

TRIBAL PAINTINGS OF RAJASTHAN: A MICRO-STUDY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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Painting is an exquisite expression of human thoughts and culture. Indian art and painting is believed to be emerged from the pre- historic and proto- historic rock paintings. The genesis of tribal painting showed a direct correlation with the pre and proto- historic rock art. They are lively and vibrant tradition and unveil the hidden meaning of tribal symbol and are a manifestation of cultural expression. In Rajasthan, tribal population since time immemorial offered a rich variety of art and painting which would provide a deep insight into their traditional culture. It reflects the reality of living, pattern of culture, philosophy of life besides extensive reflection of memory and geographic mosaic.

In the present paper an attempt has been made to discuss the painting tradition of the four major tribal communities of Rajasthan viz., Bhil, Garasia, Mina and Saharia in the context of continuity and change. The paper also unveils commonness and distinctiveness of painting tradition among the four tribal groups of Rajasthan.

Introduction

Painting is an exquisite expression of human thoughts and culture. For drawing and painting human being draw their inspiration mostly from the nature and society. Art in Indian context is mostly emerged from the prehistoric period when men placed a coloured dot on a mud surface (Gupta, 2008). Starting from the Mesolithic Period (about 8000 Years BP) there is a definite evidence of the artistic ability of the people to draw paintings and engravings in the rock shelters in several parts of India (Chakravarty, 1984; Mahapal, 1984; Nesmayer, 1983; Tribhuvan & Finkemaver, 2003 and others). The prehistoric rock paintings showed a sequential development in the thought and expression pattern from the hunting-gathering-fishing-fowling stage of Mesolithic period to the agricultural or food production era of Neolithic Period. Again from Neolithic period to the Chalcolithic period and even up to early Iron Age, with the Neolithic Revolution and shifting of economy from food collection to food production, rock painting tradition also exhibited some amount of changes.

The origin of tribal painting showed a direct co-relation with the pre- and proto-historic rock art. However, tribal painting cults are different from prehistoric rock paintings. They are living and vibrant tradition that unveils the hidden meaning of tribal symbols. Their painting cults are associated with cultural traits and ceremonies. They are social institution within themselves. Tribal art is linked with their socio-cultural fabric of life.

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Folk and traditional art and painting received adequate attention in the literature of art (Agarwal & Pathak,2001; Archar,1977; Bachaspati,1998; Basistha,1986; Bhat,1997; Goswami,1974; Gupta,1961; Kumarswami,1972; Lata,1999; Lazaro,2005; Majumdar,1968; Pratap,2008; Ropach,2014; Smita,1997 and others). However there is a scanty of literature on tribal art of Rajasthan. Some of the contemporary artists of Rajasthan like Late Gobardhanlal Joshi (Baba Ji), Suresh Sharma, Vishnu Mali, Purna Shankar Meena, Mohanlal Jat, Dinesh Upadhyay and others contributed significantly towards the promotion of tribal art and painting of Rajasthan. Barring a few studies (Mali, 2002; Gupta,2008; Mina,2006; Meena,2000; Bhanawat,1974; Bokhari,1995; Das,1996; Dhamija,1998; Elwin,1951; Jain,1984; Jain, 1998; Mishra,1999; Vyas,2014; Jat,2014 and others) not much efforts were carried out to popularise ethnic paintings of the tribal. Like miniature paintings, *phad* paintings, *pichwai* paintings, etc. tribal paintings of Rajasthan did not receive an adequate artistic recognition due to lack of proper patronage, unavailability of records on tribal scripts which led to improper documentation of tribal painting tradition of Rajasthan. Thus there is an urgent need not only to document tribal paintings but also to preserve the same in the museums (Ghosh, 2014; Copper, 2014). Against the above backdrop it is felt necessary to portray living art tradition of some of the major groups of Rajasthan.

