

HOW PYATKER PAINTING IS SERVING FOR THE LIVELIHOOD OF CHITRAKARS IN AMADOBI VILLAGE OF JHARKHAND

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***Abstract:** Pyatker painting is one of the oldest art forms of Eastern India but it is on the verge of extermination. Because of their illiteracy and poor condition Pyatker artisans are not able to grab the opportunities to access the domestic/ international high-end markets. Amadubi, a craft village near Jamshedpur is developed with the help and support of Government and NGOs. The paper attempts to emphasis the traditional aspect of Pyatker painting, to find out the reasons of extermination of Pyatker painting and to identify the prospects of Pyatker painting. The paper also analyses how Pyatker painting is serving for the livelihood of Chitrakar community in Amadobi. The data analysis is based on primary data collected from the Chitrakar community of Amadobi village. As the art form is on extermination the secondary data is not much available but few of them sourced from journals, magazines, articles, and media reports.*

***Keywords:** Pyatker Painting, Livelihood, Artisans, Tribal art, Craft village, Marketing*

INTRODUCTION

Jharkhand is majorly tribal populated state in eastern region of India. Jharkhand is known for its mineral rich fertile soil, favorable natural climate, and renewable and non-renewable resources. The tribal of Jharkhand are acknowledged for their exquisite art forms such as ornaments that represent their rich tradition. (Bera, 2008) There was already a distinct geo-political, cultural entity called Jharkhand even before the Magadha Empire. It is believed that the tribal language of Jharkhand is identical to the language used by Harappa people. This has led to interest in deciphering Harappa inscriptions using rock painting. Art and craft are an integral part of life and traditions in Jharkhand. A large part of

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tribal and non-tribal population depends on handicrafts for livelihood. Pyatker paintings are one of the oldest tribal paintings in India, also called scroll paintings. This form of painting is on the verge of extinction due to lack of funds and other infrastructural support. This art form is a creative expression of the folk art of Jharkhand and the adjacent states.

In the Eastern part of Jharkhand Amadubi village is working on the concept of craft village for preserving their almost extinct art form. Therefore Amadubi is also called the village of *Pyatker*. Although this art form is also popular in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and other adjacent states of India. (Amadubi catches big google wave, 2015) Amadubi a village 60 km from Jamshedpur is setting a new example of technology and culture by wooing tourist not just from Jharkhand but also from West Bengal. With a little help of Google Maps and American travel website Tripadvisor, villagers of this craft village are actively involved in doing business out of their art and culture from September 2014. (Ranking in revenue with rustic appeal, 2014) Amadubi is established as Jharkhand's first tribal craft village under rural tourism project with annual revenue of 7.3 lakh. Amadubi resort is proved to be a utopia for environment enthusiasts.

Pyatker Painting

Amitabh Ghosh cited the words of Kamal Kanta Gope (The chief of *Grama Panchayat*) "Pyatker artists had harmonic relations with the king of Ghatsila. Therefore king used to invite them for performing pada as well as painting scroll. Dhabaldev, the king of Ghatsila invited Pyatker artists to perform the Srisastyanarayan deopata and Naramedhjagyapata. The king was so pleased by the performance of Pyatkers that he wanted to give them some gift. The artists asked for a piece land for the practice of their Pyatker. As a token of gift the king gave them a land near Ghatshilathat was later known as Amadubi. The King also honored them with the title of Gayen for their singing.

In the historical trace it has been found that Pyatker artists were initially called *Gayen* and eventually they begin to use surname as *Chitrakars*. *Gayen* were the people who performs singing whereas *Chitrakar* were known for their Pyatker painting. In *Brahmavaivarta Purana* it has been found that *Chitrakars* were demoted from *Nava Shaka* group for not performing the traditional norms of depiction of Gods. *Chitrakar* community is settled among the tribal population of Jharkhand, Bengal and Orissa. It is believed that Pyatker painting is one of the oldest tribal paintings in India. Pyatker paintings are also called scroll paintings. Unfortunately this form of art is on the verge of extermination due to lack of funds and administrative support.

