

Development and Utility of Various Creative Indian Schools of Miniature Painting in Different Phases

Dr Brijesh Katiyar, Department of Fine Arts, Chatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj University Kanpur

Abstract

The word ‘**miniature**’ is taken from the Latin word “**minium**” which means ‘**small**’ in size. Earlier the term minium was used in manuscripts as miniaturizing pigment, its name being miniature. **Miniature Art Societies** and the **Royal Miniature Society**, such as the World Federation of Miniatures (WFM), draw attention to the applicable definition of the term. The history of Indian miniature paintings is several centuries old and it has a distinct identity on the global art forum. In the Indian miniature painting style, along with the religious and cultural form here, spiritual contemplation and meditation have been painted in a very beautiful manner. We can trace the past roots of the ancient Indian miniature painting tradition to the many centuries-old Buddhist paintings that flourished under the patronage of the kings of the Pala dynasty and engraved on palm leaf manuscripts. The new painting style that was born in India in the form of **Pal miniature painting**, its expansion continued to progress step by step under the patronage of various dynasties and wealthy people in different periods and different regions. As a result of which, all the miniature painting styles such as **Jain, Apabhramsa, Rajasthani, Mughal, Deccani, Pahari, Kalighat, Company** etc. styles of miniature painting have registered their presence in the history of Indian art from time to time with their own fundamental specialties. The main objective of this research paper is to study these various miniature painting styles step by step on the basis of their illustration technique, colour-scheme, subject matter, stylistic features etc.

Keywords: Culture, natural pigment, Miniature, History, Development, India, Painting.

Introduction:

The vast canvas of Indian painting is a multi-coloured fascinating bouquet of various creative traditional and soulful folk styles, the Indian miniature painting tradition is a living example of the same bouquet. In present era, painters have a lot of resources like colours, mediums, painting-surfaces, but when Indian art peeps into the past, then we realize that in ancient times, the painters created paintings with limited means and they developed various timeless and memorable painting styles. In this context, if we talk about Indian miniature paintings, then this illustration tradition was unique in the whole world; because its creators had made painting mediums like **palm leaves** and **banquet leaves** the basis of their paintbrushes in those circumstances when paper and canvas were not available. It not only testifies to the creative ability and skill efficiency of those painters but also reflects the antiquity of Indian art. Indian Miniature Paintings have their Origin in our Ancient Past. Indian Miniature Paintings are probably the best illustration of hand-made forms. A painting created in small size on any suitable painting-surface is called “**Miniature Painting**”. The earliest miniature paintings were painted on palm leaves under the patronage of the Pala kings and their themes are often related to Buddhism. The paintings of the ‘**Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita**’, an illustrated text of the Pala style of paintings, are the earliest evidence of the miniature painting style in India. In this manuscript also has six folios and two wooden covers with illustrations on the inside and outside.

From the above evidence, it seems that the tradition of miniature painting started from the time when the writing of manuscripts started on palm-leaves during Pala density. The Pala Kings of Bengal are considered the pioneers of miniature painting in India but the art form reached its zenith during the Mughal rule. Describe in brief about the different schools of miniature painting in India. The process of development of miniatures which began in the form of Pala style and continued with variety of forms and different styles of miniatures. Here, if the picture surface used for the marking of miniatures is mentioned, then where the initial miniatures were being paint on palm-leaves and banquet- leaves, in the fourteenth century, palm-leaves were used for creating miniatures. Silk cloth and paper were being used in place of silk. Paper was followed by the **Chalukya kings** in the **14th century**, as shown in Buddhist manuscripts and Jain texts Painted on cloth or paper, the common pictorial themes of these miniatures were **mythological events** and **episodes** from **religious texts**. In course of time, from **Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari** miniature style to **Kalighat** and **Company** miniature painting styles, many experiments and changes are seen according to time.

