2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- understand clearly the miniature painting;
- explain the different types in miniature painting;
- discuss about different elements, techniques and themes in miniature painting;
- describe the different schools of Indian miniature paintings.

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO MINIATURE PAINTING

In the previous unit we have learnt the development of mural painting in India. Now we will know about another important class of painting known as miniature painting. The miniature schools of painting flourished during medieval period. Compare to the mural painting the miniature painting is small in size and scale. It can be transported from place to place. They can be framed and hung on the wall or kept on the table. They depict stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Devi Mahatmaya (stories of Kali mata), events like hunting, festival, household, scenes showing seasons, rajas, court. They are very expressive and appear always fresh.

During medieval period from 10th century to 17th century we come across with the Illustrated Manuscript Painting and Miniature Painting. In Buddhist religious texts like Prajnaparamita colourful pictures were used to explain the contents, they are known as Pala Illustrated Manuscript. In the same way Jain religious texts like Kalpasutra, Kalkacharyakatha and Dhavala were also illustrated and they are known as Jain Illustrated Manuscript Paintings. Later the Hindu texts like Devimahatmya, Bhagavatgita, Gitagovinda and several others were illustrated with beautiful pictures.
This helped people to understand the religious principles in a better way. Followed with this development we have glorious phase of Miniature Painting Schools.

Most of the famous museums in the world have the collections of Indian miniature paintings. They are in great demand. They were created on specific themes. So they are always seen in numbers known as series, for example portraits of kings, queens, nobles, and family, *Ragamala* series, *Akbarnama* series, *Baramasa* series (depicting 12 months) and such others.

### 2.2 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

The miniature paintings have their origin in the Illustrated Manuscript Painting tradition. During the 10-13 centuries the mural paintings were not considered as part of temple structure because of high importance to sculptures in the temples. But palaces and mansions must have been decorated with paintings. In the western India commissioning of the manuscript painting was considered as sacred deed. After this phase the paintings in miniature form were done on wood and cloth. Later with the introduction of hand made paper during Mughal period miniature painting were done on the paper in large numbers. Each region came out with miniature painting tradition of its own. Thus we have four regions, such as Mughal school in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Pahari school from hill states of north India, Rajasthani School from the western region and Deccani school from Deccan plateau. All these have sub-schools recognised as courts of princely states. We will study them in detail under the heading Major Schools of Miniature Painting.

### 2.3 TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

The technique of Miniature painting is minute and delicate. The colours were earthly and concrete, thick. Gold and silver foil or liquid was used to bring rich look to paintings. Brushes were very important for the artists. Depending on the delicacy of the work, the artists created their own brushes. They painted on cloth, bark of the tree, handmade paper or board. We get to see large number paintings on handmade paper.

Like mural painters, the miniature painting artists used natural pigments for colours and also followed a procedure for painting. First they cut Basati paper according to the size required. Then they carefully burnish the surface of the paper. On the treated paper they made preliminary drawing in red ink of the theme they want to paint. After corrections the drawing is restated in black which is the final sketch or drawing. Then the sheet was coated with a thin wash of white or other light colour pigment. On this surface, with powdered colours mixed in vegetable resin as binding the actual miniature human figures, motifs, animals, landscape, structures was painted. Final touches were given with delicate outlines of black or the darker shades, shading is done very delicately, and gold or silver is placed in a minute manner. Then the complete miniature was burnished again. Enough care was taken to handle and cover the painting. They used soft silk cloth or butter paper to cover the painting.

### 2.4 THEMES

The miniature paintings are known for varied and interesting themes. They were like personal paintings. So they show the interests of the persons who commissioned the pictures. Royal portraits are found in large number. The stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata are painted in every school. The stories of the childhood of Krishna known as *Bhagavata* and stories on Devi in *Devi Mahatmya*, the incarnations of Mahavishnu in Dasavatara are painted. The poet Jayadeva composed *Gitagovinda*,...
the story of Radha and Krishna. This was a very favourite theme of all the painters in all the four miniature schools.

