

Pata And Patuas Painting: A Systematic Historical Review

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ABSTRACT

Pata and Patua painting represents one of the significant traditional visual art forms of Bengal, reflecting the region's rich cultural heritage, social narratives, religious beliefs and folk traditions. This article presented a systematic historical review of the origin, evolution, artistic features and socio-cultural significance of Pattachitra and the role of Patuas (traditional scroll painters) in preserving and transmitting indigenous knowledge through generations. Historically rooted in rural Bengal, this art form developed as a medium of storytelling where painters combined visual illustrations with songs (Pater Gaan) to communicate mythological tales, religious themes, historical events, and contemporary social issues. The study examined the transformation of Pata painting from traditional religious narratives to modern expressions addressing themes such as social awareness, environmental concerns, and cultural identity. It also explored the changing socio-economic conditions of Patuas and the challenges of commercialisation, globalisation, and the preservation of folk artistic practices. Through a historical and analytical approach, the review highlights the adaptability and resilience of Pata and Patuas painting as a living tradition. The study emphasized the necessity of documentation, institutional support, and sustainable cultural practices to safeguard this unique art heritage for future generations. In this article, pata and patuas painting: a systematic historical review was discussed.

Keywords: *Pata, Patuas, Painting.*

INTRODUCTION

Pata and Patuas painting is one of the most significant traditional folk-art forms of Bengal, representing a unique combination of visual storytelling, cultural expression, and social communication. The term Pata refers to a painted scroll or cloth-based artwork, while Patuas are the traditional artisan communities who create these paintings and narrate their stories through songs known as Pater Gaan. This indigenous art tradition has evolved over centuries, preserving religious narratives, historical events, social values, and everyday experiences of rural communities. The historical roots of Pata painting can be traced to ancient Indian traditions of narrative art, where visual representations were used as a medium for spreading religious and cultural ideas. In Bengal,

the Patuas developed a distinctive style by combining painting, music, and oral storytelling. Traditionally, they travelled from village to village, displaying their scroll paintings and explaining the stories depicted in them. Themes of early Pata paintings were largely influenced by Hindu mythology, particularly stories from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and local folk traditions, while later works incorporated themes from Islam, social reform movements, political events, and contemporary issues. During the colonial period, Pata and Patuas painting experienced significant changes due to changing social, economic, and cultural conditions. The introduction of modern forms of communication and changing patronage systems affected the traditional livelihood of Patuas. However, the art form adapted by reflecting contemporary realities, including social inequality, environmental concerns, public health awareness, and political movements. This adaptability became a key factor in the survival and continuity of Pata painting. In the post-independence period, efforts by cultural organizations, researchers, and government institutions contributed to the recognition and preservation of this folk tradition. Pata painting gradually gained national and international attention as an important representation of Bengal's intangible cultural heritage. Contemporary Patuas have expanded their artistic themes and experimented with new materials, markets, and exhibition platforms while maintaining the traditional narrative character of the art. A systematic historical review of Pata and Patuas painting provides an understanding of its origin, evolution, socio-cultural significance, artistic features, and changing role in modern society. Studying this tradition highlights not only the artistic creativity of the Patuas but also their contribution to preserving collective memory, cultural identity, and indigenous knowledge systems. The objective of the study is to exploration of systematic historical review on pata and patuas painting.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bera, S. (2024). The blending of Indian historical cultural traditions into Pata paintings and the lyrical folk songs of Patas is the main focus of this study. We have carried out a thorough analysis of the Patuas' ethnic geographic dispersion, which includes the Indus Valley Civilisation, the colonial era, the Buddhist and Jainist eras, and their present situation in Bengal. The purpose of this study paper is to use Pata and its folk music to highlight the oral history of our past. The main subject of this study is the Patua community in West Bengal. The Bengal Patachitra is an oral and visual arts tradition practised by the Patuas of West Bengal. Dramatization and graphic story songs, which are essential components of our historiography, are the main traits of this folk culture. The most important part of oral history is the Pata folk songs. Chauka pata and Jarano pata are the two main types of these ancient patas. In the past, Patuas displayed scroll artwork that told epic stories as they journeyed from village to village. As Bengali bards, they use stories, epics, folklore, social concerns, and modern difficulties to illustrate the scroll. A traditional method of telling stories is scroll painting. Patachitra artists are not just painters; they are also lyricists, singers, performers, and complete artists. Patua art is sometimes referred to as "the singing scrolls". The stories and images produced by Patua artists are inspired by ancient Hindu and Muslim historical and mythological writings. These days, the scrolls might also highlight issues related to literacy, health, and the environment.

