

STUDY OF TRIBAL ART: HASE CHITTARA FROM KARNATAKA

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Abstract: This article is to introduce Hase chittara, the unique wall painting from Karnataka, a long-established custom practiced by tribal women of Deeveru community in Malnad region of Karnataka. Deeveru or Arya Idiga belongs to Hindu community and they are mainly located in Karnataka. In ancient days, this Deeveru community involved in developing the Soma and Ayurvedic medicines hence belong to Somvanshi Kshatriy or Chandravanshi Kshatriyas. In ancient Kannada the word Deeveru might have been derived from the Sanskrit word Dweep which means island. Unique wall painting Hase chittara is traditionally practiced by tribal women of Deeveru community. This exquisite painting is owned by ladies of Deeveru community only. This art is based on themes & originally done on special occasions such as festivals, weddings & auspicious days on the walls of houses, bamboo baskets and earthen pots. Hase chitra signifies the unity of the community where the members of Deeveru community get together to beautify or decorate their houses for the occasions. The aim of this paper is to study old age traditional tribal painting Hase chittara from Karnataka. This study employs content analysis and is based on secondary sources such as books, journal articles, tribal literature and monographs. The main objectives of this study are to describe the ritualistic relevance of this tribal art form and to locate the current status of this art form in the context of tribal development. The impact of changing society is visible in the themes of Hase chittara paintings. However need of the hour is to preserve their art and use it for the development of the Deeveru tribe of Karnataka.

IndexTerms – Tribe, Deeveru Community, Traditions, Hase chittara, Motifs

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Oxford Dictionary “tribe is a group of people in primitive or barbarous stage of development, acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor”.

As Verrier Elwin (1963) explains, the term and the concept ‘tribe’ is derived from a Latin root, the middle English term “tribuz” meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped, came to evolve into the modern English ‘tribe’.

According to I.L.O. Convention 107 (1957) the aboriginals or tribal have been defined as the tribal or semi-tribal groups of the independent countries deprived socially or economically and having their own customs, traditions and traits or also they have their own special customary laws/conventions”. The constitution of India identifies the indigenous peoples as “tribes”. According to the 2001 Census, India has a tribal population of 8.2% of its total population. Social structure of Tribes maybe identified in two- ways: I. formation of the society on the basis of the kinship which empowered them to be a multifunctional grouping; II. In India, tribes are defined in reference to the cultural practices of certain groups in relation to the mainstream Hindu cultural practices.

Folk arts and Tribal arts overlap. Folk arts and crafts are like the head and tail of a coin. They are interrelated in their day today life in terms of tools or objects which are generally used at home, in festivals, customs and rituals.

Folk and tribal art, passed from one generation to the next, is the creative expression of people who live in harmony with nature. Traditionally, these art forms, though sometimes purely decorative, were used to mark different occasions such as celebrations, events to pacify malevolent deities or forces of nature, thanksgiving, harvests, and the birth of a child, puberty, marriage and cultural festivals. Indian Folk and Tribal Paintings by Charu. Smita. Gupta

The rural folk arts and crafts of India bear distinctive colorful designs which are interwoven with religious and mystical motifs. Each state in India is well-known for multiple folk art forms. As we have seen that Art and craft in Tribal communities is very vital part of their life. It’s not just for sake of doing it, they do as it actually reflects their culture which is very closely related to other components like music, dance, drama etc. They are all interrelated as while doing paintings they also sing which is related to the same theme, each one does not have separate identity. In fact all these are vital part of tribal life. They have a close rapport with one another. They don’t co-exist; in fact it is fundament form of one art in indigene life. Whatever may be the occasion, dancing and singing, which is immediately reflected in the painting which they draw on the walls. As food and water are very important to life, similarly art, dance and music are almost as important as food in the tribe’s life, it would not be an exaggeration to say that. Every night, regularly, these folks dance and sing songs. Perhaps it is a means to break the monotony and fatigue of the day’s work and also an easy and handy entertainment. On any special occasion, their enthusiasm is incomparable. They are so engrossed in dancing and singing that they forget their ill feelings and enjoy themselves till the dawn breaks. These occasions also inspire them to compose songs spontaneously though there might not be profound and deep intellectual meaning. There are some festival songs which have been sung for generations. In tribal communities all art forms are equally important and without each other they are incomplete or impede. They have the necessary musical instruments too.

