

CLASS VIII SST

OTBA (10 Marks)

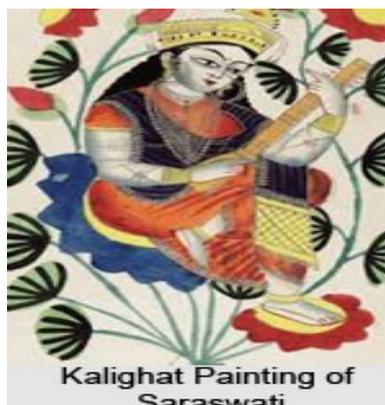
Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

The Kalighat Paintings are watercolor paintings done on mill-made paper by the scroll painters-cum-potters that migrated from rural [Bengal](#) to the city of Calcutta in the nineteenth century. The styles of these paintings were characterized by broad sweeping brush lines, bold colors, and simplification of forms. These paintings were sold to the devotees who visited the Kalighat temple. Kalighat is the place where the temple in honor of the [goddess Kali](#) is built. The area was sacred to Kali and hence the name Kalighat.



Kalighat Painting Shows Ravana and Hanuman

The Kalighat paintings were in existence from late 1830's. Let us look into the history of these paintings. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Indian artists moved to Calcutta with the breakdown of the Mughal patronage and miniature painters from places such as [Patna](#) and [Murshidabad](#) were settling in the city and making pictures for the British. The painters painted on subjects that would interest the rulers. They included subjects as Indian occupations, costumes, methods of transport, religious ceremonies, deities, birds, animals and flowers. The painters focused on the 'picturesque' qualities of life around them. They drew pictures as: a peasant with his bullock cart, a woman carrying water-pot, and shopkeepers with colorful wares. They painted on thin sheets of papers, using watercolors, and pencil or pen for drawing outlines and for shadings to suggest rounded forms, as these were the techniques favored by the British.



Kalighat Painting of Saraswati

In addition to the Mughal painters, Indian artists belonging to different traditions also migrated to Calcutta. The painters lived outside the city of Bengal, in areas like Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Nadia and Hooghly. These painters were known as the village patuas or artist minstrels. They painted on scrolls illustrating pictures from the popular stories of the [Ramayana](#) and the Krishna Lila. They wandered from village to village, singing songs and showing their work. Their style of paintings were exactly opposite to that of the Mughal paintings with its free distortions, sharply linear rhythms and bold colors. These painters on arriving at Calcutta found too difficult to adjust to the British conditions. For them the Kalighat temple offered immediate scope and some of the painters settled in its neighborhood. They also began to adopt the new style found there. They understood the merits of using watercolor. They painted on thin cheap paper and they found out that with a quick sweep of brush dramatic effects could be achieved with far less effort than by using the former medium, opaque gouache. Thus they began to draw bold and lively shapes and strong designs. Calcutta began to be a place that was opened for new visions. With its British and urban emphasis the focus of paintings became more secular and foreign subjects were included in the paintings. The Kalighat painters included alien themes in their paintings as an Englishman on an elephant shooting a tiger and jockeys engaged in horseracing. In the middle of the nineteenth century Kalighat paintings were sold in large numbers to the pilgrims who visited the Kalighat temple. The painters painted on thin, fine hemp paper the pictures of gods. They were depicted in gaudy bright colors. They used silver paintings, which was very attractive. Dresses were depicted in scroll or spot patterns in silver and the edges of saris were emphasized with silver dashes. Necklaces and jewels were indicated with delicate silver lines.

Kalighat painters experimented with faint lithographed outlines to which they applied broad washes of color. They painted dancing-girls, courtesans, voluptuous women holding scarlet roses, women combing hair, nursing peacocks, courtesans eating pan or smoking nargila pipes. Moral principles were also affirmed by illustrating proverbs. They also painted pictures of snakes, fishes, prawns, cats, mice and jackals. The commonest subjects they painted were Hindu gods and goddesses. These paintings were in strong demand for the Hindu pilgrims. Such paintings were in its zenith during 1865.

Later there were modifications in these paintings. The paintings became vastly expanded and the style had achieved new heights of rhythmical expression and during this period there was disgust with the modern life. The Kalighat painters portrayed day-to-day themes in their paintings. They pictured moralizing bitterness in their paintings. It was a time when the religious institutions were becoming lax and corrupt. Holy men were hypocritical and lived lives far removed from asceticism. These changes in subject matter were accompanied by changes in style. The day-to-day happenings of society provided with rich themes in their painting.
