
UNIT 4 PAINTING

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will discuss the art of painting that flourished in India from pre-historic times. After going-through this unit you will be:

- able to understand the aesthetic point of view of Indian painting
- better placed to understand the principle, the theme and historical context etc. of Indian paintings.
- able to familiarise yourself with some of the main schools and centres of Indian painting in different parts of our country.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

India has a very rich tradition of paintings. In the earlier period paintings were mostly concerned with religious myths though society was also amply presented. Later works were mostly

concerned with court life. In both the cases court or religious institutions used to patronise the artists. You will notice as you proceed through the Unit, that the earlier works were collective efforts and usually wall paintings, It was quite late that we could locate the practice of illustration of manuscripts. It was mostly during the Sultanate and post- Sultanate period that references of portrait paintings signed by individual painters were available.

Our main objective in this Unit is to highlight distinctive features of paintings in different parts of the country. It would not be possible for us to take, account of all the schools/centres of paintings which flourished in India.

As we will discuss in the following pages the Indian paintings are quite &fferent from Western/European paintings in both aesthetics and content. The exclusiveness of Indian paintings attracts a large number of cultural tourists.

4.2 AESTHETICS

The art of painting is the expression of idea's and emotions with the creation of certain aesthetic qualities in a two-dimensional visual-language. The elements of this language – its shape, lines, colours, tones and textures – are used in various ways to produce sensations of volume, space, movement and light on a flat surface. These elements are combined into expressive patterns in order to represent real or supernatural phenomena to interpret a narrative theme or to create wholly abstract visual relationships. The artist communicates his message in terms of sensuous qualities and expressive possibilities as also limitations of a particular medium, technique and form.

Earlier cultural traditions of tribes, religions, guilds, royal courts and states largely Controlled the craft, form, images and subject matter of painting. These also determined its function, whether ritualistic, devotional, decorative, entertaining, or educational. Painters were employed more as skilled artisans than as creative genius. Later on the Far East and Renaissance Europe saw the emergence of the fine artist, with the social status of scholar and courtier is who signed his work, who decided its designs and often its subjects and imagery. These artist also established a more personal, if not always amicable, relationship with their patrons.

During the 19th century the painter in Western societies began to lose his social position and secure patronage. Generally now he could reach an audience only through commercial galleries and public museums, which eventually expanded his audience also. He may also be assisted by financial awards or commissions from industry and the date. He had however, gained the freedom to invent his own visual language and to experiment with new -Mims and unconventional materials and techniques.

4.2.1 Definition

It is the problem of what is to be painted how it is to be painted and why it is to be painted that gives rise to problems of aesthetics. There are different views concerning the questions raised above and it will be helpful if we delineate a bit on these questions, through arguing out the meaning and sense of the term aesthetics.

Aesthetics has often been defined more specifically as the science of the beautiful, a definition implying an organised body of knowledge covering a special field of subject matter. The discipline called aesthetics may be described broadly as the study of beauty and to a lesser extent, its opposite the ugly. It may include general or theoretical studies of the arts and of related types of experiences, such as those of philosophy of arts, art criticism, and the psychology and sociology of the arts. The word general is emphasised because a narrowly specialised study of a particular work of art or artist would not ordinarily be regarded as an example of aesthetics.

Aesthetics as a philosophic or scientific discipline is not to be confused with art though it may undertake study of arts in a more or less intellectual, logical way. Since craftsmanship is a purposeful activity, it appears that the viewer is more apt to judge art by some presumed purpose while artists judge it in terms of what transcends any presumed purpose. If it is ultimately the consensus of artists that determines what is included in the field of art, artistic value must lie in something that is not recognised, even by the artists themselves as the purpose" of art.

It follows that works of art cannot understood by the manifest functions they have been specifically intended to perform. Where they function purely as works of art, they also perform a latent function - unintended and 'Unrecognized. If this observation is valid, art could be regarded as the generalised system of the society if in the-performance of unintended and unrecognized (but nevertheless needed) psychological and cultural functions.

