



BPSC MAINS X-NOTES

GS PAPER-1

Special Additions:

- Ready-to-Use Mains Keywords & Definitions
- Infographic Answer Writing Frameworks
- Map Presentation of Bihar Facts
- PYQ-Centric Applied Notes with Mindmaps
- Value Addition from standard books
Haralambos, Ritzer in Bullet Format
- Readymade Intro-Conclusions
- PYQ Model Answers.



Hello XIASians ! :)

Namaste!

READ THIS BEFORE YOU START

These **X-NOTES (BPSC Prelims 2026-27)** are not made to increase pages. These notes are made to increase **marks**. This notes booklet is designed with one objective: **Maximum Output in Minimum Time**. If used properly, these notes will help you revise faster, remember longer, and think like a BPSC examiner.

Why These Notes Feel Different?

1. Fact-Focused Coverage

Every line in these notes is exam-relevant. No filler. No padding. Only the facts and concepts that BPSC actually tests — curated from years of PYQ analysis.

2. Based on Standard References Books & Bihar Govt. Official Sources

Content is drawn directly from standard reference books and Bihar Government official sources, so your preparation stays authentic and aligned with what the commission expects.

3. Infographic-Enriched Content

Graphics • Mnemonics • Flowcharts • Illustrations • Tables are used throughout to improve recall speed inside the exam hall. Your brain remembers pictures faster than plain text.

4. Thematic PYQ Practice & MCQs

At the end of every theme, Previous Year Questions (PYQs) and practice MCQs are integrated so you can test your understanding immediately and identify gaps before the exam.

5. Reviewed by BPSC Toppers & Top Publishers

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6. Crisp & Structured Presentation

Topics follow a clean, logical order aligned with standard books so your brain does not feel like reading new content during revision. Same flow. Better retention.

7. Zero Junk Policy - Only Exam-Focused Content

We follow a strict Zero Junk Policy. If it won't help you score in BPSC Prelims 2026-27, it simply won't be here. Every word earns its place.

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We hope these notes help you convert.

Special thanks to **BPSC Rankers** who contributed to the development of this content.

We take feedback seriously. Telegram ID: **@BTSXIAS, 8287115435**

All The Best!

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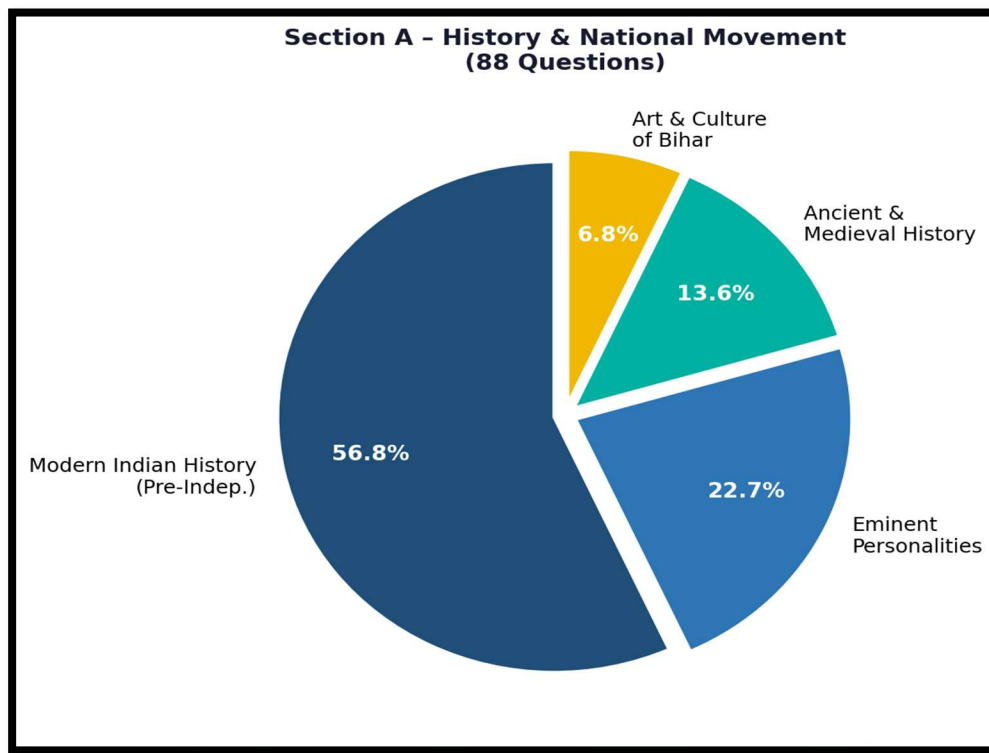
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PART 1: CULTURE AND HISTORY

Part 1 covers 88 questions across four sub-sections. It is the highest-weightage section in GS1 and has remained consistently important across all 12 exam papers.



