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An amalgamation of Craft and Heritage- Prologue of new motifs of dieties statues of Saas -Bahu (SahastraBaahu) temple in Gond art of Madhya Pradesh (Gwalior)

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Abstract:

The present article seeks to examine some aspects of the crafts and craftsmen pertaining to the amalgamation of crafts and heritage. Due to the numerous tradition tales and mysteries surrounding the temples and crafts in Madhya Pradesh, they have long attracted the attention of students, researchers, and experts of various hues. Central India is most popular for the tribal groups specially inhabiting sections of Madhya Pradesh, offers a rich cultural heritage as well as unique arts and crafts. For this study the identification of eight semi - fragmented statues of deities in Saas-Bahu Temple through its iconographic features was studied in detail with its amalgamation and introduction in the Tribal craft of Gond art, which depicts the magic of multicoloured patterns with dots and lines. Gond Painting as an art and craft form has flourished in Madhya Pradesh from very ancient period. The unique thing about Indian painting is that they are usually representative and connected to highly significant religious forms as culture events. This research covered the study of documents and information relating to the topic; a field trip to collect information, photographs of the semi-fragmented statues in Saas Bahu Temple of Gwalior. Identified statues were combined and introduced in Gond painting with the usage of signature style of artisans- dots and lines. Studio based research was used in

the development of Gond painting with its newly introduced motifs with the reference to the identified deities of Saas Bahu temple using acrylics on canvas .

Keywords: Saas Bahu temple, Gond art, motifs, Deities, Amalgamation, Craft, Semi- Fragmented Statues, Heritage, Iconography

Introduction:

India is known for its craft and heritage. The art and heritage plays an important role in defining the cultural feature of a place or people with time. (Shikha Patidat, 2014) The legacy of every state in India has its own traditional folk art (Designing Door hanging through hand painting using sculptures of sahastrabahu temple, 2020; Chavvi Joshi, 2020) and history of its heritage which are reflected in temples ,forts and many other monuments.

Madhya Pradesh is one of the states of India that is home to a large number of tribal communities The state is famous for its tribal arts and crafts. The paintings have been made in Madhya Pradesh since ancient times, and evidence of this can be found on the walls of many caves that decorate the face of Madhya Pradesh. The paintings are useful not only for decoration, but also for religious beliefs. The tribal paintings are very simple, painted on the wall , to please the gods and prevent evil and illness. The paintings of Nimar in Bundelkhand, Malwa, Gondwana and Madhya Pradesh became famous. (Sakshi, 2017)Traditional gond painting is a unique expression of gond tribe of central india. These paintings describes the life of gond people with traditional motifs. (Goswami, 2018)

Gond Folk Art:

The Gondi painted and carved art on the walls of the cave over 1400 years ago. All of these date back to the Mesolithic era. The Gondi believe that seeing good pictures brings good luck. They traditionally painted motifs, tattoos and photographs on the floors and walls of their homes.. (Modak)

It is also said that the group of gond tribe has Dravidian origin, which can be traced to pre aryan era . ‘Gond’ word derived from Dravidian word ‘Kond’ which means green mountains. As per the Anthropological evidences their existence in Gondwana –‘Land of Gond’ since pre aryan in the green mountains of Godavari gorges in the south to vindhyachal mountains in the north and also considered one of the largest tribe of south asia. The Gonds also known as Koi,Koithur ,Koyathor,Gondis or Gondas , covers a large area of central india in the states of Madhya Pradesh where these people living in the dense forests of Vindhya ,Satpura and Mekal in the narmada region in amarkantak for several centuries and also some of these tribes also inhabit in the regions of eastern maharashtra ,Chhattisgarh , northern Andhra Pradesh and western orissa. As per the scholars gonds settled in Gondwana in ninth and thirteenth centuries AD. The various parts of central india ruled by gond in forthteenth centuries . By sixteenth centuries their ruled continued in four kingdoms – Garha -Mandla ,Deogarh,Chanda and kherla in central india. Muslim invasion forced them to migrate to the nearby forests region of Vindhya and Satpura. (Goswami, 2018)Gondi paintings come in a variety of creative styles, primarily related to the particular painters and their practices. One of the distinguishing elements is the practice of the "Signaturepattern" used to "fill" larger placements on the canvas. The placement of these fills is a unique recognizable symbol used by Gondi artists, and each Gondi painter decided thatwould place his signature. (Sakshi, 2017) Traditionally, this art was done manually on thewall, which is time consuming and labor intensive. Digna and Bhittichitra are examples of contemporary Gond paintings. A traditional geometric design is used to create the Gond art Digna on the house's walls and flooring. Bhittichitra refers to the paintings of animals, plants, and trees that are displayed on the walls of homes. (Tailor, 2021) Color is usually obtained naturally from items such as charcoal, colored soil, plant sap, mud, flowers, leaves and even cow dung. However, due to the lack of natural colors, Gondi artists began to use poster colors and paintings on canvas. With the introduction of colours and urbanisation, pictorial painting evolved into narrative visual art, and individuals began to use new mediums like acrylic paint on canvas, ink on paper, and silkscreen printing, among others. (KNOW ABOUT “GOND PAINTINGS” — OBSIDIAN SPACE, 2021)