Pyatker painting might be regarded as the variable of *Pata* painting or *Patachitra* (long scroll painting). This scroll painting has a vertical format. *Pata*

painting is one of the earliest folk paintings of India. Pyatker Painting has a great importance in Santhal tribe of Jharkhand. According their traditional believe *Jadu Patua* or *Pyatker* painting have the capacity to send the wandering souls of the dead to heaven, and thus, help to free them from their all pain.

The Pyatker artists mainly uses natural materials for their Pyatker Painting like palm leaves as the base of the art and the brushes are made up of the hair of squirrel and goat. They use to paint their scrolls from water-based colors derived from nature. The color palette of Chitrakar's (artists) consists of fewer colors. They generally use only primary colors like Red, Yellow and Blue, which can be easily derived from the nature. The colors generally made up of stones collected from river. Other than that the colors also retrieved from flowers and fruits. They use to mix gums of *Neem*, *Bail*, and *Bamboo* for long lasting of colors. The painting usually takes 2-3 days for the completion. Bijoy Chitrakar states that "the painting starts with *Chintan-Dhara* (the thinking process of the theme of painting) that is time consuming. The *Chintan-dhara* is related to *shashtrasamband* (Mythology) and *prakritisambandh* (nature). The painting is basically devotion to God by its *chitravarnan* and *leelavarnan*". Scroll painting has basically three important features that include Painting, *katha* (story) and *sangeet* (song). The painting also includes lyrics composition. Chitrakars generally use handmade paper but now they have started to use Nepali paper as it adds more glazes to the painting. The paper has cotton cloth for background support. They recycle the used clothes. The Pyatker painting is a good example of eco-friendly art.

The narration of Pyatker Painting is done through two mediums that are words/songs and images. The songs used to describe Pyatker painting are generally written in Bengali language and accompanying musical instruments are *Ektara* (one string musical instrument) and *Dotara* (two string musical instruments).

There are approximately 40-45 houses in Amadubi village where maximum residents are of Chitrakar community who know about Pyatker painting but very few of them are practicing till date; reason being lack of fund and administration support. Most people from Chitrakar community gave up the practice of Pyatker painting and opt for jobs like daily wage labor, tailor, agricultural labor, sculpture, carpenter, etc.

(Bose, 2015) Cited the words of Anil Chitrakar "We have modernized Pyatker, using chart paper and fabric paints for more durability, we want to reach out to more customers but how can we? It's our family tradition to make scrolls on mythology and folktales, from Ramayana, Mahabharat to Radha-Krishna and others. But now, teaching this form to youngsters is difficult. Most men migrate to cities in search of work. Perhaps only half a dozen artists are serious."

(Narzary) Cited the words of Anil Chitrakar regarding Pyatker painting '... The story telling tradition through *Pyatker* paintings dates back to around five centuries. It involves the depiction of tales of Indian mythology or local folklore on paper that run on a scroll. "The people sit throughout the story-telling session which involves scroll paintings and it is supported by traditional songs. These paintings give a philosophical view about life and death," further added Anil Chitrakar.'

(Bose, 2015) Cited the words of Bijoy Chitrakar "We earn between Rs 3,000 to Rs 5000 a month through Pyatker, but not always. We need more art camps in the city to reach out to customers. If we can work with designers, we can make Pyatker on saris, kurtis and T-shirts in bulk. We can also use Pyatker art to make affordable wall hangings, files and diary covers. If the art doesn't pay, it will die with our generation. Why will youngsters show interest in something that doesn't help them earn money? But Pyatker must live. It is magnificent."

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To emphasis the traditional aspects of Pyatker painting.
- To understand the reason of extermination of Pyatker painting.
- To identify the future prospects for Pyatker painting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Abraham, 1964) "Handicrafts have cultural and aesthetic importance." (Dash, 2011) Handicraft sector is one of major contributor to the employment generation sector after agriculture. The importance of handicraft sector lies with the fact that it requires low capital investment; mainly involve women and weaker section artisans and produces eco-friendly products. Therefore, there is need of a platform like Internet marketing to provide varieties of handicraft sector on a single click.