4.1 Sub-Section Breakdown

Sub-Section	Question	Share in Part 1	Core Topic
Modern Indian History	50	56.8%	Champaran, Santhal Uprising, Quit India
Eminent Personalities	20	22.7%	Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, JP Narayan
Ancient & Medieval History	12	13.6%	Mauryan Art, Cave Art, Pala Art
Art & Culture of Bihar	6	6.8%	Patna Kalam Painting (all 6 Qs!)

4.2 Topic-Wise Frequency: Modern History

Topic	Question	Exams Appeared
Champaran / Indigo Revolt	9	48th, 56-59th, 63rd, 64th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th
Santhal Uprising	8	48th, 56-59th, 63rd, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th
Western & Technical Education	7	60-62nd, 63rd, 65th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th
Revolt of 1857	4	53rd, 56-59th, 63rd, 65th
Quit India Movement	4	48th, 60-62nd, 67th, 70th
INC - Formation & Phases	4	67th, 68th, 69th, 70th
Birsa Munda Movement	3	53rd, 66th, 68th
British Acts & Constitutional Dev.	3	68th, 69th, 70th
Other Topics (8 topics)	8	Various

Part 1 Insight

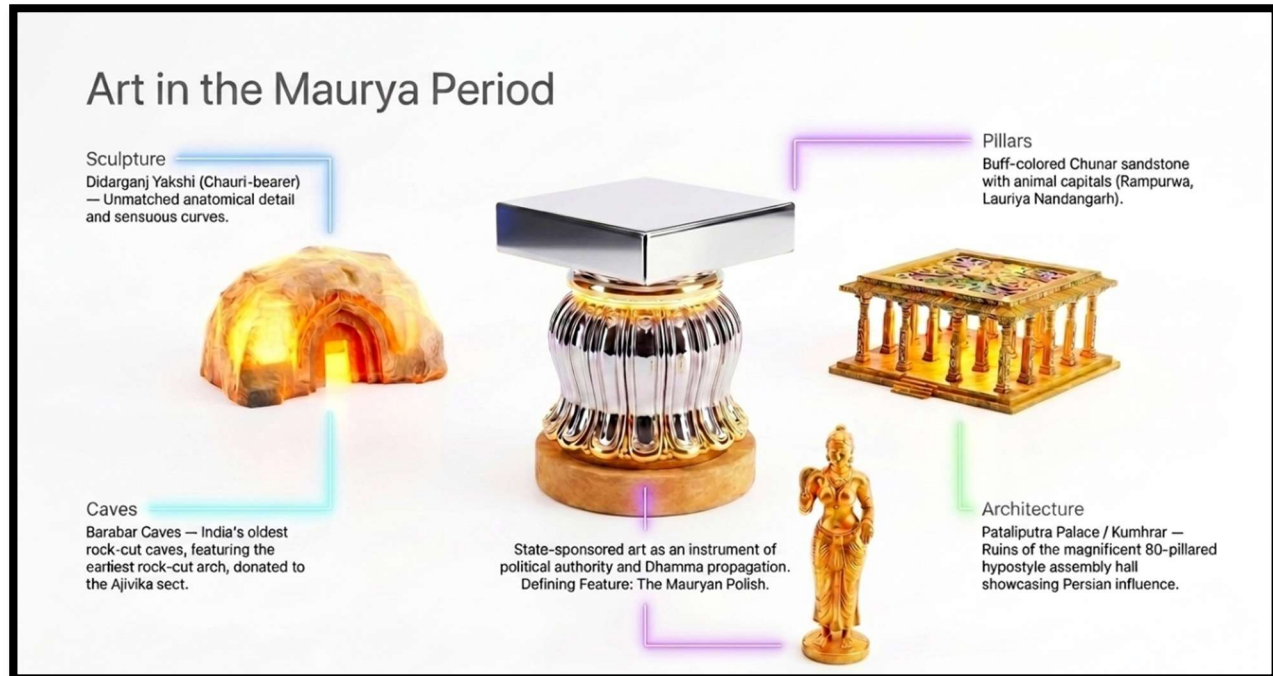
- Champaran Satyagraha is the single most repeated topic (9 times). It is near-certain in every exam.
- Santhal Uprising (8 Qs) and Mauryan Art (7 Qs) are the next most tested areas.
- Western Education in Bihar has seen a sharp rise in the last 5 exams — a growing trend.
- Patna Kalam Painting has appeared in 6 different exams — virtually guaranteed.
- Eminent Personalities (Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru) carry 20 questions — do not skip any.



