

Sustainable Transformation of a Vernacular Habitat through the Revival of Crafts: Naya Village in West Bengal, India.

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Abstract

India is a culturally diverse country with a rich heritage of crafts, which evolved upon social and religious practices remaining as records of their historic influence. Tribal and indigenous art forms, which grew up drawing from its surroundings and local resources, were essentially people's art. The society remained the cradle of the expressions of the aesthetics, which brought identity unique to a community of a region. This aesthetics was part of the lives of the people and reflected in their habitat in a number of ways.

This paper presents the study of a village in South West Bengal in India where a craft named 'Patachitra' flourishes. Due to globalization, the craft lost its glint and was slowly heading for extinction, as market demands lowered with the change in the aesthetic sensibilities. At this juncture, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Convention 2003 brought this region into its foray on revival of dying crafts. This move helped revive this craft into a sustainable economic development of the area.

The paper illustrates how the capacity building of the handicraft artists and the promotion of the craft gave the region an identity and helped to establish a place as a craft destination in the global map. The transition has not only been in sustainable economic development, but also in terms of transformation of built space of the village by reviving and incorporating vernacular aesthetics into the habitat unique in the essence of its craft.

Keywords: Craft, Patachitra, Revival, Aesthetics, Sustainability

"The soul of India lives in its villages" – Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction to craft as heritage of India

Indian villages have truly manifested this statement expressing though their rich repertoire of handicrafts, famous world over. For centuries, villages have formed as settlements and grown on the virtue of the handicrafts that they produce in many regions. Communities have settled in locales conducive to their primary occupation based on the geographical location, climatological and natural resources and their proximity to materials essential to their traditional craft. As crafts remained their way of life, vernacular settlements bore the elements of their practices. The profession was an integral part of their daily life and hence manifested in the aesthetics of the settlement to give it a unique identity (Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2019).

Crafts in India is an expression of community response—which leads to the development of the craft. It is a narrative of the culture of the society, which rears it, telling stories in material, as if frozen in time. Religion and social practices come out in the form of decorative motifs and surface ornamentations. Being the cradle of multiple cultures, some across the nation, it has led to the diversified aesthetics of the way the imagery depicts. Patterns have evolved over centuries and have passed over to generations. Crafts have remained as directions for self-development and initiating sustainable employment generation. Traditional crafts are sustainable practices that need a serious relook (Ranjan & Ranjan, 2014). It provides opportunities of income generation from within the village or the residence and with the resources available in the vicinity. This leads to greater participation of the family of an artisan in the process, which eventually manifests as a community activity and becomes its inheritance. Bringing back the craftspersons to their crafts reduces the pressure of employment generation in Industries and other sectors.

Folk art paves the way for ease of creating the uniqueness as it could be easily laid over built surfaces and within daily objects. It emerges out of memory and surroundings of the settlers. The creativity

and ingenuity of the use of such folk art reflects from and into the lives of the people of the village, leading to the need to call these master craftspersons as ‘artists’ instead of ‘artisans’. Such art work remains a simple way of releasing the expressions of creativity naturally as well as with a social purpose at times. Vernacular settlements often become frames of respective art form. In the architecture of a village hut, and its aesthetics, the art emerges out of interconnected elements and principles of visual design, integrated on the façade, transcending to the space around and intertwined into the complex composition of the village environment. It is so inherent on each other that it becomes difficult to ascertain whether it is the art for architecture or architecture leading to the art. This remained the vernacular characteristic of such settlements, which evolved over centuries to become its heritage. Thus, traditional settlements bear aesthetics lying in beauty of objects deliberately made (Javanovic-Popovic, et.al; 2014).

Sustainability of the craft and the impact of revival

In India, with the advent of technology leading to rapid changes in lifestyles, modernization and globalization, rural communities, especially their youth get lured into the global lifestyles. With change in tastes of consumers, the craft, as the occupation, provides lesser sustenance and the newer generations digress into avenues which provide them easier means of livelihood. As a result, the vast knowledge that sustained and nurtured the community starts disappearing. This demands urgent action to preserve what is there and revive what is lost—making it integral to sustainability in economic development. It is at this frail juncture, that UNESCO launched its Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity in 2001, wherein India became a partner covering its craft clusters. With the project aimed at protection and promotion of cultural industries, rural craft and cultural hubs were to be revived as self-sustaining economic bases as well as for retaining the heritage of the craft and its village (IGNCA-UNESCO report, 2014)

In 2013, the state of West Bengal, partnered with UNESCO, to develop 10 such craft hubs in the state identified by them, with coordination by the social enterprise Banglanatak.com to implement the project. West Bengal remains a craft and culturally rich state, whose handicrafts embody rich heritage in terms of aesthetics, creativity and artistic skills. The craft sector had remained the sole economic avenue for many a village in the rural areas, where most of the artisans engaged coming from vulnerable sections of society that include social and religious minorities and nearly half of them being women. It provides low cost green livelihood to this large section of population. Hence, revival of the economic self-sustenance through craft was indicative of empowering these women and marginalized sections, which would reflect in their settlements and habitat as well, since the people remain rooted to their region for survival unless economic needs force the transit to new locations or urban areas (IGNCA-UNESCO report, 2014).

