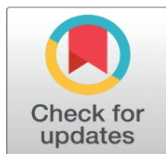
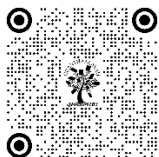


REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MURAL PAINTINGS OF ODISHA: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON PAINTINGS OF BIRANCHINARAYAN TEMPLE OF GANJAM

Dr. Sankarsan Malik  

¹Assistant Professor, Department of History, Berhampur University, Odisha, India



Received 09 December 2022
Accepted 24 February 2023
Published 01 March 2023

Corresponding Author

Dr. Sankarsan Malik,
bappinna@gmail.com

DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i1.2023.279](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i1.2023.279)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2023 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

The Painting culture of Odisha has in relation to her social and religious life. Since prehistoric times, Odisha has witnessed the advancement of this visual art. As literature, the painting of the medieval Odisha has obtained great success. Contemporary temples and Mathas in Odisha present wall paintings on the topic of epics and secular ideologies. However, while studying the history of women in medieval Odisha, the painting of the time is the key source to make an authentic framework on this subject. Historical data from that time do not provide sufficient information about the contributions, roles, and status of women in society. The mural paintings of the eighteenth century, mainly in the Ganjam region of Odisha, reflect the social, religious, and cultural life of women. Biranchinarayan temple painting is one of the finest mediaeval paintings in the area. The stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata are vivid depictions on the walls of this temple of the sun. However, portraying female figures in these murals also sheds light on their status and positions in society. The painting of the Rama-Sita wedding ceremony on the wall of this Biranchinarayan temple is the best part of all the murals. Odia traditions, dress styles and wedding ceremonies are reflected in Ramayana's paintings. The monogamy culture of medieval Odisha is mostly highlighted.

Keywords: Mural Painting, Epics, History, Women, Odia Culture, Biranchinarayan Temple, Ganjam, Odisha

1. INTRODUCTION

A study on the medieval history of women always has some issues because of the scarcity of sources. On the other hand, the study of the regional history of the same epochs is further complicated. Although regional literature and other records have provided a base to construct the pillars of history, the patriarchal nature of the medieval society of India had neglected women's role in the literary and historical records. We have new sources to study women who have been marginalized in the historical archives. Again, it's a matter of acceptance by scholars as well as

academicians. [Pande & Lavanya \(2014\)](#). In this endeavor, painting of the medieval period is a source that can provide us with a valuable platform to analyze the women's position, status, and contribution to society.

Promada Chandra asserts that medieval painting has the highest vitality and wealth. These paintings are being treated as sources of historical writings. Like literature, painting of the periods also contains the same value that archaeological evidence has for historical reconstruction. [Chandra \(1975\)](#). O. C Ganguli pointed out that women were also contributing to the painting culture of the medieval India. Women artists in the Mughal and Rajput zanana palace were making paintings. [Ganguly \(1968\)](#).

As with literature, painting gave a broad touch to the tradition and customs of Odia. Women played an important role in these paintings, because Indian traditions and customs are generally legislated and enforced for women.

2. HISTORY OF PAINTING IN ODISHA

Odisha has an extensive painting tradition. This is also an ancient tradition compared with the sculptural and architectural art of Odisha. Pathy says that Odisha painting is unique and distinct from other Indian paintings like Deccani, Ajanta, Moghul, Rajasthani. The Odisha School of Painting emerged in the prehistoric era, reached the millstone during the medieval era, and continued in today's era. Painting is still active and practiced by a group of people, who are referred to as chitrakaras or painters. This is why Odisha painting and its antique itself shows the glory of Odisha visual art.

The Jagannath culture was also deeply intertwined with the Odisha painting culture. Because the image of the god was made of wood, the wooden idols are painted with various colors such as black, white, yellow, red etc. So, in the Jagannath culture, painting is an integral part. Chronicle of the temple, Madalapanji refers to the painting rituals of Lord Jagannath and festivals associated with the Jagannath worship. J. P. Das also points out that Puri painting or pata painting originated from the emergence of the Jagannath cult. [Das \(1982\)](#).

