

CBSE CLASS 12— FINE ARTS (049 -PAINTING)

Unit – 2

Unit 2: The Mughal and Deccan Schools of Miniature Painting

Part 1: Short Notes

1. The Mughal School of Miniature Painting

The Mughal School of Miniature Painting originated as an aristocratic art form under Emperor Humayun, who brought Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad to India. It flourished from the 16th to the mid-19th century as a brilliant amalgamation of indigenous Indian (Rajasthani), Persian, and later European visual styles.

Under Akbar's liberal patronage, the royal atelier (*karkhana*) formalized the style, focusing on large-scale manuscript illustrations like the *Hamza Nama* and *Akbar Nama*. Painting reached its peak of naturalism and technical refinement under Jahangir, who had an immense passion for portraiture (*Muraqqas*) and scientific studies of flora and fauna (pioneered by Ustad Mansur). Shah Jahan emphasized royal grandeur with lavish uses of gold, jewel-like colors, and complex border decorations (*Hashiyas*). The school declined under Aurangzeb due to a lack of religious and royal patronage.

- **Key Features:** Profile faces (*Ek-Chashma*), fine three-dimensional linear accuracy, high horizon perspective, realistic depiction of local wildlife, and heavily ornamented margins.
- **Famous Artworks:** *Falcon on a Bird-Rest* (Ustad Mansur), *Kabir and Raidas* (Ustad Fakrullah Khan), and *Marriage Procession of Dara Shikoh* (Haji Madni).

2. The Deccan School of Miniature Painting

The Deccani School developed independently from 1560 AD onwards in the southern plateau region of India, predominantly centering around the independent Islamic sultanates of Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar, and later Hyderabad. It evolved parallel to the Mughal style, initially showing strong ties to Early Deccani manuscripts, local Vijayanagar wall painting traditions, and direct trade links with Persia and Turkey.

The style is celebrated for its highly stylized, romantic, and poetic charm rather than the strict historical realism seen in Mughal art. Figures are often tall and slender, set against lush, imaginative landscapes with high horizons, deep indigo skies, and atypical, sweeping foliage. Under rulers like Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur (a patron of music and arts), the school reached its zenith. Following the Mughal conquest of the Deccan in the late 17th century, a heavy Mughal influence seeped into its later phase, particularly visible in refined portraiture and the extensive use of golden pigments.

- **Key Features:** Intense and unusual color palettes, lavish use of gold, tall human figures, rich ethnic costumes, and beautiful architectural backdrops.
- **Famous Artworks:** *Rag Ragini*, *Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusro* (Hyderabad sub-school), and *Chand Bibi Playing Polo* (Golconda).