Karnataka is always recognized for its performing folk arts such as Thogalu Gombeyaata, Dollu Kunitha, Karadimajalu, Lavani, Bhootharadhane, Karaga, Bayalaata, Kamsaale, etc. However, not many are aware of the existence of a painting tribal art form named Chittaara or Chittara. Chittara is an art form that includes a set of auspicious geometric motifs and figures celebrating life, practiced in a tribal community called Deewaru which for long been an agrarian community worshipping nature. This Tribal community is native to Shivmogha district of Karnataka living in the enchanted tropic forest of western ghats and found in around the taluk of Sagara predominantly in the villages like Hasunvanthe, Honnemaradu and Majina Kaanu etc.

Deewaru community “mainly cultivate rice, sugar cane and areca nut. They are mostly tenants of farm lands; illiterate and financially backward”. Asis De (Chacko & Basant, 2017)

It is a matriarchal society where women are highly respected and controls most of the activities. This power relationship between men and women is also manifested in social practices like wedding ceremonies where the bride’s family commands higher respect. Every community is integrated culturally by unique ritualistic practices and customs. These practices reflect their interaction and

profound relationship with the environment. The traditions and ritualistic practices of the community are incomplete without the art practice of Chittara. Hase chittara is a tribal art practiced by women of Deeveru community which is a matriarchal and agrarian community and whoships nature as nature is very vital part of their cultural. This community basically resides in and around Sagar, Karnataka. Earlier main profession of this community was toddy tapping, brewing arrack etc, but due to modernization many people have moved out and very few are now in this traditional job. This exquisite art of Hase chittara is owned by Deeveru community only. Hase chittara of Karnataka is a traditional drawing done by the Deeveru community women on various rituals and occasions on the walls and floor of mud houses. This art is based on themes done on special occasions such as festivals, weddings & auspicious days on the walls of houses. This art symbolizes the unity of the community who help each other and come together to decorate.

Hase Chittara drawings are convoluted designs which signifies the auspicious ceremony and customary way of their life, indicates in geometric patterns. Drawing of hase chittara requires great understanding of proportions and ratios which the women of Deeveru community have been using with great adroitness.

The paintings are usually 2-3 feet in size, aesthetically refined, made of symbols representing their physical environment. Eco friendly natural colours like, for white colour rice powder is used, black – roasted rice powder, red colour- red mud and yellow – locally grown berry i.e. Gurige kai is used and brush is made from Pundi naar which is kind of Jute. Chittara paintings are a source of great joy, beauty and creativity for women of Deeveru community.

II. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Most of our Tribal art traditions are at its urge of becoming extinct. But still, there are resources to help them out. The analysis from primary data collected as well as the information obtained from credible authentic secondary reports, have led to infer that globalization has triggered the emergence of a synthetic macro-culture. This synthetic macro-culture is gaining popularity day by day and silently engineering the gradual attenuation of tribal/ folk art and culture. The twenty first century, the age of globalization, is marked by the incidence of cultural crisis. It is the era where the originality of many tribal and folk cultural and art forms are either losing, being completely forgotten or unknown. Due to globalization, there has been negative influence in the cultural, social, and economic arenas. Exclusivity of our indigenous culture is getting desolate and traditional culture gradually changing by a westernized culture which is fostered and fomented by rampant consumerism and leaving a big impact on the 3rd world countries and deteriorating cultural identity. Due to increase in globalization, it has exerted its voracious effect on culture, society, socio economy, policy, as well as religion. The contemporary global trend exhibits that globalization is discouraging indigenous tribal art and culture and strongly catalyzing the promotion of the western culture. The deterioration in the development and growth of tribal culture has resulted into devastating of different aspects like fragmentation of social-cohesion, dilution of cultural identity, and leaving a negative impact on rural economy. Globalization has engineered the massive change in the traditional and cultural arena, different parts of the world are slowly coming under the clutches of an all-pervasive boundless macro culture. As a result the exclusive micro cultures that retain our cultural identity are on the verge of extinction. Because of synthetic macro culture influenced by west, Indigenous cultural forms are becoming endangered which is toppling the socio-cultural structure of the regions having weaker economy.

