

■ **Modern Architecture**

During the era of British rule in India, modern architecture began to take shape. The British faced a significant challenge in replicating the majestic Mughal architecture, but they made efforts nonetheless. However, their attempts fell short when compared to the original Mughal structures. In the 19th century, buildings were constructed in the Victorian style, utilizing materials such as bricks, steel, and cement. Although they incorporated Mughal-inspired brick domes, these additions proved to be ineffective.



When Delhi was established as the new capital in 1911, architect Lutyens and his associate Baker devised a blueprint for the city's new buildings. Initially, they pursued a neo-Roman style of architecture but later shifted to incorporate influences from Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions. Notable structures such as the Central Secretariat and the Viceroy's Palace were constructed under their guidance. However, these buildings fell short in capturing the essence of modern architecture or reviving the medieval style. They lacked the openness and practicality that are hallmarks of modernity. Despite the inclusion of Buddhist or Islamic domes, they failed to leave a lasting impact or impression.

■ **Why is Laurie Baker considered the architect of the poor?**

Laurie Baker, a renowned architect of the 20th century, prioritized utility over aesthetics in his architectural designs. His focus was not on creating extravagant structures for the wealthy but on providing affordable housing for the less privileged. His innovative approach brought about a revolution in building construction, particularly in Kerala.

One of Baker's notable contributions was the introduction of the filter slab method in construction. He emphasized the use of locally available materials, eliminating the need for costly transportation from distant places. Moreover, Baker ensured that the design and construction of houses blended harmoniously with the natural surroundings and the environment. These principles established Baker as the architect dedicated to serving the needs of the economically disadvantaged, a reputation that endures to this day.



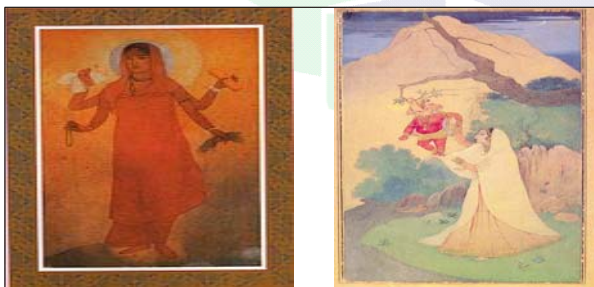
Modern Paintings

Under British rule, a few Indians were exposed to European paintings, including the renowned painter Ravi Varma from Travancore. He aimed to merge Indian and European painting styles, drawing inspiration from the flourishing art scene in Paris, the capital of France. The neoclassical French painting movement left a lasting impact on Varma's work.



Raja Ravi Varma's paintings

During the national movement, there was a growing inclination towards Indian art as a response to British influence. In the midst of the Swadeshi movement, Abanindranath Tagore played a pivotal role in reviving Mughal painting and establishing the Bengal School of Painting. Notable artists such as Nagendra Nath Tagore, Ravindra Nath Tagore, Nandlal Bose, and Yamini Roy joined this artistic movement. However, Yamini Roy stood out with her unique perspective. While many artists focused on depicting various aspects of life, she dedicated her art to portraying the lives of ordinary people.



Pictures of Abanindranath Tagore



Pictures of Amrita Sher-Gil

Amrita Sher-Gil, a notable modern painter, emerged as a significant figure in the art world. Born to a Hungarian mother and a Sikh father, she created her own artistic journey, distinct from the Bengal School. Her paintings not only reflected her diverse heritage but also showcased the influence of Hungarian fairy tales.

■ Some Local Styles of Modern India

- **Nathdwara style:** This style of painting emerged in Mewar when the idol of Shrinathji was brought from Braj by Nath in 1671. Brajvasi painters, in Mewar, developed a distinct and independent painting style, influenced by this event.

- **Sikh style:** This style of painting originated under Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule in Lahore State. It portrayed subjects from mythological epics, showcasing a distinct Indian aesthetic. This style primarily focused on ragamala pictures depicting Lord Krishna's divine pastimes (krishna lila). However, as time passed, the growing dominance of the Mughal style gradually diminished its influence.

