

PREHISTORIC PAINTING OF INDIA

Hello Mahesh, what are you doing? Why are you drawing on the wall? Don't you remember the class teacher's announcement? Yes, Madam has said to draw on stone. Let us go outside and do painting on the stones. Yes, you are right, Yogesh. Let me take drawing materials. Look at that side teacher is coming. Dear children, what are you doing on the stone? Good Morning, Madam, we are trying to draw a picture on the stone. Oh! Very good. Do you know about the rock painting or early Stone Age story? I want to give some information about this. Those paintings were magical and unique. It was one of the oldest forms of art history of human civilization in India. That began in the Paleolithic period or Old Stone Age, roughly 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 BC. In the Paleolithic period, early humans lived in caves and used stone for hunting birds and wild animals to save their lives. Early men then started painting and drawing on the walls of caves during the Paleolithic era, some 40000 years ago. Many paintings were found from the Mesolithic period, around 12000 years ago from the present time. That period was the earliest discovery of Prehistoric art in India.

In this lesson, we will learn about different types of painting in the Prehistoric age of India.



OBJECTIVES

After learning the lesson, the learner will be able to:

- explain the origin of rock paintings in the prehistoric age in India;
- identify the sites in different parts of India;

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Notes

- identify the main features of prehistoric art;
- describe the basic history of rock paintings;
- explain the geological terms of the prehistoric age;
- identify different kinds of rock art.

The earliest discovery of prehistoric art in India was made 12 years before the discovery of Altamira caves in Spain. This discovery was made in Sohaghat in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh in 1868.

There are three kinds of rock art: 1. Rock painting 2. Rock engraving 3. Rock brushing. Human beings gave form to their understanding of experience in the patterns of simple lines and colours.

One of the purposes of these paintings were to ensure that they obtained their food by hunting animals. So hunting scenes were made on cave walls before a hunt as an occult practice.

Dear learner, in this course, we will learn Prehistoric Art, Medieval Art, Contemporary Art and Folk and Tribal Art. First, we will learn about the Prehistoric Art of India, i.e. Rock painting, Mirzapur, Panchmarhi and Bhimbetka.

1.1 MIRZAPUR ROCK PAINTING

Now, let us understand the Rock Painting of Mirzapur.

Basic Information

There are some caves at Kaimur hills in the valley of Son river, just 20 kms from Mirzapur town. These caves are known as Likhunia, Bhaldaria etc. The ceilings and walls of these caves were painted by early man. There are at least 250 rock shelters, which are embellished with rock art on various themes. The paintings show many species of animals, like elephants, boars and even tigers. Domestic animals were also painted, along with wild animals.

Title	:	Primitive Hunters
Medium	:	Earth and mineral colours
Style	:	Prehistoric
Date	:	Approximately 5000 BC

General Description

In this painting, a man with a lance is shown riding a horse. He is chasing a tiger. Primitive hunters seemed to be the most popular subject for these painters. The hunting scene in the painting is a representation of their practical life experiences.



Notes

Primitive men used to hunt large and dangerous animals in groups. The painting also shows a group of people chasing the animals, surrounding them, and killing them with their primitive weapons. The colours are very limited, used to give volume to these figures. In some cases, they have used red, black and yellow pigments. The animals appear to be much more completely rendered than the human figures.



Fig. 1.1: “Primitive Hunters” Mirzapur



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

Fill in the blanks.

1. The medium of Primitive Hunters painting are and
2. Colours of pigment used in this painting are, and
3. The most popular subject of Rock Painting is

1.2 PACHMARHI ROCK PAINTING

Now, let us learn the Panchmarhi Rock Painting.

Basic Information

Panchmarhi hills are situated in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Rock shelters are found all over the hills. Many of these shelters are covered with paintings depicting a range of subjects. By popular belief, the name ‘Pachmarhi’ is derived from

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Notes

'Panch-Marhi' or complex of five caves where the five Pandavas are supposed to have spent some time.

Title : **Rows of Cows**
Medium : Earth and mineral colours
Style : Prehistoric
Date : Approximately 5000 BC

General Description

'Rows of Cows' is one of the many paintings at this site. It shows a cowherd driving a herd of cows to the pasture. The stylized drawing of the cows is almost geometrical, yet it shows a lot of movement both in the animal and human figures.



Fig. 1.2: "Rows of Cows", Panchmarhi

The colours are limited to Ochre (Geru) red in the background and white for the figures.

