

Since ancient times, Indian art and culture have prominent position all over the world. Art is the medium of human expression. Art reflects human mind and society. Artists divide art into two parts : (1) visual art (2) performing art. The visual art includes painting, sculpture and handicrafts. The performing art includes music, dance, musical instruments and drama. Art is a medium that evokes culture. Indian art has elements of globalism, unity in diversity and secularism in it. We will discuss in detail about one of the forms of fine arts in modern times i.e. painting.



Painting

From the beginning, nature and religion have been the centre of painting. Initially, the episodes depicted in the scriptures, Gods and Goddesses and animals and birds were the main subjects, but later on individuals and social customs also found a place in the pictures. Art education was imparted in universities like Takshashila and Nalanda.

Indian art and culture were almost forgotten during the British rule. There was no special institute for art education in Gujarat. Maharaja Pragmalji of Kutch, started an art school in Bhuj in 1877-78 AD. The 'Kala Bhavan' founded by Maharaja Sayajirao in Vadodara imparted art education, but its approach was more towards encouraging the art industry.

In 1951 AD Kalashala was established in Ahmedabad in Seth Chimanlal Nagindas Vidyalaya (Seth C. N. Vidyalaya) to start a course for teachers' training. The honor of being the first principal of this school goes to Rasiklal Parikh. DTC (Drawing Teacher Certificate) course started in this art school. It was transformed into Kala Mahavidyalaya in 1960 AD.

History of painting

The history of painting in India is as old as the Stone Age. Paintings have been found from the caves of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh dating back to 7000 BC. It is considered to be the first evidence of Indian painting. These paintings were painted on walls of caves with natural colours. Paintings from around 2000 BC have also been found in caves at Narasinhgarh in Maharashtra. Most of the paintings are found in caves, birch leaves, rocks, temples, monasteries. Such pictures have also been found in Buddhist texts.

The Gupta period is considered to be the best time of Indian painting. World famous paintings in the caves of Ajanta and Ellora were made during the Gupta period. Description of Jatak stories are woven in them. Among all the pictures, the pictures of Ajanta cave no. 1, 9 and 10 have become very famous. The Painting of Padmapani Buddha is one of them. Indian painting is spread from North to the South India. Such excellent paintings have also been found in Badami caves in Karnataka, Kanchipuram and Sittanavasal caves in Tamil Nadu. The walls of the temple of Brihadeshwara are decorated with the pictures of the Indian epics.

It developed during the pre-medieval Rajput period and the Mughal period. Mughal emperors like Babur, Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir greatly promoted painting. Jahangir established a painting gallery. The Bhakti movement also led to the development of painting.



Padmapani cave no.1
(Ajanta)





Goddess Saraswati

The British and the Indians developed a semi-western style of painting post 1750 AD. This style developed from Sheikh Ziauddin's bird study for Lady Impey and Ghulam Ali Khan's personal portraits for William Fraser and Colonel Skinner. Raja Ravivarma, the great painter of Travancore, can be considered as the top name in the field of painting. He has made excellent oil paintings on Indian mythology and social issues. The picture of Goddess Saraswati has become very famous.

The field of art developed greatly in the 19th century during renaissance in India. 'Sir J. J. School of Art' was established in 1858 AD in Mumbai while 'KalaBhavan' (now known as Faculty of Fine Arts) was established in Vadodara in 1890 AD. Masterpieces of art were created in 'Shantiniketan', which was established in 1901 AD. In 1948 AD, under the leadership of Francis Newton Souza, S. H. Raza and S. K. Bakre, Progressive Artists Group was founded. This group presented strong modern painting in India.

In 1950 AD, Photo galleries were established in Kolkata and Mumbai. Even in Chennai, K.C. S. Paniker and Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury established the Madras School of Art. The 'National Gallery of Modern Art' has an important place in independent India for the development of art. It contains a large collection of modern Indian paintings.

Method

The Indian style of painting mainly includes cave painting. These include paintings by primitive people and paintings of caves like Ajanta-Ellora till the 9th century. The second style involves rock painting in which the tradition of painting on rocks are found. Some ancient painting styles include Hindu, Buddhist and Jain paintings. Religion is at the centre of this painting style and the paintings are decorated on the walls of the monasteries. The scriptures of various religions are at the centre of these paintings.