The court scenes of emperors like Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir and Shahajahan, and hunting scenes, procession and festival scenes are beautifully painted by Rajasthani and Mughal artists. The Mughal artists painted the life stories of their emperors in Babarnama, Akbarnama, Humayunnama and Jahangirnama. They also painted animal studies, bird studies and flower studies. In Ragamala paintings they painted in the name of different ragas and depicted their features. In the Nayika paintings the poems of Keshavadasa were painted. The Pahari painters painted beautiful landscapes, seasons. The Rajasthani painters depicted the heroic stories of their prince and princess.

2.5 MAJOR SCHOOLS OF MINIATURE PAINTING

Now we will study about the four major schools in detail. This will cover the region, the patrons, the themes, the sub-schools and such other information of each of the major school. Though they have emerged in different places they have some common features such as the size, certain themes, the colours used, and the format in which they painted.

2.5.1 Rajasthani School of Miniature Painting

The ancient Indian tradition of painting survived in a modified form in and around Rajasthan. This tradition has history from 15-19th century. Rajasthan was divided into many princely states and each one of them ruled independently. They have shown their taste by patronising the art of painting. Early paintings come from Malwa, Jaunpur and Mewar. The different court style in miniature school is known as ‘kalam’.

i) Mewar Kalam: Under Rana Uday Singh and Rana Pratap Mewar court produced heroic paintings in original Rajasthani style. When Rana Amar Singh accepted Mughal supremacy the paintings from Udaipur and Jaipur courts were influenced by Mughal school. The themes were taken from Hindu epics and texts. The Mewar Ragamala series is very powerful. Ragini Vasanta, Ragini Todi, Ragini Hindola are the masterpieces. In portraits, shading and costumes were in Mughal style. The whole atmosphere became polished in the manner of Agra Kalam.

The most striking features of Mewar kalam is the use of dark colours, intensity of colours is high, the space in the painting is divided into compartments or bands where different scenes of the story is pasteurised.

ii) Bundi Kalam: Bundi, a princely state located near Mewar the splendour of plant life painted in detail. The Hindu and Mughal elements are beautifully blended in this style. The local folk style finds great place in these paintings. A superb work is the ‘Ladies in the Garden’ depict the pleasure scene of princess reminds the paintings of Ladies sports of Jeanie’s time. Vivid colours and a good deal of gold are used in Bundi paintings.

iii) Kotah Kalam: Under Raja Umed Singh matured style in Rajasthani Painting developed in the princely state of Kotah. There is a great impact of Mughal style on these paintings. The important Kotah pictures are mainly portraits of princess and the hunting scenes. The thick vegetation of forest is treated in greater detail in these paintings along with tigers and boars in realistic manner.

iv) Bikaner Kalam: Bikaner rulers were very close to Mughal emperors. They patronised Mughal painters and they have created many pictures of Bikaner court scenes, portraits and some social events. Rukn-ud-Din is the famous painter of
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v) **Jodhpur Kalam**: As in other Rajasthani states the Mughal-Rajput synthesis was seen in Jodhpur also. The pomp and splendour seen in the paintings of this style is drawn from Mughal school. But the pride and heroic expression are originally Rajasthani. Direct colours and strength in the figurative drawings are the salient features of Jodhpur style.

vi) **Kishangarh Kalam**: Kishangarh retained the Hindu spirit in the paintings. It was a small but beautiful princely state. Under Raja Sawant Singh the series of painting done on Radha and Krishna in great devotion. These paintings are mostly the work of the talented artist Nihal Chand. The models for Krishna was Maharaja Sawant Singh himself and for Radha his beloved Bani Thani. The elegant female forms with lovely eyes, sharp nose and arched lips brought a new kind of beauty into Rajasthani paintings. Maturity in shading and lining is the striking features of the Kishangarh miniature paintings.

vii) **Jaipur Kalam**: Jaipur was known as Amber in early times. Emperor Akbar married princess Jadha Bai from the royal family of Amber. Her brother Raja Mansingh was an important general of Akbar’s court. The life-size mural paintings are seen even now in several palaces here. The artists followed Mughal style but painted the story of Radha Krishna. Many portraits were created in typical Mughal style. The _Raslila_, Krishna dancing with _gopis_ scenes are beautiful and masterpieces of this style. The artists preferred bright colours for painting.