Das, D. & Soni, G. (2024). A unique visual depiction of West Bengal and Orissa, Pata-painting is connected to a number of songs and paintings. The social, cultural, religious, and political events portrayed by the patuas (Pata-Painters) are shown in these works of art, which are consistently beautiful and visually striking. This study explores how the custom has been identified as travelling folk art and storytelling. Interviews with the Patuas, a thorough literature survey, and an analytical examination of the Pata-paintings all contributed significantly to the investigation of the study's goals. This study described its adaptation and evolution over the past 20 years based on depictions of Hindu gods and goddesses, mythological tales, and scenes from everyday life. particularly the methods and materials used by the next generation of painters. Throughout the past few centuries, artists have participated in both domestic and international folk festivals and handicraft fairs to learn more about the global art market. In order to improve and conserve this art form, this study attempts to portray the lasting historical legacy and cultural relevance by concentrating on these distinctive West Bengali art practices. Additionally, this study seeks to highlight the present Pata-painting phenomenon and how it meets the needs of metro-city intellectuals.

Tiwari, S. & Shrivastava, H. (2023). Inspired by Jagannath and Hindu mythology, Pattachitra is an ancient art form from Bengal and Orissa. The patachitra paintings, which date back to the fifth century, mimic historic murals from the holy sites of the Puri, Konark, and Bhubaneswar regions. This kind of art is well-known among art aficionados around the world for its fluid sketching style and skilful use of spatial lines. "Patuas" is the term used to describe the artists. "Pater gaan" is the term used to describe these works, which include stories based on modern Indian events as well as ancient mythological tales and tribal rituals. This art form is mostly performed by painters, who use vegetable and mineral dyes to represent and decorate pictures of god figures. "Pattachitra" employs primary colours and blends them to produce other hues. The ideas and motifs of "Pattachitra", which usually show stories formed by rituals, are based on Indian mythology. These scrolls are made by both men and women. The goal of this study is to document the declining beauty of traditional Indian textiles in their unspoiled state. Our goal is to comprehend the evolution of this painted textile from 300 years ago to the present. The goal is to carefully document every aspect of this art form, including colour, motifs, tools, equipment, and the production process. Additionally, this project aims to document information about conventional methods of painting and natural dyeing. In addition to secondary data, we collected intentional information about the craft from Raghurajpur village through observation and interviews. Five craftspeople who were engaged in traditional "Pattachitra" painting at the time of collection provided us with the craft documentation data. Painted on beautifully woven cotton cloth, Pattachitra, sometimes referred to as 'pata' or 'pat', has experienced numerous changes in themes, colours, and techniques. Gaining understanding of the art and the contemporary artist is the main goal of studying this traditional art form. The profession of patachitra, which began in Bengal in the tenth and eleventh centuries, is commonly referred to as painting. The painting's or section's presentation is referred to as 'pat khelano'. The pigments used in the paintings came from natural sources such as gum, lamp soot, bark, and trees. The three original patachitra paintings from Purulia, Bankura, and West Medinipur—Jadano Pat and Arelatai Pat—were created under strict guidelines that required total vegetarianism during the painting period,

sleeping on the ground without a mattress, and donning a dhoti. In patachitra paintings, hand and palm gestures, as well as eye movements, represent both good and evil people. Only Lord Jagannath's life is shown in the Patachitra paintings, which incorporate parts from the sacred story.

