

THE STATE OF PUPPETRY ARTISANS OF DHARMAVARAM

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ABSTRACT

The Art of Leather Puppetry craft is an ancient form of folk Arts in Andhra Pradesh, India. It was an Art of Livelihood in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, while Nimmala Kunta, remote the village, Sriram Nagar Colony in Dharmavaram Mandal is famous for it. Families 200 above artisans living on Leather puppetry work in the surrounding. There is artisan's creativity excellent and very rare of art, puppetry products very useful to converting art into visuals based on the character of design visual craft use full teaching pedagogy in this pedagogy of primary school, fine arts and animation companies will it's very helpful to reveal the improvement of students' brain creatively. Some make creative animations of walk cycle, character, two leg and four leg animation tutorials in this art form very useful and knowledge sharing artisans to students bonding strictly. Importance of aspect in the student getting updated knowledge, student creativity enthusiastically improving working knowledge growth and high capability comes In these modules not only understanding, applying, analysis, creativity level improved for animation sector also by using the media of leather puppet student works come.

Keywords: *Puppets, Handicrafts, Animation, Teaching, Shadow Art and Craft.*

Introduction

The Art of Leather puppetry craft is an ancient form of folk Arts in Andhra Pradesh, India. It was an Art of Livelihood in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, while Nimmalakunta, a remote village in Dharmavaram Mandal is famous for it. Many puppetry Artists from this village have shown extraordinary efforts in this Art. This art was famous by the name **Tholubommalu** and now the ancient form of this Art has been transformed in to Craft Art by the way of interior designing and giving livelihood opportunities in the region.

History

The origin of this craft is the Art of Tholu Bommalata which is the traditional cultural art of the region. The material used for this craft is taken from this art form only, thus it has the background of this traditional art. The Art of "Tholu Bommalata" is very ancient one in the state of Andhra Pradesh. This folk Art was used by the people who migrated from the state of Maharashtra around 700 years back. This art was very interesting one which was displayed in the streets when there were no dramas or films for entertainment. This play was demonstrated whole night with the theme of epics. This art was honoured and encouraged by the Kings of that time. These plays which belong to the stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata were liked very much by the people as well as rulers of Maharashtra. Likewise this Flok Art was very famous at that time in the state of Maharashtra. Due to some circumstances, our ancestors who were depending for livelihood on this Art were migrated to the state of Andhra Pradesh and also to some districts of Karnataka as Gypsies and were playing this Tholu Bommalata in the villages. By doing that kind of work some people lead by our Grand Father about 90 years back came to this village Nimmalakunta, Dharmavaram and settled here itself demonstrating this Art in surrounding villages.

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Tools

The traditional process of crafting shadow puppets requires 30-40 days, from the procurement of leather to the completion of the product. However, with the shortage of water, use of newer materials such as chemical coloring, and the switching over to smaller products, the artisans now take only two to three days to make a medium-sized product.

Flow Chart



Flowchart Making Process

Making Process

- **Shape definition and cutting:** The process starts with procurement of fresh goat hide from the weekly meat market. The hide is then soaked in cold water for two to three hours before it can be cut and flattened. The hide is washed thoroughly in warm water and then put to dry in the sun for a few hours. Once it is ready, the artists cut the leather to size depending on the product requirement.
- **Outlining the figures:** Once the design is cut out on the hide, it is outlined with black ink using a bamboo nib. Holes are punched as embellishment at this stage. The outlines of the figures are painted in black with the help of a bamboo nib. Thin strips of bamboo are sharpened at the edge to create a nib-like shape. Bamboo pens are also used to add smaller details on what will soon be the puppet.
- **Colouring the figures:** Once the figure is outlined, the leather is coloured in vibrant hues, such as red, green and ochre, among others. Ink is used as a colouring agent and is applied with a brush. After marking the outlines, different colours are filled into the main form. This requires painstaking precision and a considerable amount of time. While black, red and green are some of the colours commonly used for the puppets, female figures and sages are characteristically usually depicted in yellow. After the colouring is completed, the outlines are marked in black once again.
- **Rigging the Puppets:** To make the puppets, individual parts of the products are cut and then are stitched together. This enables mobility for manipulating the puppets during a puppet show. The artist prepares a stick that will be used to operate the puppets. The puppet form is

then mounted on sticks and bound with ropes to facilitate movement. The mobility of the puppets enhances the performance. In order to allow free movement, different parts of the puppet (head and limbs) are cut separately and then tied to each other individually.

