



Distance Learning Programme

UPSC Prelims

Art & Culture





drishti

ART & CULTURE

641, First Floor, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, New Delhi-110009

Contact No.: 011-47532596, 8448485520

Web : www.drishtiiias.com

E-mail : dlpsupport@groupdrishti.com

For DLP, Current Affairs Magazine & Test Series related regular updates, follow us on



www.facebook.com/drishtithevisionfoundation



www.twitter.com/drishtiiias

CONTENTS

1. Indian Architecture	1-36
2. Indian Paintings	37-61
3. Indian Crafts	62-69
4. Sculptures	70-82
5. Indian Music	83-98
6. Dances of India	99-116
7. Martial Arts in India	117-121
8. Theatre and Puppetry	122-133
9. Language & Literature	134-149
10. Philosophical Systems	150-170
11. Bhakti & Sufi Movements	171-176
12. Development of Science in India	177-181
13. Fairs, Festivals & Calendars	182-201
14. Laws, Institutions & Awards	202-208
15. UNESCO & India	209-214
Previous Years' UPSC Questions (Solved)	215-223

INDIAN PAINTINGS

Painting is one of the most delicate forms of art giving expression to human thoughts and feelings through the media of line and colour. Many thousands of years before the dawn of history, when man was only a cave dweller, he painted his rock shelters to satisfy his aesthetic sensitivity and creative urges.

Among Indians, the love of colour and design is so deeply ingrained that they created paintings and drawings even during the earliest periods of history for which we have no direct evidence.

Prehistoric Paintings

Prehistory can be defined as events that occurred before the existence of written records in a given culture or society. Excavation at these places brought to light old tools, pottery, habitats, bones of ancient human beings and animals, and drawings on the walls of caves. By bringing together the information deduced from these objects and the cave drawings, scholars have constructed fairly accurate knowledge about what happened and how people lived in prehistoric times. Painting and drawing were the oldest art forms practised by human beings to express themselves, using the cave walls as their canvas.

The pre-historic period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age. Prehistoric paintings have been found in many parts of the world. We do not really know if Lower Palaeolithic people ever produced any art objects. But by the Upper Palaeolithic times we see a proliferation of artistic activities. The subjects of their drawings were human figures, human activities, geometric designs and symbols. In India, the earliest paintings have been reported from the Upper Palaeolithic times.

It is interesting to know that the first discovery of rock paintings was made in India in 1867–68 by an archaeologist, Archibold Carlleyle. Remnants of rock paintings have been found on the walls of the caves situated in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Bihar.

- **Uttarakhand:** The paintings in Uttarakhand can be divided into three categories: man, animal and geometric patterns in white, black and red ochre. Humans are represented in stick-like forms. One of the interesting scenes depicted here is of hand-linked dancing human figures.
- **Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh:** The granite rocks of these two regions provided suitable canvases to the Neolithic man for his paintings. There are several such sites, but most famous among them are Kupgallu, Piklihal and Tekkalkota.
- **Madhya Pradesh:** Richest paintings are reported from the Vindhya ranges of Madhya Pradesh. These hill ranges are full of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic remains.

Among these, the largest and most spectacular rock-shelter is located in the Vindhya hills at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh.

The caves of Bhimbetka were discovered in 1957–58 by V. S. Wakankar.



Fig: Rock Painting Bhimbetka

The themes of the paintings found here are of great variety. These include hunting, dancing, music, horse and elephant riders, animal fighting, honey collection, decoration of bodies, and other household scenes.

Human depictions portray matchstick-like male figures while female figures were given fuller forms. Men wore their hair loose while women kept their's braided. Hand, fist and fingerprints similar to those found on houses in contemporary times are also found.

BOOSTER

- The artists of Bhimbetka used many colours, including various shades of white, yellow, orange, red ochre, purple, brown, green and black. But white and red were their favourite colours. The paints were made by grinding various rocks and minerals.
- Red colour from haematite (known as geru in India). The green came from a green variety of a stone called chalcedony. White might have been made out of limestone.
- Brushes were made of plant fibre.
- These colours have survived thousands of years of adverse weather conditions. It is believed that the colours have remained intact because of the chemical reaction of the oxide present on the surface of the rocks.

