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14

Folk Paintings

14.0 INTRODUCTION

Art comes spontaneously from the mind to communicate to others. Expression through art is an inherent quality of human being. Folk art, in the same way, springs unself-consciously, at a grass roots level, from people's most fundamental life experience. These folk artists are ordinary people and use very simple method and material. They make use of locally available materials and prepare their own colours and brushes. Twigs or bamboo sticks are used as brush for fine lines. A piece of cloth or cotton is wrapped on the tips of the twig to draw broad lines.

Colours are made from vegetation and locally available minerals. For example, orange colour is made from Harsingar (हरसिंगार) flower. These flowers are dried in the sun and then boiled to extract the colour. Gum is added to it as binder. Red colour is extracted from *chokander* (beet roots) and green from 'Orhud' (ओड़हुद) flower. The flowers are dried and mixed with lemon, alum and gum before it is boiled. For black colour, rusted iron is put in the molasses and is kept for ten days. The molasses turns black after it is boiled. Cobalt blue comes from *jamun* (black berry) fruits and golden colour from the skin of 'Anar' (Pome grenate) fruit after adding Alum with it. This mixture is to be boiled for 48 hours. Haldi (Turmeric) supplies yellow colour.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson the learners should be able to:

- describe distinctly the regional style of enlisted folk paintings.
- mention the method and materials used in the making of the arts.
- differentiate the identifying characteristics of the enlisted paintings.
- identify the area famous for the listed folk painting.

Now let us discuss some important forms of Indian folk art.



Kalighat Painting (Bengal)

14.2 KALIGHAT PAINTING (WEST BENGAL)

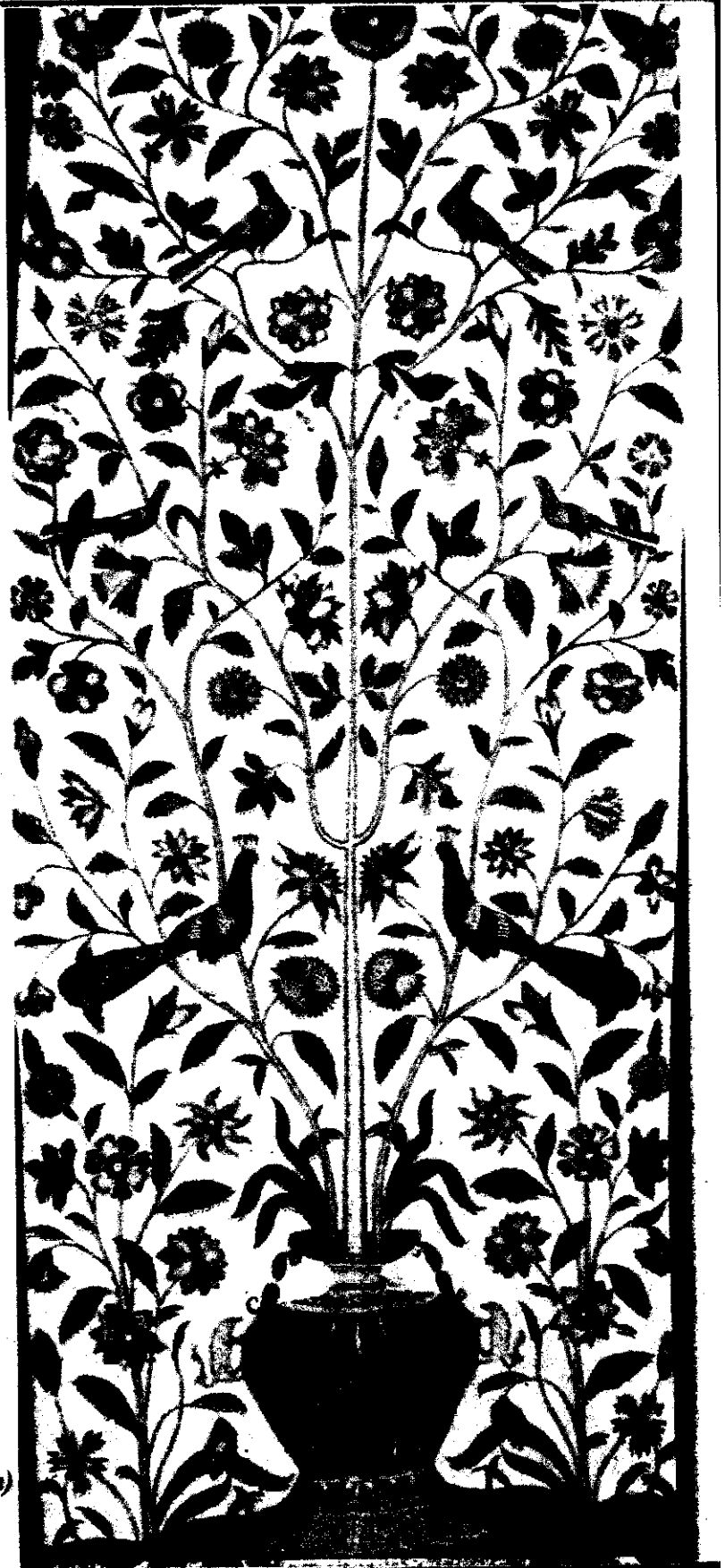
Kalighat paintings are painted by image-makers (Potua) of a locality of the same name in Kolkata. The enlisted painting is a good example in which an aristocrat is getting his ear cleaned by his servant. The distinction of their social status has been marked by the costumes and dresses.

