

Recent trends in Gond painting

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ABSTRACT

Gond painting is one of the tribal arts of Madhya Pradesh. It has a great cultural and religious importance in life of Gond tribe. Gond painting reflects the perception of life of Gond tribes, their faiths and beliefs and the happenings of their day to day lives. Gond artists have made changes in the motifs, colours and painting base used as compared to earlier days in order to preserve Gond art. Present study focuses on changing trends in Gond painting.

Key Words : Gond painting, Gond tribe, Colour

INTRODUCTION

Different types of folk paintings are practiced in India. Some of the famous folk paintings of India are Madhubani paintings of Bihar, Phad paintings of Rajasthan, Patachitra paintings of Odisha, Kalighat paintings of West Bengal, Nirmal paintings and Kalamkari paintings of Andhra Pradesh. Apart from folk paintings tribal paintings were also practised in India. The art of tribal paintings was learned by artists from their elders. Some of the tribal paintings of different states are Saura paintings of Odisha, Warli paintings from Maharashtra, Santhal paintings of Bihar, Pichhwai paintings of Rajasthan, Pithora paintings of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Bhil paintings of Madhya Pradesh, Gond paintings of Madhya Pradesh, etc.

Gond or *Koi* or *Koiture*, the major tribe of Madhya Pradesh dated back to thousands of years and famous for their Gond painting. Majority of Gonds live in Dindori, Mandla, Chhindwana, Betul, Seoni and Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh. The Gond word comes from *kond* means green mountains in the Dravidian idiom. Living in deep forests, they survived off the land and had no written word, so priests and elders conveyed information of devotion, worship, hunting, art of ceremonies and customs to the youth orally in words and also through paintings (Anonymous, 2014).

One of the distinguishing feature of Gond painting is 'signature pattern' that is used as 'infill' in the motifs. These infill arrangements are distinguishing recognizable symbols used

by the Gond paintingists and every Gond painter has established his or her own signature arrangement. Artists have made changes in different aspect of art for popularizing it. The present investigation was planned to know the recent trends in Gond painting and compared it with earlier trend.

METHODOLOGY

Information on recent trends in Gond painting was collected from the artisans, who were involved in practice of Gond painting. Present study was purposively carried out in Dindori and Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh as Gond tribal population was highly concentrated in these districts. The researcher selected 60 respondents by snowball techniques. A self structured interview schedule was developed by the researcher, which was used to assess information about recent trends of Gond painting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today Gond painting is in a state of transitions. These transitions are reflected in themes, motifs, colours and painting surfaces that are adopted by Gond artists. Table 1 shows changes in trend for theme used in the Gond painting.

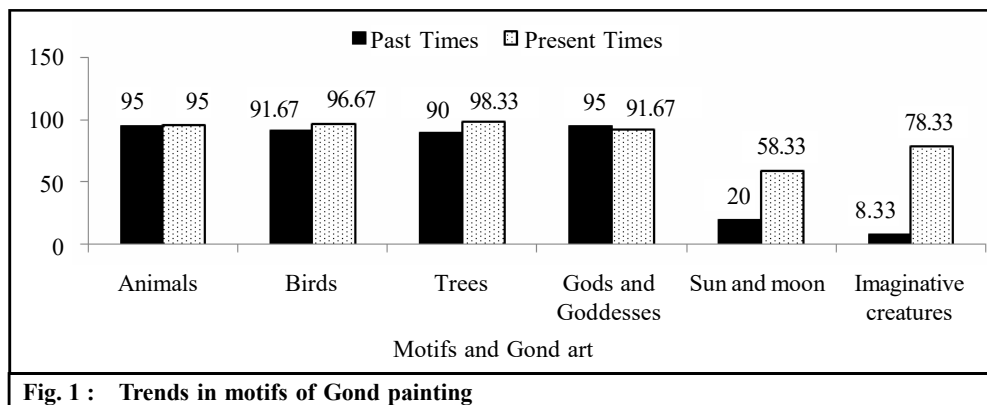
During earlier days, themes used in Gond painting were mainly myths (91.67%) followed by folklore (81.67%), translation of songs into pictures (71.67%), daily activities (45.00%) and imagination of artist (16.67%). Today, due to modernization the themes used in Gond painting have changed. Traditional themes are still being used, but slight decrease in trend for use of themes related to myths (85.00 %), folklore (80.00 %) and translation of songs into pictures (66.67 %) was seen compared to earlier days. Nowadays, there is increase in trend for use of themes related to daily activities like cattle rearing, wood cutting in the forest, offerings to god etc. which has increased almost double compared to earlier days (91.67%). Increasing trend was also seen in use of theme, imagination in Gond painting since earlier days (83.33%).

