



'North Indian Folk and Tribal Art'

Mr. Chandan Pandurang Dekate

Assistant Professor (Fine Arts),

St. Thomas College, Ruabandha Bhilai, Durg, Chhattisgarh – 490006.

Abstract

Our country, India, is a country of diverse cultures and tribes. Folk and tribal arts are spread from Jammu-Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from east to west. Culture is similar in every region, state, city and village. Still, it is presented in different ways through its costumes, art, music, food, and religious rituals; their artefacts make them unique. Warli, Kalamkari, Pichwai, Gond, Madhubani, Pithora painting, Phad, Chittar, Thanjavur, Thangak, Patachitra, Kangra, Batik and Yamunaghat etc. are prevalent in the folk arts of India. All the artefacts have different local specialities. Let's look at the prevalent North Indian folk and tribal art in detail. It is mainly Madhubani or Mithila painting in Bihar, Phad painting of Rajasthan, Gond painting made by Gonds in Madhya Pradesh, Dokra metal casting of Bastar of Chhattisgarh, Odisha. Pattachitra is popular, and the Warli painting is especially famous in the Thane district of Maharashtra. One similarity in these folk arts is linear drawing, which looks simple but challenging. Many artefacts feature human figures and describe their religious teachers, priests and deities in detail.

Keywords: Folk Art, Indian Culture, Tribal Art, Civilization

Introduction

This theme highlights the introduction of famous and beautiful artworks belonging to the North Indian people and tribal arts. Different types of artworks in different states fascinate us, as if we are seeing a beautiful place or a lake. Culture, colours, costumes, trade, economic status, and religious activities establish their own identity. Many tribes fulfilled their daily needs by doing business, making this artefact that ran their entire household. This folk art reminds us of our ancient civilization and helps save ancient Indian society. With the help of this ancient art, today we are reading about various courses in the art world. By studying the New syllabus, we have understood the importance of folk art. This is not just art but the essence of the life of folk artists and tribals.

World-famous North Indian folk and tribal art

- **Madhubani Painting**



Picture 1



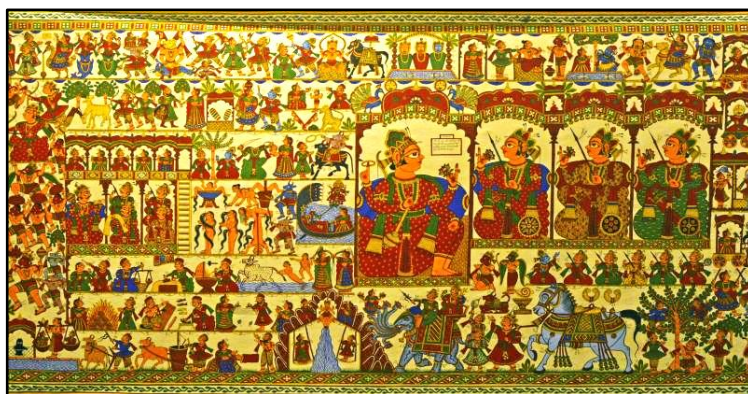
Picture 2

Shapes and drawings full of bright and contrasting colours are the speciality of Madhubani painting, which is also called Mithila art because this art developed in the Mithila region of Bihar state. And this is an art that is over 60 years old. Women did this type of painting earlier, but seeing the increasing demand today, both men and women do this type of painting. These paintings are trendy due to the use of tribal motifs in bright and earthy colours. In this painting, the artisans used mineral colours. It is worked on raw or freshly painted clay. This type of painting is now done on paper, cloth, canvas and other materials. Yellow colour is from turmeric, pollen, milk of lemon and banyan leaves; the black colour is from a mixture of kajal and cow dung; the Red colour from safflower flower juice or red sandalwood; the White colour from rice paste; the Green colour from the leaves of the Kathbel tree; And the orange colour is made from Palash flowers. Colours are applied flatly without leaving any spaces or creating colours or shades.

Mythological stories and images of nature are depicted in a way that matches his style. Many of the subjects and designs in these paintings are related to Hindu deities, such as Krishna, Rama, Shiva, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Sun and Moon, Tulsi plants, scenes from royal courts, social festivals, etc. Pictures of flowers, leaves, birds, animals, and geometric designs are used to fill the empty spaces. This art form is passed down from generation to generation, so its traditional patterns and designs remain preserved.

The Government of India and the All India Handicrafts Board are encouraging women to create and trade their traditional paintings on handmade paper to maintain a source of income apart from agriculture. Painting is a significant source of income for many families today. The business of this art in the world salutes the imagination of the women of Mithila, who have made their method of making graffiti successful by painting on paper.