The autonomy of art from the social environment is an immediate consequence, if we accept that any good design can be judged only by its aesthetic functions. In this case aesthetic function is culture related-psychological feeling, which is not governed by any given intention. A variety of consequences follow from this conception of the aesthetic function:

- If its very essence arises from performing unrecognised functions, art must be a less self-conscious, a less "nationalised" and indeed a less professionalised activity than any other in the cultural sphere.
- Since it must be ready to perform unrecognised functions as they unpredictably arise, the system of the arts cannot be a specialised one, adapted to a particular set of circumstances. It must remain generalised, to some extent maladapted to the existing state of society, and able to function in a wide range of areas of ambiguity.
- The survival over times and perhaps the aesthetic quality, of works of art, depends on how a range of unintended and unrecognised functions they can effectively perform. It is because they have a wide aesthetic range, in this sense, that great works of art function

for us even when it is not known precisely what they have meant for their producers, as is the case with pre-historic art. The latent functioning of a work of art is not dependent on the grasp of its intended meanings.

If aesthetic value depends on consciously unrecognised functions, does an explanation of these functions erase the aesthetic experience? Not necessarily if the work of art, after one of its functions has been explicated can still function effectively in other unrecognised and unintended ways. The interpretation of art could be viewed as a struggle against its inexhaustibility, but the functions that have been fully explicated would seem to become more cognitive than aesthetic.

4.2.2 Indian and European Aesthetic Sensibility

It is in terms of aesthetic values that Indian painting possesses a very distinct nature. Symbolism in Eastern painting — intended to deepen the experience of a picture's mood and spirituality — is more generalised and poetic than in Western art. Much of Indian symbolism is visually emotive, images such as snakes, plantain leaves, twining creepers and rippling water being overtly less sexual. And although symbolic attributes and colour codes identify Indian mythological characters (for example, the four arms of the terrible form of Kali and the blue skin of the divine lover Krishna), the formal character and colour scheme of settings generally reflect the narrative's emotional mood. As an example we can cite vibrant, dark blue, cloudy skies and embracing, purple-black glades evoking amorous anticipation and red grounds expressing the passions of love or war.

Western symbolic systems, however, are more intellectually directed, their imagery having precise literary meanings and their colour codes intended primarily for narrative or devotional identification. The iconographic programmes of the early Christian churches, for example, laid down complex formulas for the viewpoints, gestures, facial expressions and positions of arms, hand and feet for religious figures. An elaborate Christian iconographic system was followed until very recently. Elsewhere also traditional methods survive of identifying archangels and saints by their attributes and by their symbols of martyrdom that they display; distinguishing white bearded St. Peter from black bearded St. Paul Christian iconography adopted and elaborated Greco-Roman and Jewish symbolic, imagery; the pagan signs of vine and the fish for example, and the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd based on Greek themes are other symbols Of this kin& Medieval and Renaissance writings define an immense vocabulary of symbolic images such tithe crescent and owl signifying heresy etc.

Check Your Progress-1

1) What is the relevance of paintings for Tourism?

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2) Define Aesthetics.

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3) Distinguish between European and the Indian Aesthetic Sensibility.

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4.3 INDIAN PAINTINGS

As a factor, the religious and philosophic thought in the social context of art at any moment in history, is highly significant. It is necessary only to list the great, advanced religions of Oriental antiquity in order to realise how varied must have been their inspiration to artists of all sorts; specifically, the Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. All of these religions were producers of arts at certain times and places, with long and short phases of activity. Although the concept of an evolution of religions is controversial, numerous authorities have held that " many of these religions went through a primitive stage of animism, magic and realistic polytheism, each with it's legacy of expressive imagery, before passing on to monotheism and pantheism. This is the context in which Indian paintings can be seen.

4.3.1 The Context

Much Indian art obviously had a religious form and content, which is evident in the;

Countless myths and legends represented as subject matter, such as stories of the ancient hero Krishna and the cow- girls;

- willingness of artists, rulers and public to accept fantastic representations of the supernatural as in the case of several arms of Siva, a major Hindu daiety; and
- emphasis placed upon mystic symbolism in the arts, including paintings.