The Fig. 1 revealed about the changes occurred in the motifs of Gond painting during past and present times. Gods and Goddesses (95.00%) and animals (95.00%) were motifs used in Gond painting during past times followed by local birds (91.67%) and trees (90.00%) according to respondents. Use of sun and moon (20.00%) and imaginative creatures (8.33%) as motif was less in past times. Due to change in times motifs used in Gond painting have also changed. Nowadays in Gond painting mainly motifs of trees (98.33%) followed by birds

Table 1: Trends in themes used in Gond Painting (N=60)					
Sr. No.	Themes used	Earlier days		Present times	
		Frequency*	Percentage	Frequency*	Percentage
1.	Myths	55	91.67	51	85.00
2.	Folklore	49	81.67	48	80.00
3.	Daily activities	27	45.00	55	91.67
4.	Imagination	10	16.67	50	83.33
5.	Translation of songs into pictures	43	71.67	40	66.67

*Multiple responses

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(96.67%), animals (95.00%), Gods and Goddesses (91.67%), imaginative creatures (78.33%) and sun and moon (58.33%) are seen.

As evident from Table 1 that, the use of imagination theme as increased due which use of motifs related imaginative creatures such as flying elephants, deer having tree on head, flying fish, etc. have also increased. Increasing trend in use of motifs related to sun and moon, trees and bird is seen. Slight decrease in trend was seen in use of motifs related to gods and goddesses due to change in demand of consumers.

Colours used to depict emotions and feelings of the artists. The changes have occurred in the use of colours in Gond painting are presented in Table 2. During earlier days, natural colours obtained from natural sources were used to create Gond painting. Natural dyes obtained from natural resources available in the forest of Gondhvana region was used for colouring in Gond painting. Red colour (98.33%) was mainly seen in Gond painting followed by black (93.33%), yellow (86.67%), white (83.33%), blue (81.67%), green (68.33%) and orange (6.67%). Orange colour was rarely used during earlier days due to lack of natural sources available for this colour in Gond region. Nowadays artist are opting for synthetic colour instead of natural colour as they are readily available in the market. Now-a-days red colour (100.00%) is used in almost all the Gond painting followed by white (98.33%), black (96.67%), yellow (96.67%), blue (93.33%), green (88.33%) and orange (85.00%). Artist are

Table 2 : Trends in colours used in Gond Painting (N=60)					
Sr. No.	Colours used	Earlier days		Nowadays	
		Frequency*	Percentage	Frequency*	Percentage
1.	Black	56	93.33	58	96.67
2.	White	50	83.33	59	98.33
3.	Red	59	98.33	60	100.00
4.	Blue	49	81.67	56	93.33
5.	Yellow	52	86.67	58	96.67
6.	Orange	4	6.67	51	85.00
7.	Green	41	68.33	53	88.33

*Multiple responses

using more number of colours for beautify their Gond painting. Red colour was used as the symbol of divine power, so it was used in all folk arts like Aipan of Uttarakhand, Warli art of Maharashtra, etc. during all the times.

The painting base of Gond painting is tabulated in Table 3. It is observed that during earlier times, Gond painting was limited to wall (100.00%) and floor (6.67%) only.

Table 3: Trends in painting base for Gond Painting (N=60)					
Sr. No.	Colours used	Earlier days		Nowadays	
		Frequency*	Percentage	Frequency*	Percentage
1.	Wall	60	100.00	60	100.00
2.	Floor	4	6.67	-	-
3.	Paper	-	-	50	83.33
4.	Canvas	-	-	50	83.33

*Multiple responses

Gond painting is a tribal painting which was made to bring the good luck so it was mostly done on walls. Tribal art like Warli art was mainly done on walls during ealier times. Due to modernization and changing times, the painting base of Gond painting changed in present times. Walls (100.00%), paper (83.33%) and canvas (83.33%) was used as the painting base to create Gond painting at present times. The painting base of Gond painting has shifted from a traditional painting base (wall and floor) to other bases like paper and canvas also to increase the income of the Gond artists. Shifting to different base used for painting not only preserve traditional motifs, theme but it is also easy to carry.

Conclusion :

From the past to present times, a change in themes, motifs, colours and painting base of Gond painting have occured. Gond painting is changing as per the demand of the market and masses. Nowadays Gond painting mostly contains theme related to daily activities like cattle rearing, wood cutting in the forest, offerings to god etc. as the theme, something that was not mostly present before.vAt present times, to meet the demand of the consumers and market the motifs of Gond painting is shifted from motifs of Gods and Goddesses and animals towards other motifs like trees. Traditionally Gond painting was done on walls and floors. Gond painting now made on paper and canvas also to make Gond painting more accessible to the public. Thus Gond painting is now a union of tribal tradition and modern elements. The rich folklore and heritage of Gond tribal art is a treasure and in this era of information and communication technology the need of hour is to preserve and promote Gond painting.

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