Das, A. (2023). Patua women's paintings, which cover a wide range of subjects, are now kept in private collections and museums all around the world. They have recently been displayed in museums, galleries, art markets, and fairs all around the world. Patua women today have taken part in numerous artistic and social endeavours, some of which have been the main or secondary focus of academic research. These women's accomplishments have been widely recognised and acknowledged in recent decades. It is especially clear how these women's contributions have a global impact and how many different venues are interested in their work. These women expertly combine localism and cosmopolitanism in their many live performances, both domestically and internationally, showing their jarano paintings and singing in rural Bengal while performing traditional or modern themes. The world has "uncovered" Naya women painters and their Pattachitra creations, according to an analysis of their recent career paths and artwork. However, merely identifying these patterns does not shed light on the subjectivities of Naya Patua artists, especially with regard to the female painters. Velho emphasises how important it is to draw attention to the many effects of globalisation dynamics in modern society. He gives the example of two people from different generations who live in the same city but have different paths and opinions about what they have accomplished. He stresses the need for showcasing the variety of people's journeys, the distinctive activities they engage in, and the different interpretations they give them. Recently, women in rural Naya have started to follow pathways similar to those of patua men. I will first briefly present a person who made a substantial contribution to increasing the visibility of women as Patua craftsmen before I begin my discussion on Patua women's perspectives of their current activities. Dukhushyam Chitrakar is a patua master who exemplifies the role that some men play in advancing and recognising the efforts of women. His viewpoint illustrates how tradition and cosmopolitanism interact in the contemporary work of Naya's patua. The viewpoints of the ladies will then be briefly examined. To demonstrate the expressive qualities of lines, specific areas of Indian art have been chosen for analysis. Ajanta cave paintings, Mughal miniatures, Rajasthani miniatures, Pahari paintings, the Bengal school of art, and pieces by some contemporary painters are examples of these regions. The analysis shows that Bengali, Bihari, Odishan and Assamese artwork incorporates characteristics of Indian traditional art and folk paintings. There are many societal components in these works of art. The use of lines, colour, and European influences are all discussed. The analysis's goal is to distinguish between the composition's intrinsic quality and the well-known creative ideas it portrays. Analysis is done on the complex features, themes, and highlights of Patachitra artworks.

Mandal, R. (2023). The social and economic circumstances of Pata and Nakshi Kantha artists who emigrated from Bangladesh to Bengal's Birbhum District are examined in this article. Many people have changed both their professions and their occupations. For some reason, the majority of people in this artist community's district have switched to other jobs in order to support themselves. However, there are still certain artistic societies that have managed to preserve their work from one

generation to the next. This article will also feature Pata and Nakshi Kantha's artwork as well as the stake of all these artists. The majority of the Pata painting and Nakshi Kantha artists were Muslims. In the areas surrounding Santiniketan in the Birbhum district, they are known as Pata Chitrakar and Nakshi Kantha Artists. These days, the nakshi kantha painters and pata painting artists (pata chitrakar) have all but vanished between these Muslim villages. Many of these migrant artists were relocated to the country's most populous areas. These painters who came to Bengal have either changed careers or their art has vanished in the modern era.

Sengupta, A. & Bisen, M. (2023). A wide variety of objects that highlight the customs and handicrafts of many socioeconomic groups are referred to as folk art. Folk artists in India are an example of several art and craft media at the grassroots level. The majority of folk artists have little or no academic schooling. It is not at all influenced by academic or high art movements. This kind of art is merely a skill that has been inherited through pupillary succession. The external influences on the folk artist's surroundings are reflected in his creations. For this reason, folk art is mostly connected to rural areas. Folk art forms, whether local or worldwide, consist of simple, expressive, and symbolic technical and thematic pieces that communicate a message related to introspection. This article discusses the assessment of Patuas with particular regard to the rural masses' mobilisation during the Indian independence movement.

Basu, P. (2022). A significant issue of West Bengal's patachitra, or scroll painting, performances is the climate catastrophe. The scrolls use melodies and images to recount old stories, like Manasamangal, in addition to depicting modern themes. The Manasamangal story is seen in many living cultures over the border in Bangladesh, emphasising the strong relationship between humans and nature. Through the intermediality of written material, visual representations, sound recordings, and performance practices in carefully chosen venues, this study examines a number of these performance genres. By doing thus, it undermines disciplines' land-centric frameworks and instead uses a liquid analytical approach to comprehend them.

