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Miniature paintings in India: A Comparison between Rajasthani and Pahari Miniature paintings

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Abstract:- This paper is about miniature paintings in India and a comparison between Rajasthani and Pahari miniature paintings. Miniature painting is a traditional style of art that is very detailed. Indian miniature paintings have a long history. These paintings depict the Indian master in its pure form. These paintings highlight a wide –ranging documentation of the spiritual and emotional images of the Indian people. Miniature artists applied bright colors with tempera effect and exhibited an extraordinary perception of color combination. The Pahari paintings are principally decorative art. The subject- matter of Pahari paintings is depiction of figures and nature is presented as set for human feelings and changes of mood. While the subject matter of Rajasthani miniature paintings were presentation of architecture , figures and nature.

Keywords :- Miniature paintings , Rajasthani ,Pahari , style , sub-schools , Mewar, Marwar, Kota, Bundi, Kishangarh, Jaipur , Bikaner, Basohali, Chamba ,Guler , Kangra, Garhwal , painters ,nature , expressions , tempera technique , colors, Indian epics, subject matter , emotions .

1. Introduction:- The miniature painting is a style and technique of painting. Miniature word is derived from the term ‘minium’ (used for the red lead paint used in illuminated manuscripts during the Renaissance) and ‘miniare’ (Latin for ‘to color with red lead’). Originally the term concerned with paintings done in water color on vellum (a cream colored paper), part of handmade books. “Miniature “generally refers to a painting or illumination, small in size, meticulous in detailing and delicate in brushwork. Indian miniature paintings are one of the best examples of handmade forms of visual art in India. Indian paintings have their origin in the past. Miniature art started in 10th century. The earliest miniatures were painted on palm- leaves from Jainism and Buddhism. In the 14th century, palm leaf was transferred by paper and mineral colors and pigments were used. The Palas of Bengal are recognized the pioneers of miniature painting in India , but the art form reached its peak point during time of Mughal rule. The artists from various Rajasthani schools of painting had further taken the tradition of miniature paintings . There are seven schools of Indian miniature paintings such as :-1).Pala school of miniature painting (8th century AD), 2).Orissa school (17th century AD.),3). Jain school (11th century AD) ,4).Mughal school (16th -18th century AD),5). Rajasthani school (16th -19th century AD.), 6).Pahari school (17th-19th century AD) ,7).Deccan school (16th -19th century AD). These schools were the results of the social, religious, economic and political atmosphere which were widespread in different areas of India. . These schools of miniature paintings were influenced by each other. They have their own features and styles.

The Rajput school of Art was categorized into two parts “Rajashani school of Art “ and “Pahari school of Art” . Rajasthani painting was the style of miniature painting developed liberally in Rajasthan (in western India) during 16th-19th century .This school was established from Western Indian manuscript illustrations and under Mughal influence. The folklore of miniature painting was carried by artists of Rajasthan schools such as ; Mewar, Marwar, Kota, Bundi, Kishangarh, Jaipur and Bikaner. Pahari miniature painting originated in regions of lower hills of Himalaya ; Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh . The main centers of Pahari miniature paintings are Basohali, Chamba ,Guler and Kangra.

2. A Comparison between Rajasthani and Pahari Miniature Paintings:-

The Pahari art flourished at place of great natural beauty. In Pahari miniature painters used bright colors like red, yellow, blue and green. These colors were used symbolically. The Basohli center of Pahari school, started painting illustration of classical subjects such as Rasa-Manjari, Ramayana and Gita -Govinda and theme subject like Ragamala. While Rajasthani school of painting is marked by bold drawing and vibrant colors. The painters used bright colors like red and yellow. The most common themes were sacred and favorite subject matters of artists were selected from the story of Radha and Krishna, Mahabharata and Ramayana. Pahari artists were greatly inspired by Jaidev's 'Geet -Govind' as well as 'Bihari satsai' was also source of inspiration for these artists. Raja Sansar Chand gave maximum support in uplift of Pahari paintings.

