

Patachitra-A Micro Scale Industry: Overview and Challenges

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Abstract: India is an ancient nation of rich cultural heritage and a home of the different religion with a vast diversity in tradition and language. In India GDPs major portion has been contributed through industrial and service sector, with the change in time and aspect the working community had moved from agricultural to small scale industrial sector due to lack of irrigation facilities and dependency on the natural environment to a large extent which leads to failure in most of the times. Due to this paradigm shift from agricultural to industrial and service sector thus the position of Indian economy had improved a lot. But the story of success is not yet accomplished, as most of the venture has grown up in rural and semi-urban areas are facing inadequate infrastructural and financial problems.[1] Many people had taken Folk-art as their profession to earn their livelihood, which they inherited from their ancestors. Folk-art is a branch of art, which is performed by words of mouth and developed in folk-groups and in folk clusters. In India folk-art is being generally formed by the illiterate or semi-illiterate people living in rural areas and semi-urban areas, their economic condition is very poor and do not have any modern technological concept of art. They generally follow the traditional concept of art which they had inherited from their forefathers. Particularly in the case of Patachitra we may be observed that this type of folk-art is ethnic in nature and in a form, it is very colourful, and also it bears a traditional and cultural element of country's rich heritage. Patachitra is a general term for traditional cloth based scroll painting in eastern states of India mainly Odisha and West Bengal. In the Sanskrit language, "Patta" literally means "cloth" and "Chitra" means "picture". These paintings are based on Hindu mythology and tribal folklore as well as social messages and narrations on contemporary events. This traditional patuas or chitrakaars ramble from village to village, entertaining and educating village folks in return for their performance, they are remunerated by the villagers for the hard work with rice, vegetables, and coins. All colours used in the paintings are natural and extracted from different flowers and fruits. The Patua community of West Bengal both of PaschimMidnapore and Kaligath has practiced the ancient craft of patachitra since the 10th Century. These patuas or chitrakaars would unfold each hand-painted scroll and sing pater gaan or narrative songs frame by frame, that they had composed themselves. The paper attempts to discuss in details about Patachitra, the lifestyle and work of patuas or chitrakaars, and the problems faced by them in earning their livelihood.

Keywords: Patachitra, Chitrakaars, economic status of patuas

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I. Introduction

India is an ancient nation of rich cultural heritage and a home of the different religion with a vast diversity in tradition and language. India is a land of farmers and agricultural sector is a primary business for most of the Indian families living in rural areas, these farmers depend on the natural resources for their cultivation a lot. But as nature is unpredictable difficulties arises in most of the cases and these farmers suffer a huge loss due to lack of irrigation facilities, modernized machinery, and farming equipment, etc. So the working population is moving on the second best alternative for their survival in small scale industries sector. Small scale industries (SSI) refer to those small entrepreneurs who are engaged in production, manufacturing or service at a micro scale. Small scale industries play a focal role in the economic and social development of India in the post-independence era. Small scale industries constitute the backbone of a developing economy with its effective, efficient, flexible and innovative entrepreneurial spirit. The contribution of SSIs to the Indian economy in terms of employment generation, reducing regional imbalances, promoting inter-sectorial linkages, magnifying exports and fostering equitable economic growth potential has been quite marvelous. The Indian economy during the current fiscal years has shown considerable growth performance by contributing to creating livelihood opportunities to millions of people, in magnifying the export potential and in increasing the overall economic growth of the country with the help of these small scale industries. As a catalyst to the socio-economic transformation of the country, the SSI sector distinctly crucial in addressing the national objective of bridging the rural-urban divide, mitigate poverty and generating employment for the admirable community of