Section 1: Art and Culture of Bihar

1.1: Art in the Mauryan Period

(Pillars / Rock-cut Caves / Palace Architecture / Sculpture)



1. Introduction: Mauryan Art and the State

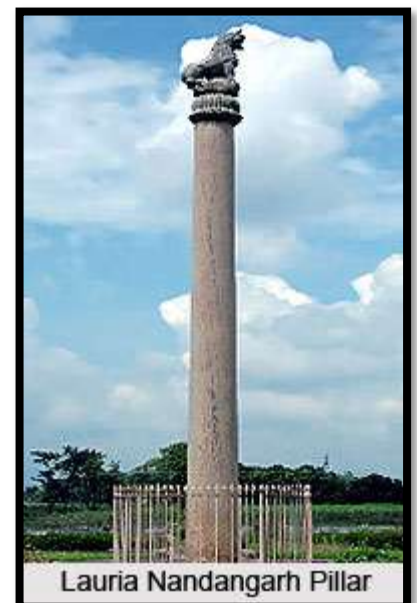
- Mauryan art (c. 322-185 BCE) represents the first systematic, **state-sponsored** artistic tradition in Indian history. Under Chandragupta Maurya and especially **Ashoka the Great**, art became an instrument of **political authority and religious propagation**.
- The defining technical achievement of Mauryan art is the **Mauryan polish**, a lustrous, mirror-like finish applied to sandstone surfaces. No modern analysis has fully replicated or explained this technique. It appears on pillar shafts, cave walls, and sculptures and disappeared entirely after the Mauryan period.

2. Ashokan Pillars (Stambhas)

- Each pillar is **monolithic** (carved from a single rock), made from **buff-coloured sandstone quarried at Chunar** near Varanasi, and polished to a mirror finish. Parts of a pillar: **Shaft (monolithic)**, **Inverted Lotus (bell-shaped base)**, **Abacus (pedestal)**, and **Capital (animal figure)**.

Bihar-specific Ashokan Pillars:

- Lauriya Nandangarh** (West Champaran): **Single lion capital**. The best-preserved Ashokan pillar in Bihar. The pillar stands to nearly its full original height.
- Lauriya Areraj** (East Champaran): Shaft survives without the animal capital.



- **Rampurwa** (West Champaran): Two pillars, one with a **bull capital**, one with a **lion capital**. The bull capital is among the finest Mauryan sculptures.
- **Vaishali: Single lion pillar**; marks the spot where the Buddha delivered his last sermon before Mahaparinirvana. It is unique because it **lacks an inscription** (unlike others).

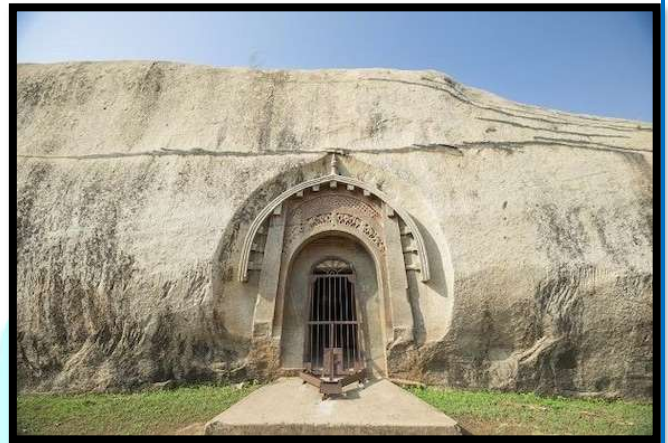
The Lion Capital at Sarnath:

- Though located at Sarnath (UP), it is the most famous Mauryan capital: **four lions back-to-back** on a circular abacus, surmounted by a **Dharmachakra**. Adopted as **India's National Emblem in 1950**. The wheel on the abacus is on the **National Flag**.



3. Rock-Cut Caves, Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills

- The **Barabar Caves**, located near Jehanabad district (Makhdumpur block), Bihar, are the **oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India**, predating the famous Buddhist caves of Maharashtra by at least a century. They were **donated to the Ajivika sect by Ashoka**.
- **Nagarjuni Hills** (also near Gaya, Bihar): Three caves donated **to the Ajivikas by Dasharatha** (Ashoka's grandson), named **Gopi, Vapiyak, and Vedathika**. Inscription on the Nagarjuni hills records Dasharatha's patronage of the Ajivikas.



Key Barabar Caves:

- **Lomas Rishi Cave**: The most famous. Its facade mimics a wooden arch, the **earliest example of rock-cut architecture in India**. Decorated with **elephants and a Dharmachakra**. The interior has a **highly polished** circular chamber.
- **Sudama Cave**: Oldest dated cave (recorded in **Ashoka's own inscription**). Two chambers, an outer rectangular hall and an inner circular chamber with Mauryan-polished walls.
- **Karan Chaupar and Vishwa Jhopri Caves**: Other Barabar caves donated by Ashoka.

4. Pataliputra Palace, Kumhrar Excavations (Patna)

- The ruins of the Mauryan palace at **Kumhrar, Patna**, are the archaeological remains of what **Megasthenes** described as the most magnificent palace in the world, not inferior to those of Susa or Ecbatana.'
- **Key find: ruins of the 80-pillared assembly hall** (Apadana), a forest of **polished sandstone columns**. Only the column bases remain.
- **Achaemenid Persian influence** is visible in the hypostyle (many-pillared) hall design, evidence of cross-cultural exchange between the Mauryan and Persian empires.

5. Mauryan Sculpture

- **Didarganj Yakshi (Chauri-bearer)**: Found at Didarganj, Patna. Now in the **Patna Museum**. A life-size female figure in **polished sandstone**, holding a fly-whisk (chauri). Considered **the finest example of**

Mauryan sculpture in the round. The Mauryan polish, sensuous curves, and anatomical detail are unmatched in ancient Indian sculpture.