(Bhattacharjee, 2012) Handicraft items are generally purchased for decorative purpose. The viability of handicrafts can be increased by adding utility dimension in innovative way. These handicrafts can be marketed as green products. Customers nowadays are aware about eco-friendly products and ready to pay premium price for such products as a part of green campaigns.

(Mr. D. Subramaniam, 2011) Handicrafts are generally produced in rural areas hence have no potential in rural market. Such handicrafts are popular among urban population as they have taste for such items and they can afford it. There is need to bridge the gap between rural producers and urban buyers. This will help to boost rural economy specifically and country's economy at large. Role of government, private sector and NGOs is required for improving the condition of rural literacy, technology, IT tools, etc. Due to lack of support rural

arts have been disappearing and as a result rural artisans don't find any opportunity to pass on their ancestral art to their younger generation.

(Priaynka Srivastava, 2009) India is famous for its small-scale cottage industries as it provides employment to women and other weaker section of population including rural artisans and urban craftsman. For developing countries small scale industries play a very important role as it requires low capital investment and uses locally available resources.

(Nagori, 2012) Rural sector plays a very important role in Indian Economy. Handicraft production is majorly done in rural area but there is a lack of technical and competitive skills. They have no marketing knowledge like product quality, packaging, after sales service, etc. The emerging trend of Internet marketing has potential as Internet users are increasing in rural areas. This will help to explore the hidden rural market through organized retail format.

(Dr. Anita Mehta, 2011) Rural women generally face problems in handling legal and other formalities because of illiteracy and unawareness. This situation demands capacity building and training in functional areas such as literacy skills, production skills, marketing, finance and managerial skills. There is need to encourage rural women entrepreneurs to increase self-employment for overall development of country.

(Vaisahali Dhingra, 2012) Employees in the major conventional handicraft units are financially and socially backward. Educational level of artisans is very low. Social security and health care measures are poor.(Edensor, 2002) Government held cultural activities are aimed to establish government's authority. Hence it can be said that the actual purpose of project is to increase government's control.

(Ms. Revathi Pandian, 2011) The training program should be aimed to identify, select and motivate potential entrepreneurs by providing training and other necessary skills for entrepreneurial units. There should be provision of special incentive, tax concessions, reduced rate of interest, etc.

(Priaynka Srivastava, 2009) There is high potential for entrepreneurship in Jharkhand as this region is full of resources either natural or human resources but it is not growing as per expectation. Main reasons that lead the dissatisfaction among the entrepreneurs are its stifling culture and unstable government. People are not ready to change and adapt new technologies. It is required by Government to improve the system by appropriate policies and programs, as people are ready to learn but have no guidance.

(Samal, 1994) Tribal co-operative marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED) directly buys tribal handicrafts from artisans and provides marketing support by selling them at 36 outlets in India and two overseas outlets.

(Soma Harza, 2012) Tribal face number of problem in Jharkhand and the reasons are poverty, low socio-economic conditions, unemployment, etc. A new trend of women migration for self-dependency has been observed as only male's migration was observed earlier for urban areas.

(Liao, 2010) Local artisans are struggling to revive their traditional craft and culture. They have to compete among themselves to get funding from Government for their empowerment program to survive their traditional handicraft. Cultural heritage act as a bridge between local people and government. Local artisans are manipulating cultural heritage to obtain grants and resources to pursue their traditional handicrafts. (Ghosal, 2012) Forest department staff and Joint forest management can help to provide information about use of forest product in tribal socio-cultural life. This will also help to identify which artifact can be produced from native forest. For improving the financial status of underprivileged communities the intervention of Government authorized bodies are required to provide guidance of production and marketing methods. Handicrafts have high potential to provide livelihood.

(Menon, 2012) For the livelihood of rural artisans *Haats* are significant medium as it exhibits and preserve rural heritage and rural market.

(Dilip Kumar, 2013) Marketing is very important aspect in current business scenario. Internet marketing is new trend of marketing of product as it is very popular among customers. The popularity of internet marketing lies with the fact that it provides all information like product information, product price, product designs, etc. the number of internet users are increasing day by day including rural areas. Hence Internet marketing is the cheapest mode of marketing. It saves time and money. There is no need of advertisement of product through banner and posters as it puts extra burden to the firm.

