

A Glimpse of Folk-Art :Various Patachitra

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Introduction- We all know that the term 'art' means a creative expression of artist, which has communicated and attracted all general people in all ages and all times. Folk-art is a branch of art, which has verbally transmitted and developed in folk-groups and in folk societies. In India folk-art, generally formed by the illiterate or semi-illiterate village people. It is true that they are very poor in economic condition and do not have any modern technological concept of art. But the general concept of art has existed in their blood. Particularly in the case of Patachitra we may observe that this type of folk-art is ethnic in nature and in form it is very colourful, and also it bears traditional and cultural element of country's rich heritage.

Patachitra is an ancient folk-art of Bengal, which has a long history of 2500 years to its development and contribution to our society. At our early student life we have heard about the term 'Kalighata painting' and now a days, we have learned much more about the term Patachitra. Beside this we also know some words, such as Pata, Patua, Pater Gaan (Song of Pata), Scroll Painting or Jarano Pata, Chouko Pata, Jama Pata, Saheb Pata etc, which were closely related with the Patachitra Art. Now this kind of folk-art has become a popular folk-art among Bengali people as well as Indians and also to the foreigner.

In 19th century of Bengal Kalighata Pata was very popular among general people. The history of Kalighata painting or Kalighata Pata is linked inextricably with the history of the Kali cult and Kolkata culture. At early stage the chitrakars or the Pata-painters were closely associated with temple functionaries who lived in and around the temple of Kalighata. Now, the community of chitrakars or patuas have spread in various places of Kolkata. In the passage of time they have also begun using a variety of non-religious themes in their paintings. This tradition of making patachitra has passed down the generations from father to son. Patachitra is a good kind of folk-art, which has popularly known as 'Pata' or 'Scroll Painting'. According to its development throughout the old days of civilization we may easily tell that it is an ancient folk

art of Bengal, which has a long history of 2500 years to its development and contribution to our society. It has also known as Pata painting or Patachira painting. It is also a popular folk-art of India as well as in some outside state of Bengal. Like other famous folk painting (such as Madhubani Painting, Warli Folk Painting, Rajasthani Miniature Painting), Patachitra painting also has a significance role in history of folk-lore or in art history. As an art figure or in respect of folk-art Patachitra painting is closely related to our society. It has a deep connection with many branches of knowledge or subject like Literature, Song, Humanity, Anthropology, Sociology, Environment, History, Culture etc.

The scroll painters were generally known as folk-artists. But they have also a credibility as composer of simple songs, which is relating to ancient and modern sociological facts. By this simple song they told a story to the viewer or audience, which belongs historical facts or human culture or mythological gods or goddesses like Rama, Krishna, Siva, Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasswati. In historical Pata they generally used famous historical facts of our civilization, like Second World War, French Revolution, War of Palashi, Life of Chaitanya, Freedom of our Country (India) etc. Beside this they mostly choosed their themes of Patachitra from the subject of Mediaeval Bengali Literature, such as Vaisnava Padavali, Chandi Mangal, Manasa Mangal, Dharma Mangal etc. We are all known that these literature are very popular among the general people of Bengal. On the other hand we may observed that Patuas are very sensitive towards modern trends of civilization or social problems of our society, such as environment pollution, misuse of drinking water, women harassment, political corruption, disease of AIDS etc. They also collect their themes of paintings from these type of social scenario.

At first if we think in the word 'Patachitra' we have to seem that the word 'Patachitra' may be divided into two parts or two sub-words, which are 'Pata' and 'Chitra'. The word 'Pata' derived from the Sanskrit word 'Patta', which means 'Cloth' or 'Dress'. But in the sense of drama it means scene. And the word 'Chitra' means 'Picture' or 'Image'. In the context of Bengal tradition 'Patachitra' means "those Paintings, which are made by Patuas by natural colors." In english and other western languages it means 'Scorll Painting.' So the Patuas were generally known as painter. These painters were locally called 'Patidars' or 'Patikars' meaning 'scroll painters' on account of their ingenuity in painting scenes of mythical and contemporary themes on cloth-pasted paper. In our society we have seen many classes of painters, such as wall-painter,

Board-painter, Chitra Shilpee etc. But we have to remember that they are only painters. But Patuas were not only made paints, they also sang in the period of exhibition of Pata. When they displayed their paintings to the audience they used song or words in a pitch, by which they told a story, which had a relation with the concerned Patachitra. One thing is to remember that this type of song generally known as 'Pater Gaan', which are played without any modern instrument. Some times Patuas played their song by free voice like 'Panchali Patha.' In language style they generally used 'Verse' and in the metre it had formed by the concept of 'Payara', which has been very popular style of verse to the poets of old civilization. Now we have seen various kind of Patachitra, which may be observed in various places of India.