Gondi paintings are very similar to styles uses dots to create the paintings. The art form have different types of points. The shaman believes that the particles of his body melt in space and combine with the particles of the spirit to form another body. This is an ancient poetic vision of the atom, a fusion of infinitely small and infinitely large. (Daryani, n.d.)

The most unique significance of the gond's are individual signatures within signatures consists of repetitive lines, minuscule dots, diagonals, chains, tiny circles, crosses or any other form of strokes that can be repeated thousands of time over. Such signatures surfacing creates textures, tones and sections within a painting of Gond art. (Dastakari Haat Samiti)

Sahastra Baahu Temple, Gwalior

Sas Bahu Temple, also known as Sas Bahu Mandir, Sas Bahu Temple, Sahastrabahu Temple, or Harisadanam Temple, is an 11th-century twin temple. Like elsewhere in India, these twin temples were locally known as Susvav Temples. The word Sasbahu means "mother-in-law, bride" or "mother with daughter-in-law" and is an association that means they are interdependent together. An ASI guide has explained that a ruler built the largest temple (Sas Bahu) for his queen. When he passed away and his son became the next king, his wife (daughter-in-law of the previous king) asked him to build a temple of her own for worship, and that is why. The new king built a smaller temple of Lord Shiva next door. Sas Bahu temple where his mother was praying. (Dey M., 2019)

"Sas Bahu" is the local word for "Sahasra Bahu", which means "One with a thousand arms", which makes perfect sense as the largest temple is actually dedicated to Vishnu. There are many structures inside the fort, one of the most beautiful of which is the Saasbahu Temple. The temple complex consists of two temples at the eastern end of the fort. One is the large temple (Saas) and the other is the small temple (Bahu). Another name for this pair of temples is Sahastrabahu, which refers to a thousand armed or infinite Vishnu. The temple's Mandapa inscription deciphered by Alexander Cunningham states that the construction began in 1093 AD during the reign of King Kachhwaha Mahipala by his brother Padmapala. Faced with widespread destruction during the Delhi Sultanate reign, the temple was largely rebuilt and restored at various times. There is no large temple Shikhara, but Cunningham speculates from the ruins that the plan shows a three-story structure with balconies and a cruciform base. This suggests that the temple originally follows the Bumija style, which is over 100 feet high. The large temple (saas) has three entrances from three main points and a richly carved entrance to Mandapa, which leads to the main pillar-lined Mandapa. At the entrance to, there is Garuda in the Mare, and Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are engraved on the tablet just above. At the front door, the Ganges and Yamuna rivers and their attendants are drawn. Mukmandapa has a finely carved ceiling. The main mandapa has four huge pillars that support the weight of the upper floors and are elaborately carved. The small temple (bahu) has Mandapa with stone seats (kakhasana) around it. The door to the disappeared Holy of Holies is richly carved and offers views of the city below. (; Dey M., 2019)

Amalgamation of Gond Art and Saas Bahu Temple of Madhya Pradesh

The stories, myths in gond tribe are related to their community local gods, natural elements which they have been carried out from ancestors or previous artisans and whatever they are seeing around them in their surroundings and environment, implement the same in their art. The god and goddesses they are worshipping are the same which common people (not gond community) are worshipping Vishnu, brahma, Mahadeva, devi's, baigasur, animals.