Indian handicrafts and traditional practices add its unique flavor to each traditional settlement in its own way, based on its locale. The state of West Bengal with its conducive climate, rich resources and diverse geophysical characteristics have nurtured various such crafts. These crafts remained the primary economic factors and occupation for the clusters in which they bloomed and retained their identity. *Patachitra* or *Pattachitra* remains one such craft, whose identity is regional and unique in its expressions. The craft is also seen in other areas such as Kalighat in Kolkata, or Raghurajpur in Orissa, each creating its own distinct identity in terms of motifs, colours and visual forms and contents (Bajpai, 2015)

Pingla region of Pashchim (West) Midnapore district of West Bengal was one such Craft cluster where the local people were all engaged in the *Patachitra* Craft for ages. The MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Department of the Government of West Bengal, in association with UNESCO, and in collaboration with Banglanatak.com, a social enterprise, developed a Rural Craft Hub in Pingla. A Folk Art Center was built by the WBKVIB (West Bengal Khadi and Village Industries Board) at Naya village in Pingla, which is home to 250 artisans practicing the art form. In 2018, the *Patachitra* craft of Pingla received the coveted GI (Geographical Indicator) tag under Intellectual Property India (ipindiaservices.gov.in, 2018) This will accelerate the promoting of the craft of this region across the world and the economic boost will eventually reflect in the settlement traditionally and sustain the craft further (RCH booklet, 2015).

Cultural revival in other settlements based on folk art in India

A parallel on the revival of folk art and its impact on the living environment can be drawn from Jitbarpur, the hearth of *Madhubani* painting in Bihar, India. Similar to the *Patachitra*, this art form came mainly from painters of a closed community, which remained hidden until the great earthquake of Bihar in 1934, when it accidentally surfaced in the debris. Equally, a woman centric craft, except the strong caste

factor which distinctly differs its expression, it was a craft confined within the walls of their residences. It attracted more women to take it up only in the 70's following success of two women painters nationally. Today *Madhubani* is a thriving and coveted folk art form and reflects in the external folds of the buildings as a symbol of pride. The aesthetics of Jitbarpur and other villages created their identity with the walls becoming canvasses for their artwork (Ghosh, 2013).

Similarly, we can see the tribal and folk traditions reflected in the vernacular Architecture of Madhya Pradesh. The different crafts communities have their own distinct settlement patterns and the cultural identities are well-defined in the decorations of these settlements. The *Bhil* or the *Gond* tribe can be distinguished by these visual elements, which go to create their vernacular aesthetics (Patidar & Raghuvanshi, 2017). The man-environment relationship has been studied in Raghurajpur village, Orissa which was declared as a 'Heritage Village' in 2002. Primarily a village of *Pattachitra*, it showed how materialistic growth, following the patronage of the craft, has modified the ambience of the village. With the rise in income and standard of living, there is a natural transition to greater urban facilities. However, a walk through the village, which is a tourist attraction, echoes with the aesthetics of the surfaces of the buildings reflecting the art style and setting the aura of the folk art style (Chandra & Mukherjee, 2016).

Studies on the Patachitra of Pingla and its relevance

Patachitra, the name derives from '*Pata*' or '*Patta*' in Sanskrit, which means cloth, and '*Chitra*' means art. *Patachitra* or scroll painting is a combination of oral and visual communication where the scrolls are painted with narratives which is sung in the form of story telling. The expressions are pure form of folk art, drawing elements from Mythology or the surroundings, or from other folklores, and is used to impart knowledge to remote villages where reach of education and communication was remote.

The *patachitra* of the two places, namely Pingla and Raghurajpur varies distinctly, as the artwork of the latter remained strictly based on Mythology and religion, while that of the former was more grounded to reality as the community had no communal barriers. Reason behind being Raghurajpur was a Hindu village while in Naya, most of them were Muslims speaking on Hindu traditions. (Chandra & Mukherjee, 2016). Again, in Madhubani paintings we can distinguish the artwork by Caste of the painter, with upper caste paintings being fine intricate and with finer details and patterns, the lower caste artists would draw inspiration from the immediate surroundings affecting their lives. (Das, 2013) This is not visible in Pingla where all castes unite in this exercise drawing the same designs which they take pride as a community. Owing to this, Pingla art creates its identity in social and communal harmony.