According to shape and size there are two types of Patachitra were found. These are Square Pata or Chouko Pata and Rolling Pata or Jarhano Pata. Square Pata or Chouko Pata is a card shaped Pata, made on the basis of single impression, which has no rolling portion. This type of Pata have been making from post card size to various big sizes. Post card sized Patas are available at the cost of Rs.10. And other type of Chouko Patas price rate depended on the basis of size and quality. And the other type of Pata, named Jarhano Pata or rolling Pata has known in various name, such as Dighal Pata, Latai Pata etc. This type of Patachitra had made by the hard work and devotion of Patua. Generally one month to ten month has required for one Rolling Pata, which is depended on how the Pata is long. In length one rolling Pata may be formed within 10 feet to 40 feet. This type of Pata based on dramatic story, which had described by the Patua in his song and in the making of images Patuas used variety of colours.

According to subject matter there are many types of Patachitras were found, such as Chakshudan Pata, Jama Pata, Saheb Pata, Kalighata Pata, Gaji Pata, Satyapirer Pata, Pabuji Pata etc. And in general context of view Patachitra may be divided into six classes. Such as General, Political, Historical, Religious, social and environmental. Now here is some example, classification and description on various Pata, as follows—

General Pata : All type of single image of man or woman or any kind of general art figure

Social Pata : Palse Polio Avijan, eradiction of Malaria, Communal harmony, Terrible Sunami, explosion in Mumbai, Tree Plantation, AIDS Awareness, Awareness on Human Rights, persecution of woman, earthquake, protest to intoxication etc.

Mythological Pata: Raban Badha, Sita Haran, King Harishchandra, Krishnaleela, Durgaleela, Sabitree- Satyaban, Manasa Mangal, Chandee Mangal, Dharma Mangal, Annada Mangal etc.

Historical Pata : Second World War, Ajaad Hind Fouj and Netaji Subhas Basu , Atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Destruction of Babri Masjid, Terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre (U.S.A.) ,Saheb Pata, Life of Vidyasagar, Life of Rabindranath Thakur, Life of Vivekananda etc.

Religious Pata: GajiPata, Satyapirer Pata, Jama Pata, Shakti Pata, Vaishnab Pata, Chaitanyaleela

GAJI PATA

Gaji Pata basically originated and developed in Bangladesh. It is very popular religious Patachitra of Muslim community, Which has formed on local history or hearsay. In this kind of folk-art Patua artist generally described a supernatural power in his song or Pater Gaan, which creates a deep influence to the folk people. It has a similarity to Satyapirer Pata, which is also popular in Paschim Banga. So the Gaji Pata developed religious faith and spirit of folk people.

SAHEB PATA

Saheb Pata has formed on the concept of western influence and historical facts of British India period. It has an amazing historical value to our nation. We are all known that India, our motherland was brutally ruled by the British people for two hundred years. From 1757 to 1947, there are so many cruel action had occurred by the British ruler to our countryman. According to subject matter there are two types of Saheb Pata may be observed. These are (1) Protest to British ruler and (2) Oppression of British ruler.

TRIBAL PATA

Tribal Pata has generally formed on the life and art thinking of Tribal people. We are known that they lived nearer to soil and water. They lived nearer to nature and they have no artificiality of life style and also have no negative approach to the civilization. In the song of Tribal Pata we may have seen their simplicity of life. Their life circle, their tradition and beliefs were manifested through the Tribal Pata.