Odisha has various paintings such as rock paintings, temple paintings, pata paintings, mural paintings, folklore paintings and palm leaf paintings. Mainly Odisha painting is divided into three categories: Bhattichitra or wall painting, Pothichitra painting or palm painting, and Patachitra or cloth painting. Tribal painting is an important part of the Odisha painting tradition, but it has no history. Because people were accustomed to painting on the earthen walls of the house, past tribal paintings can be seen through modern tribal paintings. Soura, Santal, Gonds, Pradhans, Kansas were known for their painting skills. The theme of the painting was mainly based on religion and society. Odisha also had a popular picture called Chitta. This tradition of painting, a unique art form developed from the earliest times. It was considered that Chitta or Chitra, who was painted on the human body as a tattoo these days, was the sign of propitious symbol.

There are several texts in the painting tradition of Odisha. Abhinayachandrika, Ragachitra, Chitrasastra, Silpaprakash and other puranic works associated with painting are examples of the Odisha painting culture.

3. HISTORY OF MURAL PAINTING AND ODISHA

The mural painting tradition of Odisha had a glorious past. From the pre-historic era to the present era, it has had its importance and progress. Gudahandi,

Ushakothi, Yogimatha, Ulapgarh, and Bikramkhol are the major prehistoric sites in Odisha that contain mural paintings (frescoes) on cave walls and ceilings. These paintings are preserved naturally. The themes of these paintings are based on rituals and prehistoric life of the period. Ancient Odisha also witnessed the progress of art and architecture. Sculptural and painting works on the walls of the Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves give an idea of the artistic talent of the Odia people.

The Sitabhinji mural painting of the sixth century AD is the legacy of the painting culture of Odisha. Although it is not elegant like Ajanta painting, it provides evidence of the miniature painting tradition of Odisha. The [Figure 1](#) is the Sitabhinji painting, and this painting is the royal procession of King Disa Bhanja, according to the inscription situated under the painting panel.

Figure 1



Figure 1 Is the Mural Painting of Sitabhinji, Kendujhar District of Odisha

Source Clicked by Author

Through the [Figure 2](#), which is an oil painting of original painting of Sitabhinji, we can see the original painting structure. In this painting, the king sits on the back of an elephant, with some cavalry soldiers and foot soldiers marching with him. Along with this march, a female servant is also seen walking holding a box. The inscription is written in Sanskrit. [Ramachandran \(1951\)](#).

Figure 2



Figure 2 Is the Oil Painting of Sitabhinji Mural Kendujhar District of Odisha

Source Journal Artibus Asiae, Vol. 14, No. 1 /2, 1951

Ramachandran's analysis of this painting has given a clear idea of the women attendants who were also accompanied by the king on his march. He said that one woman was wearing a necklace and a breast band and was walking behind the elephant. Two female figures, one behind the king and the other above the horsemen, appear to be *Apsaras, or dancing girls, as depicted in the Ajanta and Tanjor paintings. Apsara, or dancing girl painted with red, deep color.* But the dancing posture of tribhangi is not shown clearly here. Female elephant attendants wore white-painted tight-fitting necklaces and bangles called kuchabandha, or breast band, covering their breasts, as depicted in the paintings. Undergarments extending to the knee are drawn with care. A woman who is walking behind the elephant probably holds something in her left hand, probably a fumery pot, or cosmetic box of her master or mistress. [Ramachandran \(1951\)](#), [Pathy \(1984\)](#).

However, the female *Apsara* in dancing posture and female attendants holding some items create confusion that this royal process was not for battle purposes. It might have been a march for religion or hunting in the jungle. An eighteenth-century Odia kavya *Prastabchintamani* has given details of hunting scenes where female prostitutes were dancing after a feast. (Bidyadhar, 18th CE). On the other hand, no information regarding King Dasa Bhanja has been found in the Bhanja dynasty of Kendujhar. Women walking, probably holding ritual items, which are not clearly visible. However, T. N. Ramachandran, Dinanath Pathy, and L. Mitra argue that *the female attendants* hold a box probably containing ornaments and other goods of the king and queen or princess. [Pathy \(1981\)](#), [Ramachandran \(1951\)](#).

