

Art traditions of eastern rajasthan



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At that time it was also a major Buddhist centre - roven by excavated temple and Vihar in the hilly areas of Bairat. The disintegration of Mauryan Empire was followed by the foreign invasions. It seems that this region was also affected by these invasions. A small Jar containing 36 coins of Indo-Greek, discovered at Bairat further lead to the conclusion that the region formed part of the Indo-Greek domination. It is further confirmed by the discovery of Mitra coins from Rairh which is situated in modern Tonk. After the end of the Indo-Greek invasion in the closing years of 1st century B. C. he rule of Tribal Republics such as Yaudheyas, Arjunayans and to some extent Malvas ppears to have emerged in the area. It is further corroborated by the inscription of the Yaudheyas at Vijaygarh near Bayana. Also the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta mentioned Arjunayan, Yaudheyas and Malvas among the people on the frontier of Gupta Empire. The close proximity of the region with Gupta Empire is further established by the chance discovery of the largest hoard of Gupta coins near Bayana. It seems that in the wake of Hun invasion some part of Eastern Rajasthan had come into the political control of Huns.

Although Hun influence was short lived in this egiion but a number of sites of Eastern Rajasthan are full of numismatic evidences of their presence. At Abhaneri, Sambhar and at various places the copper coins of Torman have been discovered. It seems that from the second half of the sixth century Gur]ars came into prominence in Eastern Rajasthan. According to seventh century Chinese traveler Hieun-Tsang this region fell within the ancient GurJartra of Gurjar country. Further the Gwalior inscription of Pratihars

established it beyond doubt that the Matsya and the adjoining area was the part of the Pratihara kingdom.

More or less the influence and impact of the Pratiharas remained till the close of twelfth century. That influence is clearly shown in the art traditions of early medieval Rajasthan. The art Tradition Eastern Rajasthan has been a center of cultural assimilation and a witness of experience of cultural crosscurrents since earliest time. The area has very rich art traditions that can be traced back to the pre-historic Age. From the Alwar- Jaipur region as many as 250 caves have been discovered with Stone Age paintings, in which Bainswal and Jaisinghpur is most prominent. 7] Right from the early Iron Age or Mahajanpada period a rich tradition of terracotta figurines depicting religious and day to day life motifs have been discovered from this region. The aesthetic and artistic sense of people is also evident from their pottery. From Bairat and Noh a large number of PGW ware have been found with geometrical and artistic depictions. [8] Furthermore NBPW is itself an art object which has been found at Bairat, Noh, Kama, Jodhpura etc. Most of this pottery also carries various geometrical patterns and some time even human and animal figures.

In early Christian era the entire region witnessed a proliferation of the art of making terracotta figurines. Various terracotta plaques depicting Yakshi, Yaksh, Mother Goddess and Pauranic Deities have been found from various sites particularly Nalasar, Rairh, Nagar, Noh etc. The women used Jewellery of various types is evident from the study of a terracotta plaques depicting mother goddess, which used bangles, bracelets, anklets etc. It is evident that

ornament making was an art in early Rajasthan. These figures also throw some light upon social, religious and political life of the region.

For example the Gupta influence is clearly shown in the Nalisar Terracotta figurines where Mahishasurmardini and other figurines have been found. This influence can be traced even in the South-East Rajasthan, where sites like Durra have number of terracotta figurines which show the influence of Gupta art. The next stage of aesthetic expression is reflected in stone art. The earliest specimen of stone art which is found in this region belongs to Mauryan period. A large number of objects with typical Mauryan polish are in the collection of Bairath museum. The stone art further developed with the influence of Kushana.

The most important epitome of this influence is 'Jakha- Baba'. This larger than life-size (9 ft.) tall statue has been found at 'Noh' in Bharatpur. It is still considered as a deity among local inhabitants. In the close vicinity of the 'Jakha-Baba' another stone statue has been recovered which is identified as 'Kartikeya'. Because of nearness to Mathura which was the center of artistic activities of Kushana, Bharatpur had major influence of Kushana Art. Further the plastic art developed in Gupta age. A large number of sculptures have been found which clearly show the influence of Gupta art.