The available literature on tribal art leaves one far from adequate. There is great need and scope to know tribal art and art forms. Unfortunately in depth studies of tribal life, culture of tribal art are indeed rare. This study of tribal art is an attempt to bridge this gap.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the traditional tribal art of Karnataka ; Hase chittara art
2. To explore and document the colors, motifs, materials and process used in art
3. To study the impact of traditional tribal art of Karnataka in contemporary fashion.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Traditional tribal art of Karnataka; Hase chittara art form is taken and is being studied and researched. This study is based on experiment and survey. Research will be based on the basis of history, development of the art and its contemporary status. Research work will be a humble attempt to bring out this ancient rich treasure to the field of the discipline of visual art. Study region is a dominated tribal district. Data's can be categorized into forms two.

1. Primary Data - Data collected from people through direct conversation, using in-depth interviews as a tool for data collection.
2. Secondary Data -The secondary data will be collected by analysing history designs, literature on history, research articles, publications, libraries, newspaper articles, paper clips, internets, journals, websites and others related to the research will be collected, analysed and documented.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

India has rich folk and tribal tradition. Modern man has drawn the political and cultural boundaries but the tribal people have been in forests and in hilly area which has molded their lives. Tribal art is folk art but folk art also can be non-tribal, both are connected deeply to the community. The knowledge of art and craft in tribal community has been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The art emerges from day today life of the community and mold by the environment in which they live. Art, craft, Songs and dances of different tribal communities vary from each other because of the terrain in which they live and also the lifestyle, rituals and customs also vary from one tribe to another but for most of the tribal communities, they worship nature and it plays vital role in their life. The word folk means a group of people living within the given area who have common cultural heritage and some common traits like religion, language, occupation etc. Tribal art is influenced by nature and the tools used in day today life and there is no individual artist in the tribe or folk art, it is a group or community. Any painting the group of people are involved in creating that art and the motifs are basically related to religious and nature plays vital role in it. It is an integral part of living. There is no distinction between art and life in tribal societies.

In most of the tribal communities it is inherited culture to transmit knowledge orally. In the formation of an identity of society, religion has a very important role. Every tribal community has a social structure with unique customs, systems of beliefs and practices. In establishing and reforming of tribal customs and practices, arts, crafts and beliefs play a very important role.

Deevara Makkalu, Dhatri Pustaka 2009 by Dr.H S Mohanchandra Gutti

Ethnicity is another vital element which contributes to the identity creation. Every folk or tribal art and culture forms have an ethnic nature. The art forms are influenced by the myths of a particular region. The ethnic natures of these folk-art forms are maintain their ethnic through which they make socialization possible and they regulate and harmonize them with other communities.

In the formation of social structure of these communities, religion and ethnic culture play a vital role and these societies consist of structural units based on structural pluralism. Folk songs, arts and crafts play an important role in their survival. They stand in relation to the power system in every society. Economic status, caste and gender are related to power system. Folklore opposes the power structure and compromise with it and help preserve ethnic identity also. In social identity, gender has an important role. Idealistically in the world of Indian rights and rituals there is no gender inequality and it is evident at the practical level. All this can be analyzed in relation to the worship of mother-goddess. In Indian society a social system based on male domination is prevalent. But we see in folk-arts a system that worships woman and attributes mystic qualities to her. It appears mainly in the form of the worship of goddess 'Kali' (the dominant icon of Mother Goddess that is worshipped all over India) and at the same time, in all societies gender domination was and is prevalent to the present day