The medieval wall painting of Odisha rests on religious philosophy. Basically, an eighteenth-century mural that still exists in the southern part of Odisha provided evidence on women's way of life and position in Odia society. In Odisha, Mural Painting is found in various parts of the Odisha. And all these paintings are depicted on the walls of the temple and Mathias. Such as Ganganath Matha, Radhakanta Matha, Emar Math, etc. Theme of these paintings is based on the epic story, Jagannath cult. Raghunath Temple - Odagaon, Srikuram Temple- Andhra Pradesh, Dharakota Jaganath Temple -Ganjam, Jagannath Temple - Puri, Kosalewar Temple-Kendujhar, Gundicha Temple-Puri are the medieval temples that contains the mural paintings etc. Although fourteenth and fifteenth centuries painting in the Jagannath temple exists today but these are painted repeatedly year after year. Budhavijay and Kanchi Vijaya are the two wall paintings on the walls of the Jagaanth Temple designed by Puri painters or temple servants. The painting of Kanchivijaya is based upon the historical event of the march of Gajapati Purusottam Dev against King Kanchi of the South. This story appeared in the seventeenth century book *Knachivijaya* by Purusottam Das. [Pathy \(1981\)](#).

In Jagannath cult the chitrakara has special importance. They were integral parts of the temple rituals. Every year they are being given responsibility to paint chariots, clothes, places, and walls in the compound of the temple. They give life touch to the wooden images of God through colors. This caste of chitrakaras had enjoyed special status in the society and enjoyed revenue free lands for their service to the temple. In chitrakara family, it hasn't only men been expert in painting; female persons also had the ideas and painting quality. In Odia society, the tradition of painting on house walls on the occasions like marriage and other ceremonies was common a ritual of the functions. This painting job was done by the women folk. During the medieval period the art of painting was an extra quality of a girl before her marriage. According to the tradition of medieval society, girls should learn this quality of painting. Though this painting is categorized as folk or traditional

painting, but their talent of painting is equal to mural paintings. The difference is women painting which was drawn on earth wall of house disappear after some days while murals depicted on the plaster walls of the temple and mathas of the medieval period exist today.

Women from chitrakara family had the ideas of painting. On the basis of nineteenth and twentieth century chitrakara family who were residing in the Puri, Raghurajpur, Nayagarah, Subarnpur, and Ganjam regions the assignment of painting given to her husband or father done by wife and daughter, they had command of technique and discipline. But unfortunately, their name is not seen in the pages of painting books of Odisha. Women at the time regarded her husband as a god, so that all the good works done by her dedicated to the husband. She was trained up by patriarchal attitudes in a positive way. Thus, all credits of her went to her husband. This was the sacrifice of women of the Odia society of the periods. [Jaunna \(1996\)](#).

Most of the eighteenth-century paintings of Odisha are found in the Southern part of Odisha. Mathas, temples of the South Odisha were not destroyed by Muslim invasions and invaders. Religious architectures are undisturbed during the medieval period. In North and central part of Odisha most of the Mathas and temples were destroyed and damaged by Afghans, Mughals by their frequent attacks. Then the rise of Vaisnavism in Odisha during the twelfth century onwards led the foundation of Bhaktism which occupied a major place since Jayadeva wrote *Gitagovinda* in the Odia society. Sarala Das's *Odia Mahabharat* further encouraged the religious revolution created by five great sutra scholars known as panchasakha. All the works of this age were religious and revolutionary in nature. Their works preached religious philosophy of Lord Krishna and Rama. Then Chaitanya's philosophy of Vaisnavism also encouraged establishing Mathas and temples in Odisha. Religious literature and spread of spiritualism and Bhaktism in the medieval society encouraged the artist and scholars to illustrate the theme and philosophy of the manuscripts. Through palm leaf, murals and photo painting the culture of painting achieved a great success. Evidence of patta painting of the eighteenth century is not available and palm leaf and murals of the period are the main sources to study the woman's reflection on them.