Material and Method

On the occasion of International Day of World's Indigenous People, Anthropological Survey of India, Western Regional Centre, Udaipur, organised a workshop at its Pratapnagar campus from 8th to 13th August 2014. In the said workshop altogether sixty tribal people participated.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF TRIBAL PAINTERS BY ETHNIC AFFILIATION, SEX AND DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of the Tribal Group	District	Male	Female	Total
1	Bhil	Udaipur	7 (11.7)	2 (3.3)	9 (15.0)
		Banswara	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)	6 (10.0)
		Sub Total	11 (18.4)	4 (6.6)	15 (25.0)
2	Garasia	Udaipur	3 (5.0)	-	3 (5.0)
		Sirohi	6 (10.0)	3 (5.0)	9 (15.0)
		Sub Total	9 (15.0)	3 (5.0)	12 (20.0)
3	Mina	Bundi	5 (8.3)	3 (5.0)	8 (13.3)
		Swai Madhopur	2 (3.3)	1 (1.7)	3 (5.0)
		Tonk	3 (5.0)	1 (1.7)	4 (6.7)
		Sub Total	10 (16.6)	5 (8.4)	15 (25.0)
4	Saharia	Baran	5 (8.3)	13 (21.7)	18 (30.0)
		Total	35 (58.3)	25 (41.7)	60 (100.0)

Figures within parenthesis indicate percentage.

Sixty tribal painters from twenty groups for preparation of tribal painting and they prepared altogether forty four traditional tribal paintings. For details please see Table 2.

TABLE 2: COMMUNITY WISE PREPARATION OF PAINTINGS

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Tribal Community</i>	<i>Number of Tribal Paintings</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Bhil	12	27.3
2	Garasia	8	18.2
3	Meena	10	22.7
4	Saharia	14	31.8
Total		44	100.0

The paintings were exhibited in Shilpgram Utsav at Udaipur during 21st to 30th December, 2013 by the Anthropological Survey of India, Udaipur and later permanently displayed in the Zonal Anthropological Museum of the said organization.

Senior author of the paper being the Assistant Keeper of the Zonal Anthropological Museum and coordinator of both the workshop and exhibition, interacted with the tribal painters both during exhibition and workshop and collected information through structural questionnaire and interview. Besides several information's and pictures of tribal painting were collected from various tribal people of four groups stated above who are not participated in the workshop.

Bhil Painting

The Bhils are the second largest tribal community of Rajasthan. In Rajasthan they are distributed in southern districts. The word Bhil is derived from the Dravidian word 'vil' mean the archer. They speak *Bhilli* which belongs to the Indo Aryan family of languages. In Rajasthan they are well versed with other regional languages like Hindi, Mewari, Vagdi and so on. The total population of Bhil including Bhil-Mina as per 2001 census is 2, 816, 054 which represents 39.68 % of the total tribal population of the State.

The Bhils decorate their houses, walls, temples and shrines with paintings and artistic drawings. The mud walls are painted with the vibrant red and other natural colours. The figures drawn on them are mostly sacred and ritualistic. The main purpose of these drawings is to promote fertility, avert diseases, and to propitiate the dead and the ghost sprits. They are stylistically austere and primeval.

As already stated brilliant Indian red colour is their most favourite colour, but they also use primary colours like green, black and white. Some of the Bhils now a day's also uses other colours like blue, yellow, purple and so on. Traditional colours are prepared mostly from rock or clay of their habitat and surrounding areas. Carbon of the used cell is utilised for preparing black colour while black

berry and turmeric are used to prepare blue, purple and yellow colour. Lime is used as white colouring agent. Raw materials like vegetative material, clay and rock etc. are crushed to make powder and then it is often mixed with warm water to form paste. Rice powder is also mixed with water to use it as paint. Now days, acrylic or synthetic colours are also used by the members of the younger generations for preparing traditional and modern paintings.

Twig of bamboo or *neem* is used as painter's brush for traditional painting. Sometimes middle or ring finger of right hand is used to prepare some ethnic drawings. Pencil and scales are also recently introduced to draw the outline. At the time of using mid vein of the twigs as painter's brush, its front part is crushed to make the surface flat and the same is used as the working edge of the brush.

Bhil painting may thematically be classified into three major categories:

1. Painting drawn during marriage and ritual ceremonies.
2. Painting for ceremonial purpose not involving any ritual. It depicts everyday life scenario including paintings of the first category, relief work, mural work and so on.
3. Tattooing.