- **Rampurwa Bull Capital:** The bull capital from Rampurwa (**West Champaran**) shows naturalistic modelling of extraordinary quality, now at the entrance of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- **Terracotta figurines:** Found at **Buxar and Patna**; represent **popular (non-royal) art** of the Mauryan period.

Bihar Special Insight: The Mauryan Polish: Why It Matters

The Mauryan polish is a key factual point that sets Bihar's Mauryan monuments apart. It appears on:

- **Ashokan pillar shafts**
- **Barabar cave interior walls**
- **Sculptures like the Didarganj Yakshi**

This technique disappeared after the Mauryan period. No subsequent Indian dynasty replicated it. The process is still not fully understood by modern scholars. Mentioning this in your answer demonstrates analytical depth beyond simple fact-listing and will impress the examiner.

BPSC Mains Facts: Mauryan Art

- **Defining technical feature:** Mauryan polished lustrous mirror-finish on sandstone
- **Pillar material:** Buff-coloured sandstone, Chunar quarries (Varanasi)
- **Bihar pillars:** Lauriya Nandangarh (best preserved), Lauriya Areraj, Rampurwa, Vaishali
- **Rampurwa bull capital:** Among the finest Mauryan sculptures; now at Rashtrapati Bhavan
- **National emblem source:** Lion Capital at Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), 1950
- **Oldest rock-cut caves in India:** Barabar Caves, Jehanabad (Bihar)
- **Barabar caves donated to the Ajivika sect by Ashoka and Dasharatha**
- **Kumhrar (Patna):** Ruins of an 80-pillared assembly hall of the Pataliputra palace
- **Finest Mauryan sculpture:** Didarganj Yakshi (Chauri-bearer) Patna Museum
- **Nagarjuni Hill caves:** Donated by Dasharatha (Ashoka's grandson) to Ajivikas

BPSC Mains PYQ Analysis

Relevant Previous Questions:

- **Discuss the chief features of Mauryan art and architecture.** (Multiple Mains)
- **Write short notes on: Art & Architecture of Mauryan Age** (Multiple Mains)
- **Throw light on Mauryan art and analyze its impact in Bihar.**
- **Discuss the features of Mauryan art and architecture and its relationship with Buddhism.**

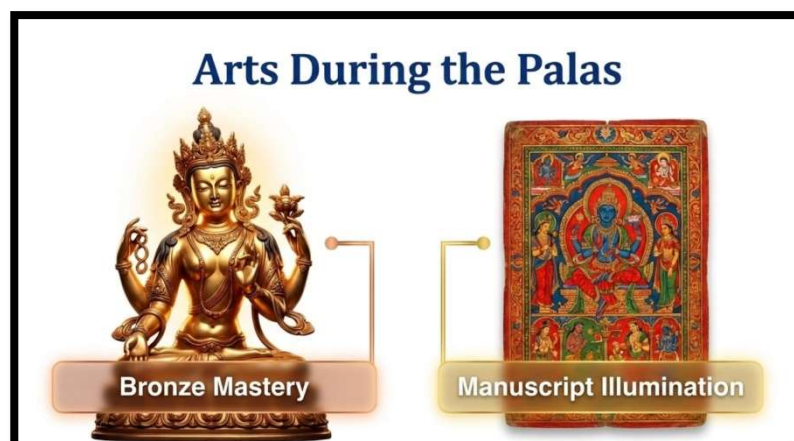
Theme and Pattern: BPSC focuses on **Bihar-specific Mauryan monuments**, the Ashokan pillars in Champaran, the Barabar Caves near Gaya, the palace ruins at Kumhrar, and the Didarganj Yakshi. The examiner expects you to link art to **political messaging**: Ashoka used pillars as public proclamations of his Dhamma across the empire. Art was governance.

1.2: Arts During the Palas

(Bronze Sculpture | Manuscript Painting | Architecture | International Influence)

1. Introduction: The Pala Dynasty and Buddhist Art

- The **Pala dynasty (c. 750-1200 CE)** was the last great Buddhist dynasty of India, ruling Bihar and Bengal. Their reign coincided with the **final flowering of Indian Buddhist art** before the destruction of the great university-monasteries by Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1197-1203 CE.
- The **Palas were patrons of Mahayana, Vajrayana, and Tantric Buddhism**, which is considered a tradition that produced rich iconographic programmes of **Bodhisattvas, Taras, and tantric deities**. This religious context shaped every form of Pala artistic production.
- Their patronage created what art historians call the **Pala School**, an influential tradition in bronze sculpture, stone carving, and manuscript illumination that shaped Buddhist art across Asia.



