Sociological Study of Tradition and Change in the Warli Art Form

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment for the award of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **"SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF TRADITION AND CHANGE IN THE WARLI ART FORM"** submitted by ASHWINI SHELKE to the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**. This is an original work and has not been submitted, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University.

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROF. SURINDER S. JODHKA   **PROF. SUSAN VISVANATHAN**

(Chairperson)   **(Supervisor)**

Dedicated to:

The Savasinis – the first Warli Artists

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GLOSSARY

Bhagat – *shaman*

Chauk – *a pictorial depiction of the wedding on the wall*

Cheda *– Warli God*

Dev chauk – *god painted in a square during marriage*

Dhartari *– Mother earth*

Dhavleri – *priestess who conducts marriages*

Gavatari *– Cow mother*

Geru *– red stone*

Gharora *– a system where if the man is unable to pay the bride price, he can still live with the woman.*

Haldi - *turmeric*

Himai *– Warli goddess*

Hirva *– Warli Goddess*

Jhoting *– Warli God*

Kadi Mod *– breaking of the Stick, to symbolize the end of a fight*

Kalash *– a pot with a coconut and mango leaves, Hindu symbol.*

Kansari *– Corn Goddess*

Kordyawar Anne – *A man and woman living together, perform their wedding ceremony later.*

Lagnace Chitra – *marriage paintings*

Lugde – *clothes worn by Warli women*

Mandap bandhane – *constructing the wedding pandal.*

Naranadeva – *Warli God*

Palaghata – *goddess of fertility*

Pancairiya – *Warli god, with five heads*

Panchas – *five oldest male members of the village*

Rab – *fertilizer, made of a mix of dried leaves and cowdung*

Savasini – *married woman*

Swastika – *Hindu symbol*

Tarpa – *musical instrument*

Ukhal – *a cylindrical space line with an iron sheet, bored into the floor*

Vaghadeva – *Tiger God of the Warli's.*

Varles – *uplanders*

Varalat – *the upper region*

Yoni - *Womb*

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INTRODUCTION

"A picture is worth a thousand words"

~ Napoleon Bonaparte

Art among the tribal societies in India is ubiquitous. Its antecedence can be traced right from the Paleolithic age as seen in the cave paintings of Bhimbetka near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. The tribal art has influenced the art forms of the Indian civilization itself. The art of the Buddhist monuments of Bharut and Sanchi shows strong links with the tribal and village cults of Yakshas, Nagas and the tree spirits. In the last couple of decades Tribal Art and Culture has gained immense popularity worldwide, as a result of the yearnings for being rooted, this has led to the surge of love for the "Ethnic". In India many of the Tribal Art forms too have gained immense popularity in the recent times. Warli Painting is a case in point.

The study "Sociological Study of Tradition and Change in the Warli Art Form" attempts to understand the Warli Paintings, their meanings and the changes that the paintings have undergone over a period of time. This study looks at how Art has been studied sociologically and understood by various Sociologists in differing contexts. The discipline of sociology has studied Art as it is a part of the society and several studies have looked at Art in terms of the relationship between art and society – how art is a reflection of the society and how art has an impact on the society. It is important to see the relationship between the creator of art – the artist and the consumers of art – the audiences. The first part of the study looks at the relationship between art and society, while the second part of this study attempts to understand Warli Paintings as they originated in the Warli community. In order to understand the Warli painting, it is important to have an understanding of the Warli community – their origin, lifestyle, religion, beliefs and cultural practices. The Warli paintings have been seen as a reflection of the beliefs and practices of their community. Therefore in order to understand the meanings of the paintings, the reason for the use of symbols and what these symbols denote, it is important to understand the Warli community's culture and practices.

This study focuses largely on the theoretical premise, that art is a reflection of the society, therefore the Warli paintings are a reflection of the Warli society. The Warli community however has undergone several changes over a period of time, this study attempts to understand

the changes that have taken place and if these changes have had an impact on the Warli art form. The process of urbanization has introduced several changes in the communities lifestyle, their culture and practices, it is important to see if the changes that have taken place in the society are reflected through the paintings. Another important aspect is that, since the Warli art form has gained prominence and recognition, the art form has undergone several changes in the style, the symbols, the motifs and the meaning. One can also see that commercialization of the art form has lead to a surge of Warli artists of which most are men, leading to a change in the ritualistic traditional practice among the Warlis. The *Savasinis* (married women) who would traditionally paint the *Chauk* have now been sidelined and the process of painting the traditional *chauk* has been taken over by the men, thereby showing the impact of commercialization on the art form, which in turn has an impact on the culture of the Warlis. Thereby showing how on one hand art is a reflection of the society and on the other art also influences society. This study identifies the various changes that have taken place in the Warli paintings over a period of time and how these changes are a reflection of the change in the Warli community and also how the changing art form has in turn impacted the community.

In order to understand the relationship between Warli art and society, it is important to look at the various concepts that are involved; firstly Warlis are a tribal community, located mostly in Maharashtra and Southern Gujarat Districts. Therefore the concept of Tribe needs to be understood, secondly the concept of culture needs to be understood as Warli paintings are a part of the Warli culture and thirdly one needs to understand the relationship between art and tribe, this would bring forth a clearer picture on how different art forms are a part of the tribal culture and practice and the position they hold in the tribal communities.

The Warlis are a tribe inhabiting largely in parts of Thane District, Dadra Nagar Haveli and the fringes of Dang's District of Gujarat. Before we delve into the nuances of Warli Art and painting, it is necessary first to conceptualize the concept of Tribe.

The concept of Tribe:

It may not be wrong to state the study of tribes has drawn the keenest interest to the anthropologists among scholars of all disciplines. In fact the interest about the study of tribes developed mainly since the publication of 'The Descent of Man' by Charles Darwin in 1871. The

major interest in the study of tribes which developed ever since was so as to trace the evolutionary lineage of man and its antecedence. This is manifested most explicitly from the studies carried out by Henry Morgan (Ancient Society: 1877), Edward Tylor (Primitive Culture: 1871), Henry Maine (Ancient Law: 1861) and J. F McLenan (Primitive Marriage: 1865) in the last century. The legacy of the same can be traced even in the works of Rivers and Lowie and also the neo – evolutionists like Julian Steward, Leslie White and Gordon Childe. The evolutionary schema is evident in the works of Historical Particularistic led by Boas, Kroeber and Redfield.

In spite of the voluminous work done on the tribes, the tribal society yet remains an enigma. The different perceptions about tribes and diversities evident among them make it all the more difficult to define a tribe. This is clear from what Sunyer et al (1978) states, "A definition of tribal societies that is adequate to cover the range of variation present among such units is not easy to formulate: if the definition is too sharply drawn, it will not apply to some societies, if too general there is a danger that it may fail to bring out important characteristics that distinguish tribes from other anthropological units of analysis" (1978: 10).

The definition of tribe most frequently quoted by anthropologists refers to the one presented by Winick's Dictionary of Anthropology (1958). According to it, "tribe is a social group usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and a unifying social organization". I.M. Lewis (1968) provides more comprehensives characteristic of the tribes "Ideally tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in spatial and temporal range of their scale, legal, and political relations and posses a morality, religion and world view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too tribal languages are unwritten and hence the extent of communication is limited, however tribal societies exhibit a remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self– sufficiency lacking in modern society. This is achieved by the close and sometimes unilateral, connections that exist between tribal institutions or principles of social organization and by concentration of a multiplicity of social roles in the same social persons or offices. There is a corresponding unity and coherence in tribal values that are intimately related to social institutions and are endowed with an intensity characteristic of all 'closed' systems of thought. The tribal societies are supremely ethnocentric" (1968: 8). Lewis further indicates the Tribals to be relatively isolated, undifferentiated with a relatively strong social equilibrium. In

spite of being comprehensive, Lewis's formulation has certain limitations. Firstly it is basically too generalized. Secondly it has slightly overemphasized about the social equilibrium of the tribes and thus undermined the dimensions of social change.

The idealized perception about tribes seems to be persisting even as late as the present time. Scholars like Susan Devalle (1992) argue that the fixed idealized perception divorced 'tribal' societies from historical processes that affected them, most notably the colonial situation in which tribal studies initially developed. She states further, "The vagueness of the category 'tribe', its uses, its derogatory implications and its lack of correspondence of reality, has made anthropologists increasingly dissatisfied" (1992: 14). Devalle feels that there are mainly two factors which have been responsible for the uncritical application of the term 'tribe'. "First, continuation of micro studies which ignore the societal macro level historical process and structural transformations. Second there has been confusion between idealized types and reality. The category tribe was constructed out of the ideas about what societies were thought to have been in the pre – colonial past. This construct was in turn projected on to the colonial situation and mechanically applied to societies which were already incorporated in a capitalist economy and in the world market" (1992: 15). Devalle is also strongly critical about the views of Indian anthropologists towards tribes. She feels that they are too paternalistic and based on administrative outlook of tribes and are hence quite ethnocentric.

J. Pathy is critical of the outlook of the Indian anthropologists almost in similar vein as he states, "The tribes in India are basically a politico – administrative category, and has hardly any socio – cultural and economic connotation". He adds, "the little attention that has been made on the tribes in transition has neither re-examined the notion of lack of internal dynamics in tribal society, nor freed itself from the sociological over – emphasis on caste" (Pathy, 1984 : 27).

Examining the different contours of idealized perception of tribes, Beteille (1987) states, "In India today, therefore, tribes which answer to the anthropologists, conception of the ideal type are rarely to be found. What we find are tribes in transition. On the other hand we are committed by the nature of our policy to regard certain communities as tribal. There is no harm to locate such groups provided we are cautious in our approach, and not too pedantic. The greatest emphasis has to be placed on an historical perspective" (1987: 47).

Though fundamentally evolutionary in nature Marshal Sahlin's approach to the conception of tribe has opened wider dialogues among anthropologists and sociologists. Sahlin (1968) considers the tribe to be an ethnographic heritage from Neolithic times. Tribal people and cultures are according to him, evolutionary advances beyond the cultural capacity of hunters. While Kinship plays the central role in tribal formation, it is not solely based on kinship, religion, age – grade association and military organizations are frequently associated with it. While territorial domains are associated with tribes, territoriality is embedded in the society, rather than territory serving all the basis of organization of the society. While apparently their approach implies an evolutionary framework which may perhaps fit into the modernist paradigm (Pathy 1988) of gemeinschaft (intimate community) giving way to gesellschaft (impersonal society) it is not necessarily so. "It is common empirical experience that tribal communities claim association with certain physical space as an extension of their social space. The link is rooted in ontology and ethics of the concerned communities rather than in the organizations of political power for exclusive control of the resources of delineated space. Looked in this way many tribes are regulated anarchies; as Max Weber puts it". (B.K. Roy Burman, 1994: 59).

For Godelier (1977), the social formation tribe is identified in two ways: first as a stage in the history of evolution of societies, second as a type of society organized on the basis of kinship ties which enables it to be a multi – functional group. Godelier mentions that two sets of characteristic features negative and positive are designated by the term primitive. The negative traits include the absence of positive traits found in western societies or the presence of these traits to a lesser degree. In both the cases primitive societies are understood to be inferior. Their positive features on the other hand, are to be those absent from civilized societies. These include social relations based primarily on kinship, with all pervasive religion in which cooperation of common goals is frequent and so on. B.K Roy Burman (1983) points out that Godelier somehow skips the crucial positive aspect, namely organization of social power as a dimension of sense of cosmic unity as contrast to political power rooted to the world view of ego as a discrete entity, does not find mention in his formulation.

Beteille has drawn attention to the fact that while the general definition of tribe provided by Ellan Service and Marshal Sahlins are embedded in an evolutionary framework, underlying their classification is the dichotomy between state and non – state societies. Beteille, however,

observes that "all non – state societies are of the same kind, they are divided into bands, tribes and chiefdoms. If one makes a futuristic projection, non – state societies may be envisaged to take many other forms" (1968: 300).

Sahlins in 1961 presented an outline of the social evolution of humanity, depicting it in four stages: the stage of bands, that of tribes, that of chiefdoms and finally that of state – societies. "A band is only a residential association of nuclear families" (1961: 324). A tribe is "of the order of a large collection of bands" (1960: 326). Chiefdom "is distinguished from the tribal type by the presence of centres coordinating economic, social and religious activity" (1961: 143). There then appears the State which "raises the level of centralization and constitutes a political structure which is external to local social groups and transforming the advantages owing to inequalities of social rank into class privileges" (1961: 157).

This futuristic projection is not a digression. It is meant to highlight the fact that the state and non – state dichotomy does not reflect the whole reality. One has to address oneself to a basic question, the world view informing the social organization. There is the world view which perceives individuals as homosociologous (Dahrendorf 1968: 25).

The tribal communities in India are also known as Adivasi, which is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups claimed to be the aboriginal population of India. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India. The Constitution of India, Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to the scheduled Tribes (STs) for the purposes of this Constitution". In Article 342, the procedure to be followed for specification of a scheduled tribe is prescribed. However, it does not contain the criterion for the specification of any community as scheduled tribe. An often used criterion is based on attributes such as:

Geographical isolation - they live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forests.

Backwardness - their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low-value closed economy with a low level of technology that leads to their poverty. They have low levels of literacy and health.

Distinctive culture, language and religion - communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion.

Shyness of contact – they have a marginal degree of contact with other cultures and people.

The Scheduled Tribe groups who were identified as more isolated from the wider community and who maintain a distinctive cultural identity have been categorized as 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PTGs) (previously known as Primitive Tribal Groups) by the Government at the Centre. So far seventy-five tribal communities have been identified as 'particularly vulnerable tribal groups' in different States of India. These hunting, food-gathering, and some agricultural communities, have been identified as less acculturated tribes among the tribal population groups and in need of special programs for their sustainable development. The tribes are awakening and asserting their rights for special reservation quota for them.

In the Indian context, Ghurye (1943) argues that the scheduled tribes are backward Hindus. N.K. Bose (1967) speaks about the Hindu mode of absorbing the tribal people. Srinivas (1962) puts forth that both the lower castes as well as the tribal people are permanently relegated to the receiving end and are constantly trying to enter or being inducted into the mainstream. While Chapter – 2, in this study looks extensively at the ethnographic study of the Warli community undertaken by K. Save, Save works primarily on Ghurye's premise that Scheduled Tribes are backward Hindu's, however this study is critical of this approach and takes a view that the Warli religion is not a partial representation of the Hindu religion, rather it must be understood as a part of the Animistic beliefs that the Warlis follow.

The concept of Culture:

The Warli art and painting is an intrinsic part of its culture. For the first time an anthropological definition of culture was given by Edward Bernett Tylor (1832 – 1917) in his famous book Primitive Culture (1871) which runs as "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society" (Burman.J.J, 1997: 34). According to Tylor, culture is an attribute of man, acquired by him in time, as a member of society. Thus "acquire" is the key word, for it meant that culture was the product of social

learning rather than of biological heredity, and that the differences in cultural development were not the result of degeneration, but of progress in cultural knowledge. Moreover, Tylor's insistence that culture was a "complex whole" implied that it included all socially learnt behaviour, no matter if it seemed trivial or not. Every facet of social life was thus worthy of study, for it contributes to the study of mankind. For Tylor, culture is always the culture of any given society or community and hence does not refer directly to the individuals as such. In brief, the study of culture is the historical study of man's development in society, from "savagery" to "barbarism" and then to the rise of "civilization", as manifested by his acquired habits and capabilities, from a primitive state of affairs to a more advanced stage of cultural development.

Malinowski defined culture in 1931 and stated that "culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values". Social organization is also included since he argued that "this cannot be really understood except as a part of culture" (Burman.J.J, 1997: 31). When we analyze Malinowski's use of the term more closely it becomes necessary to distinguish between a number of different intellectual preoccupations, which were all subsumed for him under one word "culture". First he treated the concept of culture as the tribal micro-cosm, the functioning of whole, which as Fortes (1953) has pointed out, was a new and stimulating idea when it was first propounded by Malinowski. Secondly, with this idea went Malinowski's emphasis on the need to study the "use" or "function" of the customs, institutions and beliefs, which formed part of each culture,

In studying civilization Robert Redfield (1897 – 1958) developed his propositions of great and little traditions. According to him the intellectual influences that come from outside the village may be termed as "great tradition" and those coming from the local areas are termed as "little tradition". He also introduced the term "cultural specialists" for such organized groups of people who mediate between the great and little traditions.

Elements of the little tradition are continually incorporated into the great tradition through a process of universalization. Likewise elements of the great tradition filter down to the village level, but in the process of parochialisation the elements are transformed, modified or reinterpreted to fit the rural – peasant tradition. According to Redfield this concept of little tradition does not apply to primitive societies, whose culture is thought to be autonomous.

After formulating these terms and concepts, Redfield put forward his definition of civilization in various ways – First he defined civilization as "a complex structure of great and little tradition" (1955). This definition, in terms of tradition; emphasises on the culture content, together with its historical sources and level of development.

The concept of "folk – urban continuum" was developed by Redfield to explain differences between various communities. Redfield found that as one moves along the continuum from folk communities to urban communities there is increasing group size, disorganization, role segregation, individualization and secularization. This methodological approach of Redfield for studying the process of continuum influenced many of his associates all over the world and it made a great impact on the scholars of Indian anthropology, who applied this concept in the studies of caste, tribe, city and villages.

In the study of Indian civilization B.N. Saraswati (b. 1932) has made a significant contribution and is well known for his originality and penetrating insight into the concepts and themes relating to Indian civilization. Saraswati is of the opinion (1970, 1972, 1975) that in Indian society the tradition is cultivated, preserved and transmitted in three different ways, namely –

1. Oral,

2. Written or Text

3. Self – realizing esoteric process.

He argues that each culture adopts one of these ways as the essential mode of survival and changes effectively when the mode is changed. Therefore what is most important in a culture is not its external manifestation but the inner mechanism which operates within the culture. The structure of the culture remains meaningless entity so long as its function is unexplained, according to Saraswati.

Considering their essential ways of functioning or the systematization of cultural knowledge, Saraswati argues that all the varieties of cultures maybe classified into three as listed above. According to him when the social and cultural life of a group of people is guided essentially by oral tradition or the collective memory of its members, it may be called *oral culture*; when it is governed primarily by recorded tenets or codified interpretative texts it may be called *textual*

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culture; and when a culture is involved in the self – realizing esoteric processes and dictated by the canons of transcendental knowledge it may be called *transcendental culture*. These three types of cultures are distinct so far as the modes of transmission of cultural knowledge are concerned, but at the operational level they are very much inter – communicable and affect one another. Saraswati further points out (1970) that this distinction cannot be marked out hierarchically, as each of them is governed by a self regulating and self – disciplining value system, which Indian civilization has ideally accepted and practically demonstrated in binding together as a civilized whole.

Art and Tribe:

 "All art, has its roots in the primitive", said Henry Moore. The power and vitality of tribal art was discovered by Picasso and a number of European artists in the very beginning of this century and as William Rubin puts it, they found "affinity" with it. What is of significance is the fact that they realized that tribal art was not to be treated either as curio objects or the art of people with "under – developed" minds. They realized that tribal art was not "simple" but highly economical and reductive rendering of complex concepts. Tribal art was not to be treated as "childish" in the sense of being "naïve", lacking in adult expression.

The scope of Adivasi imagination is not contained by the constraints of naturalism though it hovers over nature and derives its sustenance from it. The naturalistic approach laid claim to the realization of the mirror image of objective reality. Art, however, does not mirror nature. It is on the other hand a parallel reality. This parallel reality is possible only because of the all pervading truth of mythology, a function of imagination, which weaves its fabric from the warp and woof of both the world as it exists and the mind as it perceives it in a dual dynamic relationship.

The conclusion is inescapable that even if on the basis of the technological base of social formations one may accept certain societies as 'primitive' and others as advanced, the notion of primary and advanced stages of development in art on the basis of technological advancement is a pernicious doctrine. If such a notion were to be accepted, one would have to reject all the art of the "past" as well as contemporary manifestation of tribal art, as one rejects obsolete technology.

Buddhadeb Chaudhari in his paper Tribal Crafts: Disruption and Alternates (1983) puts forth that the tribal arts and crafts include the following objects:

1. magico – religious

2. utilitarian

3. decorative.

On the surface it may appear that only the utilitarian objects help them economically but even the magico – religious and decorative objects can help economically in some way or the other. The artistic expression of many tribes is often based on their faiths and beliefs and they make objects of clay, wood, brass, etc mainly representing figures of deities, whom they worship. Sometimes these objects are also purchased by the neighbouring communities.

The utilitarian objects include various types of dress made of textile, caps, etc, baskets, oil containers, vessels, tobacco cases and other objects for keeping day to day necessities, musical instruments, smoking pipes, hunting weapons, clay lamps, combs, etc. the decorative objects include various types of jewellery, ornaments of various type, head – gears and head – dresses.

One of the most interesting aspects of tribal arts and crafts is that the objects they make are usually meant for the people around the centres of production. In other words, they mostly cater the needs of their own community. The raw materials from which these objects are made are mostly locally grown.

As a whole, crafts in India rested on two demands, one, the utility objects required by the common people and the other, decorative objects which are mostly used by the aristocracy. The tribal crafts mostly served the former group and naturally have limited economic gain. At present the crafts prepared by the tribals also have a good demand from other communities and persons living in urban areas, but the real benefits derived from it rarely reach the tribals. Again, the competition of handicraft and industry is also there and this is also applicable to the Tribals. But one should be cautious while introducing new designs and new technology in the tribal crafts with a view to increase efficiency in production. It is also to be noticed that, this in no way, hampers the intrinsic charm and beauty of tribal crafts and traditions.

In the recent past with the increasing interaction of the Tribals with the outside world, many of tribal crafts have become quite popular. But in most cases, even though various facilities are extended by the government and other agencies, the craftsmen are not always the major

beneficiaries. Besides the commercial demand as more emphasis is given on quantity and not on quality, the inner beauty of the handicraft is sometimes lost.

Rational of the Study:

The Warli paintings have undergone several changes; there have been very few studies that have documented these changes and the factors leading to the changes.

It is essential to understand how art has now become a commodity and what impact this has on its culture.

A study 'Development amongst the Warlis of Pathardi' by A. Ramprasad Naidu, published in the Tribal Research Bulletin, March 2008, does not acknowledge the existence of Warli art as a part of the culture nor as a means of livelihood for the Warli community. This absolute ignorance or sidelining of a thriving art form shows the need to study Warli painting and to associate it with the Warli community.

There are increasing numbers of non-tribal Warli painters, and the identification of Warli paintings is no longer specific to the community, therefore it is essential to study the identification level of the community with their own art form and also to study how the society identifies the art form. Warli art draws influence from real life. The life style of Warlis has undergone several changes over a period of time. There have been changes in the living conditions; many have converted into other religions, etc. Have these changes been depicted in the paintings, needs to be seen, and how have these changes impacted the original art form needs to be considered.

Several of the changes that have taken place over a period of time have remained undocumented and therefore unknown to many. Though many are aware of Warli art as an art form, they are largely ignorant of the changes that are happening in the community due to the rapid commercialization of the art form. It is therefore considered relevant to bring to attention, the ongoing changes in the Warli community.

Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The study will throw light on the traditional Warli painting and the emerging Warli style of painting. And will highlight the factors that have brought about the change.

a) This research will show the current nature of study of sociology of art and the study of tribal art in India, taking the case study of Warli paintings.

b) This study will highlight the change that the Warli art form has undergone over a period of time. It will show how the changes in the society are depicted in the paintings and how the changing lifestyle has brought about a significant change in the culture of the Warli community and which in turn is reflected in the paintings.