Painting of the first category is generally drawn during marriage, ceremonies like Holi, Deepawali, Govardhan Puja, Navratri and so on. Some of the examples of such paintings are *Bharadi*, *Bheruji-Mataji ka Dewara*, *Tejaji ka Sajawat*, *Gotrej*, *Gotrej Ganapati ka sath*, *Gai ka upar chitra* and so on. Ritual paintings are sacred or secular in nature. Sacred paintings of the Bhils are group activities, repetitive in nature with predominant format of space and design. The same is drawn on the houses, temples or shrines as collective or individual activities. Secular paintings like *Jungle aur pal ka Drishya*, *Bharadi*, *Khet Hakokam*, *Mach aur Prani*, etc. are also drawn during rituals to decorate houses. Secular paintings often depict floral or faunal pattern, geometric designs as well as sceneries of Bhil society and culture including nature that surrounds them. Modern paintings are often connected with abstract drawing of the individual creator, mural work, emboss paintings, relief work, etc. in one hand and all sorts of traditional drawings with modern touch on the other.

The Bhils are fond of tattooing their hand or body. During fairs and festivals or in market places they often go to the tattooist who artistically tattoo on their body with electric operated machines. Names of gods and goddesses, names of the person or their near and dear one, floral and faunal design, miniature painting of deities and geometric designs are commonly tattooed.

Motives are frequently found in the Bhil paintings. These may be classified into natural objects like sun, star, moon; abstract symbols like dots, geometric designs. *khadi* (vertical), *ulti* (reverse), *sidhi* (horizontal) layers; animal designs like cattle, snake, elephant, rat, tiger, wild boar, goat and birds specially peacock are commonly noticed. Floral motives like leaf, flower, plants, banyan tree are

also the integral part of their painting cult. Sacred motives, for example, *swastika*, trident, temples, shrines, ritual sacrifices; cultural and other day to day life motives like hunting, ploughing of field, mulching of cow, carrying of water by females, churning of milk, dancing, marriage possession and so on are also commonly observed motives of their painting tradition.

During *Khekra* or Govardhan *Puja* or cattle caressing ceremony, paintings are also drawn on the body of the cattle. Paintings for commercial purpose are drawn by some of the contemporary Bhil artists with adequate training, knowledge and expertise in contemporary drawing and painting. This kind of painting amply demonstrates in the work of the school going children who are expert in drawing houses, road and natural sceneries. Some of the modern Bhil painters like Purna Shankar Meena, Yashpal Barendra, Mangu Singh, Dilip Damor and others are experts in modern painting apart from their interest in traditional painting. Some of the Bhils are also experts in relief work, emboss painting, glass work and portrait making of varied nature. With the relief work they are able to show traditional method for preparation of base for traditional painting. The base is prepared by the Bhils before painting by plastering with mud and cow dung. The contemporary painters often decorate their paintings with cloths, beads, glasses, etc. to make the design more attractive.

Garasia Painting

The Garasia also known as Girasia, live in the hill tract of the Aravalli in Sirohi, Pali and Udaipur district of Rajasthan. According to various opinions, Garasia means people who live in hill or forest dwellers. According to 2001 census the total population of Garasia in Rajasthan is 2, 32, 545 that is 4% of the total population of Rajasthan. Garasia language is a mixture of Mewari, Bhilli and Gujarati.

The Garasias are expert in line and graphic drawing. Their painting tradition may be put under the canopy of drawing work, relief work and tattooing. They paint *Gotrej* i.e., clan goddesses like Jaru Mata, Alu Mata, Amba Mata, etc. during marriage. Apart from painting, on floor and wall during marriage and other prime festive occasions like Holi, Deepawali, Gangour, Navaratri etc., they also decorate *kothi* (grain container) with excellent relief work. The painting tradition of Garasia is simple. With the help of line drawing, they draw *ghar* (house), *hathi* (elephant), *Shiv* and *Parvati* (Hindu god and goddess), a ploughing farmer with utmost passion and devotion. As stated earlier they draw *Gotrej* (clan goddess) in marriage or other rituals.

The *Gotrejes* are the symbol of various tutelary deities or clan/lineage deities propitiated by the Garasia as Mother Goddess cult. Generally the *Gotrejes* other than *Bheruji* or *Gotarji* are drawn on left or right side of main entrance of the house while other side of the main gate is decorated with the *Gotrej* of *Gotarji*. It is worth mentioning that the Garasias only draw the *Gotrej* of their respective