The badadeva in gond art is known as the creator which is same as God Brahma who is considered as the creator from the trinity Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh. Ganesh, Snakes, Elephants, cows with Krishna and Radha, stories related to Krishna, Nandi (cow with human face), Mahua Tree is as Tree of Life, known as wishfull tree,

- Mythological Tales and Legends related to Lord Shiva, Krishna, Ganesha etc
- Flora – Mahua flowers fruits, seeds and leaves are used for many purposes by the gond tribe.
- Fauna-Pictures of pictures ,birds, crabs, mythical beasts ,lizards, lions, tigers, deer, snakes, wild boars, cows ,monkeys ,elephants ,horses, fish etc.
- Important Events and Rituals
- Local Deities – Phulvari Devi is known as Goddess Kali, Jalharin Devi (river goddess), which is known as Narmada because the gond tribe resides in the areas near to Jharkhand , Marani Devi etc.
- Majorly depicts various festivals, rituals, human -nature relationship and sometimes their daily chores. (KNOW ABOUT “GOND PAINTINGS” — OBSIDIAN SPACE, 2021)

The dieties are same either worshipped by the community or common people (not related to the gond community) just the names are different .In the present scenario ,as a primary source one can trace the images of dieties in temples but due to the destruction made by the Mughals previously leads to un-identification of the elements related to the reliefs or statues.

Saas – Bahu Temple of Gwalior ,situated in Gwalior Fort is one of the evidence of it , the embossing and reliefs are somewhat identified but the fragmented or semi fragmented statues are unidentified and people should know about which statue is what not just making the assumptions . The identification of it will create awareness to the people and helps to draw an image in their mind and attracts more people towards the temple, may be this can leads to be more clear in terms of saas bahu historical charaterstics . The identified features of Deities has been implemented in the gond art which also creates awareness to the artisan to know and gain knowledge about the temples which gives a new story to their narration through the paintings . The gond community are very sensitive towards their motifs used in paintings by keeping in mind similar motifs of dieties will be implemented and explained to them . The motifs of dieties through paintings are developed keeping in mind the authenticity of the craft and also referred to the artisan Sunil Singh Shyam of the tribe ,so that the transparency is maintained between the author and the artisan.

Aims and Objective –

- To study the importance of dots and lines used in gond art motifs as per the signature style of the gond artists.
- To observe and analyse eight semi- fragmented statues of dieties present in sahastra-bahu temple through their iconographic features.
- Development of the rendered new motifs by using acrylic painting on the canvas as per the selection of dieties , gond artist sunil singh shyam.

Methodology-

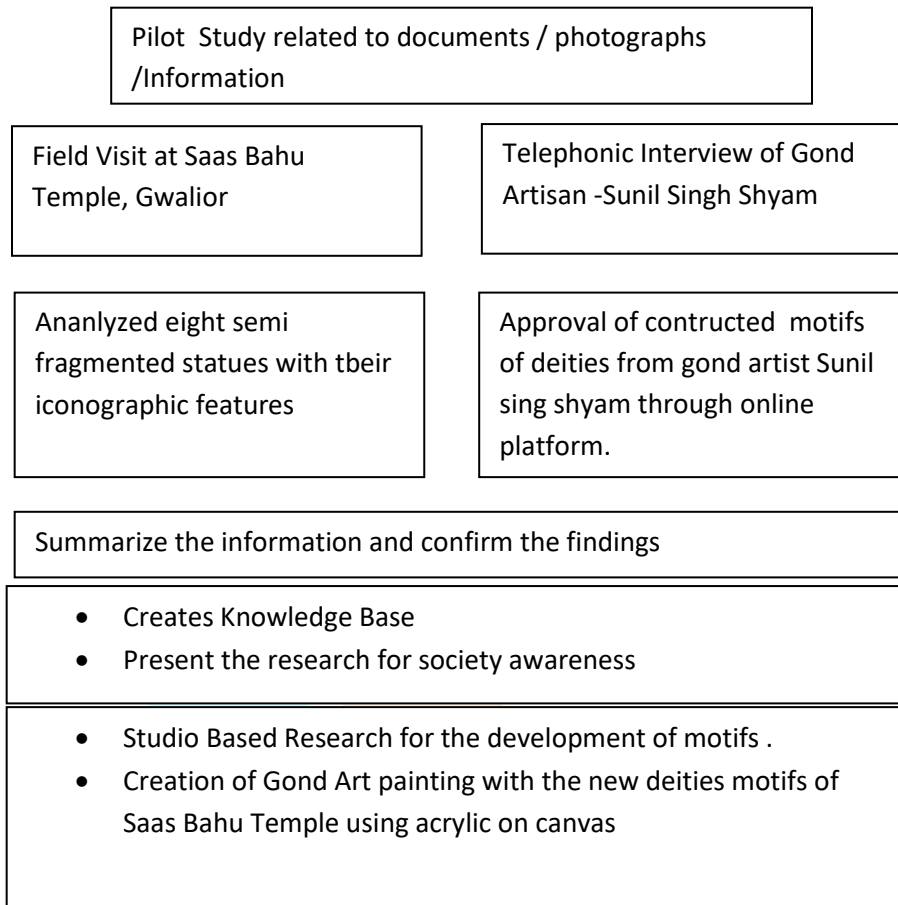
Research was conducted systematically in the areas of Gwalior ,Madhya Pradesh. The object of research includes enshrinement site of Saas Bahu Temple in Gwalior Fort .

