



2

MODULE – 1

Introduction to Folk and Tribal Art



Notes

FORMS OF FOLK AND TRIBAL ART

Dear learner, in the previous lesson we have learnt about the introduction to folk art and in this lesson we will learn different forms of folk and tribal art. India is world famous for its variety of cultural ideas. Every region of India has its distinct form of tribal and folk art. The traditional folk and tribal art are created for the benefit of local folks, and these arts and crafts are created for ritual and utilitarian purposes. Hence there is no intention to earn money from these works of art; instead it is the way to express their traditional beliefs. These are created to make rural life peaceful and seek blessings from their deceased forefathers. Folk and tribal artists make use of locally available materials. Twigs and grass, wrapped in cloth or cotton are used as paint brush and yellow clay (pili mitti), ochre (Geru), chalk (Kharia) and lampsoot (Kajal) are used as colour and ground rice, turmeric, vermilion and indigo. Cow dung and some vegetables are also a source of colour. Women mostly do folk and tribal art. The features of these paintings keep on changing from time to time. The female members of these societies spontaneously learn to paint and hand over the technique to the next generation.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the background of some of the folk and tribal art, and its utility;
- identify the different forms of folk and tribal art;
- describe the technique and medium of folk and tribal arts;
- explain the importance of different styles of folk and tribal arts;
- elaborate the contribution of women in the creation of folk and tribal art.



Notes

Types of Folk and Tribal Arts in India

Now, learner you will learn the different type of folk and tribal arts in India.

Following are some of the folk and tribal art:

- Warli painting of Maharashtra and Konkan painted by tribals on wall.
- Gond painting by Gond tribals of Madhya Pradesh.
- Pithora wall paintings are painted by Bhills and Rathwa tribes of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.
- Ittal or Irtal wall painting by Saura tribals of Odisha.
- Chaksudan painting of Sansthals tribe of West Bengal and Jharkhand.
- Patachitra and Jhuti chitra of Odisha.
- Thanka painting of Himachal (Lahaul and Spiti) and Laddakh.
- Madhubani painting of Mithila district in Bihar.
- Mandana painting on wall and floor of Rajasthan.
- Chitravan, Sanjhi, Mandana Jirauti and Karvachaut painting of Madhya Pradesh.
- Patachitra of Kalighat, West Bengal.
- Kalamkari and Cherywal painting on cloth of Andhra Pradesh/Telangna.

Apart from all the above mentioned folk and tribal art, Mandana painting on floor of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Rongoli of Maharashtra and Gujrat, Aripan of Bihar, Alpana of West Bengal, Kallam of Tamilnadu and Kolam floor painting of Kerala are significant forms of folk and tribal painting.

2.1 REGIONAL FOLK AND TRIBAL ART

Now, you will get to know about the Chitrkati art of Maharashtra.

2.1.1 Chitrakathi Painting

Title	: Chitrakathi Painting
Place	: Maharashtra
Type	: Painting
Period	: Contemporary

Basic Information

The word Chitrakathi combines two words, Chitra (painting) and Kathi (narration). The stories are narrated with these illustrations to the villagers of Paithan and

Pinguli. The story tellers move around the places to narrate different stories to make them aware of their traditions. Unfortunately, these narrations are losing their popularity, though some efforts are made to revive this art.

Chitrakathi reached its zenith during the 17th and 18th Century AD and spread over the neighbouring regions of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. These paintings are painted by the story tellers. Some artists of this style in Kundal village of Sindhu are trying to revive this style.

These paintings are done on paper with natural colours. Stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata are narrated in a popular and original style. The episode of the stories are painted in proper square format in a sequential order. All the paintings are kept in a bundle which is called Pothi. There are many such pothies with the painters which are considered family treasures. The painters mostly use brownstone to extract colours. The main features of these paintings are large eyes on the face. The paintings are characterised by a simple and spontaneous flow of the brush. The two main centres of these paintings are Pinguli and Paithan.