On the whole, within an extensive culture such as the Greek or Indian, the arts tended to develop first partly for magical and religious purposes. Theoretical discussions of the same came later. Philosophic discussion of their aims and standards of value tended to come relatively late.

Though it has been said by some historians and contested by others that all Indian art is religious, it is true that most Indian art can be given a religious interpretation by persons of a strongly theistic attitude. This was not necessarily the intention of the artist or of his public. Religious interpretations can be applied to the most humble, utilitarian products as to the most magnificent palaces. A work of art can be appreciated on various levels by the educated observer, and one of these levels or attitudes may be super-naturalistic, another naturalistic.

Indian theories of aesthetics disparage the realm of sensory experience as mere illusion; Indian artists continue to employ sensory materials and to display them for others. In trying to explain the arts, super-naturalists tend to feel that they reflect a divine creator, whereas naturalists regard them as reflecting man alone.

Another basic concept of Oriental art is mystic symbolism. In its ordinary usage, the word symbolism, refers to the practice of using a familiar image, such as a lion, to mean something very different, such as the abstract quality of courage. In India the figure of the dancing Siva is well-known as a symbol of that God, a figure that signifies the cosmic rhythm of creation and destruction as symbolized by a drum - especially its destructive aspect, through an emphasis on fire.

4.3.2 Theory of Rasa: Aesthetic Flavour

In the psychology of art, an integral part of modern Western aesthetics, India has much to offer, especially in its theory of *rasa*, or aesthetic flavour. Recent Western psychologists have so strongly emphasised behaviourism and externally observable phenomena, that they have almost ignored the inner world of individual subjective experience. Indian philosophers call attention to the importance of *rasa* in the total experience of creating and appreciating the arts, especially visual arts. The many kinds of *rasa* and ingredients in *rasa* which as they are felt and cultivated are thus enhanced in value.

The theory of **rasa** was first proclaimed by a mythical sage-priest Bharata (around A.D.500) and developed by Abinavagupta (C.1000 AD). It was used in explaining the forms, techniques, and varieties of poetry and visual arts. Bharata listed the principal feelings of human nature as delight, laughter, sorrow, anger, heroism, fear, disgust and astonishment. These are transformed by arts into *rasas*: erotic, comic, pathetic, furious, terrible, odious, marvellous and calm - qualities into which ordinary feelings can be analysed. Psychological studies of this sort were not purely mystical. Bharata interpreted the power to feel and understand beauty (to taste **rasa**) as a reward for merit in a previous life.

On seeing the richly carved and painted ornamentation of Hindu temples, Western travellers are often puzzled by what they regard as obscenities, sometimes involving complete nudity and

extremely erotic scenes carved and painted in full detail. At times they fail to understand the claim of Indian scholars that such art is "religious" and "spiritual". The same may be said of erotic Indian literature, such as that of **Kama Sutra**. It also presents a realistic account of amorous relations between the sexes in ancient India. Sensuous pleasure is not proposed as the highest good, nor it is morally disparaged. It is a psychological and cultural fact that Orientals do not regard their erotic art as pornographic in the Western popular sense. Sex as a means to love and joy is regarded as a basic fact of life, religious in that it carries on the divinely established rhythm of creation and destruction. It can be and has been transformed into fine art by capable artists.

4.3.3 General Characteristics

Moved by the charm of nature around him, man has expressed his appreciation of it in works of art produced by him. This goes back to time when he was still a primitive. Art has had a softening influence on him. The earliest paintings of the pre-historic age in the caves all over the world give us magnificent examples of the observant eye and the trained hand even in man's savage state. The colours chosen, the movement penetrated and the expression suffered in the pictures really make us marvel even if all of them are not of the standard of the paintings at Ajanta. The pre-historic cave paintings in India give us a picture of life in those far-off days of early man in India.

It is a great and true experience that Kalidas expresses, when he feels that even the happiest man is elated when he sees beautiful things or hears melodious notes. Though music, like art, deeply stirs the heart, it is the impression of beautiful form on the eye that has an even greater effect.

While in Chinese art, the delineation is as the eye sees, in Indian art, it is both as the eye perceives and as the touch feels. The depth of the figure is thus indicated. The pictures in India show an attempt at modelling.