- **Masterpieces:** Master craftsman Sindhe Bhaskar puppets that are used for performances are remarkable and unique. Leather puppetry, also known as Tholu Bommalata, brings together the plastic arts of painting and leather craft with theatre that combines folklore with local story-telling and musical traditions. With the change in dominant popular forms of entertainment, the few shadow puppetry performances that are staged are much abridged. Even so, every performance begins with the invocation of the gods for their blessings, and for an auspicious start. Master craftsman, Sindhe Sriramulu, poses with one of his puppets used for performances. The master craftsman and his wife pose with a tiger puppet they made as an entry for an award.

Significance of the Study

Decorating Items of Puppet crafts household have disappeared from the living rooms these days, contemporary utility products can be designed especially in the area of stationery retaining the traditional look of lampshade, frame decorated Dynamically: **Role playing Games:** Children can be encouraged to play role-playing games with leather puppets. **Story-Telling:** Ramayana, Mahabharata represent ritualistic and symbolic deities based on Hindu mythological characters. Folktales and mythological stories can be narrated through these toys. It can be designed showcasing a visual documentation of the toys promoting the craft and opening an avenue for artisans to reach and sell more.

Objectives

- To know the history of leather puppet artisans at Dharmavaram
- To study rural art and craft industrial culture in rural areas
- to study and observing skills of the artisans to increase the employment opportunities, to the millions of the unemployed artisans in the countryside
- To study the Up gradation of existing infrastructural facilities
- To study the artisans and thereby uplifting the weaker sections recognising .who live below the poverty line.



National Awardees Puppetry Artisans of Dharmavaram.⁸

Review of Literature

A Case Study of the Attributes Differentiation of Priest Drona Puppets: **Mohisa Pramana Koeso Emadinata** Wrote (2013):The character of priest Drona in Javanese shadow puppet Drona is a controversial and complex character in the Mahabharata epic. He has a significant role as guru (teacher)

to both warring Pandavas and Kuravas Warriors But in Javanese wayang versions, he was depicted as an ambiguous and mischievous yet humorous, with crippled physics In Javanese shadow puppetry, there are controversies regarding Dhrona's role in the epic. Some people considered that Drona was actually a wise and virtuous sage that trapped into dilemma of choosing sides between his righteous disciples, the Pandavas, and other disciples, the Kurawas, who's fighting each other to win the throne of Hastinapura kingdom. Others considered that Drona is just a provocative culprit, a devious advisor, creating problems to gain his personal interests only. The latter is generally well accepted in the Cirebon puppetry Drona was displayed with unique visual attributes such as distinguished "biological" anatomy, clothing, and accessories that made him instantly recognizable in comparisons to other puppets, even other wayang styles. The visual attributes strongly tied to how Dhrona's imagery and being described in Cirebon puppetry: devious, mischievous, cynical, and arrogant. The description is also has everything to do with socio-historical factors in Cirebon cultural area, in which this paper shall discuss furthermore. Because of those considerations mentioned above, the characters of Drona from Cirebon wayang kulit puppet become the main studied object and thoroughly discussed here.¹

An Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Development Collaboration Case: Tourist Puppets Village of Kepuhsari, Wonogiri District: **Bramasta Reynaldo** Wrote (2018): Cultural acculturation cannot be avoided because of the increasingly rapid globalization factor and that is where the main demands as a region that has decided to become a tourist area to be able to filter and professionally manage it. Form of promotion that is done more active in the scope of social media by considering the cost of affordable and efficient. Their purpose is to show that puppet art is full of noble meanings and values contained in every art or storyline with a variety of high aesthetic elements. Another effort of the preservation of puppet art is to begin to plant various knowledge about puppet art from an early age as an effort to prepare the next generation. One of its forms is with the curriculum of art education puppet in Elementary School which only exists in Kepuhsari village. The purpose of the curriculum of puppet art learning in the school environment is to teach the young generation and especially for the descendants of the artists to be more loving and appreciative until they will continue the baton art relay baton. The social effect of a tourist village is by changing the mindset of the people who were initially covered with their skills and only thinking about personal gain. However, with the existence of this tourism activity, they are more able to work together so that financial benefits can be felt larger and can be enjoyed by many people. Attitudes of tolerance and solidarity to the equation of goals began to grow in society. From the observation that the shift of values in culture when used as a commercial object is not a too big effect. In the society, there are some religious beliefs adopted so that the perspective between the indicators to interpret a tradition there is a difference. The difference not so big an impact to date, where awareness and the existence of a system of deliberations to reach an agreement together become the right solution.²

The Role of the Traditional Crafts as Intangible Heritage on the Global Tourist Market: **M.D. Curkovic** Wrote (2015) :Lack of knowledge and skills often become benchmarks weakness of Small industry to evolve. The small industry has a huge potential to accelerate equitable economic growth and improving the welfare of the community, but there are still many problems faced, including the quality of human resources. So that the business can continue then the employer requires a set of skills, competence and expertise are crucial for the survival of their business. Therefore artisan needed on the role of human resources development of small industry calligraphy goat leather as the ability to be possessed and is a set of interactive resources activities to achieve competitive advantage and to realize the independence of small industry calligraphy craftsman goat leather as creative industries and products superior. Data analysis technique is qualitative descriptive analysis. The results showed that the majority of small industry calligraphy goat leather craftsmen have adopted the technology, tanning, production technology, drying technology and materials processing goat leather. The conclusion that can be drawn are (1)small industry calligraphy goat leather craftsmen strive to raise the knowledge and skills in various ways, among others, participated in the training, participated in exhibitions at home and abroad (2) conditions that result in increasing the number of sales turnover of 10-15%, (3) increase revenues by 10-15%.³

Cultural Heritage Preservation of Traditional Indian art through virtual new media **SaptarshiKolay** Wrote (2015): Recognisability of characters: These art forms are more detailed and recognizable. Different figures are easily distinguishable; whereas the three narrators of the films are depicted by the visual style of southern Indian shadow puppetry 'Tholpavakoothu', as shown in and As these puppets appear black in contrast to an illuminated backdrop, colour and texture do not play any role for distinguishing the characters. Shadow puppetry is part of narrative storytelling accompanied by folk songs. Voices of people and the movements of the puppets help the audience to comprehend the

story. The distinctive shift of colour scheme also differentiates them. 'The Stitches Speak' is an animated short film by Nina Sabnani. Many of the Indian traditional art forms have the immense potentiality to be adopted into contemporary new media application. Visual exploration of traditional art on this contemporary paradigm is necessary for awareness building before the craft guilds fade away along with the immense treasure of our cultural heritage. Movement is being done in two by breaking the character into parts from the joints and moving them separately. 'Tholpavakoothu' shadow puppetry, as being designed by assembling separate body parts has a similar movement style. The same style is adopted by animator Gitanjali Rao in her animated movie 'Girgit. In the movie she fuses two different Indian traditional art form together to generate mythological character of God 'Krishna' and Goddess 'Radha' Visual language is derived from southern Indian dye painted textile Kalamkari' whereas movements resemble leather puppetry 'Tolubommalata' and Potentiality of using different camera angles depends on the orientation of the human faces and figures. Paintings which follow a defined syntax of the orientation of faces and body parts are difficult to represent using different camera angles in animation or game designs. The depiction of human figures in some of the Indian traditional art and craft creates the uniqueness of the art form. A paradigm shift should consider the idiosyncrasy.⁴

Methodology

The present study has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary Data was collected on the basis of conducted interviews. Sample for the study was outside the village of Dharmavaram and Nimmalakunta for study only old, New and young artisan's respondents, which is considered optimum for the study. Secondary data was gathered from different sources such as, Internet, website, News papers, professional Magazines, refereed journals related to the art and craft industry in India. For the purpose data analyze applied test of normality of data.