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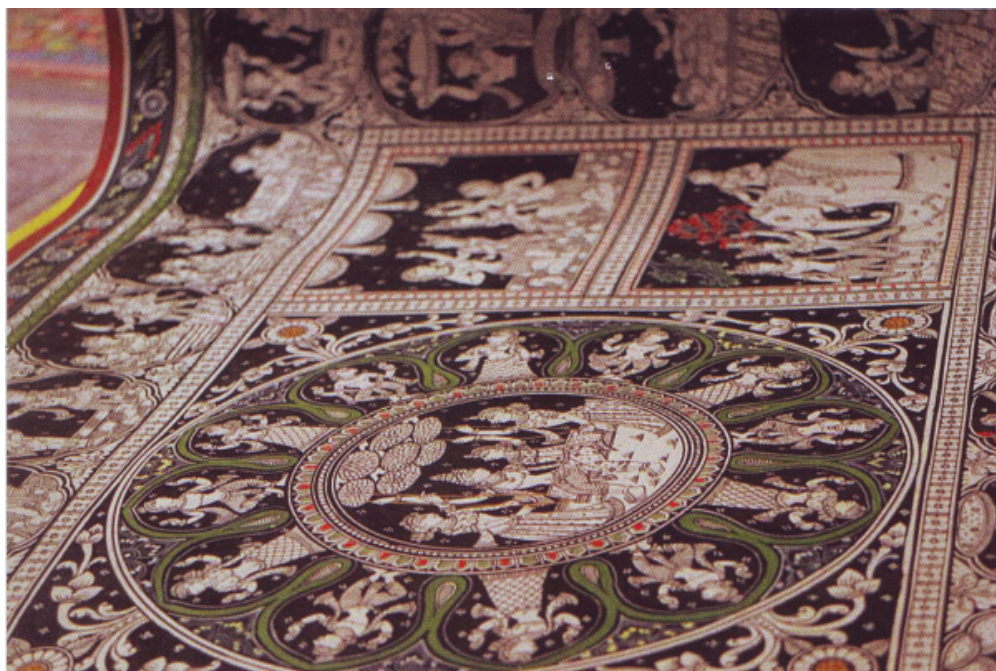


Fig. 2.1: Chitrakathi

General Description

You already know that the Chitrakathi paintings originated in Paithan of Maharashtra. It is a pilgrimage centre on the bank of the Godavari river. Thousands of pilgrims visit the Vitthal temple and love to collect these paintings. Along with stories of epics, stories from Vitthal Parchvishi and Chalchandu Aranyak are also painted. These paintings are generally 30 cm × 40 cm in size. Some large paintings

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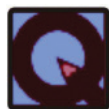
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are also made to describe the Vitthal pilgrimage. It is believed that these paintings are influenced by miniature paintings and temple murals. Vegetable and mineral colours are used in these paintings.

Chitrakathi paintings are also known as Pinguli Chitra since it is still practised in Sindhudurg of Maharashtra. It is believed that these painters were engaged by Shivaji for spying. Chitrakathi painters used to demonstrate during the festivals along with puppeteers. The association of festivals took care to provide musical instruments like Dholki, Tuntuna, Manjira and Shankh. There is a good collection of Chitrakathi paintings at the National Craft Museum, New Delhi and Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Pune.

You must know that Chitrakathi was very popular in the rural areas in the past. Still, with the emergence of Television, Cinema etc., its popularity declined. Despite this, there are some admirers of this art. An example of Chitrakathi painting by a contemporary painter is given in this text. The theme is related to Epic. The images of Rama and Sita are painted in the circular format at the centre of the composition. They are surrounded by many other Hindu deities. This painting is a part of a scroll which is to be unfolded to display the next episode along with narration.

There is limited use of colours, and emphasis is given to the line drawing. The lines are bold, clear and expressive.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

Tick the right answer:

- To which community do the painters of Chitrakathi style belong?
 - Thakur
 - Mughal
 - Rajput
 - Kayasth
- Name the region of Maharashtra, where this style of painting is popular?
 - Konkan
 - Bankura
 - Ghaziabad
 - Birbhum

2.2 TARPATRA CHITRA

So learner, we will understand about plam leaf painting.