This study seeing as having been undertaken by the use of secondary data leaves several gaps between the recorded data and the existing ground realities. The current scenario in the existing Warli communities may vary from the recorded material. Also very few studies have been undertaken in this area, making it desirable to undertake further studies and document several changes that have been taking place in the society. There have been several changes in the community that have been widely acknowledged but not viewed in the light of significant markers of change, these changes need to be recognized and highlighted.

The Overview:

This study focuses on developing an understanding of Tribal Art in India using the case study of Warli Paintings, which is an art form developed among the Warlis - a Tribal Community in India.

The First Chapter 'Sociological Study of Art' will try to understand what 'Art' is and how the term 'Art' is defined by various scholars. This chapter would look at various sociological theories and how they look at 'Art' and understand it. It will look at various perspectives of the study of art and the debates on how there is a need to understand art not only in the form of production and consumption but also in relation to society and culture. The first part of the chapter delves into conceptual understanding of art and attempts to look at various approaches in the discipline of sociology and their understanding of art. The second part of the chapter explores

the concept of 'culture diamond' where it attempts to understand the relations between arts, creator of art – the artist, the consumers of art – the audiences and the society.

The Second Chapter 'A Study of Folk and Tribal Art in India – An Overview of Warli Tribe', the first part of this chapter focuses on the Indian Society, which consists of significant percentage of its population classified as Tribe. Many of the Tribal communities are engaged in various forms of art production as a part of their culture, often these art forms had various meanings, where they were created for utilitarian, magico-ritual or decorative purposes. These art forms were eventually marketed for the purpose of consumption of the larger public. It is therefore imperative to understand the art form as it was originally created and the meaning, symbolism and the purpose that the art form served. And to study the changes that have come about in the art form, due to Commodification and commercialization. There is also a need to study if there has been a change in the cultural practice of the tribal community due to the process of commercialization of the art form. And also if the socio – cultural changes in the tribal community due to Modernization and Urbanization have in turn affected the art form. Thus, indicating a need to study Tribal Art in India from a Sociological Perspective. While the second part of the chapter focuses on the historical understanding of the Warli community, their origin, their geographical location and the Economic – Social and Cultural conditions of the Warli community. It would study the religious practices of the Warli community, their culture and traditional religious practices and beliefs. It would look into the religious aspect of their community life. This chapter would analyse the oral history of the Warlis which has been recorded and attempt to understand their myths and beliefs and their understanding of their history, which have been passed on from generation to generation through the medium of songs and poetry. This chapter would also look at the location of Warlis Post-Independence, where the Warlis lost their lands and livelihood to land grabbing businessmen, who exploited the Warlis. Which was followed by a Adivasi Movement led by Godavari Parulekar. This chapter also looks at the current scenario of the Warli community and the existing Socio – Economic – Cultural conditions of the community.

The Third Chapter 'Warli Paintings – Tradition and Change' would study the location of the paintings in the religious life of the Warlis and its significance in the Warli community. The Warli painting originally is a magico-religious ritual, which is practiced by the Warlis as a part

of the wedding ceremony. Therefore the Warli paintings have a deep religious significance; and are an important ritual. This chapter would therefore study the Religion of the Warlis and the wedding ceremony as practiced by them. It would understand how these paintings were traditionally painted, the rituals that were involved in the process of the painting, the materials used and the symbolic meaning of the motifs and images used in the paintings and their significance.

The chapter would also look into understanding how the paintings were discovered leading to the rise of Jiva Soma Mashe a renowned Warli artist, how his paintings were brought into the limelight, the significance of his work and his contribution to the tribal art form. It would look at how Jiva Soma Mashe changed the traditional form of art and gave it new meaning. His paintings thus reflect the changes in the thought process and the ideas of the artist. The use of trains, cycles, and rickshaws in the paintings is a reflection of the Modernisation that is taking place in the world around. This chapter would also attempt to study the changes that have come into the Warli art form over a period of time since its commercialization, where due to increasing demand for Warli art it has been use on equipments such as coasters, files, bed sheets, pillow covers, etc. It would study the various paintings which have come into the limelight and the changing trends that are depicted in the paintings. The commercialisation of paintings has brought about several changes to the art form in terms of its creation, packaging, marketing and distribution across the society in the national and inter-national market.

Chapter: 1. Sociological Study of Art

This chapter 'Sociological Study of Art' explores the sociological studies undertaken to understand Art. This chapter would attempt to look at the various sociological theories and how it influences the understanding of Art and Society. This chapter attempts to understand how the discipline of Sociology studies art in order to gain an understanding of the society. The first part of the chapter delves into conceptual understanding of art and attempts to look at various approaches in the discipline of sociology and their understanding of art. The second part of the chapter explores the concept of 'culture diamond' where it attempts to understand the relations between arts, creator of art – the artist, the consumers of art – the audiences and the society.

Art is a value laden word that conjures images that have been penned into words or brushed onto a canvas. However art includes the tangible, visible, and/or audible products of creative endeavour. It not only includes the traditional fine arts but also the popular and folk arts. Sociology is a discipline which is engaged in the study of society, the study of human systems, the study of how people create meaning and the study of social inequality. This chapter will attempt to gain an understanding of how groups of people work together to create what we call art, the meanings of artistic objects and how interpretations of art vary, and how people use artistic products for aesthetic pleasures certainly, but also for other reasons.

Victoria Alexander in the book *'Sociology of the Arts – Exploring Fine and Popular Forms'*, says that 'it is not actually possible to define art in abstract terms, because "what is art" – even broadly stated – is *socially* defined, and therefore subject to many inconsistencies'. She further asks "Why ballet is an Art, but World Federation Wrestling not an art? Since they are both scripted beforehand and performed to a sound track (music or the roar of the crowd and the announcer's voice over); the performers wear attractive costumes and leap athletically about the stage. We might say art is not a sport (but this begs the question, in this case, as to why the World Federation style of wrestling is considered sport). Family photo albums are not considered art, even the ones in which the pictures are carefully composed and mounted in beautiful books. Family photo albums might be an expressive form, but they are too private to be called art. Nevertheless, most of us would think of the photographer Ansel Adam's private albums as art, and some photographers have created family photos, specifically meant to be considered art, that have been exhibited in museums. If we already think of the creator as an artist, or if we see a

work in a museum, we tend to call it art". (2003: 02) This point's out the importance of the context.

The sociologist Howard Becker (1982) believes that the context is the most important aspect to the definition of art. He says

"*Like other complex concepts, [the concept of art disguises a generalization about the nature of reality. When we try to define it, we find many anomalous cases, cases which meet some, but not all, of the criteria implied or expressed by the concept. When we say "art," we usually mean something like this: a work which has aesthetic value, however that is defined; a work justified by a coherent and defensible aesthetic; a work displayed in the appropriate places (hung in museums, played at concerts). In many instances however, works have some, but not all, of these attributes.*" (1982: 138)

Becker believes that a work is art if people say it is. That is, the contents of the category of art are defined socially. Becker also suggests that we think of the definitional problems in relationship to art as an opportunity for research rather than as a problem: "*Art worlds typically devote considerable attention to trying to decide what is and isn't art….; by observing how an art world makes those distinctions rather than trying to make them ourselves we can understand much of what goes on in that world*". (1982: 36)

It is important to contextualize Art, Roma Chatterji quotes Jyotindra Jain saying that "the spectators who came to view the art works, were encouraged to view the objects being exhibited as occupying two status positions – as embodiments of age old traditions and as unique art works". (Chatterji, 2012: 4)

So also is the case with Warli paintings which needs to be understood in certain contexts i.e. the ritualistic nature of the painting, the society it represents, the meaning that the painting holds, the meaning of the symbols and how the meanings have been construed - through the society in which the painting takes place. Therefore the *'Chauk'* is not merely a design in the painting; it is also a sacred image to the Warlis which is representative of their culture and beliefs. The meaning of the *'Chauk'* is embedded in the traditional practice of the community, the meaning of which can be understood not just by viewing the painting, but by having an understanding of the community that it represents. Therefore when the painting is exhibited in a different space, the

context of the painting is changed and therefore the embodiment of folk art in the modern space needs to be contextualized.

Victoria Alexander discusses some of the elements that characterize most forms of art, as being viewed by the audience as an artistic product. It is tangible, visible, and/or audible. The product can be a physical object, like a book or a CD. Or it can be a performance, like a play or a concert.

It communicates publicly. To be art, the cultural product must not only exist, it must be seen, heard, touched or experienced by an audience, either in public or private settings. All art is communication, but not all communication is art.

It is experienced for enjoyment. "Enjoyment" can take many forms. Art must be consumed for aesthetic pleasure, for sociability and fun, for mental stimulation, or for escape. Sometimes, however, people are exposed to art because "it's good for them," as in a school trip to a museum. Art is an expressive form. When art relates to real life, it presents a fiction or an interpretation. Sometimes art claims to tell the "truth," but if it takes this idea too literally, it moves into the area of documentary, non-fiction or news.

Art is defined by its context both physical and social. What is art in a museum or theatre may be just odd objects or strange behaviour in other settings. When different social groups view the same expressive product, they may disagree on whether or not it is art.

Griswold (1994) distinguishes between *implicit culture* and *explicit culture*. Implicit culture is an abstract feature of social life: how we live and think. Explicit culture is a tangible construction, a performance or product that is produced.

Art therefore has to be understood in various contexts. Therefore depending on it, art has been classified into several categories, and these categories represent the various art forms which are included within it. There is firstly the Fine or High Arts - these include the visual arts (painting, sculpture, drawing, etching and other works) that maybe available in art museums. It would also include opera, live symphony and chamber music, recorded classical music, drama, theatre, dance (ballet and modern), other performance art such as experimental theatre, literature and serious fiction and cyber art (art created by computers and visible only in virtual environments).

Secondly there exists the Popular or Mass Arts – these include Hollywood movies, independent film, television drama (series, serials, made – for – television, movies), television sitcoms, best selling and pulp fiction, popular music (rock, pop, rap, etc) including recorded music, rock concerts, performances in pubs and clubs; and print and television advertising.

Finally there are the Folk Arts – these arts include artistic activities created in community settings. This includes: quilting (especially in quilt circles), folk music, garage rock music, as performed by teenagers; and graffiti of the artistic (rather than the public toilet) kind. Some types of arts do not neatly fall into one of the categories, for instance, jazz can be either popular or high art, and, especially in its early forms, folk art (Lopes, 2002; Peterson, 1972).

All these three categories of Art can be understood with the help of the same sociological concepts. These analytical and methodological tools are applicable to arts that appear in some tangible or performative format. The distinctions among the fine, popular and folk art continue to exist, but they have been blurred in recent decades and the categories are less powerful than they once were, in fact these distinctions exist for social reasons.

Sociology as a discipline embodies the various ways of thinking about society. These various lines of thought are the distinct approaches in the discipline. Sociology endeavours to generate theory. A theory is an attempt to describe how society works. One definition of theory is, *an abstract and general set of propositions formally specifying the interrelationships among a defined set of concepts* (Cooper, 2001). Not every sociologist subscribes to this definition, but most sociologists try to surpass "mere" description of the social world and attempt to *theorize* it, that is, to explain how it works (Gilbert, 2001).

Sociology also looks at systems, structures and culture, thereby attempting to understand the connections among individuals, the stabilized patterns emerging from social interaction and meaning that is shared across individuals. There are different approaches in the study of sociology; an *approach* is a group of theories that look at social phenomenon from the same basic perspective, with a similar set of assumptions or metatheories. Though they share metatheories, the specific theories will differ on many details, and may even be contradictory at points. Four key approaches in sociology are positivist, interpretive, critical and postmodern

styles of research. It is important to understand each of these approaches and their understanding in relation to art.

The first approach, the Positivists Sociology, is considered to be the most "scientific", in that positivists aim to make sociology a rigorous, empirical discipline analogous to the disciplines in the natural sciences. Durkheim set out many of the precepts of positivism as they relate to sociology in *The Rules of Sociological Method (1895),* highlighting the importance of empirical observation and scientific statements of causality.

In relationship to art, Crane (1992: 86) says that positivist sociologists *tend to view society as a collection of causally related variables. The goal of the social scientist is to produce a set of laws describing the causes of human behaviour. This approach leads to a conceptualization of cultural symbols as "black boxes" whose meanings and interrelationships do not require analysis.*

The concept of black box can mean that there exists a causal relationship that is deterministic, such that art works reflect – or shape – the general society in direct and unproblematic ways. Thus, Positivist sociologists may study objective aspects of the art world while leaving meaning and aesthetics aside. They may research, for instance, the demographic characteristics of art museum audiences, the repertoires of orchestras, or the effects on the arts of the cultural policies of various nations. But as Crane suggests, other topics cannot be studied without recourse to meaning.

The second approach, Interpretive Sociology, is concerned with the *question of meaning*. How is meaning created and maintained in social systems? How does cultural background (norms, values, unquestioned assumptions) affect the decisions people make? What does a particular art work mean? Interpretive sociologists try to get at these questions by talking to people about how they think – perhaps through in-depth interviews or participant observation – or by closely analyzing an element of culture. The roots of interpretative sociology lie, in the nineteenth century, in *hermeneutics*. In a hermeneutic analysis, an analyst makes a detailed reading, or interpretation of a "text" to discover its meaning. A text can be almost anything that carries meaning: a book, a movie, a painting, a billboard, a conversation, or even interaction between two people.

Some interpretive sociologists try to create a theory of how meaning is made, while some try to uncover the meaning of a specific text or the understandings of a group of people. Most interpretivists believe that meaning is particular and that it resides in individuals (although it may be socially structured). Thus, they believe that meaning cannot be abstracted from its particular situation and, therefore, cannot be generalized. Sociology, in this view, is about understanding subjective experience. They believe that the way people perceive the world is strongly shaped by assumptions they hold, and that these assumptions arise from the social groups in which they are embedded.

Thus an Interpretative approach may be used to develop an understanding and contribute to the sociology of art. Their methods and assumptions would be helpful in understanding the meaning that might be attributed to art objects and in understanding how people create meaning from them. An interpretive approach is often found in studies of audiences and in studies that concentrate on art objects alone.

The third approach, Critical Sociology is concerned with class struggles, and the control of a few elites over the masses. Critical sociology maintains the closest links with its founder, Karl Marx. Karl Marx was interested in studying the relationship between the classes, specifically, the capitalists and the proletariat. Where the Capitalists own the means of production (factories, tools, property, raw materials, money), and the proletariat provide their labour. The proletariats thus become "wage slaves" to the capitalists, depending upon them for the income, for their survival.

And it is because of this dependency that capitalists take advantage of the proletariats. Where the Capitalists try to get as much labour out of the workers as possible and pay them as little as possible; which is certainly less than the value of the labour workers contribute. Marxists call this as "extracting surplus value", while the Capitalists call it "making profit". It is this underlying difference which is a cause of conflict.

Over a period of time, there have been several changes in the society with regard to the social structure, the formal organizations, and industrial relations since the time of Karl Marx. Most notable is the fragmentation of the proletariat into a variety of classes – from the urban underclass, through various blue – collar occupations, and continuing onto the middle even upper

– middle class – and the blurring of the roles of top managers and actual owners of business (Edwards, 1979). All of these changes have reduced the applicability of Marx's general descriptions of conflict between two classes, but it has not negated his underlying insights.

Critical Sociology or Marxist, thinking shapes cultural sociology in a number of ways. The first has to do with Marx's idea of *false consciousness*, whereby workers do not see their own exploitation. Marx argued that capitalists have the desire and the power to create stories that legitimize their actions. He argues that, all elites throughout history have created the ideas that support their ascendancy. "The ideas of the ruling classes are in every epoch the ruling ideas," (1846 [1978]: 172). These ideas have been developed by more recent thinkers who talk about cultural control – control is the ability of the capitalists (or managers) to obtain desired behaviours from workers – and how art forms can function as social control.

Second, Marxian analysis informs critiques of mass culture as produced by culture industries. In this view, art forms that are produced by business organizations in capitalist systems are debased. They are not authentic pieces of culture. A third approach to art that draws inspiration from class analysis (if not Marxist, per se) has to do with the uses of culture. Different social classes use art differently, and this may give an advantage to the higher strata. And the critical approach informs the study of how art intersects with other forms of social division, notable gender and race.

Marxism posits that the culture and ideology of a society (the superstructure) reflect its economic relations (the base). This idea is "the key to Marxist cultural analysis" (Williams, 1973). Marx himself wrote:

The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society – the real foundation, on which legal and political superstructures arise and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness. With the changes of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure (the combination of legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical – ideological forms) is more or less rapidly transformed. (1963: 67).

In industrial capitalism, for instance, workers labour in factories doing extremely repetitive, boring tasks. Arts, then, will reflect these conditions: mass culture is mindless because it reflects the mindless work of the masses. Theodor Adorno (1941), a Marxist cultural critic, argues along these lines with respect to popular music. Storey (1996) interprets Adorno:

Work under capitalism is dull and therefore promotes the search for escape, but, because it is so dulling, it leaves little energy for real escape – the demands of "authentic culture"; instead, refuge is sought in forms such as popular music. The consumption of popular music is always passive, and endlessly repetitive, conforming the world as it is. "Serious" music plays to the pleasure of the imagination, offering an engagement with the world as it could be. Popular music is "the non – productive correlate" to life in the office or on the factory floor. The "strain and boredom" of work leads men and women to the "avoidance of effort" in their leisure time. Denied "novelty" in their work time, and too exhausted for it in their leisure time, "they crave a stimulant": popular music satisfies the craving.

Thus the class based approach which exists in the society is reflected in the art form with regard to the choices of art forms made by people and their position in the class hierarchy.

The fourth approach, Postmodern Sociology has a relatively recent origin, unlike the previous three approaches to sociology. There are precursors to postmodern thought in both interpretive sociology and critical sociology, but postmodernism emerged as a separate way of thinking about society at the time society began to make the transformation from modernism to postmodernism. The term "postmodernism", then, refers to both the era of post-modernity, as well as an approach to knowledge, to which only a subset of sociologists subscribe.

Alexander (2008: 18) puts forth that the term "postmodernism" is a problematic term, for a number of reasons. First, like the many terms, it means different things to different people. Second, some theorists who appear to be drawing on postmodern ideas (in one sense of the term) reject the description of their work as postmodern (in another, narrower sense of the term). She has however persisted with the use of the term "postmodernism", because it is (a) is commonly used in the discipline and (b) is a generally accurate term at the level of detail in a study.

The easiest way to understand postmodernism is to contrast it with modernism. Modernism, as an era, was the capitalist, industrial society, characterized by a "Fordist" production system.

Products were mass produced by workers who earned a wage good enough to consume other mass – produced products. The consumption then pays for the production, the production for the consumption, and so on. Products were advertised in the mass media, and the popular arts were broadcast to large audiences. Moreover, modernisms, and modernist theories, were dominated by a mode of thinking – rationalism – which arose during the Enlightenment. Rationalism suggests that society progresses and improves, that science is disinterested and able to build cumulative knowledge, that there exist absolute moral values and universal truths, and that one's individual identity is fixed.

The postmodern era, also called "late industrial capitalism" (Jameson, 1984) is characterized by "post - Fordist" production. In post – Fordism, manufacturing techniques have improved so that specialized products can be produced for market niches. Consumption and production are still linked in a circuit, but society now values, consumption over production. Products are advertised to specialized markets, and the popular arts are "narrowcast" to segments of the population differentiated by "lifestyle". On the political level, nation – states fragment into interest groups, but also agglomerate into supranational associations. Most observers agree that these changes in industrial society have indeed occurred.

Exactly how these changes have affected cultural ideas however is hotly contested. Many observers believe that a series of related changes have occurred in postmodern societies: cynicism has replaced the old optimism and ideals of progress. Identity politics has called into question the ideas of universal truths and absolute morals: And because people are more geographically mobile and can choose among a wide variety of consumer items, their identities have become fragmented and based on their consuming choices and lifestyles.

Postmodern approaches draw on these ideas to suggest that there can be no such thing as positivistic sociology (postmodernism questions positivistic science too). Postmodernists highlight the absolute relativity of all forms of knowledge and reject all forms of generalizing. Some postmodern sociologists eschew empirical research altogether. Most importantly, postmodern research is reflexive. *Reflexivity* rests on the recognition that research itself is embedded in the social world. Research is said to be reflexive when it looks back at itself to gauge the impact of the researcher and the research process on the subjects and findings.

Strinati (1995: 218) say's "We can see postmodernism as the theory of society and social change which is bound up with the philosophical and theoretical framework of post - structuralism". An important corollary to postmodernism's emphasis on relativity and the unknowable of reality draws on the work of the post structural theorist Michel Foucault (1979). He puts forth the idea of *power – knowledge*, a concept which interlinks power and knowledge, emphasizing the inseparability of the two. A modernist might say "knowledge is power". A postmodernist would put power first, and moreover, assert that knowledge is never neutral. Power creates knowledge to serve power's own end. The shape of existing knowledge embodies the power that created it. This power – knowledge is so deeply embedded in the stories we tell, that it is not readily evident to us. In order to find the true, hidden meanings of power – knowledge, postmodernists rip away the façade from stories through the technique of *deconstruction.*

Postmodern theories play an important role in the sociology of art, as the mode of thinking that underlies a good deal of work in a related area, cultural studies. Like interpretive sociology, postmodernism appears mainly in studies of audiences and the reception of art. Postmodernism is also the most negative approach, given that its meta-theoretical assumptions provide its justifications for rejecting all theory in the positivistic vein, and much from earlier critical and interpretive approaches, as well as deconstructing them.

The overview of the various approaches in Sociology provide with an understanding of the various viewpoints from which art maybe studied and understood. In order to develop a Sociological understanding of Art, the first part of the chapter attempts to provide an understanding of the various approaches in sociology and their approach to the study of art. The next part of the chapter looks at the relationship between art and society and between the creators and the consumers of art.

Wendy Griswold (1994) developed the idea of "cultural diamond", which has four corners representing (1) artistic products, (2) creators of art, (3) consumers of art and (4) the wider society. Each of these four points are linked, it is represented as in *figure1.1.*
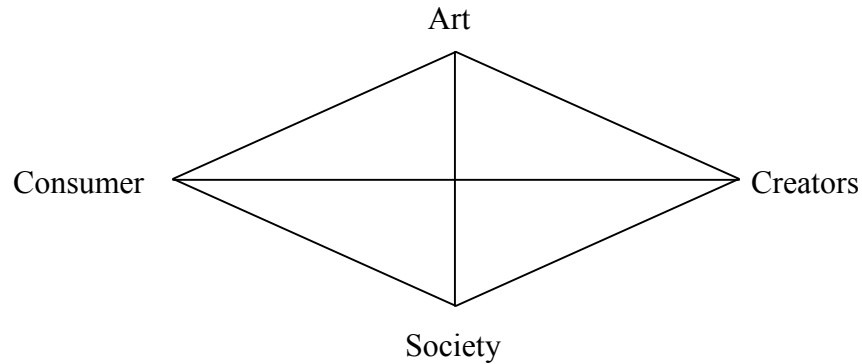
Figure1.1. Griswold's Cultural Diamond

Source: Adapted from Griswold (1994) p. 15.

Griswold argues that to understand art and society, researchers must take account of all four points in the diamond. Art is created by an artist or group of artists. It is not created without human intervention. And art does not reach "society" at large; instead it reaches a particular public, made up of individuals embedded in a social system. How consumers use art, what meanings it elicits in their minds and how it eventually penetrates the general society is mediated by these individuals and is affected by their attitudes and values, their social location and their social networks. "Society" (including wider norms, values, laws, institutions and social structures) makes up the final node on the diamond. It affects artists, the distribution system, the consumers of culture, and through these, the shape of art.

The cultural diamond is a heuristic device or metaphor that sets out, in general terms, the idea that relationships exist among these points. It strongly suggests that all four points are important in understanding art sociologically. As Griswold states (1994: 15):

'The cultural diamond is an accounting device intended to encourage a fuller understanding of any cultural object's relationship to the social world..... a complete understanding of a given cultural object would require understanding all four points and six links'.