2. Bronze Sculpture: The Greatest Contribution

- Pala bronze sculptures are regarded as the **finest Buddhist bronzes in the world**. They were cast using the **lost-wax (cire perdue) method**, molten metal poured into a clay mould formed around a wax model. The technique produces sculptures of extraordinary precision and detail. **Dhiman and Vitapala** are the only two artists from ancient India whose names are recorded in history (by the Tibetan historian Taranatha).
- **Common subjects: Avalokiteshvara, Tara, Manjushri, Prajnaparamita, Jambhala, Buddhist deities** and Bodhisattvas.
- **Stylistic features: Elegantly proportioned figures, triple-flexed poses (tribhanga), elaborate jewellery, fine crowns, combining spiritual grace with worldly beauty.** The surfaces are smooth, the expressions serene.



Key Centres of Pala Bronze Production in Bihar:

- **Nalanda:** The great university-monastery was also a centre of artistic production. Many Pala bronzes were made here.
- **Kurkihar (near Wazirganj, Gaya district):** A major bronze hoard was discovered here, hundreds of Pala bronzes, now distributed across the **Patna Museum**, the Indian Museum, Kolkata, and the National Museum, New Delhi. Kurkihar is the richest source of Pala bronzes in the world.
- **Vikramshila:** University-monastery in the **Bhagalpur** area; another major production centre.

3. Manuscript Painting: Illuminated Buddhist Texts

- The Palas produced **illuminated Buddhist manuscripts and handwritten texts** on **palm leaf and paper**, illustrated with miniature paintings of Buddhist deities.
- The most important illustrated text is the **Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita** (Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines). Multiple illustrated copies survive in collections in Nepal, Tibet, and India.



Visual Style of Pala Manuscript Paintings:

- **Background:** Dark (black or deep blue) ground creating a dramatic visual contrast. The manuscripts were primarily painted on palm leaves (Talapatra) as paper was only introduced in the very late Pala period.
- **Palette:** Vivid orange, yellow, and red figures against the dark ground; white for highlights.
- **Figure style:** Elongated, graceful figures; almond-shaped eyes; hieratic (formal, frontal) poses for deities.
- **Decorative borders:** Geometric and floral patterns framing each illustrated panel.

4. Pala Architecture in Bihar

- **Vikramshila University** (Bhagalpur district, Bihar): Founded by **Dharmapala** (770-810 CE). One of the greatest centres of Buddhist learning in the world. **Destroyed by Bakhtiyar Khilji** in 1203 CE.
- **Odantapuri (Bihar Sharif, Nalanda district):** Founded by **Gopala**, the first Pala king. A major university-monastery that became the model for later Tibetan monasteries.
- **Nalanda expansion:** The Palas donated **200 villages** for Nalanda's maintenance and extensively expanded its buildings and library under Dharmapala and Devapala. The Nalanda Copper Plate of Devapala records the grant of five villages for the maintenance of a monastery built by the Sailendra King of Sumatra.
- **Somapura Mahavihara (Paharpur, Bangladesh):** Founded by **Dharmapala**. One of the largest Buddhist monasteries ever built, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Note: located in present-day Bangladesh, not India.



5. Stone Sculpture

- **The Medium:** The defining feature of Pala stone art is the use of **Black Basalt** (also known as Kasauti Pathar). This stone is fine-grained, hard, and capable of taking a high polish, though not as mirror-like as the Mauryan polish.
- **Source:** The stone was primarily quarried from the **Rajmahal Hills** (present-day Santhal Pargana) and parts of Munger.

- **High Relief:** Unlike Mauryan sculptures, which were "in the round" (3D), Pala stone sculptures are mostly stelae (slabs) carved in high relief. The back of the slab is usually flat and uncarved, intended to be placed against temple walls.

6. International Influence of Pala Art

- **Nepal and Tibet:** Buddhist painters and sculptors from Pala workshops travelled to Nepal and Tibet. Early Tibetan Buddhist art is directly derived from Pala models.
- **Myanmar (Burma):** The Pagan kingdom's Buddhist sculpture shows strong Pala stylistic influence.
- **Java (Indonesia):** The Sailendra dynasty's Buddhist art shows Pala features, indicating active cultural exchange via sea routes.
- The Pala dynasty thus made Bihar and Bengal the international capital of Buddhist artistic culture for four centuries.

Bihar Special Insight: Kurkihar, The Most Important Pala Site in Bihar

Kurkihar is a village near Bodh Gaya, Gaya district. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, an extraordinary hoard of hundreds of Pala bronze sculptures was discovered here, making it the single richest source of Pala bronzes anywhere in the world.

These bronzes are now in the Patna Museum, the Indian Museum, Kolkata, and the National Museum, New Delhi.

Most students only mention Nalanda when writing about Pala art. Mentioning Kurkihar specifically, with the detail that it produced the world's largest Pala bronze hoard, is a proven way to differentiate your answer and secure additional marks.