The *Patachitra* of Naya has been studied under various contexts as it remains a heritage in the history of oral traditions. From a migratory community, they take pride in the space where they settled. From a collective memory to trace their lineage to an ancient time, these settlers adopted to the region and created their identity with the surroundings. Interestingly, the surname '*Chitrakar*' is attached irrespective of caste or religion - reflecting their occupation, not based on a family surname or by marriage. This goes to show how strong the community attachment is with the art form. Although the artform has evolved with time, the adherence to their roots and its glory identified them as a traditional artisan community. (Basu, 2018)

The *patuas* were patronized by the rich and aristocratic people of the region, and rewarded with the goods they needed for living or financially supported, with special occasions enhancing the earnings. With decline in the existence of landlords, the *patuas* had to deviate either into other occupations or other narratives. Furthermore, liberalized trade and increased mobility transformed the rural society, whose interest changed direction away from the *Pata* stories which failed to compete. The craft got devalued against sophisticated urban taste. The interventions by the Government at this juncture, in involving this media for generating public awareness of relevant issues such as AIDS, family planning or education as also introducing newer and contemporary themes like Twin Tower, Laden or Titanic brought newer interpretations and interest in the craft. It is significant that at this stage, it was more of the female of the community who took up the craft and has remained so till date. (Chatterjee, 2013)

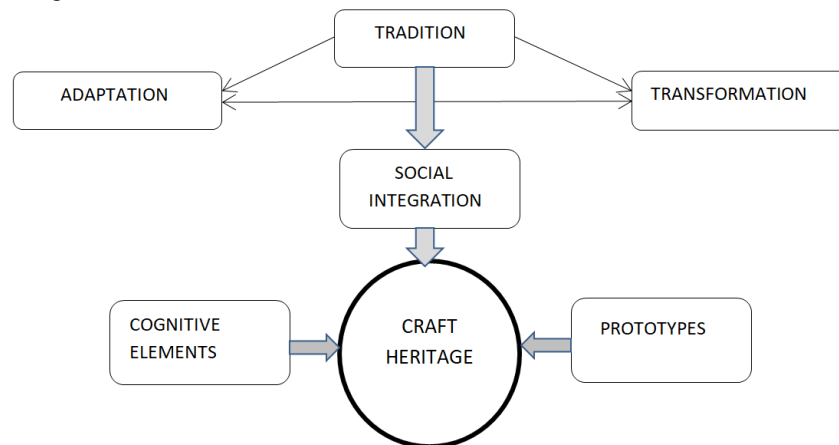
Research objectives and method of assessment

The research was to involve assimilation of information as received through secondary data collection. Such study helps in identifying the parameters essential to the identification of a particular craft and the roles and expectations of society.

The primary research was conducted as an ethnographic field study for data collection and photographically documented by the authors themselves at the actual field level. The study involved discussions with the artists at the village. During the course of interaction, the pathway of revival of Patachitra craft in Pingla was elaborated by the artists Dukhushyam, Anwar, Swarna, Mamoni, Rahim, Putul, Rupsana, Gurupada, Rani, Jaba, all bearing the Chitrakar surname, which united them as a community irrespective of religion and caste.

A traditional society undergoes various transformations over time and adapts itself to the changes and manifests it in visual expressions in their craft heritage. The crafted objects reflect the societal needs and tastes. (Jaitley, 2012)

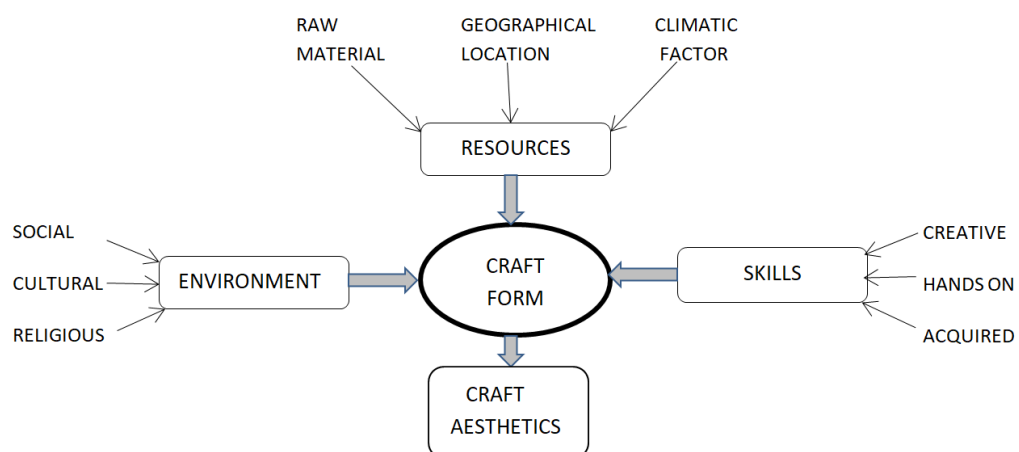
A. Defining traditional craft



Flow chart source: Author

The craft is an output of all the factors that lead to it – the locality with its resources and climatological conditions, its socio-cultural environment and the skill set acquired by the craftsmen as inheritance over generations. (Ranjan & Ranjan, 2014)

B. Identity of a craft



Flow chart source: Author

In view of the above, the following objectives were considered towards the study conducted -

- (i) Analyse decadence of Pingla as a craft region
- (ii) Study intervention of the Rural Craft Hub (RCH) Project in the region
- (iii) Understand Patachitra as Craft of West Bengal
- (iv) Understand visual aesthetics of Patachitra of Pingla
- (v) Study economic revival of the craft
- (vi) Analyse the transformation of the village aesthetics