Upper Palaeolithic Period Paintings

- The paintings of the Upper Palaeolithic phase are linear representations
- The paintings are, generally, in green and dark red.
- Huge animal figures, such as bison, elephants, tigers, rhinos and boars besides stick-like human figures are mainly depicted in paintings.
- Mostly they are filled with geometric patterns.

Mesolithic Period

- The largest numbers of paintings belong to this period.
- During this period the themes are diverse but the paintings are smaller in size.
- Hunting scenes predominate in the paintings. The hunting scenes depict people hunting in groups, armed with barbed spears, pointed sticks, arrows and bows.



- The Mesolithic artists loved to paint animals.
- In some pictures, animals are chasing men. In others, they are being chased and hunted by men.
- Though the animals were painted in a naturalistic style, humans were depicted only in a stylistic manner.
- Women are painted both in the nude and clothed.
- The young and the old equally find place in these paintings.
- Children are painted running, jumping and playing. Community dances provide a common theme.

Chalcolithic Period

- The paintings of this period reveal the association, contact, and mutual exchange of requirements of the cave dwellers of this area with settled agricultural communities.
- Many a time Chalcolithic ceramics and rock paintings bear common motifs, e.g., cross-hatched squares, lattices.
- Pottery and metal tools are also shown.

Odisha Rock (Rock Shelter) Paintings

BOOSTER

The paintings ranging from small geometrical and floral patterns to big animal motifs and human figures are shown hunting, fighting, dancing and doing domestic chores.

- Most paintings on the walls follow a sequential, horizontal pattern. The colours used are red extracted from iron, brown from copper and white from lime compounds.
- This painting carries the reminiscence of Ajanta murals.
- Splendid murals adorn the inside of the Jagannath Temple, the Buddha Vijay painting in the jagamohana of the Lakshmi Temple and the Kanchi Vijay in the jagamohana of the Jagannath temple.

Contribution of Prehistoric Man to Painting

The paintings, though from the remote past, do not lack pictorial quality. Despite the various limitations such as acute working conditions, inadequate tools, materials, etc., there is a charm of simple rendering of scenes of the environment in which the artists lived. The men shown in them appear adventurous and rejoicing in their lives. The animals are shown more youthful and majestic than perhaps they actually were. Both, proportion and tonal effect have been realistically maintained in them. The primitive artists seem to possess an intrinsic passion for storytelling. These pictures depict, in a dramatic way, both men and animals engaged in the struggle for survival.

These prehistoric paintings help us to understand about early human beings, their lifestyle, their food habits, their daily activities and, above all, they help us understand their mind—the way they thought. The prehistoric period remains a great witness to the evolution of human civilisation, through the numerous rock weapons, tools, ceramics and bones. More than anything else, the rock paintings are the greatest wealth the primitive human beings of this period left behind.

Indian Painting Principles: Shadangas

India of the 1st century BCE had seen the evolution of the ‘Shadanga’ or the Six Limbs of painting, which are considered as the prime principles of the art even today. So strong were these principles, that they have found a place even in Vatsyayana’s Kamasutra. These limbs were actually six different points which emphasized what all artists needed to infuse in their artworks to achieve greater effectiveness and appeal. The Six Limbs are:

*“Roopabhedah pramanani bhava-lavanya-yojanam |
Sadrishyam varnakabhangam iti chitram shadakam | |”*

These ‘Six Limbs’ have been translated as follows:

- **Rupabheda:** The knowledge of appearances.
- **Pramanam:** Correct perception, measure and structure.
- **Bhava:** Action of feelings on forms.
- **Lavanya Yojanam:** Infusion of grace and artistic representation.
- **Sadrishyam:** Similitude.
- **Varnikabhanga:** Artistic manner of using the brush and colours.

The subsequent development of painting by the Buddhists indicates that these ‘Six Limbs’ were put into practice by Indian artists, and are the basic principles on which their art was founded.

Mural Painting

Indian Mural Paintings are paintings made on the walls of caves and palaces. The earliest evidence of the murals is the beautiful frescoes painted on the caves of Ajanta and Ellora, the Bagh caves and Sittanvasal cave. In the old scripts and literature, there were many evidences of mural paintings.