History of Miniature Paintings:

Miniature paintings originated in India around 750 A.D when the Palas ruled over the eastern part of India. Since religious teachings of the Buddha, accompanied by his images, were written on palm leaves, these paintings became popular. As these paintings were done on palm leaves, they had to be miniature in nature because of space constraint. Around 960 A.D, similar paintings were introduced in the western parts of India by the rulers of the Chalukya Dynasty. During this period, miniature paintings often portrayed religious themes. With the rise of the Mughal Empire, miniature paintings

started growing on a level unknown before. Thanks to Akbar's love for art, Indian miniature paintings combined elements of Persian style of painting, to give rise to the Mughal style of painting. These miniature paintings further evolved with the influence of European paintings in the Mughal court. Even after the decline of the Mughal Empire, miniature paintings and artists were patronized by the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan. Though influenced by the Mughal style of painting, the miniature paintings of Rajasthan had their own distinct features and often depicted the royal lifestyle and mythological stories of Lord Krishna and Radha. Most of these miniature paintings depicted the lifestyle of kings and queens and also narrated their tales of bravery. Some of these paintings were also created to showcase the contribution of various rulers towards their respective subjects and kingdoms.

The overall development of Indian art can be classified on the basis of stylistic characteristics in different periods from the prehistoric period to the modern period can be divided into different phases on the basis of regional influences, religious, political and cultural conditions; But especially, if the development of Indian miniature painting is to be classified into different phases in chronological order, then it can be divided into different phases as follows:

Classification of Indian Miniature Painting Styles		
S. No	Phase	Duration
1.	Ancient Period	3500 BCE-1200 CE
2.	Islamic Ascendancy	1192-1757
3.	Colonial Period	1757-1947
4.	Independence and Postcolonial Period	After-1947

Notable Schools of Miniature Paintings:

Beginning from the Pala style of miniature paintings, several schools of miniature paintings evolved in India over the course of several centuries. These schools were the products of the social, religious, economic and political atmosphere prevalent in different regions of India. Though these schools of miniature paintings were influenced by each other, they had their own distinct features as well. Some of the prominent schools of miniature paintings are mentioned below:

1. Pala School of Miniature Painting.
2. Jain School of Miniature Painting.
3. Rajasthan School of Miniature Painting.
4. Mughal School of Miniature Painting.
5. Pahari School of Miniature Painting.
6. Deccan school of Miniature Painting.
7. Orissa School of Miniature Painting.
8. Assamese school of Miniature Painting.
9. Bengali school of Miniature Painting.
10. Company school of Miniature Painting

Concept of Miniature Painting:

1. A proper miniature painting gave a new status to Indian art in the medieval age and reached this on its pick.
2. Factual miniatures is a painting technique that highlights painting and sculpture in particular, with its extensive art history.
3. Miniature painting is a traditional painting method from India that is extremely widespread and is frequently referred to as painting or working in "miniature".

Declaration of the Research Problem:

Indian miniature paintings have it's a long historical; and are an important component of social, religious and cultural identity and wider identity. It is also the colour of identity; since there have been different researches on Indian miniature paintings, but this study is based on the different phases, development in various circumstances and different time slots of Indian miniature paintings along with their historical development and the impact of the development of miniature paintings.

Selection of Sample:

Various factual references related to this research paper have been collected from various authentic books, research papers, research articles, newspapers, paper clips, periodicals, journals, art museums and art collectors.

Analysis of related literature:

A number of studies have been presented on the particular topics for the Indian Miniature paintings. A lot of literature on Indian Miniature Paintings has been carried out. In order to vindicate the statement of the problem the following literature reviews have been done.

Analysis of Related Literature:

Several studies focused on different dimensions have been presented to investigate Indian miniature paintings. A lot of literature has been published on Indian miniatures. To confirm the solution of the problem of this research paper, the following literature reviews have been done.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study about the historical development of Indian miniature paintings and its various painting techniques.
2. To be familiar with the impact of Indian miniature paintings on the general public mind-set.
3. To examine the different levels of miniature painting in India, the variation in painting subjects and the painting materials used.
4. To study about the concept of Indian miniature paintings.
5. To study about the different schools of miniature paintings.

Hypotheses:

1. Historical background and authenticity of Indian miniature paintings.
2. There are various depiction styles of miniature painting.
3. There is a significant historical influence on Indian miniatures.
4. Definition of painting-techniques and materials used in creating miniature paintings.
5. The painting of miniature painting has a definition of the painting techniques used and the materials used.