In many of the paintings, forms on the wall are arranged in seemingly haphazard order, as in this painting. They are not primarily decorative. The effectiveness of works of art of the individual forms is a result of qualities of clarity and balance.

**INTEXT QUESTION 1.2****Tick the most appropriate answer**

- Name the colours of Panchmarhi painting.
 - White
 - Blue
 - Black
 - None of these
- Write the location of Panchmarhi
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - West Bengal
 - Bihar

**ACTIVITY**

You have learnt the rock paintings. Now, fill the table below:

Name of State	Theme	Type of figure found

1.3 BHIMBETKA ROCK PAINTING

You have learnt Panchmarhi Rock Painting. Let us understand the Bhimbetka

Basic Information

Bhimbetka is situated near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. There are more than 754 rock shelter caves here. These are beautifully decorated with paintings. There are varied themes in these paintings. The rock paintings belong to the Mesolithic period of hunter-gatherers. The painter portrayed man and his relationship with animals. The human figures are shown with different kinds of animals like bulls, bisons, elephants, wild boars etc.

Title	:	Fighters
Medium	:	Earth and mineral colours
Style	:	Prehistoric
Date	:	Approximately 5000 BC

**Notes**

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Notes

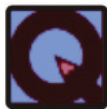


Fig. 1.3: “Fighters” Bhimbetka

General Description

In this painting, many human figures are shown along with different kinds of animals. All the human figures hold many types of primitive weapons. The men are going to kill or capture these wild animals. The silhouette forms of figures are full of action.

The painting shows four men attacking different animals. They are also taming a horse. It is interesting to compare the human and animal forms from the point of view of the completeness with which they are suggested by the artistic conventions. The appearance of the bow is also very interesting as it was not found in the earlier period. Paintings like these are still executed by the Warli painters of Maharashtra.

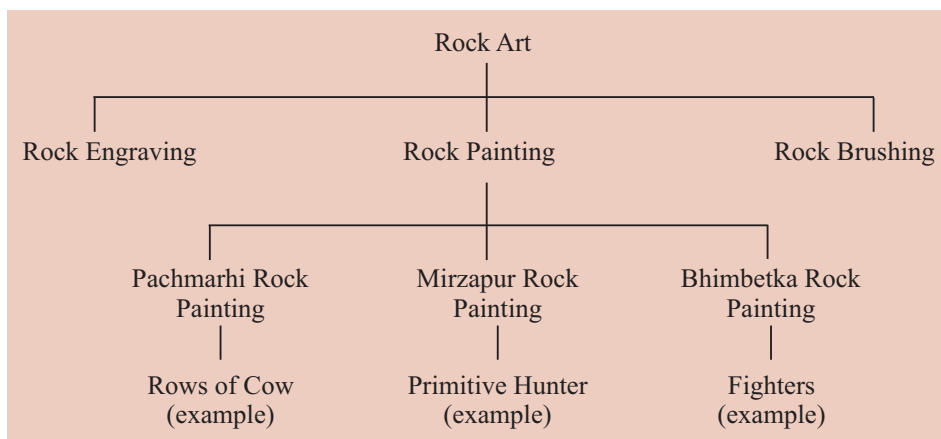


INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

1. Where is Bhimbetka located?
2. Which period do these paintings belong to?
3. Identify at least one animal in this painting.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



Notes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner

- makes beautiful composition of Rock Art by using the forms and figures of rock painting.
- illustrates rock art on their house hold objects.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Which period does the Prehistoric art in India belong to?
2. Name the types of rock art in India.
3. Describe the different types of rock art.
4. Write a short note on the method and materials of prehistoric rock paintings?
5. What is the theme of the painting of Mirzapur?
6. Write two lines on Pachmarhi cave paintings.
7. Name the animals shown in the paintings of Bhimbetka.
8. Why did primitive men paint many species of animals?
9. Write one similarity with the tribal art form of India.
10. The appearance of the bow is very interesting. Explain in your own words.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

1.1

1. Earth and mineral colour.
2. Red, black and yellow
3. Hunting

1.2

1. (i) White
2. (ii) Madhya Pradesh

1.3

1. Near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh
2. Mesolithic
3. Horse

GLOSSARY

Paleolithic	-	Early Stone Age
Mesolithic	-	Middle Stone Age
Neolithic	-	New Stone Age
Mineral colours	-	obtained from stones (minerals)
Silhouette	-	dark image outlined against a light background
Rock engraving	-	the surface is carved into get forms
Rock brushing	-	Fat or other sticky things are brushed on the surface, after that powder colours are painted on it.