

## A Study on Famous 'Pattachitra' (Painting on Clothes) in Puri district of Odisha, India

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### Abstract

*The study was carried out to get an idea about the artisans mainly involved with 'Pattachitra' preparation at Raghurajpur village, Puri district of Odisha. It was conducted in the first week of February 2023. This is purely a field-based study and data was collected directly from the beneficiaries where all 165 households were involved with different types of crafts, particularly one which continues from long ago known as 'Pattachitra' (painting on clothes). Puri district needs no introduction, as the place is famous for the Jagannath Dev temple and its vibrant beach attracts tourists from across the world. The district is spread over an area of 3051 square kilometers, inhabited by 16, 98, 730 persons (as per the 2011 Census), with a density of population is 488 persons per square kilometer. The rural population was 15.5 percent of the total population and the urban population was 84.5 percent. On the other hand, Schedule Caste (SC) population constituted 19.1 percent and Schedule Tribe (ST) was 0.4 percent. The average literacy rate in Puri for urban regions was 87.38 and the same in rural areas was 84.16 percent. But the district is famous for different types of handlooms and handicrafts. In the village, it was observed that some people took baths in the river which flows in the village but there were no sheds or rooms in the vicinity to change clothes so people in general and ladies in particular faced problems. In view of this, it is suggested that 2/3 rooms or sheds may be constructed there by the local government giving top priority to it.*

**Keywords: Artisan, Income, 'Pattachitra', Odisha, Puri, and Raghurajpur village.**

### Introduction:

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India is one of the countries where the footprint of civilisation started from the ancient age. And that is why arts and crafts can be found today. It is pertinent to mention that art refers to human creation that is appealing to the finer senses of the individual; while a craft is a skill, especially involving performing arts. Arts and crafts in India, as everywhere else, define the cultural layers of the country, community, and race. Every region of the country has an abundance of varied arts and crafts. For example, ‘terracotta’ began about 5000 years ago and the works are a testimony of excellent craftsmanship ([asiahighlights.com/india/arts-and-crafts/24/02/23](http://asiahighlights.com/india/arts-and-crafts/24/02/23)). Another one is, the ‘Pattachitra’ of Odisha as it is like a historical chronicle of our country through time. To get an idea of ‘Pattachitra’ one can visit Raghurajpur village in Puri district of Odisha. The word ‘Pattachitra’ has been derived from two words – ‘Paṭṭa’ means ‘cloth’ and ‘Chitra’ means ‘picture’. For ‘Pattachitra’ painting, the artisans (chitrakars) follow a traditional process of preparing the canvas. Raghurajpur is a beautiful village located around 15 kilometres away from Puri city of Odisha, India. The village is endowed with pristine beauty, full of greenery, birds ‘tweet’ can be heard all the times, also a perennial river viz., Bhargavi has been flowing through one side of the village and all of these have made the village an attractive place to visit. But the most asset of the village is its human resource as each family is engaged in different crafts, mainly ‘Pattachitra’, wooden toys making, stone carvings, toys making with cow dung, paper-mash through waste papers, painting on coconut and betelnut, etc. For ‘Pattachitra’ painting, the artisans (Chitrakars) follow a traditional process of preparing the canvas. A gauze-like fine cotton cloth is coated with white stone powder and gum made out of tamarind seeds. This makes the canvas ready to accept the paints which are made of natural colours. These colours are a unique feature of ‘Pattachitra’. For example, to get the shade of white, powdered conch shells are used ([theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/](http://theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/)).

### **About Puri district:**

Puri district needs no introduction, as the place is famous for the Jagannath Dev temple and its vibrant beach attracts tourists from across the world. The district is spread over an area of 3051 square kilometres, inhabited by 16, 98, 730 persons (as per the 2011 Census), with a density of population is 488 persons per square kilometre. The rural population was 15.5 percent of the total population and the urban population was 84.5 percent with Schedule Caste (SC) constituting 19.1 percent of the total population while Schedule Tribe (ST) was 0.4 percent.

The average literacy rate in Puri for urban regions was 87.38 percent (91% male and 84 % female). On the other hand, in rural areas, the average literacy rate was 84.16 percent.

Regarding crops produced in the district, it may be mentioned that paddy, wheat, pulses, groundnut, etc., are some of the major crops grown in the district ([puri.nic.in/about-district](http://puri.nic.in/about-district)). It is noteworthy to mention that the number of rivers flowing through the district helps in sustaining agriculture. The minimum temperature of the district is approximately 16. 45 degrees Celsius and the maximum 33. 9 degrees Celsius.

Handicraft and cottage industries of this district are famous in the world, its original source being the temple craft of Bhagawan Jagannath Dev and the Sun Temple of Konark. The rich traditional culture and heritage of the district give a boost to these handicrafts and cottage industries. The most important is 'Pattachitra' and others are applique work, stone carving, wood carving, modern patchwork, terracotta, bell metal, sea shell items, toys made of cow dung etc. The District Industries Centre (DIC), on its part, has imparted training and upgraded the skill of the traditional artisans and other economically weaker sections of the people, thus from time to time DIC has been helping the youths to improve their per capita income.