Jana, T. (2022). The long-standing relationship between illness and the humanities is demonstrated, among other things, by the portrayal of the Athenian Plague in Sophocles' tragedies, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting "The Triumph of Death" (1562), and several Shakespearean plays. But only with the rise of medical humanities, or more generally, health humanities, have these health-related narratives been examined. In these fields, pathographies are essential for expressing the experience of illness and treatment from the perspective of a patient or carer. The works of the Patuas of Naya, known as the "village of painters" by Frank J. Korom, demonstrate how artists are immersing themselves in portraying the deadly virus in light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic and worldwide lockdown. Themes related to the present pandemic have been depicted and expressed by some of Naya's lesser-known painters, including Swarna Chitrakar, Anwar Chitrakar, Ananda Chitrakar, Rahima Chitrakar, and Sandhya Chitrakar. The Patachitras, or scroll paintings of the Patuas, convey important messages and seek to increase consciousness during this time of great sorrow, much like the magnificent murals and digital-opera performances. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the function of Patuas' scroll paintings as pathographies during the present epidemic and to define pathographies within the framework of health humanities.

Chatterjee, A. et al. (2021). India is a culturally dynamic nation with many ingrained folk customs and a fundamentally rich past made up of a cultural-ecological legacy. Many ecosystem-dependent populations live in West Bengal, one of India's eastern states. Indigenous practices continue to be intricately linked to nature, culture, and livelihoods, making it difficult to distinguish between tangible and intangible heritage. Folk performative rituals and their architects are frequently portrayed in mainstream "ecological" and "heritage" discourses as messengers of ecological wisdom—relying on nature but also giving back to it. By examining the intricate relationships between material and cultural factors impacting these "living heritage" customs, we complicate this line of reasoning and shed light on the Patuas of Naya Pingla, West Medinipur, and the Chhau mask makers of Charida, Purulia. In order to understand the intricate human-nature interactions that simultaneously provide livelihood provisioning and cultural sustenance among folk populations in rural South Asia, we have been "immersed" in dense ethnographic realms of the field. We have highlighted the importance of place-based narratives to inform broad theories on heritage and ecological sustainability beyond mainstream perspectives by weaving a multilayered web of information and examining the nonlinear ecology–economy–culture correlation along the two case studies. Despite their geographical proximity, the case studies are intended to emphasize the significance of unmappable micro-realities and nonlinearities in forming a community's resilience rather than to complement one another or provide a comparative narrative of ecological–cultural connectivity.

Raha, P. (2021). Popular mostly in the Indian states of West Bengal and Odisha, patachitra is a type of folk painting. Using homemade adhesives and natural pigments, it is applied to fabric. One of India's most significant ethnic traditions is Patachitra. Artists and art scholars may be drawn to Patachitra because of its narrative style, simplicity, and highly stylised coordination of vivid colours and powerful lines. It was regarded as a vanishing custom. The art has been resurrected in recent years thanks to the backing of many governmental and social organisations. The new generation of Patuas, who produce Patachitras, are gaining a new outlet to sell their work and a new platform to be acknowledged for their inherited talent thanks to their successful initiatives. The Indian state of West Bengal has the village of Nayagram. Everyone who lives in Nayagram is a Patua. With the help of social organisations and the government, this area is becoming more well-known for its residents' artistic abilities. By using Nayagram as a model, this study article aims to determine the mechanisms of development for this type of ethnic art and artists. It is mostly a field-based study to understand the realities on the ground. To find out the true history of Nayagram, an interview with veteran Patua Shyamsudar Chitrakar was conducted. However, Sonia Chitrakar, a young, gifted lady from Patua, was interviewed to learn more about her struggles as a woman from such a marginalised community and how she plans to improve this traditional art form going forward. The research identifies the first four families of Patuas of Nayagram who were granted land to live by Gunadhar Bishal, a wealthy farmer who also loved art, after combining their input with additional village information from primary and literary sources. Over time, their Patuas cousins began to settle in Nayagram as well. As a result, the government and social workers recognised the location as the site of Patuas and Patachitra art. After studying Nayagram as a model of development, this paper discusses the initiatives to identify the problems and suggests likely remedies to develop other dying ethnic traditions worldwide.

