



A STUDY OF ORISSA PATACHITRA TRADITION TRADITIONAL PAINTING: MAIN ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT

Prior to the introduction of the educational system in India, which occurred in the late 19th century with the establishment of art colleges, family members, children, and people who came to study the art were taught by family elders in a Guru Shishya parampara. It was more like an apprenticeship for the students and those who were not related to the artists when they were requested to assist in the creation of the works of art and given menial tasks. The pupils would study art using a step-by-step procedure that involved creating colours, brushes, and wasli or paper, as well as comprehending the medium and material. Traditional art was frequently only taught to family members, with no participation from outsiders. Throughout history, this caused the demise of numerous art forms. In contrast, inside the family, the next generation had different job aspirations from the form of art that had developed over the centuries. Due to its constrained nature inside the caste or family, important artistic traditions around the world are now extinct. In the area of traditional painting, India too experienced difficulties. The veneration of Lord Jagannath is inextricably tied with the Pattachitra tradition. The paintings in the caves of Udaygiri and Khandagiri in Orissa are the oldest pieces of art still in existence. the Pattachitra created by the Chitrakars who reside close to Lord Jagannath's primary shrine in Puri. Recently, a few of them have made Raghurajpur village their home. Only Lord Jagannath and numerous themes pertaining to Lord Vishnu, Krishna, and ram's avatars were traditionally depicted. Artists have recently been experimenting with new shapes. Additionally, they have kept the classic Pattachitra decoration and colour palette. Primary shades of red, yellow, and blue, with sporadic green, are their favourite colours. Sweeping black lines surround and encircle the figures. The colours are made from pigments found in rocks or the ground.

KEY WORDS: *Orissa Patachitra Tradition, Educational System, India.*

INTRODUCTION

Pattachitra is typically constructed on thinly woven fabric that has been covered in a mixture of tamarind seed, gum, and white chalk. To give a primer-like feel and thickness, paint is applied in layers. To create a smooth surface that may be painted, the surface is polished with agate. Red is used to create the composition, and a final black line drawing is added once the forms have been coloured. These paintings are currently being produced in bulk for business purposes and are highly well-liked by visitors to Puri.



Image :1- Orissa Patachitra

TANJORE PAINTING TRADITION

Thanjavur, a town close to Chennai, is where tanjore paintings first appeared. The palaces and imperial pavilions of the Chola empire contained this kind of art as well. Painting was once solely done by royalty, but subsequently art became popular among all classes of people. The main religious and mythological themes revolve around pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses.



Image: 2- Krishna, Tanjore painting, 18th century

Vibrant colour schemes, ornate jewellery with stones and cut glasses, and substantial gold leaf work are all features of the Tanjore paintings. Nearly 60% of the content is made up of jewellery with gold decorations. A Tanjore artwork is produced using a complex process. First, a base is made using a cloth that has been adhered to a wooden board. Gum and chalk powder are applied as a primer to create a flat surface for the initial drawing. The drawing has been embellished with gold leaf and jewellery decorations, and the remaining space has been coloured. To emphasise the facial characteristics and other aspects in the composition, the final line drawing is now completed. In the end, gold and gems are added. Tanjore paintings are now made in vast quantities and are used as decorative art. These paintings no longer come from the artist families who once produced them, and the painting heritage now has a firmly commercial bent.

WARLI PAINTING TRADITION

More than 1200 years ago, the Warli tribe relocated to Thane, Maharashtra. Outsiders are not permitted in the tribe's village. The ritualistic tradition of the painting is performed on wedding or festive occasions. The painting

loses its meaning after the event is over. The women of the tribe typically paint the huts' walls, and only those who are married and whose spouse is still living. No widow can paint. The environment and daily life of the subjects in these paintings have a big impact on them. These paintings are made on walls covered in layers of red mud or cow dung, and the figures are painted with rice flour so they can be washed off and redone each season. Instead of a brush, they paint linear paintings with bamboo sticks. Simple geometric designs that merely include circles, squares, and triangles are used frequently in paintings as symbolic depictions of everyday life. The primary distinguishing feature of this school of painting is the stick-like human forms. These paintings are striking in their rustic and folk style.

Many male tribe members today paint as well, but on canvases or paper. To create the appearance of a mud wall, they paint the surface with terracotta or red mud, and then use white paint and a brush to create fine geometric copies of the Warli paintings. These paintings are popular with visitors, which has made them a significant source of money for the Warli tribe. They frequently depict scenes of harvesting, goddess weddings, animal gods, and tribal groups.

