

A Review on Journey of Madhubani Painting in Present Scenario

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ABSTRACT

India is a treasure trove of art forms that have been passed down from one generation to another. One such art form is Indian folk paintings that have stood even thousands of years. Mithila, the birthplace of Sita of the Ramayana, lies in the state of Bihar, bounded by the Himalayas in the north and the rivers Kosi, Ganga and Gandak in the east, south and west respectively. Over centuries, the people of Mithila have developed their own tradition of art, popularly known as Madhubani Painting, named after a district and a town in the region. What is unique about this tradition which dates back to the 7th century A.D., and is prevalent even today is that it is the women who mastered and practiced it. The style of painting differs from region to region and period to period. There is a living tradition in the art field of Bihar that is called Madhubani Painting which enlightened about the social structure as well as cultural identity of Bihar and the styles of painting has been changing from generation to generation. The article deals with the history, subject matter, use of raw materials and styles of Madhubani Paintings in the context of the role of local artisans of Jitwarpur village in it. Article focuses on the paintings of Madhubani with special emphasis to the present scenario of Madhubani Painting and how the village painters express their skill through organic colors and free hand brush drawing.

KEYWORDS-: Madhubani Painting, Painting in Mithila Art

I. INTRODUCTION

Painting, the expression of ideas and emotions, with the creation of certain aesthetic qualities, in two dimensional visual languages. The elements of this language are its shapes, lines, colors, tones, and textures are used in various ways to produce sensations of volume, space, movement, and light on a flat surface. These elements are combined into expressive patterns in order to represent real or supernatural phenomena, to interpret a narrative theme, or to create wholly abstract visual relationships.

An artist's decision to use a particular medium, such as tempera, fresco, oil, acrylic, watercolor or other water-based paints, ink, casein, as well as the choice of a particular form, such as mural, easel, panel, miniature, manuscript illumination, scroll, screen or fan, panorama, or any of a variety of modern forms, is based on the sensuous qualities and the expressive possibilities and limitations of those options. The choices of the medium and the form, as well as the artist's own technique, combine to realize a unique visual image.

Earlier cultural traditions of tribes, religions, guilds, royal courts, and states largely controlled the craft, form, imagery, and subject matter of painting and determined its function, whether ritualistic, devotional, decorative, entertaining, or educational. Painters were employed more as skilled artisans than as creative artists. Later the

notion of the “fine artist” developed in Asia and Renaissance Europe. Prominent painters were afforded the social status of scholars and courtiers they signed their work, decided its design and often its subject and imagery, and established a more personal if not always amicable relationship with their patrons.

It is no new finding that paintings and art often reflect the culture and tradition of the place from which they originate. They tend to be a reflection of the times in which the art was created. Rarely does an ancient art form become a reflection of modern times and issues. Yet a drive on Highway 52 of the Madhubani district or Ranti village in Bihar will tell you how Madhubani art that originated about 2500 years ago is still very much thriving. Not only that, it has managed to save an entire forest and put the spotlight on some very pressing women’s issues. Take a look at the history of Madhubani Paintings and how they have evolved over the years. Madhubani is a folk painting done by hands, twigs pen nibs and matchsticks with natural colors and dyes. It is believed that this art form was originated during the times of Ramayana when Raja Janak, father of Sita called artists to capture the wedding of Lord Ram and Sita in the form of Madhubani Painting.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of related research serves an important purpose and helps the research at every step of his venture as a researcher can build appropriate methodology and design keeping in view the strength and failure of previous researchers.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS OF MADHUBANI PAINTING.

Mohan A and Ankita (2018) stated that the reason of using Madhubani art in textile is to keep our art alive. Madhubani painting plays an important role in creating new design. Rapid increase in demands of consumers requires modification in fashion industry with respect to designs, colors, and technique. Indian artist have preserved the authenticity of their art by combining innovative with the essential of the traditional. In modern times, fashion designer are going back to the rich textile heritage of this art and reviving this art by designing Madhubani sarees, dupattas and indo-western dresses.