- Phad Chitra



Picture 3

Phad Chitra tradition originated in the Shahpura and Bhilwara regions of Rajasthan and is very popular. Phad means Patta, which is traditionally painted on long pieces of cloth in the form of Phad. This Phad is kept wrapped or folded, and during storytelling, the Phadchitra is spread in front of the people and read. In this traditional painting style, the life character of a great hero, folk deity or great man is depicted.

In making Phad Chitra, natural paintings use stones, natural colours of trees and plants, herbs and fibres. Natural colours obtained from minerals and plants are mixed with water and gum to make Paint for paintings. The process of making clothes for the film is also an essential part of the art form. To thicken the thread for Phadchitra, thick hand-woven cotton cloth is soaked overnight. Then, it is spread by adding starch made from wheat or rice flour and dried in the sun to harden it. The surface is then rubbed with moonstone to make it smooth.

The Phad painting of Rajasthan is said to be 700 years old. It is believed that Chochu Bhat, a devotee of Devnarayan, created his Phad painting for the first time in the medieval period. It makes us realize our ancient culture. Like scroll painting, it is our traditional painting, which describes local gods and goddesses in religious stories. Priest-singers of the Rabri tribe, called Bhopa and Bhopia, used to perform and sing religious stories of their local deities. Traditional paintings were large in size; Devnarayan's phad was about 30 feet long, and Pabuji's phad was 15 feet long. However, in some villages, there is still a tradition of telling the story of the Bhopas.

To present this art, it is equally important to follow the techniques taught by the ancestors because they have been prevalent since ancient times. This is very complex so it can take anywhere from a few weeks to months. There will be a lot of colours in it which will attract your eyes. Every colour has its own purpose. In the paintings, human figures are shown looking at each other rather than at the viewer, as if they are talking to each other. Another exciting thing about this style is that the eyes of the gods are always created at the end; the artist cannot sit on his artwork after this. Artists believe that this awakens the gods, making the painting a travelling shrine. After painting the eyes of the main deity, the attractiveness of the artwork increases and it becomes ready for worship.

In 1960, renowned painter and Padma Shri awardee "Shri Lal Ji Joshi" decided to save and revive the artwork by establishing Joshi Bala Kunj in Bhilwara, Rajasthan. And more than 3,000 artists have been trained in it. That is why everyone has aimed to protect this art style and keep the traditional and natural techniques alive. It included stories and characters from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Hanuman Chalisa and Panchatantra, attracting many audiences.

- **Gond Art**



Picture 4

Picture 5

The Gondi tribe of Madhya Pradesh is the largest tribal community in India. This art is inspired by nature and highlights the relationship between humans and other living beings. There is a lot of line and dot work in this art style. Each artwork uses vibrant colours (red, blue, yellow and white) from natural flowers, plants, soot and cow dung.

The etymology of folk and tribal arts is most difficult to trace because of the limited availability of archival resources or objects and the inherent instability of the materials and methods involved in the creative process. In this perspective, the historical development of 'Gond' or 'Jangadh Kalam' or 'Pardhan painting' has to be understood. This community of about four million people has lived in Central India since 1400 years ago. The word "Gond" comes from the Dravidian word "kond", meaning "green mountain".

Painting of Gonds and Pardhans on walls and floors has been a part of domestic life. These paintings are made with local colours and materials (such as charcoal, coloured clay, plant sap, leaves, cow dung, and limestone powder). With time, due to agricultural life and lack of social security, the Pardhanas were forced to work as labourers. These Pardhan Dravidians are a subgroup of the tribal Gonds living in central India. For the Gond painter, patterns are organic forms, not decorative devices. Their painting uses many patterns, including small-scale motif patterns of leaves, tree bark and structure, paddy shoots, maize ears and crescent moons.

Bharat Bhavan Art Center in Bhopal, central India, was established in the early 1980s to create a shared space for all contemporary art practices. This mission was led by the modern Indian painter and activist J. Swaminathan, who was very passionate about revealing the creative expressions of rural people and tribal societies in India. J. Swaminathan inspired young artists to go to rural areas to explore such expressions. When

a group of artists went to the village of Patangarh, a seventeen-year-old labourer, Jangarh Singh Shyam (who later became a famous artist in the history of Gond painting) painted a beautiful fresco.

- **Dokra Art**



Picture 6



Picture 7

Dokra art is a bell metal craft made by Ojha metallurgists in Bastar of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Midnapore of West Bengal, Telangana and some parts of Madhya Pradesh. However, the art and style of this artisan community varies from state to state.