The painting is characterized by a flat background and predominant use of colours like black, red and yellow. Figures are roundish in treatment and skin is left white. Use of light and shade to bring modeling is a noticeable element of Kalighat painting. It seems that Kalighat painters were fascinated with jewellery and ornaments. The big ear rings with pearls are interesting to note. Linearity is another characteristic of these folk forms.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (14.2)

Fill up the blanks

- (a) Kalighat painting belongs to _____ state.
 - (b) The painting is characterized by _____ background.
 - (c) Predominant colours are _____, _____, _____.
 - (d) The big _____ with pearls are interesting to note.
 - (e) An aristocrat is getting his _____ cleaned by his _____.
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Kalamkari
(Andhra Pradesh)

14.3 KALAMKARI (ANDHRA PRADESH)

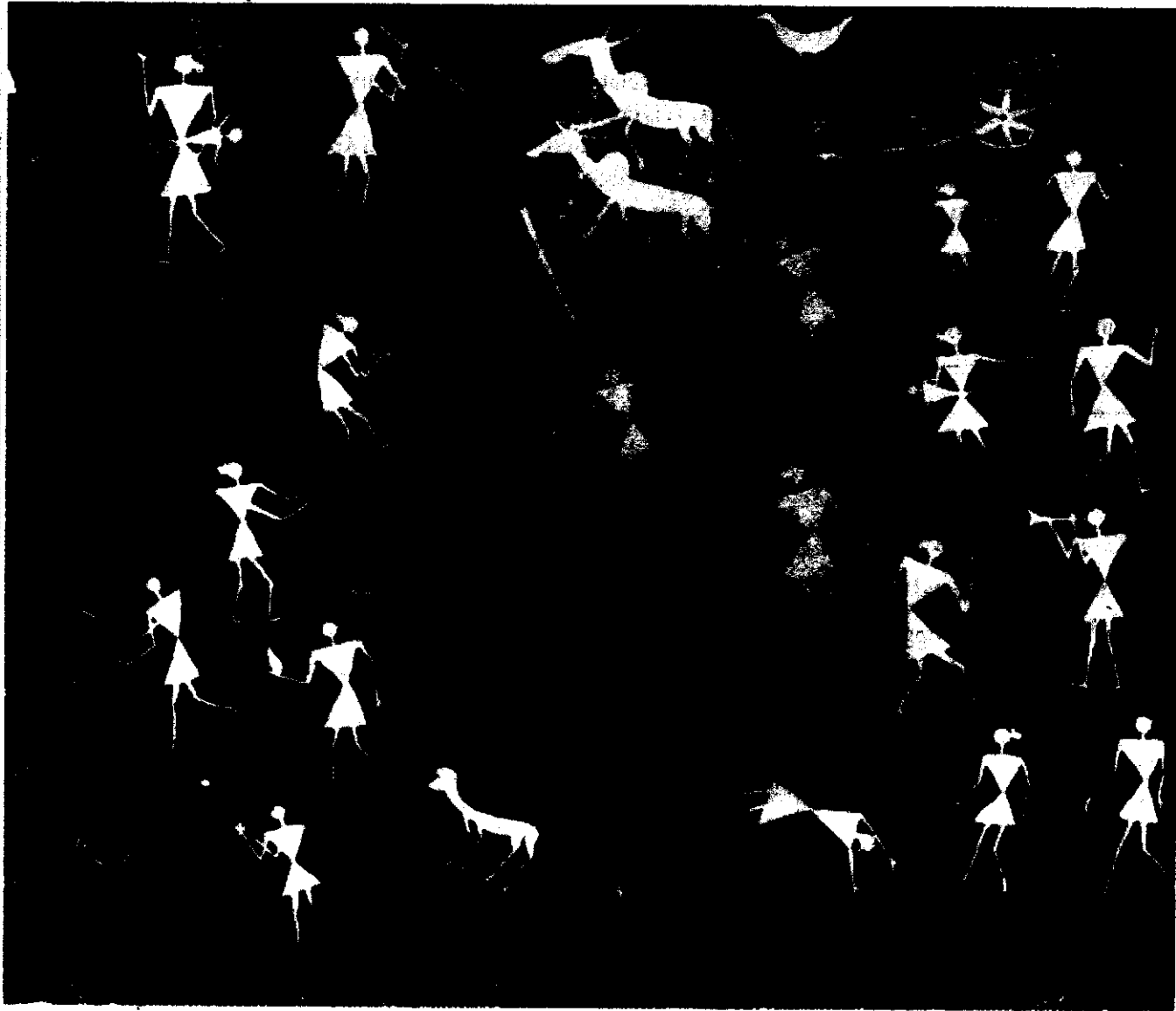
In Andhra Pradesh, both the Masulipatnam and Sri kalahasti villages are recognized as major centres for *Kalamkari* paintings. *Kalamkari* is done on cloth in batik painting and printing technique. A pen like hollow instruments is used to hold wax. So it is called *Kalam* (Pen) *Kari*. Blocks are used to print the design on the cloth. Both for dying and printing, vegetables colours are used.

The enlisted painting "Tree of Life" is a beautiful example of *Kalamkari* style. The design consists of traditional Indian motifs of flower on the stylized spread of branches and leaves. Few birds, including two peacocks, are part of this motif.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (14.3)

Fill up the blanks

1. Major centers of *Kalamkari* are _____, _____.
 2. *Kalamkari* is done on _____.
 3. Both _____ and _____ technique and used in *Kalamkari*.
 4. For dying and printing _____ colours are used.
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Warli (Maharashtra)

14.4 WARLI (MAHARASHTRA)

Warli paintings are done by the Warli tribe of Thane district of Maharashtra. It has become well known internationally due to its famous painter *Jivya Soma Mase*.

This is one of the beautiful paintings of *Jivya Soma Mase*, which shows the everyday life of the *warlis*. Human figures are simplified into triangles and few straight lines. In spite of these simplifications, emotions are expressed in a superb way. The painting is more a statement of human and nature relationship than religious sentiments. The forms are generally drawn in white on a flat coloured background.

