

Q2. India's ancient sculpture leaves many clues to understand the social and economic status of women? Do you agree? Substantiate with the help of suitable examples.

Approach

Candidate is required to give a brief overview of architectural diversity across India and connect that with the knowledge it offers of that period. Making a comment on status of women with the help of examples answer can be concluded.

Introduction

An understanding of culture in its broadest sense is indispensable in comprehending the development processes of a society, culture is the quality of mind, life, and civilization. Our ancient monuments represent our culture and rich heritage. Also, they tell us a condition of society in ancient India and in a way status of a women.

Body

One of the earliest examples of sculpture of women is Mohenjo-Daro dancing girl where her pose portray confidence and self-contentment rather than being a timid product of suppression

Some of the earliest sculptures show women as yogini i.e. female master practitioner of yoga. Depiction of female as divine aspect related to mythology and spirituality.

In mauryan period worship of Yaksha and mother goddess was prominent. Yakshini figure of Didargunj reflects elegance and shows sensitivity towards human physique.

In ancient times primary social role of a women in reproductive qualities was highlighted in characters like "lajjagauri" and "dugdhadharini" but they were not reduced to reproductive functions only, she had equal access to resources

In ellora caves sculpture of shiva and parvati represents "Purush" and "prakriti" where she is seated on lap of Shiva and taking part in daily proceedings at shiva's court, this tells us that parvati is equally important when it comes to consultation on various matters.

Ardhanarishwara sculpture of elephanta caves represents highest ideal of conjugal attachment. This form of shiva is considered most sacred because he is incomplete without parvati.

Khajuraho complex of temples is yet another excellent example of sculptures representing women in different roles. For example on Kandariya laxmana temple we can see a women with a purse in hand purchasing stuff from market showcases economic independence and her ability to make choice.