



People's Perception on Art Culture of Raghurajpur Village in Puri District of Odisha State

NITYANANDA BARIK*

Abstract: This research paper is developed on Raghurajpur which is a heritage crafts village in the district of Puri in the State of Odisha. This village is recognized for its folk art called Pattachitra and Gotipua Dance. The artists of this village are also engaged in crafting various other craft objects like wooden toys and masks, palm leaf engravings, wood carvings, etc. These activities have provided their income opportunities outside their state and even in foreign lands. The village was given the status of heritage village, the first in the state, by INTACH in the year 2000 due to its rich art and culture. The purpose of the research is to present different art and culture of the village. Also, the research presents the perception of villagers, customers, Artisans and family members, dance performers and key informants. A set of schedules is prepared logically to receive perception from the respondents. The responses are briefly analyzed on the aspects like views on art and craft village, tourism & tourists, livelihood, learning for Pattachitra painting, marketing, promotion through NGO, governmental assistance and disaster response etc.

Keywords: Village, Heritage, Perception, Pattachitra, Palm leaves, Art, Culture,

Received : 28 April 2023

Revised : 22 May 2023

Accepted : 20 June 2023

Published : 26 December 2023

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Barik, N. (2023). People's Perception on Art Culture of Raghurajpur Village in Puri District of Odisha State, *Indian Journal of Anthropological Research*, 2: 2, pp. 215-224. <https://DOI:10.47509/IJAR.2023.v02i02.09>

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Now-a-days entrepreneurial activities are continuing for the development of income generation. It establishes a strong income source and capacity building of the people. The people of different category are involving with different types of activities like painting, dance, art work, skill work, weaving work, design work etc. The present research is focusing on nature of arts and culture activities which sustain the livelihood of people. In coastal district of Puri in Odisha state there is a place named as the village Raghurajpur which has

* Assistant Professor, School of Women's Studies, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.

become a focus-center for developing art and culture. Basically, the people of the village are being involved with traditional art culture, painting culture and dance culture. People say the art culture of Raghurajpur village is linked with Jagannath culture. The ministry of culture Govt. of India and the department of culture Govt. of Odisha and some prominent NGOs promoted this village as a “Craft Village”. Both men, women and children are working in the paint and art culture work. The researcher tries to the attention on the nature of involvement category of painting work, category of entrepreneurial activities, mechanism of marketing, governmental cooperation and promotion for the village. Also, the researcher tries to find out the technical know now of the entrepreneurial activities of the village. As it becomes an ideal village in respect of art and culture, it attracts tourists, visitors, academicians, researchers etc. The focus point of the research is to gather the people perception towards the development of entrepreneurial activities and its sustainability.

Art Culture of Odisha

Odisha is a state which is situated 17°45'N to 22°30'N latitude and 85°45'E to 87°45'E longitude on the Eastern Coast of Indian covering an area of 1.56 lakhs sq.kms. It is a maritime state with coastal line of 482 kilometres along with the Bay of Bengal in the North East, Jharkhand in the North, Chhatisgarh in the West and Andhra Pradesh in the South. Odisha art and craft constituted a major portion of the culture of Odisha. Odisha is known for its sand arts, patta chitra, palm leaf paintings, jhoti, chita & murja. The Odisha artisans are unsurpassed in their skill. Odisha is famous for creative art forms such as metalworking, silver filigree, stone carving, applique and others. One among there is pattachitra, which surrounds Odisha's religiosity, culture and spiritual observance to put life into this art. The visual art is an enthralling mix of creativity with sacredness to the utility. The art painting blends into two keywords patta (foundation, base, canvas or any material suitable for drawing) and chitra (visual, creative design and or artistic depiction). Earlier, the cloth was the prime canvas for this art; now it ranges from bottles, wooden plaque, clock, coconut shell, etc. The painting gained popularity with the foundation of Jagannath Temple Puri, Odisha. In Odisha, pattachitra artisans known as chitrakarees (pattachitra artisans), mostly belong to the Raghurajpur village in Puri District. The village families are engaged in the various types of crafts. The chief crafts are namely pattachitra paintings, palm-leaf manuscripts, papier – mache, cow dung toys and tussar silk paintings. Other crafts are stone carving, wood carving and wooden toys.