the country. In view of the vast potential of small scale industries, the government has given this sector an important place in the framework of Indian economic planning for economic as well as ideological reasons. The central government and state government had taken initiatives for promoting such types of small scale enterprises through their separate department such as Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) envision a vibrant MSME sector by promoting growth and development of the MSME Sector, including Khadi, Village and Coir Industries, in cooperation with concerned Ministries/Departments, State Governments and other Stakeholders, through providing support to existing enterprises and encouraging creation of new enterprises.[1] The term 'art' denotes a creative expression of artists, which had attracted all classes of people of all ages and times. Folk-art is a branch of art rooted in tradition that comes from community and culture, developed in folk-groups and folk-societies. Folk-art encloses a wide range of functional and decorative media inclusive of cloth, wood, paper, clay, metal, etc. The Patachitra is a traditional cloth based scroll painting, basically an art form of eastern Indian states. The word 'Patachitra' can be divided into two sub-words, such as 'Pata' which means cloth in Sanskrit and 'Chitra' which means image. In Bengal, the Patachitra is made by Patuas with the help of natural colours. These Patuas sing songs on displaying the Patachitra known as 'Pater Gaan'. Basically, there are two types of Patachitra Choukopata (square) and Jarhanopata (rolling). Based on the subject matter there are many types of Patachitra,

- Kalighata Pata- Kalighat is placed in the city of Kolkata famous for the temple of goddess Kali, as per the Hindu mythology the little finger of the right leg of goddess Kali had fallen here. So through the year devotees from distinct places visit Kalighat and worship goddess Kali. The Patua community from all round Bengal came and constituted a colony in found of new jobs. These Patuas started making musk of Hindu gods and goddesses and later they started making 'Sara' pots made of clay used to worship goddess Kali.
- Saheb Pata- This Pata was created based on the historical facts of British India ruling period. The British had ruled India brutally for 200 years, this Pata demonstrates the cruel actions of British rulers to our countrymen. Two types of Saheb Pata can be observed 1) Protest against British ruler and 2) Oppression of British ruler.
- Jama Pata- This Pata is based on the concept of sin and virtue. According to Hindu mythology God Jama the God of death, he evaluates human acts and life after the death of a human being. He arranges hell or heaven based the work of that human being in his lifespan.
- Chakshudan Pata- This Pata is being used by the tribal people in the spiritual occasion of a death in the tribal community. This Pata is also known a magic Pata or Jadupata, the Patua is called jadupatus.
- Gaji Pata- This Pata is originated in Bangladesh, is a popular Patachitra of Muslim community. This Pata is based on the local history, the Patua sings the Pater Gaan which describes the supernatural power which creates a deep influence on the folk people.

II. Objective Of Study

1. To study in details about Patachitra and Patuas
2. To focus on the huge growth potential and opportunities available in Patachitra art form, and revenue generation for Patuas
3. To review the performance and challenges faced by Patuas as a MSME sector in India

III. Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary data are used in the study. The study is empirical in nature as it is based on data collected with the help of questionnaire. The study focused the collection of data from one region in West Bengal i.e. village of Naya in the Pingla block of West Midnapore district. The sample size was 16.

IV. Literature Review

Dr. Gopal Chandra Bayen (2013) "A Glimpse of Folk-Art: Various Patachitra" in Lokaratnavol V & VI, had concluded that Patuas are sociologically advanced and enriched with cultural values. They don't believe in gender bias and thinks to be the son of god Viswakarma. They don't have any narrow attitude towards life and culture, these Patuas follows some Hindu and Muslim customs as they believe in human religion. Naya a village under Pingla in Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India an important place for Patachitra painting known as 'Pater Gram', these Patachitra painting had a remarkable contribution to our society.

Dr. Lopamudra Maitra Bajpai "Intangible Heritage Transformations-Patachitra of Bengal exploring Modern New Media" in International Journal of History and Cultural Studies vol I, issue I, had concluded that the Patachitra form of folk art is a typical representation of oral tradition which has been alive through generations. With the passage of time, Patachitra had reached far places through the internet, the unscripted singing, lyrics and the simple formulae of storytelling all became disused, as the Patuas is selling the Patachitra through the website with or without any narrations. As of the demand is coming from around the globe the

traditional art form of Patachitra had changed from the mythological stories to new topics like Osama Bin Laden, 9/11 bombing of world trade center, 2004 Tsunami, etc.