4.1 DEEVARU COMMUNITY

The Deevaru community is agricultural, so the cycle of sowing and harvesting has remained the backbone of legendry narratives, which express each and every emotion of a farming community. The astonishingly beautiful Hase chittara; are entwined with nature-as the life of the creators of these paintings are entwined together with nature. Surprisingly, this is the unique aspect of these tribal artisans which they themselves do not realize, that; the whole world of art lovers is fascinated towards! An artist has to develop her (his) own identity in terms of style, technique, choice of colors, etc. For this purpose one has to study the available art traditions. Hase chittara is very rich in forms, styles, creativity and presentation of life and nature. Research work will be a humble attempt to bring out this ancient rich treasure to the field of the discipline of visual art for the first time. Study region is a dominated tribal district. Any unique cultural factor of the tribes has to be utilized for their own economic or social benefit. An in-depth empirical study of the Hase chittara art may bring about newer insights regarding the ways to use their art form for their own development and progress along with preservation of their art form.

Unique wall painting Hase chittara is traditionally practiced by tribal women of Deevaru community in Malnad region of Karnataka. Arya Idiga belongs to Hindu community and they are mainly located in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India. Deevaru or Arya Idiga belongs to Hindu community and they are mainly located in Karnataka. In ancient days, this Deevaru community involved in developing the Soma and Ayurvedic medicines hence belong to Somvanshi Kshatriy or Chandravanshi Kshatriyas.

In ancient Kannada the word Deevaru might have been derived from the Sanskrit word Dweep which means island. It is also said that the word Ida or Eda means Toddy which is derived from archaic Kannada word. Idigas are also known by various names like Namadhari, Halepaika, Billava, Thiyya, Namadhari naik in coastal part of Karnataka. Malenadina Halepaikaru (2016) by N Huchappa Mastara Kugve and N. Shivananda Kugve

Deevaru which means islanders in some parts of Karnataka. And also known as deevaru which means islanders in some parts of Karnataka. Another theory is that the word Eda or Ida is derived from archaic kannada word Ira for Toddy. Earlier main profession of this community was toddy tapping, brewing arrack etc., but due to modernization many people have moved out and very few are now in this traditional job.

This exquisite art of Hase chittara is owned by Deevaru community only. Hase chittara of Karnataka is a traditional drawing done by the Deevaru community women on various rituals and occasions on the walls and floor of mud houses. This art is based on themes done on special occasions such as festivals, weddings & auspicious days on the walls of houses. This art symbolizes the unity of the community who help each other and come together to decorate. Hase chittara of Karnataka have not been much explored; hence, efforts have been made in this study to take inspiration from this traditional folk art to incorporate them in the ever expanding field of textile designing. Efforts are being made in the study to provide a strong platform to Hase chittara, which is at the verge of extinction due to modernization. Chittara is an autochthonous art practice by Deevaru community –residing in and around Shimoga District, Karnataka.

4.2 HASE CHITTARA

Hase chittara are created by using very basic shapes: circles, triangles and squares. The art is inspired by observing the nature, circle represents the moon and sun, and triangle represents the pointed trees and mountains. The base for this art is mud paint made from different soils ranging from red, brown, white and yellow. The white color signifies purity and very auspicious and scared. The colors are basically rice flour (akki hittu), red mud (Kemmannu) coal (masi kenda), locally grown berries (kaare kai and gurage kai), lime stone (sunna), turmeric, milk, etc. which are used in making natural colors like white, black, red and yellow. The patterns are basically geometric, the combinations of lines, circles, rectangles, etc.

"The interesting thing about it is that our folk artists used mud and herbal colors with rice, leaves or seeds. They didn't use a brush, they used paddy sticks. All the materials were 100 per cent local. They used only red and white. But I experiment with different colors. Our area in Malnad has so many different colors of soils."