The study was expected to identify what lead to the sustainability of craft as a livelihood. As traditional crafts provide a livelihood which lead to sustainable development of a community, which reflects in their habitats, vernacular settlements derive their aesthetics from the craft. In the Naya village, this has manifested and the study was focused to identify the visual parameters of growth in the settlement. Visual perception of the elements of creating spaces were to be identified in the revival of the village. (Ghosh M., Nag S., Roy S., 2015)

The methodology adapted included –

- (i) Review of the RCH Project and its objectives
- (ii) Visit to the Naya village
- (iii) Communicating with the Patuas and their families
- (iv) Learning from Banglanatak.com on their spearheading this economic revival
- (v) Recording the transformation of the vernacular aesthetics of the village
- (vi) Correlating the study with similar village aesthetics in India and abroad

Case Study : Naya village , Pingla – the revival

"The Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills –as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith- the ones that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity." (The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Article 2)(ICH,2018) . The village of Pingla was identified by the Government of West Bengal under this project. The purpose of the Rural Craft Hub (RCH) project, initiated by Government of West Bengal, was to develop 'community led and managed rural craft hubs in 10 locations in the state', to create impetus to the craft sector 'in terms of employment, enterprises, export and growth'. Apart from developing the craft in terms of development of skill, product innovation, technology, infrastructure, entrepreneurship and market, a specific purpose was 'evolving the craft villages as tourism destination' (MSME, 2017).

The Naya village in Pingla , had borne signs of regression from a vernacular settlement– its traditional and cultural values overruled by the threats of the forces of economics , leading to a mundane semi-urban cultural and Architectural homogenization – with the traditional environment being considered symbolic to poverty and backwardness and countered by modernity . Since the 1980's, with patrons of the paintings dwindling, the craft was surviving more on using its narrative form for spreading social awareness issues. This was also the period when women started participating in the craft largely for sustaining their family. (Ponte , 2015). To encourage sales and vary topics of narration , contemporary subjects and latest news started taking place in the paintings. At that time , the village had only a surviving master craftsman *Patua* (performing Pata artist) , Dukhushyam Chitrakar, embodying the heritage of the craft , as the others had mostly chosen different avenues for their livelihood. Thus, the dwellings in Naya grew out of what we call folk architecture into a settlement of contemporary buildings using modern materials, an impact of exposure to urban areas. Truly, an evidence to the understanding on materials and construction techniques being modifying factors of house form and having a considerable effect on the way built environments are shaped (Rapoport,1969;Cavalcanti,1996)

However , within 5 years from 2013, with the right support and governmental intervention , Naya village revived into a craft community of 250 artists today with the economy boost enough to garner global recognition, a GI on their craft form and pride in their settlement and their *Patachitras* taking a place in the National Museum of Ethnology, Lisbon. This has reflected in the way they infused their art form and the essence of their craft in their modernistic habitat as also the retention of the traditional spaces, the entire region now emerging as a craft village, visually rich in the aesthetics of their legacy. The village is located beside a water channel, thus motifs are drawn from the objects and organisms surrounding the water body or the greenery as part of the story telling of the art, apart from the mythology or contemporary tales.

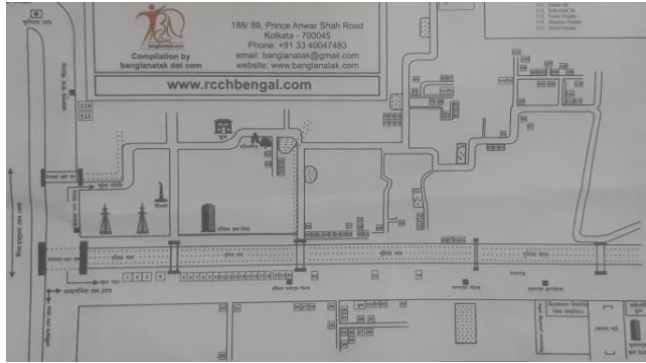


Fig. 1: Layout of the Patachitra village

Source: Banglanatak.com

The *Patachitra* craft of Pingla

It is one of the oldest traditional performative art form of Eastern India, serving as a medium of social communication using visual and oral forms. A purely folk art form, it is an integral part of the intangible heritage, which is an amalgamation of natural elements, socio-cultural practices and happenings which is conveyed through songs composed on the artwork which is unfurled and narrated in simple local dialect. The performance through *Pater Gaan* was entertainment and dissemination of information at the same time. The artist calls himself '*Chitrakar*' and the '*Patua*' is one who performs the narrative. It serves as an important form of documentation of periods and events, the '*Pata*'s or the rolled scrolls serving as records of history. Stories range from Mythology to folk lore to social messages and contemporary events or incidents such as the Tsunami or the 9/11 happenings. Changing demands have led the new generation *Patuas* to recreate and contemporize the art form for the global market while retaining the unique essence and flavor of Pingla *Patachitra*. (Bajpai, 2015)