While Rajasthani miniatures developed in Marwar -Marwar region as narrative illustrations to Jain text Kalap -sutra in early 15th century. The reflection of great traditions of Ajanta murals and Jain art of Gujarat can be seen in these paintings. The master artists of Rajasthani miniature paintings were -Ali Raza, Ustad Sahibdin, Rukunudin, Nuruddin and Murad, they worked in Mughal style. Raja Sawant Singh, gave great support to this art form. Rajasthani artists used colors very carefully, the main colors are yellow, red and brown and different colors have been used in background in Mewar school. In Guler kalam of Pahari school, the subject matter painted was well planned. The depiction of posture is clear and beautiful and the expressions of love scenes are emotional and lively. In portraits figure and form are clearly painted. Lines are full of rhythm and colors have been applied delicately. On the other hand, in Kishangarh school of Rajasthani miniature paintings, portraits of kings have been beautifully painted. Some portraits of nawabs, emperors and saints have also been painted. In comparison to other paintings, paintings of Kishangarh school are larger in size.

In Rajasthani style of paintings, many immortal paintings based on ragas and others have been painted in Mewar style. "Palambhagwat" of 1555 AD is the most developed form of Mewar style. Two famous artists of Mewar school were Shahibdin and Manohar. The painting "Maru Ragini" was painted in Mewar. The love story of Dhola - Maru is very admired in Rajasthan, which is also depicted in murals and miniature paintings. The composition of the painting is divided into two parts. In this vertical painting the king and queen are riding on camel. Two male safeguards are running along the camel-riding couple. In this painting sky is depicted in deep blue strip and remaining background is painted in yellow color. Foreground is painted in green color. The dresses of figures are painted in flat color. King is holding a flower in his right hand and looking at queen. Transparent colors have been used in this painting. "Maru-shri Ragini" is painted on the top of this painting. This painting is from Barah-Masa. Facial expressions are depicted through rhythmic lines. This painting is painted in water colors with tempera technique. The colors are bright and natural.

On the hand, Basohli started Pahari art by analyzing written master works such as Rasa -Manjiri, Ramayana and Gita -Govinda and symbolic themes such as Raga-Mala. In the background of paintings double storey structures with elaborated shikharas are painted. Other decorative elements classify a Basohli miniature. In the Pahari school, "Krishna with Gopis" is painted by Manku in water colors with tempera technique. The theme of this painting has been chosen from "Gita -Govinda" series. The composition reflects Basohli style and has been depicted in geometrical pattern. Bold colors have been used which inspired the liveliness of painting. Krishna is wearing a yellow dress and upper part of his body is covered with ornaments. He is also wearing a crown with jewels and peacock feathers. Five gopis have been depicted around Krishna, who is in the center of painting. All faces which are painted in painting have large lotus shaped eyes. The composition has bright and bold brilliant colors. The small portion of Yamuna river has been painted in the foreground of painting. Orange color has been used in background. Trees of different shapes and leaves are painted at same level of height in the background. The crown of Krishna and ornaments of gopis are very decorative and attractive. Orange, yellow, sky blue and red colors are used in this painting.

In Bundi sub-school of Rajasthani miniature painting, the paintings of Ragmala series are the first miniature painting in chunar. Influence of Mughal and Deccan styles of art is normal on these paintings. The artists here had a well practiced hand in portraits. The portrait painting of 'Raja Anuruddha Singh Hara' is one of the best paintings of this school of art. This art work is a portrait of bravery. This painting is painted in early 18th century and painted in water colors with tempera technique. This painting is in decorative Mughal style. The painting depicts the king on the running horse. The king is dressed in typically Mughal costume along with the headdress. The dress of king is white transparent and is decorated with orange and brown colors. He has a flower in his left hand. His face is painted in profile. The scabbard and sword-hilt are elaborately ornamented. The fast speed of the running horse is shown through the depiction of tail. This is best example of Bundi style of painting.

In Pahari style of painting, the paintings associated with the Guler style provided with surprisingly delicate coloring, purification of lines and a sensitive treatment of landscape. Guler school of painting is also known as the ancient type of Indian paintings. Some Hindu painters who started Guler school of art were skilled in Mughal style and worked under the favoritism of kings of Guler region. The artists of Guler draw portraits and paintings at a place which is known as Haripur Guler. The main colors used in paintings were light green and blue. The painting named "Bharat worshipping Charan -Padukas of Rama" is the famous painting of this school of art. The painting explains the scene from epic Ramayana. Bharat (brother of Lord Rama) paying respect and worshipping Rama's Padukas

depicted in graceful manner. In this painting Mughal effect can be seen clearly. The Padukas are placed on chair of king. In this painting courtiers and ministers are shown in realistic and impressive costumes. The painting is painted with details.