Research Methodology

This research paper is based on descriptive and diagnostic study and on subordinate sources such as books, research papers, research articles, newspaper

Research Format:

1. Type of Study: Descriptive and Analytical Study.
2. Focus of the study: The study is based on the traditional style of Indian miniature painting.
3. Study Sample: Various Phases of Indian Miniature Paintings.

Observations:

Various important facts of Indian miniature art-work relevant to the study unfold the importance, perspective and relevance of Indian miniatures at various levels, which are an important aspect and remarkable significance of the historical development, expansion and refinement of Indian miniature painting. The results of this study will be presented under the following headings.

Material Used for Creating Miniature Paintings:

The painting materials like silk cloth, paper, wood, canvas, mineral and vegetable colours, and brushes were the basic required material for the creating of Indian miniature paintings, without which nothing could be thought of the existence of these paintings. The creators of miniature paintings used the hair of animals like squirrels etc. to make brushes. Along with this, he also invented a complex method of manufacturing of eco-friendly pigments from various natural minerals and plants, and also learned how to prepare an aqueous binding medium of gum to give long-term stability to the colours. At the same time, it shows his art penetration, how to refine and use minerals, insects and animal substances and metals as pigments. To make metallic pigments, gold, silver and copper were ground between sheets of leather and foil in mortars with coarse salt. Traditional Indian painters still use this technique and process, but now the number of such creators is very limited.

Pala School of Miniature Paintings:

The earliest Indian miniature paintings are related to the Pala School dating back to the 8th century A.D. This school of painting emphasized on the symbolic use of colors and the themes were often taken from the Buddhist tantric rituals. Images of Buddha and other deities were portrayed on palm leaves and were often displayed in Buddhist monasteries, such as Nalanda, Somapura Mahavihara, Odantapuri and Vikramasila. These miniature paintings attracted thousands of students from far and wide. Thus, the art form spread across South-East Asia and soon, the Pala style of paintings became popular in places like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, Tibet, etc. Apart from the emphasis on symbolic usage of colors, other prominent characteristics of the Pala School include the skilful and graceful usage of lines, and modelling forms by delicate and expressive variation of pressure, usage of natural colors, etc.

Orissa School of Miniature Paintings:

The Orissa School of miniature painting came into existence during the 17th century A.D. Though the usage of paper was widespread in India during the 17th century, Orissa School of miniature paintings stuck to its tradition as it continued using palm leaves to display this intricate art form. Most of the paintings depicted the love stories of Radha and Krishna and also stories from 'Krishna Leela' and 'Gita Govinda'. These paintings were rich in colors and often depicted the majestic landscape of the eastern parts of India. The strokes used were bold and often expressive.

Jain School of Miniature Paintings:

One of the earliest schools of miniature paintings in India, the Jain School of painting gained prominence in the 11th century A.D when religious texts like 'Kalpa Sutra' and 'Kalkacharya Katha'

were portrayed in the form of miniature paintings. Like other schools of miniature paintings, Jain School too, displayed its art works on palm leaves, but started using paper from the late 12th century. Natural colors including gold and silver were used to depict the stories. Some of the exclusive features of these paintings include portrayal of enlarged eyes, square shaped hands and portrayal of stylish figures. Also, the colors used were often vibrant and most often than not, colors like green, red, gold and blue were used. The paintings often displayed male figures and goddesses of the **Tirthankara**. Also, the goddesses shown in the paintings were often heavily ornamented. These paintings began to decline during the late 16th century.