Garhwa: This name is given to the metal artisans of Bastar. In famous words, the word 'Garhwa' means the act of shaping and making. Perhaps that is why the artists are known by the name Garhwa. Garhwa artisans have traditionally made metal snakes, elephants, horses, ritual utensils, etc., apart from making utensils useful in the daily life of people in rural areas and making idols, jewellery and votive offerings to locally revered deities. After this, the demand for community utensils and traditional jewellery started decreasing, which caused these craftsmen to begin producing new forms and many decorative items in contrast to the conventional forms. Lalbazar is the centre of Dokra art, a popular metal craft in West Bengal.

Dokra or Dhokra is also called bell metal craft. The name Dhokra is derived from the traditional metallurgical Dhokra Damar tribes of West Bengal. The Lost Wax Casting technique is named after their tribe, which casts Dhokra metal. Dokra metal casting is a long process. Black soil taken from the river banks is mixed with paddy husk and kneaded by adding water. It is also used for mould and main shape. After drying, the soil is mixed with cow dung and a second layer is applied to it. The resin obtained from the Sal tree is heated in an earthen vessel until it becomes liquid, and then some mustard oil is added to boil. The boiling liquid is filtered and placed in a metal vessel over water. As a result, the resin solidifies but remains soft and pliable. It is then cut into small pieces, slightly heated over a low flame of coal and then put into a fine thread or coil. Such threads are joined together to make strips. These resin strips or coils are overlaid or added to the dry clay shape, and then decorative parts, such as the nose and eyes, are created along the shape. After this, it is covered with an earthen structure. First, add a layer of light soil, then add a layer of cow dung and soil mixture and finally, add mounds of soil made by ants along with rice husk. Then, a vessel made of clay is added to the lower part of the figure.

On the other hand, cover a cup filled with metal pieces with the soil-rice husk mixture. Sal wood or its coal is used as fuel for the fire in the furnace. The metal cup is placed under the clay mould and then covered with firewood and utensils. The air is continuously filled or blown into the furnace to melt the metal, which continues for 2 to 3 hours. With the help of tongs, the mould is taken out, then it is turned upside down, and then, giving a sharp blow, the metal is poured into the receptacle. The molten metal, which has already evaporated, flows into the resin space. The mould is left to cool, and the clay layer is broken away, revealing the metal image. As soon as the mould is used, the mould is broken to remove the artwork, making this lost wax casting technique considered unique worldwide. This technology is used in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Kerala. It takes about four to five weeks to make each idol. The bronze dancer at Mohenjodaro is one of the finest examples of the earliest Dhokra artefacts known to us today. Dokra art is still used to make artefacts, accessories, utensils and jewellery.

- **Pattachitra**



Figure 8



Figure 9

Pattachitra style is the oldest and most famous art of Odisha. The name Pattachitra is made up of two words – Chitra, meaning painting and Patta, meaning canvas. Thus, Pattachitra is an artwork made on canvas, depicted in beautiful images, designs and simple subjects (mostly mythological photos). Some of the common themes shown in the art are Vadhiya-Jagannath temple depicted, Krishnalila-image of Jagannath (Lord Krishna) as a child demonstrating his power; Dashavatara Ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu; Shri Ganesha is described as a five-faced deity. The main thing is that the subject is the core of this art, which creates the meaning of these paintings. Therefore, It is no surprise that the process of making such a painting requires extreme concentration and skilled craftsmanship, with five days needed to complete just one panel.

The work starts with the process of making the plate. To make tamarind paste, first, soak the tamarind seeds in water for three days; later, the seeds are ground, mixed with water, put in an earthen pot and heated to make the paste. Then, two pieces of cloth are combined with this paste, and raw clay is applied to it several times until it hardens. As soon as the fabric dries, it is given the finishing touch by sprinkling coarse soil over it. Then, it is pressed on a soft stone or wood until the surface becomes completely smooth and leathery. Similarly, painting is done on canvas.

Making Paint Perhaps the most essential part of Pattachitra is applying the artist's art of transforming the original raw material into paint form. The main ingredient is the gum of the Ketha tree, which is used to create different colours by mixing different types of raw materials. For example, white is made from conch shell, and black is made from kajal. The use of kea root is every day, with rat hair used to create a simple brush attached to a wooden handle when needed.

The painter strictly follows the style using samples and uses compatible colours. These painters create such beautiful pictures of their subtle expressions that, surprisingly, using different shades of colours is prohibited. These images are subject to specific rules of art. In fact, the most attractive form of art is displaying the figures' emotions in the paintings, which the painters painstakingly decorate and present in beautiful colours.