This paper is based on the identification of semi- fragmented statues of dieties in Saas Bahu Temple and its introduction in Gond art , hand painted craft of Madhya Pradesh. Researcher had studied in detail about the existing motifs of dieties being used in gond art by their artists signature style. The Exploratory study was conducted on Saas Bahu Temple. An inspiration for the development of motifs. The iconographic features of the semi fragmented statues of dieties of saas bahu temple , act as the important source .Primary Information was gathered through field visit to the Saas Bahu Temple in Gwalior fort and data was recorded as photographic record of fragmented statues of dieties. A total of eight semi-fragmented statues was identified and collected by visiting saas bahu temple ,Gwalior Fort. The proposed study is qualitative in nature.

A set of Questionnaire was prepared for the in depth interview which was done in telephonic form with gond artisan Sunil Singh Shyam ,conducted to trace the transition and also for the approval of new motifs in terms of dieties and their flexibility for acceptance in their community . For approval of Motifs done by Sunil Singh Shyam from patangarhsss , gond artist who has been actively participated and involved in the study.

Studio Based Research is used for the research carried out to create basic drawing and up to the artwork. finale as a painting of the craft . (Sumardianshah Silah, 2013)




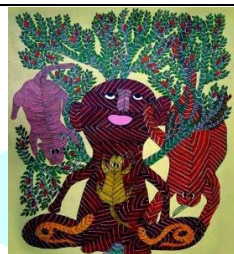

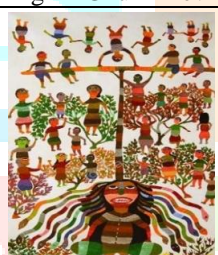





Secondary Data was also collected from various research papers, blogs and articles .






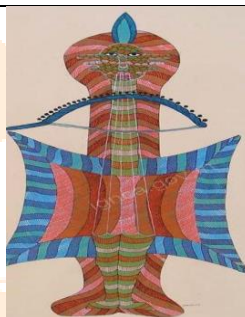


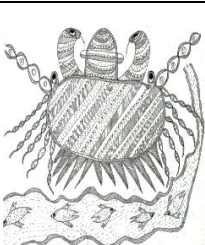




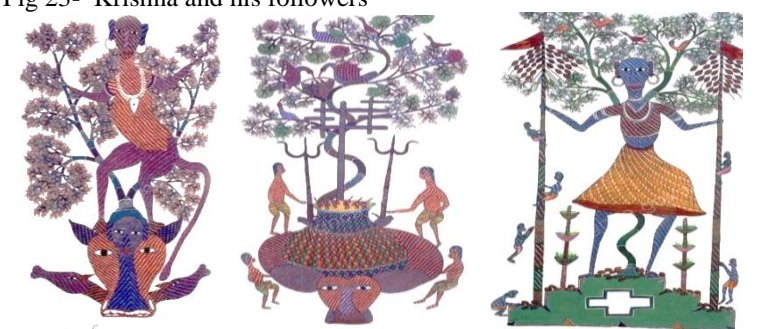



Discussions and Analysis-

- As per the interview, Sunil Singh Shyam informed certain myths about the gond painting which was mostly done by the gond women traditionally they were the one who used to get tattoo or Godna on their body in a very tiny form which symbolizes them and also according to them this is the only thing which they can carry with themselves after death .
- After the death , the particular godna or tattoo is then carry forward by the members of their family . It can also be said that the gond artists who are using their own different signature styles carry forwarding of their ancestors godna or tattoo.
- The gond artisans used all kind of detailing style in their paintings , but when it comes to some award or to get some customized paintings done each artist have registered their own individual recognisable detailing style.
- The detailing style which is done in the paintings also shows the movement and their present existence among the community.

Presently, information related to 12 Gond artisans were studied including Sunil Singh Shyam who worked on the paintings of deities with their signature style.