Sumanjeet Singh and MinakshiPaliwal (2017) in “unleashing the growth potential of Indian MSME sector” had concluded that undoubtedly the MSME sector has huge potential for generating innovative entrepreneurship and massive employment but some

problems confronting MSMEs are

- Lack of access to finance
- Lack of access to penetrate the foreign market
- Lack of skilled manpower
- Lack of reliable and stable infrastructure
- Ineffective marketing network

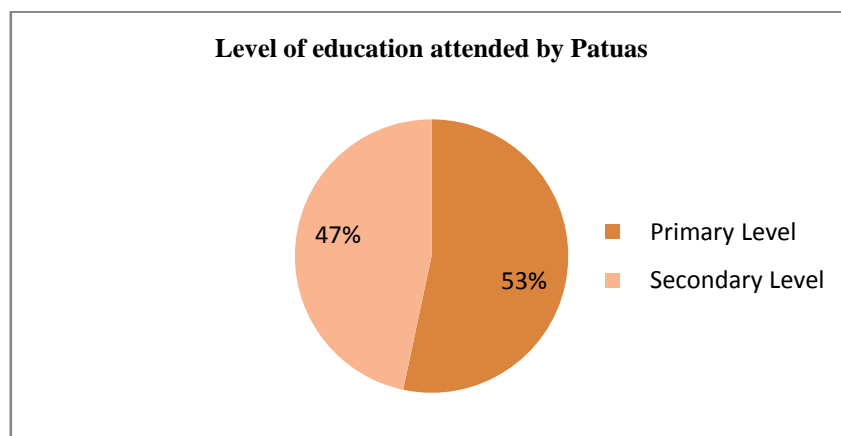
V. Patachitra Of Bengal (West Mednipur)

Patachitra is well known for its dazzling play of colours is a traditional folk art form of rural Bengal that has been an experience for centuries. It can be called as the first attempt in the world to create motion pictures. There are various opinions about the history and origination of Patachitra, some claim dated back to the Pre-Pala period from the days of Mohenjodaro to the 9th century A.D. It is still tucked away with small villages of Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, Howrah, Hooghly and 24 Parganas.[2]In Buddhist literature there is reference of pata in 1st century A.D. in Haribansha in 2nd century, in Abhijnynasakuntalam and Malabikagnimitra in 4th century; in Kaya Khondasanjukta in 6th century, Harashacharit and Uttaramcharit 6th and 7th - 8th centuries. These literatures speak about certain types of Pata which were exhibited to educate and to entertain the people.[3]The Patachitra industry comes under the wider definition of micro scale industry, the patachitra form of workly art is a stereotypical representation of such a folk and conventional medium of mass communications, especially from eastern India. Through centuries- the patachitra has been a platform where assorted methods of communication have to coincide- including visual messages, oral traditions, and music- all of which helped to consolidate, involve and illustrate nature, society, and culture co-existing through a lucid conversation.The patuas or the chitrakaars were primarily gallowant artists- who would travel from place to place with painted scrolls of different patachitraembossed in the design of various deities and other moral stories. Though their accurate date of origin as a profession is unknown, yet from different oral folklore and oral traditions- they can be roughly calculated to have begun as a profession from around 10th-11th century AD in Bengal. In India folk-art is being generally formed by the illiterate or semi-illiterate people living in rural areas and semi-urban areas, their economic condition is very poor and do not have any modern technological concept of art.