CHAKSHUDAN PATA

Chakshudan Pata is a kind of Tribal Pata, which has been used by the Tribal people in the occasion of spiritual custom of a dead man of their community. According to shape and size it is a classification of Chouko Pata. This type of Pata is also known as Jadu Pata or Magic Pata. And the Patua, who made it generally called as Jadu Patua. When a member of tribal family leaved the earth, Jadu Patua entered their house and told that the soul of that dead man will free from all malicious action if only the Chakshudan(It is a religious custom of Tribal people) occurred by the Patua. And after the conversation with family member that Jadu Patua pictured the imaginary eyeball of that concern dead man in his Pata with the exchange of prices.

KALIGHAT PATA

In Kolkata there is a place, named Kalighata, which is very famous for the temple of Goddess Kali. This temple was founded in the year 1798. According to Hindu mythology the little finger of right leg of the Goddess Sati(wife of God Shiva) had fallen here. We are known from the history of Kolkata that innumerable village people had come to Kolkata in all over the period of 18th and 19th century. They leaved their native places for new kind of job and for the attraction of urban life-style of Kolkata, which city was founded by the British. And also in Kalighata there are many new colony were founded. There lived some people of Patua community,whome were came from various villages of Bengal.They were all known that the devotees will come here through out the year in all time. So they had tried to make worshipful pata. At first they had tried to make musk of Hindu God and Goddess and after that they used the body of clay made pot named 'Sara', which were used by the devotees in worship of Goddess Kali. Generally they paints various images of Hindu God and Goddess. In 19th century they have also begun using a variety of non-religious themes in their paintings such as Babu Pata, Saheb Pata etc. There are six type of Pata may be distinguished in the history of Kalighata Pata. These are- 1.Musk of the God and Goddess 2. Images of the God and Goddess on the body of clay made pot,called Sara 3.Satirical Picture 4. House - hold Picture 5. Religious and Mythological Pata.

PURIR CHOUKOPATA

This Pattachitra painting is closely related with the worship of Lord Jagannath. In this kind of Patachitra Patuas generally used the story of the Ramayana, Mahabharath and of Radha &

Krishna. One thing in wondering that these paintings were traditionally done only by males. However, in recent times, some women artists have also taken up this folk-art form. The origin of Patachitra paintings of Puri is linked with the famous Jagannath temple of Puri, which was built by the Choda-Ganga Deva. The chitrakars of Puri were closely related with temple functionaries who live in and around the temple town of Puri like the Kalighata Patua. Now, the community of chitrakars have spread beyond Puri district, and they have also started to create a variety of paintings, which were non religious in nature.

Jama Pata- Jama Pata may be existed in the branch of religious Patachitra. It has formed with the concept of sin and virtue. According to Hindu mythology Jama is the God of death and he is coming to the people as rider of buffalo .He also evaluate human acts and life after death of man or woman. And there after he also arranged the place of heaven or hell. The God Jama also arranged punishment for those people who were living in hell and had done bad work in human life.

Conclusion- In Patua societies we may find an advance sociological pattern and valuable cultural significance, which they maintained in their family structure from old age to modern age. They believe in peaceful living. They have no gender bias in their society. They also believed that they are son of the God Viswakarma. They followed some Hindu customs and also some Islam customs in their family tradition. But as artist they don't believe in caste or race. They believe in human religion. They have no narrow attitude towards life and culture. They have been protecting world humanity by their artistic nature and creativity. So their Patachitra painting has a remarkable contribution to our civilization.

End note: Naya is an important place of Folk-art Painting. It is a village of under Pingla Panchayet Samiti of the district of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India. It is known as 'Pater Gram'. In every year there is an international festival, named 'PATAMAYA' arranged here by the help of European Union. I have visited many times this village and met more than five times with famous Patua Artist Gurupada Chitrakar, Who had awarded by the ex-President of India (Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam) as one of the best folk-artist of our country. I have known many important facts or things of Patachitra Painting.

Gratitude:

1. **Sudip Kumar Pari(Photographer)**
2. **Gurupada Chitrakar**
3. **Khandu Chhtrikar**
4. **Mousumi Chitrakar**
5. **Rani Chitrakar**
6. **Ashis Kumar Chattopadhyaya**
7. **Dr. Chittaranjan Maiti**

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