Mother Goddess and *Bheruji* or *Gotarji*. At least one line of the *Gotrej* is drawn with the dots of *kumkum* or *kunku* that is a paste of vermillion in oil. Small circles or dots are made with turmeric paste (*haldi*) or turmeric colour. Altogether seven lines are made in this fashion. Sometimes vermillion and turmeric lines are drawn in centre of the *Gotrej* or often it is drawn on one side. Various lines or geometric designs viz., semi circular lines or triangular designs are found in the *Gotrejes*. Outside the main chain of *Gotrejes* or *mandal* is drawn in triangular fashion which is often provided with the symbol of trident. The *Gotrej* is also called in the name of *Mandal*. The tutelary gods and goddesses are also drawn symbolically in the *Gotrejes*. The anointment of turmeric paste in oil (*tel haldi*) ceremony is often solemnized near or beneath the *Gotrejes*. Apart from tutelary deities, *garbha griha*, *sabha mandap* and *pravesh dwar* (main gate) are also symbolically depicting in some *Gotrejes*. Apart from *Gotrejes*, they also draw a number of temple paintings of Lord Shiva, Ganapati and Mother Goddess.

As far as traditional painting material is concerned, they first prepare the base where painting is done by cow dung, black sticky mud (*chikna mitti*) collected from the water bodies or its adjacent areas. Colours derived from various sources of clay and rocks as well as vegetative colours are traditionally used for drawing. Locally available lime in rock form and white clay colour is most commonly used. *Bhali*, tree bark which is locally available is boiled in water to extract brilliant red or blood red or Indian red colour. The Indian red colour is also obtained from locally available red mud often mixed with cow dung. Black colour is prepared from coal or charcoal, blue colour is prepared from the seeds of black berry or blue (used for whitening of clothes after washing) or vegetative indigo. Yellow colour is prepared from turmeric. A twig of Neem or Babul tree is smashed with stone to prepare painting brush. Nowadays, painters mainly use easily available readymade chemical colours instead of vegetable or earth colours.

Apart from the line drawing as is in vogue in the Garasia society, relief work is also found. In this connection it is to be stated that in almost all the Garasia households, *kothi* or grain container can easily be found for storing of grains, eatables, seeds and so on. Their expertise in relief work can be envisaged when we see that either in all the sides of the grain container or at least the front side of the same is decorated with relief work. In such relief work, they prepare the figure of human being, animals, birds, trees, flowers and a good number of geometric designs. The relief work is further beautified with the free use of glass, beads, wood etc. Generally females prepare the relief work. Some relief work also found in the Garasia household and household articles. Relief work is mainly done by clay with or without the use of colouring agents.

Tattooing on the body is also commonly seen in the Garasia society and culture. Tattooing is generally done with an electric machine. Most often tattooing parts of the body are hands, shoulder, neck and face. Various motives that are found in

their tattooing tradition include dots, tree, flower, scorpion and some geometric designs. Men often write their names, draw flower etc., while women often write the name of their husband. Apart from this both male and female often write the name of gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon.

Mina Painting

The Minas also known as Meenas, are the largest Schedule Tribe of Rajasthan. As per Census report of 2001, their total population was 37, 99, 971 souls in Rajasthan which represent 53.54 percent of the total tribal population of the State. They are mainly concentrated in Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, Tonk and Bundi districts of Rajasthan. They trace their descent from *Meenavata*, believed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the form of a fish.

The Minas also referred to as Ujla Minas and are subdivided into Zamindar Mina, who are agriculturist, animal herdsman and Chowkidar Mina. The Chowkidar Minas did not surrendered to Rajputs and kept in carrying out guerrilla warfare. British rulers branded them as criminal community and in 1952 after independence they were put under the canopy of ex criminal or de-notified community.

The Minas have traditional art form (graphic and drawing) by which wall of the houses and floors are decorated. Peacock is the favourite of a Mina Artist. Besides painting of *gotrejes*, they also draw variety of deities. Paintings are mostly drawn by ladies.

The Minas are expert in preparation of *Mandanas*. It means *kriya* or *sanja* that is a decorative design with a definite meaning or hypothesis. It is the regional folk painting of Rajasthan and its adjacent states. However *Mandanas* are acclaimed for its distinctiveness and beauty.

The females of the Mina community decorate their walls and courtyards of the houses with painting of a number of *Mandanas* which are known under different appellation like *Mandana* of marriage, *Mandana* of Govardhan Puja, *Mandana* of other festivals and occasions and so on. However, drawing *Mandana* during Holi and Govardhan Puja is most important.

