

PITHORA PAINTING: JOURNEY OF REVIVAL.

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ABSTRACT: The present article intends to discover the cultural richness of the Pithora Paintings of Gujarat state of India, which is on the edge of losing its existence in the art, craft and design industry. Understanding the limitations and needs for revival of the craft, various designer products are formulated and concepts are presented, which directly or indirectly adapt to the Pithora style of art. These products are ensured to blend into contemporary trends of handicrafts and home décor industry. Materials, methodology and promotional strategies are discussed which intend to bring this beautiful craft into the existence once again and create a business opportunity for the native artisans as well as support the government economy in terms of handicraft market.

KEYWORDS: Gujarat, Pithora, Painting, Handicrafts, India, Wall art, Mural, Decoration, Décor, Interior Design.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pithora Paintings are one of the oldest crafts from the Gujarat state of India. Pithora Painting may be a Surface Narrative craft practiced among the Rathwa Bhils, a social group or a tribal community of Chhota Udaipur, Gujarat. Pithora Painting is a ritual mural that displays their god and it's a typical observe. Pithora Paintings are generally performed within the Panchmahal district, Dahod district & Vadodara district of Gujarat. It is similar to Warli Painting unlike Pithora is additionally vibrant and vivid in nature. Most of the Pithora Paintings occupy the inside walls between the courtyard and kitchen also the insides of rooms.

Pithora or Pithoro, is a beautiful representation of tribal way living and showcasing it through art. Depicts humans, animals, birds, processions and celebrations in the scenes which are simply painted on interior walls. The tribal community mainly depict and dedicate the art to the deities and their gods in an honour or respect. The art includes vibrant motifs, playfulness, and aesthetic motion in the composition. Repetition of motifs is an important aspect of the Pithora style.

Somehow, the art is lacking support and purpose in the contemporary interior and décor industry. Similar motifs are famous for use in fashion, textile and home décor sector, so there is a scope for Pithora craft to be re-introduced.

The present study understands the originality of the historic craft, materials and methodology, limitations and needs with respect to contemporary market, new design possibilities, process for manufacturing and promotional strategies which may uplift the historic Indian craft and also empower local artisans. To involve the local artisans and support them blend in their skills to create the crafts in new techniques to target the contemporary market through new range of products or mediums for improving the economic status is the sole intent of the project.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pithora Paintings get their name from their primary subject, Pithora, the god of food grains. Alternative depictions are of the Sun & Moon, gods Gamdev & Khetarpal, cows, horses, cats, dogs, birds, etc. The Pithora painters are referred to as Lakhara and they are usually in the groups of eight to ten painters. They belong to same family. Typically, the father is the senior painter and his sons and/or nephews if any are the subordinates. Ladies are also active participants within the connected rituals however they do not participate in the method of painting but they prepare the meals, help gather colours and dyes and arrange things at the gathering house. Whereas, the older men do the particular drawing and filling in of colors, their apprentices facilitate them prepare and blend paints, clean the brushes and alternative implements, and run errands. In this manner they additionally learn the trade and barter way. The creating of the Pithora may be a long method and is an exceedingly time taking procession. It will proceed for three days or maybe every week. It's additionally a rich method requiring the family to pay quite ton of cash to host a Pithora painting in their home. The price includes the fees of the chief painter and also the priest that is paid in the form of money, as baggage of grains, new garments, a handful of hens, a goat and so on. Alternative expenses embrace ritual-related materials, wining and feeding of the neighborhood, friends and also the relations. All this explains that the family needs to have an extremely robust reason to urge a Pithora painted in their home.

Historically, the Pithora painting is commissioned by a bunch of male painters and that they will begin painting only by the orders of 'badva' or Oracle. The act of painting the wall additionally includes of formal narration of holy scripts, storytelling, singing and percussion that is enjoyed by the entire community. Additionally, while the paintings are being done, the male painters are served with food by the mate less ladies, unmarried girls and boys of the family. Pithora Painting may be a true sort of gatherings and cultural living that celebrates unity and intimacy.