According to Vinaya Pitaka, the noted courtesan of Vaishali – Amrapali employed painters to paint the kings, traders and merchants of that time on the walls of her palace.

Technique

The technique and process of making Indian wall paintings has been discussed in the Vishnudharmotaram, a Sanskrit text of the 5th/6th century CE. The process of these paintings appears to have been the same in all the early examples that have survived with an only exception in the Rajarajeshwara temple at Tanjore which is supposed to be done in a true fresco method over the surface of the rock.

- Most of the colours were locally available.
- Brushes were made up from the hair of animals, such as goat, camel, mongoose, etc.
- The ground was coated with an exceedingly thin layer of lime plaster over which paintings were drawn in water colours.
- In true fresco method the paintings are done when the surface wall is still wet, so that the pigments go deep inside the wall surface.
- The other method of painting which was followed in most of the cases of Indian painting is known as tempora. It is a method of painting on the lime plastered surface which has been allowed to dry first and then drenched with fresh lime water. On the surface, thus obtained the artist proceeded to sketch.

- The principal colours in use were red ochre, vivid red (vermilion), yellow ochre, indigo blue, lapis lazuli, lamp black (Kajjal), chalk white, terraverte and green.

BOOSTER

What is a Mural?

A mural is any piece of artwork that is painted or applied directly on a wall. More broadly, mural art also appears on ceilings or any other large permanent surface. Mural paintings usually have the distinguishing characteristic of having the architectural elements of the space they are painted on being harmoniously incorporated into the picture.

There are many techniques used for mural painting, of which the fresco is just one. A mural, therefore is a general term for a wall painting, whilst a fresco is a specific term.

Types of Fresco

There are three main types of fresco technique:

- Buon fresco, the most common fresco method, involves the use of pigments mixed with water (without a binding agent) on a thin layer of wet, fresh, lime mortar or plaster.
- By contrast, secco painting is done on dry plaster and therefore requires a binding medium, (eg. egg tempera, glue or oil) to attach the pigment to the wall.
- Mezzo-fresco involves painting onto almost but not quite dry so that the pigment only penetrates slightly into the plaster.

Mural Paintings at Different Locations**Ajanta Caves**

The world famous paintings at Ajanta fall into two broad phases. The earliest is noticed in the form of fragmentary specimens in cave nos. 9 & 10, which are datable to second century BCE. The headgear and other ornaments of the images in these paintings resemble the sculpture of Sanchi and Bharhut.

The second phase of paintings started around 5th-6th centuries CE. and continued for the next two centuries. The specimen of these exemplary paintings of Vakataka period could be noticed in cave nos. 1, 2, 16 and 17. The main theme of the paintings is the depiction of various Jataka stories, different incidents associated with the life of Buddha, and the contemporary events and social life also. The ceiling decoration invariably consists of decorative patterns, geometrical as well as floral.

The paintings were executed after an elaborate preparation of the rock surface initially. The rock surface was left with chisel marks and grooves so that the layer applied over it can be held in an effective manner. The colours and shades utilised also vary from red and yellow ochre and terra verte to lime, kaolin, gypsum, lamp black and lapis lazuli. The chief binding material used here was glue. The paintings at Ajanta are not true frescoes as they are painted with the aid of a binding agent, whereas in fresco the paintings are executed while the lime wash is still wet which, thereby acts as an intrinsic binding agent.



Fig: Ajanta Mural on Vaults

- Centrality is one of the main features so that attention is at once drawn to the most important person in each scene.
- The painters of Ajanta had realised the true glory of the Buddha, the story of whose life was employed here by them as a motif to explain the eternal pattern of human life.
- The earliest paintings at Ajanta are in cave No. 9 and 10 of which the only surviving one is a group on the left wall of cave 10.
- Another surviving painting at Ajanta, the enormously long continuous composition of Shaddanta Jataka along the right wall of the same cave (cave No.10) belong to the 1st century CE.
- A beautiful example of this period is the painting which illustrates a scene of Jataka and commonly called 'the dying princess' in cave No. 16 painted in the early part of the 5th century CE. It is one of the most remarkable paintings of Ajanta as the movement of the line is sure and firm. This adaptation of line is the chief character of all oriental paintings and one of the greatest achievements of the Ajanta artists. Emotion and pathos are expressed here by the controlled turn and poise of the body and the eloquent gestures of the hands.
- The scenes of Mahajanaka Jataka in cave No.1 are the best surviving examples of Ajanta paintings belonging to 6th-7th century CE.
- The painting of Bodhisatva Padmapani from cave 1 is one of the masterpieces of Ajanta. Painting executed in the late 6th century CE.