In rural areas, females before drawing of *Mandana*, prepare the base where they draw *Mandana* or any form of drawing. The base is prepared by plastering the wall with mixture of cow dung or yellow mud locally known as *peeli mitti*. Combination of both the material gives the colour of Indian red. Sometimes two or three times plastering is being made to give the base of painting elegant look. After plastering, no painting is done for one or two days to allow the place completely dry up. The painting is done with index finger and thumb. Some females use twig of date palm as painting brush. In such case, front part of the twig is crushed with the help of stone or brick. In some other occasions, it is also observed that females wrap the index finger and thumb with a thin piece of cloth while they are engaged in painting.

For painting, white and Indian red colour are used. White colour is obtained from locally available lime or white clay while Indian red colour is prepared from mixing cow dung and yellow mud. To make distinctive contrast at the time of preparing painting with Indian red colour, the base is prepared by plastering the area with white clay or lime. In urban areas, Mina females sometimes draw paintings by using chemical colour especially acrylic or oil colours.

It is believed that drawing during auspicious occasions like marriage keeping the house without painting of *Mandana* is a sign of bad omen which led to misfortune. They paint number of animals, plants etc. In the Mina village more than one hundred fifty variety of peacock can be seen (Mina, 2006). Besides animals, birds etc., some geomorphic and anthropomorphic designs can also be noticed in their creative work. Dots and circles are frequently observed in their drawings.

Besides painting, a very few Mina houses and grain containers are provided with relief work or relief *Mandana*. In relief work, abstract and symbolic designs are seen. Apart from it anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, geomorphic and geometric designs can also be envisaged.

A few Minas are also fond of tattooing their body. Their tattoo is also similar to those of Garasia which is already been discussed.

Saharia Painting

The Saharia also spelt as Sahariya and Seharis is the only Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) or Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) of Rajasthan. The term 'Saharia' is derived from the Arabic word 'Sehara' means wildness. Some scholars however believed that the name was derived from the Persian word 'Sehr' meaning desert and jungle. Hence they are referred to as Saharia or residents of forest. The Saharias cognition about them is that they are the companion of lion or tiger. According to legend, they have been blessed by Lord Shiva and have free access to the jungle like a tiger (*sher*). They are mainly distributed in Sahabad and Kishanganj Tehsil of Baran district of Rajasthan as well as Guna and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh. According to 2001 Census, their total population was 76, 237 that is 1.07 percent of the total tribal population of Rajasthan. The Saharias speak Hadauti, an Indo- Aryan family of languages. Their dialect is also influenced by Braj and Hindi to a large extent.

The Saharias are highly acclaimed for their art work. Their art or painting works are mainly represented by the painting of *Mandana*. This is drawn on wall, floor and sides as well as upper portion of the door during marriage (especially during anointment of oil and turmeric ceremony), Holi, Diwali, Govardhan Puja that is cattle caring ceremony and so on. Wide use of geometric design, floral and faunal pattern is some of the speciality of their painting tradition.

The Saharia use different types of earth, stone and vegetative colour or natural dyes as colouring agent for their painting. Generally Indian red colour is extracted

from *kheria* mud available in local field; black colour is extracted either from *kali mitti* or used carbon of cell/ battery or charcoal; white colour is available from lime or *safed mitti* available in mines; red and green colours are extracted from the locally available plants; yellow colour is extracted from turmeric and so on. Sometimes blue colour is also obtained from indigo or blue (used for whitening of clothes after washing) and grey colour is extracted from *bhuri mitti* available in the neighbouring mines in stone form. Different earth, stone and vegetative colours are grinded with heavy materials like stone, brick etc. and the same is mixed with normal water or in lukewarm water in order to form a paste. After that, the insoluble part is sieved with thin cloth. The colours are readily prepared and used during painting. Nowadays, chemical colours like poster colour, acrylic colour etc., are also used by a good number of Saharias. The stem of bamboo, date palm etc., are used as painting brush. Like other communities, the front part of the brush is crushed to form as the working edge of the brush. Painting is often carried out by wrapping the ring finger with the layer of clothes. It is also observed that a few people used painting brush by purchasing from the local market.

Before painting the base is prepared by smearing cow dung and black soil and the same is allowed to dry for a day or two. After that painting is carried out by using different colours. In the painting work of Saharias, different themes of their daily and ceremonial occasions have come out. The paintings of different Mandanas are the variety of regional folk painting cult of the Rajasthan and adjacent areas of Chambal basin of Madhya Pradesh. Their wall painting depicts the scenario of *Swang* dance which is a typical dance of the Saharias. Their walls are often decorated with paintings like scenario of courtyard i.e., *aangan ka chowk*; adobe of deity i.e., *deota ka sthan*; snake god i.e., *Tejaji Maharaj*; house type; village life and culture and so on. It is interesting to note that in their painting tradition both the sacred and secular scenario of their habitat, society and culture is reflected.