Title	: Tarpatra Chitra/Palm Leaf Painting
Place	: South Odisha
Period	: 5th AD
Type	: Painting



Notes

Basic Information

Palm leaf was used as writing material in ancient times before paper was invented. Palm leaves were mainly used in South and South-East Asia. The use of Palm leaf as writing material started in the 5th Century AD for this purpose. Borassas or Korifa Ambraquily Fesh species of the palm leaf is processed with smoke. The palm leaf is cut in a rectangular shape with a hole in the middle. All the palm leaves are tied into a bunch by inserting thread through these holes. This bunch is called 'Pothi'. The painting of palm leaf came into being during the 10th Century AD and continued till the 15th Century AD. There is a collection of handwritten Pothi at Jaisalmer Bhandar (Rajasthan). This is illustrated with black lines. These are painted in red, blue and golden colours.



Fig. 2.2: Tarpatra Chitra

General Description

The tradition of writing and painting on palm leaves continues in Odisha. There are more than 40 thousand Tarpatra manuscripts in the state museum of Bhubaneswar. These are written in Sanskrit and Odia. Texts and pictures are mainly erotic descriptions from Kamasutra and detailed information about

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Devadasis. The writings and drawings on palm leaves are done with an iron tool called 'Lekhna' in the local language. It is like a long nail with a sharp end. Only experts and experienced artists can handle this. Once etched on the palm leaf, lines can not be erased. After being etched a coat of black ink is applied to it. This ink fills the groove of etched lines. Then the ink on the surface is wiped off with a wet cloth. So the etched lines get the black colour. This technique is used by the Nayakar community, who are basically astrologers. Nayakars make the horoscope for a newborn child with the help of this technique. Since the width of Talpatra is not sufficient, many leaves are used and stitched with thread. The stitching is done in such a way that it takes the shape of a Pothi.

Palm leaf paintings describe the stories of Krishna, Dasavatar, Kaliadaman, Kanchiabhiyana and stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata in the later period. Raslila of Radha and Krishna is a favourite theme in Puri and Bhubneshwar, the traditional centres of Patachitra. The painters were patronised by the kings and ministers. The traditional paintings on cloth are also replicated on palm leaves. At present, the painters are combining lines with colours. The colours are prepared by the artist himself from natural ingredients. Gum is added to the pigments to make them permanent. Puri and Raghurajpur are two the main centres of Tarpotra Chitra



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. In which part of the country palm leaf was used for writing?
2. Name the species of palm leaves used for writing and drawing?
3. Mention the period of illustrated manuscript of Jains.



ACTIVITY

Collect some palm leaves from your locality, then dry these under the sun. Now you draw some painting with poster colour and attach in sheet.

2.3 GOND PAINTING

Now, we are going to learn about Gond painting.

Title	: Gond Painting
Place	: Madhyapradesh
Period	: End of Middle age
Type	: Painting



Notes

Basic Information

Gonds are one of the prominent tribes in India. They are mainly settled in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattishgarh. There are at least 70 subcastes in them. Gonds are primarily farmers. During the end of middle age, the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh was ruled by Gond kings and this region was called Gondwana. Gond tribals belong to the Dravida race, and are very fond of dance, music and storytelling. They have a long tradition of keeping their homes clean and well decorated. Dr. Verrier Elwin, in his book “Tribal Art of Middle India”, discussed Gond art. He reproduced many examples of Gond paintings.



Fig. 2.3: Gond Painting

General Description

We will now come to know the general description of the Gond painting. Tribals have inborn faculty to keep their home decorated. They use locally available materials, viz. flowers, leaves, clay etc. They not only paint their bodies with Godna painting but also paint their homes with it. The courtyard and walls of their homes are coated with a mixture of cow dung and black clay. White, red, yellow and black clay is painted, known as “Thingna”. The upper part of the wall, doors

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and windows are given special attention for decoration. The motif of Thingna is geometrical and is painted with red, white, yellow and black earth colours. The two sides of the main doors are painted with the figures of horses, elephants, aeroplanes etc. These motifs are symbols of permanence. A mixture of cowdung and rice husk is used to make relief work on the wall of the sitting space and the main door. Images of birds, animals and the human figure are painted on it along with geometrical forms. This tradition is continuing among the Gond tribe.