Rajasthani School of Miniature Paintings:

Rajasthani paintings or Rajput paintings developed under patronage of different kingdoms of Rajputana area in western India. This art form evolved here in Mewar region as textual illustrations to the Jain text Kalpa-Sutras. Each kingdom developed its own art school. Though all schools are different but have basic similarities which coincide to generic Rajasthani paintings. Rajput painting furthermore recognized as Rajasthani Painting is an approach of Indian painting which developed and flourished throughout the 18th century in the imperial courts of Rajputana, India. It is without a doubt that the Rajput paintings represent a number of images, themes and events of epics in the vein of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The cultures and colours were extracted from minerals, plant sources, conch shells, and were even inferred by processing precious stones. That's why, Gold



Figure 1, Yuddha Kanda of Ramayana, Sahibdin, Mewar, 1652

and silver were used. The grounding of preferred colours was a long-lasting procedure, occasionally taking weeks. Brushes used were very superior and excellent in quality. Rajasthani paintings have a number of artistic styles and sub-styles. Rajasthani painting consists of four principal schools that have within them several artistic styles and sub styles that can be traced to the several princely states that patronised these artists.

In the late 16th Century, Rajput art schools began to develop distinctive styles, combining indigenous as well as foreign influences such as Persian, Mughal, Chinese and European. Rajasthani painting consists of four principal schools that have within them several artistic styles and sub styles that can be traced to the various princely states that patronized these artists. The four principal schools of Rajasthani painting are as follows:

Principal Schools of Rajasthani Painting		
S. No	Style of Painting	Sub-styles of Painting
1.	Mewar School of Painting	Chavanda, Nathdwara, Devgarh, Udaipur, Sawar and Hahpura.
2.	Marwar School of Painting	Kishangarh, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali and Ghanerao.
3.	Hadoti School of Painting	Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar.
4.	Dhundhar School of Painting	Amber, Jaipur, Shekhawati and Uniara.

The above four schools were greatly shaped by the Mughal connection, which started when Raja Bharmal of Amber gave his daughter Jodha to Mughal emperor Akbar in 1562. The matrimonial alliances of the Rajputs with Mughals brought about the interesting and important changes in the various styles of paintings. These changes were visible in the dress designs, architectural details, art motifs, landscape patterns and the choice of subject matter. However, the ratio of this influence was unequal; for example, the Bikaner school showed more influence of Mughals in comparison to the Bundi and Amber schools.

Characteristics:

Bold lines, Spiritual charged faces, sharp features, robust figures and basic bright colours are its distinctive features.

Mughal School of Miniature Paintings:

In India, before the rise of the Mughal Empire in **1526 AD**, the Delhi Sultanate ruled most of the Indian subcontinent. Miniature painting was developing in various regions from about the 10th century and it continued to flourish in various regional courts during the Delhi Sultanate. When Humayun, the second Mughal emperor, returned from his exile, he brought with him two famous Persian artists – **Mir Sayyid Ali** and **Abd al-Samad**. Based on Humayun's instructions, these Persian artists created many famous paintings, including '**Khamse of Nizami**'. These paintings were different from the traditional style of Persian art and hence a new style of art called '**Mughal painting**' was born. Mughal paintings were further developed by later Mughal emperors.

Emerging from the Persian miniature paintings, Mughal painting has made its place as one of the most exquisite forms of Indian painting style. Developed in the courts of the Mughal emperors in the 16th to 18th century, it is mainly a miniature painting style that was used to draw book illustrations or as single album works.

During Akbar's reign a new style developed which was Indian in character and influenced by Persian style. The Mughal paintings were void of eroticism. In actual fact, when Islam reached India by the twelfth century, Muslim administrators made it their precedence to spoil erotic representations from the walls of Hindu Temples. The Mughal style of painting refers to miniature produced mainly as book illustration and as single works contains within an Album. Most of the Mughal paintings display the portraits of administrators, rulers and dignified men wearing tailored garments. During Jahangir's reign, the development of wildlife painting was patronized. Masur did an enormous job by painting exotic animals, birds and plants found in India during that period. The Mughal painting is a scrupulous method of South Asian painting, commonly restricted to miniatures either as book illustrations or as single works to be kept in albums. Women's symbols and identity in the Mughal paintings were negligible, and ultimately misplaced. The theme became more highlighted on men's depictions, stressing the rulers and the court topics in addition to hunting prospects and heroic actions.

Characteristics:

Realistic paintings with life portraying the life in court, war scene, social festival, nature, hunting etc. were painted. Impregnate background to show the depth was used in later paintings, style inspired by European art. Book illustration style of Persian school can be seen.