Ellora Caves

- Wall-paintings at Ellora, are of great importance and sanctity.
- A number of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples were excavated between the 8th and 10th centuries CE. from the living rocks. The most impressive of these is the Kailashnath temple. There are several fragments of painting on the ceiling of the different parts of this temple and on the walls of some associated Jain cave temple.
- The composition of the paintings at Ellora is in rectangular panels with thick borders. They have thus been conceived within the given limits of frames that hold the paintings. The space, in the sense of Ajanta, therefore, does not exist at Ellora.

So far as the style is concerned, Ellora painting is a departure from the classical norm of Ajanta paintings. Of course the classical tradition of modelling of the mass and rounded soft outline as well as the illusion of the coming forward from the depth is not altogether ignored. But the most important characteristic features of Ellora painting are the sharp twist of the head, painted angular bents of the arms, the concave curve of the close limbs, the sharp projected nose and the long drawn open eyes, which can very well be considered as the medieval character of Indian paintings. It is perhaps a product of the transitional period.



Fig: Jain Ellora Caves Painting

Rangmahal of Chamba Palace

The wall paintings, belonging to the Kangra School, that adorn Rang Mahal of the Chamba palace in Himachal Pradesh are splendid and represent one of the most extensive hill collections. The paintings follow the stories of Lord Krishna.

Bagh Caves

- The paintings from Bagh caves in Madhya Pradesh correspond to those paintings of Ajanta in cave no. 1 and 2.
- Stylistically both belong to the same form, but Bagh figures are more tightly modelled, and are stronger in outline.
- They are more earthly and human than those at Ajanta.
- These were executed in tempera.
- These paintings are materialistic rather than spiritualistic.
- Unfortunately, their condition is now such that they can only be appreciated at the site.



Fig: Bagh Cave Painting

Badami Caves

- The earliest Brahmanical paintings so far known, are the fragments found in Badami caves, in cave no. 3 belonging to 6th century CE.
- The Chalukyan king, Mangalesha, younger son of Pulakeshin I, patronized the excavation of Badami caves.
- The so called Siva and Parvati is found somewhat well preserved.
- Though the technique follows that of Ajanta and Bagh, the modelling is much more sensitive in texture and expression and the outline is soft and elastic.
- The mural in cave no. 4, dedicated to Adinatha Thirthankara, depicts Jain saints relinquishing the world for the attainment of knowledge, is truly uplifting.

Sittannavasal

- The paintings of Sittannavasal are intimately connected with Jain themes, but enjoy the same norm and technique as that of Ajanta.
- The technique employed is what is known as fresco-secco, that is, the painting is done on a dry wall.
- The contours of these paintings are firmly drawn dark on a light red ground.
- On the ceiling of the Verandah is painted
- A large decorative scene of great beauty, a lotus pool with birds, elephants, buffaloes and a young man plucking flowers.

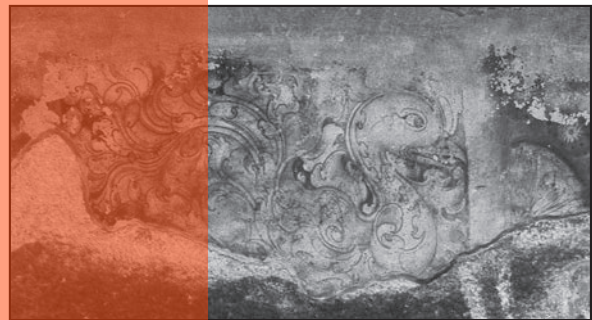


Fig: Sittannavasal Paintngs

Vijayanagara Murals

- The paintings at Tiruparakunram, near Trichy, done in the 14th century represents the early phase of the Vijayanagara style.