Material used are available local resources largely on economic grounds. The colours used in *Patachitra* were always from natural sources and are still mostly made from various elements from nature. The reason why the colours retain the palette of earth or natural colours largely. Black is from soot, White from '*kusum mati*' or a special clay from white stones, blue from *Aparajita* flower, Red from teak or saffron or *Pan*(betel) / *Khayer* (catechu), Green from *Kundri* or *Barbati* (runner bean) leaves, Yellow from turmeric, Brown from matured leaves of teak. Being of organic origin, the colours are eco-friendly as well. (RCH, 2015)

As Rabindranath Tagore said- "What is art? It is the response of Man's creative soul to the call of the real". Folk art form of *Patachitra* has remained as one of the richest forms of visual communication- Using both verbal and non-verbal communications it communicates and conveys what the artist wishes to record at that time. So, from the wandering artists that the *Patuas* were earlier, carrying their *Patas* and narrating in remote villages through '*Pater Gaan*' to pass a message or tell a story or just to entertain when no other medium was available, the need to settle in the village was natural in an era of global communication which had reached into remotest of Indian villages now. As mentioned in the UNESCO website on Intangible Heritage, oral traditions and paintings as in doodling, scribbling or cave paintings, possibly emerged at the same periods in history to pass on learning from one generation to the other in the absence of scripts. With the need of the oral practice in this craft requiring to be reduced against technology, it is natural for it to give more thrust to its visual component for revival. (Mitra Bajpai, 2015)

The habitat of Naya village, Pingla

The built environment of Naya, though essentially architecture made by the people for themselves, and essentially organic in its planning, lacked the credibility to be coined as vernacular Architecture as the built forms were modern in terms of design and materials. This was a result of the shift in the social economics resulting from the digression to urbanized economic pursuits seeking work in urban areas. With the intensity of the forces of globalization, rural lifestyle was invaded by technology, consumer products, new modes of entertainment, cultural hybridization and use of capital. In such a socio-economic state the built habitat is expected to replicate urban neighbourhoods in form. Revival of the craft led to resurrection of the vernacular with its uniqueness. It started manifesting in the facades, daily objects, building elements - symbolizing the socio-cultural and geographic contexts of the community, their sense of beauty and creativity. The manner in which the artwork transcended from one surface to another in uniting the built spaces into a whole, by the colours used, the motifs, the designs and the narratives. A

house is not a mere shelter, it is home to a family , and part of a bigger community – which rural people build for themselves and their descendants, a very personal act of satisfaction. (Cavalcanti, 1996)

The following images depict the village after the onset of RCH Project - reflecting the revival of the craft.



Fig. 2: Village buildings- modern and vernacular
Source: Author



Fig. 3: Village aesthetics
Source: Banglanatak.com

In traditional settlements, cultural identities are expressed in the built forms or spaces, in their decorations and aesthetic characteristics . Tribal and folk traditions reflect in vernacular Architecture, which evolves over ages by trial and error. For vernacular houses in craft villages, spaces remain multifunctional to accommodate the activities. Traditional habitat leads towards sustainable built environment . (Patidat & Raghuvanshi, 2014).



Fig. 4: House courtyard – multi functional
Source: Author



Fig. 5: Decorating personal spaces
Source: Author

It is established that the decorative elements in a building is dedicatedly done to beautify this effort in vernacular Architecture. The intention to use Patachitra as a surface decoration using the local resources is a conscious one to establish the identity that the revival of the craft gave to the craft artists.



Fig. 6: Creating individual identity
Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 7: Exploration of motifs and styles
Source: Banglanatak.com

Along with this, arose the need to diversify the artwork into newer domains, more contemporary in their use and matching the need of the market. Thus we find the art form in apparels, stationary items and home-décor products and accessories. Which automatically enhanced the canvas for expression of creativity. The aesthetic transformation of the built spaces appears to match the identity of this enhancement of the domain of painting. (Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2019)



Fig. 8: Traditional design of daily use object

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 9: Exploring with new design and product

Source: Author

An interesting aspect of Patachitra in this village is that it is not just a craft which engages 50% women in the artwork, but also transcends the barrier of caste, creed and religion. Today, in Naya, many a Muslim artists paint and narrate Hindu mythology with elan. The same goes for their decoration of the dwellings as well. For ages there has been a sense of elation in singing the Pater gaan and narrating tales, irrespective of the community the Patua belonged to. This craft thus becomes a unifying force in this settlement where social barriers are ignored in binding the society in its vernacular character. In this aspect, this particular region stand out in comparison to other similar villages in India, where the art is restricted to specific communities and religions, and differentiates in category of motif and designs as well (Ghosh, 2013)



Fig. 10:

Organic and local motifs unifies artists from different religious communities – names of artist showing as signature

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 11:

Vernacular objects are imbued with value and spirit. India remains creative in its villages, with the younger generations being exposed to the art of making and creating, and transforming spaces on daily basis. (Ranjan & Ranjan, 2014)