Mughal painting was essentially courtly art; it flourished under the patronage of the ruling Mughal emperors and began to decline when the rulers lost interest. The subjects of the Mughal painting style were generally secular, with historical events, themes from Persian and Indian literature, scenes of the emperor and his court, as well as nature depictions predominating.

Pahari School of Miniature Paintings:

The Pahari School flourished during 17th-19th centuries stretching from Jammu to Almora and Garhwal in the sub-Himalayan India, through Himachal Pradesh. Pahari denotes 'hilly or mountainous' in origin. Pahari Schools of Painting includes towns, such as **Basohli, Guler, Kangra, Kullu, Chamba, Mankot, Nurpur, Mandi, Bilaspur, Jammu** and others in the hills of western Himalayas, which emerged as centres of painting from seventeenth to nineteenth century. Beginning at Basohli with a coarsely flamboyant style, it blossomed into the most exquisite and sophisticated style of Indian painting known as the Kangra School, through the Guler or pre-Kangra phase.

Unlike the distinguishing stylistic features of Mughal, Deccani and Rajasthani Schools, Pahari paintings demonstrate challenges in their territorial classification.

Though all the above centres crafted precisely individualistic characteristics in painting (through the depiction of nature, architecture, figural types, facial features, costumes, preference for particular colours and such other things), they do not develop as independent schools with distinctive styles. Paucity of dated material, colophons and inscriptions also prevent informed categorization.

The central idea of Pahari paintings is figure based. Pahari painting, style miniature painting and book illustration. Though Pahari art thrive at places of immense natural backdrop, the performers were not enthused to paint the sceneries just for the sake of representing the loveliness of environment. In the time-honoured Indian art and paintings counting Pahari paintings, environment provides as a background for creature sentiments and delicate changes of moods were often focused from side to side natural world as the surroundings. Theme of these paintings, together with other Hindu myths, hero-heroine and rāgamālā (musical modes) series, and portraits of hill chiefs and their families.

Deccan School of Miniature Paintings:

Deccani painting is the form of Indian miniature painting produced in the Deccan region of Central India, in the various Muslim capitals of the Deccan sultanates that emerged from the break-up of the Bahmani Sultanate by 1520. The Deccan School of miniature painting flourished in places like



Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Tanjore, Hyderabad and Bijapur from 16th to 19th century A.D. The Deccan School of miniature painting was largely influenced by the rich traditions of the Deccan and the religious beliefs of Turkey, Persia and Iran. Symmetrical arrangement played a prominent



Figure 3. Sultan Abdullah Qutub Shah of Golconda, enthroned with dancers and attendants, c. 1630

role in the Deccan School of miniature painting. The artists often portrayed geometrically accurate buildings and other man made wonders. These paintings also display the usage of various strokes and depth, creating multi- dimensional effect.

The Deccan School of miniature painting was largely influenced by the rich traditions of the Deccan and the religious beliefs of Turkey, Persia and Iran. These paintings are different from that of their Mughal counterpart. They often portrayed intense colors and sensuous looking female figures. The ladies were portrayed with beautiful faces, large eyes and broad foreheads. Also, symmetrical arrangement played a prominent role in the Deccan School of miniature painting. Even the miniatures that depict scenic beauty have a sense of symmetry attached to it. Instead of frequently portraying trees and plants, the artists from the Deccan School of painting chose to portray geometrically accurate buildings and other man made wonders. These paintings also display the usage of various strokes and depth, creating multi-dimensional effect. Bright colors like red and orange are some of the most important aspects of Deccan School of miniature painting.

Characteristics:

The colours used in the painting being rich and brilliant are different from those used in northern paintings. The Persian influence can be seen in the high horizon, golden sky and the landscape. Golden colour has been lavishly used in painting the architecture, costume, jewellery, vessels etc. Influence of the Mughal style of the painting already existing in early styles of Deccani Paintings, introduced by several Mughal painters who migrated to the Deccan. Mostly paintings are decorative, a typical characteristic of the Hyderabad Paintings like the flowerbeds, rich colour, the Deccani Facial types and costumes can be observed. Bold drawings, techniques of shading and use of pure and brilliant colours flourished at Tanjore. Distinctive feature of the Deccani Paintings are observed in the treatment of ethnic types, costumes, jewellery, flora and fauna, landscape and colours.

