Chapter I

Historical Background
(A brief survey of different schools, Ajanta, Rajasthan and Mughal)
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(A brief survey of different schools
Ajanta, Rajastharn and Mughal etc.)

Woman in Indian Paintings:— (A survey of the major
dschools of art, in India)

1. Ajanta and Bagh Cave Paintings— Their are the
cave Paintings. The art of the Ajanta is full of
ornamentation. We find different aspects of life
painted in Ajanta caves. "Woman is supposed to be
a symbol of beauty. But the artists of Ajanta
have taken woman as the worshipped goddess of
art. Instead of being the centre of attraction of
worldly or physical charm, the woman of Ajanta,
is the embodiment of divinity, affection,
compassion, inspiration and power. Mostly woman
is painted half nude in Ajanta, but there is not
a spark of obscenity in that, moreover she looks
graceful, polite and divine"¹ (plate.1 fig.1)
pardon Ajanta cave-2.
"The artists of Ajanta have achieved a special style of expressing emotions and ideas through the posture of hands or Mudras only. Of course, they have also expressed their ideas through face and eyes etc., but in different paintings the postures of hands very successfully expressed hope, despair, destruction, request, pardon, renunciation and compassion etc. The whole idea of the composition can be read through figures only. This is the contribution of all those devoted artists who have immortalized the Art of Ajanta in the history of the Art of Paintings". (Plate.1 fig.2) woman Ajanta cave-9

**Garments and Ornaments:** One can feel the fashion of that age while observing the garments painted there. The imagination of those artists in creating noble design of ornaments and garments is Praise worthy. No two figures can be found wearing the same design of ornaments. The ornaments like, crowns, garlands, armlets, ear-rings, belts, bangles and (Pazebs) ornaments for feets etc. are a
challenge to the goldsmiths of today. Mostly figures are wearing clothes up to the belt and are topless but there is variety in them. At places these clothes have been decorated with lines and stripes or by one colour only at other place”.

(Plate. No. 2,3) I have collected some photographs of ancient period i.e. from 1400 A.D., on words, from British Museum London, U.K.

**Hair Styles**

“The Hair styles that were conceived by the artists of Ajanta About 2000 years back and were painted with minute details are still a source of inspiration and knowledge to the modern woman and the artists too (See plate...). Different types of Judas, b hair hanging down on the back of the neck like snakes as well as the bobbed hair styles having the beauty of their own as painted in various styles and types. Out of hundreds, no two

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* A hair style in which all the hairs are rounded and tilted on one side of the head or on the back of the neck.
women have been shown with a similar hair style and that is the climax of their conception regarding the hair styles".

"In the 16th cave of Ajanta the most famous and emotional painting is that of "Dying Princess". In it a princess is lying down with the help of a maid servant with head raised a little upwards. One maid servant is with a fan in her hand and another one is looking in distress. There are four more female figures in this painting. One man is sitting near the gate. Two more women are sitting in a corner. The eyes of the princess are half closed which is clearly showing the feeling of pain she is experiencing, a lady is feeling her pulse where as the relatives have been painted lively in the mournful mood. Pity, compassion and the feeling of pain have been very successfully shown in this painting".

There are so many other paintings in these caves for example "pardon" in Ajanta cave no. 2,
and "woman" in Ajanta cave no. 9. (See Plate No 1-
figure 1 and 2).

**Linear Beauty** - It is the main characteristic of
Ajanta paintings. "Line drawing in Ajanta is most
important expressions of emotions. The line is the
speciality of these paintings.

Nowhere in the world such a beautiful style of
expression of emotions through lines has been ever
done. A little movement of brush has added
additional charm to the paintings. The expression
of ideas through fingers only could have been
possible simple through the power and flexibility
of lines. Light, roundness and convexity have been
shown through lines. There lines reveal a special
creative dimension changing in its meaning
according to the atmosphere and main object. The
line are thick and thin according to the pressure
of the brush that creates the desired effect. The
shades of the lines are also different varying from
Indian red to dark brown and black.⁶
Bagh Caves Paintings: "After Ajanta, we find the traditional cave paintings in Bagh caves. These caves are situated near the bank of the river Bagh, a tributary to river Narmada in Southern India. That is why these are called as Bagh caves." A number of female paintings have been found in the Bagh Caves. One can feel the feminine grace in the depiction of woman in those paintings if one compares them with the Ajanta woman, the woman of Bagh cave is a little more healthy. Only Juda in hair style is depicted there. Every Juda tightened, and the hair style is different.