The picture shows some human figures and animals like monkey and snakes. The snakes are being fed by these persons.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (14.4)

Write the answers of the following

- (a) Name the animals, those are shown in this painting.
 - (b) How the human figures are drawn?
 - (c) Write the name of the folk painter of this picture.
 - (d) Which colour is mainly used in this painting?
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14.5 PHAD (RAJASTHAN)

Phad is one of the famous folk paintings style of Rajasthan, which generally depicts the royal and secular themes. These paintings are narrative in nature and are painted on flat ground. This enlited picture is only a part of a panel, which shows Rajasthani men and women are engaged in various types of work. The whole panel is divided into some segments to describe different activities of social life of various people like, soldiers, worshippers, horse riders, and royal attendants on elephant and camels. In spite of multiple formats in the composition, a unity is achieved by the painter which binds all elements into one.

All the colours like red, yellow, green, black are very warm and decorative. The picture is full of local characteristics. The male members wear typical Rajasthani costumes like turban, belt, and long dress, while the females are in *Choli-lehenga* and *Dopatta*. Both men and women are decked in ornaments. "*Borla*", a kind of forehead ornaments for Rajasthani women, is also not missed.

Human figures are drawn in a very simple manner, though appear to be short. Lines are fluent and of equal thickness. "*Jhaokhas*" or covered balcony in the painting gives a Rajasthani character to the picture. The animals like, horse, elephant and specially camels are painted with charm and ornaments.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (14.5)

Fill up the blanks :

- (a) The picture shows men and women are _____ work.
 - (b) All the colours like _____, _____, _____ and decorative.
 - (c) The male members wear _____, _____ dress.
 - (d) The animals are painted _____.
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Madhuvani (Mithila, Bihar)

14.6 MADHUVANI (MITHILA, BIHAR)

Woman folks of Mithila paint the walls, floors and courtyard of their home during different festivals.

The enlisted picture depicts the diety of water. She is standing on an imaginary animal, floating on water (Jaladevi). The diety is with four arms, two of these arms are with lotus flowers, and one hand holds disc (*chakra*) and the other one holds a conchshell (*Shankha*). The background is totally covered with flower and leaf motifs. Forms are defined with two parallel outlines, which is a typical characteristic of *Madhuvani* paintings. Space between the two outlines remains white, and emphasises the brightly colour planes of the picture. Red, yellow and blue has been harmoniously used in this picture. Big eyes and long chin are special features of this painting style.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (14.6)

Write the answers of the following

- (a) Name the diety of this picture?
 - (b) What does she hold in her hands?
 - (c) Describe the background of the painting.
 - (d) What is the colour of her veil?
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14.7 SUMMARY

Indian states have a long tradition of folk art in different media. Folk art is a traditional art. Objects and decoration are made in a traditional fashion by craftsmen without formal training. A vast country like India have different tendencies in social and religious life. Almost each district of each state in India developed its individuality in art and craft. Folk artists decorate their home with painting. In recent times, these artists are painting on papers.

14.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on *Madhuvani* Painting.
2. Describe the *Kalighat* Painting.
3. What is *Warli* Painting, explain very briefly.

14.9 ANSWERS OF INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 14.2 (a) W. Bengal (b) Flat (c) Red, black, yellow
(d) Ear rings (e) Ear, Servant.

14.3 (1) Masuli Patnam, Sri Kalahasti; (2) Cloth; (3) Painting, printing; (4) Vegetable.

- 14.4 (a) Snake and monkey (b) Triangles and few straight lines
(c) Jivya Soma Mase (d) White

- 14.5 (a) engaged in various types of work.
(b) Red, yellow, green, black etc. are very warm.
(c) Typical Rajasthani costumes like turban, belt and long.
(d) Charm and ornaments.

- 14.6 (a) Jaladevi (b) Lotus, disc and Conch Shell
(c) Filled with flower, leaf and fruit (d) Red

14.10 GLOSSARY

Binder - The gum binds the pigments of colour.

Image maker - Maker of different images of Gods and Goddesses like, *Durga, Kali, Lakshmi* etc. in clay, which are worshiped by devotees.

Aristocrat - Raja, Maharaja and land lords.

Linearity - mainly done in lines.

Secular theme - life of common people.

Formats - shape and size

Choli-lehenga - Blouse and skirt

Dopatta - Veil.