



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT  
SENIOR SECTION  
DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS



CLASS: XII  
PAINTING (049) & SCULPTURE (051)  
WORKSHEET No. 14

## Unit – III (B) The Bengal School of Painting

### The Origin and Development of Bengal School

The Bengal School of painting originated in Bengal.

Indian art stood at the crossroad after the decline of Mughal Empire, and the beginning of the British colonial rule after the mutiny of 1857. By the end of the century, the smaller feudal states where art survived for sometime were annexed one by the British rulers. Indian painting reached almost a dead end.

The British ruler in the mean time had set-up art schools at Bombay, Madras (1850) and Calcutta (1854), and by systematic propaganda successfully persuaded the educated Indians to believe that Indians had no cultural heritage of their own.

At this point of our identity crisis, Bengal school of Art came into existence. The first encouragement for revival of Indian art was led by famous European artist Mr. E.V. Hevell, Principal of Madras and later on art school of Calcutta. He appreciated Indian art for its own traditional values and rich heritage of Indian Art

‘**Society of Oriental Art**’ was established under the patronage from Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, Gagenendranath Tagore, Sister Nivedita etc. Society sponsored a group of artists like Nandalal Bose, Asit kumar Haldar, Samarendranath Gupta to copy the painting of Ajanta and Bagh caves. They worked with Lady Herringham of Indian Society of London. The paintings were widely acclaimed in the European journals. This move was a major success towards development.

Indian artists to turn for inspiration to true native tradition, a group of talented artist under leadership of **Abanindranath Tagore** created a new Painting style called ‘**wash painting**’; this technique was a fusion of Indian Tempara Style and European transparent water color. ‘Wash painting’ Became **the hall mark of Bengal school**

Major artists of Bengal school were Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, M. A. R. Chughtai, Kshtindranath Majumdar, Asit kumar Haldar. The Bengal School painters were greatly influenced by Ajanta and Bagh, Miniature paintings of Rajasthani, Pahari, Mughal, and Persian and from Shilpasastra.

Subject of Bengal school of painting covers all types’ of paintings including Religious, Social, Historical events, Birds and Animals, Landscapes. The colours used soft without shadow and conventional perspective with Mystic sense of space, diluting the impact of colors. The Bengal painters introduced **linear delicacy, rhythm and grace as dominating visual impact.**

## The Main features of Bengal School of Painting

**Based on Indian Traditions:** The Bengal School is fully based on the Indian traditional style as the subject matter of this school is based on Indian culture. The paintings based on Indian theme like ‘Mahakali, ‘Shiva Parwati’ Krishna and Gopis etc. prove the Bengal School’s Indian mentality.

**Influence of Ajanta Paintings:** Bengal school is influenced from Ajanta Art. The qualities of Ajanta Art like rhythm, grace, harmony etc. are visible in Bengal School.

**Linear Delicacy:** The lines of Bengal School resemble the Ajanta Paintings. Lines are delicate and rhythmic.

**Softness and Rhythm in Figures:** The figures of Bengal School give soft effect and no hardness is there. They are graceful and have delicacy. They are rhythmic and provide pleasant experience to eyes.

**Beautiful Colour Scheme:** The colours of Bengal School are very attractive. Wash technique is used and colours are not bright and gaudy at all.

**Influence of Mughal and Rajasthani Schools:** Mughal and Rajasthani Schools’ influence can also be seen at some places.

**Light and Shade:** The softness in the paintings of Bengal School is due to its quality of brilliant light and shade.

**Impressive and Indian Subject Matter:** The subject matter of Bengal School is very impressive and Indian in character. Themes used are historical, religious, literary etc

### **The Bengal School of Painting**

- Study and appreciation of the following paintings of the Bengal school:

1	Journey’s End	Abanindranath Tagore
2	Rasa-Lila	Kshitindranath Majumdar
3	Radhika	M.A.R. Chughtai
4	Meghdoot	Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya