

CHANDUA

(The indigenous art of Pipli)



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Solomon Pradhan, BMCOMM1912



Pipli is a village in the Puri district of Odisha. It is about 18 km away from the capital city of Bhubaneswar and 40 km away from Puri which is known to have some of the magnificent temples for which the decorations are transported from Pipli. Pipli is a village which does not have agriculture or any animal husbandry business as their primary bread-making occupation. The

economy of Pipli is maintained by its craft, which has been a traditional work for the villagers since we can imagine. The craft of this village is so famous that it has demand worldwide. During the Pujas, the decorations for the deities and for their carriers are all hand-made and sent from Pipli.





Pipli is a village which has become a potential town. Most of it has been urbanized. Fancy houses and lot of shops have started coming up in Pipli. Most of it is no longer like a village like it was in the past. Most of the old houses have been renovated and many more have been built. The roads have become more crowded and street have become narrower.

PIPLI VILLAGE

(Little of which remains)









CHANDUA

(The indigenous art of Pipli)



One of the most colourful handicrafts in Odisha is the appliqué work in Pipli Crafts Village, located 40 km away from Bhubaneswar. The craft, locally called Chandua, is related to the rituals and traditions of Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. Even as there is no history behind the

evolution and origin of appliqué work, it is believed to have started in the 17th and 18th centuries when clothes and decorative pieces were used in the Jagannath Temple in Puri during religious processions.



As one approaches the quaint little village, a kaleidoscope of colours welcomes the visitors. The handicrafts adorn each shop in varied patterns and sizes from umbrellas to lanterns, cushion covers, bags, pillow covers to canopies and much more.





HISTORY

The term appliqué is derived from French and Latin words *appliquer* and *applicare*, respectively, which both mean to join or attach. Like embroidery, it has a humble beginning. The technique was used as a way to strengthen worn areas of items or to patch holes that had formed. Early appliqué was used to lengthen the life of clothing and moved into artful techniques that can be seen in blankets and quilts from numerous cultures from all over the world. In Pipli 'Chandua' art dates back to many generations of the people on Pipli. The people there, are taught to hone Chandua art from their childhood.



The intricacy of the handicraft, practiced by a specific caste of professional tailors, known as 'Darjis', is unparalleled. The technique of creating appliqué is basically cutting up various coloured fabrics which are then sewn on to the surface of another foundation fabric. To accentuate the look, beautiful needlework, sequins and mirrors are added to the design. The stitching varies from one item to another, but is categorised under six styles 'Bakhia', 'Taropa', 'Ganthi', 'Chikana', Button Hole and 'Ruching'.




The cloth patches are simple and motifs mostly revolve around gods, animals, birds, flowers and plants. The village is home to around 150 craftsmen and there are 500 girls who are involved in needle work, besides the shopkeepers and salesmen who procure the products. Though earlier the art form was restricted to Darji caste, today it is practiced by non-caste members, notably a group of Muslims in the village.



Pipli is used to adorn the chariots of Lord Jagannath and his siblings during the annual Ratha Yatra. It is also used in other rituals associated with the Lord. Pipli was set up as an artisan's village during the Somavamsi dynasty rule in Odisha somewhere in the 10th Century AD. The art exemplifies the perfect syncretisation of the culture of Odisha.

The applique work are predominantly created by Muslim artisans and adorned by the Lord of Odisha. The applique work comes in many variants right from wall hangings to lanterns to umbrellas to bag's, pouches , bedspreads and are perfect souvenir's to relive the memories of Odisha.



Pipli, the village of applique craftsmen, derives its name from Pirs, the Muslim saint who lived in the region. The king of Odisha established the village to accommodate the craftsmen who made applique craft for the annual Jagannath Rath Yatra procession.

Both Hindus and Muslims of the village are involved in the making and trading of applique craft. The craft that originated as a temple art now finds its space in a wide range of decorative and ceremonial products. Almost all the villagers depend on the craft for their livelihood, the tourism industry working in their favour.

“It’s not that all are involved in making or trading of applique products. There are people who run hotels and other businesses that cater to tourists who visit Puri and Konark,” said Mahapatra. “Tourists cannot resist buying colourful applique craft displayed in our shops.”

The craftsmen of Pipli produce numerous designs ranging from Jagannath and Ganesha, the favourite gods, to animals, birds, flowers, leaves, and geometric designs. Catering to modern needs, they produce wedding canopies, umbrellas, bags, wall hangings, lampshades and household furnishings that are popular with locals and tourists.



Any type of worship or sacrificial work is incomplete without pipili chandua. Canopies, chhatris and tarasas made in applique process are increasingly finding place in festivities. In every religious geity be it the car festival or the minor event of festive, shamiana or the canopies are displayed significantly. Wide scale use of shamiana are seen in the various festival of Lord Jagannath. Since the Lord's rituals are more of the nature of the daily routine of human being, fan, umbrella of applique work are in rampant use to save the deity from the scorching heat of Sun or the rough weather. In chandan yatra the

entire procession is taken out displaying and covering the deities with chattris of applique work. Further, the chandua another marvel of applique work has become a household commodity in almost every riligious work. Besides used in the religious function, with the touch of a little modernity, garments of varied designs are also made with it. Ladies item like frock, blouse, purse, handbags etc. are in great demand among tourists. Screens of bigger size with applique touch are also been made depicting the different charecters of religious myth for interior design or decoration of houses.

STITCHING

In the context of sewing, an appliqué refers to a needlework technique in which patterns or representational scenes are created by the attachment of smaller pieces of fabric to a larger piece of contrasting colour or texture. It is particularly suitable for work which is to be seen from a distance, such as in banner-making. A famous example of appliqué is the Hastings Embroidery.

Appliquéd cloth is an important art form in Benin, West Africa, particularly in the area around Abomey, where it has been a tradition since the 18th century and the kingdom of Danhomè.

QUILTING

Appliqué is used extensively in quilting. “Dresden Plate” and “Sunbonnet Sue” are two examples of traditional American quilt blocks that are constructed with both patchwork and appliqué. Baltimore album quilts, Broderie perse, Hawaiian quilts, Amish quilts, Egyptian Khayamiya and the ralli quilts of India and Pakistan also use appliqué.



TYPES OF STITCHING STYLES

- **Straight or Flat stitch** is a class of simple embroidery and sewing stitches in which individual stitches are made without crossing or looping the thread. These stitches are used to form broken or unbroken lines or starbursts, fill shapes and create geometric designs.

- **The running stitch or straight stitch** is the basic stitch in hand-sewing and embroidery, on which all other forms of sewing are based. The stitch is worked by passing the needle in and out of the fabric. The needle is always pushed through both layers of cloth starting on the side it is on and ending on the other side. A running stitch runs through the fabric. Running stitches are most often not visible as they are used to close seams.

- **Holbein stitch** is a simple, reversible line embroidery stitch most commonly used in Blackwork embroidery and Assisi embroidery. The stitch is named after Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), a 16th-century portrait painter best known for his paintings of Henry VIII and his children, almost all of whom are depicted wearing clothing decorated with blackwork embroidery.

Although superficially similar to Back Stitch the Holbein stitch produces a smoother line and a pattern that is identical on both sides of the fabric. It can be worked in straight lines, diagonally, or in a stepped fashion to make a zigzag line and is well suited to creating outlines or intricate filling patterns.

Holbein stitch is also known as double running stitch, line stitch, Spanish stitch, Chiara stitch and two-sided line stitch.



-Satin stitch, in sewing and embroidery, a satin stitch or damask stitch is a series of flat stitches that are used to completely cover a section of the background fabric. Narrow rows of satin stitch can be executed on a standard sewing machine using a zigzag stitch or a special satin stitch foot.

In order to maintain a smooth edge, shapes can be outlined with back, split or chain stitch before the entire shape including the outline is covered with satin stitch.

Machine-made satin stitch is often used to outline and attach appliques to the ground fabric.



PIPLI CHANDUA DYING

(The fading)





Colourful chariots are the first thing that people notice during Odisha's annual chariot procession of the gods, Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. Decorating the chariots for the procession has been the responsibility of Darji or tailoring servitors for generations.

Applique items such as chhati or umbrella, tarasa, a heart-shaped wooden piece covered by applique and supported by a long wooden pole, and chandua, an umbrella-shaped canopy are also used to dress up the chariots during the processions.



Due to various reasons, the applique artisans are moving to other trades or migrating to cities to work as construction workers to make out a living. If things do not improve soon, there is every possibility that only a handful of craftsmen will be left for doing applique work.

