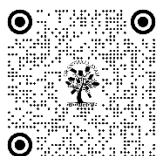


INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY: AN ANALYSIS OF GOND PAINTINGS IN MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Folk arts in India possess a distinct identity, setting them apart from other art forms, and they serve a crucial social mission in creating and preserving cultural identities. The Gond tribe, one of India's largest tribal communities, resides predominantly in central India, particularly in the regions of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Over the past few decades, Gond paintings have gained global recognition and acclaim, primarily thanks to the work of artist Jangarh Singh Shyam. For many years, members of the Gond tribe have continued to practice and pass down this traditional art form through generations. The data for this study was collected using visual analysis and in-depth interviews. The study aims to analyze the representation of everyday life in Gond paintings and examine viewers' perceptions of these artworks. The study's results demonstrate that Gond art vividly expresses the essence of the culture in all its vibrant hues. Gond paintings are a form of storytelling folk art, providing a captivating gateway to a world of imagination and astonishment. These artworks utilize a distinctive style characterized by multi-hued and dot-bright techniques to portray various aspects of Gond culture and everyday activities through indigenous communication.

Keywords: Communication, Folk Art, Gond Paintings, Indigenous Philosophy, Everyday Life

1. INTRODUCTION

Art is the creation of visual, aural, or performative works that express the intellectual or technical expertise of the creator and are intended to be praised for their beauty or emotional impact. The three traditional types of art are sculpture, drawings, and architecture. The terms "trades," "science," and "art" were used interchangeably before the seventeenth century without any distinction between them. In modern usage after the 17th century, where aesthetic considerations predominate, the fine arts are distinguished from learned abilities in general, such

as ornamental or practical arts. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of art and concepts like creativity and interpretation related to it.

Human emotion interpretation and engagement are common goals of art. They have the potential to arouse and serve as a vehicle for the expression of aesthetic or moral sentiments. In certain ways, artists express things that capture the interest of their audience, although this is not an absolute necessity. The study of the human condition and what it means to be human can be understood as an exploration in art. Paintings are both the practice and art of applying paint to a surface to create images. An artistic creation known as a painting is created using pigments on a surface like canvas or paper. Pigments used for painting pictures are available in both dry and wet forms, like paint or pastels.

In a traditional community, a tribe is a group of families or communities connected by social, economic, religious, or blood ties. Tribes share a common culture and dialect, and they often have a recognized leader. The Gonds, a Dravidian people whose origins can be traced to the pre-Aryan era, constitute the largest Adivasi community in India. They are primarily found in Madhya Pradesh and the states bordering it. With a population of over 4 million, they are the largest tribe in central India. Although they are predominantly concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, significant numbers of Gonds can also be found in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha. The word Gond is derived from the Dravidian term "Kond," which translates to "green mountains" in English. The Gonds are identified as either koi or koiture [Rastogi, T. et al. \(2022\)](#).

The Gondi language is popular among Gondi tribes, while the remaining population within the Gondi tribe speaks widely-used Indo-Aryan languages like Hindi. The Gond tribe of central India utilizes Gond painting, a traditional art form, to convey traditional themes [Sakshi \(2017\)](#). Traditionally, Gond paintings were created on the mud walls of their homes.

These paintings are known for their intricate and vibrant designs, drawing inspiration from the local environment and tribal culture. Common themes in Gond art include depictions of the region's rich flora and fauna, with animals such as peacocks, birds, crabs, and various mythical creatures playing a prominent role. The Mahua tree, considered the "Tree of Life," features prominently in Gond paintings, with its flowers, fruits, seeds, and leaves symbolizing vitality. Gond artists also blend tradition with modernity by incorporating elements like airplanes, bicycles, and cars into their artwork. Their creations reflect the interplay between myths, legends, and daily life within the Gond community, showcasing scenes from tribal rituals and everyday activities. Hindu gods and deities, as well as local divine figures, are commonly depicted, highlighting the cultural diversity of the region. Gond art is deeply rooted in a reverence for nature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human life and the environment. The use of intricate details and vibrant colors not only captivates the eye but also serves as a medium for preserving and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Gond tribe.