Thus, in order to understand the four points and the links among them, it is important to study the links between various points, staring with the relationship between Art and Society.

The Relationship between Art and Society:

In order to understand the relationship between art and society, one may use various approaches, two such important approaches that this chapter attempts to look at are the Reflection Approach and the Shaping Approach. Reflection Approach supposes that Art contains information about society, and therefore is a reflection of the existing society. For instance, smiles in paintings reflect social attitudes and the quality of dental care available.

'The toothy grin was considered a sign of dementia, until the exhibition of a radical painting in 1787, by Elizabeth Vigee – Lebrun, a self – portrait of herself with her daughter; the little one smiling with lips slightly parted. A study by Colin Jones (2000) uncovers the birth of the modern smile, where until Vigee – Lebrun, icons such as the Mona Lisa had preferred to stay tight – lipped, for a good reason, since baring one's teeth was considered rude, lower – class and a possible sign of madness. Dental care was also of such poor quality that few wished to be depicted with rotten teeth. Professor Jones said: "Teeth quality was at its lowest ebb in the 18th Century because all classes were drinking tea or coffee and eating chocolates". Nevertheless, many significant French figures began to allow their portraits to reveal their teeth. Professor Jones believes that was due to the radical transformation in the practice of dentistry and a consumer boom in the range of dental products available'

(The Times, July 19, 2000: 10).

If one wanted to learn about the position of ethnic minorities in society, rather than oral hygiene, one might study the television shows and see how minority groups are portrayed. One could focus on crime shows, counting the number of police officers of various ethnicities and coding the ethnic make-up of the criminals and victims (Oliver and Armstrong, 1998).

The Reflection Approach rests on the idea that art tells us something about society. The reflection approach to the sociology of art encompasses a wide variety of research sharing in common the belief that art mirrors (or is conditioned by, or determined by) society. [The reflection approach is often termed "reflection theory". This is a misnomer, however, as the approach is neither a formal theory nor a single, unified way of viewing the relationship between art and society. It is more accurately a metaphor for understanding this relationship]. Research in this tradition looks at art works in order to learn more about society. Reflection studies are a

form of documentary analysis, the study of contemporary or historical documents. A *document* connotes something written, in this sense, examples from art include novels, poems, scripts and printed music. A document, however, can also be visual or aural, as in a painting or a song; or a mix of these, as in a magazine advertisement, film, television show, play or concert. A useful advantage of documentary analysis is that it enables researchers to study the past, as well as the present; old artwork may offer clues to bygone days (Scott, 1990: 106).

The studies using reflection approach use a range of research techniques, which may be classified as follows: firstly the *interpretive analysis* technique where Helsinger (1994) looks at how engravings made by the great landscape painter J.M.W. Turner in the 1820's and 1830 have reflected aspects of English national identity. Helsinger situates Turners engravings, published in *Picturesque Views in England and Wales,* in "the genre of coffee – table books that address readers as travellers" (1994: 108). These books show pretty scenes from England that an actual tourist might see while travelling, and through them, middle-class "picturesque travellers" can gain a symbolic possession of the country. Helsinger writes:

 Purchase these books and you too may gain at least visual access to the land. The prints also… provide an analogue for experiences of touristic travel (itself established since the eighteenth century as a means of vicariously possessing England) and for the geographic and social mobility increasingly characteristic of their middle class, often urban purchasers. (1994: 105)

Helsinger's work is an interpretive study. She has taken a number of art works and examined them in detail in order to extract their meaning, and, thereby, she has shown that elements in the paintings reflect certain aspects of society. Her study shows the interpretation of the visual objects with a historical analysis, in which she matches the stylistic elements in Turner's work with aspects of the political and economic climate of Britain of the time.

The second research technique used by the researchers of reflection approach would be *content analysis*, where researchers might track changes that may have occurred over a period of time, as Lowenthal (1961) did in a study of popular icons in America. He studied magazines from 1901 to 1941 to document a change in the subjects of biographies. Lowenthal argues that biographies celebrate and thus reveal society's heroes. Before World War I, heroes in magazine biographies were from "the serious and important professions" (1961: 111). They were *idols of production –*

captains of industry, politicians and serious artists. Lowenthal describes them as "*examples of success which can be imitated. These, life stories; are really intended to be educational models*" (1961: 116).

After World War I, the heroes were different. They were *idols of consumption* – people from the entertainment sphere such as sports figures and movie actors, which Lowenthal describes as "*people with a more or less normal and typical personal and vocational background*" (1961: 116). In addition Lowenthal adds, people no longer read biographies to obtain general information as they had before. Instead biographies "*seem to lead to a dream world of the masses that no longer are capable or willing to conceive of biographies primarily as a means of orientation and education..... During the leisure in which they read, they read almost exclusively about people who are directly or indirectly providing for the readers leisure time*" (1961: 116).

These changes reflect the changing nature of the society over a period of time, which reflects what are the societies desires and requirements and how the society which earlier focused on war heroes and important professionals, emphasizing on patriotism, achievement of success through hard work had undergone drastic transformation where the society in the current scenario focused on idols of pleasure and entertainment, where leisure and amusement was the focus, where the notion of hard work was replaced by the notion of getting lucky and getting a break. Thereby reflecting the consumerist attitude, that had developed in the society over a period of time.

The third research technique is *structural analysis*, where Wright (1975) examined changes over time; he looked at archetypal genre of American movies – the Western – concentrating on financially successfully films from 1930 to 1972. He argues that profitability indicates popularity which, in turn, suggests that a film resonates with society. Lowenthal, believes that the meaning of art is on its surface (the manifest content), Wright believes that the meaning is hidden (the latent content), and can be uncovered through techniques of *structural analysis*.

Wright's argument is based on Levi – Strauss's (1967) structural study of myths. The idea is that stories with quite different "surface" appearances can actually have the same underlying narrative (or mythic) structure. The narrative structure of the traditional romance story, where 1. Boy meets girl, 2. Boy loses girl, 3. Boy gets girl. Both Romeo and Juliet and Cinderella contain

this structure, even though the stories themselves appear quite different. Although Wright does not necessarily agree with Levi – Strauss that structural similarities across types of myths arise from the physical or cognitive structure of the brain, Wright does agree that meaning can be isolated more easily with a structural analysis.

In Wright's method, the meaning of the story can be read in the oppositions within the story. The job of the analyst is to discover the coding of the oppositions, and hence, to discover the structure of the story. Mythic structures can tell us much about a society. For instance, oppositions embodied in myth signal the sources of conflict or contradiction in the society. Thus, the analysis of narrative structures yield an insight into the conflicts of a society, and it gives the researcher leverage to overcome the surface differences of structurally similar stories.

Wright identifies four distinct versions of the Western myth – the classical plot, the transition theme, the vengeance variation and the professional plot, each corresponding to a particular era. Wright relates each version to the particular social structure that existed in American society at the same time. Specifically he shows how the earliest narrative structure, the classical plot, reflects market capitalism and its ideology – such as an emphasis on its individuality, whereas the latest structure, the professional plot, mirrors corporate capitalism with its emphasis on working in groups. The middle two structures mirror American society in transition from a market to a corporate system.

This goes to show how the changing art form is a reflection of the changing society that consumes it. Another example is that of Goffman's work on *Gender Advertisements* which reflect the structural relationships between men and women in the society. Goffman (1979) examined advertisements to learn about contemporary society. He argues that in order to make their meaning clear, advertisements contain familiar 'rituals' from everyday life. Rituals "provide evidence of the actor's *alignment* in a gathering, the position he seems prepared to take up in what is about to happen in the social situation" (1979: 69). Rituals therefore reveal the structural relationships – the alignments – among people. Goffman argues that advertisements are an excellent source from which to learn about structural relationships in everyday life, precisely because they present, unambiguously these rituals.

Goffman looked at numerous advertisements to show the structural relationship between men and women. He showed that the society's common understanding that women are structurally subordinate to men is reflected in the advertisements. He says that subordination is shown through the height of the participants, where the taller participants carry more authority. In the advertisements, Goffman examined, that men are routinely shown with their heads higher than women. Goffman suggests that this physical difference alone does not account for the way men are shown in advertisements; rather advertisements are constructed to convey a particular meaning. In another case, Goffman explains that the woman is dressed in upper class clothing and she stands next to a shorter man dressed as a chef. This provides a clear indication that as his patron, she has more status than he does. Goffman describes a number of other displays that similarly reflect the unequal nature of gender relations in society.

The reflection approach refers to a diverse literature within the sociology of art that shares the core assumption that art is a mirror held up to society. Albrecht (1954) identified six types of reflection in research on literature and society: 1. the notion that literature embodies norms and values of a society. 2. The psychoanalytic variant that literature fulfils shared emotional needs and fantasies. 3. A Jungian view that literature arises from the collective unconscious and thus is similar to dreams. 4. The theory that literature reflects a Hegelian "essential spirit" of society. 5. The Marxian view that forms of literature are a result of the economic conditions of the elite, or of the rising classes. 6. Literature reflects demographic trends. Peterson (1979) suggests a different way of dividing reflection theories: Those that focus on how art reflects the whole society, and 2. more modest studies claiming that art reflects only the local milieu of the subculture that consumes it.

Thus when we study art using the reflection approach it is important to understand *what* is reflected – norms, values, needs, fantasies, myths, demographic trends, stereotypes, statistical regularities or unusual events, and *who* is reflected – elites, rising classes, specific ethnic groups, whole society or subcultures, and *how* society comes to be reflected.

Thus on one hand the reflection approach views the relationship between art and society such that art is a reflection of the existing social conditions in a society; while on the other hand there exists' another approach, which views art as a medium that shapes society. Accordingly the Shaping approach can be understood as follows:

Shaping theories suggest that art objects affects society. The Shaping Approach encompasses a wide group of theories that share the core belief, or metaphor, that art has an impact on society. The reflection approach represents the relationship between art and society as a simple straight line, whereas the shaping approach reverses the causal arrow (the direction of the effect between art objects and society), so that art is seen as affecting society rather than vice-versa.

Shaping theorists tend to look at the negative effects of art on society. Marxists suggest that the popular arts condition workers to accept capitalism and socialize them to be willing to work. Social critics have argued that jazz music leads to a society filled with degenerates drinking in speakeasies (in the 1920's), that pulp fiction corrupts morals (in the 1930's), that the flying of Superman encourages children to jump off rooftops (in the 1960's), that rap music erodes respect for law and order (in the 1980's) and that sensationalist art undermines family values (in the 1990's).

However, it is not necessarily the case that the effects of art must be negative for an explanation to be of the shaping variety. Art can be seen to shape in positive ways as well. For instance: "green" art might encourage recycling, movies for cancer victims might engender sympathy for those afflicted or encourage donations to medical research charities. However not every work of art is necessarily positive or negative – for instance in the case of advertising, it may be argued to be bad if it inculcates a mindless consumerism in the populace, but might be argued to be useful when it provides information about products, services and events.

Matthew Arnold (1869 [1960]), a poet and literary critic, was one of the early shaping theorists, he believed that "culture" was made up of the "best that has been thought and said in the world" (1960: 6). For Arnold, art included only the fine arts. The fine arts provided uplift due to their "moral, social and beneficial character" (1960: 46). Their purpose was "to make reason and the will of god to prevail" (1960: 42) and they should do this by portraying "sweetness and light" (1960: 46). He maintains that through the influence of art people would be led away from their baser instincts thereby letting go of envy, spite, hostility and anger. The fine arts he believed should be available to everyone in order to improve the general condition of all humankind.

According to Arnold, the civilizing effects of the fine arts and culture in general worked on all classes, but differently for each class. Through education, culture shaped the middle classes as

they took up power and leadership and it prepared the aristocracy for its inevitable decline. For the working classes however, culture inculcated humbleness and an acceptance of the authority to which they were to submit.

This led to the development of the notion that high art was beneficial and that mass art was harmful. High culture was seen as distinctly different from popular culture and diametrically opposite. While intellectuals in praise of fine arts were worried about the deleterious effects of the popular arts. For instance Q.D. Leavis (1932 [1978]) was concerned that the masses were rejecting the great books chosen for remembrance by intellectuals and professors, and were instead engaged in reading popular fiction, to the detriment of themselves and the society. Leavis was also concerned about the harmful effects of Hollywood films and advertising. This marks a shift from an emphasis on the uplifting effects of fine arts to the cultural critique of mass arts.

Some Marxists believe that the cultural super structure reflects the economic base. A related strand of Marxism sees the superstructure as an instrument of control. The superstructure, created by capitalism, shapes the workers to fit better with capitalism.

Antonio Gramsci (1971) wrote about *Hegemony* as a form of cultural control. Marx (1978) writes, "*The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships... But each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled to represent its interest as the common interest of all members of the society, that is... it has to give its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only rational, universal, valid ones*" (1978: 172). Hegemony embodies the norms, values and world views imposed on society by the dominant elites. Importantly however, while these hegemonic ideals reflect the interests of the dominant elites who created them, they get their power from the fact that they are widely shared by most members of the society.

As Strinati (1995) writes, hegemony is

a cultural and ideological means whereby the dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the "spontaneous consent" of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups.

Hegemony develops through a variety of means, but what is important for the sociology of arts is that elites are instrumental in the creation and distribution of cultural products. They are, therefore, able to place into art ideas favourable to their own interests. Movies, television dramas, and sitcoms portray people in occupations. That is, most "normal" people in these shows have some sort of job, even though one may never see them in a work setting, however there may be some exceptions. Housewives are shown at home, the rich are shown having a lifestyle (which is envied by the lower and middle class, and makes them work harder to achieve it), and the poor are shown in their squalor (which people wish to avoid). There may also be a "rebel" genre where men or women take to the road to escape (which may sooth restless fantasies). But the idea that comes across in these cultural forms is that society expects one to get a job. Both fine art and popular art can have hegemonic effects.

A group of scholars collectively known as the "Frankfurt School" wrote about the popular arts produced by the *culture industries* – those business firms which produce cultural products for profit. The mass culture produced by these industries is homogenous, standardized and predictable. Therefore they argue that mass culture is a commodity churned out through mass production techniques and it does not differ from other commodities like cars or shoes in any fundamental respect. Marx's concept of *commodity fetishism*, the idea that people value things in monetary terms is central here as cultural commodities are tainted by commodity fetishism, and they are not valued for themselves, but for their exchange value. Adorno suggests that mass culture products are given some surface difference, to veil their commodified nature. Adorno emphasis is that the key function of the mass culture is to discourage critical thinking

The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti – enlightenment, in which, as Horkheimer and I have noted, enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means of fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves. (Adorno 1991: 92)

Adorno believed that the mind numbing work of industrial capitalism required numb minds. Stimulating the brains of the workers even outside the work place undermines this requirement. Therefore popular entertainment had to be as mundane as daily work. As a result of which the popular arts were "dumbed down" so that workers would not realize how stupefied they were

and would continue to show up at work day after day. Adorno also argued that the purpose of this mass culture was control and conformity. This demonstrates that Adorno saw reflection and shaping working dialectically, the economic base determines the super structure. In this way mindless art reflects mindless work. However, the super structure also shapes the base; mindless art is passively consumed, so that the workers do not develop their critical senses. This inability to evaluate their own conditions hides the true nature of capitalism from the workers, who continue their dreary existence with no hope for release.

Writers from Frankfurt School agreed with Leavis that mass culture was dangerous, but not because it undermined the cultural authority of the intellectuals. They worried about almost exactly the reverse. They argued that mass culture strengthened the hands of the elites. Leavies thought that the masses had become strong enough to outvote intellectuals on the merits of popular versus quality fiction. The Frankfurt School on the other hand saw the masses as powerless and the cultural industries as all powerful.

As we study the shaping theories it is important to understand the two facts namely that: art is not monolithic and that the audience is not homogenous. And therefore there can be no simple, unproblematic mechanism by which art shapes society. Abercrombie writes:

It is notoriously difficult to say how audiences interpret the output of the media, and many studies avoid it altogether simply by assuming that audiences are affected. There are substantial methodological problems in the way of any empirical investigation of the audience. Even if it is clear that people react to, and are influenced by, television programs in the very short term, it is very difficult to measure long term changes. Any long term study will find it awkward to isolate changes in the audience due to the media from those stemming from other social influences. (1994: 432)

Abercrombie further points out that many studies o media effects, especially with regard to violent behaviours are based on laboratory experiments. These studies are problematic because they are conducted in artificial setting, removing people from their social context.

Much of shaping theory speaks about the effects of cultural products on society, however it views the audience as passive and uncritical suggesting that individuals are merely absorbers of the art forms and therefore are fooled by culture. In contrast to this is the idea of active audience,

where people who consume culture are seen as competent adults capable of making decisions for themselves, able to distinguish truth from fiction and to interpret cultural objects rationally.

Thus the reflection approach and shaping approach are essential in understanding the relationship between art and society as it shows how art is influenced by the society and vice versa. Coming back to the Cultural Diamond, after seeing the relationship between art and society, it is important to see the inter linkages between the artist and the audience as well. Therefore we shall first consider the left side of the cultural diamond which constitutes the following: art – creator – society, these can be understood in terms of Production of Culture and the right side of the cultural diamond which constitutes art – consumer – society can be seen in terms of Consumption of Culture.

When we look at the Production of Culture, it is important to discuss Howard Becker's (1982) concept of art worlds and their effects on art. The production approach examines factors on the left hand side of the cultural diamond relating to the creation, production and distribution of art. It examines the relationship between creators, art works and society.

Howard Becker's book, *Art Worlds*, (1982) makes a very important contribution to the sociology of art. He argues that the arts are embedded in what he calls *art worlds*. An art world is "the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that the art world is noted for" (1982: 10). Some art worlds are small and narrowly defined, say a local poetry circle or an experimental theatre group. Others may be quite large, such as the art world surrounding Hollywood movies. Becker argues that every aspect of the art world provides a set of resources and constraints for making art. The key point is that art works are shaped by the whole system that produces them, not just by the people we think of as artists.

Becker believes that to understand art sociologically, it should be viewed as a *collective activity*. To Becker art is a process – an *activity* – rather than the finished product (an object for performance). This view highlights the creation of art, and the sociological factors that affect this act. Becker emphasizes that making art is a collective endeavour, in making this assertion, he does two things: first, he defines art as "a work being made *and* appreciated" (1982: 4), if it does not have an audience, it is not art. Second, he takes issue with the idea, prevalent in the Western

society, that art is something created by an artist – a creative genius – who works alone. Becker argues that all art forms from Hollywood movies to poetry, involve the efforts of many people, and art would neither exist nor be meaningful without their input.

Becker's argument is that every aspect of the process of creating art shapes the final results. Many people are involved. Some work directly on the art, others help, and still others have played a role in developing the already existing material and symbolic components upon which the art is built. Becker says, "Think of all those activities that must be carried out for any work of art to appear as it finally does" (Becker, 1982: 2). First, someone needs to conceive an idea, to decide the kind and the specific form of work that will be made. Second, someone needs to execute the idea, for this, the responsible parties will need to obtain materials (paints, musical notation paper, costumes) find equipments (musical instruments, lights, costumes, cameras), recruit other artists (actors, musicians, dancers) and recruit support staff and technicians. The process of conceiving the idea and then bringing it to fruition is called *production.*

Therefore all art forms rely on the *division of labour*. This is true for symphony, opera, plays, music, movies as it is for painting and poetry. Some people do more of the creative work, these are the *core personnel*, as Becker calls them, and they are the centre of the making of an artwork and are seen to have the special skills of an artist. Others help design sets or advertising posters for the play or cast bronze for an artist, or keep track of the finances. These support personnel are given a lower status. They have skills that are seen as "a matter of craft, business acumen or some other ability less rare, less characteristic of art, less necessary to the works success, less worthy of respect" (Ibid: 16).

Becker's view of the art worlds is a powerful and a radical way to view art. He questions the fundamental view of the art that: art is created by artists. He suggests that art is created by lots of people, by art worlds, not artists. Becker agrees that people have different talents, but he argues that artists are not special in this regard as the standard ideology of artists suggests. Many people, with diverse talents, contribute to the activity of art – and to the formation of the final product – but most of them do not get the credit. The idea of giving one person credit for the art work is a socially constructed idea that we take for granted.

Although Becker focused on the art world itself, he recognizes the existence of the artists' role. He notes that the artists' role is very important in the western conceptions of art because it has been socially constructed as a privileged one. He argues that most artists conform to most of the conventions in their art world, because that is the easiest way to get things done and to produce art that the audience will appreciate.

Once people have produced the idea and it is embodied in form, they need to find a way to get their work to an audience. This is called *distribution*. How the distribution system works has profound implications for who will see, but or access the art form. Some distribution systems are large and complex such as the networks that distribute Hollywood movies to an international viewership. Other distribution systems are quite small and local, as when poets photocopy their work for friends or read it in coffee houses or libraries.

But distributing art work to people is not enough, audiences must appreciate the work as well. Part of the collective activity of art requires that some create and maintain the rationale according to which art is seen to make sense and be valuable. An *aesthetic system* helps people to understand the work of art, most art works are situated in standard aesthetic systems that are already available, and for instance, they are presented as "paintings or rock music". Finally, the activity of artistic creation relies on civic order and stability as well as norms such as the recognition of private property.

Becker points out that we take many of these things for granted, but consciously noted or not, each aspect of the process of creating and distributing art affects art. The production system constrains artistic creation and channels art in some directions rather than others. The distribution system constrains artists in that art needs to fit into the system in order for it to reach an audience. Becker does not suggest that these constraints control artists instead Becker sees people in the production system as working within a system of constraints: "Available resources make some things possible, some easy, and others harder; every pattern of availability reflects the workings of some kind of social organization and becomes part of the pattern of constraints and possibilities that shapes the art produced" (Ibid: 92).

Thus when we look at production of culture, the inter linkages between art, artist and society are important. The concept of art worlds shows how art is produced not by a single entity, but rather

it is a collective effort of several individuals, thus the art, artist and the society are inter connected in the production of culture.

After understanding what constitutes the production of culture, we can now attempt to understand the right hand side of the culture diamond, which is - art, consumer and society; this constitutes the Consumption of Culture.

The Consumption of Culture approach focuses on how people consume, use and receive art. The main idea of the Reception Theory is that *audiences are the key to understanding art, because the meanings created from art and the ways it is used depend on its consumers not its creators*. The approach also critiques simplistic shaping approaches by denying that art has a direct impact on society. Rather, art shapes society through audiences, who are for the most part quite capable of intelligent reaction. (Griswold, 1993: 457)

The implication is that art never stands alone, but must be understood in relationship to the people who consume it. Specifically, the meaning people take from art, and the type of art that they choose to consume, are based on their backgrounds and their social networks.

In the 1970's, a new model of understanding the consumption of culture, the *Uses and Gratification* perspective, came up, it suggests that audiences are *active* in consuming culture. Shaping approaches assume a passive audience. The uses and gratification approach asks how and why people use culture, arguing that an important clue is that people consume culture to gratify their own needs. Blumler and Katz (1974), argued that people watch television to met four needs (1) *Diversion,* (2) *Personal relationships* – both with on-screen characters and with friends and family while watching together or discussing shows, (3) *Personal identity* – reinforcing one's own values and comparing one's circumstances and personal problems to those presented on television, and (4) *Surveillance* – to gain information on what is happening in the wider world.

Hall (1980) provided a key building block in cultural studies, in which he focuses on the *encoding* and *decoding* of cultural texts. Art objects are seen as "texts" which embody meanings. These meanings are presented in verbal or visual codes. The creator of the art object encodes meaning into it. In order for the audience to make sense of the art object, it must decode or *read* the message. The meaning that the author of the text intends is called the *preferred meaning*.