### 2.5.2 Mughal School of Miniature Painting

You must have read about the establishment of Mughal empire in India. The rulers of this dynasty were great patrons of painting. The Mughal rule was established in India by Babar in 1526. The art of painting was initiated in Humayun’s time. It was carried further by Emperor Akbar in a big way. It was in the time of Jahangir the superb art works turned out. Shahajahan also promoted the art of painting along with his architectural venture.

i) **Akbar School**: Akbar, the Mughal emperor was a great patron of art and literature. He established a workshop for artists in Fatehpur Sikri, the new capital he had built. Here artists worked as a team one making the outline, the other figures, the third landscape and the fourth filled the colours. The two masters, Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad were the Persian Masters who taught the artists in Fatehpur Sikri Kutubkhana (Workshop). The Hindu and Muslim artists in large number under these masters learnt and mastered the art and painted hundreds of pictures. In this way the Persian and Indian styles merged in Akbar’s time.

Emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan were so fond of paintings that they always took some of the artists of their court with them on their journeys, whether it was a hunt or a march with the army. Akbar’s court poet Abdul Fazal in the Aini-Akbari has written about the love of Akbar for painting. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by his clerks. He conferred rewards to the artists according to the excellence of workmanship or increases their salary. The emperor set up a department for the art materials, and collection of the art works. Among the many manuscripts which came to be illustrated by the painters of the court were the _Akbarnama_, the _Razmnama_ and _Anwar-i-suhaayli_, a book of fables. The minuteness and detail, the general finish, boldness in execution, new
way of applying colours are the important features of the paintings of Akbar school of miniature paintings.

ii) **Jahangir School**: Jahangir was the son of Akbar and took deep interest in painting even as a prince. He had his own workshop (Kutubkhana) apart from his father's large studio. He patronised Farukh Baig from Central Asia and improvised the portrait style in Mughal painting. Ustad Mansur was the court painter of Jahangir. The style under Jahangir was called naturalistic. The masterpieces of Mansur are Pheasant, Zebra and Turkey Cock, exquisite pictures which show the mastery of Mansur's brushwork. Many paintings depict Jahangir and his court. The best pictures of Mughal period come from Jahangir's time. The floral border around the paintings has become the main feature of the paintings of this time.

iii) **Shahajahan School**: Prince, Shahajahan also showed interest in painting as an Emperor, he spent a great deal of time in building the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi and Taj Mahal in Agra. The painters continued the previous tradition of doing portraits of noble men, preparing portfolios and illustrating books. But the colours became more decorative, gold was more frequently used for embellishment, showiness replaced the feelings in painting. An excellent painting of his time is 'the portrait of ShahJahan'. In times of the last Emperor Aurangzeb the artistic scene disintegrated due to discontinuation of patronage. After the fall of Mughal rule the painting as art lost its place and the artists went in search of provincial courts for livelihood.

2.5.3 **Pahari School of Paintings**: During 17th – 18th centuries a fine style of painting emerged in Kashmir and the adjoining hill areas of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The paintings from these states are collectively called as Pahari paintings, representing hill area. Here the artists and paintings travelled from one state to another frequently. Because of this there was mutual influences and also drawn from Mughal school of painting. But they are very different from Mughal painting in treatment, subjects, colour sense and directly linked with folk base.

i. **Basohli**: The earliest Pahari paintings are from the time of Raja Kirpal Singh from Basohli. After the decline of Mughal empire the artists were given patronage in Basohli. They painted the themes based on the books such as Rasamanjari, Gitagovinda and Bhagavata Purana. Most of the paintings are on Krishna theme and the portraits of the local kings. Reds, browns, blues, yellows, and greens burst out from these pictures. The profile of the figures has big eyes as in the Jain pictures. The paintings are flat and the jewels are specially treated.