The traditional tools embrace a cotton string, Bamboo sticks, arrow heads and wood stencils and colour. The process begins with treating the walls with cow dung and white chalk powder, usually gathered by ladies. Powders, earth and vegetable colours are mixed with milk and mahuda flower liquor to arrange the dye for the pithoro in colors like yellow, indigo, orange, green, vermilion, red and silver. The brushes are made ready from bamboo, neem tree and alternative twigs that are worn by mastication, beating and alternative ways.



Fig 1. Animals Pithora Painting on wall



Fig 2. Pithora Painting on wall showing scenes of lifestyle

III. LIMITATIONS AND NEED FOR REVIVAL

• Limitations

It's ascertained that this lovely practice of art actually grabbed attention of the many researchers and active craft enthusiasts from India and foreign countries as well. This form of art is documented by several journals and researchers. However, the form didn't penetrate the modern market. There's no important craft or form that represents Pithora Painting vogue or its method. The modern day artists are somehow not under the influence of practicing the tribal or heritage art as their primary subject. Though many artists have struggled to revive the art and its beautiful contents, the penetration level have seen its limitation in terms of today's industrial production.

Since it's not accessible within the world market and appears like the art is merely practiced historically by the native social group individuals, it's a good chance to quote a spot light-weight on the options of this artistic creation with a distinguished application. Several techniques can be developed to form this art to associate with industrial and organized market.

• Needs for Revival

The beautiful craft is gradually losing its hold as the world moves towards modernization and globalization. The native tribes are obliged to adapt to the changing world for the basic survival and economic balance in their lives. They are left with the option to either leave their tradition behind and adapt to the practices or jobs of modern times or promote their traditional craft. The artisans generally knew to paint the walls of their house as a tradition, but later on started to paint for commercial purposes as well. It is the governments and designers' role to enlighten them with the knowledge of the beautiful crafts which could be discovered.

The Pithora Paintings have the potential of becoming a form of art that can be brought forward as a heritage art and witnessed with respect to new canons of style and graphics. This act can also give rise to new social and semiotic relations, also creating opportunity for the Adivasis' or the native artisans to sustain and grow in the contemporary market.

IV. CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATIONS

The use of Pithora style motifs are pretty popular in the fashion or art industry. Every artist uses the motifs in a distinguished manner to replicate the cultural heritage or tradition Pithora art. The application medium also varies in a large set of options. The present article is directly focusing on creating the originality of the art motifs in its purest form as well as new innovative industrialized products to support the theme. The range of products will be dedicated towards interior design and décor. This will help us to fill in the research gap by setting an example to uplift the art.

• Motif painted on Vase

The beauty of the Pithora craft gives us opportunity to use its motifs in numerous ways to reach the aesthetical serenity. This can be done on either contemporary or conventional home décor items. One of the items are the vase, which can be made out of ceramic, casted into any desired shape and hand painted with motifs of Pithora style. These vases can be either used as flower housing or simply as artefacts. The trend of decorating home interiors with vases have been into existence and will continue to exist with newer trends in design. Pithora painted ceramics will surely prove to enter the big time home décor market.



Fig 3. Samples of Pithora motif painted vases

- **Motif on Home Décor fabrics**

India has been well-known and prominent exporter of textiles to the world since ancient times. Block printed, painted, weaved or embroidered fabrics are still some of the majors of the industry. The article introduces the typical Pithora motifs on the fabrics. This can be achieved using block printing, hand painting and embroidery techniques. Typically applied on home décor and fabrics associated with interior like bedsheets, curtains, pillow covers and rugs. Though there are similar patterns and motifs already running in the market, the Pithora style would not only improve the scope but sustain the demand as well.



Fig 4. Pithora motif on a pillow cover



Fig 5. Pithora motif embroidery



Fig 6. Pithora motif on bedsheet and pillow set

- **Portraits**

The Rathwa Bhils or the native owners of the Pithora art primarily painted on the walls of their homes with traditional colours and rituals. The paintings appear in repetitive motifs and vibrant colours. This was intentional way of paying respects to their deities and also remember them every time they see the paintings. In similar context, in today's world, artistic wall paintings have the righteous values in Home Décor. There are several genres and styles available in the industry for paintings. The article tries to bring forward the Pithora art for contemporary world. The motifs can be painted in singular or traditional way. The native artisans can practice the same style but on new canvas.



Fig 7. Pithora motif portrait



Fig 8. Pithora motif portrait

- **Customized Designer Wallpapers**

Modern technology provides us with opportunity to get the wallpapers printed with desired customizations with respect to colour, motifs, composition, etc. Pithora themed wallpapers can be either customized and machine printed or hand painted using traditional stencils and blocks for the desired outcome. The printed would benefit the printing vendor and the painted would benefit the local artisan directly. The intent is to promote the art style and motif, with recommendation given to hand painted customizations. This will support the craft and the craftsman genuinely.

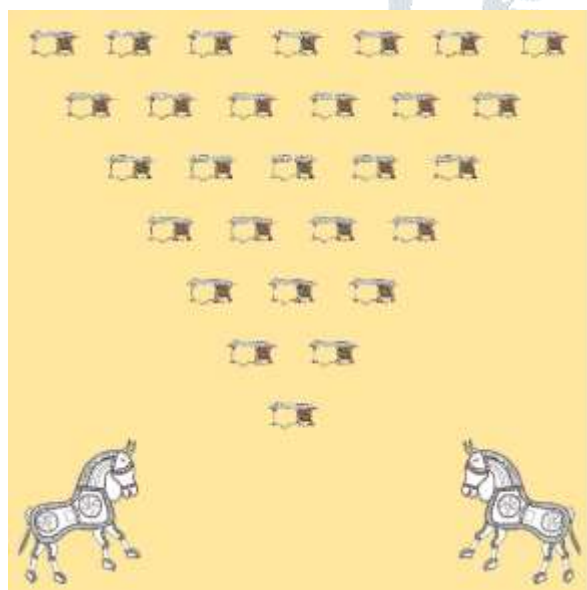


Fig 9. Pithora motif wallpaper composition

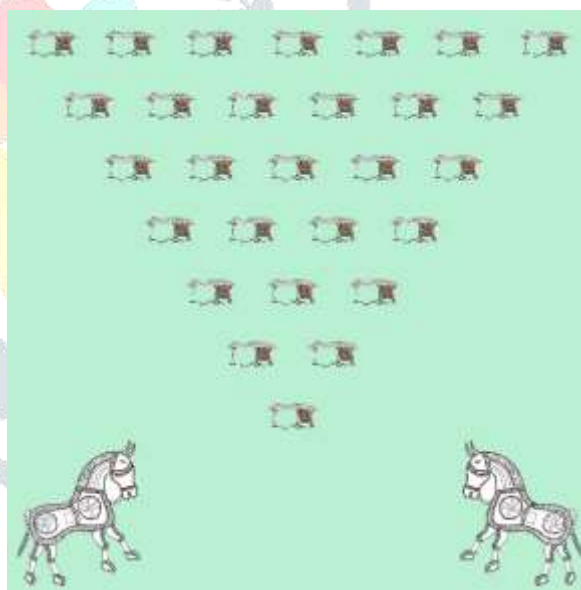


Fig 10. Pithora motif wallpaper composition

V. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Post exploration of the possible ways for the craft to revive, identifying the materials and manufacturing process for each craft design is essential. The mediums and paints used in the traditional practice may or may not satisfy the contemporary market demands or applications. Modern day tools and techniques can be used to make sure the craft is evolved righteously fit for industrial manufacturing and finishing.

- **Motif painted on Vase**

The Vase is a product of a Home décor segment which are now available in abundant designs, material and colour options. Industrial manufacturers are dealing majorly with Glass, Ceramics, Porcelain and wooden vases. The intention is to target the same demand in a standardized way.

Materials: Ceramic Vase, Glass Vase, Acrylic Enamel Paints, Acrylic Glass Paints, Oil Paints, polish, brushes and stencils with respect to desired motif.

Methodology: To meet the industrial finish outcome, vases of existing manufacturing players can be used. This will include ceramic and glass mediums which can be procured in raw or unpolished finishes to effortlessly paint on them. These vases can be provided for painting to a formulated and organized set of local artisans from Rathwa Bhil tribe in Gujarat. After casting the importance, need and scope for growth, these artisans will be painting selective motifs and graphics with the help of stencils or free hand which can standardized designs to meet the contemporary demand. Acrylic enamel and acrylic glass paints will be used respectively to get the industrial finish.