However people can take different meanings from the text by decoding them in different ways. Hall (1980) suggests that there are four basic categories of decoding (1) the *dominant hegemonic* position, which occurs when the receivers read the message as it was intended. (2) The *oppositional* position, a stance in which receivers understand the intended meaning, but nevertheless, take an alternative meaning that was not intended by the creator of the art object. (3) The *negotiated* position, in which receivers mix the first two positions. (4) The *aberrant* position, which occurs when the receiver does not understand the encoding and consequently interprets the text in an idiosyncratic or bizarre manner. This goes to show that there isn't one single meaning of art, and that art can be decoded or understood differently by different people.

The reception theory was developed in literary criticism and is situated in the debate – Where does the meaning of text lie? (Jauss, 1982) Alexander (2003) explains that *"in the model of literary analysis that was dominant during most of the twentieth century, the meaning of the text was in the text itself and the role of the literary critic was to explicate the text, based on what it said and, as determined by research, what the author intended to say. So a professor would study a work, and teach the students what it meant. If a student took a different meaning from the text, then the student had misread it and was wrong"* (2003: 191).

It was much later that literary analysts began to question the idea that a preferred meaning resided in the text and began to suggest that the readers create meaning from the text. Reception theory therefore focuses on the meanings and interpretations created by the audiences. Reception theory assumes that readers come to a text with a "horizon of expectations" (Alexander, 2003) and that their background characteristics, which include their demographic profile – nation of origin, gender, race, age, sexuality, etc, their social networks and personal idiosyncrasies. They read the text against their horizon of expectations. As a result of which the meaning that they assign to a text will be influenced by their own background and understanding of things.

Griswold (1987) draws on insights from reception aesthetics and applies them to a sociological theorizing about art and culture. She proposes a methodological framework that situates cultural explanation, and the sociology of art in a positivistic framework, she suggests that as a research strategy, sociologists adopt a "provisional, provincial positivism" (1990). She suggests that cultural explanation is a way of connecting art objects to the wider society. The researcher has to comprehend the art objects, which can be done, through the study of group objects that share the

same structural aspects and draw on the same set of conventions. Once the genre of art objects has been identified, the researcher can look at the agent. Griswold argues that cultural objects cannot connect to the society only means of individuals or agents; they can be either creator or receiver of the art. If the agent is the creator of art – then the researcher must look into the probable factors that came into play in creating the work. If the agent is the receiver, then the researcher must look into – the probable factors that affect the agent's reading of the art object. Griswold points out that the agent and the factors influencing them may change over time and place. This leads to produce different cultural explanations for the same art object when it is received in different times and places. Thus from the understanding of the agent the researcher can infer the mentality of the people in the creative community and can use it to connect the cultural objects to more general social and cultural experience.

While the reception approach stresses on individuality and each individual's singular interpretation of the subject, this subjectivity questions the notion of generalization and common understanding of an art form, as a result generalization or universal understanding becomes difficult. On the methodological grounds, the question of sampling arises, one may debate – on how sampling may be undertaken, or if sampling is even to be used as the meaning of art would be individual centric rather than that of a group.

When we understand the consumption of culture through the reception approach and the significance of the meaning of art as seen by individuals, the consumption of culture also needs to be understood in relation to class. When we looked at production of culture, it was noted that art was categorized as High Art, Popular Art and Folk Art, where these different forms of art are consumed by different social groups. These differences create boundaries among different social groups on the basis of taste and aesthetic choice. Boundaries can exist in symbolic forms, "Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions that we make to categorize objects, people, practices and even time and space….. [They] presuppose both inclusion (of the desirable) and exclusion (of the repulsive, the impure) [and] imply a third gray zone made up of elements that leave us indifferent" (Lamont, 1992: 9). Symbolic boundaries can divide objects, for instance, when elites say that fine arts are "high" and popular arts are "low" forms of culture. They can also create distinctions among social groups. In this way, they may serve as invisible barriers to inclusion or explicit exclusion of certain social groups (historically – women, ethnic minorities,

foreigners, immigrants, marginalized social groups) from access to certain places/ institutions – such as membership in clubs, attendance of universities, participation in election, etc.

There are several debates with regard to distinction between high art and popular art, where one may argue that high art takes more training to understand and maybe complex in nature, which is why it is different from the popular art. However one may debate that there are certain art pieces, that are categorized as high art, and yet these art pieces are immensely popular, for instance – Leonardo's Mona Lisa, Van Gogh's Sunflowers and Monet's Water Lilies (Storey, 1993).

Rather than viewing the distinction between high and low forms of art as something that is inherent in the art itself. Alexander suggests that "the distinction comes from class relationships in society and differential tastes for and uses of art by different social classes, it has to do with who uses art forms, and for what purpose they use them. Division is a historically situated concept that has been institutionalized by powerful groups who have wished to enhance their own status through assertions that their art forms are better than those of other people" (2003: 227).

Bourdieu (1984) formulated the theory of distinction. He suggests that just as social groups vary in the amount of economic capital they control, so also they vary in the amount of cultural capital. Bourdieu emphasized that "any "competence" becomes a capital insofar as it facilitates of appropriation a society's "cultural heritage" but is unequally distributed, thereby creating opportunities for "exclusive advantages". In societies characterized by a highly differentiated social structure and a system of formal education, Bourdieu further asserted, these "advantages" largely stem from the institutionalization of "criteria of evaluation" in schools—that is, standards of assessment—which are favorable to children from a particular class or classes" (Bourdieu 1984: 44). It involves knowledge about high art and culture, a high degree of sophistication and of know – how, and an appreciation of knowledge in general and of speaking knowledgeably. Elites in society are able to use this capital to do two things, firstly to maintain an invisible boundary between themselves and lower classes and second to perpetuate class distinctions. They are able to do the first because they can recognize other members of the upper class by the similarity in tastes and they are able to do the second because they are in positions of power and can structure other institutions to favor themselves.

Bourdieu demonstrates that there are differences in the tastes of people based on their social class. He showed that people's knowledge of art in general was also related to taste and social class. Through the study given below, Bourdieu shows that different social classes talked about art very different ways:

"Confronted with a photograph of an old woman's hands, the culturally most deprived express a more or less conventional emotion or an ethical complicity but never a specifically aesthetic judgment (other than a negative one): " Oh, she's got terribly deformed hands!.... funny way of taking a photo. The old girl must've worked hard. Looks like she's got arthritis…. I really feel sorry seeing that poor woman's hands, they're all knotted, you might say" (manual worker, Paris). With the lower middle classes, exaltation of ethical virtues comes to the forefront ("hands worn out by toil"), sometimes tinged with populist sentimentality ("Poor old thing! Her hands must really hurt her. It really gives a sense of pain"); and sometimes even concern for aesthetic properties "That reminds me of a picture I saw in an exhibition of Spanish paintings, a monk with his hands clasped in front of him and deformed fingers" (Technician, Paris). At higher levels in the social hierarchy, the remarks become increasingly abstract, with (other people's) hands, labor and old age functioning as allegories or symbols which serve as pretexts for general reflections on general problems….. An aestheticizing reference to painting, sculptor or literature, more frequent, more varied and more subtly handled, resorts to neutralization and distancing with bourgeois discourse about the social world requires and performs. "I find this a very beautiful photograph. It is the very symbol of toil. It puts in my mind Falubert's old servant woman…. That woman's gesture, at once very humble…. It is terrible that work and poverty are so deforming" (engineer, Paris)" (Bourdieu, 1984: 44, 45).

Bourdieu connects cultural capital with the concept of habitus. *Habitus* is "the internalized form of class condition and the conditioning it entails" (Ibid: 101). It is the way people think. Bourdieu suggests that as children are socialized they develop characteristic ways of thinking, a world view or habitus, based on their class position. They internalize this habitus, and consequently they carry a mode of thought with them throughout their lives.

Bourdieu's work has been extremely influential and has also received a great amount of critical attention. Many authors have criticized Bourdieu's idea that habitus is internalized. Swindler (2001) argues that people can and do learn different cultural repertoires throughout their lives. People vary in the contents of their cultural "tool kit", but they can both add to this kit and can

choose among repertoires according to the situation. Many authors have suggested that Bourdieu's ideas might describe France, a country which is relatively homogenous and where social mobility is relatively low. But they question the degree to which it applies in more heterogeneous and mobile societies.

Semiotic and Structural Analysis:

Semiotics and structuralism derive from ideas in structural linguistics first discussed by Saussure (1915 [1959]). Saussure was interested in how language creates meaning. He distinguished first between *langue* and *parole. Langue* embodies the structure of a language, its grammar and rules, whereas parole is spoken or written language, in which the structure is manifest. In order to learn about *langue*, researchers must study *parole*. From *parole* they can infer *langue,* which cannot be observed directly. Furthermore, words are signifiers that point to a signified, the concept referred to by the signifier. Together, the signifier and the signified make up the *sign.* The relationship between signifier and signified in language is arbitrary. We call a furry, four – legged thing that barks a "dog" and we call an omniscient, transcendent being a "god", but if everyone were to agree, we could easily exchange their names. The point being that the letters in "dog" and the utterance of the word do not have any necessary relationship to animals that bark, except that the speakers of English language have agreed on the term. Meaning in language is built up through binary oppositions. An opposition: good – evil, us – them, human – animal, creates meaning through contrast, and clear meanings come from sharp contrasts. If one speaks of a hawk and a tiger –the other is likely to notice that one animal is air – borne and the other is land – bound, and think of sky and earth. One is less likely to think that they are both carnivores, unless it also mentions predators and prey. This shows that meaning can be built up juxtaposing a series of opposites.

Semiotics is the science of signs (Hawkes 1992, Bignell 1992). It suggests that when studying a cultural object – or a number of cultural objects from the same "language" – a researcher should look for structures, codes, oppositions and grammars that underlie texts or images. The semiotics of art uses Saussure's ideas on language by analogy. Cultural objects from a particular style or genre share a set of codes which can be decoded like language. These codes work not only within a given object, but also *intertextually* across objects in the genre. They take meaning from

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each other not only through direct references, but by the existence of the other objects which, taken as a system embody a system of rules that structure individual texts.

Barthes (1957 [1993]) argues that a first order semiological system in cultural objects relate to a second order semiological system that he terms *myth*. Myths, he argues, naturalize history and are the true, hidden meanings in texts. In a famous example, he analyses a magazine cover:

> 'I am at the barber's, and a copy of *Paris – Match* is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so – called oppressors. I am therefore again faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (*a black soldier is giving the French salute*); there is a signified (it is here a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); finally, there is a presence of the signified through the signifier… [The myth of French imperiality].' (1993: 116)

Thus, by attending to both the semiotic system and the mythic system in society, the researcher can find the latent meaning of texts.

Structuralism has influenced the analysis of stories, through the idea of narrative structure. Stories, especially mythic and formulaic ones, rely on binary oppositions (often good versus evil). "When a man is contrasted to a jaguar in a myth, this can represent humanity as opposed to animality, culture as opposed to nature. The symbolism is derived from their differences" (Wright, 1975: 23). Myths and formula stories are both general and easy to understand because of the simplicity involved in a binary structure. A genre of stories relies on a standard unfolding of the story that highlights the oppositions. The plot of a story when seen this way is called its "narrative structure" and can be summarized in a series of plot "functions." Stories from the same genre will have the same narrative structure, although the details of the setting, the particulars of the plot complications, and the traits of the characters will all differ. The stories with the same narrative structures can end quite differently, classic love stories, for instance, can

end happily (in comedies or fairytales) or sadly (in tragedies). The different endings make a difference in the readers experience of the story, but stories with quite different endings can still embody the same set of oppositional codes; for instance: man – woman, active – passive, rescuer – victim, rich – poor.

Berger (1972) looks at the ways that our social system affects the way we look at art works. The concern that, the notion that a text "positions" the reader, that is, that art works set up certain understandings to which the viewer must adjust. One of these is called the "male gaze". In this a visual representation is made assuming the viewer is male; thus both men and women viewing the object will be positioned as men (Mulvey, 1975). According to Berger, "men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male…. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight" (Berger, 1972: 47).

The chapter looks at various theories of art and the importance of using art as a method to study society and culture. The understanding of the various approaches in Sociology, the approaches in the Production of culture and consumption of culture and the relationship between art and society, help to understand how art has been studied sociologically over a period of time. Using the above theories as a reference point, the following chapters will attempt to understand the narratives studying the Tribal art in India and will look at the case of Warli tribe and their art form in particular.

Chapter: 2. A Study of Folk and Tribal Art in India –

An Overview of Warli Tribe

This chapter focuses on the understanding the varying perspective on using of the words 'Tribal Art', along with it, the chapter will also focus on the social history of tribal groups in India with special emphasis on Warli tribe and their social history. This chapter attempts to provide an overview of the varying tribal arts in India. Given the understanding that art and society are related (as seen in the first chapter) such that art is a reflection of the society (using Reflection Approach), this chapter attempts to understand the Warli society as it exists. It will attempt to understand, the Warli communities origin, their geographical location, their religious practices and beliefs and their lifestyle as was seen by Save in 1945 in the extensive ethnographic study that was undertaken by him, and how the Warli community has changed over a period of time bringing about remarkable change in their lifestyle, occupation, culture and religious practices.

Herta Haelberger uses the term 'Ethnological Art' to denote the art of those people in Africa, Asia, Australia and America, who are objects of ethnological or anthropological study. According to her "it corresponds to the area of art that has often and unsatisfactorily been termed primitive, tribal, traditional, indigenous, folk or popular" (1961: 341). The reasons for objection is mainly because of the implication of backwards in the terms used. These terms also denote that the mentioned art forms are then different from the high arts enjoyed by the elites in the society.

While keeping the Indian society in mind, the original inhabitants of the society were called as 'adivasi' – which means the indigenous people or the original inhabitants. The Warlis too are an Adivasi community. "The term 'adivasi' meaning 'original' inhabitants' was first used in the Chhota Nagpur region of Bihar in the 1930s and was extended to other regions in the 1940s by A V Thakkar, who worked among the tribals. In the historical Indian context now 'adivasi' refers to a wide variety of communities which before had remained relatively free, from the controls of outside states, but were eventually subjugated during the colonial period and brought under the control of the state. Today, they are classified as "Scheduled Tribes" by the Indian Constitution and the Warlis are included in this listing". (2000: 4428) Therefore the art of the Warlis is termed as Tribal Art.

Art is not merely an expression of self, but a way of life. Art sustains life, nourishes it and makes it meaningful. All these years' men and women have lived and created, and it is their creations which have enriched the flow of art with the reflections of their feelings, emotions and refinements. Arts are intimately linked with life, its living and its celebration. These are based on faith, emotions, devotions and are closely related to the ceremonies and rituals, seasons and timings, sorrows and happiness, births and deaths, marriages and worships. These speak of te glories of kings and emperors, the battles fought and wars lost. These are interwoven with myths, legends, history, episodes and tales of the communities.

India is a vast country with tremendous diversity in geography, climate, language and people adhering to widely different religions – Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrian, Christian, Islam, Hinduism as well as various animistic religions, which is reflected in its varied artistic materials and forms.

Beginning with the earliest primordial image of the Earth Mother of Mohenjodaro down to the votive terracotta figures near the gram devati shrines in almost every village today, there is an inherent flow of creative energy of the sculptor which reveal timeless cultural patterns[1]. The highly simplified wall paintings either of Warlis in Maharashtra or of Sauras in Orissa are bound by faith and institution.

The Kolam of South India, Mandana of Rajasthan, Rangoli of Maharashtra, Sathiya of Gujrat, Alpona of Bengal, Aripana of Bihar, Chowka Purna and Sona Rakhma in Uttar Pradesh and Jhoti and Muruja of Orissa are auspicious symbols drawn on floor or wall in rice paste against a cow dung or red ochre smeared ground. These drawings are symbols of cosmic power and at the same time filled with meaning of life and express the myth, ritual and folklore.

The wall paintings of tribal communities, particularly of Sauras of Orissa, the Rathvas and Bhilals of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, the Warlis of Maharashtra invoke spirits in the painted walls in their homes. In Madhubani, Bihar, kayasth [2] women paint the walls of the nuptial chamber (Kohbarghar) or the room of the family deity (gosauni – ka - ghar) in earth and

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[1] Ed: Dr.Pathy Dinanath, 1992 'Primitive Vigour – tribal folk and traditional arts of India', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

[2] It is a caste group in the Hindu social order.

vegetable pigments. Many of these paintings narrate myths and legends and specially scenes from the epic Ramayana.

The icons of the Sauras executed in rice paste on the red ochre background are meant to propitiate deities and ancestors as well as for fertility.

The tradition of narrative painting or chitrakatha is as old as the myths and legends. In many parts of India, there exist wandering picture story tellers who carry their painted scrolls narrating myths and legends wherever they go. The Pahadi paintings of Rajasthan, depicting the life stories of Pabuji and Dev Narayan, the Nakkashi paintings of Andhra Pradesh depicting puranic legends, the Gundana pats of Bengal keep the tradition alive. The icon paintings of the yatri patas of Puri mainly depicting Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra or the old Kalighat paintings with divinities are essentially the temple souvenirs of pilgrims.

The wax technique or the hollow casting which exist in the tribal communities of central and eastern India links the tradition to an archaic past. The Dhokras and Mals of West Bengal, Malars of Bihar, Thataris, Ghantaras and Sithulias of Orissa and Jharas and Gadhavas in Madhya Pradesh mostly cast by cire perdue process, images of large varieties, such as human figures, figures of birds, animals, reptiles, decorative containers, lamps and grain measuring bowls.

While Kashmir is known for its papier-mâché articles, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan are also renowned for their fabulous presentation of this art form.

Textiles provide another major art form in our country, Patolas, Ikats, Mashru, Brocades, Jamdani, Himru are a few famous names in textile which link it to the past. There are also embroideries in rich varieties in Kutch and Saurasthra region of Gujarat and the Barmer and Jaisalmer regions of Rajasthan. Bengal is renowned for Kantha, Bihar for sujni quilts, Punjab for Phulkari, Himachal Pradesh for Chamba rumals, Orissa for Appliques, Andhra Pradesh for Asia rumals. Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh is the home of the Kalamkari. In Gujarat Matano Chandarvoo or textiles for Mother Goddess worship is an old tradition. The pigment – painted temple hangings or pichhavais in nathdwars is extremely popular.

Some of the art forms, their meanings, the occasion of paintings and the narratives that they express need to be understood. A few of these art forms which share some similarities with the

Warli paintings can be looked into and it is important to understand what they reflect. There are a wide range of paintings done by various tribes across India; we will focus only on a few of such art forms. The art forms mentioned below are a varied number of studies that have been undertaken by the Lalit Kala Akademi, these varying art forms represent the varied nature of tribal art in India.

Pithora Tribal Painting – the Rathwa or the Bhil tribe of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are spread over a large area. They worship a local deity called Pithora or Babo Pithoro, to whom animals such as tigers and horses are dedicated. The Pithora wall paintings are associated with rituals and executed by the Bhils in honour of the deity. These paintings commonly depict the marriage processions of Bablo Pithoro and his wife Pithora Devi. It is believed that painting Babo Pithoro on the wall brings prosperity and good luck to the family. They also paint gods and goddess and myths related to creation of earth. They execute these paintings for every auspicious and religious ceremony.

Figure 2.1 – Pithora Wall Paintings

The Pithora wall paintings are confined within a rectangular decorative bordered space on the wall with three symbolic rows. Every Pithora painting has depiction of n outer boundary and an entrance in the middle of the lower boarder, usually guarded by two panthers that are often seen snatching a pig or a goat. The village guard also figures prominently in many versions. The most significant element of Pithora wall paintings is the linear execution of the painting. In the uppermost row are the depiction of gods mounted on horses, usually five gods/goddesses are depicted in the paintings – Ganesha, Babo Pithora, Pithora Devi, Indra (King of all Gods) and Hudol (the benevolent female spirit). Pithora paintings also contain depictions of peacocks and parrots, tigers, monkeys, elephants and insects of the region.

The remaining picture plane is filled with various images from daily life such as a group of dancers, persons brewing liquor, milkmaids, hunters, horse – carts, farmers, women drawing water from the well, etc.

There are some modern inclusions as well, such as the police station, granary, water hand pumps, airplanes, helicopters, trains, motorcars, soldiers with uniforms in guns, etc.

Pithora paintings are usually rendered in bright tints of blues, reds, greens, yellows, orange with figures outlined in black. These paintings were traditionally created by the women of the house, but today this art is also found on paper by the traditional painters for commercial purposes.

Phad Painting from Rajasthan – Phad is a painted cloth which in Rajasthani dialect translates 'folds'. The Phad painters produce their pictures for the wandering story tellers, who provide nightly entertainment for village audiences. The classic compositions illustrate stories from the popular epics. The painted themes are built around local legends, especially heroic tales of Pabuji and of Dev Narain (Devji), local deities. In the current times, other stories from Ramayana and the life of Krishna are also painted on Phads to provide further entertainment.

The Rabari tribe worship Pabuji as a great hero and the Phads depict these tales. The wandering singers throughout the countryside sing these tales. The singers are always a couple known as Bhopa (man) and Bhopi (woman), the man plays a one stringed instrument while the woman joins him in Ballad singing. The important feature of the narration is the ritual oil lamp held by the Bhopa or Bhopi during the course of the entire narration.

The Phad or the picture scrolls are produced by Phad painters, some of which have been as long as twelve meters in length and ten meters wide. The Phad scrolls are so long that they cannot be assimilated at a glance.

Figure 2.2 Phad Painting from Rajasthan

The composition and assimilation of scenes differ; they may be painted horizontally or vertically. Each panel is separated from the other by an imaginative geometrical design. The painting includes depiction of animals like the elephants, horses, snakes, birds, trees and flowers. The faces are depicted in profile and figures represented in rows. The colour range is very limited and contains only few basic shades in which the colour red predominates. White and black is used as outline, orange for skin, grey for buildings, and green for plants and in combination with red for clothing. Yellow colour is used to enhance the decorative elements.

The Phad painters produce their scroll for the patrons who commissioned them and he in turn passes them to the Bhopas. The Bhopas are not permitted to sell their scroll directly. The date of the tradition is unknown, some literary evidences attest to its existence by the early nineteenth century.

Kurumbha Tribal Painting – the Kurumbha tribals inhabit the foothills of the Nilgiri Mountain of Tamil Nadu, also known as the Southern 'Kanares', primarily located in the Coimbatore and Dharmapuri districts of Southern India. Small communities of Kurumbha tribe are also found in areas of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The Kurumbha tribes decorate the walls of their houses with paintings just as most of other animistic communities. They paint not just for decorating their homes, but also to celebrate festivals and other Kurumbha religious observances.

Most of the tribal paintings have their origination from the pre-historic rock paintings. The Kurumbha tribal paintings have high graphic quality, the striking feature of Kurumbha tribal painting is their depiction of trees and plants, which are fairly realistic images. Human figures are painted with rectangular body form, while legs and hands are drawn with lines. The head painted in a circular shape and the neck shown with a small vertical line, images of females is easily distinguishable with their circular hairstyle or hair knot.
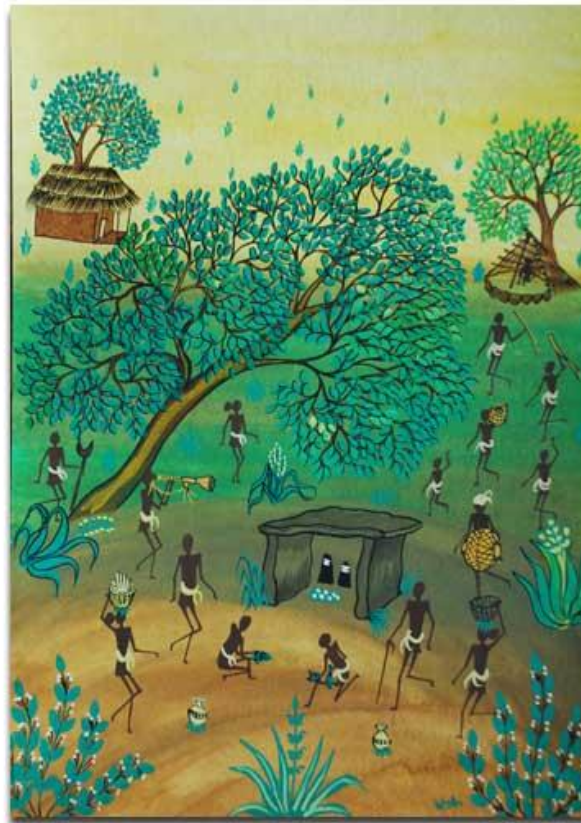
Figure 2.3 Kurumbha Tribal Painting

Kurumbha paintings generally depict scenes from the daily life like, women doing their house hold chores, agricultural activities, men and women carrying baskets on their head, women dancing, landscapes, etc. the paintings are done with organic materials on different coloured backgrounds.