S.no	Gond Artisan	Paintings
1.	Paintings by Indu Bai Maravi	   <p>Fig1-Cow with a human face Fig2 -Kalimata Fig3 – Thakur Deva</p>
2.	Paintings by Mohan Singh	  <p>Fig4 – Ghurri Dev Fig5 – Bagaisur</p>
3.	Paintings of Dhaniya Baai	   <p>Fig 6-Raihichijhula and the goddess Raksha Fig 7- Shiva Fig-8 Narmada emerging from Amarkantak</p>
4.	Paintings by Mohan singh	  <p>Fig9 – Ghurri Dev Fig10 – Ganesh on Snake</p>
5.	Paintings by Narmada Prasad Tekam	 <p>Fig 11 – Ardha Ganesha</p>

6.	Paintings by Dilip Shyam			
		Fig 13-Snake and Ganesha		
7.	Paintings by Venkat Shyam			
		Fig14 -Augustani Mata	Fig15-The Trinity Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh	Fig16- Hanuman
8.	Paintings by Dhavat singh uikey	 		
		Fig 17 –Ganesha	Fig18 – Gond Diety	
9.	Paintings of Bhajju Shyam	 		
		Fig 19- Vasudeva carrying Krishna, across Yamuna. The crocodile is river.		Fig 20- Radha and Krishna
10.	Paintings by Choti Tekam	 		
		Fig 22- Shankar Deva with snakes seated Kerkramal		

11.	Paintings by Prasad Kumsaran	 <p>Fig 23- Krishna and his followers</p>  <p>Fig 24- Baigasurdeva, Fig 25- - Thakurdeva Fig26 – Mehrelin Dai Protecting the village from evil spirits</p>
12.	Paintings by Sunil Singh Shyam	 <p>Fig 27 -Shiva</p>  <p>Fig 28- Animals of God</p>  <p>Fig 29- Matsya</p>

Identification of Iconographic features of Fragmented Statues of Saas bahu temple.



Fig – 30 (Clicked by the author)



Fig-31 Image of Lord Vishnu
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- The two main forms of Vishnu , a standing figure and a sleeping figure.
- Depicted with four arms depicts the variety of earth ,four guidelines of area ,four vedas.
- Shankha or “Panchajanya” represents five senses within body and mind i.e water ,fire, earth, air and sky. It depicts vishnu power to create and maintain the universe.
- Sudarshan chakra called “Super Vision” represents 6 petals of lotus ,represents infinite power of continuous creation and destruction.
- The mace or “gada” called Kaumodaki symbolized his sacred power-source of spiritual and physical power.
- Visible in yellow veil represents Vedas, skinny yellow dhoti called Pitambara .
- His attributes shown in different colours ,his skin colour is light blue shows spreading nature. It is the colour of infinite sky and sea where he lives.
- The diety wear armlets which symbolize three goals of life- pleasure, success and justice.
- Also wore Kaustabha jewel around his neck , which is known to be emerged from ocean. (Iconography of Lord Vishnu)
- The earrings reflect intrinsic opposites in creation — knowledge and ignorance, happiness and unhappiness, joy and suffering. (Swati, 2019)



Fig-32 (Clicked by the author)



Fig-33 Image of Lord Vishnu with Goddess Lakshmi and Padmavati.
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- As the temple was dedicated to Lord Vishnu the statues with the identified iconographic features so the myths related to it can be connected here.
- Vishnu is also frequently depicted as reclining (shayana) on the coils of Shesha, also known as Adhi-Shesh. (Swati, 2019)
- As in the standing figure of Lord Vishnu ,he is always associated with Goddess, Laxhmi who stands on the right and on the other side is goddess padmavati ,who is also worshipped as an aspect of Goddess Laxhmi. (Damani, 2018)

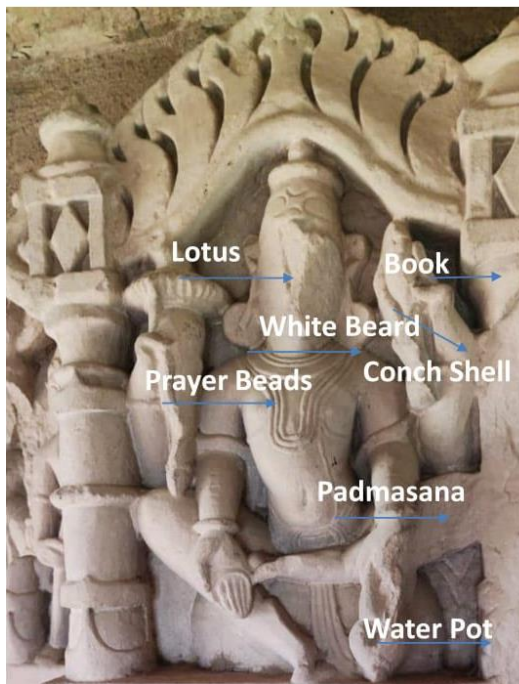


Fig-34 (Clicked by the author)