Gond art, boasting a rich lineage spanning over 1400 years, finds its roots in the Mesolithic Period, making it a treasured cultural heritage of India. Referred to as 'Gond,' 'Pardhan Art,' or 'Jangarh kalam,' this art form intricately weaves together elaborate patterns, vibrant hues, and a touch of whimsy, all drawing inspiration from a profound reverence for nature. Gond art serves as a canvas for the creative expressions of the Pardhan Gonds, an indigenous community residing in the heart of Madhya Pradesh, Central India.

In the bygone eras, the Pardhan Gond people held a distinctive role within their communities. They acted as spiritual intermediaries, offering invocations to natural

deities while skillfully playing the traditional Bana string instrument. Furthermore, they served as the custodians of oral traditions, passing down the tapestry of their mythology and culture to successive generations. The genesis of Gond art can be traced to the wall decorations adorning their homes, an integral facet of their daily existence.

A transformative moment for Gond art unfolded in the 1980s when a cadre of researchers, driven by a quest to unearth indigenous artistic treasures, stumbled upon the prodigious talent of a young Pardhan Gond, Jangarh Singh Shyam (1962-2001). Guiding this expedition was J. Swaminathan, the curator who, captivated by Jangarh's exceptional skills, persuaded him to embark on a journey into the realm of painting. Relocating from village life to the city, Jangarh began transcribing his art onto paper and canvas. Jangarh's distinct oeuvre garnered widespread acclaim, culminating in a seminal exhibition at the hallowed halls of Centre Pompidou in 1989, leaving art enthusiasts captivated.

Janagarh Singh Shyam was the first Gond artist to transition to creating art on paper and canvas. His exceptional talent was swiftly recognized, and his artwork was exhibited throughout the nation. Gond paintings bear a resemblance to Australian Aboriginal art in that both techniques employ dots to construct the imagery. Products crafted with Gond art, such as painted wooden trays, boxes, and Gond paintings on wood, have gained immense popularity worldwide. Gond art is imbued with the belief that a well-crafted image can bring prosperity. In the Gond religious system, everything, whether it be a hill, river, rock, or tree, is considered sacred because everything is believed to be the abode of a spirit. Consequently, the Gond tribe portrays these elements with deep respect and affection. Due to this ingrained mindset, Gonds adorn their homes and floors with traditional tattoos and decorations.

Beyond his own artistic contributions, Jangarh initiated an atelier school christened "Jangarh Kalam," where he generously imparted his painting expertise to fellow villagers. This pivotal initiative catalyzed the Gond art movement into the vibrant and evolving tradition that we know today. Tragically, Jangarh's life was tragically cut short at the tender age of 39. Yet, his enduring legacy lives on through his dedicated students who have flourished as Gond artists on the global stage, preserving and breathing new life into this remarkable artistic heritage.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

[Arur & Wyeld \(2016\)](#) aim to shed light on the cultural significance of Gond tribal art from Central India. Despite changes in the materials used and the subjects covered over time, Gond art still maintains a connection to traditional practices and a religious context. Due to the limited exposure of this art form on a global scale, this paper provides an introductory overview of the artists and the art form, with the intention of inspiring further research in the field.

[Saxena \(2017\)](#) reveals in the study that the Gonds' agrarian way of life has preserved the foundation of mythical tales that depict all the emotions experienced by a farming community. The planting and harvesting cycle serves as the basis for these stories. Oral traditions like Gondwani and Ramayani play a crucial role in keeping the community together. According to Gond mythology, Badadev, the greatest of all gods, created the earth and all life on it. Legends also revolve around the Gond kings and the vital fruits, flowers, and trees in their way of life. The origin of Gond iconography is attributed to remarkable trees and innocent-looking wild animals, from which every Chitra is said to have descended.

