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NCERT Class 11 Indian Art & Culture Chapter 1: Pre-Historic Rock Paintings YouTube Lecture Handouts

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- Prehistory/Old Stone Age/Paleolithic Age – distant past with no written words, documents or books
- Excavations brought old tools, pottery, habitats and bones and cave paintings
- Once basic needs were fulfilled people felt need to express themselves – paintings and drawings became the first way to do so
- Cave walls was used as canvas

Paleolithic

- Lower – no art forms
- Upper – human figures, activities, geometric designs and symbols – has earliest paintings

1st rock painting in India in 1867-68 by Archibold Carlleyle (12 years before discovery of Altamira in Spain)

Archaeologists who discovered - Cockburn, Anderson, Mitra and Ghosh

Rock paintings – MP, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar, Kumaon in Uttarakhand

Rock shelters on banks of the River Suyal at Lakhudiyar (1 lakh caves), about 20 km on the Almora-Barechina road – divided in 3 categories as man (stick like, dancing human figures), animal (long-snouted animal, a fox and a multiple legged lizard) and geometric patterns (wavy lines, rectangle-filled geometric designs, and groups of dots) in white, black and red ochre

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- Richest paintings are reported from Vindhya ranges of MP and their Kaimurean extensions into UP - mainly Paleolithic and Mesolithic remains
- Largest and most spectacular rock-shelter is located in the Vindhya hills at Bhimbetka (45 km south of Bhopal, MP) – spread in 10 km², having about 800 rock shelters of which 500 bear paintings - Drawings and paintings are categorized into seven historical periods.
 - Period I: Upper Paleolithic
 - Period II: Mesolithic
 - Period III: Chalcolithic
 - After Period III there are four successive periods.

Upper Paleolithic Period

- Represent linear representations in green (dancers) and dark red (hunters)
- Huge animal figures like bisons, elephants, tigers, rhinos and boars besides stick-like human figure
- Wash paintings filled with geometric patterns

Mesolithic Period

- Period II – themes multiply but paintings are small
- Mainly hunting scenes with people hunting in groups, armed with barbed spears, pointed sticks, arrows and bows
- Primitive man with traps and snares to catch animals
- Loved to paint animals – feelings of fear, tenderness and love revealed
- Depict men chasing animals
- Animals painted in naturalistic style while humans painted in stylistic manner
- Women painted as nude and clothed
- Children are painted running, jumping and playing.
- Community dances provide a common theme
- Depicted gathering food, honey; grinding and preparing food
- Hand prints, fist prints, and dots made by the fingertips

Chalcolithic Period

- Period III

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- Reveal association, contact, and mutual exchange of requirements of the cave dwellers of this area with settled agricultural communities of the Malwa Plains
- Cross-hatched squares, lattices, pottery and metal tools
- Many colours, including various shades of white, yellow, orange, red ochre, purple, brown, green and black – most favorite was red and white
- Red from haematite (geru)
- Green from chalcedony
- White from limestone
- Rock mineral was grounded, mixed with water, thick substance like animal fat or gum
- Brushes made from plant fibers
- Colors have remained intact because of the chemical reaction of the oxide present on the surface of the rocks
- Paintings made on wall and ceiling of rocks, shelters and living space – it did not lack quality
- Paintings were made on rocks so that they could notice from distance
- Primitive artists seem to possess an intrinsic passion for storytelling
- Both men and animals engaged in the struggle for survival
- Group of people shown hunting a bison
- Animal is shown in the agony of death and the men are depicted dancing

Paintings of individual animals show the mastery of skill of the primitive artist in drawing these form – in proportion and tonal effect

New painting is painted on top of old paintings – 20 layers one over another

Prehistoric period remains are a great witness to the evolution of human civilization, through the numerous rock weapons, tools, ceramics and bones.

Rock paintings are the greatest wealth the primitive human beings of this period left behind

-Manishika