However, medieval paintings are not secular in nature. Due to their religious quality women are depicted within the boundary of religion. Through the epic characters they were portrayed, but the Odia tradition and customs are also reflected in the contemporary paintings. Literature of the period also provides information about the mural paintings existed in the society. Eighteenth century mural painting has been found in Biranchi Narayan Temple or Wooden Sun Temple of Buguda, Ganjam, Odisha. Mural paintings of eighteenth-century Odisha were also influenced by the Northern and Southern Painting style of India. Not only painting, Odia traditions, its food culture, dressing style, court life, language, rituals, and administration was influenced by the Mughal culture as well as by the Telugu culture. Kings of Odisha had their dominion over Vijayanagar and Andhra regions till Krishnadeva Ray defeated Gajapati Prataprudra Dev. Then Mughals ruled Odisha nearly one hundred and fifty years. So, the cultural amalgamation took place in Odisha. Painting culture which was the oldest culture of Odisha had also seen the effect of Rajstahni and Deccani painting tradition during the eighteenth century.

The most important characteristic of the mural of the eighteenth century is that women were depicted shorter in size than men. This demonstrates that women have historically had lower status than men. Although eighteenth-century wall paintings do not contain many female figures, but the epic character like Radha, Sita, and Gopis and the maids dominated the picture. Most of the women in these painting is depicted

with sarees and blouse, while other women basically in dancing posture and servants are seen in ghagra or skirts with a blouse. Chili-ghagra dressing style is not an Odia tradition, but it was adopted Andhra culture. Eighteenth-century literature also refers to the ghagra and choli of girls who predominate in society. Even literature from that period describes this type of dress as a telenga dress or as a telenga dance or dakhini dance in medieval Odisha. Mural of this period also depicted some female figures displayed in odhani which was an Indian culture of the north. [Jaunna \(1996\)](#).

Eighteenth century Odisha witnessed the changes in its cultural and social life. As a part of Mughal India, Odisha was influenced by the political and cultural changes of the contemporary period. The eighteenth-century Indians who saw the rise of English power and the decline of Mughal power made many changes in the lives of the Indians. Eighteenth century Odisha, which had seen the rise of Maratha and decline of Mughal power in the land, had adopted many Mughal traditions and practices in its administration and cultural life. Maratha did not have much influence for their fifty years of administration. In one-way Northern Indian tradition through Mughal administration and southern Indian customs through political and regional connection on the other brought many changes in the socio-cultural life of the Odisha. On the south side, Odisha was mainly influenced by the Andhra culture of dress style, marital tradition, food practice and behavior and artistic practice also. Even the Trikalinga concept in the history and Kalingapatnam Port of the maritime trade culture of India is examples of it. At the same time Kalinga style temple architecture and Odia style art and painting on the walls of the coastal Andhra region depicts many things regarding the cultural and artistic exchange between these two countries. Fisher points out this feature of dressing style Odisha paintings. He argues that it was under the Andhra influence of wearing ghagra and a blouse and odhani over chest not overhead. However, some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century painting shows women used odhani overhead, means the influence of Rajshtani paintings over Odisha mural and palm painting was there. [Jaunna \(1996\)](#).

We have examples of mural painting where women figures are not shown in blouse. Because all the temple women figure of the early medieval and medieval period are not seen in blouse. Even today, in rural villages, women don't wear blouses. The feminine figures in the Odisha temple are semi-naked or naked. But some women images chest is covered by kanchula or bodies. On the other hand, palm leaf painting which is the most important records of eighteenth-century painting have not contained women figures with blouse. However, in late eighteenth century and nineteenth century palm leaf manuscript illustrations basically from southern regions of Odisha and boarder regions of Andhra Pradesh shown the women figures are in blouse. Not all women wore blouses, only princes and queens and Radha, Sita are seen in the blouse. The Gopis, women servants and dancers are not in blouse. Thus, one is under neighboring influence and the other is social changes in India, which are probably the main causes of this impact on Odia paintings. Mural of Biranchi Narayan Temple is the best example of this eighteenth century changes. Here Sita image is depicted with blouse while others are not. Similarly, [Figure 3](#) shows Srikuram temple painting in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradaesh portrayed a female Character named Manika in the story of Gajapati Purosottam Dev's Kanchi invasion also wore a blouse. [Jaunna \(1996\)](#).

This illustrated painting is based on eighteenth century Odia kavya *Kanchivijaya* of Purusottam Das. This wall painting depicts about the Jagannath and Balabhadra marching towards Kanchi as in guise of two soldiers and on the way, they met a women named Manika who is selling curd. Here women figures are seen in south Indian dressing style or influenced by Teluge culture. [Pathy \(1981\)](#).