Zanatta, M & Roy, A.G. (2021). The global art market and art output have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Patachitra scrolls are a noteworthy example of the folk-art groups' economic structure in the Patua or Patachitra regions of Medinipur, West Bengal. Patachitras' singing paintings belong to a lineage of storytelling and performance arts. The Patuas have been incorporating new themes into their repertory for aeons, creating a living tradition that continuously reflects important social, political, religious, and cultural events, including the COVID-19 epidemic. Since the target audience and the purpose of performances have changed due to societal shifts and new kinds of entertainment, resilience has always been an essential part of this legacy. In recent decades, travelling artists have continued to exist and reorganise their role to better serve the global art market. They participate in art fairs and festivals both inside and outside of their local communities. These artists have been severely impacted financially by COVID-19, since lockdowns that prevented travel and tourism and the cancellation of art festivals and performances have drastically decreased their earnings. In order to support these artists and maintain the spirit of their performances, they are investigating cutting-edge techniques and online exhibition venues. This essay aims to investigate how the pandemic has affected Patua production and the art market from both a commercial and social perspective. The difficulties brought on by the limiting measures and the incapacity to perform will be investigated empirically. Using telephone interviews with thirty hereditary Patuas from Naya conducted between April 2020 and April 2021 as part of the project "Folk Artists in the Time of Coronavirus", this article seeks to shed light on the pandemic's effects on hereditary performing castes in India. The results may be representative of similar groups across South Asia. The article will also attempt to describe these traditional painters' possibilities for the art market in the future. The article is divided into two sections: the first examines Patachitra and Patachitrakars' transformative evolution, while the second uses the concepts of precarity, precariousness, and resilience to analyse the impact of the epidemic.

Mandal, R. et al. (2018). Chinese scroll painting, Bengali pata painting, and Kalighat pata painting have a long and rich history. The scroll paintings mostly feature scenes and narratives from a variety of epics, mythological stories, everyday life embellishments, and activities set against landscapes. An historical description of scroll paintings from India and the Far East is given in this work. Chinese scroll paintings include poetry, flora, avifauna, landscapes, and inscriptions—where Chinese characters play a major role—to portray stories and activities. One important connection between traditional and modern art is the Chinese scroll painting. It depicts important incidents and stories from the court to the person. Bengali pata paintings have developed to portray a variety of mythological and historical themes. Hindu gods, goddesses, and other mythological characters are depicted by the artists along with their stories, which are taken from the Vedas, Puranas, and Mangal Kavyas. As seen in the Kalighat pata painting, the Bengal scroll depicts historical events as well as social and cultural everyday occurrences, especially during the colonial era.

Banik, S. & Kundu, U. (2018). India is a long-standing country with a diverse cultural heritage that includes many different faiths, customs, and languages. India's GDP is largely derived from the industrial and service sectors. Over time, the workforce has moved from agricultural to small-scale manufacturing because of poor irrigation systems and a strong reliance on the environment, which

frequently leads to failures. The Indian economy has greatly improved as a result of its shift from an agricultural to an industrial and service-orientated economy. However, the story of triumph is still unfinished because many businesses that have sprung up in rural and semi-urban areas are facing financial difficulties and inadequate infrastructure. Many people have turned to folk art as a means of subsistence, following in the footsteps of their ancestors. Folk art is based on oral transmission and cultivation among social groups and cultural clusters. Folk art in India is mostly produced by uneducated or semi-illiterate people who live in rural and semi-urban areas with poor economic conditions and lack modern art principles. They usually adhere to the ancient artistic ideas that have been handed down from their forefathers. Patachitra represents the historic and cultural aspects of the country's rich past and is a prime example of an ethnic folk-art form distinguished by vivid colour. 'Pattachitra' is the term for traditional cloth-based scroll painting that originated in the eastern Indian states of West Bengal and Odisha. In Sanskrit, "Patta" means "cloth", and "Chitra" means "picture". These paintings are influenced by tribal culture and Hindu mythology, and they tell stories about contemporary events and social issues. The locals are entertained and educated by the traditional patuas, also known as chitrakaars, who travel from village to village. They receive cash, vegetables, and grains from the public as payment for their performances. Every colour used in the paintings is natural and comes from different fruits and flowers. Since the tenth century, the Patua community in West Bengal, particularly in Paschim Midnapore and Kalighat, has practised the traditional art of patachitra. Each hand-painted scroll would be unfolded by the patuas or chitrakaars, who would then perform their own narrative songs, or pater gaan, frame by frame. The study aims to clarify Patachitra, the way of life and work of Patuas, or Chitrakaars, as well as the difficulties they face in obtaining a living.

