

Madhubani Painting: An Epitome of Indian Tradition and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This article basically focuses on the traditional and cultural heritage of the Indians. India is a holistic country and the origin and source of all forms of knowledge, which are basically directed through the philosophical thoughts and rituals in a holistic manner, either through folk art or through folk stories.



Traditional & Cultural depiction Through Mithila Art

The role of Indian folk art in preserving ancient Indian civilization and culture is universally acknowledged by the intellectuals as well as the art lovers. Among the Indian regional folk art, the importance of painting is well known. The Vedic lines and curves used in auspicious and inauspicious occasions in India has always been a matter of deep meditation and pondering not only for elite Indian, but also for the same class people abroad. This rich tradition has its origin in Mithila also. “**Mithila Painting**” which is one of the chief folk arts among the Indian **folk art traditions** has got much name and fame not only in India but also in western countries through its fundamental peculiarities and ethnicity. Mithila, the land of Janaka and Yajnavalkya has always been in center of cultural thought and philosophy. The incessant development of art and culture in this pious land has made it unforgettable. The circle, lines, curves use in this folk paintings are full of spiritual and cultural philosophies. The culture of Mithila is ancient and so is its folk painting; its all-time companion. Both are

Punita Jha

inseparably united. One has no existence without the other. One of the chief specifications of Mithila painting is the original colour made by natural resources, which distinguishes it from other Indian folk painting in which synthetic colours are abundantly used. For example, the women of Mithila prepare black colour by the mixture of smoke and **dung** as well as juice of 'Bel', a type of delicious fruit ; yellow colour by the mixture of **lime** and **milk of banyan tree** or by the **buds of orange** ; red colour by the **juice of kusum** etc. the portraits made by the use of these colours attract at once not only the good artist of modern age but also any onlookers of the same taste. They become amazed as how these women of rustic background without any formal education prepare all these colors in a usual manner. Foreign artists have also observed these paintings with due respect and arrest all these paintings into electronic device, which would later be explored in their own countries.

The rich cultural and traditional background of these folk arts have their age old association with **Vedic period** as well as with **the Ramayana** is now on the edge of decaying, but the women of good sacrament are endeavoring to preserve this age old heritage still today. In this age of modern mind and activities their festivals and auspicious events are full of these symbols. Different occasions are represented by different paintings. Its style is specifically different from the other styles of paintings. It is also known as '**Maithil style**'. This art is existing not only in the houses of **Brahmins** and **Kaisths** but it is also existing in the homes of outcasts and **Harijans** with same dignity and zeal. Any work of art is a vibrant mouth- piece of the region where it is molded. It is because any creation cannot escape from the influence of its creator, and all the personality of a creator can best be expressed by his/her creation. Environment, one of the chief factors to comprehend any artistic or literary work always comes first, especially before the artist or a writer. The belongingness of any art form, from its root is itself revealed and the surroundings where an artist resides show their existence primarily before the real exposition of the very art. In all across the world, the prominence of any art is chiefly based on its popularity and in making any art popular the contribution of its moulder is unforgettable. But the most distinguishable element which plays a major role in implementing all the following requisitions and which is the fundamental existence of any art is the lovers of such art, whose judgment plays a pivotal role in making any art immortal. And then all the concerned people who spread such art all across the world. In making **Pablo Picasso** immortal the contribution of art lovers cannot be forgotten. For expressing the real intention of any artist, words are considered as the chief means, especially in the context of Paintings. It is because all the **lines** and **curves** drawn by the painters show individual approach which is itself confined to his/ her consciousness and to explore its real identity through words has become inevitable particularly for all its lovers.

The historical and cultural background of any folk- art is acknowledged as "*soul of the concerned art*". It has some important glimpses of its culture. It is elevated and recognized by these elements. Its identity is identified beyond its surroundings, where it is molded. **Mithila** or Madhubani painting is not an exception so far as these factors are concerned. The bondage of language has always been the chief cause of its confinement. *The earlier form of spoken Maithili, now designated as Maithili Avahatta can be seen in Vidyapati's Kirtilata and Kirtipataka.*"¹ The people or the lovers of Madhubani Paintings want to comprehend this rare art



Kohbar: A unique Form of Madhubani Painting

Punita Jha

through popular language. And no other language except **English** has the courage or vivacity to fulfill such long awaited requirement. English is not only acceptable in Indian sub-continent but an internationally acknowledged language, which can be the only means to popularize this age old folk art. Much had been said, about the significance of this art in English language also, but the emptiness of its actual identity in terms of language could not be fulfilled as yet. No doubt it is being elucidated at times by learned scholars, but the lack of harmony in elucidation is the very cause in exposing this art before the world.

Lord Janaka, the inaugurator of this art and one of the chief characters of the historical epic “**the Ramayana**” is acknowledged the initiator of this form of Mithila Painting, which includes this folk art as in the form of livelihood. *Nimi, the son of Manu, king of Ayodhya who came to this pious land. Mithi, the son of Nimi founded a kingdom which was later known as Mithila. He was told Mithi because of his birth from attrition. Another name by which he was known is Janaka, who explored his extraordinary birth in this land*.² When, all the premises and the palace of Lord Janaka in **Janakpur** had been decorated with this unique art by the artists, he having mesmerized distributed ample wealth among the painters. From then it is generally believed that this art is the source of earning livelihood. Even today some particular villages of Madhubani district like **Jitwarpur** and **Ranti** are totally concerned with this fact and if this historical event would not have been happened, today the state of this art is something different. One thing which is very remarkable is that “**why each and every individual of these villages are excelled in this art**”. No exceptional case is available so far as this issue is concerned. Not only elder people but the younger ones have also the same zeal for this art. Culture and tradition have juxtaposed when one observe the day to day lives of these artists. This ethnic art has deep rooted in the consciousness of human mind. The practice of this art starts from early morning till the late night. When the residents of Mithila get up early in the morning, they after taking bath start to practice **ARIPAN**, one of the chief forms of **floral painting**. It is done to welcome the deities to their sanctum, which symbolizes holiness and sacredness. Aripan is also classified into different types and each type has its own significance. Contradiction among its types is very poignant. Each type of Aripan is generally referred to each occasion of the Mithila rituals. Women of Mithila are particularly associated with such practices. Only they have got the authorities to do this form of Mithila Painting. Ingredients like **powder of rice** and **vermillion** are used as the chief tools of Aripan. **Geometrical lines** are artistically drawn but it signifies something more than art. **The lines have certain directions**. And when researchers like us observe it, we become compelled to think that how they are artistically superior to us. They do it merely and freely as if mental exercise has no role in drawing these lines. Consistency and probability both are inherent qualities of these artists. They have excelled in their art but the exposition of their art has confined to them. Here lies the fundamental problem. And it is the need of the hour to expose Indian art in general and Madhubani painting in particular. **And words can be a major source in implementing such human associated art.**

REFERENCES

1. R. K. Choudhary, Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati, p. 13-20; A Survey of Maithili Literature, p. 54-55.
2. Quoted from the Bhavisya Purana in the sabdakalpadruma, p-3, p-723