The district has given birth to a number of eminent personalities-both in the past and present. Some of the great personalities are Jayadeva, Gobardhan Acharya, Sridhara Swamy, Jagannath Das, Raya Ramananda Pattanayak, Kanhai Khuntia, Jayadeva-II, Kavi Chintamani Mishra, Balaram Das, Jagannath Das, Bhakta Kavi Salbeg, Dinakrushna Das and Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das. Padma Bhusan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. who is famous for Odissi dance hails from the district ([puri.nic.in/about-district](http://puri.nic.in/about-district)). Since the district is famous for 'Pattachitra', the author visited the village, Raghurajpur village, Puri Sadar Block of Puri district, where this is made widely and famous for this craft.

### **Study area and methodology:**

The study was conducted at Raghurajpur village, Puri Sadar block of Puri district, Odisha in the first week of February 2023. Raghurajpur village is famous for 'Pattachitra'.

To get an idea study was carried out at Raghurajpur village and one of the renowned artisans who travelled across India and abroad was contacted in his village where along with him a few other villagers were also present. In this village, altogether 165 households live (Scheduled Caste – 40, Other Backward Caste -65, and Other Caste -60) live. Around 80 percent earn mainly through 'Pattachitra' making and others along with this were involved with wooden toy making, stone carvings, toys making with cow dung, paper-mash through waste papers,

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painting on coconut and betelnut, etc. It is pertinent to mention that a few might be doing stone-carving, etc., but 'Pattachitra' is the main attraction and cream of the village. During the course of the field study, the villagers informed that around 30 percent of the households had agricultural land in the range of 1-2 acres indicating all who had agricultural land were in the category of marginal farmers.

### **Field Situation:**

Bamadev Das (40 years, 10 passed, belonged to Other Backward Caste /OBC) with his wife and two sons eke out their livelihoods through 'Pattachitra'. He makes 'Pattachitra' on clothes, tasar-clothes, betelnut, palm leaf, used utensils, etc. Most of them are designed by painting using different types of colours but in the case of palm leaf, a sharp iron pencil is used as other materials cannot be used to write on the palm leaf because when leaves become dry it becomes very hard. The advantage in the case of the iron pencil is that whatever writing or design all are permanent and durable on the palm leaves. During the course of interaction, he informed that by selling the 'Pattachitra', his net income per month was around Rs. 35,000. The products are sold in local markets, and outside of the state such as in Kolkata or in different Melas. He also informed that in the Mela organized by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), an organization of the Government of India, Hyderabad, he visited three times in 2005, 2006, and 2007 and could do brisk business. Anyway, in presence of other villagers, he informed that each household's earning was between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 40,000 per month by selling the 'Pattachitra' or other items such as stone-curving, wooden toys, toys made of cow-dung, etc.

One of the problems reported by the villagers was the marketing of products so they suggested in the village itself one showroom may be established. If the government cannot manage the showroom, then the villagers themselves can manage through the Producers' Group formed in the village. It is pertinent to mention that in the village one Producers' Group was formed with 25 members which was the off-shoot of nine self-help groups (SHGs). This author supports their suggestion so, I request to the Government of Odisha please arrange a showroom to sell 'Pattachitra' and other products produced in the village. Also, all the tourist vehicles carrying tourists should visit the village spending around one hour time.

For the benefit of readers, the names of the nine SHGs (each constituting 10 women members of the village) are presented here. The author has studied many SHGs across India and observed

that through SHGs women were not only earning income but they felt empowered also as they time to time contributed to the welfare of their families.

Nine SHGs formed in the villages are:

- i. OM SHG
- ii. DASHABHUJA SHG
- iii. MAA BHUBASINI SHG
- iv. SHUBHAM SHG
- v. TARINI SHG
- vi. MAA KALI SHG
- vii. BAJRANGBALI SHG
- viii. OM SAI SHG
- ix. MAA MONGOLA SHG

Also, it was reported that Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) had been helping to sell the products but not on a massive scale so I suggest ORMAS should look into this issue.

During the course of the study, the author visited the river viz., Bhargavi river which was flowing through the village, and observed that some people took baths in the river but there were no sheds or rooms in the vicinity to change their clothes after baths so people in general and ladies in particular faced problems. In view of this, it is suggested that 2/3 small rooms or sheds may be constructed there by the local government on a priority basis.

### **Conclusion:**

'Pattachitra products are the pride not only of Odisha but pride of India also because such activities seldom can be seen in other places. So, I suggest the Tourism Department of Odisha Government should instruct all private, government, and other vehicles to take the tourists in the village as the village is within the vicinity of Puri city in that case as forward linkage (marketing) artisans will be benefitted. Also, one showroom can be established in the village.

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