This is corroborated by the fact that the concept of portrayal at its best in India is in terms of the figure in the round styled **chitra**. The figure in relief, high or low, is **ardhchitra**; and the painting resembling sculpture is **chitrabhasa**. The term **chitrabhasa** itself indicates that the aim is to portray some kind of modelling to suggest depth.

In the six limbs of painting or **Shadanga** described in Vatsyayan in **Kamasutra**, modelling is given as an important limb; others are variety of form (**rupabheda**), proportion (**pramana**), on the infusion of emotions (**bhava yojana**) creation of lustre and bid essence (**lawanya yojana**), portrayal of likeness (**sadrisya**), colour mixing to produce the effect of modelling (**varnikabhang**).

Emotions portrayed in pictures are best illustrated in such master pieces as the mother and child before **Buddha** or the **subjugation** of **Nalagiri** from Ajanta. The former effectively presents **karunarasa**, while the latter shows first **bhayanak rasa** in the stampede of the elephant Nalagir, and **santarasa** where the furious animal lies humble at the feet of the Master. The

Vishnudharmottara has specially stressed suggestion as an important element in art. Different methods for suggesting various aspects of nature are here enumerated:

- portraying lotuses in bloom and rishis hurrying for a bath to suggest day break,
- prowling thieves and amorous damsels going to the place of their tryst for indicating night, lotuses and aquatic beings for the sensation of water,
- overcast sky and white cranes flying in the sky to signify the rainy season,
- pleasant flower decked forests and gardens to recall spring,
- travellers oppressed by heat and greatly fatigued to suggest summer.

All these devices are carefully followed in paintings and are to be understood in order to fully appreciate the meaning of a picture, specially in the later-day miniature painting from Rajasthan, Baramasa paintings and those portraying the loves of the **nayakas** and **nayikas**.

Check Your Progress-2

1) How many rasas are there in Indian aesthetics?

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2) Define general characteristics of Indian paintings.

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4.4 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

Literary evidence proves that painting was a highly developed art in ancient India. Palaces and the homes of the rich were adorned with beautiful murals and smaller paintings were made on prepared hoards. Not only were there professional artists, but many men and women of the educated classes could ably handle a brush. Though now all in very bad condition the surviving remains of ancient Indian painting are sufficient to show its achievement. They consist almost entirely of murals in certain of the cave temples.

4.4.1 Pre-historic

The earliest paintings in India have been found in primitive caves and rock-shelters in:

- Mirzapur and Banda in Uttar Pradesh,
- Mahadeo hills of the Vindhyan range in Bundelkhand,
- Larimur hills in the area of Baghelkhand,
- Singanpur in Raigarh district of Central India, and
- Bellary in the South.

These paintings are mainly hunting scenes representing man in his encounter with wild animals. The paintings, though in a crude technique, represent vivid pictures of hunt. Red pigment has been freely used. Some of the figures have got washed off. In a well preserved scene there is the hunt of a bison and a **sambhar**. The human figures are conventionalized. The torso is sometimes drawn as almost a ladder composed of steps. Sometimes it is a silhouetted figure with the head dominating the rest of the body, the hands and feet in all cases appearing as just straight or bent lines. Their handling of pikes and javelins, in their effort to attack the animal, is indeed most lively. One of the animals at Singanpur represents a barking dog, rushing forward at a terrific pace, the tail stretched out and the leg indicating the speed of its motion. This is in contrast with the stylized form in many of the human figures.

As these paintings are not ornated, very small number of tourists are attracted towards them. As a result these sites lack tourist infrastructural facilities. These are also not being promoted for tourism. Only historians and archaeologists are primarily interested in them. These sites are located in mountain ranges and poorly connected with metropolitan towns of India. Since pre-historic paintings have the potential of becoming a major tourist attraction, the sites need to be developed for this purpose.

