



A STUDY OF LINEARITY OF INDIAN FOLK PAINTINGS

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ABSTRACT

India had always been known as the land that portrayed cultural and traditional vibrancy through its conventional arts and crafts. The 35 states and union territories sprawled across the country have their own distinct cultural and traditional identities, and are displayed through various forms of art prevalent there. Every region in India has its own style and pattern of art, which is known as folk art. The folk and tribal arts of India are very ethnic and simple, and yet colorful and vibrant enough to speak volumes about the country's rich heritage. Folk art in India apparently has a great potential in the international market because of its traditional aesthetic sensibility and authenticity. The rural folk paintings of India bear distinctive colorful designs, which are treated with religious and mystical motifs.

Keywords:

*Linearity, Indian Folk
Paintings Cultural,
Traditional Vibrancy*



INTRODUCTION

Folk art expresses cultural identity by conveying shared community values and aesthetics. It encompasses a range of utilitarian and decorative media, including cloth, wood, paper, clay, metal and other items which are quite popular among foreign tourists because of their ethnic and traditional beauty. Some of the most famous folk paintings of India are the Madhubani paintings of Bihar, Patachitra paintings from the state of Odisha, Phad Paintings of Rajasthan, Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh, Pichhvai Paintings of Rajasthan, Warli Paintings of Maharashtra, Nirmal paintings of Andhra Pradesh, Aipan of Uttarakhand, Pithoro paintings of Gujarat, Gond and Mandana Paintings of Madhya Pradesh, Kalighat paintings of Calcuta and many more forms. Some of these tribal folk paintings are discussed below

Madhubani Paintings of Bihar

Perhaps one of the best-known genre of Indian folk paintings are the Mithila (also called Madhubani) paintings from the Mithila region of Bihar state. The Madhubani in literal translation means 'Forest of Honey' (Madhu-honey, Bans-forest or woods). These paintings are basically religious in nature. The paintings are done by women predominantly at home, in anointed areas like the prayer room. Hindu mythology is the main theme in Madhubani Painting. It is an Indian living folk art inspired from mythological epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana. It is divine and prayful expression of unconditional surrender and thankfulness to the God. The contemporary art of Mithila painting was born in the early 1960's, following the terrible Bihar famine. The women of Mithila were encouraged to apply their painting skills to paper as a means of supplementing their meager incomes. Once applied to a portable and thus more visible medium, the skill of Mithila women was quickly recognized. The work was enthusiastically bought by tourists and folk-art collectors alike.

Warli Paintings of Maharashtra

Warli are principally found in "Thane" district in the state of Maharashtra. They are also scattered to very few numbers in parts of Nashik and greater Bombay. Much has been written about how the tribe got the name warlis. The word warli comes from 'varal', a small patch of cultivated land that means

an uplander. According to Ayush (2007) Warli art roots may be traced to as early as the century AD. Research suggests that the tribals are the propagators of a tradition which originated sometime in the Neolithic period between 2,500 BC and 3,000 BC. Their extremely rudimentary wall paintings use a very basic graphic vocabulary: a circle, a triangle and a square come from their observation of nature; the circle representing the sun and moon, the triangle derived from mountains and pointed trees. Only the square seems to obey a different logic and seems to be a human invention, indicating a sacred enclosure or a piece of land. Warli art is a beautiful folk art of Maharashtra, traditionally created by the tribal women of the Tribes such as Warli, Malkharkoli, Kathodi, Kokana, Dhodi tribes found on the northern outskirts of Mumbai, in Western India.



Madhubani of Bihar



Warli of Maharashtra



Tribal people express themselves in vivid styles through paintings which they execute on the walls of their house. Warli paintings were mainly done by the women folk. The paintings are beautifully executed and resemble pre-historic cave paintings in execution and usually depict scenes of human figures engaged in activities like hunting, dancing, sowing and harvesting.

Aipan of Uttarakhand

'Aepan' or Aipan or Alpana is an art which has a special place in all Kumaoni homes. The word 'Aepan' is a derivative of 'Arpan'. A commonly used word for it is "Likhai" (writing), although it is a pattern made with the fingers. Aepan are used as ritual designs for Pujas, festivals and ceremonies connected with birth, janeu (the sacred thread ceremony), marriage and death. In Aipan the walls, papers and pieces of cloth are decorated by the drawing of various geometric and other figures belonging to gods, goddesses and objects of nature. Pichhauras or dupattas are also decorated in this manner. At the time of Harela there is a tradition of making clay idols (Dikaras). The raw material used is simple ochre (Geru) colour and rice paste. It is mostly women who paint the designs on the floors and walls of their homes using the last three fingers of the right hand. Once the ochre base is ready the artist draws the pattern free hand. Chowkies are made with mango wood and painted with special designs for each occasion. Pattas & Thapas are made directly on the walls or on paper and cloth.