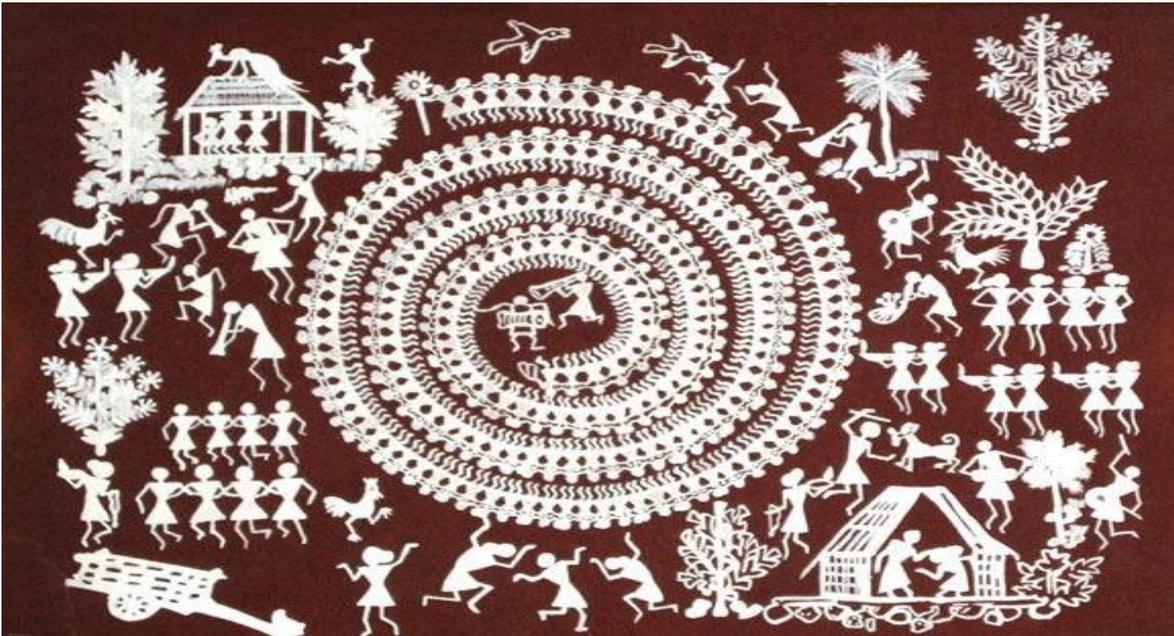


Image:3- Warli painting

PHAD PAINTING TRADITION

Phad paintings were first created almost 800 years ago in Rajasthan's Bhilwara area. These paintings were created primarily for a performance component. The narrative scrolls show the life journey of the neighbourhood hero or any god, and two balladeers, Bhopa and Bhopi, sing while the Phad artwork is unveiled. Each verse they sing is choreographed to open the scroll, which contains an illustration of the verse. These individuals move from village to village while singing and dancing to the verses of various religious and folk tales while holding a ravanhatha in one hand and playing it. They can be compared to street theatre as well.

