

Art Culture of the Artisans of Raghurajpur Village, Puri District

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Abstract: Raghurajpur village is coming under the jurisdiction of Malatipur Gram Panchyat, of Puri district. This village is possessed a unique position in the field of art culture and dance culture. The village attracts tourists, visitors, academicians, researchers for its traditional art work. The village is famous for making patachitra which has been used for the Lord Jagannath in different festivals. As such, the culture of this village is associated with Jagannath culture. Such culture has been developed since long years ago and the people of chitrakar caste of the village are involved to make patachitra for Lord Jagannath. The village has become a hub for its famous art work not only for patachitra but also for other painting work, such as, palm leaf painting, tusar painting, glass painting, wood and mask painting etc. Such activities have become the source of income for the villagers. Women and children of the households assist artisans in selling and counselling the customers. This village has identified as the ideal village by the government of Odisha and recognized as the heritage village by INTACH.

Keywords: Patachitra, Tusser, Chitrakar, Odishi, Gotipua, Parampara, Ideal

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Introduction

There has always been a timeless tradition of art forms, which have been practised for different reasons among people, living far from urban life in interior terrains of forests, deserts, mountains and villages. So far, we have studied art of a certain time, a period named after a place or dynasties, who ruled different parts of the Indian subcontinent for few hundred years or so. But what about common people? Were they not creative? Was there no art that existed around them? From where did the artists come to the courts or patrons? What did they use to make before coming to cities? Or even now, who are the unknown artists making handicrafts in faraway deserts, mountains, villages and rural areas, who have never been to an

art school or design institute or even attended formal schooling? Our country has always been a repository of indigenous knowledge, which has been transferred from one generation to another. Artists in each generation have created the best of works out of available material and technology. Many scholars named these art forms as minor arts, utility art, folk art, tribal art, people's art, ritual art, crafts, and so on. We know that these art forms have existed from time immemorial. We have seen the examples in pre-historic cave paintings or works of pottery, terracotta, bronze, ivory, etc., of the Indus period as well.

Puri district of Odisha state is famous for Lord Jagannath temple, Konark temple and some other prominent tourist places. This place is memorable due to its culture, art and religious ceremonies. Basically, the Jagannath culture is famous at the national and international level. Pilgrims, visitors, religious preachers, saints, researchers, academicians, historians visit Puri for gathering knowledge and doing research on art and culture. Remarkable, it can be accepted that Puri in general and Raghurajpur village in particular is famous for art culture. Now a days, this village has been considered a significant place for the people. Government of Odisha identifies this village as 'Ideal' village for its high and innovative quality in art work. Such work includes pata chitra painting, palm leaf painting, tasar and wood painting, glass and silver painting, stone work and paper mask work. The culture of Odishi dance and Gotipua dance have been originated from this village. Such category of dances is linked with Jagannath culture. Patachitra painting is a traditional painting of this village and it is used for the Lord Jagannath temple in different festivals. Prominent festivals are called as the Snannpurnima, Anasara Pati, Rathayatra (Car festival), Dola Yatra. The Chitrakar caste of the village is involved in patachitra works and associated with Jagannath culture.

Objectives

The objective of this research article is to focus on the nature of art culture of Raghurajpur villager of Puri district. In connection to major objective, the researcher outlined other objectives, such as,

- To focus environmental aspect of the village
- To focus different categories of art work based on painting
- To focus the identity of the artisans and nature of involvement
- To focus civil society organization role to sustain art culture in the village