ii. **Guler**: Under Raja Dalip Singh of Guler, a style similar to that of Basohli emerged. The trees and structures of Basohli style are evident here. Later a Mughal artist influences the Guler school. The artist Nainsukh and his brother created outstanding paintings in Guler. The drawing became finer, colouring more sophisticated, graceful appearance of women and great skill are seen in this style. The dominant feature is the painting is the poetry in colour. The themes are based on Krishna, Ragamala, Nayika and Baramasa paintings.

iii. **Kangra**: In Kangra valley under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand a fresh phase of art flourished. Since childhood he expressed interest in painting. As the ruler he patronised the painters and acquired a large collection of pictures. Like other patrons of Pahari states he believed in Krishna cult and the artists created new series of paintings depicting Krishnalila and love of Radha and Krishna. The striking feature of this style is the importance given to landscape and background.
Lush green trees and bushes, clear sky, flowing river, chirping birds and fresh flowers are part of these paintings. The colours are used symbolically to express moods. With the death of Sansar Chand in 1823, the Kangra Kalam lost its inspiration.

iv. **Jammu:** From 1700 onwards Jammu began to produce beautiful paintings. Under Raja Balwant Singh the famous painter Nainsukh created great pictures. He came from Guler and continued to paint in that style. Thus there is a great similarity between Jammu and Guler styles. The portrait of Raja Balwant Singh, Kathak dancer and paintings on Krishna theme are prominent pictures that Nainsukh created. The drawings of Jammu School are more sensitive, dark colours are used sensibly and the local atmosphere dominates in this mature style.

v. **Chamba:** Chamba is another hilly state ruled by kings like Prithvi Singh and Raj Singh. Since the wife of Prithvi Singh was from Basohli, the Basohli Kalam travelled to Chamba. The early panels of the doors and paintings have high influence of Basohli. But later on this bases the Chamba painters adopted the treatment of wall paintings in miniatures. There are more of interior and narration in Chamba paintings.

vi. **Tehri Garhwal:** Anirudh Chand, the son of Sansar Chand from Kangra migrated to Tehri Garhwal and carried many paintings with him. Some of the Kangra painters also moved with him. The paintings are mostly of Krishna legend and Ramayana. The paintings are beautiful, retained the grace of Guler and the richness of Kangra.

### 2.5.4 Deccani School of Miniature Paintings

The Deccani school is the off-shoot of the Mughal miniature school. The Bahamani states were known as Deccani Sultanates. Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda, Bidar and later Hyderabad were politically in confrontation with the neighbouring Vijayanagar. But culturally the artists drew the inspiration, materials and elements from the mighty empire of Vijayanagar. The early paintings from Deccan are influenced by Ellora murals, Mewar, Malwa miniature styles. The Persian elements are also deep rooted in Deccani kalam. Under Ibrahim Adil shahi the Bijapur school of painting thrived greatly. The portraiture of Adil Shahi and the *Ragamala* series are the best class. In Ahmednagar also series of paintings depicting the ruler Queen Chand Bibi are found. Golkonda and Bidar produced portraits of *nawabs* and courtiers in miniature style.

This style is reinforced by a touch of the Mughal during the declining stage. The artists from Mughal court migrated to Deccani states and a new variety of painting they created with Persian, Mughal and Hindu elements.

Thus the Deccani School of miniature show their own identity.

Apart from these known schools there are several minor developments in all these four major schools. The miniature painting as art in demand still flourishes particularly in the major cities of Rajasthan.

### 2.6 SUMMARY

- We have learnt how the miniature school of painting developed in India and the regions associated with its development.

- The techniques are very fine treatment of the subjects and brushwork. Colours are both thick and vibrant. The wash coat was very particular.
The major schools have developed owing to historical development and influences; they are Rajasthani, Mughal, Pahari and Deccani.

It also gives an idea of people taking painting as serious profession. The painters were respected and awarded by the rulers in respective courts.

Each major school had sub-schools with specific themes and series.