Through a moderate development process, pattachitra emerged as a way of livelihood.

Raghurajpur Village

The Raghurajpur village is situated about 50 km from the state capital, Bhubaneswar. It is situated on the south of Bhargabi river. Every family in the village is engaged in visual or performing art making it an artisan village. Tropical trees like mango, jackfruit and coconut are common around house and the nearby crops and making betel leaves. Various small temples dedicated to lord Laxminarayan, Raghunath etc. and Bhuasuni, the local deity are found in this village. The artist are engaged in various activities like the Talapatra Painting, Patta paintings, carving stone and wooden ideals, sculptures, papier and making of toys. The village has 150 houses with about 500 residents. Raghurajpur village is known for its traditional performing dance, known as Gotipua. This village is the birth place of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, the grate Odissi dancer who popularized it on an international scale.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the historical context of the art and culture of the village.
- To study different activities and promotions art and culture of the village.
- To study the art and painting culture as a medium of income source and capacity building.
- To study the technical know how for preparing patta chitra.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher adopted different methods to conduct the study. Data collection process are personal interaction, group discussion, primary, secondary source of data collection and the case study methods. Data have been collected from both primary and secondary source, secondary source such as books, journals, articles and from website and primary data as direct interaction with the respondent and villagers. There were 100 respondents that had taken in the research study. Out of them villagers were 20, customers were 20, Artisans and family members were 20, dance performers were 20 and 20 numbers were as key informants. A set of schedule is prepared logically to receive perception from the respondents.

Discussions and Findings on art and culture

The researcher collected data through questionnaire, open discussion, personal interaction and group discussion. The collected data have been tabulated and their responses are presented in narrative forms. However, their opinions are placed and analyzed below.

(i) Views on art and craft village

During the discussion it was found that the art and culture of this village is a traditional and continuing in hereditary basis. The development of art and culture is going day by day as per with modernization, globalization and digital era. The traditional and modern combination art reflection are found in village Raghurajpur on the aspects of painting and dance. As a matter of fact traditional culture was surrounded by locality and modern impact has reached at National and International sphere. Besides that the rapid growth at digital technology and use of internet had facilitated to reach the village culture of different corner of the society. To some how the people across the country could able to see and pass online order to purchase the art work of artisans of Raghurajpur village.

(ii) View on Tourism Tourists

In the course of the interaction it was found that the Raghurajpur village has become a rural tourists hub for which UNESCO and INTACH recognized as an ideal village. With the support of INTACH a great programme have been organized where artisans, performers, artists of different foreign country participated. The countries are USA, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, ENGLAND etc... Thereafter this village has been renowned at the global level. In the last 10-15 years the tourists of different countries had visited in a quantitative number to this village. It resulted in growing the income of local artisans made a high quality remark on the visitors of foreign tourists. As such, the local rural tourism is achieving a new shape of identity. The National & International tourists had become astonished to see the painted items. Specifically, the Pattachitra work, which is the unique contribution of the village Raghurajpur, attract the visitors / tourists in terms of the involvement of the artistic activities. Even the Pattachitra work which is the composition of different stories on Lord Jagannath, birth history of Ganesh, Dasabatar, goddess Durga etc. has set the minds of the tourists to pay order or to purchase.

(iii) View on livelihood

From this study it was gathered that all the families of the village involved with art and painting activities irrespective of caste. The village Chitrakara caste has been accepted the occupation of Pattachitra paintings since many years. The earning from the Pattachitra has become the only source of livelihood. But in current situation all the castes of this village are involved with Pattachitra painting along with other paintings. It is interesting to express that the earning from painting has become the main source of livelihood. Even no such government employees have been found except one teacher in this village. From the childhood to old age the male person involves with the painting activities and accepts the source of livelihood. Even the girls during their childhood and schooling start learning the painting activities and even after marriage they come to their village to assist their relatives in painting activities. Another interesting activities performed by such married women that develop art and painting activities at their in-laws-family. Another fact is that those women from other village marry at Raghurajpur village acquired knowledge on painting activities and assist in-laws-family to grow the source of livelihood. Says to sag the source of livelihood of the village is depending upon income from painting activities.