The ground, a threshold, a palm leaf, a wooden plank, town walls, rocks, and caves can all be decorated, even the human body. Gond artists use colors found in flowers, leaves, or stones to express traditional beliefs in an unlimited number of ways. They are so colorful, sophisticated, and intricate in their decoration, which is carefully carved; much like stunningly gorgeous Gond paintings that are linked with nature. Surprisingly, this unique feature of these native artisans, a trait that they are unaware of, has captured the attention of art fans globally. The various fabrics, home decor items, and accessories on the market now make an effort to replicate the magnificence of Gond's detailed narrative artwork. The results of the study indicate that, if the advice is put into action, their efforts, with assistance from government agencies and other organizations might succeed in providing them with a means of subsistence and a respectable position in society.

[Bharadwaj \(2014\)](#) attempts to assess the changes that Gond art has undergone due to its increased integration into contemporary art and the growing influence of color-theoretical approaches. Tribal art is one of the most immediate and vivid forms of artistic expression, characterized by its use of color, humor, complexity, and mystery. According to the artists themselves, Gond art is a celebration of their existence deeply rooted in cultural tradition. The primary colors employed in Gond paintings are red, yellow, black, blue, green, purple, and white, resulting in a dazzling and vibrant color palette that mirrors the painters' optimistic outlook on life. The rich colors in the compositions evoke a sense of joy and positivity in the viewer.

[Kumar \(2014\)](#) points out that Gond painting depict a wide range of rituals, celebrations, and interactions between people and nature. These paintings serve as a means to offer sacrifices in worship of nature, ensuring safety and warding off evil. The use of motifs that portray village life and the integration of human figures with rituals and nature, all depicted in a variety of vibrant colors, showcase the innate talents and creativity of the Gond people. Each painting is imbued with a significant storytelling element since, from the perspective of a Gond artist; storytelling is an inherent part of their folktales and culture.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To inquire about the historical background of Gond art.
- To analyze the portrayal of everyday life, including nature and human beings, in Gond paintings.
- To gain insight into the various narratives, faith, values, beliefs, and philosophical elements depicted in Gond paintings.
- To examine the widespread appeal of Gond art among indigenous communities.
- To explore the elements that enhances the aesthetic and visual qualities of Gond paintings.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research study utilized visual analysis, a qualitative research methodology that relies on the use of artistic mediums to generate and present information. Artistic tools serve as a rich source of details capable of capturing facts and revealing insights about what the art medium conveys, as well as the artist or creator behind it. This approach enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the perspectives and perceptions reflected in the paintings.

Primary sources were obtained through in-depth interviews with traditional artist and on-site observations of Gond paintings. The observational approach is crucial for collecting primary data in this research article. These methods of data and image collection assist in analyzing Gond art themes, particularly those rooted in the history and traditions embedded in the artwork. A wide range of secondary sources, including books, the internet, journals, and unpublished works, was thoroughly reviewed before data collection for this research was initiated. Only after this review were the necessary pieces of information collected for the research study.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Gond painting is a vibrant form of folk art that skillfully conveys the core concepts of the vernacular through a captivating use of colors. The current subgenre of Gond painting is known as "Jangarh Kalam," in honor of Jangarh Singh Shyam, the first widely recognized Gond painter known for his innovative techniques [Abraham \(2018\)](#). He was the pioneering artist who introduced the use of paper and canvas, departing from the traditional practice of painting on canvas or building walls.

In the Dravidian tradition, the term "Gond," derived from "Kond," is often associated with "Green Mountains." This nomenclature reflects the Gond people's dwelling in lush, mountainous regions and is occasionally referred to as "Koi" or "Koitur" [Tailor \(2021\)](#). These mountains showcase the unspoiled beauty of nature, which can serve as a wellspring of inspiration and sustenance for all living beings.