Patachitra Painting of Orissa

Originated from the temple of Jagannath at Puri in the 12th century; Patachitra painting is considered as one of the oldest and most popular and important form of Oriya paintings. The name Pattachitra has evolved from the Sanskrit words patta, meaning canvas, and chitra, meaning picture. Pattachitra is thus a painting done on canvas, and is manifested by rich colourful application, creative motifs and designs, and portrayal of simple themes, mostly mythological in depiction.



Phad of Rajasthan



Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh

Some of the popular themes represented through this art form are ThiaBadhia - depiction of the temple of Jagannath; Krishna Lila - enactment of Jagannath as Lord Krishna displaying his powers as a child etc. The creation of the Pattachitra paintings is a disciplined art form, and the chitrakars maintain rigidity in their use of colours and patterns, restricting the colours to a single tone. Preparing the paints is perhaps the most important part of the creation of Pattachitra, engaging the craftsmanship of the chitrakars in using naturally available raw materials to bring about indigenous paints.

Phad Paintings of Rajasthan

Phad painting or Phad is a style religious scroll painting and folk painting, practiced in Rajasthan state of India. This style of painting is traditionally done on a long piece of cloth or canvas, known as phad. The narratives of the folk deities of Rajasthan, mostly of Pabuji and Devnarayan are depicted

on the phads. The Bhopas, the priest-singers traditionally carry the painted phads along with them and use these as the mobile temples of the folk deities. The phads of Pabuji are normally about 15 feet in length, while the phads of Devnarayan are normally about 30 feet long. Traditionally the phads are painted with vegetable colors.

Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh

Kalamkari or Qalamkari is a type of hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, produced in parts of India. The word is derived from the Persian words kalam (pen) and kari (craftmanship), meaning drawing with a pen. The craft made at Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, evolved with patronage of The Mughals and the Golconda sultanat



Phad of Rajasthan



Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh

There are two distinctive styles of kalamkari art in India - one, the 'Srikalahasti' style and the other, the Machalipatnam style of art. The Srikalahasti style of Kalamkari, wherein the "kalam" or pen is used for free hand drawing of the subject, and filling in the colours is entirely hand worked. This style flowered around temples and their patronage, and so had an almost religious identity - scrolls, temple hangings, chariot banners and the like depicted deities and scenes taken from great epics - Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and mythological classics. Only natural dyes are used in Kalamkari, and involves seventeen painstaking steps.

Gond Paintings of Madhya Pradesh

Gond paintings are the living expressions of the village people of Gond tribals of district Mandla in Madhya Pradesh, these paintings are deeply linked with their day to day lives the paintings are made by placing dots over the dots in upward, downward and sideways to create final pictures. The theme of paintings is drawn from folktales and Gond mythology. They are not mere decorations but also instant expressions of their religious sentiments and devotions. The tribal folk art gond paintings, based on local Indian festivals like Karwa Chauth, Deepawali, Ahoi Ashtami, Nag Panchmi, Sanjhi etc. are done by women using simple homemade colors. Horses, elephants, tigers, birds, gods, men and objects of daily life are painted in bright and multi-coloured hues.

Mandana Paintings of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

The art of creating designs on the floor during the festive occasion is the tradition of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the art is known as Mandana paintings. It consists of geometrical designs originating from eastern Rajasthan, particularly in Bundi and Jhalawar areas. In this the ground is prepared with cow dung mixed with rati, a local clay and red ochre. Lime and chalk powder is used for making the motifs. The architectural motifs in mandama art are made by first plotting the points. A set of three points are plotted to make equilateral triangle. There are smaller motifs used in the paintings.



Gond of Madhya Pradesh



Mandana of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

Saora Paintings of Orissa

Saora is the name of a tribal community inhabiting the hilly area of the koraput, Gunpur, Ganjam and Gajapati districts of south Orissa. The paintings of the saora community are linked to the healing process for disease, safe childbirth and other life events. The Sun, moon, icons of the tutelary spirits, and ghosts, form the contents of the paintings. Contemporary motifs such as bicycles, motor car and airplanes are also used. These paintings are done on wall surfaces smeared with red ochre and rice paste. Yellow, ultramarine blue and black are also used at times to enhance the visual effect. No adhesive is added to fix the colors on the wall. Palm twigs are used as brushes for painting, the end of the stick being beaten by the painter to make it fibrous.