(iv) Views on early part of learning for Pattachitra Painting

It is observed that Pattachitra painting has become a regular practice for the Chitrakara caste and other involved persons or family. In order to know the early mechanism for developing the total skilled work the researcher gather informations. In the first stage at early childhood age the training method has given. The children of the family acquired training on hand setting and point position on the painting paper. The drawing activities is the primary part of training thereafter the trainees are provided to make arts on simple aspects and the hand practices are meticulously judged by the trainers. The painting training to their children are based on a chronological order like hand setting, drawing, sketching and colour matching. The circle or rectangular point is marked in the upper part, lower part, top, bottom, left and right. The early part of the painting begins from the art of trees, animals, deities. The painting techniques are based upon the proportion, like length and the scale. From these painting, in the palm left painting the children are asked to draw the given motif on palm leaf canvas with the help of pencil them in the 2nd step the children are learnt to engrave on rough palm leaf surface then in the last step which is easiest among all steps. The children are told to etch their name on the

reverse side of the bookmark then engraved palm leaf bookmarks are colored using black ink.

(v) Views on marketing

It is gathered that Raghurajpur village has become a landmark due to its cultural development. Besides that this village has become a rural tourism hub in attracting tourists and visitors. The unique aspect is that the villagers those who sell the painted items don't go outside or don't have any shop at market place, rather they sell these items in their homes. It is very interesting that the entrance room of the house and verandah are being used for selling purpose. They display the painting items at the entrance of the house and at the verandah. Another interesting matter is that any member of the house either male, female or Children can able. In market place only the owner sell his/her goods to the customers but in Raghurajpur the owner is no specific to the head of the family instead of every member of the family can sell their products to the customers. Another important aspect is that the visitors, who come to know about the art and culture are well described by the villagers without any sign of hesitation on their face. This thing indirectly promotes the advertisement of the art and painting culture both of National and international scale. By this process the marketing of the products have been marketised. Even at a time the business activities, painting activities and house work are being managed. The villagers of Raghurajpur do prefer to sell their products at their village. But they don't take interest to go outside to sell on regular basis at a fixed shop or at a temporary shop. It promotes to do so due to the availability of customers at their door step. Rare people participate in different exhibition, programmes organized by ORAMS (Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society) Govt. of Odisha.

(vi) Views on Collective involvement in the painting work

In regard to collective effort among the artisans and family members the researcher gather informations. The family members do not hesitate to cooperate each other. They all assist in selling, in displaying goods in connecting with customers, in drawing pictures and in preparing raw materials. The female members of the family also take multiple burden in the matter of cooking, child caring, the minimum household works and involving with the business. So the members of the family co-operate each other and develop good relation among them. For which the peaceful life exist. Another interesting aspect is that the family quarrel is happening in less manner in this village. Because the village always filled with customers and visitors.

(vii) Views on Response of the NGO (Village level)

During the discussion people responded that one NGO named as 'Parampara' is taking different steps for the development of art and culture of Raghurajpur village. The said NGO is functioning in the concern village and it is managed by a president, secretary and other executive members. The Parampara office is located of the entry point to the left side of the village. This organization focuses only the development of this village, in relating to cultural development, cultural assimilation, promotion of painting items. The said organization voluntarily works in placing the art work of the village at different exhibitions, programmes. It acts a prominent role in bringing governmental assistance to the village. Even the members of the Parampara pay fill attention on the hospitality part of the tourists. In most cases the president and secretary of the organization arrange cultural programmes in this village for the tourist on demand basis. The growth of art and culture is found success due to the involvement and engagement of this organization. Even some of the artists and artisans are being awarded at state, National and international level for the proper co-ordination of this organization. As such this village level organization is fostering the dignity of this village and the glory of this village. During the visit of the governmental officials, noted persons and VIPs the organization welcomes them on behalf of the villagers and artisans. So the immense role of the Parampara is praise worthy for the promotion of art and culture of this village.

