



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Examine the significance of prehistoric paintings found in India. Also, trace the changes that occurred in the painting styles during this period. (250 words)

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### Approach

- Briefly explain what prehistoric paintings are.
- Significance: what these paintings tell about prehistoric life, help understand the social life of mankind.
- Changes in painting: styles, themes techniques evolution
- Conclude by highlighting that influenced future art themes.

### Introduction

Prehistoric period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or Palaeolithic Age. There was no paper or language or the written word, and hence no books or written documents. Painting on wall canvas was a way to express human feelings, artistic creation in such times.

### Body

#### Significance of Prehistoric Paintings

- Paintings were early humans visual record of their day-to-day life, as subjects of their drawings were human figures, human activities, geometric designs and animal symbols
- This helped us to understand early human beings, their lifestyle, their food habits, their daily activities and, above all, they help us understand their mind—the way they thought.
- Prehistoric period remains are a great witness to the evolution of human civilisation, through the numerous rock weapons, tools, ceramics and bones.

Thus, such creations help trace our present cultural practices by studying how they evolved overtime.

#### Changes in Painting Styles

On the basis of style, technique, themes and superimposition, paintings can be classified as below which evolved over the preceding ones:

- Upper Palaeolithic Period
  - Linear representations, in green and dark red, of huge animal figures, such as bisons, elephants, tigers, rhinos and boars besides stick-like human figures.
  - A few are wash paintings but mostly they are filled with geometric patterns.
  - The green paintings are of dancers and the red ones of hunters.
- Mesolithic Period
  - Themes are multiple but the paintings are smaller in size. Hunting scenes predominate.

- Animals were painted in a naturalistic style; humans were depicted only in a stylistic manner.
- Simple rendering of scenes of the environment in which the artists lived. The men shown in them appear adventurous and rejoicing in their lives. The animals are shown more youthful and majestic than perhaps they actually were
- Community activities like dancing, children playing provide a common theme
- Various colours including various shades of white, yellow, orange, red ochre, purple, brown, green and black
- Some caves were exclusively dedicated for paintings, perhaps such places had some religious importance.

## Conclusion

Such mastery in techniques of paintings thus, continued to influence and evolve during Chalcolithic Age art forms expanding into statues, figures etc. evident in Indus Valley Art.

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