Education Qualification of Patuas or Chitrakaars

School attended by Patuas

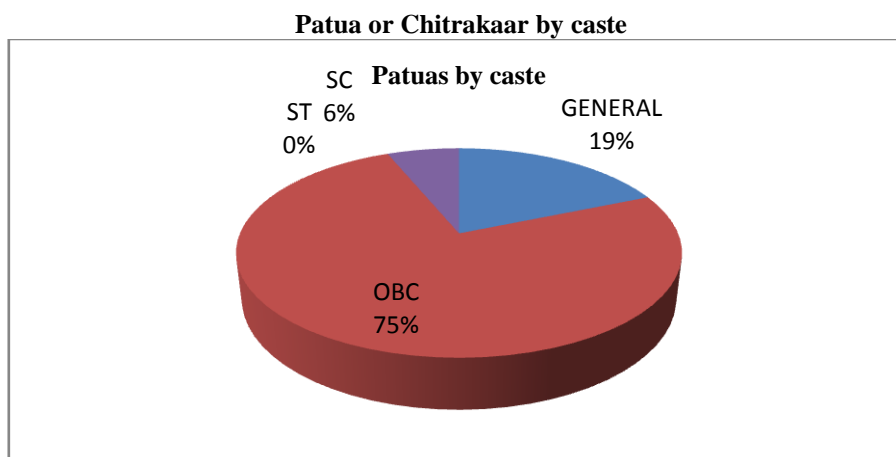
Yes	15
No	0
No Response	1
Total	16



Source: Primary data

As professional artists- they startedvisiting the homes of especially rich people (mostly zamindars and landlords, feudal lords, administrative heads, etc.), the patuas or chitrakaarsdisplay the patachitrascrolls at various households and sing pater gaan they had composed themselves of the different folklore, mythology and

epics and in return would then be rewarded with cash or kind or both in the form of grains, food, and clothes. Most of the Patuas or Chitrakaars belong to the minority and backward sector of the community.



Source: Primary data

In the patua community, the female members are also engaged in this profession to earn their livelihood. A total of 70 households of artists lived in the Pingla village of West Medinipur. The total number of artists is 230 out of which 110 are female (approx.).

Patua or Chitrakaars in profession by sex

Male	8
Female	8
No Response	0
Total	16

Source: Primary data

Habitually at the place of residence of the rich and the wealthy, they are often invited on special occasions, e.g. during pujas, religious occasions, marriage ceremony to narrate the stories pertaining to that specific occasion and they are then rewarded accordingly. The average monthly earning of a Patua family is Rs. 5,000-12,000. The collective annual turnover of Patuas in Pingla on selling their products for the last 4 financial year who are members of chitrataru,

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Annual Turnover	1Crore	1.18Crore	1.3Crore	1.5Crore

Report on Patachitra of West Bengal, MontuChitrakar, Secretary, Chitrataru

The narration or the pater gaan would include stories from local lore and local Purana (especially reflected through the three MangalKavyas- the ManasaMangalKavya, ChandiMangalKavya and Dharma MangalKavya) to the most popular story from Indian mythology- The Ramayana and even the artists have started choosing their themes from contemporary events such as the 9/11 attacks, the French Revolution, the life of Mother Teresa, and the devastating tsunami of 2004. Social messages like conservation of trees, female infanticide, child trafficking and AIDS awareness also had taken place in their paintings. Originally, there used to be specific deities whose stories used to be narrated by the patuas. The colours employed in the patachitra are all natural made from various elements from nature- e.g. tree leaf, flower, seeds, fruits, burned clay etc with the sap of the bel tree (wood apple), which acts as a binder. Earlier, apart from paper and cloth, sometimes palm-leaf manuscripts were made to paint the patachitra, however, in recent years, this has been replaced completely by the use of paper, proficiently stuck on the cloth to give it more stability and then used as a canvas for drawing. The brushes are still made from the whiskers of the tail of squirrels and mongoose, which are tied with thin strips of bamboo to give the shape of a paint-brush. The colours are mixed in empty shells of broken coconuts with the help of water and home-made glue. The following are the most important natural colours used by the patuas-