In some parts of India, murals, as well as rangoli or decorative art made in the courtyard or on the floor during festivals, are also important paintings. A miniature style of painting was also developed to complement the manuscripts of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. They are seen in manuscripts and texts. Apart from this, textile painting style has also developed by making impressions of pictures on fabrics.

In modern times oil painting, spray painting as well as canvas painting have also developed with multicolor dimensions.

Styles of Painting

Painting style changed with the passage of time in India. Different dynasties are associated with these styles. Indian painting can be understood from its time and place. We will discuss some of the important painting styles :

(1) Pal style : Under the patronage of Pal kings, the painting style extending to Bengal, Bihar, Nepal and Tibet is known as Pal style. The main subject of this painting style has been the Mahayana Buddhist sect. It has pictures of Jataka stories and Bodhisattvas. Some Hindu manuscripts with pictures of this style have also been found. These picture books are of miniature type.

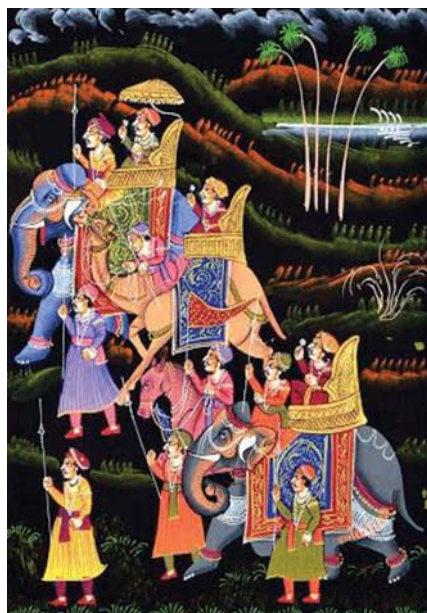


Paintings of Pal style

(2) Jain style : This style developed in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa regions from the 12th century. They are miniature paintings drawn on palm leaves and manuscripts. Jainism has been at the centre of these paintings. Miniatures of this style have been included in Kalpasutra, Kalkacharya Katha, Kathasaritsagar etc. texts of Jainism. As Jain style painting were specifically found in Gujarat, they are also called ‘Gujarat style’.



Jain style paintings



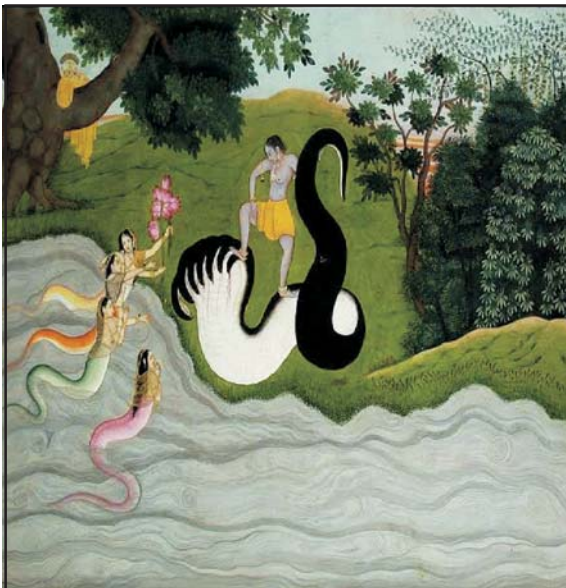
Rajput style painting

(3) Rajput style : This style was famous in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh from 10th to 16th century under the patronage of Rajput kings. It includes miniatures and murals. Since the kings were the patrons to the traditional painters, the life of the Rajput kings, their customs, attire and festivals have been at the centre of the Rajput painting style. Radhakrishna, Krishnabhakti, Raslila and the folk life of Rajasthan have been at its centre. It is also known as Rajasthan style as it has developed in Bundi, Kishangarh, Bikaner and Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

(4) Mughal style : The Mughal emperors in India were great lovers of painting. Emperors from Babur to Shah Jahan gave great impetus to painting. The Mughal style of painting was an innovative style that came into being through a combination of Indian and Iranian styles. Biographies and portraits began during Akbar's time. Pictures of Baburnama were painted during his time. However, the Mughal style reached its peak during the time of Jahangir. His court had famous painters like Mansoor and Bishandas. During this period, paintings were made of animals and birds, natural scenes, courts, wars, hunting and animal fights. Mughal painting was a court art. Hence the royal elegance was at its centre.