Pithoro paintings of Gujarat

Pithora is a highly ritualistic painting done on the walls by several tribes such as the Rathwas and Bhilalas who live in the central Gujarat, in a village of Vadodara called Tejgadh. The Pithora is a folk-art form originating from an ancient ritualistic tradition of mural paintings initiated within tribal beliefs and customs. The Rathwa, Bhil and Nayakadivasi communities revere this art form though it is always members of the Rathwa community who are the traditional painters and storytellers as Pithora Dev is their principal deity presiding over every aspect of their existence. These paintings have significance in their lives and executing the Pithora paintings in their homes brings peace, prosperity and happiness. What is even more interesting is that there is never an attempt to imitate nature. A horse or a bull, which might be a vision of a God, impresses him with only one central quality. This central quality is worked upon and given a form.



Saora of Orissa



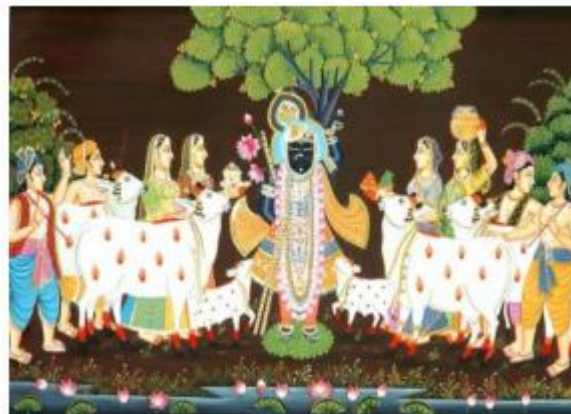
Pithoro of Gujarat

Pichhvai Paintings of Rajasthan

Pichwai painting is an art form that has its roots in Rajasthan and more precisely in Nathwara. Pichwai means ‘at the back’ so these paintings are basically used as decorative curtains/ backdrop in Shrinathji temples and Krishna temples in Rajasthan. These cloth hangings are considered very sacred and devotees offer these cloth hangings in temples and take them back home as souvenir as well. This painting are known to have more details, are more polished and pure than Phad paintings that are other form of paintings in Rajasthan but is very similar to Pichvai.

Nirmal paintings of Andhra Pradesh

Nirmal Paintings are found in the Nirmal town which lies in Adilabad District of AP, the Nirmal Art is acknowledged all across the state. The community of craftsmen “Nakash” lives here. They are engaged in Nirmal arts, in which pictures from the legendary Hindu epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata are painted. These craftsmen utilize indigenous colors that are made from herbs, gums, and minerals. Now days the gold found in these paintings is extracted from herbal juices.



Pichhvai Paintings of Rajasthan



Nirmal of Andhra Pradesh

Problem Faced by The Artisans

The artisans have been facing problems and impediments in the development of their occupation. Consequently, they face struggle in their subsistence. The major problem faced by the artists of tribal paintings is no assurance of regular sales from direct customers or even orders from the traders. They have to depend on the local middle men or promoters for the sale of their products. Sometimes there is lack of communication among the artists as well as foreign buyers as a result their vulnerability is exploited by the trade intermediates. Lack of proper working space and luminosity in the houses of tribal artists is found to be another problem associated with the art of making paintings. Prospects of tribal paintings: Indian Handicrafts, which constitutes a significant segment of the decentralized sector of the economy, its export has reached at a commendable height. Indian folk art and crafts which are the integral parts of the Indian culture and tradition are in high demand among the western consumers. At present handicrafts have substantial contribution for employment generation and country's exports. Therefore, it has occupied a significant place in the economy and society of India.

CONCLUSION

India is marked by its rich traditional heritage of Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture. Since the days of remote past, the diversified art and cultural forms generated by the tribal and rural people of India have continued to evince their creative magnificence. The folk paintings have rich heritage. Without folk paintings, there is no identity of culture in human life as well as occasion will be incomplete.



Folk paintings give aesthetical feelings and remind us about the native life through their colorful line drawings. Further commercialization of these tribal paintings creates a new source of non-agricultural income as these have achieved eminence in the national and international art market. Due to the growing demands of the crafts internationally, different organizations encourage the artists to produce their traditional paintings on handmade paper for commercial sale. Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Ministry of Textile, Government of India and other agencies are also working and supporting the genuine craft artists directly by arranging various exhibitions, skill-oriented trainings, organizing and inviting artists to market events and providing incentives and awards to artists for their work.

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