Figure 1

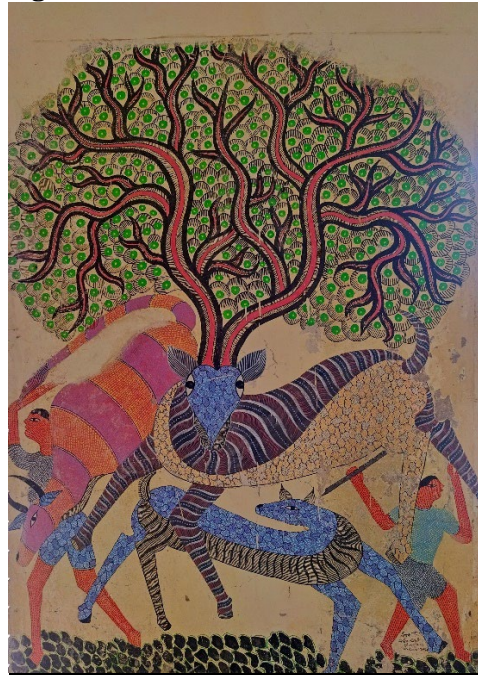


Figure 1 This Untitled Gond Painting is Part of an Art Exhibition at the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. It was Created by the Artist Pradeep Maravi from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Proper Credit has Been Attributed to the Artist.

[Figure 1](#) illustrates that Gond paintings exhibit an "on-line work" aesthetic. To ensure the precision of the lines has an immediate impact on the viewer; artists pay meticulous attention to both the inner and outer lines. The skilled use of lines imparts a sense of motion to still images. Additionally, dots and dashes are

incorporated to enhance the perception of movement and provide greater depth. Another noteworthy aspect of Gond painting is the vibrant and brilliant color palette, which includes hues like white, red, blue, and yellow. Typically, Gond artists derive these colors from natural sources such as charcoal, colored soil, plant sap, leaves, and even cow dung.

Yellow in Gond paintings is derived from the local sand known as Chui mitti, brown from Gheru mitti, green is obtained from leaves, and red is extracted from the Hibiscus flower [Modak \(n.d.\)](#). Modern Gond paintings are created on canvas rather than walls and floors. Using canvas ensures that the paintings stand out considerably more than if they were produced on a wall, making them easier to transport, handle, and display on a wall. Gond artists have started to use poster colors due to the scarcity of natural colors in today's society.

The Gonds believe that decorating their homes and floors with traditional themes is essential because they believe that "viewing a good picture brings good luck." Bhattichitra, which means painting on the walls of houses freehand, was primarily carried out by women. They painted specific symbols and patterns known as dhignas on the floor, which later evolved into Gond paintings, and Bhattichitra on house walls for decoration. It was done only during significant occasions such as weddings, births, marriages, pregnancies, deaths, or festivals like Dussehra, Nagpanchami, Hariyali, and Deepawali, and it remained on the walls throughout the year. The Gonds decorate their homes with colorful paintings depicting indigenous flora, animals, and deities like Marahi Devi and Phulvari Devi (Goddess Kali), among others. Gond art traditionally represents various celebrations, traditions, and human interaction with nature. These paintings are created during festive events like Karwa Chauth, Diwali, Ashtami, and Nag Panchmi. While nature primarily serves as the inspiration for most Gond paintings, it is not the sole source. Gond paintings may draw inspiration from Indian mythology and traditions, or they can depict scenes from the tribe's daily life to represent ideas such as emotions, dreams, and imagination.

Figure 2



Figure 2 This Untitled Gond Painting is Part of an Art Exhibition at the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. It was Created by the Artist Shambu Dayal Shyam from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Proper Credit has Been Attributed to the Artist.

These paintings depict the daily occurrences, religious and philosophical beliefs, and perspectives on life of the Gond Tribes. Dhignas serve as the inspiration for some of the patterns used by painters in Gond paintings. Original artworks featuring flowers, trees, as well as representations of gods, goddesses, and rakshas (the devil) are created. In addition to serving as ornamentation, Dhignas and Bhattichitra are painted on the ground and brick walls surrounding people's homes to convey their immediate religiosity and devotion. They use the walls and surroundings as their canvases, and an individual ecosystem emerges in the form of numerous beautiful paintings. Regional celebrations and goddesses like Marahi Devi and Phulvari Devi (Goddess Kali), as well as local holidays like Karwa Chauth, Deepawali, Ahoi Ashtami, Nag Panchmi, and Sanjhi, serve as the inspiration for Gond paintings. The vivid, lifelike colors depict gods, humanity, animals, birds, horses, elephants, tigers, and other subjects (Figure 2). A new artwork, Dhigna, or Bhattichitra, is created for each occasion.