4.4.2 Classical

Ajanta

The earliest historical paintings in India belong to the Satavahana period (2nd century A.D) in the Deccan. During this period some of the most glorious Buddhist caves were excavated in the living rock, many of them in Western India; Nasik, Bedsa, Bhaja, Karla, Kondane caves are famous. The earliest caves at Ajanta are also of the Satavahana period. The paintings are concentrated in caves - 9 and 10.

The paintings cover the walls, pillars, and ceilings to illustrate scenes from the life of the Master (Buddha) and his previous lives, comprising the **jatakas** and **avadanas**. There are also floral and animal motifs dexterously created. Cave 9 is a chaitya hall with a fine facade, its nave, apse and aisles composed by a colonnade of pillars running the entire length. The cave has two layers of

paintings, the earliest is contemporary with the structure and the later Ts of the 5th Century A.D. The paintings here show the worship of the **Bodhi** tree, the **Sama Jataka** and the **Chhadanta Jataka**.

The **Vakatakas** succeeded the **Satavahanas** in the Deccan. Some of the caves at Ajanta have inscriptions of the Vakataka period. Now the paintings completely cover the walls, pillars and ceilings. They constitute a great gallery of Buddhist art illustrating scenes from the life of Buddha.

The mode of paintings at Ajanta is the tempera and the materials used are very simple. The five colours usually described in all the silpa texts are found here - red ochre, yellow ochre, lamp black, lapis-lazuli and white. The first coating on the rock was of clay mixed with rice husk and gum. A coat of lime was done over this which was carefully smoothed and polished. On this ground paintings were created. The outline drawing was in dark brown or black and subsequently colours were added. Effects of light and shade were achieved by the process of streaks and dots illustrating the methods of **patiavartana**, stippling and hatching mentioned in the **silpa** texts. The lines composing the figures painted at Ajanta are sure, rich in form and depth and recall the lines in praise of the effective line drawing in the **Viddhasala bhanjita** where by a few lines sketched, the maximum effect of form is produced.

The painter at Ajanta had studied life around him and natural scenes of great beauty with intense sympathy and appreciation. Plant and animal life had interested him considerably. He had lovingly treated such themes of flora and fauna as he had chosen to depict. The elephants under the banyan tree in cave 10, the geese in the **Hamsa Jataka** from cave 17, the deer in the **Miga Jataka**, also from the same cave, may be cited as a few examples of the tender approach of the painter to the themes of animals and birds. He had been equally at home in ably representing the dazzling magnificence of the royal court, the simplicity of rural life and the hermits' tranquil life amidst sylvan surroundings.

There are excellent illustrations in these paintings at Ajanata of the six limbs of painting, (**shadanga**). The diversity of form at Ajanta is indeed incredible. The painters here mastered the vast complex of human, animal and plant form in addition to giving free shapes to their imaginations and were creating designs galore. The master at Ajanta has control over not only the proportions of individual figures but also has the ability to group them and he has designed excellent compositions. Emotion is at its best in the narration of scenes from the legends.

These cave paintings achieved fame because of which they have become an important tourist attraction. The tourist infrastructural facilities have developed and it is quite convenient to reach the place. Numerous conducted tours are being operated mainly from Aurangabad which is the nearest district headquarter.

Ellora

In the eighth century, the early Western Chalukya power came to an end and the Rashtrakutas under Dantidurga asserted themselves. Dantidurga was followed by his uncle Krishna - 1, who was not only a great ruler but was also the creator of unique monument in the Deccan, the Kailasnatha temple at Ellora, carved out of living rock. The paintings at Ellora covered the ceilings and walls of the **mandapas** and represent not only the iconographic forms but also the lovely floral designs and animals and birds entwining in the patters. The Natraja here is a splendid example of the Chalukya type. The figure is multiarmed and the dance is in the **chatura** pose. The anatomy of figure, the details and the ornamentation closely follow that of sculpture, including such minute details as the pattern of the **jatamakuta**, the elaboration of decoration and so forth. It is one of the most beautifully preserved panels at Ellora.

The Jain cave towards the end of the group of caves at Ellora has its entire surface of ceiling and wall covered with paintings with a wealth of detail. There are scenes illustrating Jain texts and decorative patters with floral, animal and bird designs.

The tourist infrastructural facilities are well developed as it is situated near Ajanta.