Devi. S (2019) described that Madhubani Paintings were being practiced many years ago by the womenfolk of Mithila it was Sita Devi who brought this art from under the limelight. Sita Devi was honored with the state Award by the government of Bihar in year 1969 and that is when this art form received national recognition. Sita Devi was born in Jitwarpur village in the Madhubani district of Bihar. She was exposed to this age old painting right from her childhood. But it was not until she received the state Award that the art form was recognized all over the country. In 1975 she was once again honored when the national Award was bestowed upon her by the President of India. In 1981, Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India, was conferred on Sita Devi. The government of Bihar Rattan in 1984. In 2006, the government of India conferred on her the title, Shilp Guru.

Devi. G (2019) is another artist who credited for popularizing Madhubani Painting. Not just in India, but Ganga Devi popularized this ancient art form in foreign countries as well. Like Sita Devi, Ganga Devi too was exposed to Madhubani Painting right from her childhood as she was born in Mithila, Bihar. She was born into the Kayastha community and practiced the Katchni style of painting. She then travelled to various countries in an attempt to popularize the art form all over the world. She even participated in „Festival of India,“ an event organized in the United States of America. In the event, she displayed her paintings and was appreciated by

many international artists. For her efforts, the government of India honored her with the national award for crafts. In the year 1984, Ganga Devi was awarded Padma Shri by the President of India.

Devi. M (2019) said that she is also born in Madhubani, Bihar, and Mahasundari Devi was a renowned Madhubani artist. She started learning art form from her aunt at a very young age. Mahasundari Devi played a key role in supporting and developing not just Madhubani Painting but also various other forms of Bihar by creating a cooperative society. She was considered a living legend and was honored her with various prestigious awards. In 1982, the president of India honored with the national award. The government of Madhya padres then bestowed on her the prestigious Tulsi Samman in 1995. In 2011, she was honored with the Padma Shri by the government of India. Mahasundari Devi breather her last on 4 July 2013, but left behind a great legacy. Bibha Das, her daughter- in- law, is an award-winning Madhubani painter as well.

Dyal. B (2019) mentioned that she is born in Samastipur Bihar; Bharti Dyal learnt the traditional art form from her mother and grandmother. Bharti strived to take the art form to the world stage and played a key role in the popularize it throughout of these paintings. In order to popularize the art form and propagare to throughout the world, she started using present day technique and thereby contemporized the art form. She then displayed her work in various exhibitions through the world. In June 2016, her paintings were displayed at the museum of scared Art, Belgium. In 2006, Bharti Dyal won the national award for excellence in the art form. She has also been honored with various other awards.

Devi. J (2019) noted that other important exponent Madhubani Paintings. She was given the Padma Shri award in 1975 for her contributions toward the art form. Other Madhubani painters like Shashi Devi, Kala Devi, Leela Devi, Bauwa Devi, Yamuna Devi, Shanti Devi, Ambika Devi, Manisha Jha and Chandrabhushan have also been honored with national awards. Madhubani art is an important part of the life of people in a village called Ranti in present day Bihar. The women who practice this art form in the village use it as an opportunity to create awareness on social issues and to empower women. Artists like Karpuri Devi, Mahalaxhmi and Dulari are playing key roles in teaching other women the importance of Madhubani Paintings.

Their works are displayed in museums in "Japan". Also, there are several institutions near Mithila that teach Madhubani Painting to young artists. Some of the major centers that teach this art form are Benipatti in Madhubani district, Gram Vikas Parishad in Ranti and Vaidehi in Madhubani. Artist Bharti Dyal owns a studio in New Delhi.