Arur & Wyeld (2016) Pointed out that the oral traditions of Gond iconography have, in the past three decades, taken on visual forms in vivid hues, and the bhittichitra has been adapted to a contemporary context. Gond art remains vibrant and resonates with tales from Gondi mythology and traditions. Gond-Pardhans believe in the existence of Devayoni (divine form) and Bhutayoni (ghost form) and hold a strong belief in the atman (soul). One of their most cherished tales is the story of Lord Shiva and his encounter with the Mahua tree. Rupendra Shyam beautifully portrays a magnificent Mahua tree covered in fruit, crowned by a parrot, and flanked by a dynamically depicted boar and tiger in unmatched elegance.

In the eyes of a Gond artist, everything is sacred and closely connected to nature, including flora and fauna, people, and deities. While these paintings were originally created on walls, modern Gond artists are reinterpreting these art forms with an understanding of contemporary culture. The renowned Jangarh Singh Shyam, for the first time, ventured into depicting potters, weavers, and basket vendors. In his unique style, he integrated them with the natural world and wildlife, featuring snakes, peacocks, monkeys, lions, boars, and a stag whose antlers harmonize with the spreading greenery of the trees. Gond paintings portray the exquisite oral traditions of Gond culture that have been passed down through generations.

The oral traditions of Gond iconography have, however, taken on vivid visual forms over the past three decades, and the bhittichitra has been integrated into a contemporary context. Gond art remains vibrant, resonating with tales from Gondi mythology and traditions. The Gond-Pardhans believe in the existence of both Devayoni (divine form) and bhutayoni (ghost form), and they hold a deep belief in the concept of atman (soul). The story of Lord Badadev is an integral part of Gond mythology.

Gond paintings, as tangible representations of an intangible heritage, have played a crucial role in preserving and disseminating the ethnic traditions of Gond communities. Given the agrarian nature of Gond society, the cyclical events of planting and harvesting have served as a foundation for mythical tales that encompass all the emotions experienced by a farming community. Oral traditions like the Gondwani and the Ramayani help bind the community together. According to Gond mythology, the earth and all living beings on it were created by the greatest of Gods, Badadev.

The beautiful trees and innocent-faced wild animals that form the essence of Gond vision serve as the inspiration for each piece of art. Myths surround not only

the Gond monarchs but also the trees, flowers, and fruits that are vital to their existence. Similarly, Gond Paintings are exquisite works of art: they are intricately crafted, bursting with vibrant colors, and adorned with intricate details that are intertwined with nature (Figure 3). These paintings offer a visual journey into a flawlessly seamless realm of the unique and unexpected, presented through a two-dimensional aesthetic.

Figure 3



Figure 3 This Untitled Gond Painting is Part of an Art Exhibition at the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. It was Created by the Artist Rajendra from Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. Proper Credit has Been Attributed to the Artist.

The multi-hued brilliance of tribal gods, exotic birds, anthill-covered alligators, and long-nosed crabs, among others, is both inventive and aesthetic, representing some of the subjects of Gond paintings. Influenced by lore, the artist's surroundings, and more recent exposure to metropolitan life, these paintings convey concepts using a simple, organic visual language untainted by layers of formal training. The Gond people's faith is deeply rooted in the goodness of their surroundings, as it is an essential component of their way of life and existence. In Gond artwork, they depict stories of their livelihood and inhabitants, including animals, birds, insects, and nature. They create their own color palettes, perspectives, and compositional rules, enhancing the beauty of their aesthetic expressions.

Gond paintings are surrounded by colorful artwork that draws inspiration from nature and everyday life, creating a pleasant energy. Gond art is characterized by a distinctive cultural ethos and is inspired by images of everyday life, surrealistic experiences, dreams, fantasies, as well as myths and traditions. The primary subjects that have influenced Gond artwork are legendary animals and meticulous attention to plants and animals (Figure 4). Various aesthetic shapes and styles emerge from the different ways the artists specify distinctive patterns. The unique aesthetics of this tribal art style, used to adorn ornamental patterns, capture its essence.