Bagh Caves

The Gupta emperors were great patrons of art and literature. The aesthetic qualities of Samudra Gupta are very well known. This phase of art is amply illustrated in the caves, close to the village Bagh near Gwalior, which are excavated on the slopes of the Vindhya Hills at a height of 150 feet above the river Bagh in the vicinity. There are nine caves in all but the most important are caves 2, 4 and 5.

The paintings in the Baghpalace, it suggests an important event in this royal household and the procession associated with that. It is one of the most magnificent representations of a royal procession in all its glory. On other walls and on the ceiling in this cave, there are floral decorations most pleasing to the eye, the long wandering length of the lotus-stalk with a wealth of flowers, half-blown and in full bloom, and pairs of birds in flight particularly geese. Others The tradition of painting specially cave-temple painting continued till very late. It was primarily preserved in Southern India. Usually a part of the building was so painted as to arrest the attention of appreciative and aesthetic minded connoisseurs of art. At Mahabalipuram, a fervent of painting may be noted in the upper cells of the Dharmarajaratha. Similarly they occur in other Pallava cave temples and the Kailashnatha temple at Kanchipuram. At Badami, Hampi, too this decorative factor is present. The paintings in the Brihadisvara temple constitute the most valuable document on the state of the painters' art during the time of the Cholas.

At Lepakshi (Andhra Pradesh), there is one of the most remarkable paintings of the Vijayanagara period, a colossal one of Virabhadra painted on the ceiling of the mandapa. The scenes depicted here are from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana cave and the Puranas. The coronation of Rama, Arjuna fighting Kirat, and Krishna as vatapatrasayi are charming portraits of this series.

4.4.3 Medieval

Miniatures

Medieval painting is distinctive but Indian. It has the flavour of the Persian but the inborn charm of Indian tradition. The study of Mughal painting in India may be said to begin with Khwaja Abdus Samad of Shiraz who was patronized by Humayun and continued in the time of Akbar. The practice of signing pictures in this period gives us names of artists at Akbar's court. The **Babur-Nama, Akbar-Nama, Humza-Nama, Razm-Nama** and other beautifully illustrated manuscripts of the period have a great artistic achievement. Still in this period, the Persian treatment of the background and the landscape is obvious. The Mughal paintings are aristocratic, individualistic, strong in their character of portraiture, being fostered by and for nobility. Mughal art peeped into the inner revelry of the **harem**, the magnificence of the court, the delightful wild bouts, depicting elephants and camels fights that appealed to the emperor, scenes of hunting, toilet dress and decoration of coquettish damsels.

Rajasthani

The Rajasthani School of Art is a natural outcome of a long sequence of art tradition. The miniatures that comprise the Rajasthani School found in such profusion in several art galleries of India and the world, did not, strangely enough, originate as miniatures. In the palaces at Jaipur and Udaipur, there are wall paintings which show how wonderfully the painter of this school produced large murals. The **Raslila** and the love of Radha Krishna form a happy theme.

The Rajput paintings were more in time with the throbbing life around, simple, with a direct appeal to the peasant and the common folk. Universal in appeal, deeply religious and mystic, true interpreters of phases of nature in her different moods, Rajasthani paintings evoke themes whose appeal goes direct to the heart.

4.5 MODERN PAINTINGS

Folk traditions in art, however, were yet alive with some measure of vitality even under early British rule, but the lingering traits of Indian art gave into new fashions brought by foreigners. Miniatures were ousted by European oil painting. Ultimately, with the British conquest of the country, art and architectural styles of 19th century Europe found access in India and the prosperous section of Indian society came very much under the influence of 'Victorian concepts of living.

The British, during their rule, founded art schools in the capitals of the provinces. The art schools were mainly required to produce painters and draughtsmen for the Railway and Survey departments. Patronage of painters of the then popular genre painting was confined to the landed aristocracy and wealthy merchants and to some extent to British bureaucrats in India. Mention must, however, be made here of the small group of enlightened Englishmen who came to learn and appreciate the aesthetic values of Indian art and save it from decay and oblivion. Best known among them are Cunnigham, Fergusson, Cousins, Havell and Percy Brown.