III. TRADITIONAL DESIGNS OF MADHUBANI PAINTING

Dutta (1993) defined that the folk artists have no any formal academic training in the art it is created out of peoples' consciousness of beauty. Folk paintings are done on floor, wall, ceiling, paper, pots and various places which may be connected to myths, special festivals and the special occasions. The philosophy of the society, rural life and realism are subject matter of folk painting. It has no sharp mechanism and texurious character. The artists arranged their composition by using distinctive category of lines and colours along with different motifs to make their composition. Some folk artists attempt to experiment with new forms from time to time and create an individualistic type of folk art. These artists develop a new style within the old format. These innovations are to be found in the motif of Madhubani Painting, Kantha design and Kalighat Patachitra.

Devi.N (2013) explained that the local client does not give Nirmal Devi any design brief on what exactly to draw and paint when she accepts the order. Nirmala Devi has all freedom to plan and execute her paintings on the fabric as per her own creative imagination. She understands a good quality Tassar sarees are expensive

which range between Rs 3000 to 5000, therefore it has good demand during marriage seasons. She picks up design motifs accordingly which will depict the traditional Madhubani style. She paints Doli ka har, Krishna surrounded by Sakhis, peacock, fishes, few motifs from Kohbar, flowers, petals, leaf etc. She first sketches the motifs on the anchal, borders and butis directly on Tassar fabric with nib and synthetic fabric colour solution, then details it with line work and filling color with medium. Nirmala Devi takes 7-8 days (32-40 hours) to complete one Tassar saree. She earns Rs 800 for four full days of work. The payment is made within 3-4 times after delivery of the final finished product. For Tassar dupatta, Nirmala Devi takes 2-3 days" time to complete and earns Rs 300 per piece. In a month she completes either 3 sarees or 6 dupattas and earn between Rs 3000-4000 per month.

Sarkar.A (2016) depicted that this study is an investigation into the journey of Madhubani from India to Amazon has reconfigured and reconstructed the art form itself. Hence, determining the „circuits of commerce“ (Zelizer, 2004) will be indispensable to understanding the infrastructure that has aided the flow of Madhubani from the local to the global art market and responsible for the modification and repositioning of traditional Indian art from its ceremonial, traditional moorings, to its now decorative or commodified use. Their sale on Amazon signals its deterritorialisation (Tomlinson, 1999) where in as Appadurai (1990, 1996) elaborates, it affects the loyalties of groups, the manipulation of currencies and other forms of wealth, which can fundamentally alter the basis of cultural reproduction the art then no longer remains bound to the same territory or is culturally homogeneous. The Madhubani Paintings adorning the walls of a house have been stripped off their original meanings, serving merely as an aesthetic addition to a house"s decor. Hence, as Crane (2002) asserts, it becomes necessary to question what is „local“ in this era of globalization.

Gupta.M and Gangwar.S (2016) shows that the Madhubani art of the Bihar state has been undergoing transition where its application in original composition has been declined owing to social and economic changes now-a-days. There is need to explore possibilities for the conservation of this art form viz other artistic media for future generations. The reason for using traditional motifs in textiles is to keep our designs or motifs alive. The Indian folk arts with painting play important role in creating new designs. Escalating demands of consumers requires modification in the fashion industry with respect to design, color, style and technique, so in an effort to add another dimension in the application of Madhubani designs on textiles. The effort was targeted towards finding the possibility of applying Madhubani designs on textile articles utilizing the hand painting. Madhubani motifs/designs were adapted for center design and border design.

Mishra.K.K (2003) shows that the article deals with the history and different styles of Mithila Paintings in the context of the role of women in it. It draws attention to the differences between the traditional wall and floor paintings and the canvas paintings, of modern day. It underlines the 24contribution of women to the development and popularity of Mithila paintings over many generations, and how they were brought into the painting tradition. It also shows how this painting tradition provided an opportunity to women in the Mithila region to garner additional income for the family when they were challenged by natural calamities such as drought. While describing the present status of the art form, the article calls for an adoption of appropriate measures to retain the tradition in its original form and vigor.

