India**

### **Dravidian Architect Cholas vs Pandyas**

South Indian style of temple architecture differs from the rest of India and specifically revolves around the four periods corresponding to the 4 principal kingdoms- Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas and Vijaynagar rulers.

- In the Southern Silpa and Agama Texts, Vimanas are classified in the following 3 categories-Nagra, Dravida and Vesara

#### Temple Architecture of the Pallavas

- Earliest examples of temples of the Dravidian style belonged to the Pallava period

There are two different sub styles of Pallava temple architecture:

i. Rock Cut(610-690 AD)

ii. Structural (600-900 AD)

- The rock cut temples at Mahabalipuram are the epitome of Pallava temple architecture.

- The Pallava temples are further categorised into excavated pillared halls/mandapas and monolithic shrines called rather

- 5 rathas were building by Narasimhavarman I in the period from 625 to 645 AD

- The rathas are named after the characters in Mahabharata-Draupadi, Arjuna, Bhima, Sahadeva and Dharmaraj

- The ratha of the latter is the most complete and largest in the series

#### Chola Temple Architecture

- Chola art was an extension of the Pallava era

- Cholas building several 100 temples, some of which were modest in size while others were massive with vimanas or gopuras

- Chola architecture is epitomised by the temple of Koranganatha aTrichinopoly constructed by Parantaka I (907-949 AD)

- Temple comprises pillared hall/mandapa with attached sanctuary/vimana
- Height of the shikara is around 50 feet while the mandapa is located at the height of 16 feet from the base
- Chola temple architecture reached its fullest glory at Thanjavur which was the capital established by Chola King Rajaraja I
- Tamil architecture saw its peak in the Brihadeshwara temple at Thanjavur, constructed around 1000 AD
- 55 m long structure of the temple has a 58 metres feet tall pyramidal tower/shikhara

## **Terracotta arts**

Terracotta Art in India has been flourishing since the times of **Indus Valley Civilisation**. The Terracotta Art is another form of **clay art** of the country that is generally brownish orange in colour. The colour is derived from dried up and baked clay and is also painted sometimes in similar fashion. Various excavations at **Mohenjodaro** and **Harappa** have unearthed several terracotta items in the form of different human and animal figures.

Terracotta figures also have a ritualistic aspect associated with it. This becomes evident from the fact that many terracotta figures of deities are used in a number of auspicious occasions. In fact terracotta art in India is considered mystical because it incorporates within the five vital elements like air, fire, earth, water and ether.

### **Terracotta art in States of India**

In a number of states in India, the terracotta figures have a lot of prominence. For instance the impressive Ayanaar horse from **Tamil Nadu** represents the largest terracotta sculpture ever made and is constructed from coiling and beating. The same techniques are used for making vessels. Although votive terracotta is made by members of the Hindu potter caste, the customer is often a member of the **Tribal community**. The relief plaques depicting images of Tribal deities are made in **Rajasthan** and the varied styles of horses and tigers recorded in **Gujarat** are also made for Tribal clientele.

**Madhya Pradesh** is represented by the highly embellished elephants offered in forest shrines and also by women's **wall decoration**. This involves using clay pigments and decorating techniques similar to **pottery** creation and modelling processes. In West Bengal the snake **goddess Manasa** is worshipped through a terracotta tree shrine constructed from multiple thrown and modelled parts. Another major form of terracotta in **West Bengal** finds its artistic channel in the **horses**. They are famous almost all over the country for their handsome looks.

In **Gujarat** and **Rajasthan** terracotta panels and storage jars painted in white are famous. In **Odisha** and Madhya Pradesh the roof tops with profuse terracotta works are also a part of the terracotta art. Besides,

the terracotta pottery of Madhya Pradesh is well known for their artistic excellence.

### **Different forms of Terracotta art**

Over the years, Terracotta art has flourished from mere decorative items to home utility products as well like lamps, utensils, bricks, tiles, etc. The art is known for its aesthetic appeal and eco-friendly nature. Humans have discovered the solution to cure mother earth by resorting to Terracotta art for basic necessity as well as decorative items.



Harappa Terracotta Figures

### **Terracotta Jewellery**

**Terracotta Jewellery** also is an important component of terracotta art in India. In the present age, terracotta jewellery has gained a lot of prominence even among the urban population of the country. From necklaces to earrings, **rings** and even bracelets are made of Terracotta in intricate designs and sometimes in vibrant colours.

### **Terracotta Pottery**

This is perhaps the most commonly used product of **Terracotta art**. Besides increasing the aesthetic appeal of the garden or home, Terracotta pots and planters are also a healthy means to promote greenery around.

### **Terracotta Crockery**

Terracotta art has expanded its genre to plates, cups, trays, spoons, teapots, and even bowls. These non-toxic items are safe for consuming foods and are also heat resistant and oven safe. Terracotta crockery also enhances the aesthetic appeal of the kitchen.

### **Terracotta Tiles**

Solid Terracotta tiles are used as flooring in eco-friendly homes. They come with intricate patterns on it. These non-toxic tiles make great interiors in modern homes.

### **Terracotta Decorative items**

From chandeliers to lamps and horses, Terracotta art has shown its caliber in making the home décor even more appealing. Terracotta diyas are often seen during **festivals in temples** and homes. Besides that, Terracotta vases, statues, etc. are also in huge demand.

It can be said that India has been the home land of terracotta and today because of the versatility of the art it has cut across all kinds of barriers. The art has become a part of almost of every Indian household in various forms.