(Dipti Mal, 2014) Companies are realizing the importance of socio-economic development of local community that's why actively engaged in CSR practices. For rural development, CSR initiatives should aim to provide income generation activities. For better planning and implementation of CSR activities, a company should have dedicated CSR department for better evaluation. Company should survey the concerned area to know the need of the local people. Company should prepare CSR progress report annually for better transparency. Government should act as motivator, facilitator and enabler of CSR rather than dictator.

(Bose, 2015) Pyatker painters paint epic battles and divine lovers but they struggle to meet their basic needs, as their art doesn't pay. Therefor artisans are forced to sell vegetables at haats. Pyatker is in the blood of Chitrakar communities. But youngsters of this community are not interested in this art as it is not sufficient to fulfill their basic needs of food, cloth and shelter. Therefor for better livelihood option youngsters are heading towards Jamshedpur. Presently there are only

two known faces Anil Chitrakar and BijoyChitrakar who are actively involved in Pyatker painting in Amadubi.

(Agarwal) As a part of CSR, TATA has worked for Primitive Tribal Groups (PGT) of Jharkhand. It is observed that social transformations are taking place as a result of their CSR initiative. The Primitive Tribal Groups responded enthusiastically especially youth. A sustainable livelihood and income options can be generated through making of handicrafts. The contribution to the society is ethnic goods.

(Ong, 1997) Government should plan to establish a craft village specifically for tourism to sell local handicrafts. Through this, artisans can create a connection with the village. Tourist can directly visit the artisans and can directly experience the craft process. This will help to maintain the authenticity of local handicraft and also help to motivate local artisans. Livelihood will also get a positive inflow. (Mohapatra, 2011)Government should make provisions for preventing duplication of designs by providing design registration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research paper used exploratory research method and based on primary and secondary data. Primary data collected through personal interview. The population included the Pyatker painters of Chitrakar community. As the art form is on extermination the secondary data is not much available but few of them sourced from journals, magazines, articles, and media reports. The sample size consisted of 10 artisans out of 40-45 artisans of the village. The names of artisans involved in the interview are Kajalchitrakar, Kishorchitrakar, Govindagayen, ManojGayen, DheerenChitrakar, Vishwajeetchitrakar, JagannathChitrakar, Ganesh Chitrakar, Anil Chitrakar, BijoyChtrakar, Anil Chitrakar and BijoyChitrakar. The primary data was collected during the second and third week of June 2016.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As per the data collected through interview out of ten artisans eight had Pyatker painting as the only source of income. Other 2 had their other source of income to support their family. It can be clearly seen in Fig.1. Because of sole dependency on Pyatker painting it is difficult for those 8 artisans to support their family, as they are unable to create a satisfactory market potential for their Pyatker paintings. Artisans have great knowledge of art but they lack in marketing knowledge. Therefore they are not able to generate demand for the product, as there is negligible market awareness about the Pyatker painting. Through proper marketing, demand can be generated for Pyatker painting.

