

What are the relevant topics/books/sources to cover in art and culture for the UPSC CSE? (Bavesh Misharaworks at Indian Administrative Service (2015-present))

Art and Culture has always been Achilles' Heel for UPSC aspirants. The facts that make this topic dreadful are:

- The **syllabus is enormous**. There are numerous topics and subtopics to cover in Architecture, Literature, Painting etc.
- There is no surety of performing well even if you have covered everything under the sun. The chances of getting **out of the syllabus question** are very high in this section.
- It involves fair amount of memorization and can be extremely monotonous to learn the names and places.

The best strategy to cover Art & Culture is:

- To realize that we have limited time in our hand and therefore we cannot afford to study all the books that are there in the market for Art & Culture.
- If a difficult question is asked by UPSC then the chances are that no one would be able to answer the question correctly.

Nitin Singhania's book is a very good resource for Art and Culture. It used to come in notes format during my preparation days. It has gained popularity because it touches almost all aspects of syllabus well without going too deep into the topic. A good reading of the book will give good grasp over the fundamentals.

NCERT Ancient and Medieval India (Old) are two another good book. Every chapter has few paragraphs for the developments in the field of art and culture during that era. For example, there is a separate chapter on Science Technology and Philosophy in the Ancient India book.

If you want to read further then **Introduction to Indian Art NCERT (New)** is yet another book. It contains colorful photos and the layout of the book is visually appealing.

The above 3 resources should be enough for tackling easy to medium difficulty question.

There is no need to refer to Spectrum, Coaching Institute Notes, CCRT, NIOS etc. as the **ROI (Return on Investment)** is very low.

If you have spare time then utilize it effectively by focusing on your Optional, Essay and Ethics. 100+ hours spent on Art and Culture may not even yield 10 marks extra but it can create 30+ marks difference in Essay.

So don't go overboard with your Art & Culture preparation.

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