On the other hand, in Bikaner sub-school of Rajasthani art, abundance of Mughal art elements have been seen in paintings. The artists came to Bikaner. "Krishna on Swing" is painting by Nurudin is one of the famous paintings of Bikaner school. This is a water color painting in tempera technique on paper. This painting is based on Rasikpriya poetry of Keshavdasa. This painting is painted on two parts on panel. On the first part of the panel, Krishna is depicted sitting on a swing on left side of panel. He is painted with royal crown on his head garland of white flowers on neck. Dupatta is hanging from his shoulders and he is wearing an orange colored dhoti. The swing has an ornamental border in a hexagonal shape. On the other side of same panel Radha is sitting in front of him in the balcony. She is wearing a traditional and decorative dress 'Ghagra' and 'Choli'. A transparent odhni is on her head. Bright colors are used in this painting such as orange, yellow, light green and blue.

In the lower panel, both Radha and Krishna are painted sitting under trees at different places. Here Krishna has crown jewel, garland and dupatta, but color of his dhoti is yellow. Radha is again dressed in yellow color choli and ghagra. Trees are painted in dark green color. Mount can be seen in the background which is painted in yellow-green color. The mount is drawn in Rajasthani style.

Garhwal miniatures are known for softness of colors and delicacy of beauty as miniatures of Guler sub-school have. In this school, well defined faces and costume present with great realism, where each figure has its own distinct features and life-style, these are strong points of Hindu art. The painting "Radha and Krishna looking into a mirror" is painted in Garhwal sub school under Pahari school of miniature painting. This painting illustrates that Radha and Krishna are seated in a balcony on yellow colored beautiful and decorative chaunki on palace's terrace. Krishna is cheerfully looking at the face of Radha in a mirror. The balcony omits the vastness of lovely landscape, foliage with flowering trees, hills' tops, a lake with blooming lotuses and aquatic birds. In this painting figures are well modeled and drawing is delicate. The brilliant colors are used and golden color has been used on a liberal scale. This painting is master piece of the Garhwal style.

While the paintings of Kishangarh; the region of Rajasthani school of miniature paintings are recognized easily by its main features such as; the sharp elongated facial features of the men and women, the pointed chins, receding foreheads, lotus-shaped and half-closed eyes and serpentine locks of hair. The landscape, Rajasthani architecture of ornate marble structures, traditional archways and open terraces are used as background to set the subject of painting. Nihal Chand was famous artist of this school of painting, who was employed under crown prince Sawant Singh. The artworks by Nihal Chand has become well-known artworks of Rajputana.

The main feature of Kishangarh style of painting is mysterious beauty of women. The immortal paintings like Bani-Thani (Radha) and the painting of king Sawant Singh are the identity of Kishangarh style. This painting is painted in water colors with tempera technique on paper. The painting "Radha (Bani-Thani)" is painted by Nihal Chand of Kishangarh under Rajasthani school of miniature painting. It is a portrait of Radha (Bani-Thani). In this painting the artist portrayed a beautiful Rajsthani girl Radha, who is also called "lady of fashion", decorated in beautiful jewel necklace and ornaments decorated with gold and costly gems, which are visible through the beautiful transparent 'chunri'. Radha is depicted in mysterious smile. Her face has been shown large in size, the nose is long, sharp and pointed with arched eyebrows. Her eyes reflect the womanly beauty with red and thin lips. The two lotus buds are holding in her left hand and she holds her gold decorated transparent chunari her body is painted in peach color. Very sharp lines are used. Her dress and jewellery reflect Rajput royalty. The background of this painting is painted with shining dark blue color.

3. Conclusion:- After analyzing miniature paintings in India and comparing both Rajasthani and Pahari miniature paintings, we can say that Rajasthani school and Pahari school of miniature paintings started in 16th century and 17th century in western and northern parts of India. These art styles are different from each other. Pahari miniature paintings are based on natural beauty, human feelings, Raga-mala, Ramayana, Gita-Govinda, Rasa-manjari, Mahabharata and Radha-Krishna. While the architecture, human figures, nature, Radha-Krishna, Ramayana, and Mahabharata are painted under Rajasthani school of miniature paintings. The miniature paintings under sub-schools of both schools of miniature paintings are painted with tempera technique. The artists of both schools used different colors and styles. The miniature paintings of these two schools are recognized by their distinct characteristics. Both schools of Indian miniature paintings have their own importance in history of Indian painting.

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