Fig. 12. Children and their motifs the walls behind

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 13. New generation of artist and contemporary designs and styles

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 14. A child learns on to sing the Pater Gaan

Source: Author

The vernacular aesthetics

The social identities are well defined in the traditional settlements in their built forms, decorations and lifestyle. (Patidat & Raghuwanshi, 2014). The cultural traditions, adapted over generations, express in the particular aesthetic. Elements of design in the composition, blends local resources with industrialized ones. Hence we come across industrial materials defining the art form in a newer manner. It also emphasizes variation in the themes and mode of artwork. (Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2019)



Fig. 15. Traditional building material

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 16. Industrial material in building

Source: Author

The motifs and elements derived from the tradition that the village and the community grew on. Vernacular environments are very culture and place specific. The artwork befits the landscape, not to make a statement but harmonizing with nature. Use of scale is based on the visual relevance of the elements used vis-à-vis the built structure. (Cavalcanti, 1996)



Fig. 17. Surrounding landscape in design

Source: Author



Fig. 18. Elements from nature
Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 19. Scale of motif
Source: Author

The artwork on a building façade is a conscious choice of the artist and / or owner . In Naya, it manifests in a superb burst of creativity by merging building elements in the artwork or vice versa .



Fig. 20.
Innovative and creative integration of building components and the artwork
Source: Author



Fig. 21.

The built space all around is interspersed with daily objects becoming canvas for the artwork , as if to retain the ethos of the transition of the art from the building flowing into the surroundings spaces. In this way , they become elements in the visual composition , making it vibrant by the riot of colours and creating interesting aesthetics . (Ghosh M., Nag S., Roy S., 2015)



Fig. 22.
Daily objects become part of visual composition of the space
Source: Author



Fig. 23.
Source: Banglanatak.com

Creativity of the artist is manifested in their artwork. It generates a desire to be different from the neighbouring house and the façade remains a subjective choice of what the owners wish to illustrate and their sense of beauty, personal values and tradition of the community nurtured over generations. (Cavalcanti, 1996) It is unique in its own way, whether the built form is traditional or modern. Hence the designs vary from the traditional to contemporary styling of the design elements. It is interesting the way

the artist writes their name within the artwork to identify their house. Thus, also drawing attention to the potential buyer to sustain his/her craft.



Fig. 24.

Creativity giving individual identity to building facades in contemporary houses

Source: Author



Fig. 25.



Fig. 26.

Motifs are more traditional for vernacular houses – note the signature of the artist creatively inserted in the design

Source: Author



Fig. 27.

Source: Banglanatak.com

Vernacular designs are a reflection of the locale, especially the flora and fauna. It imitates the nature of the space in its expression. (Knapp, 2013) The *Patachitra* style creates the vernacular aesthetic as if as landscaping translating the concept of the calm and ordered surroundings into indigenous forms.



Fig. 28.

Local flora and fauna feature in the artwork and merges the built form with the surroundings

Source: Banglanatak.com



Fig. 29.

Source: Author

The Future of the Craft and its Village

Owing to the New Media , as the need of *Pater Gaan* became limited and exclusive, the artists required to probe newer avenues . In this quest for revival of the craft , the *Pata Chitrakars* came under the collective called Chitrataru , which led to the building of a folk art center to assemble , retain the craft activity and also to display their craft . The pride of the artisans and their confidence and participation in the craft is now evident from their own expressions in building this center.



Fig. 30: The identity of the Folk Art Center
Source: Author



Fig. 31: The pride in their own initiative
Source: Author

Exploration of the art is evident in the various parts and components of the building . The use of colours and design details tranforming into homely and down to earth spaces. (Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2019)



Fig. 32- window shutter
The craft applied on building components showing the new directions for the craft .
Source: Author



Fig.33: door shutter



Fig. 34: door frame

In this typical vernacular style building , the craft continued its foray into use in different products and innovations, and showcasing them within the building. Thus the center has become an example of revival of the craft in terms of vernacular habitat, allowing to explore new design alternatives to sustain their economy



Fig. 35:



Fig. 36:

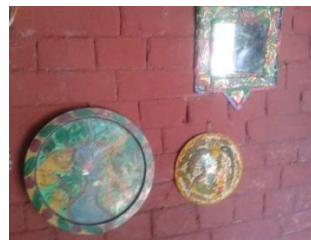


Fig. 37:



Fig. 38:

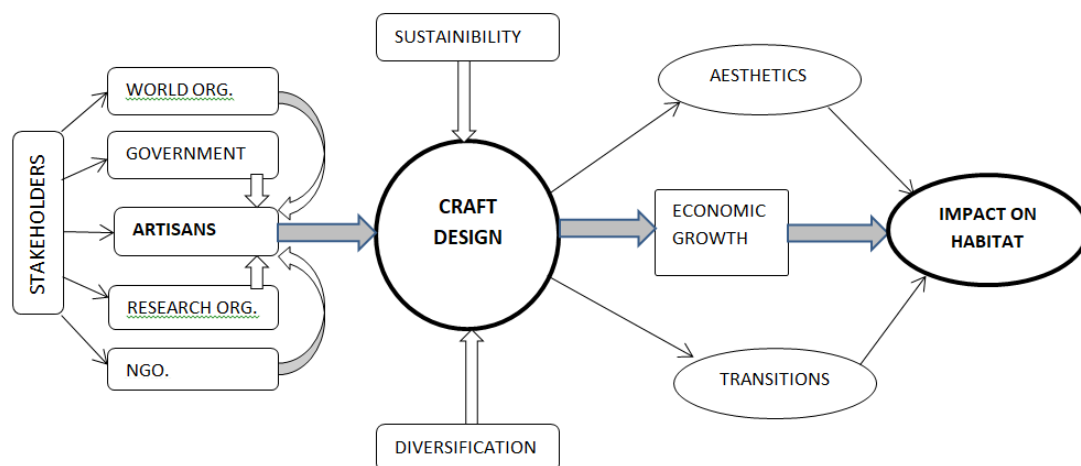
The vernacular style of the Folk Art Center housing the artefacts and display of creativity
Source: Author

Discussion: Transformation in vernacular aesthetics of Naya village by revival of *Patachitra* craft for sustainable development

In this research, the objective was to identify the pathway through which Naya had reinvented itself through economic self dependence by revival of its lineage of *Patachitra* as its employment generating activity. The purpose of the study was also to establish the indicators of such growth, which reflects back to socio-economic development of a settlement, to generate its identity, which in turn, becomes a reason for the community to sustain the craft and retain the progress achieved. It was derived that such progress was a gradual process which would show sustenance over time, diversifying for the purpose, if need be so. In a rural community which is very close-knit and bound by social norms for generations, the habitat is an expression of the way of living of the people and their activities, practices and rituals, which are strongly advocated by the society. For a vernacular settlement with an aesthetic heritage innate in its craft, the visual elements naturally reflect in the surroundings.

The support of various agencies towards the artisans helped them to focus on a craft as an occupation and provided them opportunities to create their designs by commissioned work or providing market assistance – at a time when the patrons of the craft dissipated against market economics. It happened over decades and through various agencies in different ways at various stages. Such support assisted in bringing back sustainability into the craft and leads to its diversification, which automatically improved earnings and when the economic improvement leads to betterment of the immediate habitats, the residences. As the craft is a collective one where the ownership to the songs are of the community, this improvement of surroundings percolates slowly into the neighbourhood. As rural communities are more integrated, economic developments of households manifest in improving surroundings. (Ponte, 2015)