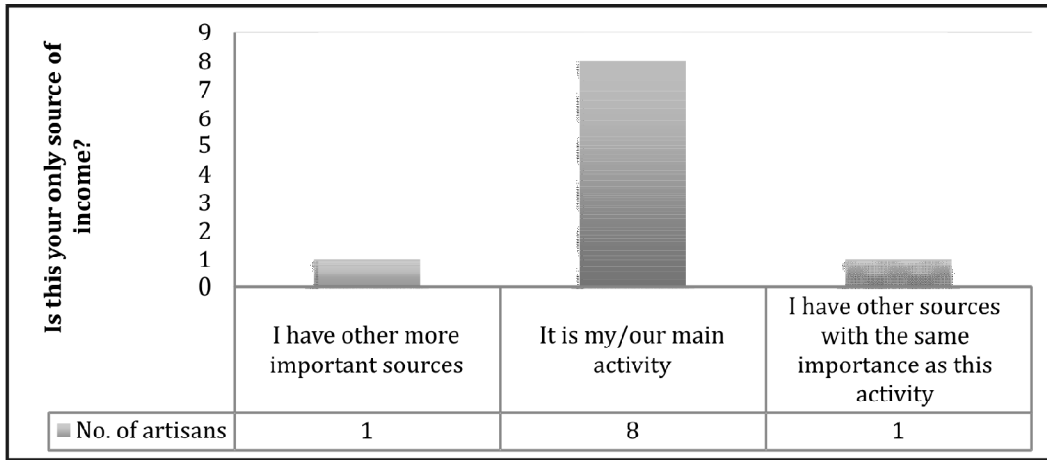


Figure 1: Source of income

Source: Primary data

The artisans have expressed various suggestions, which could be helpful in increasing high value production. Referring Fig 2. out of ten artisans three think better marketing practices can increase the demand for the high value production of Pyatker painting. Two artisans focused on the availability of raw material, as the raw material used in Pyatker are majorly nature retrieved therefore it is difficult to acquire them. Two artisans gave importance to credit facility. Rest three artisans have given importance to modernization of production facility, design support and training respectively.