BPSC Mains Facts Pala Art

- **Pala period:** c. 750-1200 CE; Bihar and Bengal
- **Religious tradition:** Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism
- **Greatest artistic contribution:** Buddhist bronze sculpture, lost-wax (cire perdue) method
- **Most important Bihar site:** Kurkihar (Gaya district), the world's largest Pala bronze hoard
- **Key illustrated manuscript:** Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita
- **Manuscript palette:** Dark background; orange-yellow-red figures
- **Odantapuri was founded by Gopala** (Bihar Sharif, Nalanda district)
- **Vikramshila was founded by: Dharmapala** (Bhagalpur area, Bihar)
- **Somapura Mahavihara: Dharmapala** (Paharpur, present-day Bangladesh; UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- **Destroyed by:** Bakhtiyar Khilji 1197-1203 CE
- **International influence:** Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar, Java Pala as the origin of trans-Asian Buddhist art

BPSC Mains PYQ Analysis

Relevant Previous Questions:

- **Critically examine the salient features of Pala Art.** (Multiple Mains)
- **Discuss the features of Pala art and architecture and its relationship with Buddhism.**
- **Write a short note on: Pala Art** (Multiple Mains)

Theme and Pattern: BPSC focuses on three aspects of Pala art: bronze **sculpture**, **manuscript painting**, and **architectural patronage**. The examiner rewards answers that name specific centres (**Nalanda, Kurkihar**), specific texts (**Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita**), and explain the international spread of Pala art across Asia.

1.3: Patna Kalam Painting

(Origin | Style | Subjects | Artists | Significance)



1. Origin of the School

- Patna Kalam (also written **Patna Qalam**; also called **Company Painting** or the **Company School**) is a school of miniature painting that emerged in **Patna (then called Azimabad)** in the **late 18th century** and flourished through the 19th century.
- Its origin lies in the **decline of the Mughal Empire** after Aurangzeb's death (1707). As the imperial court weakened, **Mughal court artists lost their primary patrons** and began migrating to provincial centres. Patna, a thriving commercial city on the Ganga, home to European trading companies and later British administrators, was a natural destination.
- Artists who settled here gradually developed a **distinct local style** that departed significantly from Mughal conventions, shaped by the new subject matter demanded by their patrons.

2. Characteristics and Style

A. Subject Matter: The Defining Difference

- This is the most important distinguishing feature: **Patna Kalam paintings depict ordinary life**, not royalty, not mythology, not religious scenes.
- Subjects: artisans at work (weavers, potters, blacksmiths), bazaar scenes, musicians, dancers, festivals, flora and fauna of Bihar and the Gangetic plain**
- This shift from court and religious subjects to **secular daily life** is unique in Indian miniature painting. Patna Kalam is therefore a **rare visual record of Bihar's social history** during the 18th and 19th centuries.

B. Technical Features

- **Size:** Smaller format than Mughal miniatures suited for personal collection or gifting.
- **Medium:** Primarily **paper**, which was often handmade '**Sialkoti**' **paper or imported European paper with watermarks.**; later **ivory** for European patrons who prized its delicate quality.
- **Technique:** Known as **Kajli Syahi**, where the painting is made directly with the brush without any pencil sketching (under-drawing).
- **Colour palette:** Softer and more naturalistic than the bold Mughal palette, influenced by European watercolour conventions.
- **Perspective:** Adoption of European 'Linear Perspective' while retaining the Mughal 'Bird's Eye View' in some compositions.
- **No gold leaf:** Unlike Mughal miniatures, Patna Kalam uses little or no gold, reflecting its secular, documentary character.

3. Key Artists of the Patna Kalam School

- **Sewak Ram** (active c. 1790-1830): **The founder figure and most important artist of the Patna Kalam school.** His work set the stylistic standards for the tradition. Best known for portraits and depictions of daily life.
- **Hulas Lal:** Second-generation artist who refined the naturalistic approach and is known for precise depictions of craftsmen.
- **Shiva Lal:** Leading artist who continued the tradition into the mid-19th century.
- **Gobardhan Lal:** Famous for his 'Bird and Animal' studies, often compared to the Mughal artist Ustad Mansur but with a more scientific, European documentary style.
- **Fakir Chand Lal:** A later artist in the tradition.

4. European Patronage

- A defining feature of Patna Kalam is its **European patronage.** British administrators, merchants, and travellers commissioned paintings of Indian life as **documentary records and souvenirs**
- This created a unique dynamic: **Indian artists painting Indian subjects for European patrons, resulting** in a style that blends Mughal technical precision with European interests in naturalistic documentation.
- The **Patna Museum** holds the primary public collection of Patna Kalam works in Bihar.

5. Significance

- **Historical record:** Patna Kalam paintings are an invaluable visual **archive of Bihar's social life.** The occupations, dress, customs, and material culture of the **18th-19th centuries** are documented here in a way no written source can match.
- **Artistic innovation:** The school represents a **genuinely hybrid artistic tradition**, neither purely Mughal nor purely European, but a synthesis unique to Company-era Patna.
- **Cultural heritage:** Patna Kalam is formally recognised as part of India's intangible cultural heritage. Revival efforts are ongoing.