In this text, the Gond painting in the text shows an example of peacock and peahen. Colours are applied beautifully. Since 1980, Gond paintings have been painted with poster and acrylic colours on paper and canvas. Jangarh Singh Shyam and Narmada from Pathangarh village of Mandala district of Madhya Pradesh are famous for creative Gond paintings. Their works are well appreciated. Jagdish Swaminathan, the then director of Bharat Bhawan, played an important role in popularising Gond paintings. Paintings of Jangarh Singh Shyam became internationally famous. The sale of Gond paintings at a high price improved the financial status of villagers. Several young men and women took the profession of painting in the style of Jangarh Singh Shyam. They made enough money to run their families.

The new generation of Gond painters uses canvas and paper to depict mythological stories and images of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. They are also using everyday life experiences as the theme of their painting. They use bright colours. The figures are painted with colours. Paintings are embellished with colourful dots and lines.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

1. Where does the Gond tribe live?
2. Name the author and researcher who wrote a book on Gond art? Name the title of the book.
3. What do they call the coat of earth colours of Gond painting?
4. Who started the new movement of Gond art?

2.4 KALAMKARI

Some of you must have seen Kalamkari painting. Let us know in details about this art.

Title	: Kalamkari
Place	: Andhra Pradesh/Telangana
Period	: Ancient
Type	: Painting

Basic Information

Kalamkari is a painting in which pen and block print are used. The word Kalamkari is derived from the Persian words Kalam and Kari. Kalam means pen, and Kari means work.

Kalamkari paintings are developed around temples of Srikalahasti town in Andhra Pradesh. The paintings include scroll paintings, a backdrop of the images in the temples, patchitra for Rathas etc. The themes are mainly taken from Ramayana, Mahabharat and mythologies.

The Muslim rulers patronised the Muchilipatnam centre of Kalamkari painting. For their satisfaction, the painters used the favourite themes of the rulers. The borders of the paintings and main figures are done with block printing, while colours are painted with a pen. These paintings are used as prayer mat, marquee etc., and are decorated with birds, animals and floral design motifs. These paintings are exported to middle east countries. There was a visible change in the design of Kalamkari after British rule. These are being used as garments, curtains and bedsheets. Floral design is more prominent.



Notes



Fig. 2.4: Kalamkari Painting (Ganesh)

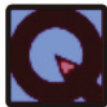


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General Description

You need to know that Kalamkari was painted only with the pen, but block printing was used in the later stage. The themes were restricted to Hindu religious subjects, and only pen was used in the first phase of this style. Both the pen and block prints were introduced in the Masulipatnam style.

The Kalamkari painting is an example of the Srikalahasti style. It shows Ganesha with four arms. There are well decorated borders on the four sides of the picture. The borders on the edges are broader than inside. These have floral motifs. The base colour of the borders is yellow. The image of Ganesh is in the centre of the composition with an area behind his head. The aura is painted in red and brown colours. The lotus petal motifs of the border are repeated here. The image is holding a conch shell (Shanka), lotus and sweet (Modak) in three hands, and the fourth hand shows 'Abhaya Mudra' (Protection). The well-proportioned figure is full of expressions. Different shades of blue are used. These colours are from natural and vegetable sources.



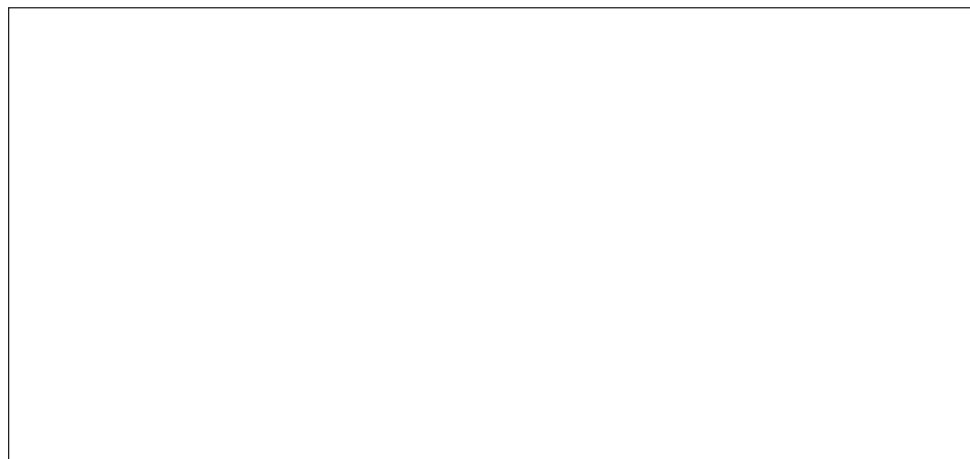
INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.4