Painting of Mughal style



Painting of Kangra style

(5) Kangra style : Kangra style is also a prominent aspect of Indian painting style. This style was developed by Rajasthan and Mughal painters in the Himalayan mountainous region. Kangra, Kullu, Garhwal, Chamba and Mandi were its main centres. Molaram was a great painter of this genre. The main theme of this style is Lord Krishna and devotion towards Krishna, in addition to the beauty of the Himalaya.

(6) Other painting styles : In addition to the above styles, Mithila painting style of Bihar, (Madhubani painting style), Kalamkari painting style of Andhra Pradesh, Patt painting style of Orissa, Phad painting style of Rajasthan,

Gond painting style of the Santhal tribe, Warli painting of Maharashtra tribes, Pithora painting of Gujarat and Kalighat painting of Bengal are included among Indian painting styles.

Notable Painters

Raja Ravivarma and Rabindranath Tagore are among the renowned painters of India.

Among the renowned painters of Gujarat, Kalaguru Shri Ravi Shankar M. Raval and Rameshbhai Pandya's name can be considered as the prominent ones. In addition to all these painters, many other well-known and anonymous painters have enhanced India's fame through their contributions in the field of painting.



Painting of Pithora style

Know This

- Among the renowned painters of India, we have Nandlal Bose, Jaimini Roy, Devi Prasad Roy Chaudhary, Ms. Amrita Shergill, M. H. Bendre, Jagannath Ahiwasi, Anjali Ila Menon etc.
- Among the renowned painters of Gujarat, we have Rameshbhai Pandya, Hakubhai Shah, Piraji Sagara, C. D. Mistry, Vrindavan Solanki, Shyavaksh Chavda, Tayyab Mehta, Himmat Shah, Bhupen Khakhar, Natu Parikh, Rasiklal Parikh, Somalal Shah, Khodidas Parmar, H. L. Khatri etc.

Kalaguru Ravi Shankar Raval

Ravi Shankar Rawal got his art education in Mumbai and made Ahmedabad his workplace and guided Gujarat in the direction of painting. He presented his painting 'Bilvamangal' at the Bombay Art Society's annual art exhibition. He was the first Gujarati artist to present a painting in the exhibition of this society. His painting won a gold medal. The painting was done in Rajput style in flat colours.

In 1924 AD, Ravi Shankar Rawal started a monthly called 'Kumar'. People were introduced to paintings and artists through Kumar. He imparted art culture in Gujarat and inculcated interest and awareness towards art. He established Gujarat Kala Sangh and gave free training for painting to the youth.

Gandhiji and Shankarlal Banker were tried for treason on March 12, 1922 in a court in Ahmedabad (now circuit house in Shahibaug). Ravishankar Rawal saw this historical event and painted it.



Painter : Shri Ravi Shankar Raval

A sketch made in the court on the occasion when the British government prosecuted Gandhiji at the circuit house in Ahmedabad in 1922 AD

We will study in detail about Raja Ravivarma, Rabindranath Tagore and Abanindranath Tagore.



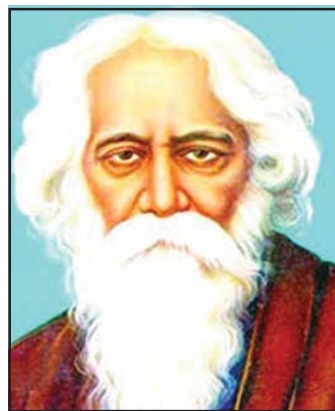
(1) Raja Ravivarma (1848-1906 AD) : Ravivarma, who was born in the Kilimannur village of Kerala, was known as Raja Ravivarma as he was a member of the royal family. In his time, the field of art was highly influenced by western art. Ravivarma developed his distinctive style by receiving art education and guidance from Shri Ramaswami Naidu, Theodore Jensen and European guest painters from the royal family. His paintings are realistic. His achievement in creating portraits was unique. In his paintings, technique was more important than emotions. He was highly praised for his oil paintings focused on the occasions and characters depicted in mythological scriptures and Sanskrit literature. His paintings include Virat Darbar, Ganga-Avataran, Urvashi, Shakuntala, Portrait of Lady etc.