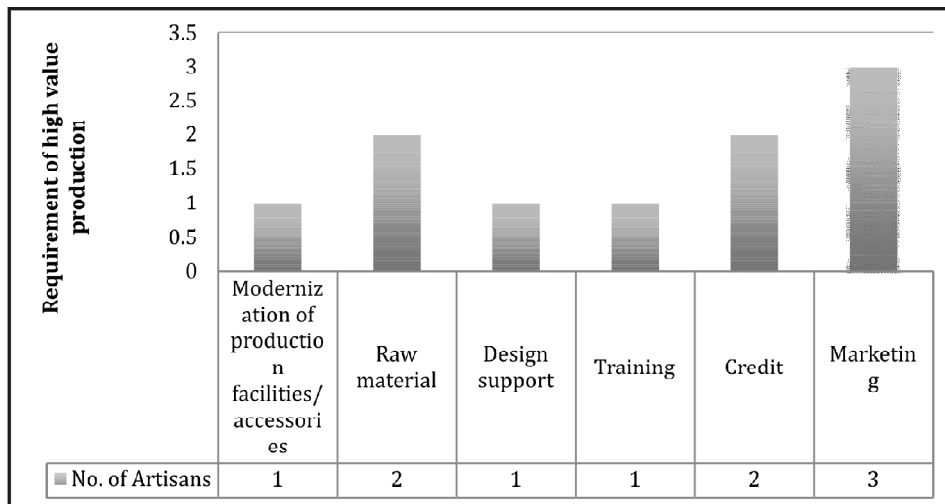


Figure 2: Requirement of high value production

Source: Primary data

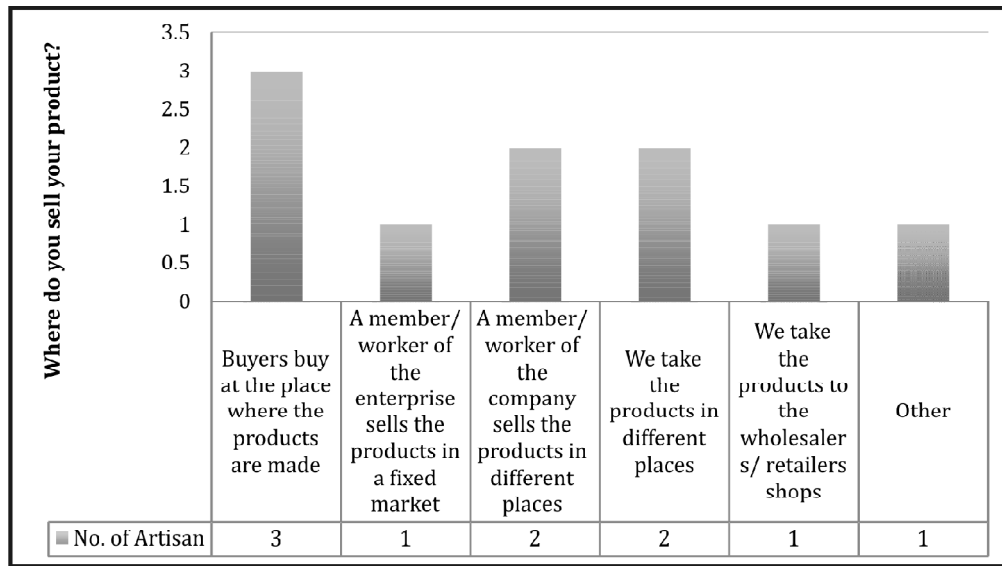


Figure 3: Location of selling point

Source: Primary data

Referring Fig. 3. out of ten artisans three used to sell their product from the place of production. Other two artisans used to sell their product through the member of company like the craft village organized by *Kalamandir, Jharkraft* etc. Other two artisans used to sell their product by taking to their product to different places by themselves. Rest three artisans used to sell their product in a fixed market, through wholesaler or retailer and other modes respectively. As the market is not organized the selling point is not static.

Most of them are not aware about any marketing and services scheme. Although such scheme exist. Referring Fig 4. out of ten artisans three wanted to avail marketing support and services scheme for increasing their income. Other two artisans wanted to reduce their losses and other two wanted to increase the quality of product. Rest three artisans wanted to increase the production, to improve the production technique and to modernize the production tools respectively.

Through the interview of ten it has been clearly observed that they are facing lot of problems to sustain their art form. As the art is not able to provide sufficient monetary support for the families of Pyater painters, they are seeking other prospects. But few of them like Anil Chitrakar and Bijoy Chitrakar are solely working on only Pyatker painting. They are taking their art to national and international platform. But they are not getting required rewards in return. Some Chitrakars and Gayens are forced to do other things for livelihood like selling vegetables, daily labourer, tailoring etc. for supporting their family.

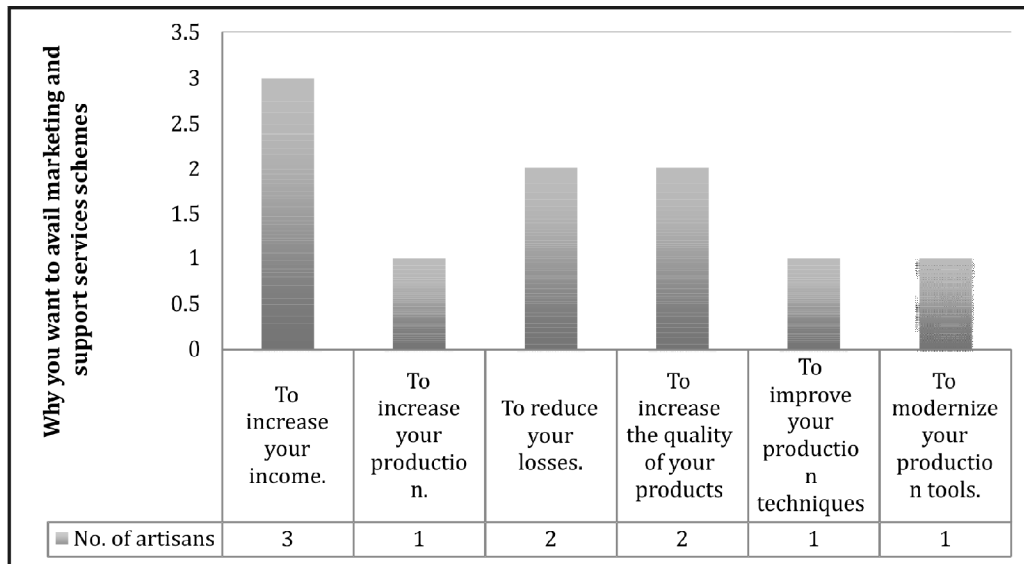


Figure 4: Reasons of Marketing and support services schemes

Source: Primary Data

Pyatker painting has traditional significance, as it is associated with Hindu epics. The stories used in Pyatker painting are generally from *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Manasasong* (*Manasapada*) and *Kali song* (*Kali Pada*).

The major reasons of extermination of Pyatker painting are as follows:

Language barrier - The Pyatker painters mainly speaks Bengali or their regional language. Therefore it is difficult for them to communicate with the customers. This could bereason for not reaching to the customers out of Amadubi village. They must be also facing difficulty in expressing the theme, the message and the story, which they want to depict through their paintings to the customers.