C. Supporting revival of craft and its outcome

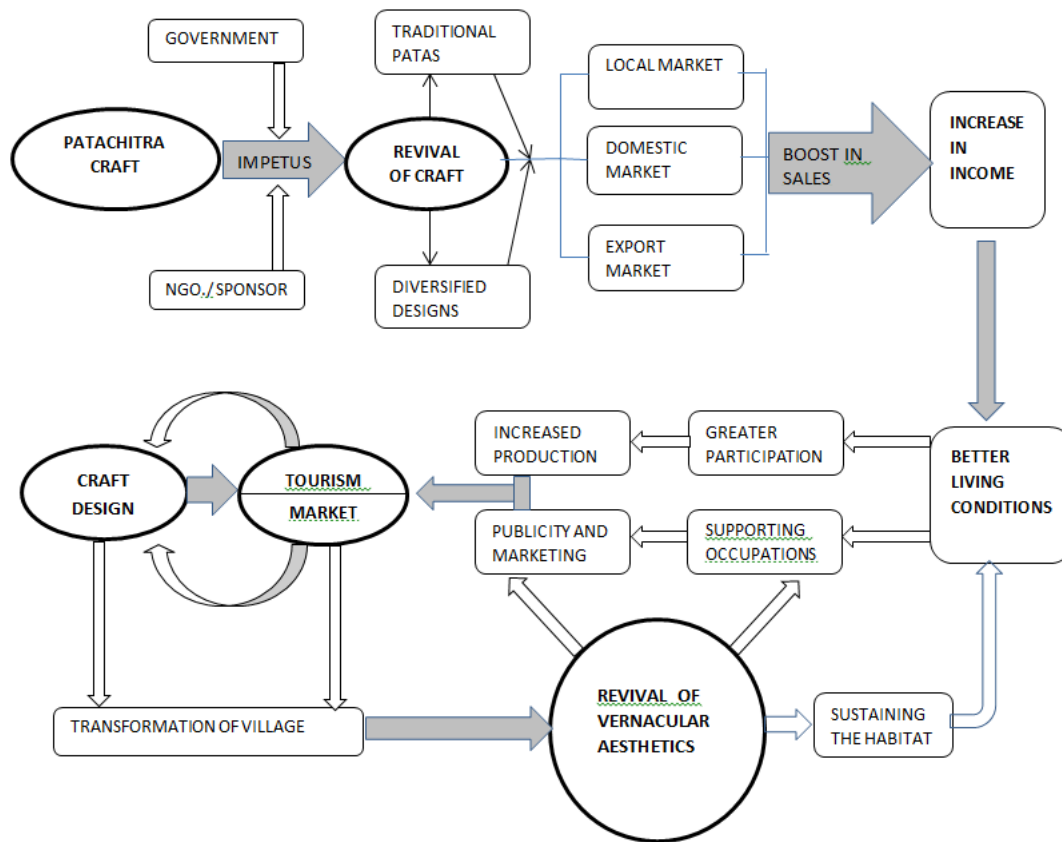


Flow chart source: Author

In the 1980's, it was the recognition with national awards and subsequent training by West Bengal Board of Handicrafts, that initiated the women of the village to take to the craft to supplement their family income, as their male counterparts felt it was not as much assuring as an income generating activity. This led to the women coming into the focus of the craft – authoring *Patras* or in terms of visibility and performance. Women being family and society oriented, the craft revived its heritage practices in terms of traditional material and designs. Along with this, the creativity of the artists, sharpened through training, and changing market demands led to the experimentation with contemporary social issues and then products of newer origin that were market friendly. As women are family-centric, the additional income generated was pumped into the household and its needs. Eventually, the men also joined in and this renewed the push to the craft. Products were developed to cater to various markets. More sales led to more income and created parallel supporting activities such as packaging, marketing etc. creating more income opportunities. This promoted tourism, as referred in section 2.1, which in turn improved the craft production as well as enthusiasm to project the village for tourism- one of the objectives of the RCH Project. In order to garner popularity and publicity, the vernacular aesthetics came in – similar to the folk art settlements at Jitbarpur (*Madhubani*) or Raghurajpur (*Pattachitra*), where the paintings on the facades created ambience and awe around the craft and ushered in tourists and hence market channels. In a

cyclic order, this became the pathway of the sustenance of the craft and revival of the vernacular aesthetics inherent in it.

D. Pathway for revival of craft and its impact on settlement



Flow chart source: Author

Conclusions

As we see in the vernacular settlements of handicrafts, the identity of the architecture reflects in the façade of the architecture of the village, easy to relate to the community practicing the craft, their living and working spaces reflecting their occupational needs. Murals, paintings and sculpture are integral to the architecture and not a decoration. Culture reflects on vernacular settlements. In order to retain the cultural heritage one must bring back the elements of vernacular to the buildings. These cultural identities are invisible in modern cities or urbanized spaces. (Patidat & Raghuwanshi, 2014). Using folk art as decoration is natural to bring improvement to this vernacular aesthetics.

This has earlier manifested in the villages of *Madhubani* paintings in Bihar and those of *Pattachitra* in Orissa, each of the two crafts having its own designs and patterns distinctly different from each other. For *Madhubani*, the household interior decorations emerged out to gradually manifest in the most economically viable manner which can identify any *Madhubani* painters' village now by its aesthetic characteristics. In Raghurajpur, the entire village has gained the identity of a 'Heritage Village' only because of its artwork based on its *Pattachitra*. Pride and publicity of the craft lead to its sustainability and revival of the villages. Popularity of these crafts, in local and foreign markets, transformed the villages into places of tourist attraction only because of their paintings. (Chandra & Mukherjee, 2016)

Resonating with the likes of the revival seen in the previous two examples, Naya becomes an example of Governmental support and peoples' will to transcend borders and bring back sustainable economy. It created identity to the habitat remaining rooted to the soil. It showed that the turnaround of a settlement towards traditional habitats against the tide of a global trend in urbanization is possible through systematic intervention, funding and initiatives primarily taken by Government and followed by other agencies. In each case, the revival manifests itself after 2-3 decades wherein we see imparting of training,

diversification of products and market initiatives. The revival is evident as in the residence of one of the coveted *Patua*, Swarna Chitrakar, who is a national awardee and has widely travelled in India and abroad. She houses tourists in her house, providing basic hygienic stay to enjoy the feel of the village and its craft. Her home stay stays booked for most part of the year. Similarly, artists like Putul along with her husband would travel far to attend fairs and also to impart training as master artisans in workshops outside. The revival was interpreted based on primary survey and interview of the artists as conveyed by themselves. The visual documentation of the field work only supplemented the information gathered. The cultural heritage was reinstated and vernacular aesthetics revived or introduced to a traditional settlement, establishing sustainable development by people's initiative. The result is a creative manifestation unique to inducing the transformation of the village into a craft destination, establishing the vernacular aspects of the craft in its habitat.

Acknowledgement

The authors express their sincere gratitude towards the support, resource materials and the photographs of Pingla provided by Smt. Ananya Bhattacharya, Director and Vice President – Projects, Banglanatak.com, which was essential to shaping up of this article. We would also like to thank the team of Banglanatak.com and Contact Base who assisted in familiarizing us with Pingla and enriched our learnings on *Patachitra*, the craft.

The authors mention sincerely that this research would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation and assistance of the *Patuas* of Naya whose pride in the revival of their settlement was evident in every possible manner.

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