- **Patna or Company School:** The Patna or Company School of painting gained prominence after the decline of the Mughal Empire. Painters associated with this school were active in and around Patna and their artworks were exported to Britain. Patna Kalam paintings, primarily done on paper and occasionally on ivory, belong to the miniature category. These paintings vividly portray everyday life, capturing scenes of carpenters chopping wood, women selling fish, blacksmiths and goldsmiths, palanquin bearers, farmers plowing fields, and wandering ascetics. Furthermore, this style also includes depictions of animals and birds.

- **Paintings of Kalighat:** Kalighat paintings, created on paper or gunny cloth near the renowned Kali temple in Calcutta, were widely recognized. These paintings fulfilled the local market's needs and encompassed religious narratives, portraying gods and goddesses,

along with social themes. This unique style of painting served as an inspiration for artworks in Midnapore, Hooghly, Chandannagar, Bardhaman, and Murshidabad.



- **Kalamkari painting:** A traditional handmade art form originating from Andhra Pradesh in South India, involves the printing of colored blocks on cotton cloth. Natural vegetable dyes are used to create religious imagery.
- Kalamkari flourished under the patronage of Vijayanagara rulers in the 15th century.
- It is predominantly practiced by women. It is prevalent not only in India but also in Iran.
- Two main forms of Kalamkari have evolved in India: Masulipatnam Kalamkari and Srikalahasti Kalamkari, both originating from Andhra Pradesh.
- The process begins by soaking the cloth overnight in a solution of cow dung. The next day, it is sun-dried and then immersed in a mixture of milk and cow dung. After thorough drying, the cloth is softened by beating it with a wooden staff. Various natural materials such as plants, leaves, tree bark, and stems are used for painting on the cloth.

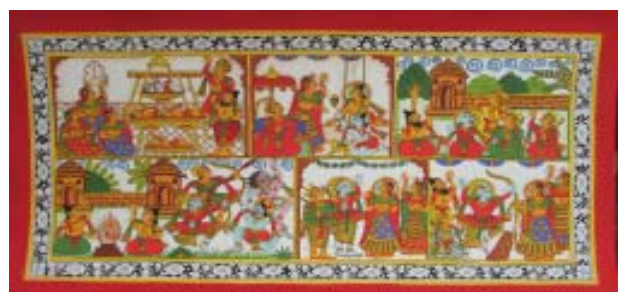


- **Warli Painting:** A popular mural art form practiced by tribal communities in the Maharashtra-Gujarat border areas, showcases similarities to the Bhimbetka style. These paint-

ings depict natural scenes featuring the sun, moon, mountains, pointed trees, circles, triangles, and most notably, elements of everyday life such as hunting, fishing, feasting, festivals, and dances. The background is filled with white rice paste, while the foreground is adorned with other color. Renowned artists like Jivya Soma Mashe and his son Balu Mashe have contributed to this art form. Warli paintings use simple materials like rice paste and vegetable gum, and incorporate geometrical shapes like squares, triangles, and circles on various colored backgrounds.



- **Kohbar-Sohrai Painting Style:** This art style, originating from Jharkhand's tribal region, celebrates the growth of progeny and crops. Intricate engravings depicting kings, queens, and nature adorn the walls of houses. Within the artwork, one can find engravings of fish, elephants, parrots, the sun, the moon, and other elements, all intricately woven together.
- **Phad Chitra:** Phad Chitra is a popular art form in Rajasthan, especially in the Bhilwara district. Created on a long, scarf-like cloth, these paintings depict heroic tales, the lives of painters or farmers, and showcase animals, birds, flowers, and plants. Vibrant and subtle colors are used to bring these pictures to life. The process involves sketching the outline with black ink and then filling it in with colors.