The *Mandana* is drawn both on wall and floor and the court yard of the houses. *Nariyalwala Mandana* or the *Mandana* with the motif of coconut is considered as sacred painting. *Chiriyawala Mandana* or *Mandana* with the prime motif bird, *Morwala Mandana* or *Mandana* with the main motif of peacock etc. are some of the typical forms of *Mandana* drawn by the Saharia.

The designs or motives that are reflected in the painting work of the Saharia include wide use of geometric designs like dot, triangle, circle, semi circle, pentagonal design, hexagonal design etc. Besides, some human figures, plants, natural scene, different birds, peacock, adobe of deities, abstract designs etc. can also found in their painting. Hence, the painting tradition of the Saharia is the excellent blend of geometric, geomorphic, anthropomorphic designs in one hand and sacred and secular painting on the other hand.

It is also worth mentioning that besides painting, their relief work is also excellent. The relief work includes some of the magnificent work drawn on house,

grain container or some other articles. A few Saharias also draw tattoo on their hands, neck etc., mainly during communal fairs like *Sitawadi Ki Mela* at Kelwada of Sahabad, Baran, Rajasthan where they participate with great pomp and enthusiasm.

During *Swang* dance, the Saharia often decorate the body of the dancer with different colours and designs. Painting is normally done by the females but some of the male Saharias are also expert in their traditional painting work.

Glimpses of Tribal Paintings of Rajasthan

Appasamy (1981, 1985) defined folk or tribal art by five distinctive characters viz.,

1. Preference for simple outline, choice of typically representation of lives and reflection of accessory elements.
2. A simplification of volume and colours to eliminate shading.
3. Exaggeration of gestures for dramatic expression and primitive use of relative size.
4. Stylization of motifs to create decorative elements.
5. The repetition of lines, entire figures and dots for intensive or rhythmical purpose.

The above features are also the typicality of the tribal paintings of Rajasthan. There is a definite continuity in the style of prehistoric cave paintings and traditional tribal paintings of Rajasthan. Painters derive their inspiration mostly from surroundings or world view but their painting form is not always naturalistic or realistic depiction but is symbolic in character. Tribal art is often thus a parallel reality which is simple in character.

Wall and floor paintings or drawings continued to be an inherent part of everyday rituals and decorative art practices of the tribes of Rajasthan. Paintings are also carried at on *kothis* (grain containers), temples, shrines, murals and on human body in the form of tattooing. Jayakar (1980) in this regard observed that Indian tribal or folk paintings may be categorised as rock paintings, pictographs on wall or pottery, *madalas* (circular drawing depicting cosmic energy), magical or ritual drawings on floor and wall, rituals or festive narratives on wall, narratives on other articles as well as astrological or astronomical paintings. In Rajasthan painting tradition as is envisaged in the major tribal communities viz. the Bhil, Garasia, Meena and Saharia may broadly be categorized under the canopy of pictographs or designs on wall, floor, courtyard, etc. *Mandanas* (regional folk design or painting), magical or ritual drawings, ritual or festive narratives as well as paintings related to marriage and *Gotrej* (painting on the focal theme of clan deities).

Tribals of Rajasthan though are acclaimed for their distinctive culture, language, ethnic diversity and tradition, yet certain common elements can be traced in the art

and painting form of the tribes of Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, tribes since time immemorial offer a rich variety of art and painting which would provide a deep insight into their vibrant culture. It reflects the reality of living, pattern of culture, philosophy of life, besides extensive reflection of memory and geographic mosaic.

Mandana is the most popular and widely used folk design drawn by the most of the tribal and rural folks throughout the length and breadth of Rajasthan. The term *Mandana* means *kriya* or *sanja* with definite hypothesis. In Indian tradition out of sixty four *kalas*, *Bithikala* or wall and floor painting is most important and significant. It is primarily drawn on the auspicious occasion's viz., marriage, Deepawali, Govardhan Puja, Holi and so on. By and large painting is done by females. However, there is no bar or restriction for the males to draw paintings. Extensive use of geometric design, floral and faunal pattern, and deities either in reality or in the form of its symbols are the major themes of tribal painting. Apart from it they also draw painting with the focal theme of hunting, agricultural activities, day to day life and related view, Gotrej or clan goddess, Lord Ganapati etc. are seen in many of the tribal paintings. Peacock with more than one hundred fifty varieties of designs, elephant, horse, human figure especially with royal or marriage attire, cosmic and natural objects are also some of the major themes of tribal paintings of Rajasthan. In spite of many similarities, major tribal groups of Rajasthan viz., Bhil, Garasia, Mina and Saharia are famous for their distinctive traditional drawings and paintings.