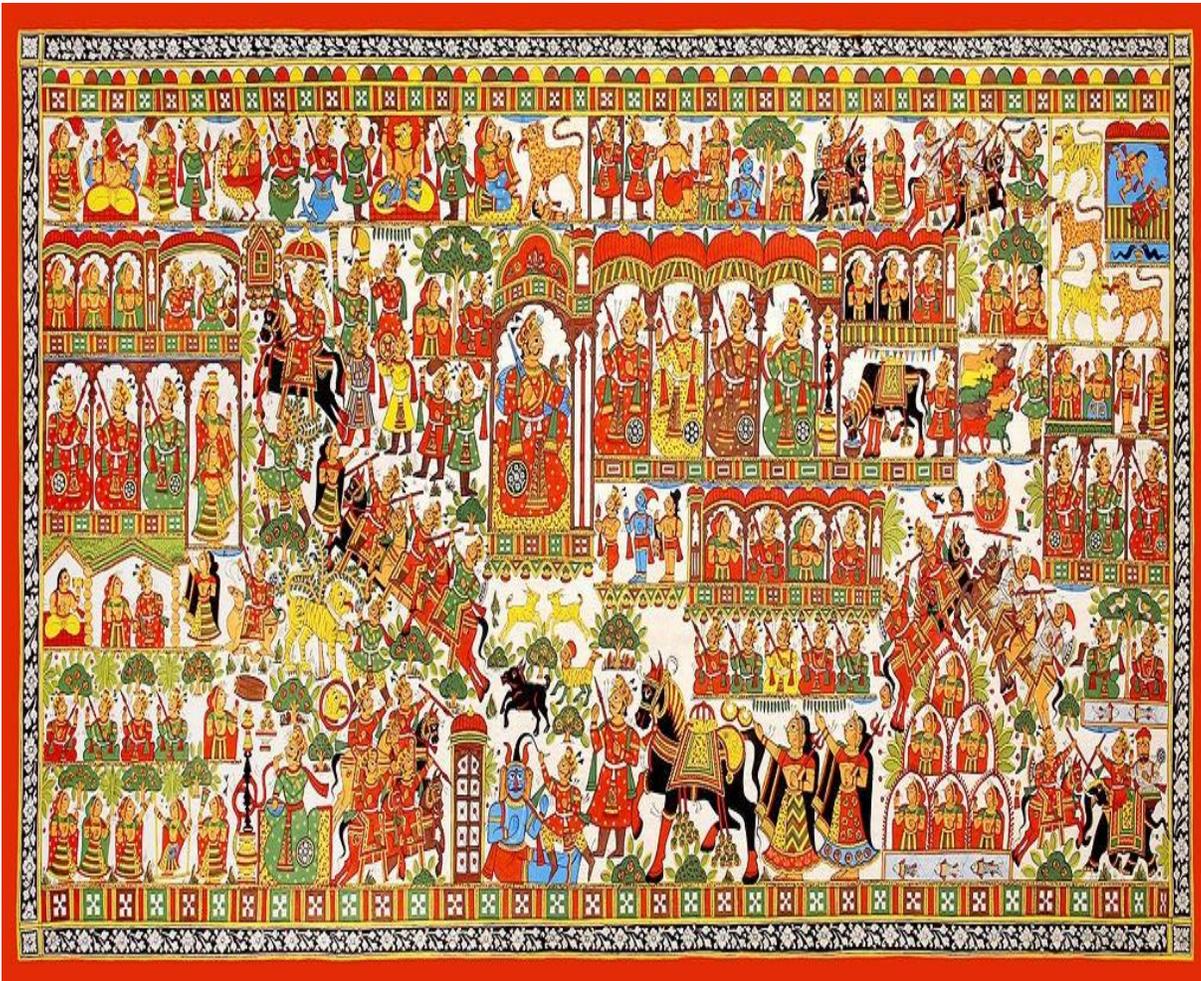


Image: 4 - Phad painting of Bhilwara

The Phad painting was created on canvas and fabric fairly late in the 1900s, becoming the primary means of income and the founding school of painting. Long horizontal panels with these paintings are often 18 feet long and 3 feet high. As the narrator describes each occurrence, these folded up and then gently unrolled. The painting's composition is broken up into several sections, and each section features characters painted in profile.

Red, yellow, green, and black are the primary outline colours. Most of the time, the Phad's border is wide and crimson in hue. The artwork as a whole is fairly unpolished or rustic and has a folk aesthetic. Devnarayanji ki Phad and Pabuji ki Phad are the central topics. Many artists today are creating miniature versions of the well-known Phad paintings on small canvases. Though just a select handful are testing out the most recent options.

KAVAD PAINTING TRADITION

A 400-year-old oral tradition in Rajasthan is kavad storytelling. It is one of the oldest living storytelling traditions.

The Kavad, or mobile temple shrines, are made of a wooden box that opens to reveal numerous door panels and windows that are episodically painted with images of local deities and heroes. The word "Kavad" appears to have been derived from "Kivaad," which means "door."

The drawings follow the narrative of gods' lives as well as those of local heroes or epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

For the Kavadiyas from the Marwar region of western Rajasthan, who transport these kavads from one village to the next while singing and acting out various legends and fables, these kavads are made by Suthars of Chittor in the Mewar district of Rajasthan.