Figure 3



Figure 3 Is the Painting of Srikuramam Temple, Andhra Pradesh

Source Mural Paintings in Orissa History by Dinanath Pathy, (rare book section), Department of History Archive, Berhampur University, Odisha

Dinanath Pathy rightly analyzed the eighteenth-century painting and women's costumes. He also supported Fisher's arguments of Andhra influence on Odia culture. As a result, Oriya women of the period adopted Telugu dressing style, social traditions like marriage and celebrations, etc. Pathy argues that blouse culture in Odisha migrated from Andhra regions or Northern India. Thus, blouse is not seen in early medieval paintings culture of Odisha but the late medieval paintings of southern part Odisha like Ganjam and Paralakhemundi have depicted women images with blouse. However, in modern society of Odisha blouse occupies a major place in the Odisha dressing practice of women and is an integral part of it.

Women figures in these Mural paintings have been decorated with various ornaments like nose rings, earrings, nose pendants, mathamani etc. women also depicted with decorated hair style of back of head. In legs, ankle ornaments, waist ornaments called antapithia, in legs jhuntia, rings in fingers are depicted in these eighteenth-century mural paintings. [Pathy \(1981\)](#).

Mural painting of Odisha also has influences of Ragamala paintings. Eighteenth century painting of Biranchi Narayan Temple of Buguda has depicted a scene of musical concert. Like the ancient tradition of Odisha where music and dance had the importance in the social life, medieval painters had depicted these musical traditions through their artistic talent. Raghunath Prusti's Ragachitra illustrated palm leaf manuscript of the eighteenth century is a magnificent work in this field. Stories with different ragas of Indian music are portrayed through these folios of this work.

4. MURALS OF BIRANCHINARAYANA TEMPLE, GANJAM AND WOMEN

Biranchinarayan temple of Ganjam is devoted to the sun god of Hindu culture. This temple is the second Odisha sun temple that has dedicated to the Suryadeva or sun god. The temple is mostly made of wood. That's why this temple called Wood Sun Temple or Wood Konark Temple. Biranchinarayan temple of Ganjam is also known as Buguda Surya Mandira or Buguda Sun Temple, because it is located in a city called Buguda in the Ganjam district of Odisha. Unlike the temple of Konark, the temple of Biranchinarayan built in the west face whereas the temple of Konark is

facing east. However, both temples of the sun built like the chariot of the sun god driven by horses.

Biranchinarayan Temple, built during the eighteenth century by Srikara Bhanja of the Bhanja dynasty of Gumusura, contained the mural paintings of the period. This is a good example of the painting of the eighteenth century of Odisha. The whole paintings represented on the walls of this temple are based on the theme of Ramayan and Mahabharata. [Figure 4](#) represents the painted walls in the Biranchinarayan temple. Many of the paintings on the wall surface have become discolored. That temple roof was built with wood. Apart from the plaster foundations and walls, all the other structures were built of wood. The structure of this temple emulated the Konark Sun Temple of the thirteenth century A.D. This is why this temple is called the wooden Konark. The combination of eighteenth-century wooden sculpture and wall painting of Buguda temple revived the past glory of Odia artists who built the majestic Lingaraj Temple, Jagannath Temple, Sun Temple Konark and painted the Ravanachaya mound in Sitabhinji.