Prasad, S. (2018). Our Indian folk artistry's distinctiveness is rooted in long-standing historical and customary beliefs, and it has a rich aesthetic appeal on a global scale. Perfection and specialised abilities that have been passed down through the years are necessary for these traditional artistic disciplines. In their own unique regional style, the artisans' creations portray a variety of facts and mythology. Over the years, these craftspeople have reached out to our nation's farthest regions and used their scroll paintings to spread moral principles. This painting demonstrates the cultural and traditional vitality of our heritage. West Bengali Patachitra paintings are one of the most well-known examples of this art type. This artwork conveys its own cultural identity, values, and aesthetics through its unique painting style and pattern. With a history spanning 2500 years, Patachitra art has made significant contributions to civilisation through the storytelling of its audiovisual scroll paintings. The Patachitrakars' contribution to rural society and their role in preserving our ancient customs, reaching out to remote parts of the nation, and bridging the communication gap would be undermined if they were only regarded as folk art and a community practice in a specific area. The question of whether we are considering the durability of this art form's distinctiveness in the modern era emerges as the Patachitra art form has evolved over time from oral and visual painting to only visual painting. The Patachitarakar have been forced to change their art form and are no longer bound to their customary fringe due to the demands of the modern world. The Patuas were unable to compete with the liberalised market goods due to numerous issues. Even after so many years of

independence, the Patachitra artisans continue to live in poverty, neglect, and hardship due to another significant disadvantage that made them more vulnerable: illiteracy. Additionally, the government did not provide these craftspeople with any significant policy support. The country folk art was devalued by the rapidly expanding city life, and this rural craftsman struggled to find a dignified and safe place inside the urban bounds. These artisan communities are currently under pressure to either maintain their customs and distinctiveness or adapt to the changing global market and cultural shifts. Therefore, this study attempts to concentrate on the problems and difficulties that the current Patachitrakars have in maintaining their own ancient customs and ensuring their own survival. The essay also attempts to highlight the necessity of using traditional art as a means of subsistence for rural craftspeople and the preservation of our customs through adaptation.

Mandal, K. (2017). The Patua community in the Purba Medinipur district, West Bengal, India, is acknowledged by the Brahmapur Purana as an artisan class, more precisely as an occupational caste-guild called "Nabasakh". The Purba Medinipur district's patuas are required to use their traditional skills to create artisan goods, mainly scroll paintings or Pata paintings. Through a number of programmes run by the Ministry of Handicrafts, the Indian government has worked to improve the standing of the rural artisan class across the country since independence. In the late 1950s, West Bengal founded the Department of Micro and Small-Scale Enterprises and Textiles. Every West Bengal district, including Purba Medinipur, also developed a district industrial centre. Since independence, the Indian government has worked to improve the standing of rural artisan groups under the Ministry of Handicrafts, including chitrakars or patuas from the former district of Medinipur (now divided into Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, and Jhargram). The Patuas' economic situation dramatically improved after the SGSY project was introduced in 1999. The economic prospects for artisan groups, such as the Patuas of Purba Medinipur, have been enhanced by the operations of self-help groups (SHGs), state and central government programmes, the growth of retail industries, and the emergence of new urban clients. Improving Purba Medinipur's Patuas' economic circumstances is vital in the context of globalisation and commercialisation. However, the traditional methods of pata painting and scroll painting are threatened by the effects of globalisation.