- Yellow is made from turmeric
- Green is made from leaves of hyacinth bean plant or the leaves of wood apple
- Purple is from black plum or blackberry

- Conch-shell powder or rice roof gives the white colour
- Brown colour is obtained from burned clay
- Red is made from vermilion
- Grey is obtained from the soot from earthen ovens
- Blue is obtained from blue seeds or Clitoriaternatea flower
- Black is obtained from scrapping the soot off from the outside bottoms of clay pots

However, in recent years, as the canvas has taken the shape of papers bought easily from the local market, the natural colours are also sometimes substituted with easily bought acrylic and fabric paints from the market. Some features of Patachitra of West Bengal are:

- There are big eyes of the character in the Patachitra
- The perspective used is limited.
- It is imaginative, simple.
- Inspiration obtained from surrounding and traditional stories.
- There are fewer hand movements
- The whole set of male character look alike and the whole set of the female character as well, differentiation of sex and individual can be made on the basis of skin, clothes, hairstyles etc.
- There are no eyelashes, no nails and mouths are closed.
- Use of borders on all 4 sides and between the divisions of panel

Basically, there are two types of Patachitra Choukopata (square) and Jarhanopata (rolling). The size of a Pata generally varies from one to one and a half feet in width and three to twenty five feet in length.



VI. Challenges Faced By Patuas

In spite of expedient contribution by the Patuas towards the Indian rural economy, Patuas does not get the indispensable support from the concerned Government departments, financial institutions, Banks, credit societies and corporate. The major problems faced by the Patuas are discussed below:

1. Weak Financial Power and inability to get bank loans

The financial position of the Patuas is very weak hence they had to depend on the local money lenders for the financial requirements, who charge exorbitant rate of interest on this loans, in many cases if the Patuas are unable to pay interest or principal amount these money lenders take the Patachitra items produced by the Patuas at very low price which is much below the market price. However the government has announced loans and finance at concessional rates, yet they are unable to get because of huge formalities maintained by the nationalised banks. Lack of finance and cash flow is almost always the crux of the Patuas, these Patuas are still

waiting for simplified and proper financial award which can help them to survive their business and livelihood. The Government had started a financial aid of Rs. 1000 per month to Patuas above 18 years of age but unfortunately stopped from last 6 months.

2. Illiteracy of artisans

Mostly Patuas had attended primary level of schooling, thus lack of education makes it difficult to manage inventory, access government schemes and bargain with traders and middlemen. They don't have any knowledge on the computer; they are willing to be skilled in the computer. Many Patuas are willing to learn singing to improve their Patargaan.

3. The absence of organised marketing process

Patuas does not have any organised marketing process and even due to weak financial position can't appoint any marketing organisation for marketing of products. Some organisation had shown initiative to market the Patachitra through internet technology but it was not up to the mark. Even due to weak financial power these Patuas are unable to attend the fairs in and around the globe to narrate the Patachitra with PatarGaan.

Besides the above-mentioned problems, the Patuas suffer from a number of other problems also poor managerial capabilities, lack of adequate warehousing for storage of goods, lack of appropriate information, etc. Due to all these problems the progress and development of Patua community could not reach the distinguished stage.

VII. Conclusion

Patuas mostly work on the traditional or unorganised sector, the furtherance and advancement of Patua community are essential for the development of Indian economy to achieve an impartial distribution of income and wealth, economic self-dependence and economic sustainable developments. Some appropriate measures to be taken by the government in providing financial assistance at minimum formalities, a platform to be built by the government to help the Patuas in acquiring quality skill in the field they required and to organise a marketing process for better saleability of the products. Traditionally these patuas had been the backbone of the Indian society, yet today they are the most valuable character in the social and cultural development. Thus in this paper, an attempt has been taken to study the weakness and challenges and to identify the possible ways to overcome this challenges.

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