The Kurumbha paintings stylistically resemble the Warli tribal art of Maharashtra and the Saura tribal art of Orissa in their subject matter and execution. While Warli and Saura tribal paintings are generally monochromatic, Kurumbha paintings are polychromatic. The depiction of tribal dance in circular pattern is similar to Warli tribal painting.

Bastar Tribal Painting – the Gond or the Ghadwa is a popular tribe of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Gond painting of bastar area is a free hand expression of the Gond tribes. They used to paint the walls of their house in memories of their ancestors. Gond tribal paintings are ritualistic in nature.
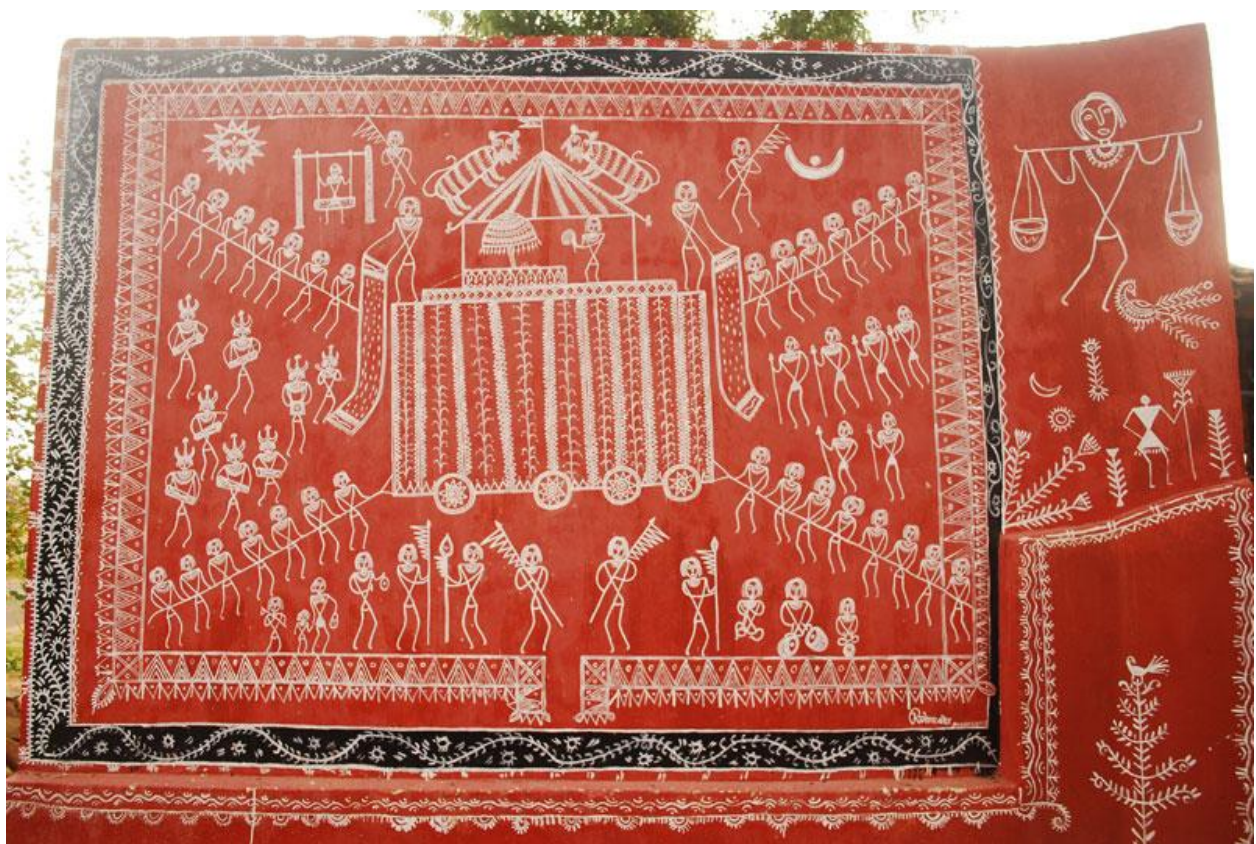
Figure 2.4 Bastar Tribal Painting

They, initially paint over a wooden pole that has now been replaced by the large flat slab of stone, which are elaborately painted and locally referred to as a '*math*'. Various stones of this kind can be seen in the Jagdalpur area. The memorials depict a man on an elephant always at the bottom, dancers, a man carrying pots and also various scenes such as a deceased riding a horse or ploughing, in the lower part of the stone slab. The other common depiction is the river monster called *Rassi* or *Satti* because her snake like body resembles a rope. The birds, tigers and fishes are also common subjects in the paintings. There is a variety of colours in vivid shades that are used in the paintings.

They also paint auspicious symbols drawn on the floor with white rice paste and ochre or yellow earth colour. One of the popular votive painting is made to celebrate the birth of Krishna (Hindu god) locally known as *Kanhaiya aathe*. A special type of *chowk* is made with paddy husk to worship *Hara Dev*, a symbolic depiction of Mother Goddess, through a geometric motif, which expands outward from its central point like a lotus flower.

Apart from serving ritualistic purposes wall paintings and floor paintings are believed to create harmonious atmosphere in the house. Paintings are done on the walls of the house to ward off evils and to seek protection of the goddess.

The replicas of Gond tribal paintings are executed on paper for commercial purposes. Gond paintings now incorporate images from modern world like cars, motorcycles, buses, etc.

Tribal Paintings of Hazaribagh – the tribals of Harazibagh in Jharkhand State of Eastern India, paint outside the walls of their houses with paintings that have a remarkable resemblance with the Mesolithic rock art and a continuation of the painting tradition visualize in their village murals. In the present times, this traditional art is also done on paper.

These paintings are considered auspicious by them and related with fertility, based on themes related to harvesting and marriage. On the occasion of *sahorai*[3], they paint related subjects with vivid expressions. During the traditional marriage season, the houses are redecorated with paintings, especially the bridal room '*khovar*'.

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[3] a festival of harvest

Figure 2.5 Painting on a Kurmi House

The art of Kurmis is anthropomorphic in character. They paint mainly with natural ochre, red, white and black, on the yellow mud plaster of their homes. Kurmis residing in the deep forest and hills decorate their houses with images of wild birds and animals.

The tribal women learn painting from their mother or aunts when they are young and unmarried. After marriage when she goes to another village her style blends with her mother – in – law's tradition and fusion occurs.

Saura Art – the art of Sauras, is primitive but one of the most dynamic and colourful tribe of Orissa. Like many tribal cultures all over the world, the art of Sauras draws inspiration and direction from their spiritual and religious beliefs. It has a utilitarian value; it functions as a means of worship and a medium of invocation.

Over the centuries, the Sauras have developed an elaborate system of sacrifices and actions involving magic, incantation, charm and sorcery intended to flatter the vanity of the spirits and to please them. Among such actions is the custom of making paintings on the walls of their houses. These paintings serve as temporary dwellings or houses for the spirits in the living world. Thus, by creating ritualistic spaces within their own houses, their belief brings about an intimate

relationship between the Sauras and the spirit on one hand and the spirit and the icons on the other.

To begin with, the wall on which is a painting is to be drawn is washed with fresh red earth and water to provide good background. The painter uses a twig slightly splayed at the end. For the paints, the painter uses the materials, which are available locally. The major pigment for the Saura icons is white, which is obtained either from rice, ash, chalk or lime mixed with water. At times the figures are emphasised using colours such as black, red, blue and yellow.

The general format of the painting is in the form of a house, like a *kothi* in rectangular or square shape and it is filled up, in accordance with the dictates. The artist makes the outline of the house first, and then proceeds to decorate and fill it with human and animal figures, and objects etc. When the artist has finished the initial drawing, he sends for the intermediary who then proceeds to add new elements to the drawing as per the dictates of the invoked spirit. Thus the painting(as seen in figure 2.6) is actually a religious ritual which is done by invoking the spirits and is thus sacred.

When one considers the various tribal art forms, we see that these art forms hold a meaning, with regard to their society, their religion, their rituals, their practices and beliefs. Therefore in order to understand the painting and the meaning that the painting symbolizes, it is important to have an understanding of the tribe which paints it. The painting usually takes place under particular circumstances such as at the time of harvest, marriage, and other such important occasion, therefore the day to day life style and practice needs to be understood, in order to get a better understanding of the painting, its location, the time period in which it was created, the symbols used and their meanings and the significance of a painting in the tribal community. Yashodhara Dalmia (1982) when discussing the Warli Paintings mentions that the Warli Paintings are a part of the ritualistic tradition of the Warli community and so 'a study of ritual art can only be complete, when it takes into account the day to day lives of the people as enacted within the family relationships. An overall understanding of the economic structure is also necessary to

Figure 2.6 Saura Painting

place the rituals in perspectives'.[4] Therefore in order to understand the Warli Paintings, the importance of the painting, its location, the rituals with regard to the painting and their significance, the symbols and their meanings and the changes that have been noted in the paintings over a period of time, it is first important to understand the Warli community, their origin, history, social organization, social, economic, cultural life, their religion, the process of marriage and their wedding ritual[5], etc as these will help understand the Warli community and the paintings. Therefore the second part of this chapter will look at the overview of the Warli community and attempt to understand the socio – economic – political and cultural aspects of the Warlis.

Overview of the Warli Tribe

The Warli tribes are located mostly in the hilly tracts along the west coast in northern Maharashtra and Southern Gujarat. The total population of Maharashtra, as per the 2001 Census is 96,878,627. Of this, 8,577,276 (8.9 per cent) are Scheduled Tribes (STs). The population of Warlis is 627,197 (7.3 per cent) as per the 2001 census.

The Warlis do not show affinity with the Bhils, Thakurs, or Malhar Kolis, on the other hand they regard themselves to be socially superior to the Bhils, Katkaris and Thakurs. The extent of Gujrathi influence on the Warli language would seem to show that they moved towards the south from the north. Many Warlis claim that their original home was in Nagar Haveli, in the Daman territory. They say that they came down either from Dharampur or Daman territory and occupied the present territory long back.

This part of the chapter will focus on understanding the overview of the Warli tribe, which will focus on the Historical and Sociological understanding of the community. The outline of this is as follows:

1. Origin and History of the Warlis – this section will focus on the understanding of the history of the Warli community, their origin, geographical location and the various debates regarding their origin.

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[4] Y.Dalmia, 1982. p. 11.
[5] Since the Warli Paintings are a part of the Wedding Ritual.

2. Social Organization – this section of the chapter will look into the organizational structure of the Warli community, where the exogamous nature of the clans is discussed, the family as a unit of the social organization is studied and how the tribe organizes itself into hamlets, local groups and village.

3. Social Life of the Warlis – this section will look into the matter of the day to day lifestyle of the Warlis which includes their appearance, dressing, food, habitation and food.

4. Socio – Economic account of the Warlis – this part of the chapter studies the occupation of the Warlis and their source of income.

5. Religion of the Warlis – the Warlis worship a range of gods and goddesses, this chapter looks at different gods and goddesses and their significance in the life of the Warlis.

6. Marriage – the marriage is an important ceremony in the life of the Warlis and an important marker of the change in the position of the individuals and the beginning of family life. This section covers the rituals of the marriage ceremony, their meanings and significance and the symbols they represent, which give an understanding of the community.

7. The Status of Women – this part of the chapter attempts to understand the position that women hold in the Warli community. Their role in the day to day life and during the rituals and celebrations.

8. The Changing Scenario – this part of the chapter will look the various changes that have been taking place in the Warli community over a period of time.

Origin and History of the Warlis:

According to Dr. Wilson, Warlis are originally *Varles* or 'up - landers'. They are called so because they lived in *Varalat*, the northern part of the Konkan which was called *"Varalat"* because Warlis originally lived there. *Varal* according to Dr. Wilson, means a tilled patch of land. The people who cultivated these patches of land are therefore *Varalis* or Warlis. The Varalat area consists of hilly tracts of Thane and around the hilly tracts of Surat, Nashik, and Dang Districts and traditionally occupied by this tribe.

On the other hand Mr. Rajwade, a historian and research scholar, thinks that the Warlis are mentioned as the non – Aryan tribe by Katyayan in his Vartikas under the name *varud* along with *vyas* and *nishad*. Rajwade derives the word Warli from the word *varud* as mentioned in Katyayan's Vartikas thus: *varud – varudaki – varulai – varuli* and finally *varali.*[6] K.Save argues that though the derivation seems to be farfetched, it may be taken that the tribe is of non – Aryan origin and lived in the country near the Vindhyas and Satpuras from which it came southwards. [7]Some of them took shelter in the Satpura hills in Khandesh where they are still found. Some, probably the major portion descended to the hilly forests of Dharampur and Bansda. Their language, which has been considerably influenced by Guajarati, goes to prove that they moved towards the south from the morth. Many Warlis claim that, their original home was in Namnagar or Nagarhaveli in the Daman Territory. Almost invariably they say that they came from the North, either from Dharampur or Daman territory. The dialect of the Davar Warlis seems to be older than that of others from the southern parts and it has been influenced by Gujarati to a great extent. The southerners seem to have been more assimilated with tribes like the Kolis and Kunbis who have imbibed lower Maratha Culture in regard to marriage, customs, religion and language. Enthoven has described Varalis as a sub-division of Bhils – who are found not only in Khandesh in considerable numbers but also in the northern parts of Gujarat.[8] It is not unlikely that the Warlis were associated sometimes or the other with the Bhils with whom they have many traits in common as regards to customs and culture. Latham, in discussing the origin of Maharattas, opined that the "Maharatta blood must be to a certain extent Bhil"[9]. In his opinion, "it was the Bhils and Kols who were the aborigines, the Rajputs and their congeners who were the strangers". That the Warlis at one time formed part of the Bhils is further supported by the following passage from Latham: "In habits the Bhils, the Warlis, the Kols of Gujarat and other allied tribes, are on the Western side of Gondwana, what the Sours, the Konds and the Kols of Bengal are on the Eastern. All are believed, on good grounds, to be of the same blood. At the same time, the language of the Bhils is akin to Hindi; on the eastern side of India the language

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[6] V.K. Rajwade, 'Mahikavatichi Bakhar', 1924, p.82.
[7] K.J. Save, The Warlis, 1945. Pg – 5.
[8] "Tribes and Castes of Bombay Presidency", Vol I, p. 156.
[9] "Ethnology of India" p. 306.

and blood coincide, on the western, the blood is southern, the language northern – the language Marathi"[10].

Y. Dalmia (1982: 199) mentions that Warlis use of the symbol of the triangle in their painting is representative of the "yoni of the mother goddess which gives birth to life" she further elaborates that "the Warlis worship the yoni in the shape of the triangle, sometimes seeing the shape itself as the force which has brought the universe into being". There is also a mention of the Warlis worship of the conical peak of hill in the Warli area, where the hill is known as the goddess Mahalaksmi thereby indicating that Warlis are a cult engaged in yoni worship similar to other cults which exist in other parts of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and other areas in the Southern part of India. Dalmia has noted that 'in many places, the triangular snake hill is worshipped as the yoni of the earth goddess and the snakes inside the hill signify the male element. The goddess Santeri, worshipped all over South Konkan and Goa, is an actual snake hill, over which a concrete structure is established to make it more permanent. Significantly the conical snake hill is known as *warul* in Marathi from which the word Warli may have been derived' (Ibid: 199). This description by Dalmia is yet another explanation through which the name Warli may have been derived.

Since there is no definite knowledge regarding the origin of the Warlis, according to Sanskriti Kosa, the Warlis once inhabited the region near Dharampur, which has been described by Megasthenes as the Warlis. However there is no sufficient evidence to independently corroborate this. [11] Therefore there has been no satisfactory conclusion as to the probable origin of the tribe and the reason why they are called so.

Social Organization

The social organization of the Warlis can be understood in terms their geographical location and the social structure that constitutes the Warli community. The Warlis are an exogamous group – where they marry outside their clan group. The Warli family comprises of the man, wife and their children, having their own independent households. The Warli community though Patriarchal, there exists certain practices, which points to the matriarchal cult of the tribe, where

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[10] K.J. Save, The Warlis, 1945. Pg – 6
[11] Ed. Dandekar. A, Mythos and Logos of the Warlis – A Tribal Worldview, 1998

practice of bride price is followed, also the wedding ceremony is presided over by a priestess. The family is the smallest unit of the community; the community is organized into hamlets and forms a village. Each village comprises of panchas who are a council of five senior most men in the village and who look after the matters of the village. Save (1945) writes that in the Bombay Gazetteers of 1882, this tribe is sub – divided into three groups, they are Murdes, Davars, and Nihirs. According to Enthoven, there is one more division known as pure or Sudh Warlis. He calls all of them as endogamous divisions, not inter - dining or intermarrying with each other. These divisions may also be geographical or local divisions. "The local group is the smallest unit of cultural specialization. In slight details of customs and daily habits of ceremony and perhaps of dialect, a local group is always to some extent different from every other social group".[12] Those in the extreme north are known as Murdes – they are called so, because the women of this area wear an ornament called muradanya in their ears. Next to them come the Davars, they live in the northern most part of the Thane district. The Davar women are known for their brass rings worn on their arms and legs. Further towards the south live the Nihirs, who are seen to have been influenced by the language and culture of the lower classes of Marathas viz. the Kunbis. The Nihirs are called so because they use the word *nihi* instead of the more common Marathi word *nahi* (no). The Warlis near the Sahyadari range, i.e. in Mokhada call themselves *shud* or pure Warlis. It is difficult to decide which group is socially superior, each group thinks it is socially superior to the others and hence it does not like to partake of food with members of other divisions, nor give to or tae girls in marriage from other groups. Inter – marriages among the various groups is not strictly prohibited, but one of the reason very few intermarriages take place is because Warlis prefer to take a bride from a nearby locality.

Exogamous Divisions – "The rule which prescribes that an individual must find a mate outside of his own group, whether that group is the family, village, or some other social unit, is known as exogamy".[13] The Warli tribe is composed of numerous exogamous groups. Ever clan or *kul* forms an exogamous division with others. Every clan has a separate surname which is called *kuli* or *varangnen* and forms a distinct social unit. Marriage must take place outside the clan and those who have the same surname are claimed to be *kutumbi* or clansman, even though there may have been no previous relationship between either parties. According to K.J. Save, there are 200

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[12] Goldenweiser "Early Civilization" p. 237
[13] Robert Lowie "Primitive Society" p.16

clans or exogamous groups among this tribe. Some of them are Achari, Budhar, Bhowar, Chothe, Darode, Douda, Dongarkar, Dumada, Sumada, Dhodi, Dhangada, Fupane, Garel, Gawate, Ghatel, Hadal, Kamdi, Khutade, Kharpade, Kolha, Karpat, Moshi, Mor, Metha, Rade, Tumda, Valvi, Viskadya, Vardha, Vangad, Vagh, Singode, etc. (Save, 1945: 32)

Hamlet – The extent of Warli population spreads over the hilly parts of the North Konkan and the the South Gujarat, the coastal strip of the north of Thana district and the plains and forests lying between the coast (Arabian Sea) and the Sahyadri range. The people live in numerous small groups scattered all over these parts. Each group lives in huts clustered together in limited area, which is called as a hamlet or a *pada.*

A hamlet is composed of a small number of huts, usually twelve to fifteen, four or five such hamlets constitute a Warli village. The Warli *pada* is not a segregated locality, though it may be located in the outskirt areas.

The Warli community also has divisions which are primarily regional or geographic in character. Thus there are Pather Warlis who live in the plains near the coastal strip and the Ghati Warlis who live near the Ghats of the Sahyadris. These regional divisions cannot be set in water – tight compartments, but they often overlap each other. It can be said that regionally the tribe is divided into fairly large geographical divisions, which again are sub – divided into villages. The village is further divided into hamlets and the hamlets into various families. The family is the basis of the Warli organization, both as a social and local unit.

Family – A Warli family comprises a man and his wife together with their children. The family includes the man's brothers and sisters, especially if they are minors or unmarried. The family life of the Warlis began with marriage. A man acquires the status of a family man when he has a wife. A married life is synonymous with independent household, which is why married sons move away from the parent's house. Sometimes, though living in separate huts, they may share a common hearth. In the old age, the parents may choose to live with one of their sons or daughters. However, the parents move in with their children only when they are unable to work and earn living.

The Warli family is patronymic, where the wife and all the children take the husband's and father's name respectively. Sometimes a wife is not known by her name, but as the wife of so

and so. Even the word 'wife' is dropped, and the possessive case of the husband's name serves the purpose, thus a woman may be known and called as Ramachi (Rama's – implying Rama's wife) or Jethyachi (Jethya's – implying Jethya's wife).

The Warli society is a Patriarchal Society, with the man as the head of the household. In many Warlis the man has as many as four or five wives. However many couples live together and have children without getting married. The transitory nature of their society pointing to a matriarchal cult is indicated by the fact that men still have to pay bride-price, only priestess can perform marriages and the role of the maternal uncle is important in many rites and rituals of the year. Women may choose to leave their man, asserting their free will in which case the second man has to pay her price to the first. The *gharora* system is also practiced where if the man is unable to pay the bride-price; he can live on trial at the woman's place, earning his stay there by working for her. However, a marriage ceremony needs to be performed, at convenience later on, even after children are born to the couple. This system is called *"Koradyawar Anne"*. If a man dies, his wife is inherited by his brother even though he has a wife. Divorce is permitted on the grounds of extra marital relations, excessive drinking, impotency, etc.

The tribe observes patrilineal descent, but the tribe has not exclusively adopted the system of patrilocal residence. A man if he chooses may go and live in the village of his father – in –law. In the case of a *gharor*[14]*,* the man has to adopt the matrilocal residence. But in such circumstances the *gharor* does not lose his family identity nor does he go by the name of the family of his father – in – law.

The Local Group – The family is a local unit and forms a part of the local group or the hamlet. Each hamlet vis –a – vis a village is fairly independent in the management of its own affairs. The relations of the family as a local unit with the local group are more vital than with the clan. The clan is distributed all over, while the local group is compact. There may be different families living in the same hamlet, and they live in the spirit of neighbourliness. A family shares in the joy and sorrows of the hamlet and the idea of mutual help prevails among the different families of the hamlet.

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[14] *Gharor* – husband living in the family of his wife's father.

The affairs of a village are managed by a council of five members called the *Panchas* who are self – elected persons and approved by the villagers. The *Panchas* are usually the *bhagats* and the elderly men in the village who by their experience and seniority are taken to be the authorities on matters of the village.

The Warlis have a system of *"Kadi Mod"*, where in case of a fight between any two persons; the matter is taken to the *Panchas*, who are the five oldest members of the village. The fight is then resolved by the *panchas*, and the two parties and asked to break – a – stick *(kadi mod)*, the breaking of the stick is symbolic of the end of the fight. The two parties now have to serve toddy to the entire village, to celebrate the end of the fight, and also as compensation due to the inconvenience caused to the villagers because of the fight. Once the matter has been resolved, neither of the parties can fight again on the same issue.