(viii) Views on Promotional activities by other NGOs (District & State Level)

The researcher gathered information on the assistance and encouragement are given by prominent institutions, organizations at district and state level. As such, the Lalitkala Academy of Bhubaneswar has been taking important steps to reach the achievement of this village at National & International level. The effort of Sri Sudarshan Pattnaik, a noted sand artist, put effort towards promotion of the village's craft activities with the help of government. Lalit Kala Academy could able to organize online exhibition by which people of different corner got facility to join and see some other District Level NGOs also involved in arranging the cultural dignity of the village at District Level. Such organization add the village art activities in their inter linking with other organization of District and State. So the village Raghurajpur and its art activities, craft activities are being promoted with the effort of such organization. As a matter of fact Raghurajpur village has been identified as a landmark.

(ix) Views on Governmental Assistance

The respondents of the village clearly admitted that government has assisted this village for development of art and culture in multiple aspects. The governmental assistance in general schemes like housing, Swachh Bharat, Ujwala scheme, health policy for individual purpose. But for the village government has sanctioned a better pakka road, open pond, a guest house, community hall for cultural programmes, arrangement, entry gate, health centre, school to the village for common due to the meticulous and continuous matching work for art painting and direct contact with the preparation of raw materials, most of the people face health hazards. So, the health centre provides health facility to the artisans.

(x) Views on Disaster Response

The researcher interacted with the key informers, respondents and different stake holders. In regard to disaster response the researcher asked questions on the mechanism of disaster response. It is received that the cyclone 'Foni' made devastation in greater manner. Say to sag many houses, coconut trees and other trees have been broken down and change the external outlook of the village. Certain Kachha ghara of Artisans have been damaged. It resulted in destroying and damaging partly and fully the painting items that preserved in their houses. The artisans faced great financial loss which stood as hindrance in the progressive part of life. Thereafter government and other international NGOs assisted to bring into the original situation of the village. The present epidemic COVID situation also badly effected business of the artisans.

Conclusion

Raghurajpur village is a unique and prominent one in its art activities at the international and national level. The village is considered as a heritage village in the state of Odisha by the Government. The village entry point is identical having a remarkable gate. The internal part of village is quite pleasure because of its beauties and display of different art work by the artisans. The prominent role played by the NGO, 'Parampara' a noted NGO plays prominent role in increasing the dignity of the art work of the village in Odisha State and outside. The tradition of Guru-Shishya parampara are being developed soundly by which the learning process continues in generation wise. The village finds less number of high educated persons due to the adoption of painting profession. Besides the visual art, Raghurajpur village is identified in the field of performing art, in the name of 'Gotipua

Dance, Odissi Dance'. Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, a noted Odissi dance performer, was a great son of the village. Maa Dasabhuja Gotipua Odissi Dance institute is functioning with able support of Guru Maguni Charan Das. The performer of the dance belongs to age between 10 to 18 years and they earned name and fame at national and international level. Among the castes, mostly, Chitrakar families do work on Patachitra painting which is used for the puja work at Lord Jagannath. Besides the Chitrakar artisans, persons of other castes, Gouda, Khandayat, Badhei, are engaged in the painting work for the purpose of business.



(The entry gate of the village)

References

- Das, J.P (1982) *Puri Painting : The Chitrakara and his work*, Prafulla Pathagara Publication, Jagatisngpur, Odisha.
- Das, J.P (2007), *Chitra Pothi: Illustrated Palm leaf munuscripts from Odisha*, Niyogo books, New Delhi.
- Das, Nibedita (2013), "Pattachitra of Orissa: a case study of Raghurajpur village", *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, volume No-1, issue code IV April, P.P.-247-251.
- Mohapatra, Sanjaya and Das, Manjusmita, (2011), " Problem associated with artisans in making of handicrafts in Odisha, India", in *Management Review*, an International Journal, Volume – 6, Issue-I, P.P. 56-81.
- Tripathy, Mamata (1998), "Folk art at the crossroads of tradition and modernity: a study of patta painting in Orissa," A campaign article on applique work in Orissa, *JASO*, Volume No-29, Issue No-III, P.P. 197-211.
- Jena, P.K., (2004), "Raghurajpur; the craft village", in *Odisha Review*, November,, P.P. 52-53.

Das, M.P. (1965) 'A Note on the Illustrated Manuscripts and Pata Paintings of Orissa : *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, XIII. 3.1965.

Mishta, M., (2015), "Artisan village of Odisha: A concept of open Air Museum", *Odisha Review*, vol. 71-9., pp 80-83.