

CHAPTER – 10

The Changing World of Visual Arts

❖ LET'S RECALL

Question 1:

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The art form which observed carefully and tried to capture exactly what the eye saw is called_____
- (b) The style of painting which showed Indian landscape as quaint, unexplored land is called_____.
- (c) Paintings which showed the social lives of Europeans in India are called_____.
- (d) Paintings which depicted scenes from British imperial history and their victories are called _____.

Answer:

- (a) The art form which observed carefully and tried to capture exactly what the eye saw is called **portarit**.
- (b) The style of painting which showed Indian landscape as quaint, unexplored land is called **picturesque**.
- (c) Paintings which showed the social lives of Europeans in India are called **kalighat painting**.
- (d) Paintings which depicted scenes from British imperial history and their victories are called **history painting**.

Question 2:

Point out which of the following were brought in with British art:

- (a) Oil painting
- (b) Miniature
- (c) Life size portrait painting
- (d) Use of perspective
- (e) Mural art

Answer:

(a) Oil Painting: Oil painting was also introduced in India by the European artists. It enabled artists to produce images that looked real. It is technique with which Indian artists were not familiar.

(b) Miniature painting- As the name suggests; miniature paintings are colorful handmade paintings very small in size. One of the outstanding features of these paintings is the intricate brushwork which contributes to their unique identity. ex- Kishangarh painting, Bundi style painting.

(c) Life-size portrait painting: Portrait painting was another tradition of art that became popular in colonial India. These portraits were life-size images that looked and real. This new style of portraiture also served as an ideal means of displaying the lavish life style, wealth and status that the empire generated.

(d) Use of perspective: The way that objects appear smaller when they are further away and the way parallel lines appear to meet each other at a point in the distance.

(e) Mural art- A **mural** is any piece of artwork painted or applied directly on a wall, ceiling or other permanent surfaces. A distinguishing characteristic of mural painting is that the architectural elements of the given space are harmoniously incorporated into the picture. ex- paintings in Ajanta and Ellora caves.

Question 3:

Describe in your own words one painting from this chapter which suggests that the British were more powerful than Indians. How does the artist depict this?

Answer:

There are many paintings by the British artists of that time that shows British superior than the Indians. Here is some example which prove that:

- Thomas Daniell and his nephew William Daniell, were the famous artist of picture square in that time. In most of their picture square, they showed ruins of the local buildings which were once grand buildings. These buildings remind us about our glorious past and remains of an ancient civilization that was now in ruins. It was as if the decaying civilization would be changed and modernized and it would be done with the British help.
- The painting which depicts the discovery of the body of Tipu Sultan was the perfect example which shows British superiority on Indians. In this painting British general was painted standing on a high pedestal portraying the confidence and the body of Tipu Sultan was laying life-less on the ground half naked. This

painting appears to announce that those who dare to challenge the British government would meet the same fate.

Question 4:

Why did the scroll painters and potters come to Kalighat? Why did they begin to paint new themes?

Answer:

The city of Calcutta was emerging as an administrative and commercial centre. It promised opportunities and a bright future.

(a) Scroll painters and potter came to Kalighat on account of towns reasons:

In the early nineteenth century, in Bengal, around the pilgrimage centre of the temple of Kalighat, the city was expanding as a commercial and administrative centre. Local village scroll painters and potter began developing a new style of art.

(b) The British colonial offices were coming up in new huge buildings and road were being built, markets were being established. The city appeared as a place of opportunity where people could come to make a new living.

New trend within Kalighat artist:

Villages' artists too came and settled in the city in the hope of new patrons and new buyers of their art. They closely observed the changes in the society around them and began to paint new themes like social life under British rule and mocked at the changes they saw around. They made fun of the westernized baboo.

Question 5:

Why can we think of Raja Ravi Verma's paintings as national?

Answer:

Raja Ravi Verma was one of the first artists who tried to create a style that was both modern and national. Ravi Verma belongs to the family of the Maharajas of Travancore in Kerala and was addressed as Raja.

Verma painted themes from Indian Mythology. The characters from these mythologies had a Pan-India appeal. He dramatized on Canvas scene after scene from Ramayana and Mahabharata, drawing on the theatrical performances of witnessed during his tour of the Bombay presidency.

From the 1880s, Raja Verma's mythological paintings became the rage among Indian priests and art collectors, who filled their place galleries with the works.

Prepared a team of artists: Responding to the huge popular appeal of such paintings Ravi Verma decided to set up a picture production team and printing press of his religious painting were mass produced even the poor could now buy these cheap prints.

❖ LET'S DISCUSS

Question 6:

In what way did the British history paintings in India reflect the attitudes of imperial conquerors?

Answer:

Imperial history paintings were an attempt to create a public memory of imperial triumphs. Such paintings were used as tools to showcase the British as invincible and all powerful. British considered themselves superior to the Indian on every field. The entire British history of paintings in India is a living proof of it. It reflected their attitudes of colonial and imperial conquests. The scenes in paintings were highly dramatized British soldiers were shown as destroying everything which represented India.

These paintings celebrated British power, their victories, and their supremacy. British victories in India served as rich material for history painters in British. These painters drew on first-hand sketches and accounts of travellers to depict for the British public a favourable image of British actions in India.

In the painting by Hayman, the British had just defeated Sirajuddaulah in the famous Battle of Plassey and installed Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Murshidabad. In this act of aggression and conquest is not depicted. It shows Lord Clive being welcomed by Mir Jafar and his troops after the Battle of Plassey.

Question 7:

Why do you think some artists wanted to develop a national style of art?

Answer:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a stronger convention was established between art and nationalism. Many painters now tried to develop a style that could be considered

both modern and Indian. One of them was the Ravi Varma but some artists thought that Ravi Varma's style was the imitative of the west. They wanted to develop a style which could truly capture the essence of the East. They wanted to use the traditional painting styles from India.

Some Bengali painter artists felt that a genuine Indian style of painting had to draw inspiration from non-western and tradition and they tried to capture the spiritual essence of the East. So they moved from western style to towards the medieval Indian tradition of miniature painting and the ancient art of mural painting in the Ajanta Cave.

There were some Indian artists and painters who felt that artists had to explore real life instead of illustrating ancient books and look for inspiration from living folk art and tribal designs of rather than ancient or medieval art forms.

Some great nationalist notice the higher position provided to the British flag (The Union Jack) and felt their sentiments hurt. They wanted the paintings of Indian freedom fighters, great historical heroes, reformers and symbols directly related with India.

Question 8:

Why did some artists produce cheap popular prints? What influence would such prints have had on the minds of people who looked at them?

Answer:

In the late nineteenth century, mechanical printing presses were set up in different parts of India. Presses made printing easy and produced in large number. Therefore, these prints can be sold at lower price.

Some artists wanted their depiction of certain themes to reach the wider public. Hence, they wanted to produce cheap popular prints. Raja Ram Verma of Travancore in Kerala was one of these painters, who come to know about the responding huge popular appeal of such painting so, he decided to set up a picture production team and printing press on the outskirts of Bombay.

Cheap prints have helped in spreading certain ideas among the masses. For example; paintings depicting the Bharat Mata must have helped in instilling a sense of nationhood among the Indians.

Some artists produced cheap popular prints so that color prints of religion paintings could be bought even by the poor people.