Scope of the Study

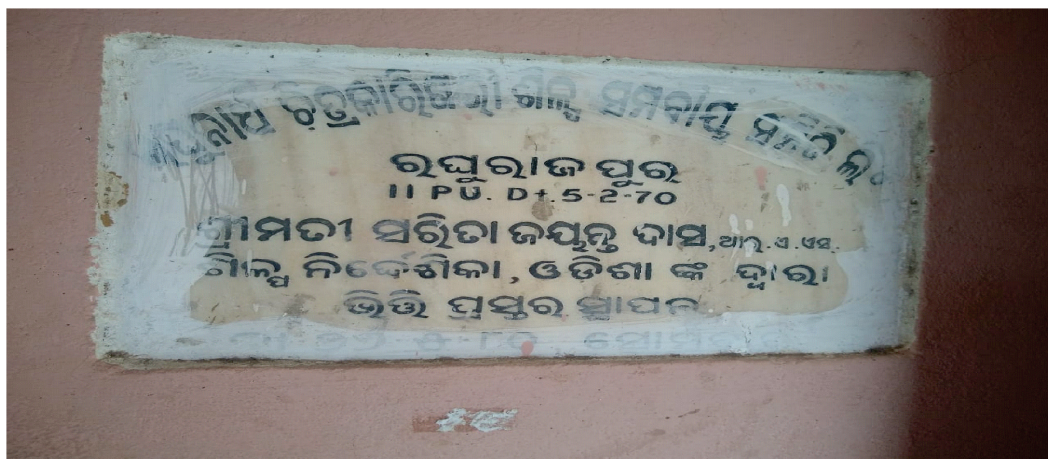
The villagers are involved with art work in current situation and that has become their source of livelihood. The village is famous and internationally reputed for art work for which tourists visit frequently. The nature of art work and the Gotipua dance attract tourists to gather knowledge. The majority of households of the village is dealt with art work and perform Gotipua dance. So the researcher continued study without any problem.

Methodology

The study is conducted for a broader aspect of research work. The researcher made a schedule and prepared a set of question for the interaction of the people, artisans and Gotipua dance performers. They are well interacted to meet the research requirement and to reach the findings of the research questions. The researcher collected data from both primary and secondary sources. The village environment is very cooperative and positive for the researcher to collect data qualitative and quantitative. Even, group discussion and personal interview have been made with the artisans and key informants for the collection of data. Again, the researcher has taken photographs of different position of the village, art work, artisans, display shop, work shops etc. These are presented in the suitable place of this research paper.

About the Village

The village Raghurajpur is situated at distance of 3 km from Chandanpur Bazar, near the national highway to Puri. It is placed at a distance of fifty km from Bhubaeswar, the capital of Odisha. In reverse it is around 12 km, distance from Puri town and Lord Jagannath temple. Raghurajpur village is under the jurisdiction of Malatipur Gram Panchyat, Chandanpur police station of Puri district. The village comprises of around one hundred fifty households from many castes including chitrakar caste. The houses are built at both sides of the village road. The unique aspect of the village is the open market system. In the sense, the art works have been displayed at entry point of each family. The customers and tourists visit this village and purchase applique and art items. No central market is available in the village. The identity of the village is known from its entry gate and near cooperative association house. Besides that there are number of temples in the middle of the village. They are, namely, Bhagabat Tangi, Radhamohan, Gopinath Raghunath, Laxminarayan, Gouranga and the Bhuasani.



(Raghurajpur village)

Living Art and Tradition

During the early history and its subsequent times, we find references of artists' communities everywhere. They made pots and dresses, jewellery and ritual or votive sculptures. They decorated their walls and floors and did many more artistic things to fulfill their daily needs and supply their works to local markets at the same time. There is an instinctive aesthetic expression in their creations. There is symbolism, specific use of motifs, materials, colours and methods of making. There is a thin line between art of the people and crafts as both involve creativity, instinct, necessities and aesthetics. Even now, in many pockets, we find such artifacts. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a new perspective emerged among modern artists when they looked at traditional art forms around them as sources of inspiration for their creative pursuits in India, as well as, the West. In India, post-Independence a revival of handicraft industry took place. The sector became organised for commercial production. Apart from continued practice, it gained a unique identity. With the forming of States and Union Territories, each one of them showcased their unique art forms and products in their respective State emporia. The art and craft traditions of India showcase the tangible heritage of the country with history of more than five thousand years. Though we know many of these, let us talk about few of them. By and large, there has been a religious or ritualistic overtone with richer symbolism, utilitarian and decorative aspects, associated with the day-to-day practices at home to production on a large scale.

What Is a Painting?

The following are the basic physical components of a painting:

- Ground on which the painting is done
- Colours that make up the painting
- Adhesive or glue
- Tools to apply colours to the ground

Ground on Which the Painting Is Done

Right through history in India, rock faces and caves, walls of the home, the floor, the threshold, a palm leaf, a piece of wood, cloth or even the palm of a hand was used as a background to paint. In English many terms for paintings refer to the ground. Have you heard of canvas painting, fabric painting, glass painting, wall painting also called ‘murals’, or even face painting? The ground determines what colours, adhesives, and tools should be used. Wood has an oily surface therefore water-based paints cannot be used. In India we have many imaginative names for each type of painted surface in all our languages.