1. What is Kalamkari, and why is it called Kalamkari?
2. Name the two styles of Kalamkari. How are these different?



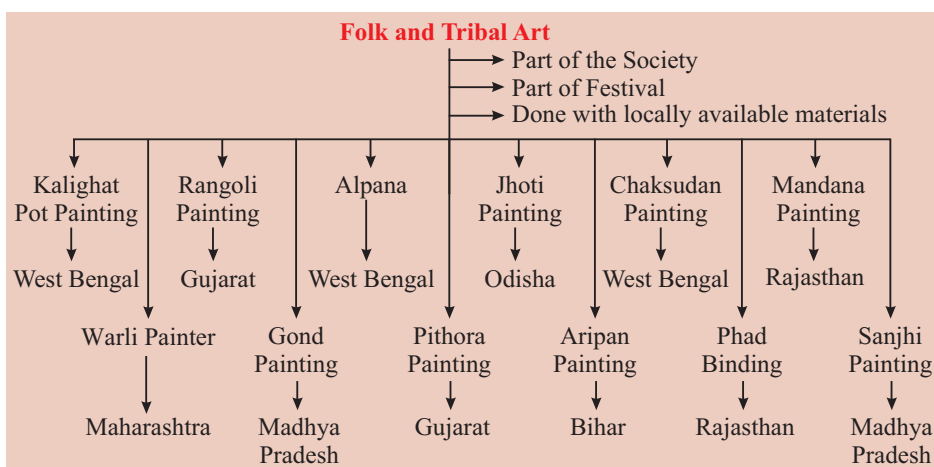
ACTIVITY

Visit a library in your locality and collect some photographs of Kalamkari art and study. Now try to draw anyone Kalamkari design with a pen.





WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



Notes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner

- treat the locally available materials to create any other art forms.
- use different techniques, colours materials to create art work.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is Chitrakathi? Where is it practised? Explain.
2. Write about the themes. Write in detail the material used in making Chitrakathi.
3. Where and when the Chitrakathi painting is exhibited?
4. When did writing on Tarpatra start? Explain.
5. Name the type of Tarpatra on which writing is done. How writing and drawing are done on Tarpatra?
6. When did Tarpatra painting start? Which religion is related to Tarpatra paintings? Where can the collection of Tarpatra paintings be found?
8. In which part of India does the Gond tribe reside? What is the name of their traditional 'Lipai'?
9. Name the two Gond painters who brought new tradition and development when they appeared.
10. Which organisation is responsible for the development of Gond painting?

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ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

2.1

1. (i) Thukur
2. (i) Konkan

2.2

1. South and South East Asia.
2. Borasses or Korla Ambrakujiphes.
3. Illustrated manuscript of Jain from 10th to 15th Century AD.

2.3

1. The Gond tribes belong to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
2. Tribals of middle India is written by Dr. Verrier Elwin.
3. Traditional technique of colouring is called 'Tingana'
4. It is contributed by Jangarh Shyam Singh and Narmada.

2.4

1. It is a style of painting. It is painted on cloth with the help of a pen and colour.
2. Only the pen was used in the first phase. Later block printing was used in Musalipattam.

GLOSSARY

Devdasi	:	Dedicated women to serve deity of a temple
Replicate	:	To copy something exactly
Patronise	:	To support
Image	:	An artifact that depicts visual
Episode	:	An incident in the course of series of events
Erotic	:	Theme related to sexual desire
Sub caste	:	A division of caste