4.5.2 Modern Indian Painting

Towards the end of the 19th century a positive reaction commenced against the stallions of the degenerate school of painting and time was ripe for the rise of truly Indian painting. Quite a few talented Indians, however, became adepts in the current style of European painting and in the techniques of oil and water colour. Raja Ravi Verma of Kerala gained much reputation in the period through his paintings of mythological subjects and portraiture. The pioneers looked back into the heritage for inspiration. Abanindranath, conscientiously tried to re-create a national style in painting. He and his worthy pupils assiduously experimented in techniques of Indian miniature, frescos, scroll and **pata paintings**.

This new artistic faith spread far and wide in the country. It was known as Bengal school of painting. Naturally enough, the exponents of the school, charged with the newly awakened sense of nationalism tried to copy and imitate old water pieces of Indian art, aiming at revival. But no sooner the romantic renaissance phase came to an end than the school readily yielded to stronger modern inspirations. As early as in the early twenties, Rabindra Nath Tagore dissociated himself from the entire revivalist thought.

For the first time we began to hear 'painterly paintings'. It is almost impossible to explain what is understood by the term painterly, but it is safe to assume that it lays accent on the manner of pigment is handled and on the fact that colour by itself is an important element in modern painting, independent of subject matter if any. Stale traditionalism was rejected in preference to progressivism. Modern Indian painting is a complete reversal and final break away from the past.

What is modern painting? It is not easy to explain in words what belongs to shape, colour and form. Seeing is learning in the visual art and we must look at a work of art with eyes and heart and head. Modern Indian paintings reflect the complexity of modern life. Modern Indian painters are city dwellers and not free from the complexities of modern life. Moreover, intellectually they accept the tenets of modern art, as much as they share the experience of modern man.

Rabindranath's credo thus provides Indian modernism with a character for expressionistic art of all types. Gaganendranath, studied the pictorial possibilities of light, especially in interior scenes. He experimented with cubism and coalescence of forms. There was nothing specifically Indian about it. He used his art for social comment, often with a pleasant satire.

In her heredity as well as her art, Amrita Shergil symbolizes the interaction of Indian and European tradition that is visible in the bulk of modern Indian painting. it can be seen in her works that the preference for forms is reduced to their essential planes, suggestions of volumes through colour modulation, seizure of effects of light, even in open air scenes, less by play of light and shade than by the brilliance of the pigment itself.

Jamini Roy returned to the far more vigorous tradition of folk art, of the **pat** and the scroll, the clay dolls and pottery decorations. The positive achievement of this period was the creation of a ferment rather than a precise definition of aesthetic objectives and stylistic canons.

- V.S. Gaitnde - abstracts
- Shabbir Husain - optical qualities
- Bimal Dasgupta and Manu Parekh - modalities and recombined forms
- M.F. Hussain and Ram Kumar - earthly
- Bhupen Khakhar - curious reality
- Gulam Sheikh - colour sensitive
- Rajeev Lochan - a peep into the past.

The number is not exhaustive, nor the artists mentioned form a merit list; but they should give an idea of the variety of expression now available on the Indian scene.

Check Your Progress-3

1) Explain general characteristics of Classical Indian paintings.

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2) What are the major themes of Medieval Indian paintings?

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4.6 CONSERVATION

The close relationship between tourism and the environment is also a source of problem for the conservation of environment. Tourism is often developed in environmentally fragile and vulnerable settings, such as paintings in Ajanta, Ellora or Bagh caves, because these are important resources or attraction for tourists.

We should keep in mind the fragile state of existence of painting in cave-temples. Due to use of floodlights to illuminate the interior paintings of caves, the brightness of paintings is diminishing. Had these been paintings on paper, these would have been framed behind the glass, as is the normal practice elsewhere. Paintings of movable article are being and can be preserved in museums which are usually air-conditioned now. The old practice of putting varnish over paintings, though retain the brightness leads to the growth of yellowishness over pictures, over a period of time.