In Bharatpur, it seems Kama and Katara were the main center of artistic activities in this period. The sculpture depicting Shaiva and Vaishnava themes have been found here and most of them are placed in a Museum at Ajmer. The tradition of sculpture art further developed in Pratihara period which can be seen in the panels of Abhaneri, Neelkanth and Kama Temple.

Architecture Like art, architecture too is hand-maid of religion in India. Most of the architectural remains are associated either with Hindu, Jain or Buddhist traditions. In Eastern Rajasthan the earliest discovered structure is a Buddhist temple which has been excavated at Bairath.

In early Christian era the entire region witnessed a robust growth in architectural activities. From Nagar (Tonk), Rairh (Tonk) and Naliasar-Sambhar (Oaipur) many secular structures have been unearthed. Most of them, particularly from Naliasar-Sambhar were more than one story which is revealed by the presence of staircases in dilapidated structures. It is very interesting to know that almost all the non-religious buildings were constructed on the usual form of open central courtyard, surrounded with rooms which is still a prevailing system in the residential houses of rural areas of this region.

The examples of religious architecture are found in abundance. Moreover Dausa, Alwar, Bharatpur have large number of sites having temples related to later Gupta and Pratihara period. In Alwar, Paranagar is a site which can be compared with Osia of Jodhpur. Like Osia, Paranagar has many temples in close vicinity besides the major one known as Neelkanth or Shiv temple. In Dausa, near Bandikui the Harshat Mata temple of Abhaneri is a structure of national importance. The temple is in dilapidated condition and its ruins have been assigned to eighth - ninth century.

The main attraction of the temple is its panel on which scenes of love, music and dance are depicted. On the outskirts of Dausa another architectural remains of Pratihara period has been discovered which is known as Narayan'

Mata temple. Problem to be investigated Geographically and historically eastern Rajasthan makes a singular entity. It is moreover a part of northern Indian plain rather than Maru Pradesh. In ancient time Matsya region was known for its rich livestock that again reconfirmed its closeness with Brij-Bhoomi.

Historically this entire area retained its political identity as Matsya State till early Medieval period. It is an area which culturally and historically is in close proximity with South- Western U. P. and has immense impact of U. P. on the art, tradition, language, religious activities etc. Although stray attempts have been made to study the art of this region, which mainly covers only a single site, temple or monument, but so far no comprehensive study of this region has been done. No scholar has so far taken this region as a single cultural - historical entity.

Thus till date it has not been established that whether this region was following some common beliefs, aesthetic tradition in their artistic expressions. In the case of Rajasthan this area is promising for the study of cultural assimilation, because it appears like melting crucible of different cultures. The influence of Kushana, Gupta merged with that of Gurjar Pratiharas. It is evident on the art tradition particularly. The study of cultural crosscurrent of this region would also be made in the proposed project. A comprehensive study is also needed to synchronise economic prosperity and technological development with art and architecture.

In early medieval period a lot of theoretical work has been done on art and architecture like Mansara, Shilpshastra, Roopmandan etc. The objective of

the research is to find out that how much it was transformed or followed in architectural activities. Similarly the region plays an important role in trade. It fell into one of the major route which used to connect Gangetic plains with Gujarat ports. In this context Bayana emerged as one of the main trading point in early medieval period. The proposed project aims to study that how much the trading activities and the prosperity yielded by it influenced the art traditions.

Review of Existing Literature The region lack any comprehensive study of art traditions although sporadic work has been done by Shri R. C. Agarwal, former director of State Archeological Department, but his attempt is limited to the findings which came into his course of explorations. A large number of articles have been published by Shri R. C. Agarwal and his colleagues on various aspects of art and architecture of this region which were published periodically in " Researcher", the official Journal of the Department. Some other scholars like Harphool Singh, Vijay Kumar have done some scattered research.