When persons from two different villages are involved in a social dispute, the *Panchas* from both the villages come together and try to settle the matter amicably. If the *Panchas* uphold the person from their respective villages, a decision is difficult to be arrived at. In such cases the matter may be referred the *Panchas* of two other villages, who may look into the matter in an unbiased manner. The judgment of the third party is generally accepted by both, in case it is not, and then the matter ends there itself without any justice being administered in the case. There is no higher body to which a further appeal can be made.

Social Life of the Warlis

Appearance and Dress of the Warlis

The description of the Warlis described by K. Save is as follows: "Warlis have a dark sun – burnt skin. Warlis have a scanty growth of hair on the body especially on the chest. They have no hair on the hands and legs on account of constant work. A Warli without a tuft of hair on the head is hardly to be found as they believe there is no beauty without such tuft.

A Warli shows no peculiar traits on his face or body. Their hair is not woolly like that of the Negroes. The cheek bones are not prominent like those of the Mongolians. The eyes are neither small nor deep. Eyebrows are hairy and lips are neither broad nor protruding. The nose is neither prominent nor flat. A Warli of robust constitution is hardly to be seen. They are lean and

emaciated and lack vitality, partly because of starvation and partly because of drinks. Though apparently weak, they have stamina, and if determined, can put up any amount of hard work" (1945: 7-8).

The Warli women wear several ornaments such as brass rings on arms and legs, glass bangles, strings of glass beads and sometimes a silver chain around the neck. They also put on brass or silver earrings and sometimes a bunch of big hollow silver beads in their hair. Men also usually wear simple round brass earrings.

The Warlis dress is a simple loin cloth for the men tied around their waist and a small waist coat, while the women wear a *lugde*, which is a nine yard sari. It is draped between the two thighs to cover the private parts and a part of this garment is taken over the breasts over the shoulder.

Habitations

Warlis lead a quiet agricultural life; the tribe as a whole is a settled one and the wandering habits are almost extinct. Warlis love and live a forest life. Their habitations are much scattered. A Warli village comprises of no more than forty huts. The population is distributed in small hamlets of about a dozen huts cut off from each other by furlongs and sometimes by miles. Warlis prefer to erect a hut on the fields they cultivate irrespective of the fact that they have to live all alone without neighbours or company.

The hut in which a Warli family lives consists of simple earth foundation, a wooden frame, bamboo strips, reed, straw and leaves. A Warli hut is always square in shape and in most cases facing the east direction. There is only one door for entrance, as there is no window, there is no passage of free air and light within the house. The walls are built of boru (reeds), bamboo and karvi sticks and plastered with cow dung or mud. The huts are either made with straw or dried leaves. Many a times, a part of the hut serves the purpose of a shed for the cattle.

Food

As pre – eminently agriculturists, their food consists of the produce of the soil they cultivate. Rice of a coarser kind is therefore their chief food. In the hilly districts where there are no rice farms, *nagli* has taken its place. Rice or *nagli* is boiled or turned into flour for bread, or boiled

with water to prepare gruel. Either of these with salt is their daily dish. Among the farm produce, besides rice are *nagli, kodra, vari, udid, tur, chavali* and other such pulses.

In rainy season particularly fresh fish, occasionally dried fish and sometimes green vegetables add flavour to their dishes. They eat fowls, the flesh of goat, sheep, all kinds of deer, rabbit, wild pig and some birds like pigeons, peacocks, etc.

Warlis avoid eating certain things in the monsoon. From the first showers of rain to the time of threshing new corn, a few things like coconut, plantain, betel – leaf, betel – nut, turmeric, sugarcane, beans, cucumber, etc are taboo to them. These are avoided, because they must not be partaken of unless offered to the deity of corn. The head of the family has to observe this taboo. Young men who are having their training under a *bhagat*, the *bhagats*, the snake charmers and medicine men do not eat fish or flesh besides the things mentioned above during the course of their training.

The Religion of the Warlis

An awe of life in all its forms leads the Warlis to revere almost any object, animate or inanimate. Thus they have not only the Sun and Moon Gods, but also Gods of Lightning, the God of Happiness, the God of Thunder and Rain. In their marriage songs the Warlis remember a whole number of Gods of Forest to the God of Hands. Acutely conscious of death they look upon even the humblest manifestation of life with great wonder.

As season follows season then and nature changes its forms, the god appropriate to each season is worshipped. Each year is born in the monsoon, reaches its full bloom during harvest and attains maturity and finally death after the last corn has been threshed and sold in the market. With the bringing of the first rice, the festival of *Naranadeva,* the god of rain is celebrated. When the crop reaches ripeness, the household gods *Hirva, Himai, Jhoting* and *Naranadeva* are worshipped. During the harvest, *Cheda* or the village guardian is worshipped for only he can protect the fields. The next festival is of the Tiger God or the *Waghadeva*, the guardian of every three villages, and if no offering is made to him, the villagers believe that they will suffer great wrath. Following this the festival of *Kansari*, the Corn Goddess takes place, for without her the fields would be barren. It is only when the crop has been stacked and stored that the Warlis savour the fruits of their labour.

Another important goddess is the deity of Marriage, *Palghata*, the vegetation goddess; all of the nature is personified in the form of *Palghata*, the goddess of trees and plants (fertility) who presides over marriage. Acutely aware of the primal processes of birth and death, the Warlis believe that these are contained within the very womb of the Mother. The womb is best represented by the pot, the boundless container of life. The goddess *Palghata* then stands for the pot overflowing with vegetation, the brimming over of life (*Pal – Plants, Ghata - Pot*).

Central to the lives of the Warlis is the cult of mother goddess, according to them; their chief goddess is *aai* or Mother who looks after their welfare. She is worshipped in the form of *Dhartari,* the mother earth, *Gavatari,* the cow mother and *Kansari* the corn goddess. On all important occasions, the tribals congregate at the *Mahalakshmi Hill* in Dahanu Taluka, whose conical peak resembles the *yoni*, they worship as mother.

In the cult of the mother goddess, women are invested with especially creative powers, since it is they who give birth to life. In the Warli area only a *Savasini* or a woman whose husband is alive can make the marriage paintings. Then again only the *Dhavleri* or the priestess can get couples married – the *dhavleri's* are those who get the wedding song in their dreams.

Worship of Tiger – God: The Warlis worship *Waghadeva,* every village has an image of the tiger-god in the form of a standing stone, usually cylindrical in shape, under a tree. *Waghya* is the lords of the tigers and is said to protect the cattle grazing in the forest. It is believed that this god assumes the form of a tiger and moves about and protects the cattle from an attack from the wild beasts. On the day of worship of the *Waghadeva* a lamp is burnt in front of the image, a coconut is broken and a chicken is offered to the god.

Worship of trees: certain trees like *bel, pipal* and *umbar* are regarded as scared, and the dry wood of these trees is never used as fuel. The *bel* tree is not cut, as it is believed that the first two creatures of the world had their habitation on the *bel* tree. A twig of the *Umbar* tree is required at the time of the marriage, therefore even an *Umbar* tree is considered to be sacred. It is regarded as a tree of God *Isar.* Warlis believe that water is available if the land is dug near an *Umbar* tree. This tree bears fruit without the flower stage, as the *Umbar* flowers are never seen; Warlis believe that he who sees an *Umbar* flower should be assured of a good fortune.

<u>The Tribal Deities</u>: the principal Warli deities are *Naran dev, Hirva and Himai. Naran dev* is the common tribal god, and every clan has an image of *Naran dev* in the form of either a stone or an areca nut besmeared with red lead. This stone image is placed along with similar images of other deities in a big basket half full of rice. The areca nut images are kept separately in small baskets hung on a stick which is again covered and the images are taken out only when required.

Hirva is the family god of the Warlis, the image of this deity is a small silver piece which is besmeared with red lead. This image is kept in a small basket filled with rice. Every year after the harvest, the old rice in the basket is replaced by the new harvested rice. *Hirva* is generally worshipped during or after the harvest season. The Warlis worship the *Hirva* god annually, during special occasions and also when somebody in the family is ill. *Hirva* is regarded as the god of wealth, which is the reason why the image of *Hirva* is made on silver, which is a symbol of wealth to the Warlis.

Himay is a female deity and is supposed to be the object of worship for women. The image of *Himay* is a *waghol* or a *gorochan* fallen from the mouth of a cow. The *gorochana* is a yellow pigment found in small quantities in the bodies of cows and is considered to be a valuable drug.

Bhutali or a witch is a woman who has acquired special evil powers by which she can do harm to others. All the witches in the village form a secret association and select one of them as their leader. They pick out some young unmarried girls and impart their instructions in witchcraft to them. The recruits to the witchcraft can only be maidens, but they can regularly marry thereafter; and their married life does not come in the way of their practicing witchcraft. After finishing with the course of instructions, the recruits have to pay fees to their preceptor – the chief *Bhutali*.

Bhagat is a renowned and respected person of the Warli tribe. *Bhagats*, the 'wise men' of the Warlis are the carriers and propagators of the Warli world view, which the community has acquired through its long existence in the forest. The *Bhagat* is a medium, a medicine man, an arbitrator, a diviner, a conductor of rituals and above all an enemy of witches. The knowledge of the medicinal plants in the terrain they live and the understanding of the different environmental parameters that regulate the Warli life are envisaged in their belief system. The Warli belief system thus is a manifestation of the intellectual attempt on the part of the Warlis to understand human behaviour and the nature. The rituals and beliefs of Warlis are adaptive to their living

conditions. Thus, Warlis are '*jungalacha raja*' or the 'kings of the forests' and the *Bhagats* are the 'wise men' of the forests.

Bhagat holds a prominent social position in the community and is revered by all. He performs magico –religious duties and is a part of all the ceremonies, rituals and religious duties in the community. It is believed that he invokes spirits and can bring them into his body, and spirits thus speak thru him. He can point our factors responsible for the suffering of a person and prescribe means to cure them. He can see the past and future of the person. He coaches pupils in magico – religious training either privately or in short course school called *raval*. He is consulted by the tribesmen in every important matter. A *bhagat* thus yields powerful influence over the tribesmen and he holds a fund of knowledge and information.

Even today though, some rudimentary medical facilities are available in Warli areas, the *Bhagat* is the only life saver. The patient is generally brought to the nearest primary health centre when a *Bhagat* so desires. The health services not being fully equipped, often the patient dies due to the absence of the medical officer or due to lack of availability of proper medicine. In such a situation *Bhagats* with their age old traditional knowledge make a sincere effort to save the life. He considers himself as the "*bhakta*" of the god and believes that without the blessing of the god his endeavours will not be successful. The blessing of god comes from timely service to people. That is why when any chance to serve people comes, the 'wise man' runs on bare foot to save the patients from an untimely death. Hence he is justly called a "bare foot doctor".[15]

Raval is a short course school, where pupils are trained for becoming a *bhagat*. It is a "Men's house", a secret society like the *Kwod* of the North American primitives, "which no woman or girl could visit".[16] A small booth is raised to hold a *raval* outside the precincts of a village in a lonely place in the vicinity of water, preferably a stream or a lake. *Raval* is conducted by a senior *bhagat* who is assisted by two or three junior *bhagats*. Forty to fifty people take part in the *raval* including new entrants as well as repeaters and a few spectators. They are required to attend the *raval* at night and are free to attend to their avocations during the day.

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[15] Ed. Dandekar. A, 'Mythos and Logos of the Warlis – A Tribal Worldview,' 1998. p – 22.
[16] Webster, "Primitive Secret Societies" p. 7.

In due time, one sees a change in the religion of the Warlis, there is a presence of the Hindu religion making its mark in the Warli society. A large number of Warlis have accepted themselves to be a part of the Hindu society. They worship the Hindu gods and goddesses along with their own gods and goddesses. Change has been so subtle that people don't remember since when they have begun worshipping the Hindu gods and goddesses, and they say that this has been the practice since a long time.

One also sees the spread of Christianity in the tribal areas of Talasari, where the Jesuit Missionaries have been working for the past 20 years. They have built a church and a school and work towards providing education and other facilities to the tribals in the area. However along with the facilities, the tribals are also being taught about the catholic faith and conversion does take place.

Marriage

Marriage is an important ritual in the Warli community, the process of marriage is also important as the Warli paintings are traditionally painted at the time of marriage. Therefore not only is the process of marriage ritual important to understand for understanding the community, but it is also essential to understand the reasons for undertaking the process of painting, the location of the painting and why the painting is sacred to the Warlis and what it denotes for them. it is only when one understands the location and the process of creation of the traditional painting, would we be able to understand how the painting reflects the society in which it is created, their understanding of religion and rituals and their world view which is reflected in their painting. The paintings are studied extensively by Yashodhara Dalmia (1982).

The marriage season for the Warlis begins from *Magha* (February) to *Phalguna* (March) bringing with it festivity and colour. But this is also the culmination of the ritual cycle of the year, which is necessary to activate the forces of nature. The Warlis believe that with marriage of the bride and bridegroom, all living things are fertilized and re-energized into creativity. Every single marriage then is a cosmic event and the long process of marriage rituals, designed as it is to affect creation, is observed according to convention.

In the Warli wedding, the bride-groom has to undertake the wedding expenses, for he has to first pay a bride price, depending on the financial condition of the groom's family. The groom also buys the wedding sari of the bride and a sari for her mother and a pair of white pants and suit for her brother. The bridegroom pays for the expense of the wedding which includes meals for the bride and the party, toddy and the expense of the band.

The wedding ceremony takes place over three days. On the first day is the ceremony of *mandapa bandhane.* In this ceremony, a rough wooden pandal is constructed outside the house and simultaneously the *chowk* is being drawn inside the house.

The drawing of the *chowk* begins in the morning, where *Savasinis*, women whose husbands are alive are called to the house and they prepare the white paste for the painting by sieving rice flour. Then the wall is plastered with cow dung, over which *geru* (red mud) is smeared. The *Savasinis* first make the *Chaukat*, and then draw the goddess *Palaghata*. Simultaneously other women draw trees, animals, men around the square. A much smaller *Chaukat* is drawn on the side in which their home deities are drawn, usually it holds the *Pancasiriya*, the five headed god riding the horse.

The fertile goddess of vegetation would preside over the wedding activities.

The Location of the Marriage Painting

The paintings function in a way similar to the seasonal cycle for the Warlis. They encapsulate their entire universe concerning themselves with fundamental aspects of their lives. Made at the time of marriage, they express their idea of fertility and all that precedes and follows it. Just as the seasonal cycle dies a natural death at the end of the year, the marriage paintings too are forgotten and neglected. The wedding *caukats* are essential for without them the wedding cannot take place.

Most often, the paintings are made on the outer side of the kitchen wall, the structure of the house often being a rectangle or square, this wall usually faces the entrance door. The fact that the painting is placed on the kitchen wall does not seem fortuitous. The kitchen is most sanctified part of the house, for here the food especially the corn is cooked. The household gods too are

kept in the loft above the kitchen. Also the kitchen is the woman's domain, the place where they spend a greater part of their time in the house.

Outside, in the front of the painting is the *ukhal,* a cylindrical container lined with an iron sheet, bored into the floor. It is in this that the rice is pounded by a long wooden stick, before being cooked. Most auspicious events take place around the *ukhal*. Placed before the paintings are objects of use in the house, most often it is the round mud vessels used for storing water that are kept. These vessels, with their round base, symbolically represent the auspicious womb of the mother goddess.

The Process of Painting

The process of painting during the wedding is as important as the completed picture itself. This is evident in the careful preparations that are made for the painting as well as the actual making of the painting, which is a slow, well orchestrated movement towards completion. The order in the process emerges according to the convention and leads to the progressive development of the painting. At the same time the women who are painting are engaged in singing, dancing and drinking.

Once the wall is prepared for the painting using *geru* (red coloured mud), the *Savasinis* begin their painting with sticks dipped in the rice paste.

They begin by drawing the four lines, which forms the main square of the *Chauk,* once the square is completed the edges of the square are secured by tying them up in loops. This process is repeated on all four sides of the square. The young unmarried women also join in the painting, they begin to paint everything else, but not inside the central square. Even young boys and girls join in painting, which is referred to as the children learning to paint.

Symbols

For the Warlis, life is cyclic repeating it eternally. Circles best represent the art of Warli, which has neither an end nor a beginning. At all occasions – birth, marriage, and death they draw circles, symbol of Mother Goddess. Death is not the end for them; rather it is a new beginning. Similar to their religious beliefs, the Warli paintings carry this circular and spiral movement that gives an everlasting joy.

The Warli paintings communicate a sense of oneness and interconnection, in which each individual is a balanced combination of masculine and feminine existing in a world that is sustained by that balance. Their paintings point toward the importance of their relationships with each other, their family and community, as well as the natural world. Warli art honours the many parts, including children, rituals, work, play, animals, insects, earth and stars, that make up the greater whole.

The Position of Women among the Warlis

The Warli society though Patriarchal is Women centric, where they worship mother earth and believe that women are equated to Mother Nature, due to the women's ability to reproduce. Women are considered sacred and the Warli society is based on equality and believes in balance between the males and females in the society. The women have the freedom to choose the husband of their choice, in case she does not get along with her husband, she may choose to move out and live either with her maternal family or even independently, and this choice is accepted and not looked down upon. Mothers in the society are treated in a highly respectful manner, and Warli children are taught to run to their mother's side as soon as she calls them, as a mark of their respect to her.

The goddess *Kansari* is known to be dark in colour, short, lame and not very pretty, she is called by some Warlis as *pangalai – a lame mother*. The housewife resembles the *Kansari* goddess; hence any ill treatment meted out to her by the husband is considered an offence to the *Kansari* goddess. [17] This reflects the respect they have for the women of the household and that the Warlis hold the women in high esteem as they reflect the goddess and the nature.

Women were the original painters of Warli painting, however in the process of income generation, men have taken over the art form. The women are not trained in Warli painting because it is believed that an artist needs to travel, which a woman cannot do alone, also a woman has a responsibility towards the care taking of the family and the upbringing of the children, which cannot be possible if she takes up painting as a profession.

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[17] Ed. Dandekar.A, 1998. p. 58

Socio – Economic Account of the Warlis:

The Warlis are spread mostly over Dahanu and Talasari talukas, but can be found in other parts of the district as well, like Mokhada, Vada, Palghar, Shahpur and Javahar Talukas. The neighbouring tribes of the Warlis are Dhodias, Dublas, Kankanas, Kolis, Thankurs, Malhar Kunabis and Katkaris. The Warlis maintain friendly but intricately differentiated relationships.

The oral history of the Warlis as has been recorded by Ajay Dandekar (1998) says that Warlis believe that "Once upon a time, there was a king who ruled over the kingdom of Jawhar. He was the ruler of the Warlis. His Kingdom was attacked by a neighbour, Popera, the Koli King. Popera demanded that he be given only that much land that could be covered by cattle hides. The Warli king agreed to this demand. Popera then covered the entire Warli land with cattle hide. Thus the Warlis lost their kingdom." This loss is still today remembered by the Warlis and is symptomatic of their loss of identity. The Warlis find themselves in a situation, where they have to take to agriculture for their subsistence, giving up on their earlier hunting – gathering habits.[18]

All of the tribes of this area earn their livelihood by practicing agriculture. Though they use the plough, they seem to have barely outgrown the earlier *slash and burn* method of cultivation, which is still practiced. Even though they use plough, they practice only one crop farming with barely enough yields for survival. No fertilizers are used except *'rab'* which is a mixture of dried leaves and cow dung. They say that "once we use fertilizers we will always have to do so because otherwise the land will become even more barren. The earth has her own way of fertilizing herself". The Warli relationship with nature seems not just one of harnessing it for one's own need but rather entering into a meaningful exchange with it.

The main source of Income for the Warlis is through agriculture, which provides a bare sustenance to the Warlis. With paddy as their main crop, harvested once in a year, there is little or no surplus for the coming year. An average of two to three acres for a family of five is barely sufficient for the year and therefore apart from agriculture, they earn their livelihood by doing odd jobs, working in factories, taking up fishery, working in the sand quarries and stone quarries, etc. the level of migration is high among the Warlis especially near areas around Mumbai, Nasik and Gujarat. Even though Warli paintings fetch a considerable amount, Warli painting was not a

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[18] Ed. Dandekar. A, Mythos and Logos of the Warlis – A Tribal Worldview, 1998.

part of their economy, and even today, there are very few tribal artists who earn their income solely through painting. There are a few who use painting as a source of income, but it is not the only source of income, agriculture still is the main source of livelihood for the Warlis.

The Warlis, who live in the rugged part of the country, keep to themselves and have their own social organization. Warlis however co habit with the other tribal communities. There is no caste differentiation among them. The head of the village is the *sarpanch* whose main work as he himself admits is "to settle quarrels". The virtual rulers of the communities are the *bhagats*, the priest-cum-medicine men, without their consultation, nothing can be done.

While Save's work is an extensive ethnographic work which provides detailed insight into the Warli society, however there are several instances where Save draws parallels between Warli tribal religion and Hinduism. He portrays Warlis as Backward Hindu's and thereby showing similarities between Warli religion and Hinduism. He works on the premise that tribes in this case Warlis are backward Hindus using Ghurye's argument that tribal communities can be considered as backward Hindus. However this argument sidelines the Warlis animistic beliefs and practices, the Warlis are animistic in their religious beliefs, they practice nature in all its forms, yet Save has drawn parallels between Warli religion and Hindu religion. He identifies *Naran dev* of the Warlis with Hindu god *Satyanarayan.* He also mentions the belief in caste and how Warlis do not accept food from the lower castes and practice the caste Hindus notions of purity and pollution. However Warlis being a tribal community and believing in nature and believing in the perfect balance between all things in nature and even balance between male and female, therefore Warlis observing caste practice would be seem highly improbable. However a more detailed field study would be required to gain further clarity in this regard.

Changing Scenario:

The Warlis found themselves in a situation where they have to take to agriculture for their subsistence, giving up on their earlier hunting-gathering habits. The hunter – gatherers to a greater degree, and the pastoralists to a lesser degree have always been subjected to severe pressures by the agrarian communities. But in the pre-colonial era, such pressures were resisted. But the forest laws introduced by the colonial state have proved to be a major watershed in the history of these communities. The emergence of forests as major commercial entities in them

altered the context and the colonial state asserted its right over the forest, which meant an active intervention in the day-to-day life of these communities, who depended on the forest for their livelihood. This direct control also meant an intervention in some of the traditional rights the people held over the forests. This introduced an altogether new system, where the traditional rights of wage – property obligations were replaced by the new ones (Gadgil and Guha 1992: 147).

Thane, for all its rugged and isolated appearance, has been touched by history many times. It had been under an early Hindu rule (up to 1300 A.D) followed by the Muslim period (1300 – 1660 A.D), the Portuguese rule (1500 – 1670 A.D), the Maratha Period (1660 - 1800) and finally the British (1800 - 1947). Each successive rule brought little for the tribals except the imposition of taxes on their commons land and with the last three rulers a class of landholders came into being over and above the actual tillers. With the British a uniform land settlement was imposed, with some concessions, to encourage the tribals to till their land. This only marginally benefitted them as the easy terms of the settlement attracted hordes of outsiders from other areas. Much of the land was thus appropriated by the Gujarati, Marwari and Parsi landlords, while the Warlis were more often found working on their farms for little or no wages.[19]

The Warlis found themselves at the mercy of the money lenders, and found themselves at the door steps of a new subsistence system alien to their own. This exploitation and alienation resulted in the Warli revolt of 1940's. Subsequent to the revolt, the condition of the Warlis remains by and large unchanged. They are still being denied the basic access to the forest, the rights of duties and the traditional duties and obligations they once enjoyed over the forests. The fight for the forest has pushed the Warlis into a position where the very core of their culture is at stake.