It is not that tourism leads only negatively as far as conservation is concerned. Tourism provides the incentive and helps pay for the conservation of sites, that might otherwise be allowed to deteriorate or disappear, thus resulting in the loss of the cultural heritage. Tourism also helps provide the incentive for 'cleaning up' the overall environment through control of air, water and pollution, littering and other environmental problems and for improving environmental aesthetics through landscape programmes.

4.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit has introduced you to several aspects of paintings in India. The treatment of subject matter was on two levels - (a) theoretical orientation of paintings (b) details of some selected sites. We discussed the main differences in Indian and European aesthetics. We also gave details of the textual references on the genre from India. The sites of important paintings were discussed in an order than conformed to their historical growth. You were also introduced to the main features of modern Indian painting. It also explained why paintings in India are a major attraction for foreign tourists. With the help of this Unit you can introduce the viewer/tourist to the finer nuances of Indian paintings.

4.8 KEYWORDS

Aesthetics	:	Study of beauty and the philosophy of taste.
'Rasa'	:	Emotions
Conservation	:	Preservation
Sultante	:	The period of Indian history when Turkish conquerers were ruling over India, before the coming of Mughals. (1206 - 1526 A.D.)
Pre-Sultanate	:	It signifies the period of Indian history from 7th century upto the coming of the Turkish conquerers. (7th to 12th century)
Renaissance	:	It means rebirth. In history Renaissance defines the period of European history in

15th century A.D. when an attempt was made to review the ancient culture and past.

Iconography : Study of meanings conventionally attached to pictorial representations.

Pagan : Ancient Christians used to call the believers of other religions as pagan.

Greco-Roman: It signifies that era of European history when whole of Europe and larger part of central Asia was ruled by the rulers of Rome.

Cartography : It is the technique of drawing maps

Occidental : Since ancient times Europeans have tried to identify themselves by juxtaposing to the Eastern (Asian) Societies. In this attempt Europe has been termed as occidental.

Oriental : Ancient Europeans used to fantasize about the Eastern (Asian) Societies, and in this attempt they coined the term Oriental for all the societies east of Black Sea.

Animism : Societies where even animals are ascribed a special position in their rituals to protect them are known as practicing Animism.

Pantheism : Ancient societies, when they could not control natural forces they tended to worship them. It gives rise to the belief that God and universe (the whole world) are identical. Hence on earth everything is part of God.

KarunaRasa : It is feeling of piety, according to Indian Rasa theory.

Jataka : Extremely popular stories of former lives of the Buddha that are preserved in all branches of Buddhism.

Tempera : A tempera medium is dry pigment tempered with an emulsion and third with water. It is a very ancient medium. Traditional tempera painting is a lengthy process. Gesso, mixture of plaster of paris (or gypsum) with size, is the traditional ground which after laborious preparations, results, however, in an opaque brilliant white light reflecting surface, similar in texture to hard flat icing sugar. Colours were applied with sable brushes in successive broad sweeps or washes of semi transparent tempera.

The luminous gesso base of a tempera painting combined with the accumulative effects of overlaid colour washes, produces a unique depth and intensity of colour.

Lapis-lazuli : It is a mineral which provides a unique colour of violet-blue. It was an expensive mineral hence reserved for focal accents and important symbolic features in design.

Aitamira : Prehistoric cave towers famous for its magnificent paintings and engravings. It is in northern Spain.

Fresco : Fresco (Italian; 'fresh') is the traditional method for painting directly on to wall or ceiling. It is the oldest known painting medium, surviving in the pre-historic mural decorations.

Mural : Mural painting has its origins in the primal instincts of people to decorate their surroundings and to use wall surfaces as means for expressing ideas, emotions and beliefs. Their universal manifestation is in the form of graffiti. But in more disciplined attempts to symbolise the importance and function of particular buildings through their interior decoration, murals have been designed for the restricted framework of specific surface areas.

4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sec.4.2
- 2) See sub.Sec.4.2.1
- 3) See sub.Sec.4.2.2.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See sub.Sec.4.3.2
- 2) See sub.Sec.4.3.3

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See sub.Sec.4.4.2
- 2) See sub.Sec.4.4.3

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