Mango or teak wood is used to make the Kavad. Kavad's design is based on the size of the artwork. If the artwork is as large as the Mahabharata, numerous doors and panels are added, whereas a little Kavad is constructed for a local proverb or a saint's life narrative. After the design is complete, the entire Kavad is smoothed down with sandpaper to remove any imperfections from the surface. The panels are now primed with a white, chalk-like tone, providing a flat surface for painting. The composition of the images is chosen in accordance with the theme and is created on a variety of doors. Forms are coloured, and black colour is used to create the outline. The primary hues are red, yellow, green, and blue. The colour red takes up most of the room.

Earlier, these Kavads were manufactured for religious purposes, but today, many artists create them as souvenirs for travellers to bring home. They are also used to teach youngsters about specific concerns, and Kavadiyas are requested for specific educational programmes.



Image: 5- Kavad from Chittor

UNDERSTANDING THE INDIAN CHARACTER OF TRADITIONAL PAINTING: MAIN ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Indian painting is common throughout the subcontinent and has been developing since ancient times. According to literary sources, painting as a form of art was done in India for several centuries before the emergence of Christianity.

Over the course of centuries, numerous kingdoms were created, many were subdued, and numerous invasions resulted in the fusion of the societies and their individual cultures. The social structure of the area is woven in such a way that local artistic expressions are entwined with culture, creating enduring, unending traditions. If we take one thread out of it, we can see how different civilizations, foods, works of art, and religions have all influenced it in different ways. Such is the subcontinent of India's splendour.

The different dynasties that ruled different regions of India, including the Aryans from Central Asia, the Mauryans, the Gupta who ruled until Gandhara, the Jains, Buddhists, Hindu kings of the Pallava and Chalukyas, the Vakatakas kings of Ajanta and Ellora, the Rajputana Kings, the Mughal Emperors, the Deccan Nawabs, and finally the British as their colony, witnessed it India adopted the best traditions that were shown to it and created a distinctive, understandable, and literary society.

Any region's art and culture tend to survive by developing and assimilating new elements that make them better and allow them to change over time. The origins of India's various arts were similar. Many schools or styles of art have developed over time from one another and separated into whole different ideological schools with distinctive stylistics and traits.

Since the borders of the many states have shifted and cut over the centuries due to invasions and internal conflicts, it is impossible to distinguish between these artistic schools. The stylistic school boundaries are a preferable choice for research since cultural limits differ from political boundaries.

Every ethnic society experiences a great deal of cultural stimulation and interaction. As a result, one of the unique qualities of Indian art and a key element that has contributed to its continued success for so many centuries is its ability to incorporate a foreign influence while maintaining its indigenous character.

Early illustrations of Patachitra, Mewar paintings, Phad, Kalighat, and Orissa patuas all exhibit the practise of bold, assured drawings with little embellishment. Line has a strong, poised, and unpolished personality. The line drawing was considerably smoother, more rhythmic, more delicate in subsequent schools of painting like the Pahari, Mughal, and Rajasthani traditional styles. The line still had a strong, lyrical feel to it. In conclusion, the lines occasionally influenced the form and style of a certain traditional school.

It's vital to take a close look at the line, shape, form, colour, techniques, method, and materials if you want to comprehend the fundamental qualities of traditional Indian painting.

The Jain and Rajasthani paintings were rough and unpolished in tone, in contrast to the early Ajanta murals' rhythmic and sensitive line work. When it disappeared from the middle centuries of Indian art history, the Ajanta art was at its pinnacle. What caused the art in other regions of the country to deteriorate to such primitive levels is shrouded in mystery.

However, as Persian and Byzantine traditions spread throughout the Indian subcontinent, practically all of the traditional schools of painting gradually changed in order to improve their individual schools of style. In the otherwise flat and two-dimensional composition, perspective was added and considerably more delicate lines and shading were used to depict the portraits and figures.

The influence of Persian line drawing may be observed in practically all traditional artworks from that era because the Mughal empire was so vast.

The paper tradition began in the 15th century with the arrival of the Mughals. The use of paper provided artists with a completely new option for composition. They were previously limited to smaller formats by the use of palm leaves and fabric. Now the artists could play with with the composition's many forms, shapes, and sizes.

Instead of using numerous perspectives, the architectural viewpoint was used, and the figures' shading and detailing brought them considerably closer to an accurate representation. In order of seniority, the kings, men, and warriors were depicted, and they were symbolically larger in scale than the other, lower-ranking officials and commoners. It's interesting to observe how the dominant and the weak are represented by changing the size of the portrait or figure. Similar traits can also be seen in later Pahari and Rajasthani paintings. With the help of the animals and birds, the flora and fauna are being fascinatingly painted. Additionally, the sky, complete with recognisable clouds, dominates the space in Pahari paintings.