The tribals have not been able to protect themselves, or to assert their human rights, or preserve their indigenous culture. Both their cultural identity and human dignity have been under threat from the outsiders. According to the 1936 Symington Report on the Aboriginal Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Province of Bombay records how their lives were "wretched in the extreme and constitute a blot on the administration" (Report 1939). Rack renting labour and widespread indebtedness were rampant. The progressive alienation of tribal lands in the area began with the Portuguese occupation, intensified under the Marathas and culminated with the

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[19] Dalmia.Y, 1982, p. 14

British. The colonial system with its monetized economy as opposed to the barter system, and legalized rights as opposed to traditional and community ones, left the tribals even more vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. In spite of the apparent protection given to them by the new government after the independence, the deterioration in their life situation has only been further accentuated in post-colonial India.

Godavari Parulekar in her work on 'Adivasis Revolt' (1975), elaborates on the conditions on the Warli women who suffered long with the Warli men. "They had to perform *veth*[20] for the landlord. Incidents like the following were a common feature - An old woman, because she was too ill to do *veth*, was dragged to the landlord's house, and forced to work till she fainted. Another young woman who had recently delivered a baby was beaten by the landlord because she had not turned up for work" (1975: 45-48)

The tribal culture was not able to cope with the changes consequent on the model of integration through development that had been adopted. Neither could they protect themselves from its adverse effects. The result has been progressive withdrawal of the tribals over decades into more remote areas, where the forest could still be their provider and protector. But as these areas too are drawn more and more into the process of change and modernization, there is less and less space for the tribals and their way of life.

The government policy of "integration not assimilation" is intended to leave an autonomous cultural space for our tribals, while bringing them into the political economy of the mainstream. But such a policy has been problematic in its conceptualization and more so in its implementation.

The "Adivasi Revolt" in 1940 led by the then Communist Party of India under Godavari Parulekar, brought into prominence, "The Story of the Warli Peasants: In Struggle." (Parulekar1975). But the Communists have focused mainly on economic issues. The Congress and other non-government agencies in the area have tried to address social concerns like education (Naik 1978).

This understanding of social – economic – political – cultural conditions and practice of the Warlis is important to understand the paintings of the Warlis as they reflect the cultural practices and religious beliefs of the community. Also the changes in the paintings are a reflection of the changes that have taken place over a period of time in the Warli community. The changes in the

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[20] Veth – labour performed in the agricultural fields.

socio – economic – cultural sphere of the community is reflected through the paintings as seen in the contemporary times, this will be discussed in length in the third chapter.

Chapter: 3. Warli Paintings – Tradition and Change

The significance of the traditional painting of the *Chauk* as a part of the wedding ritual is clear from K.V.Save, Yashodhara Dalmia and Ajay Dandekar's works on the Warlis, where they each mention that without the painting, the wedding cannot take place. The painting upholds the traditional belief which signifies that at the time of the wedding ritual, the goddess *Palaghata* will bless the bride and the groom with fertility. This chapter explores the traditional process of the Warli painting and the changes that it has undergone over a period of time.

The Process of Painting:

It is important to understand the process of painting as it is an intricate process which is a reflection of the culture of the Warlis. The process of painting is a ritual in itself, which needs to be understood in order to understand the beliefs of the Warlis.

The main portion of the painting that comprises of the *Chauk* and the goddess *Palaghata* can be done only by a *Savasini* or a woman whose husband is alive. Yashodhara Dalmia (1982: 127) mentions that before beginning to paint the *Chauk*, 'the *Savasinis* beg pardon from the gods for being 'impure' because they have had sexual relations with their men. They also ask for forgiveness for the impurity of the soil, cow dung, water, flour and other painting +objects which might contain insects.' After this they start the process of painting. The wall which is chosen for the painting is the kitchen wall, as was discussed in the last chapter. This wall is then coated with cow dung and then geru (red coloured mud) which is the background for the painting. The paint is prepared using rice flour, which is then mixed with water to form a paste, using this and thin red like sticks whose ends are chewed are used as a brush for the painting. The painting among the Warlis is thus an inexpensive process, making use of only those materials which are easily available to them in the nature.

With all the materials needed to start the painting, the women who are not necessarily married began to paint the outer area of the *Chauk*, while the *Savasinis* began to paint the *Chauk* which is the main part of the painting, as it holds the goddess whose presence is important for the wedding ceremony to take place. The women engaged in painting also sing songs about the ritual, singing about the reason for writing (painting) the *Chauk* saying that it is a convention which has to be followed.

Figure - 3.1. Painting of the Chauk

Figure - 3.2 Savasinis painting the wedding Chauk - a collective effort

They also sing and dance while consuming the liquor served in the house. Thus the process of painting is an enjoyable event for the women to come together and celebrate the wedding process as seen in *Figures – 3.1 and 3.2*.

In order to understand the significance of this art to the *savasanis*, Yashhodhara Dalmia (1982:143) says that "they always pointed to the process which they employed while painting". She further adds that 'their own identity is seen by them as a process rather than as something conclusive. It is the very act of creating which is important rather than the completed work. For into the making of it goes the entire world of experiences striving for coherency. Once the painting is finished, it is animated and capable of magical powers and believed to be fully potent. The painting serves a ritual purpose: that of enabling a marriage to take place, but marriage for them, takes place not merely in the ordinary sense: it implies the union of the entire cosmos. It is their own world of experience which on acquiring an order is considered the potent force of life.'

Thus the painting acts as a medium between the goddess and the couple to be married, since the marriage cannot take place without the painting and it is also believed that at the time of the marriage ritual the goddess resides in the painting thus animating it with magical powers and blessing the bride and groom with fertility and prosperity.

Since the painting is animated with the goddess at the time of the wedding ritual, the painting it is a sacred object, however after the marriage has taken place, the painting no longer holds the same sacred place among the Warlis, it is no longer of significance or of a value, this is made clear in Yashodhara Dalmia's work (1982: 143) where she mentions that once the marriage has taken place, "Warlis lose interest in the painting, allowing it to be destroyed by the vagaries of weather, for the painting has served its purpose."

The Symbols used in the Paintings and their meanings:

*The Chauk***:**   The significance and the process of the painting once understood, it is also important to understand what the painting symbolizes to the Warlis. The most striking feature of the Warli paintings is the *Chauk* – which is the square central to the painting, and the most significant feature as it holds the goddess within itself. The square consists of circles, triangles, diagonals, polygons and other geometric shapes. The *Chauk* is of vital importance in the position it occupies in the centre of the painting and its visually striking motifs. In the painting, the square

Figure – 3.3.'Lagnace citra' - Marriage Painting.

is not just ornamentation but it exists in relation to the deity inside as well as the surrounding landscape, which depicts a well defined function.

In order to understand if the geometric designs of the *Chauk* are mere decorative symbols or if they have any specific significance and an effect on the rest of the painting, Y. Dalmia (1982: 197) explains that each pattern in the *Chauk* is seen to be following a deliberate order, which outlines its own historical evolution, and therefore concludes that the drawing of the *Chauk*, is the writing of history as it were. She further explains that 'the basic *Chauk* is a skeleton of parallel lines drawn to enclose a square space, the edges of the square are looped together, sometimes in three or four loops, in order to make the joints more secure. These lines represented the four household gods – *Naranadeva, Hirva, Himai and Jhotinga*. And there is a possibility that the Warlis believe that the gods are also stationed, one at each corner, to guard the universe as well s the hut which is the universe in microcosm. The square then concretizes the ancient belief of the four quarters of the earth being presided over by the guardian deities'. She further explains that the *Chauk* represents the cosmos, the hut as well as itself. The square thus becomes an area of concentrated energy.

Along with the main *Chauk*, another smaller *Chauk* is drawn alongside, which houses the male god Pancasiriya. This smaller *Chauk* is also known as the deva *Chauk*, and it is usually devoid of decorative patterns. The square being a representation of the universe and seen as an area of concentrated energy by the Warlis, makes it a powerful symbol of protection.

Another important symbol which is seen in the *Chauk* is the concentric half circles, which are termed as *Pophala* by the Warlis. Sadasiv Mashe[21]explains that "*Pophala* is not really a half circle, but in fact a whole circle, whose upper and lower portions are not joined together so it looks like a half circle". Therefore the *Pophala* represents a circle which is an auspicious symbol. The circle represents the cycle of life, indicative of the process of birth and death which is the ongoing cycle of nature.

The inner boundary of the frame consists of a series of ridges or diagonals drawn at a distance from each other which appears to be an interlinked loop attached to each other in a chain like

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[21] Sadasiv Mashe is a Warli artist, excerpts of whose interview have been used in Y.Dalmia's book 'The Painted World of the Warlis – Art and Ritual of the Warli Tribes of Maharashtra' (1982 : 198)

fashion. Y.Dalmi uses the term '*sakhali*' to explain these chain like motifs which also represent the metal chain worn by the bride and groom during the wedding, where it is important for the Warlis that the two lines intersect each other and this is taken by Y. Dalmia to signify 'the union of male and female'.

Another important symbol used in the *Chauk* is the use of triangular patterns; Y. Dalmia explains that "the triangle signifies the creative yoni of mother goddess which gives birth to life. Joined together, two triangles also seem to represent a couple in a sexual union. Significantly, the chief object of worship in Warli area is the conical peak of the hill known as the goddess *Mahalaksmi*. The Warlis worship the yoni in the shape of the triangle, and sometimes see the shape itself as the force, which has brought the universe into being". She further adds that "for the Warlis an abstract shape is not the one which is merely representative of something else, but that it actually contains the essence of the thing it represents and its efficacious in bringing about fertility".

These various rows of pattern integrate both design and meaning to the painting, which provide a richly textured tapestry woven around the goddess. The Warlis claim that the *Chauk* is the jewellery of the goddess, and it adorns and enhances the central figure of the goddess.

Y. Dalmia compares these designs to the *mithuna* figures which decorate the precincts of a temple. These *mithuna* figures create a state of being or a situation which enables the devotee to enter into communion with the deity inside. Y. Dalmia puts forth that similar to *mithuna* figures "the triangular shapes create the magic spell which would enable the individual to enter the fertile space of the *Chauk*. Just as the circumambulation of a temple can be seen as a halt at different mental stations which prepare for the ultimate contact with the deity, similarly the architecture of the *Chauk* prepares one to gain access to the mother goddess. The aesthetic order of the *Chauk* then is a mental preparation to gain access to the divine both by magical contact and by powerful suggestion. In turn, the *Chauk* is a house for *Palaghata*, a centre for a concentrated form of energy as well as a place from which order can be provided to individual lives".

Palaghata – The Marriage Goddess: The most important part of the painting is the marriage goddess i.e. the goddess *Palaghata* who is central to the painting without which the marriage cannot take place. The word *Palaghata* means the 'pot over flowing with plants' which is

understood to be representative of the goddess of fertility. Thus the *Palaghata* symbolizes the pot of abundance. It is noted that amongst tribals the 'pot' is revered as a fertility symbol, for instance among the Saora tribes of Orissa – 'they draw with white rice paste, a potter carrying pots in their icons when they want their fields to be fertile' (V. Elwin, 1955:406).

Another important feature of the *Palaghata* is the position of her legs which are shown to be in a cross – legged position, "this position of *Palaghata* closely resembles the goddess giving birth to vegetation in an Indus Valley seal, where the birth giving goddess lies horizontally, her arms and legs stretched wide apart. A five – leafed plant springs from her womb, in the process of being born. Two tigers on the left stand as probable guardians to the Earth Mother's auspicious act, the seal with its remarkable depiction of the earth Mother actually giving birth to a plant is a vivid concretization of the concept of fecundity. This birth giving positions have been found in several places: Alampur (Andhra Pradesh), Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh), Siddhankkote (Karnataka), Sangameshwar and Vyagheshwari and Vadgaon (Maharashtra) have reveled stone statues and Nevase, Ter, Mahurjhari, Bhokardan (Maharashtra) have clay statues. They are euphemistically referred to as '*Lajja Gauri*'[22] or the embarrassed women" (Dalmia, 1982: 182).

Yashodhara Dalmia (1982: 183) further explains the relation of the *Palaghata* through the songs of the Warlis – which suggests *Palaghata* to be a birth – giving / life giving position. She explains "*Mahadeva* sits in the *Palaghata* position and holds *Dhangarbai* in his lap. It is suggested that she becomes pregnant after that (*mahadevane Palaghata valun dhangarbaine mandivar ghetala*). At another place the bai takes this position, and then holds the golden plate in her lap. The tears that fall on the plate are brought to her mouth and she becomes pregnant. (*Baine sona tataya ghetale, baina Palaghata valun mandivar ghetala*). The song establishes that *Palaghata* is a position taken both for sexual intercourse and for giving birth to a child. *Palaghata* then is that most ancient of goddess, the Earth Mother, who represents the all – sustaining principle of the universe."

Thus *Chauk* holding the *Palaghata* is symbolic of the idea of fertility, and the marriage ritual animates the goddess which leads the *Palaghata* to bless the bride and the groom with fertility in their married life.

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[22] The upper and lower sexual organs are displayed exuberantly because these are considered central to all of creation.

The *Chauk* also holds the sun and the moon, which is looked upon as a symbol of cosmic force[23], it also symbolizes that the 'bride and groom will enjoy marital bliss till the time the sun and the moon shine on earth. Along with the sun and the moon, the *Chauk* also depicts a **comb**, a **ladder** and a **broom**. The presence of the comb signifies that the goddess would bless the bride with long flowing hair all her life and would therefore need a comb to brush her hair. Here the long hair is a symbol of beauty, which in turn symbolizes that the bride is blessed with beauty. The ladder is another very important symbol in the *Chauk*, which symbolizes prosperity. The Warlis use a ladder in their house to reach the loft, the loft is used to store several things mainly the rice i.e. *kansari*. By drawing a ladder in the painting it symbolizes that the goddess blesses the bride with prosperity and wishes that the bride always have enough rice in her house. The broom in the painting is also symbolic; it represents the blessing by the goddess given to the bride to drive away clutter i.e. evil. Thus the bride armed with the blessing from the articles of daily use can spend her life in happiness'[24].

Changes in the Traditional Form of Warli Paintings:

After understanding the traditional Warli painting, their symbols and meanings it is important to understand the process through which the paintings came into the limelight and were exposed in urban settings. It is also necessary to see how the paintings have undergone changes as the placement of the paintings change. These paintings have received a wide exposure on the global platform and have been displayed across museums and art galleries in different parts of the world. Jivya Soma Mashe has been the most recognized and renowned Warli artist, therefore when we study the changes that the Warli paintings have undergone, it is important to look at the changes reflected in Jivya Soma Mashe's work over a period of time.

The art of the Warlis is a magico – religious ritual takes place in the ritualistic context and for a specific purpose. Over a period of time, the Warli art form was removed from its context and introduced on paper and made available to the urban audience, this has lead to several changes in the Warli art form as it seen today in the urban context. It is also important to study the changes

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[23] Y. Dalmia, 1982: 201

[24] Unpublished Dissertation – Shelke. A, Warli Paintings: Tradition and Change, Commercialization and its Impact on Culture, 2010: 53, 55.

that have taken place in the Warli paintings in the traditional Warli settings and how the changing scenario of the Warli art form has an impact within the Warli community itself.

Y. Dalmia notes that the first Warli artists to be 'discovered' were some old Warli women who were asked to translate on paper what they made on the hut wall, which resulted in an array of wondrous trees, which appeared to be looming magnificently towards the sky. These paintings were exhibited at an art gallery in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1975. Some of the paintings exhibited include those made by Jivya Soma Mashe – whose paintings were concerned with men, their work, and their leisure. Jivya's paintings on paper won acclaim as early as 1974 in India and were also exhibited internationally. Soon after which, many visitors and film makers visited him to witness and record Warli art. Dalmia (1982: 221) emphasizes that "his work can in no way be equated with Warli art, which exists at a specific place and for a specific purpose. If anything he is the only successful example of a person who has been able to make a break with his tradition and yet carry it forward. Jivya's work also attempts to please a city audience by decorative and static motifs showing some of the worst effects of commercialization."

Y. Dalmia appears to be highly critical of the works of Jivya Soma Mashe emphasizing on the fact that Mashe's form of painting has deviated from the traditional form of painting. The traditional Warli painting is viewed in a certain context and upholds certain meaning, however since the placement and positioning of the painting has undergone change the scared value of the painting no longer holds true, also the meaning of the painting is often lost or the emphasis on aesthetic beautification is given more importance than the meaning of the painting itself.

Y. Dalmia has engaged in an in-depth study of the Warli art form and looked at the works of Jivya Soma Mashe closely and analyzed it, giving an in-depth understanding not only of his work, but also the situation/ factors under which he undertook the process of painting, his explanation's of the painting and her analysis of his work. She describes Jivya's early work as energetic description of human activity, some of his initial works included a large painting, where the central *Chauk* is divided into four squares and within each is placed the goddess *Palaghata*. The images of *Palaghata* are not the conventional one's, but his own version which Dalmia describes as a "mask like ghostly face which could either be a caricature of *Palaghata* or the first attempt at providing naturalistic facial characteristics. The body stands stiffly erect. The inner space of the body as of the *Chauk* consists of symmetrical industrial designs. It is evident

that whether by accident or by design, the entire *Chauk* is a subversion of the sacred *Chauk* painted on the mud walls.", this is the first indication of Mashe's attempt to create a painting which attempts to balance the traditional art form, yet in indicative of his personal imagination in the painting.

The paintings that follow comprise of various human activities such as celebration of harvest dances, *tarpa* dances[25], groups of men in various stages of work in the fields, which shows that the first series of Jivya's paintings are concerned with description of human activity rather than the gods. These paintings though not traditional still hold some of the traditional qualities, where certain dualities of nature are expressed in Jivya's paintings – where he paints the tiger being worshipped and hunted within the same painting, where the dualities are tangibly present. While the exhibition of Warli art was well received in Bombay, Dalmia resounds that "it rang a death knell for the Warlis", this expression is indicative that in spite of the recognition that was given to the Warli art form, it was not seen as appreciative by Dalmia, as her concerns reflect that the changes made to the art form did not do justice to the actual nature of Warli painting – which includes their meaning, their position in the Warli community, their magico – religious status and glorification of the aesthetic in which the painting reveals itself is lost. The changes made by Jivya Soma Mashe to the traditional art form led to further changes not only in the traditional Warli paintings, but also created a new trend leading to changes in the culture of the Warlis themselves.

Roma Chatterji while speaking about Jangarh Shyam quotes Mushtak Khan, "Jangarh didn't come from a community of traditional painters, which is why he was porous – open to new ideas and new techniques that he learned in the graphics workshop at Bharat Bhawan. Others like Pema Fatia, a ritual artist, who belongs to a community with a great painting tradition, could not break away from this tradition. He keeps coming back to the Pithora painting that he has always done". (Chatterji, 2012: 18). This explanation when placed in the context of Jivya Soma Mashe, can explain Jivya as an artist. The traditional artists of the Warli paintings were the *Savasinis*, yet it came to exhibiting Warli paintings in the Art Galleries the work of Jivya was considered to be worthy of exhibition. One of the reasons could be a possibility that Jivya had seen the Warli art

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[25] Tarpa dance – Warli men and women engage in a dance form on special occasion such as harvest, weddings, etc, which is done around the musical instrument 'tarpa', which is made especially for the Warlis.
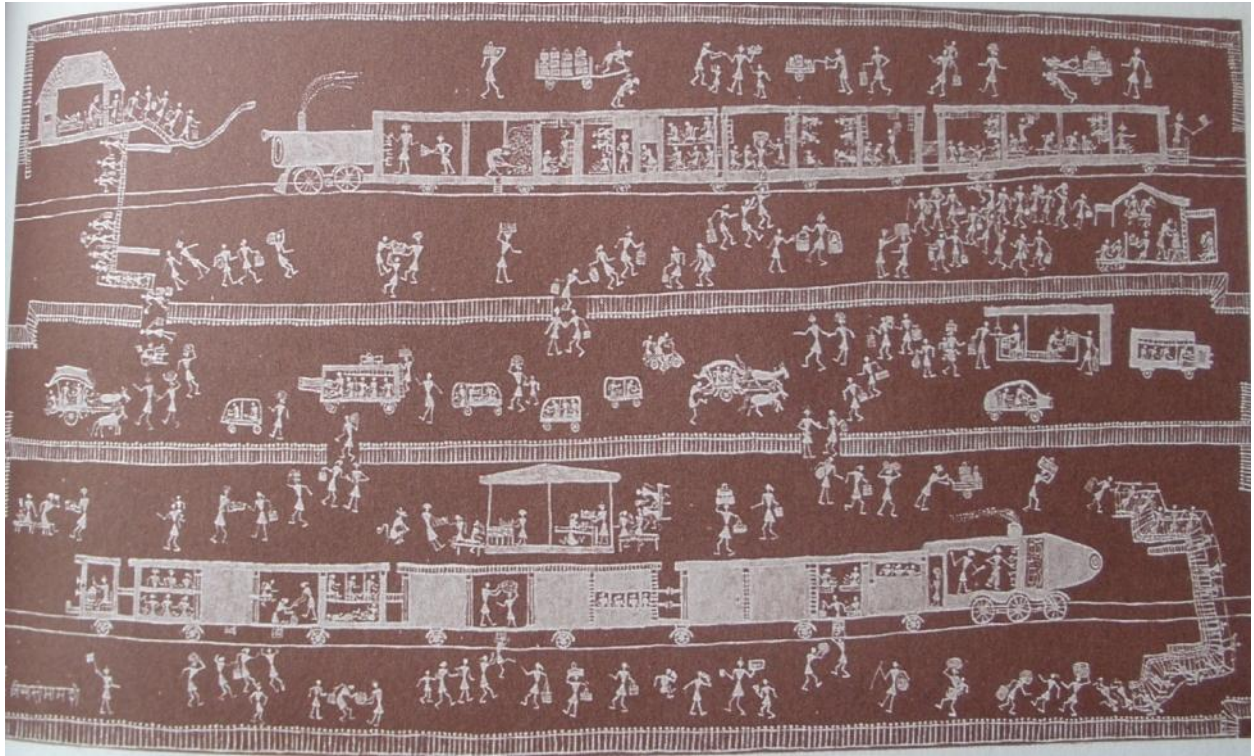
Figure – 3.4. Train Station – by Jivya Soma Mashe

Figure – 3.5. Ants – Jivya Soma Mashe

throughout his life, yet he was not confined to the traditional motifs and was so as to say 'porous' – where he was capable of working with the traditional motifs to express new ideas and new techniques. One can see how he has incorporated the changing scenarios in the Warli community in his paintings for instance the painting that depicts the train station in the Warli area. Another painting of Jivya ' Ants', which shows ants in a circle depicts the cycles in the nature and expresses the harmony of the artist with the nature viz a viz the harmony of the Warli community with the nature, as Warlis are often referred to as the 'kings of the forest' and who respect all life forms big or small. Thus the art work is a representation of the Jivya's openness to incorporate the traditional with the modern.

In an excerpt from the interview taken by Yashodhara Dalmia (1982: 227) Jivya Soma Mashe mentions that he is engaged in drawing the *Palaghata* in the *Chauk* at a Warli wedding ceremony, when questioned about the fact that it is the *Savasinis* that draw the *Chauk*, he mentions that he is invited and the *Savasinis* start painting the *Chauk* with the first four lines and it is then taken over by him and he completes the entire painting.