Figure 4



Figure 4 This Untitled Gond Painting is Part of an Art Exhibition at the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. It was Created by the Artist Pradeep Maravi from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Proper Credit has Been Attributed to the Artist.

As we journey through this unique Gond universe, it becomes evident how the creator, BadaDeo, fashioned trees from three parts of his body hair and coated them in ash so that they may yield fruit and flowers. Hardworking silkworms, cunning chameleons, and seductive peacocks that transform trees into brilliant feathers with their hypnotic dances are just a few of the many species that call the Gond woods home. Gond paintings reveal that if you ever get lost in the Madhya Pradesh jungles near the Satpura Hills, you should head to the Sembar tree because good spirits reside there and shine like gold at night. They offer a captivating and awe-inspiring journey into the imagination through their work, one in which the aesthetic and spiritual facets of life are intertwined.

5.1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH GOND ARTIST SHAMBU DAYAL SHYAM IN BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH

The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in the local language, Hindi. It was audio-recorded and later transcribed. Each question asked during the in-depth interview focused on the Gond artist's experience, techniques, themes, and concepts used in Gond paintings. Additionally, during the in-depth interview, the Gond artist was asked about their individual views on Gond paintings as an indigenous art form. The in-depth interview with Gond artist Shambu Dayal from Madhya Pradesh revealed his perspectives and experiences regarding Gond paintings.

“I began my painting journey in early childhood, around the third or fourth grade. However, it was a childhood friend who truly inspired me. When I was in the sixth grade, this friend visited Bhopal in 1984 and left a lasting impression with his

artwork at Bharat Bhawan. The director of the institution was highly impressed by his creations, and this encounter motivated me to start painting as well.

In my early days, I used to paint on walls due to my family's poor economic condition. I couldn't afford pencils, so I improvised and used burnt wood coal to create my artwork on any available walls. I even made my own colors using old, discarded radio cells and soil from Amarkantak to provide the basic pigments. Nowadays, I use acrylic colors for my paintings. It's worth noting that the colors made from soil were exceptionally durable, and they would retain their vibrancy for centuries.

The themes for my paintings draw from the stories and traditions passed down through generations by my forefathers. These stories have stayed with me, and I've never copied themes from external sources for my artwork. These paintings beautifully depict the culture and traditions of the Gond tribe, showcasing elements of nature such as forests, rivers, ponds, as well as the daily lifestyle and livelihood of the community."

5.2. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GOND PAINTINGS WITH OTHER INDIGENOUS ART FORMS

Gond paintings, offer a unique and distinctive style that sets them apart from other indigenous art forms in the country. While Gond art primarily focuses on nature, folklore, and tribal traditions, it stands out for its intricate patterns, use of vibrant colors, and distinctive symbolism. In contrast, Warli paintings, another indigenous art form, practiced by the Warli tribe in Maharashtra, employ a minimalistic style with primarily white geometric shapes against a brown background to depict daily life and rituals. For instance, Gond art, like the work of renowned artist Jangarh Singh Shyam, is characterized by its detailed depictions of animals, birds, and mythological beings, while Warli art, such as the creations of Jivya Soma Mashe, features human figures engaged in rhythmic dance or agricultural activities. Comparatively, Gond paintings are more intricate and exuberant in their imagery, while Warli paintings are known for their simplicity and use of monochromatic tones.

1) Style and Technique:

Gond paintings are characterized by their detailed and intricate patterns. They often feature fine lines, dots, and vibrant colors to depict nature, wildlife, and tribal folklore. The use of intricate patterns and vibrant hues is a hallmark of Gond art. In contrast, Warli paintings, practiced by the Warli tribe in Maharashtra, employ a minimalistic style with predominantly white geometric shapes against a brown background. They use rudimentary shapes like circles, triangles, and squares, emphasizing simplicity.