Radhakrishna. Bandagadde, The Hindu, Crafts from the heart, Bangalore November 22 2011

These tribal art depicts the life style of community like dance, marriage, haunting farming etc. Each painting is usually an entire scene that contains various elements of nature including people, animals, trees, hills etc. Malnad region of Sagara and Shimoga – Hasuvanthe, Honemaradu and Manjina Kaanu. It is a matriarchal society. The traditions and ritualistic practices of the community are incomplete without the art practice of Chittara. Hase chittara are generally 2 – 3 feet in size. Themes based on special occasions such as festivals, weddings & auspicious days.

The designs of Hase Chittara like Hasse Gode Chittara (Figure.1), most auspicious and sacred chittara painting. Painted only when there's a wedding in the household. Columns signifying the foundation of the house. Central to the painting are the bride and

groom. Motifs like Valagadavaru (instrumentalists), Kelu kumbha (water pot), Mandakini (hands of the goddess), Basinga nili (headgear of the bride and groom). The two bird -“Godina hakki” and signify happiness and prosperity for the wedded couple. Seethe mudhi (Figure.2), which translates to Goddess Seetha’s hair bun. It can be painted anytime of the year and is considered one of the favorites of the Deevuru women.

Terina Chittara (Figure.3), the people pulling the chariot is usually painted during the village festivals. The stone at the center of the palanquin in the painting is worshipped. The hen and the rooster at the top of the painting are thrown up in the air at the end of all the rituals.



Figure. 1



Figure. 2

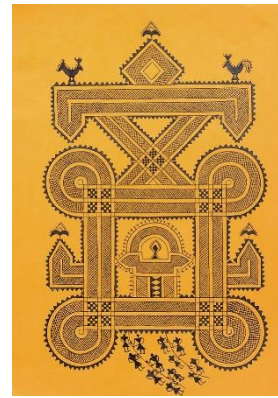


Figure. 3

Figure.1 – Hase chittara painting by Smt Gowamma Huchappa Master Sagar Taluk, Shimoga District

Figure.2 Seethe Mudhi Picture courtesy Centre for Revival of Indigenous Arts (CFRIA), Bengaluru

Figure.3 Terina Chittara Picture courtesy Centre for Revival of Indigenous Arts (CFRIA), Bengaluru

Generally they paint using four Colours: red, white, black and yellow. Colours are extracted from eco-friendly natural resources like

- Ground rice paste for white colour,
- Roasted rice for black,
- Yellow seeds (gurige)
- Red earth - kemmannu and
- The brushes are made up of pundi naaru.

Paintings are divided in to three types according to the use of colours.

- Bili hase - white
- Kappu hase - black
- Kemmannu hase – mud red

Patterns and Techniques

- Combination of simple geometric shapes.
- Straight lines, triangle, square, circle are the basis of every drawing.
- Symbolize women’s empowerment to an intricate border surrounding the celebration of new beginnings.
- Hase chittara drawings are done free hand by women of Deevuru community, the beauty of this paintings lie in simple imperfections.
- They follow certain ratios and proportions for each drawings

CONCLUSION

India has a very rich traditional heritage of folk and tribal arts and culture. Without folk paintings, there is no identity of culture in human life as well as occasion will be incomplete. Tribal art and craft depicts the life style of tribal community inspired by nature. The Deevuru community is agricultural, so the cycle of sowing and harvesting has remained the backbone of legendry narratives, which express each and every emotion of a farming community. The astonishingly beautiful Hase chittara; are entwined with nature- as the life of the creators of these paintings are entwined together with nature. Hase chittara is very rich in forms, styles, creativity and presentation of life and nature. These paints can be a new source of income for the tribal people other than agriculture. As there is lot of demand in international art and craft and lot of organizations are encouraging these tribal communities to produce traditional paintings for commercial sale.

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