Marketing barrier - The Pyatker painting dies out of lack of marketing support. Craft village is an attempt to revive the age-old tradition of Pyatker painting. Other promotional support by the student of XLRI acted as a remedy for Pyatker painting. XLRI students asked them to draw the paintings on T-shirts for spreading awareness about this art form. Such small initiatives helped artisans to build confidence in their art form.

Lack of awareness - The *Madhubanipainting* of Bihar has a buzz for being famous in the market. Therefore it attracts customers who might have no or less knowledge about the *Madhubani*. Such buzz could be created through marketing support for pyatker painting to popularize them in handicraft market. This would

help in sustaining and increasing the sell of Pyatker painting. Pyatker requires same marketing support to sustain in the handicraft market.

Other infrastructural support – Artisans have lack of knowledge about the schemes of Government i.e. Babasahib Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Bima Yojana for Handicrafts Artisans, Credit Guarantee Scheme, Research & Development Scheme, Export Promotion Scheme, Design & Technology Up gradation Scheme, Marketing Support & Services Scheme. The government also helps such cases through “Skill india movement”.

There are number of prospects of Pyatker painting. The pyatker painting can be used in:

Home decor – Pyatker painting can be used in cushion covers, curtains, bed sheets, sofa covers, rugs, paper lamps, mats, coasters, wall painting etc. The synthetic color can be used in the place of natural colors for long lasting.

Fashion industry– The fashion industry has huge potential for Pyatker painting like it can be used on Sarees, T-shirts, kurtis, dress materials, gowns, shirts, scarves, shawls etc.

Animation – Pyatker can be used in the form of animated art forms (character) or cartoons. This can create a huge buzz for characters like *ChotaBhim, bal hanuman, spiderman, batman* among childrens. This might lead to the awareness about Pyatker painting in the market. Bijoy Chitrakar said that his son Budheshwar Chitrakar 12 year old had once made an animated Pyatker painting depicting the Glucon-D product that was instantly purchased by a woman. This shows that Pyatker painting has other interesting prospects than just a painting.

CONCLUSION

Pyatker painting is an ancient art form. It is an Environment friendly art form, as made of natural materials. It has negligible market potential as on date. Therefore, only few artisans around 40-45 are actively involved in this art form. Pyatker artisans are seeking other modes of livelihood for supporting their family. Younger generations are also not showing much interest in this art form because of lack of business potential. If popularized this art form has lot of market prospects in home decor, fashion industry and animation sector. But the artisans are not aware about it. They require support from Government or NGO for understanding such potentials. The art form must live, as it is one of the ancient art form. The state governments should pay special attention towards the promotion of Pyatker painting, if we want to carry forward the cultural heritage of Pyatker painting.

SUGGESTIONS

If we want to carry this art in future the following ways are suggested to encourage Pyatker paintings based on the research findings -

- The socio-economic development of the Pyatker artisans of the Amadubi village is necessary for a promising future of the art and the artisans. Government, Corporate houses and NGOs should provide infrastructural support to the artisans. As a part of their CSR initiatives corporates like Tata Steel, Jindal, CCL, etc. who are functioning in this region can adopt the Amadubi village as the number of artisans is around 40 only. If it is not possible to adopt the whole village Corporates can sponsor the artworks of an individual artist or a group of 5-6 artisans.
- Financial support should be provided by the government to the artisans through government schemes. It could be in form of a definite monetary support to young artisans and a pension scheme to senior artisans above the age of 55 years which would help them to support their family and carry the art further.
- Skill India movement could be used for Pyatker's development and enhancement. This would provide employment to the younger generations. This can be a platform or involving the youngsters enthusiastically in Pyatker's development.
- Pyatker painting is not much popular but has great future prospects in home decor, fashion industry and animation. Government and corporates should popularize this art form through various platforms like art exhibitions, handicraft exhibitions, etc. Distribution of pamphlets of this art form at such platforms and on tourist places would increase the awareness of Pyatker paintings.
- A place for Pyatker Paintings in corporate offices and museums would also increase the awareness and business potential for this art form.

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