The tribal people of Rajasthan traditionally draw painting on wall, floor, sides of their gate, etc., which may be put under the canopy of *Bhitti Chitra* or *Bhumi Chitra* means wall or floor painting. Painting and relief work is also carried out on grain container and less frequently on other area of the house. Tattooing on body is though not always done by the tribal but they are fond of tattooing on the exposed parts of the body. Painting is also done on wooden, clay or stone articles used by the tribes of Rajasthan. Recently under the influence of globalization, the tribal start to draw painting on paper, canvas or some other modes mainly for commercial purpose. Few educated tribal like Bhil and Mina also showcase their paintings through internet and social networking media for the larger viewers.

For drawing on wall and floor, they prepare the base by plastering the area with cow dung and coloured soil. Mainly Indian red and less often white colour are used to prepare the base. A few tribes use black soil and cow dung to prepare the base. Nowadays, a large number of tribal especially those who live in urban areas prepare the base of painting with the mixture of cow dung and chemical colouring agent.

Relief work is carried on grain container by using white or Indian red coloured mud. For such work, *multani mitti* or lime is used as colouring agent. Nowadays, tribal people also use different colours for the relief work and the same is often decorated with glass, beads, tree barks etc.

Tattooing is carried out on the body specially exposed parts of the body using electric machine. Traditionally it was done during *Gavri* dance performed by the Bhil tribe of Mewar region. Apart from it, tattoo work is done during major fairs and festivals. However, nowadays, foreigners and domestic tourists are also fond to make tattoos on their own body. Some tattoo artists are available in major tourist centres. The tribal often go to the shops or door steps of such artists for tattooing.

The tribal people also decorate several clay, stone, wooden and bamboo made materials with exquisite painting work. Traditional vegetative colour, stone colour, earth colour and cow dung are used for such painting. But present day many of them are using chemical colours.

Due to the initiative of M L V Tribal Research Institute, Udaipur; West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur; Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur; TRIFED, Jaipur and Anthropological Survey of India, Udaipur; IGRMS, Bhopal, the tribal students prepare paintings on paper and canvas. Many Government and Non Government Organizations, and many private agencies trained the tribal people to paint on paper and canvas and encourage them to market their art in the fairs and workshops organised by Government or NGO's.

Painting Brush

For painting or drawing brush is required. For making traditional brushes, the twig of the date palm, bamboo, *neem* tree etc. are used. The twigs are kept in water for two to three days to make it softer. One end of the twig is crushed with stone or brick to prepare the working edge. Sometimes the working edge of the brush is wrapped with cloth. Some of them use the ring finger with or without wrapping the cloth for painting. Presently most of the tribal painters use painting brush whose body is made up with plastic or metal and working part is made up of hairs of animal.

Colouring Agent

Traditionally vegetative, earthen or stone colours are used by the tribal of Rajasthan. Red colour is either extracted from bark of *Bholli* or bark or flower of other plants. The bark or flower is grinded and mixed with water and the same is kept for two to three days and is sieved to good brilliant red colour. Yellow colour is mainly extracted from turmeric or yellow soil. Black colour is obtained from coal, charcoal or carbon from the used battery or cell. White colour is mostly obtained from lime or white soil. Sometimes, rice powder is mixed with water to get white colour. Green and other colours are obtained from various vegetative colouring agents. Hence, it is observed that traditional people used a good number of vegetative, clay and stone colour. Recently, few tribal under the impact of modernisation and after receiving training from various organizations started using various chemical colours like poster colour, oil paint, plastic paint, acrylic paint etc.

Shape and Theme

The shape of the painting depends on the area where they draw painting. A portion of wall, floor or courtyard, etc. is often decorated with various paintings. However, modern painters draw painting depending upon the size of the canvas, paper etc.