The ornaments and garments to some extant resemble with those of Ajanta. The figures painted have been shown wearing less ornaments. In some paintings one or two ladies are wearing garments while rest shown half nude. Where as the expression of emotions resembles with that of Ajanta paintings. The artists have beautifully depicted the emotions required dearly in the paintings.
showing a lady with the pangs of separation. In another painting in Bagh Cave two ladies are shown sitting at a place, one of the ladies seem to be full of sorrow as she has covered her face with her right hand where as the other one is trying to console her. A couple of pigeons is also painted on the roof of the balcony which further adds to the clarification of the pathos of the mood. This lady seems to be Yashodhara, the wife of Lord Buddha.

Different aspects of life beside dancers and singers are depicted but there is no representation of religion in those paintings.

II. Rajasthan School of Paintings:— As we see in the Rajasthan school the human figures, nose is shown a little longer and pointed, faces are round and eyes are like fishes. The female figures in this school are of a small size or in other words we can say that in comparision to faces, the whole figure seems to be smaller which is the typical local folk effect in the painting.
Garments:- Choli, Daman, or Ghaghra are all over embroidered clothes. These all over embroidered clothes, have been worn by female figures. Women shown wearing transparent 'Odhnis'.

Romantic Scenes:- Romance of Radha and Krishna has been beautifully painted. Nayak Nayika Bheda, Krishna with gopies have been mostly painted.

These are the main subject matters of this school, the ornamentation and composition are remarkably good and worth mentioning of the Rajasthan school. What ever the artists have tried to express in their work, they have succeeded in bringing the desired effect of atmosphere and emotion.

Kishangarh School of Paintings:- 'Radha and Krishna' became the main subject matter of this school also. Religious themes were painted in abundance. A most common theme in Rajasthani and Pahari schools was Nayak Nayika Bheda. Here mostly Nayak is Krishna and Nayika is Radha. Radha and

\[\text{6} \text{Dupatta.}\]
Krishna have been shown as lovers in creeper groves and beautiful natural surroundings which are extraordinarily beautiful and charming.

**Depiction Of Women In Kishangarh School Of Paintings:** The main attraction of the Kishangarh school is the depiction of women. No where in any Rajasthani School the woman has been so beautifully painted. 'Bani Thani' was painted in the form of Radha. "Radha of Kishangarh" has been selected as the best example of the painting of Rajasthan. The artists of this school have excelled in painting of the woman. The faces are soft and there is neither heaviness nor dryness. Women have been painted slim, flexible and tall like creepers. Faces are also long, with high and sloping fore heads, pointed and long nose, and bulging out well cut lips with chin a little longer.

Almost all the qualities of Kishangarh School are also found in Jaipur School. Themes, figures,
garments, and faces of women, fish like eyes resembles from both the Schools.

III. Mughal School of Painting:

Mughals came to India and established their rule, with them came their culture, their way of living their art and literature all what ever they liked or disliked and thus a process of assimilation of two cultures i.e. of the prevailing Indian culture of that time and what came with the new settlers i.e. the Mughals. They gave a new style of living in every aspect of life during their reign.

The mixture of Rajasthani and Persian style of painting was developed and was known as the Mughal school of painting. Mughals were the great lovers of art.

The one characteristic of this school is the brightness of colours. Artists of this school use bright charming colours. Gold and Silver was also beautifully used in this school of paintings. In
Akbar’s time Mughal style divided into five parts as regards their subject of the paintings which are:-

1. Painting of Non Indian Stories.

2. Painting of Indian Stories.

3. Historical Paintings.

4. Portrait Paintings.

5. Social life Paintings.

Profile face was also one of the qualities of Mughal School which we find in Chughtai’s paintings as well. This is the contribution of Rajasthani painting to the Mughal School. The ornaments and Garments are beautifully painted in Mughal School. Transparent chunries have been painted and mostly the garments worn by the figures are of summer season. Clothes are beautifully designed. The fine ornamentation in embroidery added beauty to the garments. The figures have also been decorated with ornaments. We find beautifully designed ornaments in these paintings¹¹ (see plate - 6).
Comparison Of Rajasthani And Mughal Painting

The development of the Rajasthani and the Mughal School is almost contemporary, still there can be no two opinions about the fact that the Rajasthani School was prevalent long before the advent of the Mughals, in Gujrat and Mewar. What ever may have been the style of the same but it is definite that Rajasthani and Persian style both being coordinated gave birth to the Mughal School. It is clear that there must be some similarity in both the schools. Thus we can say that the Mughal style was the mixture of the good points of both the schools.

If we observe keenly Chughtai's work, we found the similarity in it like that of Rajasthan, Mughal and Persian Schools. The hair styles of women in the Mughals is also like that found in Ajanta Alora females that an overall study of all these different schools very well suggest that there is enough influence and effect shown more gracefully in the paintings of these schools.
References


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid-p47.


5. Sharma, Lokesh Chandra. "A Brief history of Indian Paintings". Goel pub. House, Meerut (U.P) India. P-36

6. Ibid-p-44

7. Ibid-p-47


10. Ibid