Raja Ravivarma

Ravivarma started a lithography printing press in Ghatkopar, Mumbai in 1894 AD. The pictures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses printed in this press could be bought by the common people due to its low (normal) price. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Vadodara and royalty of Bhavnagar invited Raja Ravivarma to make some mythological paintings and paintings of the royal family. His paintings are preserved in the Trivendrum Museum, the Fatehsinharao Art Gallery in Vadodara and the Darbar in Bhavnagar. He was honored by the British government with the title of ‘Kaiser-e-Hind’. He was the king of art and invaluable heritage of the country.

(2) Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941 AD) : Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Prize-winner poet for the epic “Gitanjali”, was also a gifted painter. He made Shantiniketan a confluence of literature, music, dance, painting etc. He developed his own distinctive style of painting free from the influence of traditional Indian art and Western art, that is why he is known as the Bhishma Pitamah of modern Indian painting. He has created more than 2000 paintings. His paintings show flow in lines, freshness in colors and various emotions in depiction. Rabindranath Tagore’s paintings are archived in Shantiniketan, Rabindra Bhawan and the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi.



Rabindranath Tagore

Although Rabindranath did not receive any systematic training in painting,



his keen sensitivity and intuition gave impetus to his creative expression.

(3) Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1941 AD) : Born in Bengal, Abanindranath Tagore, studied the Indian, Mughal, Tanjore, Chinese and Japanese painting style in detail. Taking guidance from western painters, he created a new style of painting and gave a new direction to Indian painting. His style reflects the Indian environment and sentimentality. His paintings, drawn in the Japanese wash method, show the depth of the atmosphere and the eloquence of the characters. He founded the ‘Bengal School of Art’ to promote painting. The style of painting that existed at that time became famous as the ‘Bengal School of Art’.



Painting of Bharat Mata by Abanindranath Tagore

Exercise

1. Write the answers of the following questions in one sentence :

- (1) Who established 'Kalabhavan' in Vadodara ?
- (2) Where did the Pal painting style spread ?
- (3) Who among the Mughal emperors promoted painting ?
- (4) Which organization was established by Abanindranath to promote painting ?
- (5) Which style of paintings have been found in Gujarat ?

2. Write a short note :

- (1) Raja Ravivarma (2) Rajput style (3) Kangra style

3. Find the correct option from the following options and write the correct answer :

- (1) Which of the following caves would Jalpa visit during her tour of Tamil Nadu ?
(A) Caves of Sittanavasal (B) Caves of Badami
(C) Caves of Ajanta (D) Caves of Bhimbetka
- (2) In which of the following scriptures would you see Jain style paintings ?
(A) Abhidhamma Pittak (B) Suttapittak
(C) Anguttarnikaya (D) Kathasaritsagar
- (3) In a painting exhibition, Hetansh bought a painting of a painter of Gujarat. Which painter's painting would he have bought ?
(A) Abanindranath Tagore (B) Piraji Sagar
(C) Jamini Roy (D) Anjali Menon
- (4) You get confused when you see a painting. Looking at that picture you can not decide whether it is Rajput style or Kangra style. So what might be the subject of the painting ?
(A) Rajasthani folk dance (B) The natural beauty of the Himalayas
(C) Krishnabhakti (D) Scenes of war

4. Match the following :

A

- (1) Jahangir
- (2) Pal style
- (3) Mughal style
- (4) Devi Prasad Roy Chaudhary
- (5) Rabindranath Tagore

B

- (A) Style developed in Bundi, Kishangarh, Bikaner
- (B) Establishment of Madras School of Art
- (C) Bhishma Pitamah of painting
- (D) Jataka stories and pictures of Bodhisattvas
- (E) Paintings of animals-birds and animal fights
- (F) Establishment of a gallery

Special Questions

- (1) Explain the similarities and differences between Kangra style and Rajput style of painting.
- (2) What could be the main theme of Mughal style paintings ? Why ?
- (3) Why can it be assumed that the history of painting began with cave paintings ?