Discussion

The artisans of Dharmavaram only know the traditional art work like leather puppet show for running their daily livelihood. Moreover, they know very minute techniques of this art work from their childhood as heredity. Traditional art work is the basis of their livelihood. Their educational background is limited to elementary school as they learn and practice this art work afterwards. The present young generations of these families found to be studying in colleges. I observed their life style and came to know that they are very innocent. The dressing style of artisans is very traditional with designs of flowers printed on the clothing. The houses of artisans are modified a little bit; they live in reinforced concrete slab houses. They possess 100% skills in puppet show art and well experienced to make the puppets as per the requirements of emotions of characters in their show.

I observed that some of them won International, National and State level awards. They are experts in their skill work in making puppets for the show. Some of them are extraordinarily talented in making puppets. They possess the ability to complete the work in stipulated time limits and the calligraphy of their work is commendable. Their art work is wonderful and awesome. The paintings from their brushes represent live characters of the show. Some of the master pieces of their work are comparable to the international standards with locally available materials.



Leather puppetry award winners at Dharmavaram Division, Andhra Pradesh.⁹

Demerits

Due to the poor educational background, their communication and marketing skills are very limited. They need modern techniques to represent complicated and fashionable designs. They lack in

acquiring knowledge of modern trends in art work due to poor educational background. If government or any volunteer organization helps them in raising educational qualifications and offering training on communication and marketing skills, they can do wonders. They can be made partners in Skill India and Make in India programmes of Government of India and thereby they can widen the market for traditional puppet show art. They need to be trained on computers for learner computer aided drawings and designs for improvements of the art designs.

Result

Their products can acquire attention and craze in the International market in the fields of Designs, Craft, Drama and Movies. They can become No.1 in the art field. The skill inputs of puppet show artisans will be a value addition to the companies in the field of animation. They can acquire good deals of contracts from the multinational companies like Pixar, Dream works and Wall Disney. The puppet skill art can be useful as a 2-D art for animation companies. The children of their families can be trained in the modern fields of art work. This would create empowerment and employment for the next generations too. The next generations of artisans can be trained in CAD, CAM, 2D, 3D, animation etc., The proximity of YSR Architecture and Fine Arts Department can help them in providing various training programs and techniques. New courses can be designed and implemented for the encouragement of traditional art work with modern trends. They can get opportunities in multinational companies for various positions like leather puppet artisans, character designers, and creative directors. There is no doubt that one can forecast the young talent in the emerging animation and art fields.

In this way, Dharmavaram leather puppetry artisans can become pioneers for the skill India programme.



Leather puppetry Women artisan at Dharmavaram Division, Andhra Pradesh.¹⁰

Conclusion

My paper revolves around the puppetry preparation, the community, other puppetry from the community and works for its revival from being extinct. Recognition from the government and its intervention will elevate the status of this rural craft. Dharmavaram puppetry artisan to raise the knowledge and skills in various ways, among others, participated in the training, participated in exhibitions at home and abroad. Compulsory leather puppetry art forms and techniques collaboration and co-creation for the sustainability of crafts cultural heritage are necessary. In this art forms compulsory documentary does will it can explore more for heritage conservation and generation of public awareness. The colours that are used are not harmful to utility purpose, unlike the readymade china products we get in the market. Using new technology 3D,2D dimensional techniques visual communication design can be involved to document data represent the puppetry shows and disseminate knowledge among larger target audience irrespective of the spatial distance between them the interactive way some designing colleges, university to give some collaboration exploration traditional art on this contemporary paradigm is necessary for awareness. Interactive way game designing, production design houses co-evolutionary the learning process can be impactful for users. Providing marketing skills techniques they improving communicating to others. The government should also take initiative for its revival by providing subsidies for the makers of this craft. The recognition through the government will enhance productivity and will help in the survival of the craft. These puppetry products are not only for decoration purposes but also are being used by Animators for creating product animation.

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Tables

1. Flowchart making process

Images

1. Puppetry Artisans of Dharmavaram
2. Leather puppetry award winners at Dharmavaram Division, Andhra Pradesh.
3. Leather puppetry Women artisan at Dharmavaram Division, Andhra Pradesh..