A lengthy work on Abhaneri sculpture has been done by Shrimiti Pupul Jaikar but her attempt is limited to cultural interpretation of sculptures. In this context the work of Smt. Neelima Vashishta is path - breaking. Her work - Sculpture Traditions of Rajasthan- deals very minutely the sculptures in the context of socio- religious developments. But this also does not consider eastern Rajasthan as a entity, nor it comments beyond sculpture. Objectives of the Project This comprehensive study of art of the region is aimed to achieve the following objectives:- 1.

To understand and reconstruct the integrated image of Eastern Rajasthan as reflected in the art and architecture of the region. 2. To undertake, the comparative study of the art and architecture of Eastern Rajasthan with those of adjoining regions. It is further aimed to evaluate the quantum of mutual impact of the art traditions in a border region. 3. To what extent the prescriptions of the " Shilp Texts" were followed in actual execution. 4. It further aims to study the economic aspect of art and architecture including the nature and behaviour of guilds of sculptors and architects. 5.

To get a glimpse of the social and cultural life of contemporary people with the help of art and architecture of the region. Hypothesis This project is based on certain assumptions. The basic assumption is that Indian art is deeply related to philosophy and religion and reflects like a mirror, the faith and ideals of the contemporary era. Thus study of art tradition plays an important role in understanding the religious and cultural development of particular region. How much cultural contact took place with other regions and how far it influenced the local traditions can be comprehended with the help of art and architecture.

Research Design and Methodology The proposed project is aimed to find continuity and integrity of art tradition of Eastern Rajasthan keeping in view the cultural cross current with adjoining regions. For this purpose an in-depth study of the art and architecture of the Eastern Rajasthan will be undertaken, with an incisive analysis of the contents basic theme, stylistic variation etc. of the art objects. A holistic study of the art and contemporary life will be undertaken to achieve better understanding of the society of the

proposed period. details of the Tools Documentation of monuments and artifacts will be the main tools.

The primary source material will be collected by visiting ancient art sites of the region and by studying the contemporary inscriptions and literature. A large number of scholarly work on Indian art and architecture has appeared in last two centuries which will definitely assist in understanding the art traditions of the region under study. Similarly the research on history and society of ancient Rajasthan will be of great help in understanding the region in proper perspective. Academic significance of the Project The proposed project is an effort to enrich the knowledge of ancient art and culture of Rajasthan.

It is an effort to study art in a new perspective, in view of the fact that Indian art is essentially expressive of the cultural ethos of India This study will bring us nearer to the inspirational sources of art and will provide a clear understanding of the great psychic currents and intellectual movements of ancient Indian society. Relevance to present day problems of the society The Indian art is a true representation of the essential spiritual and cultural unity of India and a close study of this would be inspirational for the modern society, which is torn by various diversities, mostly artificial.

A study of Indian Art will also provide us a better understanding of our social and cultural life in the past and will thus remove many misconceptions about our past. Expected Contribution in the Field of Knowledge As mentioned above the project is aimed to study the art traditions in a holistic approach. With this approach an integrated image of Eastern Rajasthan would merge in

the art tradition. In the course of documentation and fieldwork some new artifacts and monuments may also be identified. BIBLIOGRAPHY ORIGINAL SOURCES A. Literary (i) Vedic Manu Smriti, with the commentary of Medhatithi, Ed. y Ganganatha Jha, Calcutta, 1934. Rigveda Samhita, (ed.) Tilak, Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Poona, 4 Vols. 1933, 1936, 1941, 1946. Mahabharat, Geeta Press, Gorakhpur. Puranic Agni Purana, Ed. , by Baladeva Upadhyaya, Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, First edn. , 1966. Harivamsa Purana, Khilabgh Mahabharata, Gita Press, Gorakhpur (n. d.) (iii) Classical Amarakosha of Amar Singh, ed. By A. D. Sharma and N. G. Sardesai, Poona , 1941. Bhoja, Samarmgana Sutradhara, Ed. by T. Ganapati Sastri, Baroda, 1924-25. Lakshmidhara, Krityakalpataru, Ed. with an introduction by K.

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