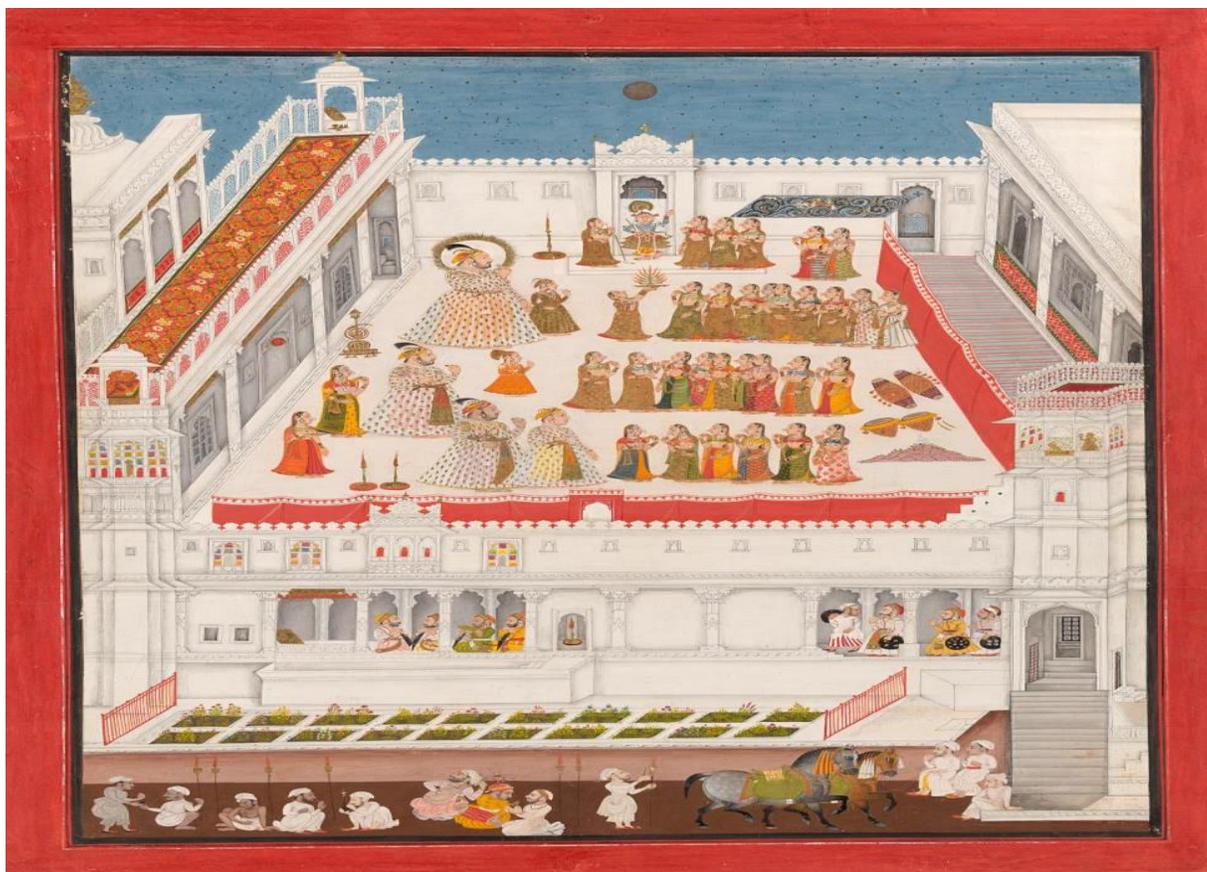


Image:6- Maharana Ari Singh in his palace, 17th century, Mewar, Maharana of Udaipur private collection

Indian art is distinguished by its audacious use of vibrant primary hues including reds, blues, green, yellow, and orange as well as black. The colour red symbolises both the manifestation of battle and the season of love. Indian art used colour more poetically and metaphorically than it did literally, reflecting the physicality of nature. According to the composition's mood, the colour was modified.

The blue pigment lapis-lazuli, which was employed in Persian art and quickly spread to all other ancient painting schools, was also brought by the Mughals.