Fig-35 Image of Lord Brahma
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- Brahma is holding these primordial fluids in his palm, in a kamandalu (water container), in a hand resting posture also symbolizes Earth (Team, 2021)
- Brahma frequently carries a book in one hand as a representation of the world's knowledge.
- Prayer beads represent all of the materials that move into the developing the universe.
- Each of the four Vedas—Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda—is represented by one of Brahman's four hands. The Vedas are a collection of historic Indian Sanskrit writings. (Tortora) It is also said that Brahma's four hands are seen in held up in symbolic gestures or holding meaningful artifacts, although it is said that the hands represent the four directions of travel – Poorab, Paschim, Uttar, and Dakshin – and stand for ego, intellect, mind and confidence
- White beard showing the intensity of Brahma preoccupation with meditation and time control.
- Famous for never wielding weapons, he is seen seated in Lalitasana or Padmasana, showing dignity and calm because he is the creator of the world. (Neha Mubeen, 2014)

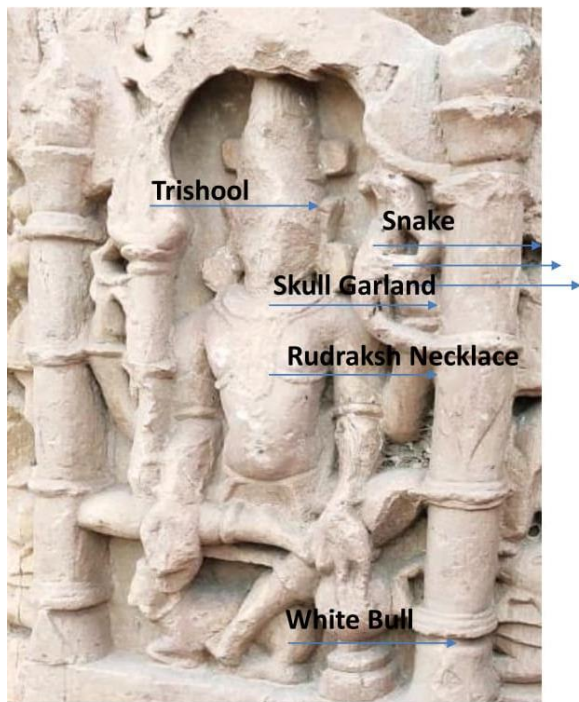


Fig-36 (Clicked by the author)

Fig-37 Image of Lord Shiva
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- Wore a garland of skulls munda mala around his neck represents revolution of ages successive appearance and disappearance of human races .
- Serpant is represented as ego in hindu scripture, which he as a man has conquered.
- Nandi is his vehicle represents both power and ignorance. (Sherline Pimenta K.)
- Trishool- Tri means three and shool means spear, it represents knowledge ,power and implementation
- Shiva is often called Vibhuti Bhushan (the one having ash as his ornament) (Sherline Pimenta K.) which are three lines of holy ashes. (bhasma) The shape derives by the three fingers used to put ash on the body .
- Rudraksha – Rudra is the also one of the name of shive and akasha means eyes. It is said that tears that escaped from shivas eye became the rudraksh. (Sherline Pimenta K.)The 108 beads symbolize the elements which are used to create the world.

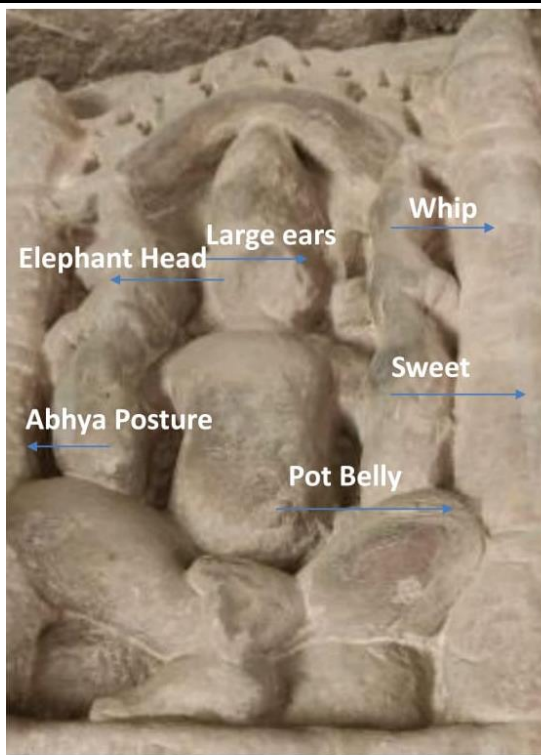


Fig-38 (Clicked by the author)