Basis	Mughal Miniature	Patna Kalam
Subject	Court scenes, royalty, battles	Artisans, bazaars, and everyday Bihar life
Patron	The Emperor and nobles	British administrators and merchants
Format	Varied sizes, sometimes large	Consistently small format
Gold use	Extensive gold leaf and lapis lazuli	Minimal or no gold

Answer Writing Tip

How to write a Patna Kalam short note (150-200 words):

- **Origin (2 sentences):** Mughal decline → artists migrate to Patna → new style in late 18th century.
- **Subjects (2 sentences):** Ordinary Bihar life/artisans, bazaars, flora-fauna.
- **Style (2 sentences):** Fine brushwork, paper or ivory medium, naturalistic palette, European perspective, no gold leaf.
- **Artists (1 sentence names only):** Sewak Ram (founder), Hulas Lal, Shiva Lal, Gobardhan Lal.
- **Significance (1-2 sentences):** Unique visual record of Bihar's 18th-19th century social life; rare hybrid tradition.

Do NOT pad with general art theory. BPSC short notes reward **specific, accurate, Bihar-specific content**.

BPSC Mains Facts Patna Kalam Painting

- **Other names:** Patna Qalam, Company Painting, Company School of painting
- **Period:** Late 18th century (origin); 19th century (peak)
- **Location:** Patna (Azimabad), Bihar. Specifically, the **Lodikila** and **Mughalpura** areas of Patna.
- **Origin:** Migration of Mughal court artists after the decline of the Mughal Empire
- **Founder artist:** **Sewak Ram** (c. 1790-1830)
- **Other artists:** Hulas Lal, Shiva Lal, Gobardhan Lal, Fakir Chand Lal and Ishwari Prasad (the last great master of the school).
- **Medium:** Paper (primarily); ivory (for European patrons)
- **Subjects:** Ordinary life of Bihar/artisans, craftsmen, bazaar scenes, flora and fauna
- **Patrons:** British administrators and merchants in Company-era Patna, with **Sir Charles D'Oyly** playing a leading role.
- **Primary collection:** Patna Museum, Bihar

BPSC Mains PYQ Analysis

Relevant Previous Questions:

- **Explain the salient features of Patna Kalam painting style.** (Multiple Mains)
- **Write short note on: Patna Kalam Painting** (Multiple Mains)

Theme and Pattern: Patna Kalam is a **guaranteed short note topic** in BPSC Mains. The examiner looks for three things: (a) the historical origin and decline of the Mughal Empire and artist migration to Patna, (b) the unique subject matter, ordinary people of Bihar, not royalty or mythology, and (c) **at least 2-3 artist names**. An answer without artist names is incomplete.

1.4: Madhubani Painting (Mithila Painting)

(Origin | Types | Technique | Artists | Significance)



1. Introduction and Origin

- Madhubani painting holds a unique place in Bihar's cultural and artistic tradition. It is prevalent in **Madhubani, Darbhanga, Mithilanchal, Katihar, and the Terai region of Nepal**, all within what was ancient Mithila.
- The earliest literary evidence of the Madhubani art style is found in the Maithili poet **Vidyapati's** celebrated works '**Kirtilata**' and '**Kirtipataka**'. The artistic tradition itself is traced to the **Ramayana period**: according to tradition, **King Janak of Mithila** commissioned artists to paint the walls of his palace and the homes of his subjects for the **wedding of his daughter Sita to Lord Rama**. This is why Madhubani painting is also called **Mithila Painting**.
- The art gained **global visibility in the modern era through W.J. Archer**, Sub-Divisional Officer, Darbhanga district, who documented and promoted it extensively. A large museum of Madhubani art has been established in Tokoamachi city, Japan.
- Indian Railways decorated the bogies of the Sampark Kranti Express and the **Parliament gate in Delhi** with Madhubani art. **Madhubani railway station** itself has been decorated with Madhubani paintings, a significant recognition of its national cultural status.

2. Visual Features and Subjects

- Madhubani paintings depict symbolic images of religious and social tradition, primarily related to **weddings, festivals, and social customs**. They show particular attention to **natural imagery**: sun, moon, peacock, fish, bamboo, tortoise, elephant, and green trees.
- Religious subjects include **Hindu deities**: Ganesha, Radha-Krishna, Rama-Sita, Maa Gauri, and Kul Devata.



The images are rich with **symbolic meaning**. **Fish symbolises fertility and prosperity**; tortoise symbolises prosperity and regeneration; **lotus represents religious ceremony and purity**.

- **Traditionally painted on walls and floors**, Madhubani art is **now created on paper and cloth as well**. Images are made with fingers or bamboo sticks (koonchi) rather than formal brushes.

3. Natural Colours

- All **colours are made from natural sources**, a defining feature that makes Madhubani painting eco-friendly and distinct:
- **Black**: kajal (lampblack) mixed with cow dung or the seed of the wood-apple.
- **Yellow**: turmeric or flower pollen
- **Red**: juice of the kusuma flower or red sandal
- **Green**: ground leaves of trees
- **White**: rice powder
- **Orange (basanti)**: palash (flame of the forest) flowers

4. Types of Madhubani Art

A. Bhatti Chitra (Wall Painting)

- **Gosni Ghar decoration**: Religious subjects, Devi Durga, Sita-Ram, Radha-Krishna, Lakshmi-Vishnu, Shiva-Parvati. Made primarily by Brahmin and Kayastha women.
- **Kohar Ghar decoration**: Erotic imagery related to fertility, representations of Kamadeva-Rati outside the house, and symbolic sexual imagery inside.
- **Kohbar corner decoration**: Yaksha-Yakshini images at the four corners of the room, along with fish, banana, sun, moon, elephant, and lion.

