

Socio Economic survey at Natungram, Agradweep, Purba Bardhaman

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Journey detail: All the students of sem-IV were arrived at Katwa station at 8.30 am along with respective teachers. Then we took local train towards Howrah and after reaching Agradwip get down from train. Then we took auto to reach the Craft village at Natungram.

Description of Natungram Village:

Wooden Dolls of Natungram is very popular in West Bengal and also in India. The art-making wooden dolls have been an age-old practice in India and Natungram is one of them. It situated in Burdwan district of West Bengal.^[1] There are many kinds of dolls like Gour-Nitai, Wooden owl, Krishna, Royal couple etc. The wooden owl is most popular among them.

History

The artist of Natungram used to work in stone carving first. with the king's patronage, they were working well. But after the fall of the king of Bardhaman, the craftsmen face difficulties. Then they left the stone carving industry and started doing fine arts and wooden works. One of the common family names here is *Sutradhar* because inspirations for most dolls are drawn from mythologies and folklore.^[2]

Method

Dolls are mainly made out of Gamar wood, Mango wood, Shimul wood, Ata wood, Chatim wood.^[3] After making a shape of dolls, men carved the wood as per the requirement. Then women have painted the products with various colour. Then they used a glue, made from tamarind seed. Colouring has to be done by the female member of a family. They have used lots of colours in the dolls like white, green, yellow, black borders and red.^[4]



Description:

Crafts persons from this area are traditionally practicing the art form and for most of them it is their primary livelihood. The doll makers are the Hindus, have last name ***Bhaskar***, meaning sculptor or ***Sutradhar***, meaning story teller.

The craft and craftsmanship were on its peak under the **Bardhaman Maharaja**. The honesty and the labour of this craft distinguish this art from the others. Wooden dolls to stools, each and every product can be distinguishable by their different colors and the placement of colors. Color can change the character of a same looking product.

Dolls are mainly made out of gamar wood, mango wood, shimul wood, ata wood, chatim wood. Men are cutting and carving the wood as per the requirement and women are painted the products with various color. Coloring has to be done by the female member of a family. They did an wonderful job and create various motifs and designs by themselves. They have used lots of colors in the dolls like-green, yellow, black borders and red. they used fabric colors and oil paints in decorating the dolls.

Apart from these, the crafts persons used to make 'Rashiputul' (figures of Radha-Krishna on a single block of wood), Durga, Laksmi, Saraswati, figures of the King, the Queen. They are simply diversified and get a new form .The artisans of Natungram started their wood crafting 200 years ago .Since then the artisans making various types of wooden dolls for their livelihood. Now a days a change of color, texture, and design can be seen. Colors are more vibrant like yellow,red,blue and bold black border of each part to define. Various complex and intricate wood carving techniques have been introduced. The designs of the products are also varied from the older piece of products.

The process of making the craft is simple. The figures are first drawn on the blocks of wood and then chiseled out. However, the master crafts person does not need the drawings. The wood is cut as per the size of the block. The piece is cleaned and smoothened. The design of the toy to be made is traced on this piece. Extra wood is chipped off according to the design. Fine strokes with the hammer are made on the chisel. It is smoothened with a file and painted. Add clay and wheat with fevicol and make a paste . Next the dresses with specific designs are marked out by fine strokes of the brush. The facial features are added in the end.