However, different schools of painting used different colour schemes. For example, while Mewar, Kota, Kishangarh, and Basholi continued to use bright, rich hues of yellow, orange, red, green, and blue, Kangra and Jammu used softer mixed hues of lighter tones of pinks, mellow yellow, lights greys, and orange. The vibrant colour scheme from earlier folk paintings, such as Tanjore, Patuas, and Phad, was also used.

The majority of these hues were alchemical, biological, mineral, and earth hues. Nearly all painting traditions used them, although the way these colours were prepared for use was different. In addition to this, Indian artwork makes considerable use of gold leaf.

The coloured stones were ground into a powder, which was then combined with water and gum Arabic. The smooth colour paste is produced by repeatedly blending and grinding. At this point, several traditional artists use a variety of approaches. For instance, whereas subtle light colours are painted in several layers in Pahari and Mughal paintings, heavy opaque colour is utilised in Rajasthani and Deccani paintings. As a result, there is a lot of colour mixing to achieve the correct tones and hues.

Early on, different natural and mineral pigments were used to create the colours.

Squirrel hair brushes were almost universally used in ancient schools, and intricate and detailed work was valued.

The paintings also expertly incorporated gold in addition to the colours. Gold was used on the halo of gods, monarchs, and other powerful people. The early byzantine tradition demonstrates a significant use of gold, and it is assumed that Persians acquired the skill of using gold from byzantine contacts, which subsequently spread to India with their invasions of the Indian subcontinent. As other variables were absorbed, this was also swiftly incorporated into the traditional Indian painting techniques.

Additionally, the way that gold was used varied throughout traditional paintings. The gold leaf was rigorously beat before being combined with homemade gum by the Rajasthani craftsmen to create "Hal." They might then use a brush to paint gold on paintings.

In Basholi, an unique kind of beetle's wings were clipped and adhered on the artwork to create the illusion of three-dimensional jewellery.

Traditional Indian paintings have relatively basic spatial divisions, which limits the possibilities of including intricate people in the composition. However, as time went on, the painting began to take on a larger format due to the advent of paper, which made it possible to include detailed details and patterns. Additionally, shade, transparency, and perspective were made possible by the numerous Persian painting styles. The types of flora and wildlife in the terrain also altered, and palaces and other buildings used foreshortening techniques. Paintings are done in a symbolic and realistic style. The story was narrated by using several perspectives within a complex.

On paper or fabric, the composition is drawn in line using raw sienna or burned umber. Brown pigment colour is used for the drawing's final stage. To give the "wasli" a solid white base so that the colours applied on the paper are vivid and don't blot on the composition, a white primer coat is used.

Later, a fundamental outline for the forms is created before the major forms and backdrop are filled in one by one with wide strokes. Colors are used to balance the composition.

With finger pressure, the gold is now placed where it is needed. Gum is used to apply the beetle wings where the jewellery must be visible. The Basholi region is where this practise is most common.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the painting receives the finishing touches of the minute details, such as tree patterns, clothing prints, bird and animal patterns, etc. Later, the composition is detailed, and each section is meticulously worked on one at a time. The jewellery has received finishing touches and all beautiful patterns have been created.

Along with these aesthetic fusions, we also notice a lot of subject matter exchange. Nearly all painting traditions centred on religious subjects, epic literature, and love-related scriptures. Since ancient times, literature and the arts have coexisted.

Since practically all traditional art forms are linked to certain socio-cultural and religious activities, it is no surprise that traditional Indian painting has endured in India for many generations. These painting customs were to be followed by future generations because they had become ingrained in Indian society's rituals and way of life. Most of the traditions would have died out like other traditions around the world if it hadn't been the same.

Religion, society, and tradition are strongly connected, and this connection will persist in some fashion. Traditional arts in ancient India were only passed down to family members and subsequent generations of the same family. The art always belonged to specific families, and it was the duty of the successors to uphold the custom. This practise preserved many global customs for numerous centuries. Though most traditional arts are becoming clever, which causes them to become stagnant and lose their original charm and vigour, traditions are steadily deteriorating or dying off in recent years.

The traditional arts in India are currently being preserved in two ways: either by artisans who have copied great artists' Indian paintings and marketed them locally, making them freely accessible to the general population.

putting it into a calendar or painting it on objects and clothing. Because of this, traditional art's quality and level of expertise were in some ways diminished.

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