

# PAINTING STUDY MATERIAL FOR CLASS 12TH BASED ON NCERT

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4

## The Mughal School of Miniature Painting

### Origin and Development

In medieval India, Mughal school of miniature painting was recognised as the *art of aristocracy*. The **Mughal Art** was quite different from the **Sultanate Art** or the **Islamic Art** which was prevalent in Deccan Muslims' empires, because **theme, style of art, human figures and artists** of the Islamic art came from the Islamic world of Persia or Iran and Turkey. The paintings painted by them were Indian only in the context that they were painted on Indian ground, but the feeling of Indianness was not in them at all.

The view of the Mughal Art was quite different from the Sultanate Art or the Islamic Art. It was not only Indian but also looked Indian. The artists of that period had initiated to represent the **Islam** even in **Indian style** with the **Indian subject-matter**. In that way, the Mughal Art was not the Islamic art at all, only the **Islamic elements** were included in that to make it more prosperous.

On the basis of development, there are three phases of the Mughal Art:

1. **Art during Akbar's Period.** Akbar is acknowledged as the *father* of Mughal Art. Because his two predecessor rulers—Babar and Humayun—remained busy in stabilizing the empire. When 13-year old Akbar became king, he not only stabilized the Mughal empire with his intellectual skills and expert leadership but also encouraged his architectural skills, art skills (painting) and book writing skills. For the picturisation of the books he established a **Tasvirkhana** house in his court. He got a paper-mill established in Syalkot (now in Pakistan) to make compulsory and continuous supply of paper.

It is because of the good attitudes of Akbar towards the Hindu and other religions that today we observe the inclusion of the best Indian as well as the best Islamic elements and themes of art. The artists of Akbar court very beautifully included the Islamic values and royal Iranian themes with the Hindu style and the Indian aesthetic sense in their paintings. So, the art could get new direction during his period. In the Akbar's courtier, the Hindu painters were in majority but they were to work under the direction of two Iranian master artists—**Mir Saiyad Ali** and **Abdus Samad**. In that way, the elements of two different styles of painting were spontaneously included in the paintings of those artists/painters.

Akbar did not get formal education. So, he is known as *illiterate king*. But, he got translated the best Indian literature into Persian and the best Persian literature into

Hindustani. It is acceded that when Akbar died, there were about twenty-four thousand illustrated manuscripts of the world-fame literature in his library. It reveals that, together with tolerance, how skilled he was in art, knowledge and intellectual matters.

Akbar's regime was the initiative period of the *Mughal Art*. Nevertheless, in that period the preference was given to systematic and serialised painting of the significant volumes of the **Ramayana**, the **Mahabharata**, **Harivansh Purana**, **Hamjanama**, **Shahnama**, **Tutinama**, **Babarnama**, etc. In that period, a few portraits were painted, but the women portraits were not allowed to paint except professional women and dancers.

**Characteristics:** In these paintings, we can see the co-ordination with excellent colour-mixture, clear execution, the vibrating or gliding lines, too minute delineation, overcrowded but balanced figures, potential demonstration, balanced body assemblage, pretty round faces and full-fledged screen.

2. **Art during Jahangir Period.** Jahangir was a very sharp sighted and sensitive against the charming beauty of both the humans and nature. Poeticism and imaginativeness was present in Jahangir's character. The impressions in paintings of his period are more evident. The paintings of birds and animals are counted among the best paintings of the world.

During Jahangir's regime, reconciliation with the European world increased. Consequently, **European elements of art—light and shadow, and feelings of three-dimensional aspects**—were included in Indian art.

3. **Art during Shahjahan Period.** Shahjahan preferred architecture rather than paintings. For that very purpose, the art of his predecessor Mughals although remained continue yet it was not so effective as before. Except a selected few love-stories, such as of *Darashikoh-Ranadil*, *Bajbahadur-Roopmati*, *Laila-Majnu*, and the serialised painting on different themes were abandoned.

**Characteristics:** The delineation on applied subjects such as individual delineation, courtly scenes, pageants, festivals, picnics, etc. was started to be liked. Nature and background was more placid, tender and attractive. Decorative elements were started giving preference. Romantic and fastidious Shahjahan did not like violence and ugliness at all. For that very purpose in the painting of his period, there is an absence of such delineation like hunting, animal fights, violence and wars or battles whereas there is plenty of all the elements of symbols of beauty.

4. **Declining the Mughal Art.** Aurangzeb was an orthodox Muslim. There was no place for all the forms of art in his regime. Therefore, no work was left for the artists/painters after declining of the Mughal court. So, they started going towards the independent provinces and states. Wherever those artists went, carried with them the style of the Mughal painting and art. But taking into consideration the demand of the time, the likeness, dislikeness and interests of new patrons and the elements of art existed beforehand, the elements and the style of the Mughal art were also included in paintings. In this way, the new style was developed with the blend of both the styles which is known as '**Provincial Mughal Style**'. *Avadh* became the leading centre of that newly developed style of painting/art, whereas in *Datiya* painting work continued in pure Mughal style for a long time.