Post paint job is done, the vases can be either polished and marketed by us or directly setting up with the leading manufacturer which can be further distributed to the Home Décor section within the country or can be exported.

With their skills getting more outcomes than the tradition, they may not only get the benefits of money but also save the tradition by themselves.

• Motif on Home Décor fabrics

Home Décor fabrics like Bedsheets, Pillow covers, cushions, curtains and rugs can be either block printed or hand painted for the finished Pithora themed outcome. Another way to promote the application may include the embroidery of the motifs. Since there are numerous small scale as well as large scale producers of Home décor fabrics of similar design or motifs, the intention is to target on involving the tribal Rathwa folks to join in the start up to work on blank fabrics.

Materials: Fabric Sheets, Fabric Paints, Stencils, Printing blocks, Colourful threads and other embroidery tools.

Methodology: The process begins with procuring blank fabric sheets from local manufacturer which is suitable for bedsheet, pillow cover or curtains application. These may be clear white or other dyed tints. Another way is to set up with leading manufacturer and involve their participation.

After procuring the base fabric, it can be provided to the native Rathwa Bhil artists for either free hand painting or painting using stencils and blocks. They may be advised to use selective motifs to bring out simplicity and newness to the design.

Women are traditionally non participants of the Pithora Painting act. Since employment is concerned, promoting the embroidery work by the hands of women of the tribe. A set of Pithora motifs can be selected and embroidered to bring out the potential of the women of Rathwa Bhil tribe similar to the practice of native women of Kutchh. They have mastered the use of geometrical and floral patterns for clay relief work on their houses as well as replicate the same patterns into their embroidery works.

The fabrics can be further finished on edges and cut to standard sizes if required, folded and packed for further delivery. All these products can be distributed to the local vendors or non-profit government collection centres which can then put forward for sale online or in the domestic market.

• Portraits

The simplest yet most attractive form of production can be devised as portraits of the motif work. They can be painted on canvas or simply using the cut pieces of the same fabric which is used for making bedsheets. These painted canvases can be sold at art galleries or home décor vendors.

Materials: Canvas, Fabric, Oil Paints, Enamel Paints, Organic vegetable dyes, varnish, brushes and frames.

Methodology: Various motifs from the Pithora style can be painted using vegetable dyes for traditional approach or modern oil based and enamel paints for qualitative outcome. These motifs are subjected to typical Pithora style and the artists may have the liberty to create the composition on the canvas in their own way. This will motivate their personal belief and this belief will in turn act as an arsenal for empowering the craft practice. The creative outcome can be further treated with varnish to preserve it and add the sheer quality. Border frames and supportive back can be added co-operating with the local merchants, finishing the industrial manufacturing process. The finished products can be auctioned or sold at fixed price to art galleries of Home decoration vendors which may directly benefit the artists.

• Customized Designer Wallpapers

Designer Wallpaper is a trend. Wallpapers have been designed by the Art Designers since its origin. The newest trend gives liberty to the buyers to customize the print with their own preferences and selection of graphics. Creating a range of crafted wallpapers using appropriate Pithora style motifs, but simplified composition to blend with the contemporary applications can be introduced.

Materials: Blank Wallpaper rolls, Printing Blocks, Stencils, Wallpaper dye

Methodology: The article intends to introduce a way to depict the Pithora craft into print media. This can be achieved in two ways. The industrial way of producing subtle Pithora themed wallpapers is to create compositions and designs on computer aided software, get them printed in collaboration with customized wallpaper printing vendor and float the goods into the market directly. The craft dedicated way suggest us to train the local artisans to use block printing dyes, stencils and paint a subtle composition on an empty wallpaper roll. The final outcome may be delivered to the respective collection office which can pay them for the goods. This way, a new scope of using the traditional style may come up which will uplift the original craftsman and ensure a good business opportunity.