Figure 4

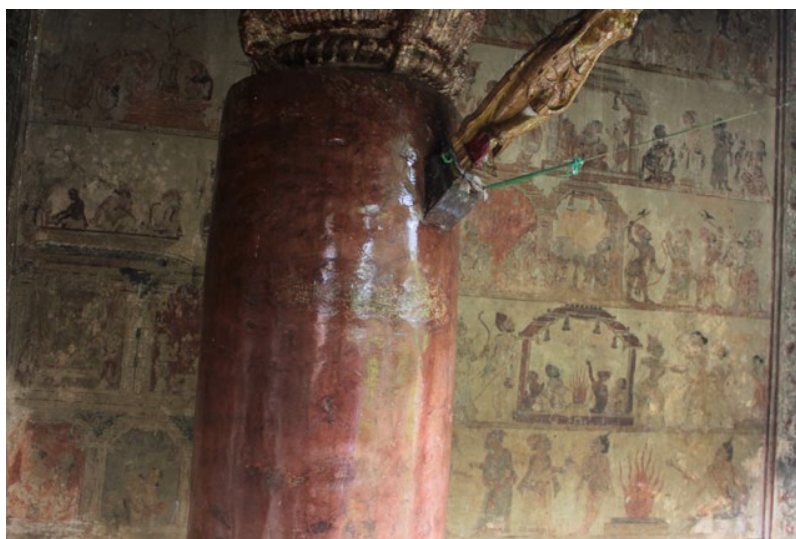


Figure 4 Is the Painting of Biranchinarayan Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District, Odisha.

Source Painting recorded or photographed by Author

Biranchinarayan temple painting was painted by local painters and the painting style and technique is very similar to the palm leaf painting. However, it is difficult to describe these paintings. Jaonna Williame argues that a narrative part of the picture is hard to explain. [Jaonna \(1996\)](#). Although the painting on the walls is in the faded state and the restoration process has not been taken, some local books containing paintings from this published temple. However, the Lalita Kala Academy in 1987 attempted to copy all the paintings from this Konark wooden temple. A painter called Rama Maharana was appointed and hired for two months to copy the deteriorating wall paintings. [Bundgaard \(1999\)](#). Same time Dinanath Pathy and foreign scholars like E Fisher, Jaonna William and others have done some research on this temple painting. But this fresco work needs more attention for research and framing a concrete image of contemporary society. This article is part of my research and has tried to examine all the histories and paintings to represent the women of that time.

Biranchinarayan temple painting is based on the religious theme, but the performance also reflects Odisha's traditions and costumes. Wedding functions,

love, rituals, music, dance, religion of contemporary society were the main characteristics of the eighteenth-century murals. Brajanath Badjenaan eighteenth century author of *Chatura Vinoda*, and *Samara Taranga*, describes in his works about the mural painting as well as palm leaf painting. [Jaunna \(1996\)](#)

Monogamy was a common tradition of Odisha in medieval times. People believed that monogamy should be the token of life as Rama-Sita, Hara-Parvati, Laxmi - Narayna, the two gods of Hindu mythology and Puranas. Because the adventures of Ramayan and Mahabharat had profoundly influenced the society and culture of the odia people. The marital system was also considered a sacred ritual as the marriage between god and goddess. This institution of marriage was very well respected and appreciated by people. Even the second marriage was not permitted by Hindu sastra, unless for certain reasons. Buguda mural has given the same idea about the monogamy practice in the society. The majority of the temple walls are illustrated with stories of Ramayan. From childhood story of Rama to the death of Ravana portrayed on the walls of the temple. War scenes of Ramayan are represented very well in the fresco. Besides that, the Ram's journey towards Mithila and participation in Sita swayambar are illustrated beautifully. [Figure 5](#) represents all whole marriage ceremony of Rama and Sita. Rituals of Odia marriage tradition painted with multi colour for better visibility and understanding. The philosophy of Rama-Sita marriage was given more important in this painting culture. Medieval literature and authors have described this monogamy marriage system or Rama-Sita's married life in their works. socio and cultural life of the medieval people are represented through the ceremonies and war scenes.

Figure 5



Figure 5 Is the Wall Painting of Biranchinarayan Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District, Odisha.

Source Painting recorded or photographed by Author

The philosophy of Rama-Sita marriage was given important priority in this painting culture. The [Figure 6](#) has depicted the figures of Rama and Sita both sitting face to face and Rama putting sindur or vermilion on the forehead of Sita. This image frame is marvelous in this category. Theme and scene are unique and preached its quality and richness of the painting.

Figure 6



Figure 6 Is the Painting of Biranchinarayan Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District, Odisha.

Source Painting recorded or photographed by Author

This Ram Sita painting reflects the marriage tradition of Odisha. In an Odia wedding system, putting the sender on the bride's forehead is a mandatory ritual. Without its marriage is considered incomplete. Thus, the marriage system of medieval Odisha was based on the monogamies ideology of the history of Ramayan. The residents of Odisha were deeply influenced by this Holy Scripture and adopted their lives. The literature of the time provided detailed descriptions of that characteristic of the wedding ceremony. The miracle of the temple of Biranchinarayan is an example of this social life. In this mural, frame dressing style of Sita is different than the palm leaf painting figures. The blouse was not common in Odia costume tradition, but here Sita has seen wearing blouse that is typical of South India or Rajstani style. And besides Sita was also portrayed with lehenga which was not a dress style of Odia.