Fig-39 Image of Lord Ganesha
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- The elephant head suggests fidelity, intelligence and discriminative power.
- The reality that he has a single tusk (the opposite being damaged off) suggests Ganesha's capability to conquer all kinds of dualism.
- The extensive ears denote wisdom, capability to pay attention to individuals who are trying to find assist and to mirror on non secular truths.
- Ganesha's belly contains infinite universes. It signifies nature's generosity and equanimity, Ganesha's ability to swallow the sorrows of the universe and protect the world.
- The hand wielding an axe is a symbol of the rentrenchment of all desires, bearer of pain and suffering. With this axe, Ganesha can hit and repel obstacles. The axe should also push man down the path of justice and truth.
- The second hand holds a whip, a symbol of the power that binds the devotee to the eternal bliss of God. The whip conveys that worldly attachments and desires must be removed.
- The third hand, facing the devotee, is in an attitude of blessing, refuge and protection (abhaya)
- the fourth hand holds a lotus flower (padma) or in some images sweet, symbolizing the ultimate goal of human evolution, the sweetness of the realized inner self .



Fig-40 (Clicked by the author)

Fig-41 (Clicked by the author) **Keechaka**



Fig-42 &43 Image of Kechchaka
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

- As per T.V.G Shastri they are symbolized as a dwarf of Indian sculptures .
- These are bracket dwarfs known as keechak also the evidence of such kind of dwarfs holding the weight on their head with hands up and also in standing figures are found in Amravati region by scholar Alex Rea.

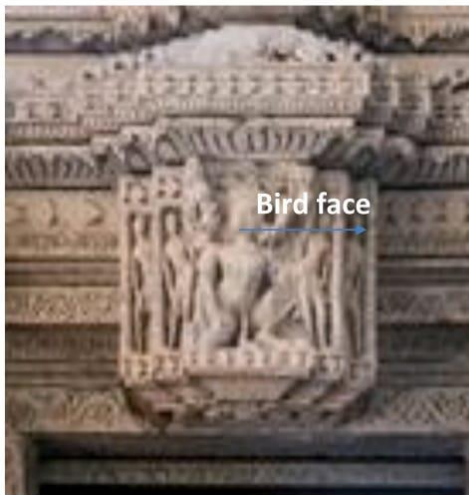


Fig-44 (Clicked by the author)
(Identified and Sketched by the author)



Fig-45 Image of Garuda

Without an image of Garuda, no Vishnu temple is complete. Garuda, a Vishnu devotee-servant, is the only deity as powerful as Hanuman, another Vishnu devotee-servant known as Rama. (Admin, 2020) Garuda sculptures and reliefs are intriguing to examine because the shape is a combination of human and animal features, despite the fact that Garuda is a bird, thanks to the many statues and reliefs of Garuda and the backing of the Adiparwa Book. The embodiment of Garuda differs from one temple to the next, and the embodiment differs from the Garuda that existed in Indian tradition, from where Garudeya's narrative derives.



Fig-44 , 45 &46 (Clicked by the author)



Fig-47 , 48 &49 Image of Dwarpaals
(Identified and Sketched by the author)

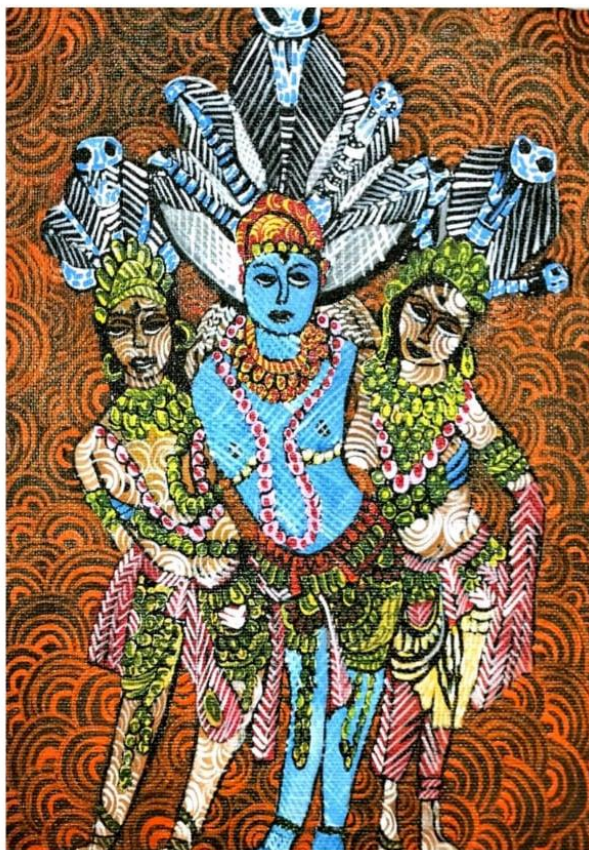
Attendants on their sides, while the dwarapalas stand at the two ends. Inside the sanctum, the dwarapalas display the reigning deity's qualities. The dwarapalas serve as protectors, warding off all evil and preventing contamination of the temple's seed and embryo (garbha). (Dey M. B., 2021)

