



Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine the impact of European influence on India's art and architecture. (250 words)

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Approach

- Highlight the features of Indian Art at the time of Europeans' arrival.
- Highlight what elements that were added by Europeans in Indian Art and Architecture.
- Conclude with the significance of such influence on Indian Culture.

Introduction

Europeans started coming to India as traders by the end of the 15th century and eventually colonised entire South Asia by the mid-18th century. Like Mughals who influenced Indian culture with their styles like Persian Architecture and lifestyle, Europeans too have left their mark on Indian Art and Architecture.

Body

- Printing technology was brought by Portuguese in the mid-16th century. It expanded into newer forms of publications by the end of the 18th century like novels, books. It played an important role in the growth of nationalistic feeling and remained an important tool for freedom movement like Kesari newspaper by Tilak.
- Europeans brought new styles of paintings like oil paintings. These were adapted into local styles like Kalighat paintings and also with themes from Indian mythology like Bharat Mata. One of the pioneers towards this transition was Ravi Varma.
- Architecture, perhaps remains the most visible influence of Europeans on Indian Art. Gothic style with tall pointed arches was mixed with Ashokan and Mughal Style evident in domes of the Viceroy's House, Elphinstone circle, Victoria Terminus. They also brought in planned city development, for example, Lutyens Delhi, which was based on geometry and open wide spaces.

Conclusion

Thus Europeans brought in many changes which enhanced Indian Art and Architecture over the years giving an example of the confluence of a unique cultural mixture.