Education under British rule

Education is crucial for the progress of individuals and communities, and India's ancient civilization has a rich history of education. In ancient times, education embraced Brahmin, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. Nalanda University, established in the fifth century, flourished as a renowned center of Buddhist learning. In comparison, Europe's first university, the University of Bologna, emerged in the 12th century. Even during medieval India, rulers and landlords patronized education, in Hindi and Islamic education also coexisting. Higher education focused on subjects like religion, philosophy, and mathematics, while practical skills were taught at lower levels, adapting to local needs.

British rule brought modernity to India alongside colonialism and modernization. Colonial policies aimed to exploit the native economy for the benefit of the colonizing country, influencing the education policy implemented in India. British Orientalists, administrators in India, established educational institutions like the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 under Warren Hastings and the Sanskrit college in Banaras in 1791 under Jonathan Duncan to promote Indian knowledge systems. They believed that British officials well-versed in Indian traditions would better serve British interests.

However, the rise of industrial capitalism in Britain led to the emergence of a liberal and utilitarian intellectual class known as Anglicists, who greatly influenced India's 19th-century education policy. The Anglicist-dominated Bengal Public Education Committee sparked the Orientalist-Anglicist debate on India's future education policy. The primary issue was the medium of instruction: Indian or English language? Lord Macaulay's appointment as the committee's President strengthened the Anglicists' cause, resulting in the declaration of the Macaulay Education System in February 1835, which settled the debate on India's education policy.

Macaulay's education system emphasized the following:-

- The teaching of modern knowledge and science in the English language to Indians followed the Downward Filtration Theory. This approach was adopted due to the colonial government's reluctance to invest extensively in the social sector, which required significant expenditure. The strategy involved imparting Western education and English proficiency to a selected group of Indians, who would then disseminate this knowledge to the general public in Indian vernacular languages.
- The implementation of this plan primarily served British colonial interests, resulting in benefits for Britain and a relatively limited negative impact on India. It is widely believed that the true intention of the Macaulay education system was to promote the British market and Christianity, while also ensuring the appointment of Indians to low-ranking positions at a lower cost. However, British liberal thinkers advocated for the objective of modernization in India.

Subsequently, when Lord Hardinge made English education compulsory for government service, Indian languages and the education system suffered long-term setbacks. The so-called modernity claimed after the introduction of the English education system turned out to be superficial. Several flaws in the system became evident:

- The education system failed to reach the masses, disproving the notion that a small group of intellectuals would bring education to the general public. Attempts were made to emphasize education in native languages, as proposed in the Thomasian education system (1853) and Wood's Despatch (1854). However, these efforts were not effectively implemented, leading to the decline of the public education system in India. To this day, India continues to grapple with the consequences of this setback. Adam's report also confirms that in the 1830s, there were approximately one lakh small schools operating in Bengal and Bihar alone. However, these schools faced destruction due to subsequent British policies.

- The education provided to Indians did not cater to their specific needs. English education did not encourage scientific pursuits or fundamental thinking within our country. Furthermore, it significantly hindered the development of our native languages. The present divide between “India” and “Bharat” can be attributed to the influence of English education.

Nationalist Reaction

Different periods and Indian nationalist-intellectuals exhibited diverse reactions towards British education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy initially supported English education for uplifting India, unaware of its flaws. In contrast, Gandhi viewed it as enslaving and fostering an inferiority complex, hindering native languages. Gandhi advocated a balanced education model combining theoretical and physical labor, reflected in the Wardha Education Scheme.

Tagore aimed for an alternative approach, blending Western and Indian methods at **Shanti Niketan**.

Some nationalists aimed to reform the education system. Baroda’s progressive state introduced compulsory primary education, and leaders like Gokhale urged its implementation in British India. Although the 1913 Education Policy acknowledged the need to eradicate illiteracy, compulsory education wasn’t adopted until the Sargent Plan in 1944, proposing comprehensive education for children aged 6-11.

These facts highlight the British government’s education initiatives’ adverse impact on India. At independence, the literacy rate was only 16%, with women at 8%. Sadly, the independent Indian government prioritized higher education, neglecting primary education despite the Bombay Plan’s (1944) emphasis. As a result, achieving 100% literacy remains a goal.