Most of the masterpieces of miniature paintings are found in International museums. During British times they have been transported to foreign countries in a large number.

The miniature paintings are full of charm, grace and beauty.

### 2.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

**Self Assessment Questions 1**

State whether the following are true or false.

1. Compare to the mural painting the miniature painting is big in size and scale.
2. In the western India commissioning of the manuscript painting was considered as sacred deed.
3. Then they do not carefully burnish the surface of the paper.
4. We get to see large number miniature paintings on machine made paper.
5. The Deccani painters painted beautiful landscapes, seasons.

**Self Assessment Questions 2**

Match the following:

1. Jayadeva  
   a) Akbarnama
2. Nayika paintings  
   b) Dasavatara
3. Mughal artists  
   c) Gitagovinda
4. Mahavishnu  
   d) Bhagavata
5. Krishna  
   e) Keshavadasa

**Self Assessment Questions 3**

Fill in the blanks with the suitable words given below.

‘Ladies in the Garden’, Nihal Chand., Rukn-ud-Din, the use of dark colours, ‘kalam’.

1. The different court style in miniature school is known as ______________.
2. The most striking features of Mewar kalam is ______________.
3. A superb work in Bundi School is the ______________depict the pleasure scene of princess.
4. ______________ is the famous painter of Bikaner style.
5. Kishangarh paintings are mostly the work of the talented artist ______________.
Self Assessment Questions 4
Match the Following from A to the sub-schools in B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mughal School</td>
<td>a) Chamba, Basohli,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rajasthani</td>
<td>b) Ahmed Nagar, Bijapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pahari</td>
<td>c) Akbar school, Jahangir School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deccani</td>
<td>d) Kishangarh, Bundi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self Assessment Questions 5
Fill in the blanks by choosing the right words from the list provided.

Raja Swant Singh and Bani Thani, Raja Balwant Singh, of Raja Kirpal Singh Sansar Chand from Kangra, Ibrahim Adil shahi

1. Under____________________ the Bijapur school of painting thrived greatly.

2. __________________________ migrated to Tehri Garhwal and carried many paintings with him.

3. Under the famous____________________ painter Nainsukh created great pictures.

4. The earliest pahari paintings are from the time____________________ from Basohli.

5. __________________________ were the patrons of Kishangarh paintings.

2.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Mughal Miniature Painting.

2. Give at least two names of artists from each school Mughal, and Rajasthani.

3. Explain the following words in one sentence.

   Deccani kalam
   Pahari paintings
   Ragamala
   Baramasa
   Nayika paintings

4. Describe the painting given here ‘Turkey Cock’

5. Write briefly the procedure followed in miniature painting.

2.9 ANSWERS

Self Assessment Questions 1

Self Assessment Questions 2
1. c), 2. e), 3. a), 4. b), 5. d)

Self Assessment Questions 3
1. Kalam
2. The use of dark colours
3. ‘Ladies in the Garden’
4. Rukn-ud-din
5. Nihal chand

Self Assessment Questions 4
1. c), 2. d), 3. a), 4. b)

Self Assessment Questions 5

Terminal Questions
1. Write a note on Mughal Miniature Painting.

Answer: Mughal miniature school of painting flourished during the Mughal rule in north India. There are three important phases in Mughal school, 1. Akbar School, 2. Jahangir school and 3. Shahajahan School

i) Akbar School: Akbar, the Mughal emperor was a great patron of art and literature. He established a workshop for artists in Fatehpur Sikri, the new capital he had built. Here artists worked as a team, one making the outline, the other figures, the third landscape and the fourth filled the colours. The two masters, Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad were the Persian Masters who taught the artists in Fatehpur Sikri Kutubkhana (Workshop).

Emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan were so fond of paintings that they always took some of the artists of their court with them on their journeys, whether it was a hunt or a march with the army. The emperor set up a department for the art materials, and collection of the art works. Among the many manuscripts which came to be illustrated by the painters of the court were the Akbarnama, the Razmnama and Anwar-i-suhayli, a book of fables.

ii) Jahangir School: Jahangir was the son of Akbar and took deep interest in painting even as a prince. He had his own workshop apart from his father’s large studio. He patronised Farukh Baig from Central Asia and improvised the portrait style in Mughal painting. Ustad Mansur was the court painter of Jahangir. The style under Jahangir was called naturalistic. The masterpieces of Mansur are Pheasant, Zebra and Turkey Cock, exquisite pictures which show the mastery of Mansur’s brushwork. Many paintings depict Jahangir and his court. The best pictures of Mughal period come from Jahangir’s time. The floral border around the paintings have become the main feature of the paintings of this time.

iii) Shahajahan School: As prince, Shahajahan also shown interest in painting. As an emperor, he spent a great deal of time in building the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid
in Delhi and Taj Mahal in Agra. The painters continued the previous tradition of doing portraits of noble men, preparing portfolios and illustrating books. But the colours became more decorative, gold was more frequently used for embellishment, showiness replaced the feelings in painting. An excellent painting of his time is ‘the portrait of Shah Jahan’. In times of the last Emperor Aurangzeb the artistic scene disintegrated due to discontinuation of patronage. After the fall of Mughal rule the painting as art lost its place and the artists went in search of provincial courts for livelihood.

2. **Give at least two names of artists from each school.**

   Mughal School of Miniature – Mir Sayad Ali and Mansur.
   Rajasthani School of Miniature – Nihal Chand and Rukn-id-din.

3. **Explain the following words in one sentence.**

   a) *Deccani kalam* – The paintings style developed in Deccani states: Ahmad Nagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, Bidar and later Hyderabad.
   b) *Pahari paintings* – This style developed in Hilly regions of Jammu, Punjab, Kangra and Tehri Garewal.
   c) *Ragamala* – They are the series of paintings based on Indian music, the ragas found in Rajasthani, Pahari and Deccani schools of paintings.
   d) *Baramasa* – These are the paintings which depict the 12 months and seasons with beautiful landscape.
   e) *Nayika paintings* – These paintings are based on the concept of eight heroines, beautifully depicted in Pahari school of painting.

4. **Describe the painting given here ‘Turkey Cock’**

   The ‘Turkey Cock’ is a master piece of Mughal school painting. It was painted by Mansur whose works were greatly appreciated by the Emperor Jahangir. The cock is the central figure in the painting with all the possible details like feathers, fur, nails, beak and eyes are worked. The shading and use of colours are superb. The background landscape is attempted. The border has two frames. In the inner frame calligraphy is seen and the outer border is beautifully laid with flowers and creepers.

5. **Write briefly the procedure followed in miniature painting.**

   Like mural painters the miniature painting artists used natural pigments for colours and also followed a procedure for painting. First they cut Basati paper according to the size required. Then they carefully burnish the surface of the paper. On the treated paper they made preliminary drawing in red ink of the theme they want to paint. After corrections the drawing is restated in black which is the final sketch or drawing. Then the sheet was coated with a thin wash of white or other light colour pigment. On this surface, with powdered colours mixed in vegetable resin as binding the actual miniature human figures, motifs, animals, landscape, structures was painted.
01. Mahaparinirvana – Manuscript painting, Pala

02. Kalpasutra - manuscript painting Jain

03. Yaksha – Dhavala Manuscript paintings Moodabidri, Hoysala
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04. Princess – Jodhpur Rajasthani School

05. Bani thani, Radha – Kishangarh, artist Nihal Chand, Rajasthani School
06. Radha Krishna – Kishangarh, Rajasthani school

07. Krishna watching the game – Bundi, Rajasthani School
08. Turkey by artist Mansur Mughal School

09. Portrait of Jahangir, Mughal School
10. Ragini Bhairavi, Kangra, Pahari School

11. Illustration of Keshavadasa poem – Kangra, Pahari School
12. Shiva dancing – Chamba, Pahari School

13. Krishna with gopis – Basoli, Pahari School

14. Raga Vasanta – Deccani school
15. Krishna – Tanjore School