The art of Pattachitra has undergone significant changes with time. The painters created wall hangings, showpieces, and paintings of tussar silk and palm leaves. However, this latest has not changed the traditional expression of the shapes and the traditional use of colours, which has been retained from generation to generation. Some special programs designed to promote Pattachitra art in Odisha show that a significant reason for the popularity of Pattachitra art is the commitment of the painters.

- **Warli Painting**



Figure 10

Warli folk painting is mainly found in the Thane district of Maharashtra state and is very popular. The Worli community lives in the northern suburbs of Mumbai in western India. Warli, located close to India's largest city, has not been affected by today's urbanization. This art is estimated to be over 50 years old, but no confirmation exists when it originated. Warli It is a vibrant picture of the daily life and social life of the Warli tribe of Maharashtra. They used to make this artwork to decorate the walls of their mud houses. Due to a lack of script knowledge, this was the only way to reach the familiar people. This painting is much simpler than the bright paintings of Madhubani.

Most of these painters are women. These paintings do not depict mythological characters or gods and goddesses but depict subjects from social life. Incidents of everyday life and pictures of humans and animals are created, which are shown simply without any planning. Tribal (tribal) painting work of Maharashtra is

ubiquitous in Warli homes. These white-painted paintings, similar to those on the walls of prehistoric caves, depict people hunting, dancing, sowing and harvesting crops.

Stylistically, they are painted white on a simple clay base, a white coating made by grinding rice. Red and yellow colours are sometimes used. The uniqueness of the subject is hidden in the simplicity of the colour. Its themes are more repetitive and symbolic. In the many paintings at Palghat in Warli depicting gods and goddesses at weddings, the bride and groom are often seen riding horses. These pictures are very sacred, and it is believed that marriage would not have taken place without them. These paintings also fulfil the social and religious desires of the local people. These images are supposed to invoke the powers of God.

A straight line is scarce in a Warli structure. The more significant line is made up of many smaller lines and dots. Recently, artisans have started incorporating consecutive lines into their artworks. Not only women but now men have also taken up painting, and they often create traditional Warli paintings on paper and modern equipment like bicycles. Warli paintings are now bought all over India because they are made of paper. Nowadays, small paintings are made on cloth and paper, but wall paintings or large murals look most beautiful and depict the vast and magical world of Warlis. Today, Warli still sticks to tradition but also adopts new ideas, which helps it face new ideas in its marketing.

Conclusion

We have an abundance of folk arts, and we have preserved this heritage with great dedication and hard work. In every state, region, city and village of India, their own folk art is alive, and their own art, culture, music, costumes and food are commendable. But our aim is not just to preserve it; we have to take this folk art to a unique level so that people become familiar with it and this ancient culture continues to spread worldwide. Through folk art painting on the railway station premises through related programs, the Government of India has also been promoting this folk art occasionally by running campaigns. Folk art is linked to our culture, identity, and pride. This spreads enthusiasm and positive feelings in our lives.

References

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhubani_art#/media/File:Madhubani_Mahavidyas.jpg
- https://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki/मधुबनी_चित्रकला#/media/चित्र:Madhubani_painting.jpg
- https://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki/मधुबनी_चित्रकला#
- Thakur, U. (2003). Madhubani Painting. Abhinav Publications.
- https://www.sahapedia.org/sites/default/files/styles/sp_page_banner_800x800/public/_DSC3215.jpg?itok=IKMnPItF
- <https://www.sahapedia.org/फड़-चित्र—सामान्य-परिचय>
- <https://hindimekuch.com/2020/08/phad-painting-kalamkari-painting-gond-html>

- <https://indianculture.gov.in/hi/paintings/gaonda-caitarakalaaen/gaonda-caitarakalaaen>
- <https://www.abhivyakti-hindi.org/kaladirgha/folkart/gond.htm>
- https://nbt.in/wp-content/uploads/elementor/thumbs/handicraft_1-qfz3vklxm1cwvu645dgz8deyx9zr512kfl711cjzfc.jpg
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dhokra_\(couple\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dhokra_(couple).jpg)
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhokra>
- https://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki/पट्टचित्र#/media/चित्र:Patta_Chitra_03.jpg
- https://www.sahapedia.org/sites/default/files/styles/sp_page_banner_800x800/public/DSC_0073.JPG?itok=ZwSkmuHI
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattachitra>
- https://hi.wikipedia.org/wiki/वारली_चित्रकला#/media/चित्र:A_Warli_painting_by_Jivya_Soma_Mashe,_Thane_district.jpg
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warli_painting
- <http://www.warli.in/>