Sarkar, S.K. (2017). For decades, people in rural India, especially in the rural Bengal region, have been entertained, educated, and engaged by the scroll performers using their natural ability to tell stories visually. Patuas, which displayed scroll paintings depicting epic stories, usually moved from village to village. A vibrant oral tradition influenced by visual art can be established in each community by having people sing songs that tell the stories shown on the scroll while also unfolding the scroll. Their topics were religious in scope, including stories from both Muslim and Hindu faiths. The artists primarily interact with the cultural heritage of the audience, striking a chord with thousands of people and encouraging them to consider the message. As Bengali bards, they portray social and modern themes alongside scrolls containing myths, epics, folklore, and fables. In order to lay the groundwork for the complex history of the patuas' art, the researcher will first clarify the essence of their lives and pursuits, both historically and in the present. The Patuas were active in Bengali villages before British colonisation and the Islamic invasion. This study looks at how social movements and other reasons have caused a millennium of traditional art practices to come to a

standstill, which has led to a sharp drop in support from the rural Bengali agricultural community and its audience. Researchers from India and other countries have been studying this difficult topic on a regular basis for about 200 years, bringing attention to the societal awareness of artistic forms that are in danger.

Mandal, K. (2017). The Paschim Medinipur district's Naya, P.S. Pingla, is home to scroll painters, also referred to as 'Patuas', 'Chitrakaras', or craftsmen. Notably, such scroll painters are not artisans but rather professional artists by ancestry. This art has been practised by people for thousands of years. This rural artisan class have inherited both Islamic and Hindu ceremonial cultural phenomena in their way of life over the course of history. They are members of a disadvantaged and impoverished group. Through a number of programmes run by the Ministry of Handicrafts, the Indian government has worked to improve the standing of the rural artisan class across the country since independence. In the late 1950s, West Bengal founded the Department of Micro and Small-Scale Enterprises and Textiles. Every West Bengal district, including Paschim Medinipur and Purba, also set up a district industrial centre. Nonetheless, the scroll painters' level of poverty has not improved. Following the launch of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in 1999, a number of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were established. It improved Patuas' economic standing. As a result, Pata painting started to become commercialised. Many renowned patuas from Naya, Pingla in Paschim Medinipur district, including Dukhushyam Chitrakar, Shyamsundar Chitrakar, Rani Chitrakar, Manu Chitrakar, Gurupada Chitrakar, Sambhu Chitrakar, and others, have exhibited their folk painting and musical traditions of rural Bengal throughout India and abroad during the era of globalisation. In comparison to earlier times, the Patuas' economic situation in Naya has improved.

CONCLUSION

Pata and Patuas painting represents one of the most significant traditional folk-art forms of Bengal, reflecting the region's cultural heritage, social narratives, religious beliefs, and collective memory. The historical development of this art form demonstrates its transformation from a primarily religious storytelling medium into a dynamic form of visual communication addressing social, political, environmental, and contemporary issues. The Patua community, through their artistic practices and narrative performances, has preserved indigenous knowledge systems and contributed to the continuity of Bengali folk traditions. The systematic historical review reveals that Pata painting has continuously adapted to changing socio-cultural conditions while maintaining its traditional identity. From mythological themes based on Hindu, Islamic, and folk traditions to modern themes such as social awareness, human rights, and environmental concerns, Patuas have expanded the scope of their artistic expressions. Their paintings function not only as aesthetic creations but also as instruments of education, social commentary, and cultural dialogue. However, the survival of this traditional art faces challenges due to modernization, commercialization, changing audience preferences, and limited economic opportunities for artists. Despite these difficulties, initiatives by cultural organizations, government programs, exhibitions, and digital platforms have provided new opportunities for the preservation and global recognition of Pata painting. In conclusion, Pata and Patuas painting is not merely a folk-art tradition but a living cultural practice that connects history, society, and artistic innovation. Its preservation requires sustained

support, documentation, and appreciation of the Patua community's creative contributions. By integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary platforms, Pata painting can continue to evolve while safeguarding its historical and cultural significance for future generations.

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