B. Patta Chitra (Cloth/Paper Painting)

- Developed from a blend of ancient Indian painting traditions and Nepal's art. Painted on paper or cloth. These are now commercially prominent.

C. Arian (Floor Art)

- Unlike Bhatti Chitra, Arian is drawn using a paste of bhiswar (**soaked rice**) and is usually done using the fingers of the right hand.
- Created by women on the floor of the courtyard and the threshold of the house. Made from ground rice mixed with water and colour. Five major categories of Arian: (1) flowers, plants, trees, (2) animals, birds, and humans, (3) tantric symbols, (4) deities, (5) lamps and swastika.

5. Key Artists

- **Godavari Dutta**: Pioneering artist who helped establish Madhubani's international reputation.
- **Jagdamba Devi**: The first Madhubani artist to receive the Padma Shri (1975).
- **Mahasundari Devi**: received Padma Shri in 2011.
- **Sita Devi, Kausalya Devi, Ganga Devi**: Traditional masters who preserved and transmitted the art form. Traditionally, the art has been women's domain.
- **Contemporary male artists**: Narendra Kumar Verma, Shiv Paswan, Arun Kumar Yadav. As the commercial demand has grown, men have joined the tradition.

Basis	Madhubani	Patna Kalam
Origin	Ramayana period, folk tradition	18th century, derived from Mughal court painting.
Subjects	religious imagery, festivals, nature	secular daily life, artisans, bazaar scenes
Artists	traditionally women	traditionally, men (hence called 'purushon ki chitra shaili')
Medium	walls, paper, cloth, natural pigments	paper, ivory, imported pigments
Survival	survived as a living folk tradition passed from generation to generation	declined because it required institutional patronage and died when patronage ended, demonstrating that folk art survives better than court-derived art

BPSC Mains Facts: Madhubani Painting

- **Also called:** Mithila Painting
- **Styles:** Kachni, Godna, Bharni
- **Region:** Madhubani, Darbhanga, Mithilanchal, Katihar, Nepal Terai
- **Traced to the** Ramayana period, King Janak commissioned the Sita-Ram wedding
- **Earliest literary mention:** Kirtipataaka by Maithili poet Vidyapith
- **Global promoter:** W.J. Archer, Sub-Divisional Officer, Darbhanga district
- **Museum:** Tokoamachi city, Japan
- **Types:** Bhatti Chitra (wall), Patta Chitra (paper/cloth), Arian (floor)
- **Colours:** All natural turmeric (yellow), kusuma flower (red), leaves (green), kaja+dung/ the seed of the wood-apple (black), rice powder (white)
- **Made by:** Traditionally, women of Mithila
- **Key artist (Padma Shri):** Jagdamba Devi Padma Shri, 2010
- **Other artists:** Godavari Dutta, Sita Devi, Ganga Devi, Kausalya Devi
- **National recognition:** Parliament Gate, Delhi; Sampark Kranti Express bogies; Madhubani railway station

Exam Tip

The examiner looks for: (a) origin story, King Janak and the Sita-Ram wedding, (b) types, Bhatti chitra, Patta chitra, Arian, (c) natural colour sources, and (d) key artists, especially Padma Shri recipients. An answer without artist names is incomplete.

BPSC Mains PYQ Analysis

Relevant Previous Questions:

- **Write an essay on the art and painting of Bihar.** (39th BPSC Long Answer)

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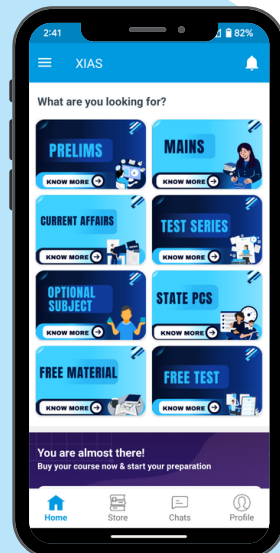
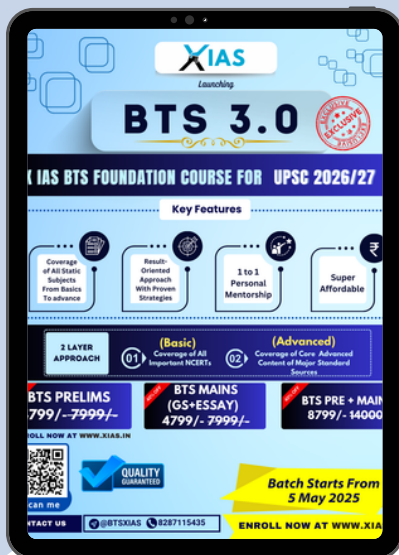
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