Figure 7 also shows the Southern Indian clothing style. In this figure, a standing female figure with a dance pose showing the impact of the Telugu culture in southern Odisha. Odisha had a profound political relationship with the South Indian region since the reign of Kharavela over these regions in the first century BC. Then Gangas, Gajapatis had many invasions over South and ruled there for long periods like till the defeat of Gajapati Prataprudradeva of Krishnadeba Ray of Vijayanagar kingdom. Probably the political relation caused the cultural migration. As a result, South Indian dress styles, food culture, rituals were visible in the contemporary literary and painting works of the Southern region of Odisha.

Figure 7



Figure 7 Is the Front Wall Painting of Biranchinarayan Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District, Odisha.
Source Painting recorded or photographed by Author

This dress pattern and costumes show that women's dress style was also influenced by northern India as well as southern Indian clothing. Because the style of painting and design is similar to the style of painting in southern India. S. C. Welch states that Buguda painting is considered as an elite class painting. Its clarity, theme, quality, and harmony have placed this mural in India's tradition of top-notch painting. This eighteenth century mural is marvelous in its category. The design and style are similar to those in southern India. [Welch \(1985\)](#). Eighteenth century works of Upendra Bhanja also describes this type of dress which named Telenga dress. (Bhanja, 18th CE) However, putting the sindur over the bride's forehead is a tradition within the Odia marriage system. The depiction of women through this painting shows the devotion and submissive nature towards her husband as a god.

5. CONCLUSION

The eighteenth-century Odisha mural has a unique style and identity due to its design and themes. Female figures have been represented in the murals representing the Odia women and their culture. The medieval paintings of Odisha could be based on religious philosophy, but the figures depicted reflect the socio-cultural life of the eighteenth-century people of Odisha. Sita, Radha, the Gopis, dancers, figures of the maids have been portrayed on the walls of the temples and Matha symbolizes their position and status in society. Their style of clothing and decoration in paintings dividing folk women into two groups, one is among elite class women while the other is lower class women. Dress styles and the use of ornaments are the main criteria for the identification of elite and impoverished women.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Prof Rekha Pande, University of Hyderabad, for her correction and suggestions on this paper.

REFERENCES

- Bundgaard, H. (1999). *Indian Art Worlds in Contention : Local, Regional, and National Discourses on Orissan Patta Paintings*. London : Rutledge.
- Chandra, P. (1975). *Medieval Indian Miniature Painting, in Cultural History of India* Ed. By A. L. Bhasam, New Delhi : Oxford Publication.
- Das, J. P. (1982). *Puri Paintings*. Jagatsinghpur : Prafulla.
- Ganguly, O. C. (1968). *The Glorious Beginning, in Panaroma of Indian Painting*, New Delhi : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt of India.
- Jaunna, W. (1996). *The Two Headed Deer, Illustration of the Ramayan in Orissa*. Barkeley : University of Carlifornia Press.
- Nilamber, B. (1976). *Prastabachintamani, (Eighteenth Century Oriya Work)*, ed. By S. N. Rajguru, Brahmapur : Berhampur University Publication.
- Pande, R. & Lavanya, B. (2014). *Miniature Painting of Golconda and the Representation of Women (16th -17th Centruries AD. In Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Archaeology, 1(1), (73-86)*.
- Pathy, D. (1981). *Mural Paintings in Orissa*. Bhubanswar : Orissa Lalitakala Academy.
- Pathy, D. (1984). *Orissa Painting, in Glimpses of Orissan Art and Culture*. Bhubaneswar : Orissa State Museum.
- Ramachandran, T. N. (1951). *Find of Tempera Painting in Sitabhinji. District Keonjhar, Orissa, Artibus Asiae, 14(1 /2), (4-25)*.
- Welch, S. C. (1985). *India : Art and Culture (1300-1900)*. New York : Metropolitan Museum of Art.