VI. PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

The Handicrafts are the genuine treasures or representatives of the oldest civilizations of the world. The interesting part is that Handicrafts are enjoyed by everyone regardless of race, caste, community, religion or nation. They are the fundamentals and artistic creation of humans practice since ancient times.

Indian craft industry has shown a definitive growth of almost 20% over the years, although being decentralized sector. Most of the industry is unorganized and runs in semi-urban or rural areas of the country. There are many efforts taken by government as well as the local NGO's to support the craft and bring the rightful value to it.

Pithora Paintings by the Rathwa Adivasi tribe is at the edge of losing its culture and identity. The native tribesman has adopted the traits of modern lifestyle and are struggling on the line between culture and globalization. The practice of coming together and celebrating the festivals and painting the deities on the walls is gradually diminishing. The structure of houses in the villages and the traditions itself are seeing the changes of global modernization. In this situation, the artisans are giving up on the painting culture and moving towards cities for jobs or getting employed at payable organizations.

To bring back its value, beauty and rich heritage, certain promotional strategies can be identified. These can be further listed as follows:

- a) **The Development of Product:** As the traditional art limits itself with customs and painting on walls, the Rathwa tribe can bring their beautiful craft in front of the world in many forms. The Designers and Industry professionals can help the tribe to uplift the style on different media and scale. The application in organized manner could bring about changes in the style and culture. Similarly, a conceptualized a range of products in which the style could be applied is formulated.
- b) **Workshops on Development:** As the products are formulated, they can be carefully handed over to the interested native tribesman to further take control. Training programs on manufacturing, packaging and export can be conducted under the aegis of state government or NGO's. This will help the artisans understand and adapt the products in their culture.
- c) **Professional Documentaries:** Video documentaries of the native craftsman practicing the new art and product range would set an example for other craftsman. Also the videos can be uploaded and floated on the internet, which can cast knowledge about the existence of craft and promote it. This may also boost the motivation of the tribal artists and they will turn back towards the craft practice.
- d) **Government assurance:** The state government support is very essential in the execution of this project. The native people are fairly involved when they acknowledge the support of the government. Ensuring fair trade practices, securing rights and norms for the tribal craft, subsidy for the start-up business, social branding and marketing, publicity campaign and Craft Bazaar are some of the interventions initiated by the government of India. Design solutions and new concepts of Pithora Painting can be showcased in co-operation with government to bring a light on this particular handicraft.
- e) **Co-ordination with Facility Centre:** Post finalizing the designs and registration of the intellectual property, the craft can be taken upfront with the Facility Centre like 'Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastaship Vikas Yojana', 'Craft Council of India', 'NCDPD' and similar clusters associated with the craft. A government initiative can be reached which can help to augment the crafts in organized and standardized large-scale production and can be further exported.
- f) **Online Marketing and Sales:** Websites and online portals may supplement the marketing and sale practices. 50% of the population being online now, there is a huge scope of selling goods at an increased speed through websites and E-commerce.
- g) **Celebrity Marketing:** In India, the role of celebrities and professionals in Film Industry have a vital role into Marketing and Advertisements. Once the products reach a level of standardization and smooth running cycle which can be handle by the native craftsman, the idea can be taken forward to larger scale. For this, special promotion campaigns can be conducted which can receive the courtesy of Celebrities to promote the craft.

VII. CONCLUSION

The present article identifies the potential in tribal and traditional craft of Gujarat state of India. The Pithora Paintings are the beautiful depictions of deities and gods in vibrant organic colours. The ritual painting has enjoyed the togetherness and social harmony in the community.

The craft has been identified by the government, researchers, fine artists and designers as well, yet the native artisans and the art are perishing. The tribal community are now turning their backs towards the craft as the globalization takes over and the culture is changing with modern traits.

Identifying the opportunity and the need, various products are conceptualized in order to uplift the craft and respective craftsman. These products keep the potential of sustaining the contemporary market and bringing benefits to the craftsman. These products will also promote the existence of the craft practice which is one of the heritage of India's culture.

The article also briefly discusses about the materials and process techniques through which the actual products designs can be executed. Further the standardization procedures and promotional strategies are stated, so the products reach the market responsibly and self-sustain the business which could be further completely taken control by the native craftsman.

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