Thanks to the success of Jivya Soma Mashe, it has encouraged the Warli men to take up painting professionally and engage themselves as professional artists. Leading to which, the process which seems to have started by Jivya Soma Mashe - wherein he would paint the *Palaghata* in the *Chauk* at the wedding ceremony, has been replicated over time and the process of painting the *Chauk* has been taken over by men, where the *Savasinis* draw the customary four lines and the task of completing the painting is taken over by men[26] (figures 3.6, 3.7). Thus the process where the women of the village would come together and engage in singing, dancing and consuming liquor while painting the *Chauk* seems to have been largely done away with. And the process has been taken over by the professional male artists in the community.

When one attempts to understand Jivya Soma Mashe's work as it was showcased in the exhibitions and art galleries, one needs to understand the location of the painting, it is important to view the location of the traditional Warli painting and the current location of the painting, where on one hand the traditional painting was located inside the Warli house, on the outer wall of the kitchen, one realizes that the position of the wall, the significance of choosing the

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[26] Unpublished Dissertation Shelke. A, 2010: 55, 56

Figure: 3.6 Men painting the Chauk at Bhoipada

Figure: 3.7 Men painting Chauk at Bhoipada

particular wall, the materials used for the painting – namely the rice paste mixed with water and bamboo sticks chewed to make a brush viz – a – viz the currently used water/oil/fabric colours, and the various sized paint brushes to create a decorative motif for viewing pleasure of the audience, whereas the creation of the traditional painting not for aesthetic pleasure, but rather for a religious purpose made it scared and created a sense of reverence while one took in the painting.

The commercialization of the Warli art form is also apparent, thru Yashodhara Dalmia's work, where at several points, it has been mentioned that Mashe was asked to specifically paint as per requirement, often he was asked to paint the *Chauk*, the *Palaghata*, the *tarpa* dance, etc. there is also mention of an instance, where Jivya Soma Mashe was visited by a group of designers from the National Institute of Design, Ahmadabad, who encouraged him to use colors like blue, yellow and green in his work, and placed an order of 15 paintings, this was one of the examples of the continuous demand made on Jivya by the government, by the private and by international agencies, to produce work. These demands could lead to a mechanical production of paintings for commercial gains.

While on one hand there is a constant pressure on many Warli painters to make only the traditional *Chauk* with the goddess *Palaghata*, the other effect is commercialization of the art where content and form are both degraded to appeal to a mass market. Dalmia says that "we see that Warli paintings have been affected in both ways, but primarily in the latter way, where even as they reach a wide number of people their quality has deteriorated. The paper paintings which in their early seventies where so vitally alive have over a period of time become mechanical.

Certain decorative elements like the central square or the circle of dancers are reproduced in painting after painting without any innovation. Attempts are also made to please a city audience; naturalistic animals and men, Hindu temples, circuses, men riding scooters".

Thus in the recent times the form of the Warli paintings has form has undergone several changes, the medium used to broadcast the painting has also undergone several changes, the traditional Warli art form was initially found on the wall of the Warli households at the time of marriage, the medium of which underwent change when the paintings were transferred on paper, over a

period of time the surface of reproduction, the mode of reproduction and the reasons for reproduction have undergone several changes.

The following table (figure – 3.8)[27] is a representation of the various stages that the art form has undergone:

steps	inscriptional tool	surface	reproduction	purpose
1.	twigs / rice paste	mud walls	hand copying	decoration rituals celebration
2.	brushes / paints	brown paper	printing / scanning	marketable commodity
3.	wooden moulds fabric paints	cloth/fabric	block printing	tourist attraction
4.	digitally enhanced	wall paper, post cards, posters	digital printing	ethnic style potrayal
5.	oil paints	canvas	warli replica but modern	modern art

Figure - 3. 8. Changes in the Warli Art Form

The table shows the various changes that the Warli art form has undergone, it speaks about the various stages that the various mediums used to transfer the Warli paintings. One can see that after the transfer of Warli paintings on paper, they were eventually transferred on cloth and fabrics of different kinds using wooden moulds (figure -3.9) and fabric paints. The art form was further digitally enhanced and made available on wall paper, post cards, posters and other artefacts (figures – 3.10). The use of Warli paintings in modern art, where the traditional Warli

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[27] Trex.id.iit.edu/~agashe/pdfs/Sharon-Warli.pdf

motifs have been used but it is no longer the replica or the mystic painting as in its traditional form (figure – 3.11).

While explaining the association between 'primitivism' and 'modernist aesthetics' Roma Chatterji explains that, "the abstract form is reflected in the representation of Adivasi gods as part human and part abstract" (2012: 114) explaining how Gond Artist Saroj Shyam's painting of Maharilin Mata – the goddess of boundaries, whose shrine is normally located on the raised boundary of a field, is being painted as an earth mound, layered with images of Hindu gods, which are recognizably human. So also one sees a gradual change in the portrayal of the *Palaghata* in the Warli paintings over a period of time, where the Palaghata is often depicted with human features.

When Yashodhara Dalmia mentions that Warli paintings are made with an attempt to please the city audience to which they cater, she mentions the inclusion of Hindu temples in the painting. With the changing times, the impact of Hindu religion on the Warli Community is noticeable in the Warli art form, the significant markers of change is the shift in form of the *Chauk*, 'the *Chauk* which is square in shape, is in several areas altered to represent a Temple, one also sees an inclusion of several Hindu motifs such as the *kalash, swastika, om*, temple bells, etc in the *Chauk*'[28] (Figure – 3.12 to 3.16).

While on one hand one sees the impact of Hindu religion on the Warli art form, one also sees the impact of Christianity on the Warli religion. 'Warli art has been used as a means to connect with the people is by the church, which has made use of Warli paintings to interpret the Bible, and put forth the teachings of the Bible through the Warli paintings, which depict the life of Jesus Christ and traces his entire journey from birth to death thru this medium. One also sees how the religious conversion has an impact on the Warli painting, where the Warlis who have converted to Christianity have not entirely given up their tribal culture but adopted Christianity into their culture. One sees instances where the Warlis in their wedding continue to follow their traditional practices and continue to draw the wedding *Chauk*, but in place of the traditional Warli goddess *Palaghata* they use the cross as a symbol of their adopted Christian status. Use of doves as a

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[28] Unpublished Paper – Shelke. A, ASA- 12 Conference, Warli Paintings – Tradition and Change, 2012, JNU.

Figure – 3.9 Wooden moulds with Warli paintings

Figure – 3.10 Digitally Enhanced Warli Paintings

Figure – 3.11 Modern Art form of Warli Painting

Figure – 3.12, Chauk taking the shape of a Temple ~ Dahanu, Thane

Figure – 3.13, The use of Kalash in the Chauk ~ Vakdupada, Thane

Figure – 3.14, Use of Temple Bells, Kalash in the Chauk ~ Bhoipada, Thane

Figure – 3.15, Motif of Hindu Goddess Durga in the Chauk ~ Jawahar, Thane

Figure – 3.16 ~ Jawahar, Thane

Figure – 3.17, Depiction of a Church ~ Talasari, Thane

Figure -3.18, The Angel of the Lord appeared unto Mary ~ School in Talasari, Thane

Figure – 3.19, Joseph and Mary on the way to Bethlehem ~ Talasari, Thane

Figure – 3.20, Crucifixion of Jesus ~ Talasari, Thane

Figure – 3.21, Use of Cross in the Chauk

Figure – 3.22, Symbol of Joined Hands, Dove and the Holy Eucharist in the Chauk

symbol of peace, use of the Eucharist or joining of hands are some of the other symbols used in the *Chauk* painted by Warlis who have converted to Christianity'[29] (Figures – 3.17 to 3.22).

Given the rising interest in the Warli paintings, the Warli art gained immense popularity particularly in the late 90's and it acted as an impetus for change. 'The portrayal of urbanized society through the Warli paintings is indicative of the Shift from a naturalistic order to a materialistic order. Where the world of Warlis was the forests, the gods and goddess and the Warli culture, which has shifted focus to the invasion of urban artefacts into their world, so we have the trains, automobiles, factories, etc which depict the change in the Warli lifestyle making it more mechanized as is prevalent in the urban areas[30]' (Figure – 3.23 to 3.26).

'Warli paintings today are available on several surfaces ranging from wooden panels, to pots, articles of cutlery use, to show pieces like pen stands, key chains, wall hangings, calendars, wall clocks, coasters etc. After considering Warli art as a means to decorate articles, it gradually moved to the articles of daily use such as the bed sheets, napkins, pillow covers, T-shirts etc. further Warli paintings were also used on dupattas, dresses, and even on saris. This shows the range of articles to which Warli painting was exposed. Warli art invariably became a part of urban people's life. Warli artists now work either in a workshop or organization where these articles are mass produced. Once the article is produced the Warli artists have to paint it. The demand for these articles is high, and therefore there is a need for similar products, therefore the artists are stuck doing the same motif over and over again, leaving little room for creativity. This is a clear indication of market dictating the requirements and pressurizing the artists to mass-produce their craft[31]' (Figure 3.27 to 3.28).

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[29] Unpublished Paper – Shelke. A, ASA- 12 Conference, Warli Paintings – Tradition and Change, 2012, JNU
[30] Unpublished Dissertation Shelke. A, 2010: 87

[31] Unpublished Dissertation Shelke. A, 2010: 87,88
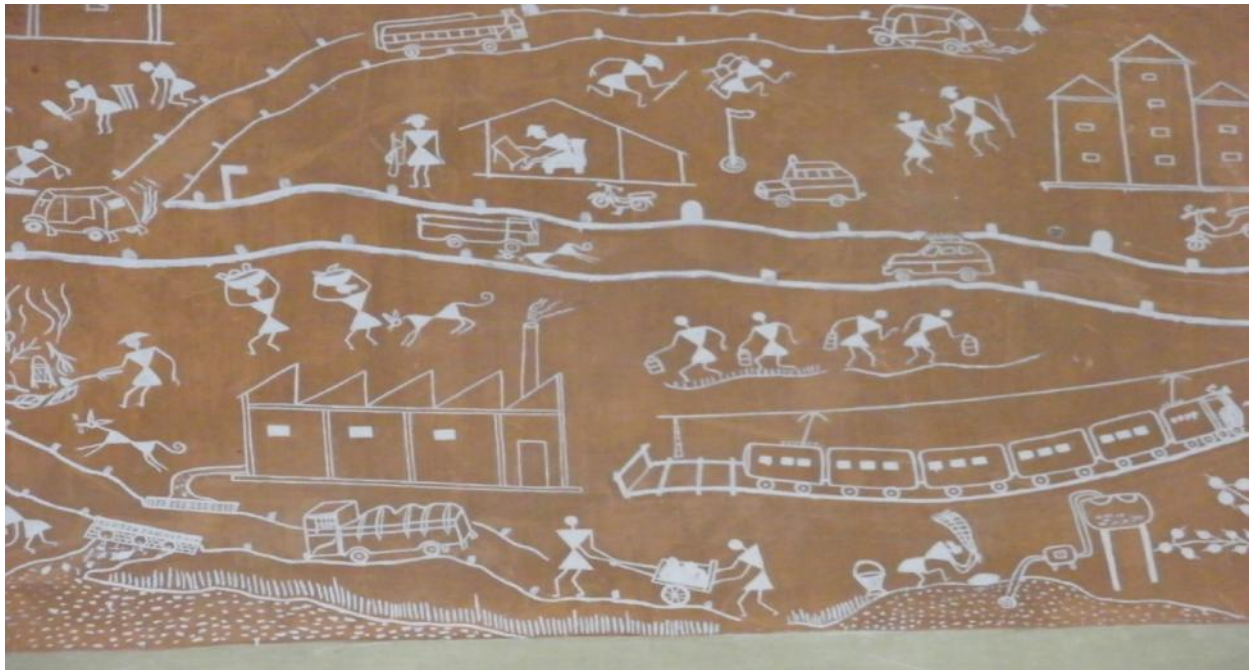
Figure – 3.23. Factories, Trains, Automobiles, Buildings, police Stations, being represented in Warli Paintings, Zari, Talasari

Figure -3.24. Urbanization seen in the Warli Painting, Zari, Talasari

Figure – 3.25. Use of Tractor in the field, Zari, Talasari

Figure – 3.26. Depiction of Shop, use of bicycle – Zari, Talasari

Figure – 3.27. Workshop at Pragati Pratishtan Kendra, Jawhar

Figure – 3.28. Napkin Holder, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

In the wake of such rapid commercialization of Warli art, an attempt has been made to document and study the ancient tradition of painting in the villages before it too is wiped out. Yashodhara Dalmia points out in the study undertaken by her in 1982 that "such a study can give an idea of what has been destroyed. We documented as many paintings spread over the thane area between the years 1981 – 1982. Many of these were recorded despite the fact that they were faded, rubbed out or partially covered by insecticide spray, as a record of the artistic creativity of a people", this goes to show that over a period of time, there have been several changes that the Warli art form has undergone, these changes need to be looked into and understood in the context of changing times.

CONCLUSION

The study 'Sociological Study of Tradition and Change in the Warli Art Form' attempts to understand the concept of Art as it is seen in the Sociological Context. The study attempts to define art as it has been seen historically and looks at the various approaches in sociology and how they each look at art in the society. The word Art brings to mind a work of painting, a piece of literary work, a musical composition and several other varied images, which are products of creative endeavour. However these works have not been created in isolation, they are products of the artists – individual or collective, who are a part of the society and are in turn influenced by the various social factors.

Sociology as a discipline engages in the study of society, the study of human systems, the study of how people create meaning and the study of social inequality. Therefore an understanding of how groups of people work together to create what we call art, the meanings of artistic objects and how interpretations of art vary, and how people use artistic products for aesthetic pleasures certainly, but also for other reasons can be understood by studying art sociologically. The Positivist Approach in sociology views Art, such that art reflects - shapes the society in direct and unproblematic ways. However this a very simplistic view and as one studies various studies of relationship between art and society one understands that art and society are interconnected such that they each have an influence on the other such that Art is often the reflection of the existing social conditions, and on the other hand Art also influences society such that one may see instance where the society in turn emulates the art form.

While the Interpretative approach focuses on the 'question of meaning', it serves as an essential method to understand art. It would be helpful in understanding the meaning that might be attributed to art objects and in understanding how people create meaning from them. However in the Post – Modernist approach, where Griswold (1987) argues that an object of art when received in different times and places would produce differing cultural explanations, and therefore the meaning of art is a subjective idea and cannot be generalized. However as the study focuses on tribal Art, especially Warli Painting, the meaning of art is an important concept to understand the art form. Because each object that is painted in the painting holds a certain meaning and is a symbolic representation of the beliefs of the Warli community.

The Critical approach in sociology applies Marxist concept of conflict in understanding art, where the idea that art is also categorised into different categories – high art, popular art and folk art. While high art is enjoyed by the elite groups of people in the society, the masses enjoy the popular art forms and the folk art created and enjoyed by a specific group of people usually of the same ethnic origins. Therefore the production of art is crucial in this approach, where Marxists believe that the elites are instrumental in the creation and distribution of cultural products; therefore, they are able to place into art ideas favourable to their own interests.

Art as we know it is not seen in isolation, therefore Griswold's (1994) concept of "cultural diamond" shows the inter-linkages between art, society, creator of art – the artists and the consumers of art – the audiences. Griswold say's that each of the concepts is interlinked to each other.

When we consider the Warli community, the Warli paintings are created not in isolation, but it is a collective effort of the women in the community. The paintings are not just a decorative art form, but they are a reflection of the beliefs of the Warlis. The Warli Painting is called *Chauk*, which is a magico – religious artefact. The painting is a reflection of the religious beliefs of the community. The Warlis believe that during the wedding ceremony – the wedding rituals take place, where the painting is located and it is believed that during the ritual, the goddess of fertility the Goddess Palaghata, would inhabit the painting and bless the married couple with Fertility. Each object in the painting also has a specific meaning, the comb symbolizes that the bride be blessed with long hair, which is a trait of beauty, and the ladder is a symbol of prosperity as it denotes the over head space in the house for storing rice – which is of value to them.

However it is important to note that using the reflection approach, one can understand that the paintings are a reflection of the society, such that Warli paintings reflect the nature of the Warli community and therefore when we study the changing nature of the art forms i.e. the changing nature of the Warli paintings, we can see that the paintings have undergone several changes in the course of time and the changes that are seen in the paintings are a reflection of the changes that have been taking place in the society over a period of time.

The traditional *Chauk* which is the original form of Warli painting, has over time, influenced a style of painting, which today is popularly known as Warli art.

The Warli paintings were first discovered in the 1980's, when the Warli art form was removed from its original context and placed on paper and made available to the urban audience. These paintings were exhibited at an art gallery in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1975. Some of the paintings exhibited include those made by Jivya Soma Mashe – whose paintings were concerned with men, their work, and their leisure. Jivya's paintings on paper won acclaim as early as 1974 in India and were also exhibited internationally. Soon after which, many visitors and film makers visited him to witness and record Warli art. Dalmia (1982: 221) emphasizes that "his work can in no way be equated with Warli art, which exists at a specific place and for a specific purpose. If anything he is the only successful example of a person who has been able to make a break with his tradition and yet carry it forward. Jivya's work also attempts to please a city audience by decorative and static motifs showing some of the worst effects of commercialisation." While clearly shows that Dalmia is critical of Jivya's work as the traditional form of art, it recognises that the art form had undergone a change and though it was influenced by the Warli painting of the *Chauk*, it was a different and a refined version of the art form.

While the Warli art gained immense popularity in the national and international circles, the repetitive nature of the art form came to the forefront, as the artists then was asked to paint to certain requirements and their own creativity was cut short.

Another major change that is seen in the Warli art form is that the changing nature of positions and roles of the Warli artists. While the *Savasini's* (married women) were the traditional Warli artists, the commercialization of the paintings have resulted that Warli men have taken up painting as a meaning of earning an extra income. There are several changes in the Warli paintings which are a reflection of the changes that are taking place in the Warli society. The Warlis are animistic in their religious belief; however given the proximity of their location near a metropolitan city (Mumbai), there is a considerable influence of the mainstream religious institution on the Warli tribes. The more visible changes are the influence of Hinduism and Christianity on the Warli community. These changes are reflected in the paintings. The change in the shape of the *Chauk* – the *Chauk* which was traditionally a square in shape, has undergone a change and taken shape of a temple, along with it, the use of several motifs which are

specifically Hindu in their nature – such as the swastika, Om, yagna, the Brahmin pundits, etc. while on the other hand under the influence of Christianity, there change in the motifs includes the incorporation of symbols such the cross, the image of the Eucharist, the doves, etc. both these changes are a reflection of the changing nature of the Warli community. The Warlis seem to have assimilated the influence of other religions within their community fold.

The changes in the Warli community are also reflected in the art form, where the rapid urbanization is taking place in the tribal areas. The paintings now show the modern means of transportation – trains, buses, cars, cycles, etc, these indicate the increased mobility among the Warlis. It also reflects the increased rate of migration and the movement among the Warlis.

As the Warli art gained popularity, the Warli paintings were made available on a large scale on several artefacts as well as items of regular use, such as greeting cards, files, folders, coasters, bed sheets, t – shirts, etc. As a result of which the Warli painting which was a traditional ritual process, was first exhibited to a certain group of people, was now made available to the masses of the large scale, and was therefore mass produced. The mass production of Warli artifacts resulted in repetition of motifs, thereby leaving little room for creativity.

The study puts forth that the Warli art form is a reflection of the Warli community, and understanding the Warli paintings without the knowledge of the community would be difficult. Thus art does not only reflect the existing conditions of the society, but is also the reflection of the beliefs and traditions of the people. And the study of the art form as it varies over a period of time would be an indicator of the changing nature of the community, its practices and its culture.

While this study is based on secondary material, there is a need for further research in this area, it is important to look at various aspects of the Warli art form, a study focusing on the traditional Warli artists i.e. the *Savasinis* who have been sidelined and been taken over by Warli men needs to be looked into. The various aspects of commercialisation of the art form, the changing nature of the Warli paintings also needs to be understood, and this would be possible with a detailed primary research and analysis. Thus one hopes that this dissertation will contribute to the development of knowledge in this area and serve to highlight the changes in the Warli art form.

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Figure – 4.1. Wall hanging, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.2. Warli Painting on a Wooden Tray, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.3. Coasters, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.4. Coaster's, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.5. Artifacs with Warli motifs, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.6. Jewelry Box, Pragati Pratishthan, Jawhar

Figure – 4.7. Mirror, Art Center, Bhoipada

Figure – 4.8. Key chains, Art Center, Bhoipada

Figure – 4.9. Coasters, Art Center, Bhoipada

Figure – 4.10. Art Center, Bhoipada

Figure – 4.11. Warli painting on a Stool, Art Center, Bhoipada

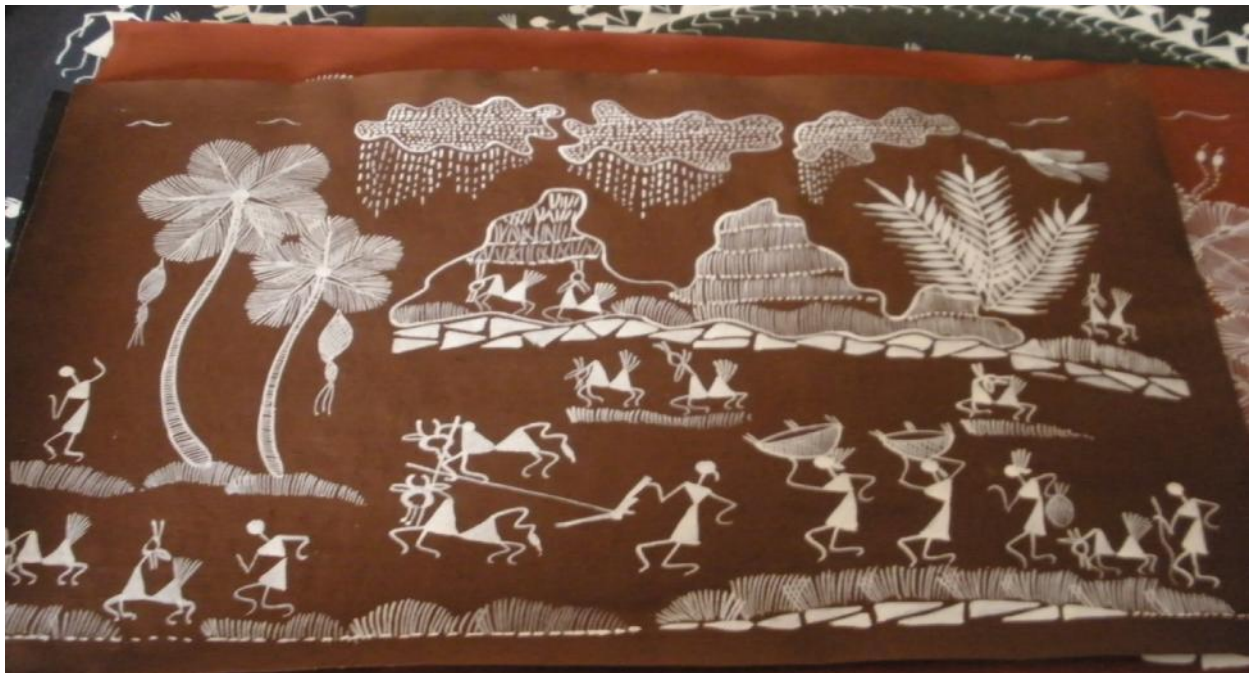*Figure – 4.12. Warli painting on watches, Vakdupada*

Figure – 4.13. Warli Painting on bed sheet, Talasari

Figure – 4.14. Warli Painting on T-shirt, Jawhar

Figure – 4.15. Warli Painting on a Bed Sheet, Mumbai.

Figure – 4.16. Warli painting on files, Mumbai

Figure – 4.17. Working on the coasters, Vakdupada.

Figure – 4.18. Pen Holders are being made, Vakdupada

Figure – 4.19. Artist's workshop, Vakdupada

Figure – 4.20. Workshop, Art Center, Bhoipada