2) Themes and Subject Matter:

Gond art predominantly focuses on nature, animals, birds, and mythological beings. It often depicts the strong connection between the Gond tribe and their natural surroundings, emphasizing their cultural and spiritual significance. Warli paintings, on the other hand, center on the depiction of daily life, rituals, and social events within the Warli community. They often represent human figures engaged in rhythmic dance, agricultural activities, and celebrations.

3) Cultural Significance:

Gond paintings are deeply rooted in Gond tribal culture and traditions. They serve as a means of preserving and passing down their tribal stories, myths, and

beliefs. These paintings play a crucial role in maintaining the cultural identity of the Gond community. Warli paintings similarly hold immense cultural significance for the Warli tribe, serving as a medium for expressing their customs, values, and way of life. They are a form of oral history that has been passed down through generations.

4) Geographic Distribution:

Gond art is primarily found in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and parts of Odisha. It has gained recognition not only in India but also on the global art scene. Warli art is predominantly found in the tribal villages of Maharashtra, especially in the Thane district. It has gained popularity both within India and internationally for its distinctive style.

In summary, while both Gond and Warli paintings are indigenous art forms of India, they differ significantly in style, themes, and cultural contexts. Gond art is characterized by its intricate patterns, vibrant colors, and nature-centric themes, while Warli art is known for its minimalistic geometric shapes and representations of daily life and rituals within the Warli community. Both art forms are invaluable for preserving and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of their respective tribal communities.

[Drolia \(2020\)](#) distinguished Gond art with other art forms in India indicates, each art forms rooted in distinct regions of India, offer a rich tapestry of cultural expression and artistic traditions.

Gond art, originating in Madhya Pradesh and spreading to regions like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa, is a vibrant folk and tribal tradition. Modern Gond artists have transitioned from using natural colors on walls to paper and canvas with poster colors. Their themes draw inspiration from nature, emphasizing sacred elements like trees, mountains, and flowers, alongside animals and mythical figures. Bright and monochromatic colors blend with intricate dots and dashes, forming repetitive patterns that fill primary outlines.

In contrast, Rajput paintings, hailing from Rajasthan, are characterized by their depiction of court life, battles, and mythology, often using antique miniatures or modern adaptations to capture the essence of valor and achievement. Rajput paintings, born in 16th-17th century Rajasthan, offer a rich tapestry of themes, including court life, battles, mythology, and wildlife. They were preferred by rulers to showcase their valor and achievements. Influenced by Mughal Miniature style, Rajput art adorned manuscripts and palace walls. Today, we mostly encounter antique miniatures or modern adaptations.

Kalamkari, meaning "pen art," emerged in Andhra Pradesh as a medium for storytelling on cotton and silk fabrics. Kalamkari, on the other hand, is renowned for its vibrant motifs on cotton and silk, such as flowers and peacocks, using earthy colors derived from natural sources like indigo and pomegranate peels. Some fashion designers have breathed new life into this art, aiding artisans in sustaining their tradition.

Madhubani painting, rooted in Bihar and Nepal, uses a variety of tools and natural dyes to create eye-catching geometric patterns and vibrant colors. Celebrating nature, mythology, festivals, and special occasions, Madhubani art has gained popularity in the West for its storytelling prowess, evolving from mud wall chalk paintings into a recognized art form.

Kalighat paintings originated at Kolkata's Kalighat Kali Temple, featuring bold dyes and flowing brushwork on mill-made paper. Initially sold as religious souvenirs, they depicted Hindu gods and later transitioned to portraying everyday

life by local artisans known as patuas. Artists like Jamini Roy continue to be influenced by this captivating art style, which enchants art lovers worldwide. These art forms, each rooted in distinct regions of India, offer a rich tapestry of cultural expression and artistic traditions.

5.3. CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFERENCES OF GOND PAINTINGS FROM VARIOUS REGIONS OF CENTRAL INDIA

Despite sharing certain common traits, Gond paintings exhibit distinct variations in styles and themes across different regions of Central India. Here are key characteristics and regional distinctions of Gond paintings:

Common Characteristics:

- **Nature-Inspired:** Gond artworks predominantly depict intricate scenes from nature, showcasing animals, birds, trees, and the natural landscape.
- **Vibrant Color Palette:** Gond artists employ a vivid and bold color scheme, resulting in visually captivating compositions.
- **Dots and Lines:** A hallmark of Gond art is the use of dots and lines, imparting a unique and visually appealing texture to the paintings.
- **Mythological and Folklore Themes:** Gond paintings draw inspiration from local myths, folklore, and tribal traditions, enriching them with cultural significance.