From time immemorial, women in India have actively participated in various forms of creativity, which explicate the relationship between nature, culture and the human psyche. In fact, their arts of creativity can be treated as a style of writing by which their emotions, expectations, freedom of thoughts, social and cultural limitations, worldviews etc, find expression. Moreover, their significant role in some of the art forms present in many parts of the country is noteworthy: Phulkari in Punjab, Warli in Gujarat; Chikan in Lucknow, Weaving

in the North-East, Kantha in Bengal, Miniature Paintings in Rajasthan and, of course, Mithila Paintings in Bihar. The aim of this article is to focus on Mithila Painting to show how it is a parallel literacy by which women communicate aesthetic experience and expression. The Mithila Paintings, also known as Madhubani Paintings, are a living creative tradition mainly practiced by village women of the Mithila region in Bihar, irrespective of caste and religion. The paintings are made on paper, cloth, readymade garments, shoes, movable objects, etc, using natural and vegetable dyes. Though these paintings were originally done on walls and floors of houses, the women artists were slowly encouraged to translate the art from the walls and floors to canvas, which helped the art, get a new identity in the art world as well as in the market.

Mittapalli.K and Samaras.P.A (2008) stated that this study is situated within a self-study research methods course to scaffold doctoral students' explorations of the intersections of their culture, and research interests using arts as a tool. Embracing the arts as a research method, the first author painted a self-portrait using the vibrant colors of Madhubani art which holds cultural significance to her. She utilized Blumer's (1986) and Mead's (1934) theory of symbolic interactionism to explain the process of her self-development as a researcher.

Dutta.G (2016) mentioned in her interviews how all her nieces based in Delhi earned a major part of their income through regular order from boutiques. However, she also cautioned how many artists would sell themselves short due to the popularity of the paintings. She explains that around 20-25 years ago the value of Madhubani had reduced a lot. Once it became popular and artists started earning an income, especially since Madhubani is primarily a women's vocation and helps them to run their families, they thought that involving multiple people in the family to say paint 4 paintings in 10 days, instead of one painting in 10 days, will get them an even higher income. In this way there was an oversupply of paintings, so if a buyer or middleman placed an order for 10 paintings, the artist in order to get rid of so many paintings would sell 100 paintings for the price of 10 Hence the prices of Madhubani got extremely devalued. Ishitashri Shandilya, founder of the folk-art gallery Mithilasmita had discovered that mass production of the paintings was rampant, and artists had started using scales and pencils to produce multiple paintings with the same patterns and motifs. Post the production of the paintings, 100 would be carted off to Dilli Haat, 100 to Surajkund Mela (an annual arts and crafts event held in Delhi), and similar such places. She felt this had polluted the art form, degrading the Madhubani Paintings from being art to becoming a mere commodity. Another national award winning artist, Shashi Kala Devi in her interview reiterated the fact that places like Dilli Haat, were literally a „Haat“, since in the Indian context, a „Haat“ signifies a weekly conglomeration of buyers and sellers exchanging groceries and daily necessities. Thereby the selling of the Madhubani Paintings in spaces like Dilli Haat devalues the art further.

Shipra.k (2017) defined the handicrafts of Bihar are appreciated all over the world because of their great aesthetic value and their adherence to tradition. Mithila painting is more than an art. Through this creative ability, a group of women express their desires, dreams, expectations, hopes and aspirations to the people. Mithila painting is also known as Madhubani Painting. Madhubani Painting is an emblematic expression of day-to-day experiences and beliefs. As such, symbolism, simplicity and beauty hold them together in a single school of traditional art. Traditional artisan skills exist in clusters and are unique to Bihar. Mithila painting is one such art form. Madhubani Painting has been encouraged by all India Handicrafts Board and this traditional skill, as it has been rigorously promoted by the Government, has a unique work and trade organization, though co-operatives are yet to establish ground amongst the artisans. While earnings from these activities are low ranging from Rs30-35 with a likely median of Rs 50-60 per day, many of these could be helped to become more

viable occupations. This research focuses on impact of Mithila paintings in the status of women artisans and also on the economy of Bihar.

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