Results of Amalgamation of Gond art and Saas bahu Temple Motifs

- All the identified compositions of dieties was send through online platform to sunil singh shyam for approval with proper explanation of identified God and Goddesses ,which was then approved by him .
- Implementing the combination of all the textures used by the artists of gond tribe .
- Researcher combined the signature style of sunil singh shyam(Table1) i.e Khat , Fish Scales, Leaf Veins ,Broken Lines , which was implemented in the new motifs in gond paintings .
- Development of 3 rendered Paintings using acrylic on canvas.

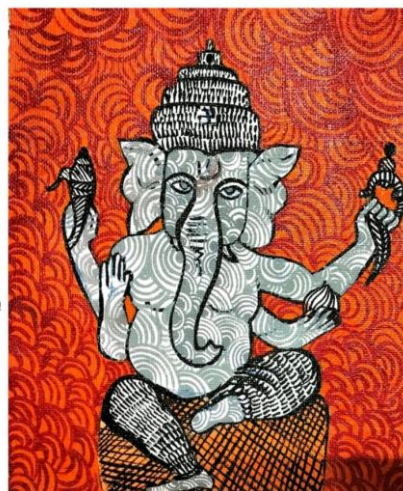
Painting 1-

Theme- Vishnu with Lakshmi and Padmavati

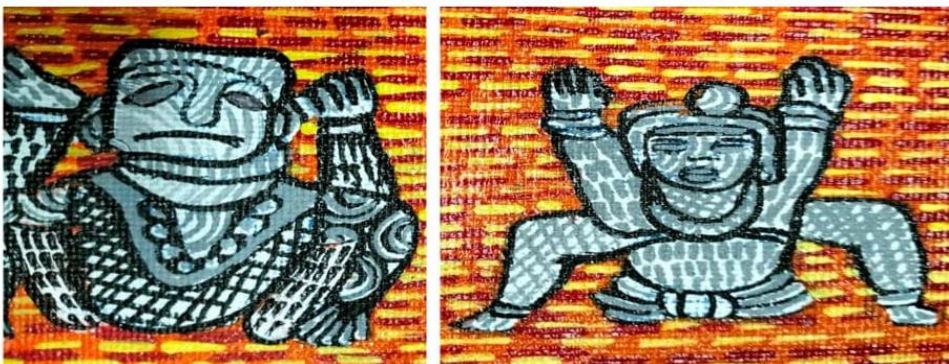


Painting 2-
Theme- Brahma

Painting 3-
Theme- Ganesha



Painting 4-
Theme- Vishnu with Lakshmi and Padmavati



Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Introduction of new motifs in the Gond painting should not be restricted to only one temple , exploration of new motifs can be discovered through its identification from various other temples of Gwalior .
2. Signature style of one or more artisans can also be combined in the new introduction of motifs for the paintings.
3. Traditional values to be given more importance as previously plant based or natural extracted colours was used and presently could be implemented the same in any garments and lifestyle accessories. This doesn't mean the garment or the accessories will not be cost effective through proper training and the placement of newly introduced motifs in the garment or accessories will help in promoting the craft as well as hertigae but also to create a platform for the consumers or art lovers or to the society to know its authenticity.
4. Acrylic colour acts as a major mediums nowadays like the one is used in the study but through natural colours also these paintings can be implemented.
5. For Cost Effectiveness - Design and Development of Gond Motifs can be used in production, printing and weaving techniques so like other crafts printed material in market ,gond can be one of them as of now its very rare to see a gond art fabrics in the market.
6. Digital Development has created a vast platform for the designers. Simplifying it and changing the colours tones , repetition of a particular motif will lead to variety of designs

Conclusion

The amalgamation of Gond art and Saas Bahu temple opened up a pathway for artisans and historians to work together. The focus on temple, its architectural features, identification of statues of deities and celebrating the gond art folk heritage. The present study was an initial step in the direction of introducing new motifs of similar deities in the gond paintings. The awareness of collection of new motifs, stories in the gond paintings through the temples will bring a new evolution to the society. To see what can not be identified, but identified into an art form is itself unique.

“ It’s a gift of past ,present and future”

Acknowledgement

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