Colours That Make Up the Painting:

Colours for a painting can be organic or inorganic depending on how they are obtained or made.

- **Organic Colours:** Infinite colours provided by nature from flowers, leaves, stones and even cow dung or soot collected from inside a chimney fill the artist’s palette. Common colours for cloth in use even today are:
 - ❖ indigo laboriously obtained from the indigo plant to create many hues of blue
 - ❖ madder red with powdered bark and leaves
 - ❖ dried karaka flowers with powdered alum and water for an ochre yellow
 These are only the basic colours whereas each region uses some special materials from its own area to add to this common natural colour range. Before chemical colours came to be produced industrially, people sought to bring vibrancy into their lives by using colours extracted from nature. Each region had its own materials and mixtures which people used to create aesthetic moods. Also, the instinctive urge to honour nature and to capture it without destroying it inspired people to search for colours

in the natural world. Traditional wisdom everywhere enabled people to experiment with available natural resources.

- ❖ **Dyes:** Natural dyes have been used since time immemorial to add colours to cloth. It was India that first invented the technique of printing or painting on cotton cloth by using a fixing agent termed a 'mordant'. The most common type of mordant used is myrobalam which is made from unripe karaka fruit and mixed with fresh unboiled milk. The cloth is bleached with sheep or cow dung dissolved in water before it is dyed.
- ❖ **Inorganic Colours:** Inorganic or chemical colours such as acrylic, emulsion etc. came into existence as a result of industrialisation. They are commercially sold and since they are easily available, they are widely used.
- **Adhesive or Glue:** A painting is said to be permanent if an adhesive is used to fix it to the ground. For centuries, in western countries (Europe), oil was used to fix colours and the paintings were called oil paintings. When water is used it is called water colour paintings.
- **Tools to Apply Colours to the Ground:** Painting is done with a variety of implements or tools made from natural materials such as:
 - ❖ thin sticks stripped from long grasses
 - ❖ brushes made of bird's feathers, squirrel's and cat's hair
 - ❖ bamboo slivers buried in the ground until they become fibrous

Painting Work of the Village

Art through Patachitra painting

The patachitra painting work is the traditional art work of the village and basically the chitrakar caste is associated with patachitra painting work activities. The village is famous for such art work at globally and locally. The patachitra is used at different festivals and occasions for Lord Jagannath including 'Snana Purnima' which occurs in the lunar month of Jyestha in Odia, May-June in English. Again at the time of 'Rathayatra' (Car Festival), these chitrakar artisans prepare colourful painting on the three chariot. The mechanism of preparing patachitra is unique one and it needs more time. The raw materials for such art work are old cotton sarees, cow dung, black earth, white coating (colour), locally made gum, white stone powder. Besides that heavy sun ray is required for which the artisans take attempt to prepare patta during summer season. The patta is prepared with proper combination of these

raw material. The artisans focus due care during the preparation of patta and then they keep in a dry place with meticulous care. The artists put their art knowledge in drawing different pictures and messages on patta. Prominent pictures are the 'Dasabatara, Ganesh birth story, Devi Durga, lord jagannath culture, Ratha yatra etc. Such art work of this village has become their source of livelihood and source of income. Some of the patachitra work is presented as follows:



(Patachitra painting)