As far as tribal is concerned, their drawing may be classified into following categories:

1. Domesticated animals, wild animals and plants.
2. Religious and sacred painting.
3. Painting depicting house hold activities and socio- cultural scenario.
4. Natural scenario.
5. *Mandana* or regional folk painting.
6. Abstract painting.
7. Decorative painting.

Aesthetic Aspects

Tribal painting as far as its aesthetics are concerned, exhibits several motives and designs. The same may further be classified into objective, non- objective, abstract, decorative and representative. The tribal painting shows a good number of zoomorphic, geomorphic motives either in real form or its symbolic depiction. They draw flowers, petals, leaves, birds, animals etc. as main theme of their painting. The side themes are astronomical objects like sun, moon, and stars etc., which are also found in their painting. They also draw *Mandana* that is regional folk design, *Gotrej* that is painting of clan or lineage deity. Abstract or geometric designs like straight line, triangle, square, circle, semi circle, etc. are also found in their drawing.

Modernisation of Tribal Painting

It has already been mentioned that tribal painting of Rajasthan is an age old tradition. Recently there has been a change due to modernisation and the process of globalization which has transformed the entire world into a small village through internet and multimedia. Virtual depiction of painting through electronic and print media is also serving as a catalyst in this process. Moreover, some tribal people prepare paintings for the tourists, museums, exhibitions in one hand and to cater the need and demand of market economy on the other hand. Hence, concept of self sufficiency and tribe speciality is the realm of tribal painting is slowly but surely under the process of change.

Modern painters by using folk and tribal tradition draw modern themes like scenario of tribal society and culture, mural paintings, combination of relief work

and line drawings, abstract painting, portrait painting in various modern media. In the work of some reputed non tribal painters, traces of changing tribal painting tradition can be envisaged. In their painting work they initiated experiments which simplify the density of colours, shade effects, changing the size and shape of object in their painting, symbolic depiction of reality and so on. By doing so, they try to make their distinctive identity of painting tradition. It is a departure from the original painting tradition of the tribal. A few tribal who are students of drawing and painting also make certain experiment on tribal painting with a view to make their own tradition.

In traditional spectrum, tribal painting generally drawn in order to meet socio-cultural and religious need of the society. It is linked with their folk culture. However, modernisation of the tribal painting tradition forms distinctive identity of certain tribal painters who can sale their products in the wider market. Originally in traditional spectrum, all the tribal especially females take part in the painting work. Nowadays, a class of enlightened and educated tribal painters take the leading role to popularise their tradition either in original form or in modified manner. Many tribal students start learning modern painting right from their school days as a part of their course curriculum which is not in tune with their tradition bound painting tradition. It is embedded in their structural cognition. Many Government and Non- Government Organisations are trying to revive the vanishing tribal painting tradition through workshops, training programmes etc. Their aim is to restore the tribal painting tradition in its original form.

The creative art in tribal society is not compartmentalised like the non-tribal culture. It is closely interwoven in their life. The tribal approach their creativity in realistic state or in conventional form. Haden (1914) explained the development of style. According to him, artistic expression owes its birth to reality. The representations were met to the life, once born the design achieved on individuality of its own. Elwin (1951) cautioned about the rapid disappearance of tribal outside Assam. According to him, ignorance, poverty, depression, economic exploitation and political oppression are the main cause of the absence to aspire tribal art form. Besides this, new generation tribal people have accepted the readymade knowledge of art from their non-tribal counterpart. In spite of all these push and pull factors, the tribal art form is existed in Rajasthan due to some cultural and religious norms and values attached to these paintings. Recently, due to the process of globalization, even the school going tribal children learn non-creative and non-value loaded design from school and internet. It not only restricts their imagination and emulation from their older generation but create a fear complex and cultural shock which in turn make culture of silence in the realm of art among the tribal. Other facts as discussed earlier are also distorted the original art form and imaginative outlook of the tribal to a large extent. It is thus a need of the hour to revive and popularise tribal art of Rajasthan.

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PLATES

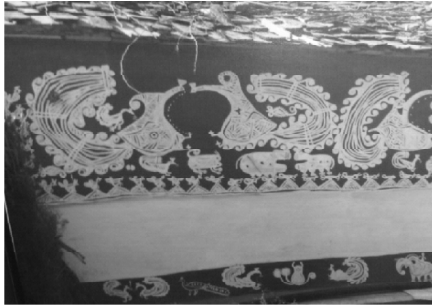
Bhil Paintings



Garasia Paintings



Mina Paintings



Saharia Paintings