Regional Differences:

- **Madhya Pradesh Gond Paintings:**

Gond paintings in Madhya Pradesh bear the influence of the Kalachuri dynasty, which once ruled the region. This influence is reflected in the intricate detailing and more complex compositions seen in these artworks. Madhya Pradesh Gond artists often utilize white spaces to create contrast and emphasize the central subject, resulting in a distinctive style.

- **Chhattisgarh Gond Paintings:**

Chhattisgarh Gond paintings are characterized by their simple yet bold designs. Prominent lines and dots, along with more sparingly used colors, are notable features of this style. Chhattisgarh Gond artists frequently portray scenes from tribal life, rituals, and daily activities in their artwork, giving their paintings a unique and cultural focus.

- **Maharashtra Gond Paintings:**

Gond art in Maharashtra exhibits influences from Maratha culture, evident in subjects that may include warriors and royal themes, creating a distinct regional flavor. Maharashtra Gond paintings often incorporate geometric patterns; introducing a unique dimension to the art and making it stand out within the Gond tradition.

- **Andhra Pradesh Gond Paintings:**

Gond art in Andhra Pradesh has been influenced by Warli art, another tribal art form. This influence can be observed in the use of geometric shapes and patterns, distinguishing this regional variant. Gond paintings from Andhra Pradesh often exhibit a sense of balance and harmony in their compositions, adding a particular aesthetic quality.

It is crucial to recognize that within each region, individual Gond artists contribute their unique styles and interpretations, resulting in further diversity even within a specific regional style. Gond art has gained recognition both in India and internationally and continues to evolve while preserving its rich cultural heritage.

6. FINDINGS

Gond paintings are a traditional form of tribal art originating from the Gond tribes of central India, primarily in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. These paintings are characterized by intricate and vibrant designs, often depicting elements of nature, animals, rituals, and folklore. Gond paintings offer glimpses into the way of life of the Gond tribes, their religious and philosophical beliefs, and everyday experiences. They beautifully depict the oral traditions of the Gond civilization. Digna and Bhittichitra are created for both aesthetic reasons and to swiftly convey their deeply rooted religious passion and dedication.

The primary themes influencing Gond artwork are animals and the meticulous attention to flora and fauna. In Gond paintings, everything, from people to animals and goddesses like Phulvari Devi (Goddess Kali) and Marahi Devi, is considered sacred and profoundly connected to nature. Nature and wildlife, such as deer, snakes, peacocks, monkeys, lions, and boars, are portrayed alongside everyday objects in vivid, lifelike colors. The distinct Gond imagery is inspired by trees and wild creatures with a naive appearance in each painting. Myths, stories, realistic depictions of daily life, surreal experiences, desires, and imaginations all serve as sources of inspiration for Gond paintings. They are in harmony with a cultural ethos.

Gond paintings are expertly crafted, abundantly colorful, and intricately detailed ornaments intricately connected with nature. Gond paintings transport us to a seamless world of creativity and the unexpected.

7. CONCLUSION

The study examined how Gond paintings depict everyday life and philosophy. Within its scope, the study emphasized the claim that Gond paintings reflect the faiths, beliefs, and events of the Gond community's daily life. The indigenous community's oral tradition finds visual representation through Gond paintings. Each chitra in Gond paintings enriches the daily life of the society and nature, and they carry a strong cultural significance. Gond paintings often narrate stories or convey myths and legends through their imagery. They can portray scenes from daily life, folklore, or rituals. Gond art is deeply rooted in the Gond belief system, which revolves around the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Many Gond paintings depict elements of nature, such as trees, plants, birds, and animals. These representations often hold a spiritual or symbolic significance in Gond culture.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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