Art through Palm Leaf Painting

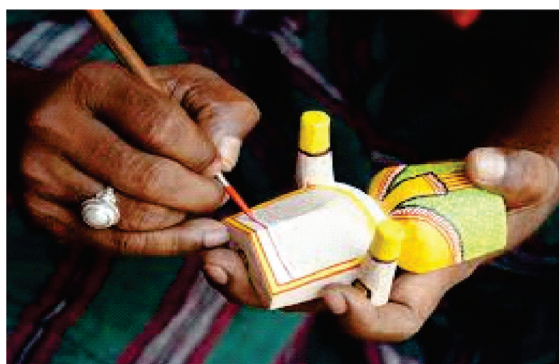
In addition to the patachitra work artisans of Raghurajpur village also involved with art work through palm leaf painting. Such category of art work has been continuing from the old times. It is an old traditional art work which attracts visitors and tourists. Though its market demand is less than patachitra but some people do accept and purchase. The art work has been made on the palm leaf and it remains long time without any damage. Some households of the village are involved with this art work. The palm leaf painting mechanism is depending on locally prepared raw materials. Dried, flat and strong palm leaf, colour, ink, turmeric oil, threads etc. are the required materials for the palm leaf painting. The family members collect palm leaves and they make process into small pieces. They boil these leaves with neem leaves and turmeric for the protection from insects. Then they added oils and colours. With the help of ink and colour artisans draw and sketch pictures, stories etc. The artisans make attempt to fold and unfold the painted leaf in order to show the customers. These painting works have been kept in a separate volumes and bundles. Some of the palm leaf work is presented as follows:



Palm leaf painting

Art through Wood painting

The Raghurajpur village is famous for art work in the field of patachitra and allied painting work. Some families are associated with wood painting. When the village has become the hub of art work and the visitors make regular trip, definitely they are attracted with different painting wooden articles. The wooden made deities are coloured, painted and displayed for the purpose of selling. Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra deities, lord Shiva, Lord Ganesh, and many more items have been prepared by the artisans. The raw materials are collected by the artisans. Even some of the artisans purchase the wood from Maharana caste. Generally, the neem wood is used for the painting work. With the help of cutting equipment, the wooden is converted into small pieces or as per the required deities. Then the wood needs finishing and polishing. With the help of colour the artisans start the painting work. Some artisans work for the people who give advance money or advance order.

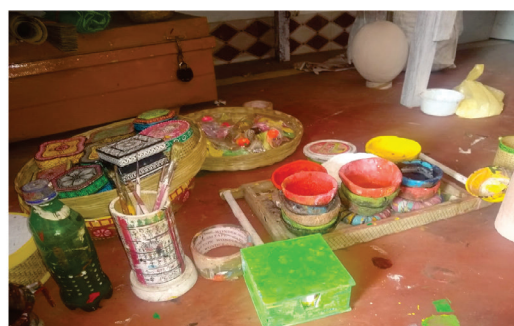


Wood painting



Art through Glass painting

Multiple painting work is being developed in this village. The glass painting work is given emphasis by selected family members. Such painting work is not so demanded in the market. The glass items are sold for the purpose of offering gifts. But the outlook of the glass painting is nice. These items have fulfilled the needs of the artisans. Now a days it has become a fashion aspect. The preparation process of glass painting is not so traditional. The unused bottles are collected and then these are washed well. The artisans brush the colour and draw the pictures, animals, trees, flowers, etc. The family members including women and children are involved in this work. The children who continue study at schools and colleges are engaged in painting work during their leisure time. The following photos are the glass painting work.



Glass painting items and required colours

Role of Civil Society

The Raghurajpur village is considered as the ideal village for its growth of art culture in Odisha. 'Parampara', a noted civil society organization plays important role to promote its glory at the national and international level. The office of the Parampara is functioning at the entry point of the village. This organization is managed by president, secretary and other dedicated members. The organization establishes as a link to export art items to outside of Odisha and other countries. It links to ORMAS, Government of Odisha for distributing and selling art items at different exhibitions. This organization also assists artisans to participate in different state level and district level exhibitions. The youth of the village cooperate this organization in organizing cultural programmes in the village. In general, Parampara's activities involve with art and culture development of the Raghurajpur village.



Artisan's workshop

Conclusion

INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage) has made research and study on the art and culture of the Raghurajpur village. It has marked this village as 'heritage village'. Due to the interest of artisans in developing the art activities, INTACH has taken important steps and has contributed a great effort for them. This village has developed tremendous achievements not only in art culture but also in the field of dance culture. Both Odishi dance and Gotipua dance have originated from this village. Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, a former noted Odissi dance performer, belonged to this village and promoted Odishi dance in Odisha. Guru Maguni Charan Das is remembered for his activities in promoting Gotipua Dance. As such, the village is famous for composite culture in terms of art and dance. The family members of artisans including women and children cooperate for the success of the business transaction at the level of selling and counselling the customers. The following photo shows the selling of art goods and counselling the customers.



Village women selling their own product.

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