Bengali School of Miniature Paintings:

The patachitras of Bengal similar to Midnapur, Murshidabad, ground paintings are of great value. The conventional Bengal art of alpana, raising Gods with finger-painted designs are of immense importance. Handed down from side to side ages of women, Bengal folk art, where the finger is the brush and a paste encompassing mostly rice powder is the paint, once adorned the walls and floors of houses. The gorgeous and beautiful designs are based on ritualistic images from legends, folklores and scriptures.

Assamese School of Miniature Paintings:

Assam, the heart of the seven sister states of the North-East, has a rich history of painting and craftsmanship. Assam also houses a rich legacy of paintings that dates back to the 7th century CE. Renowned for their unmatched mastery of outstanding strokes, the Assamese paintings are the source of inspiration to thousands of art enthusiasts across the globe.

The presence of miniature paintings on manuscripts was first discovered from the accounts of Bana, the court poet of King Harshavardhana. In them, he had clearly described the gifts sent to King Harshavardhana from King Bhaskaravarma, the ruler of 'Kamrup'. The gifts included items like a pair of wooden panels which had colour pots with small gourds and brushes attached to one of its sides on Agar bark (Aquilaria agallocha: Agar (botanical name: Aquilaria malaccensis) is a tree. If originally the tree of Asia continent. It is found in India, China, Malaya, Laos, Cambodia, Singapore, Malacca, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sumatra, etc. In India, it is found in the surrounding parts of the eastern Himalayas of North India - Tripura, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Kerala. Among these, if found in Sylhet, it is considered to be the best. Agar is the state tree of Tripura.). These clearly indicate they were used for painting small designs or miniatures.

Company school of Miniature Painting:

Company school, also called Patna painting, style of miniature painting that developed in India in the second half of the 18th century in response to the tastes of the British serving with the East India Company. The paintings were executed in water colours on paper and on mica.

Company style of painting first emerged in Murshidabad, West Bengal, and then spread to other centers of British trade: Banaras (Varanasi), Delhi, Lucknow, and Patna. It is said that the ancestors of "Patna style painters" were residents of Pratapgarh (Rajputana). Emperor Akbar established a "Chitrashala" in Agra. Some of the same painters were selected for the appointment of art teachers in this Chitrashala. Manohar, the painter of Akbar's Chitrashala, is considered the ancestor of Patna style of painting.

When the Mughal rule was taking its last breaths, many groups of painters left Delhi here and there in search of livelihood, because there were no longer people to respect and reward them in Delhi. A group of those painters went to Murshidabad. In this group were those painters, who are

considered to be the ancestors of Patna style of painting. This group of painters moved from Murshidabad to Patna and most of these painters were Lodikatra, Mogalpura, Nityananda's well, Settled in places like Mosquitta (Patna City) etc. At that time Patna was financially prosperous. People had a love for fine arts and genres. Like Delhi, the princes here too were lovers and knowledgeable of fine arts. The military officers of Danapur military cantonment were also lovers of paintings. In the beginning, these painters used to paint according to the wishes of their owners and decorated their houses with paintings.

Company style is a term for a 'style of paintings' made in India by Indian artists & about 50 British artists working mainly for patrons in the British East India Company in the 18th and 19th centuries. This style blended native elements from Mughal painting with a more Western treatment of perspective, volume and recession. Most paintings were small, reflecting the Indian miniature tradition. Company school, also called Patna painting, style of miniature painting that developed in India in the 2nd half of the 18th century in response to the tastes of the British serving with the East India Company.



Figure 4, Five Recruits- Ummee Chund, Indur, Goolzaree, Bukhtawur and Juhaz, 1815-16

Conclusions:

In this research paper factual light has been thrown on the background of Indian miniature paintings on points such as **religious-cultural influence**, **subject matter** and interesting **colour-combination** because the sources of Indian miniature paintings at different phases are extremely indispensable.

Indian miniature paintings of various communities have no doubt had a great influence in the special treatment of judgments.

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