WOMEN ARTISANS

Women mostly do the applique work. Almost all the women of every household engage in this craft. It is the source of their livelihood. Women are involved in stitching, but men take care of the designing, cutting and selection of colours, besides the sale of products.

Whatever applique work we see is done by women artisans, but the pay is very meagre. There are no fixed working hours. Sometimes they work for more than 10 hours.”

But it does help the women add to the family income. After passing Class 10, there was no job opportunity. Many

young women joined applique craft workshops. The monthly income of Rs 5,000 helps them support their family.

However, according to a workshop owner, the number of women artisans has reduced. Though the craft is dependent on women artisans, with the government’s new skill-building training, many young girls have quit handicrafts and joined apparel factories in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

LACK OF RAW MATERIALS

Artisans used to buy cloth from state-owned Orissa Textiles Mills (OTM). But after the shutting down of the mill they have to depend on private mills or manufacturing units of other states. After the closure of OTM, the artisans buy cloth from Surat and thread and other accessories from Kolkata.

But the real problem, according to traders, is that they do not get the right quality cloth. For applique work, the artisans use low-cost material, and so we cannot get good quality cloth, because, they buy raw material from Surat, thus, the input cost and hence the cost of the product increases and custom-

ers find it expensive compared to other gift items.

The State Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Department has opened a raw material bank for applique artisans and small traders at Pipli. But according to most of the artisans, there is not much variety of colours at the raw material bank. In applique work we use nearly 10 different colours of cloth, threads and other accessories but most of the time the bank stores cloth of only two or three colours. This disables the artisans from getting their wanted output and are not able to finish the products due to bad quality and lack of raw material.



OTHER MAJOR ISSUES

The recent Goods & Services Tax (GST) on handicraft items is another challenge for retail shop owners. In 2016 the artists sold a large number of lampshades to traders of other states. In 2017 sales dropped to 50 percent because of implementation of GST. With 5 percent GST on cloth and 12 percent on steel wire the prices of the complete product became very high compared to what it was before.

Tourists from Bhubaneswar used to pass through Pipli on their way to Puri and Konark. A bypass road, constructed in 2015, for the convenience of tourists and devotees going to Puri and Konark during Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath, has been a major shortcoming for the handicraft trade.

According to the artisans, now, hardly any artisans come to Pipli. Due to the bypass road, most of the crowd travels through the bypass road which has made trav-

elling much easier for people. The artisans have said that the government has hardly made any attempts to make the condition of the suffering artisans better. The villagers briefed central ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Suresh Prabhu of their plight, when the ministers visited Pipli. They have staged road blocks, put forth written complaints to authorities concerned and also to the chief minister, but haven't got any response.

The craftsmen plan to introduce applique work in sarees and dress materials, as applique handicraft is always in demand.

Recently, an interactive session was held between artisans and traders of applique work and designers of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Bhubaneswar. According to many of the artisans who attended the interaction have said that their work was highly appreciated by everyone. Most of them are hoping a rise in the sale.











Over all these issues, there is another issue which is not seen very clearly among the people living in Pipli, but , somewhere within them there is a conflict. The place was mostly inhabited by the people of Hindu religion. But now, there are a lot of muslims who stay in Pipli. The artisans who ahve been doing Chandua since childhood are quite unhappy with the fact that

the people of the Muslim community are taking over their tradition. Many artisans have said that they feel their heritage being infiltrated. The people of the Muslim community learnt the craft by through the government programs in which, the government sends master artisans to teach the people and spread the craft. This was done to keep the dying art form alive.

CONCLUSION



Pipli is the home to one of the most famous art form around the world, Chandua. But, with time it has faded and is not like it used to be. Due to various reasons the beauty of the craft has deteriorated with time. As citizen of India and Chandua being an essential part of Indian tradition and culture, it is our duty to preserve this art form. We should do all that we can, in our capability to save this art form from fading away.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNT ?

I have learnt a lot from the Photography class. It was a combination of various challenges. From the basic like learning to hold the camera to composing a perfect picture, we learnt a lot thing in these few months. We learnt how to play with lights and colours. We learnt how to manage all the important components of a camera to get a perfect picture. We learnt about different genre of protography and also the different modes. We learnt about how lights create mood and emotions and learnt that what does different colours mean. We learnt about different lenses. If we keep counting thing we learnt, there is a lot to say. But to say what we learnt in a very confined way, we can say that we learnt hown to capture things which amaze people when they see it. It has been a great journey working with the cameras and lights.