

Exploring the Contribution of Women Artisans in the Context of Subjective Vitality and Preservation of *Dewal Chitra*: A Phenomenological Study on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)-Based Sustainable Tourism in Purulia, West Bengal, India

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Abstract:

This study examines the significance of subjective vitality among the rural women artisans of Purulia in conserving the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) product, Dewal Chitra, from Purulia and their contribution to the transformation and revitalization of the art form. Women artisans in Purulia, West Bengal, are the forerunners of old traditional Dewal Chitra practices. Women from the Santhal area of Purulia are skilled in rich rural vernacular art. They often perform Dewal Chitra during the Badna festival and marital rituals. During these occasions, the Santhal women of Purulia paint their mud-brick homes with graphical designs, borders, and motifs. This type of graphic expression could be characterized and identified in comparison to other floor or wall paintings in Purulia, West Bengal. It is, without a doubt, one of the finest examples of this country's rich folk and tribal culture in terms of technique, style, and aesthetics. The varied artistic manifestations of Santhal Pargana's rural women artisans are evaluated in this study using a qualitative approach. The phenomenological study findings allowed us to intellectualize the magnitudes of their contribution in the context of Dewal Chitra's subjective vitality and preservation. The major finding of this study is that subjective vitality has a positive effect on behavioural patterns. The study has also confirmed the importance of authenticity on the quality of experience in intangible cultural tourism consumption. The social implication of the study is that policies need to be crafted by local authorities and destination marketers to respect and promote the cultural significance of the ICH while ensuring its sustainability and authenticity for tourism.

Keywords: *Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), women artisans, dewal chitra, graphical design, border, motif, subjective vitality, preservation, conservation, authentic experience*

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1. Introduction

Cultural heritage includes more than just monuments and material objects. Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, celebratory occasions, knowledge and practices about nature and the universe, or knowledge and skills to create traditional crafts are all living expressions of a specific society and group of people that have been passed down from generation to generation. Modern tourism contributes to the goals of sustainable development by demonstrating continual economic growth. To grow tourism sustainably and ethically, it is necessary to maximize the use of natural resources, safeguard cultural artefacts and traditional values, and provide opportunities for long-term employment and income generation. In Santhal houses, the mud walls have a hard, cement-like precision, a suave and solid neatness, and the roofs, softly thatched or ribbed with tiles, compose a vista of gently blending curves. Even in the rain, the walls manage to retain their trimness (Archer, 1987). Similarly, according to him, of all the other tribes of eastern India, none has quite the same relish for neatly ordered houses, the same capacity for tidy, spacious living, or the same genius for domestic architecture. The cultural legacy of women artists and their visual art practices is now being accepted as an intellectual contribution to the world of art.

It has long been popular to paint or decorate the clay walls of rural Indian hutments. This type of wall decoration is known as *Dewal Chitra* (wall painting) in Bengal. It mainly belongs to the same territory or is a culturally homogeneous group that is the Santhals (Kiksu, Besra, Mandi, Murmu, Hembrom, and other tribal communities). They are the most numerous tribal communities in Birbhum, Purulia, Bankura, and Midnapore, and their images can be found on their walls. Locally, Santhals are known for their ability to build, plaster, and decorate their homes (Bharat et al., 2015; Panda et al., 2023).

The “Sacred Place of Wall Painting” marks the northern boundary of the former Manbhum District. The Santhals are a Proto-Austroloid ethnic group (Ministry of Culture, Government of India, “*Dewal Chitra & Alpana: Santhal art demonstrating simplicity, honesty, and a gentle vitality*”). Although Santhals can be found throughout West Bengal, Purulia is the second most populated district after West Midnapore. Santhals are predominantly found in Bankura, Birbhum, Midnapore, Purulia, and other regions. However, after being centred in Purulia, its significant history has expanded.

According to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the primary activities of Santhals are everyday agricultural and manual labour (*Dewal Chitra & Alpana: Santhal art displaying “simplicity, honesty, and quiet vigour”*). The Supreme deity in the Santhal faith is Marang Buru or Bonga. Tribal painting art is passed down from generation to generation, and communities and groups continually reinvent it in response to their surroundings and history. Women have played a significant role in the evolution of numerous artistic disciplines.

Influential and essential understanding of the society that has aided the flow of Purulia *Dewal Chitra* from the local to the global art market and is responsible for the modification and repositioning of traditional Indian art from its ceremonial, traditional moorings, meaning marriage ceremony, to its now decorative use.

The artistic qualities of rural women as house decorators have been recognized throughout Indian art history. In rural India, traditional house decoration, including painted

walls, flooring, and other handicrafts, is still practised. Each house that has been decorated reflects cultural aspects of its specific area, location, and technique. Villages generally honour local festivals, marriage ceremonies, and other events with annual house upkeep activities and decorations. Rituals, mythology, male-dominated art, and inspiration from other house decorations all contribute to the vibrant paintings created by these female painters. Nature is the primary inspiration for Purulia's *Dewal Chitra*.

Modern tourism promotes sustainable development goals by demonstrating consistent economic growth. Sustainable, responsible, and ethical tourist promotion necessitates maximizing resource utilization, safeguarding cultural artefacts and traditional values, and providing opportunities for long-term employment and revenue growth. As cultural tourism grows in popularity as a leisure activity, the cultural consumer experience must improve. Intangible cultural assets must be conserved to sustain cultural variation, respond to globalization, and promote long-term cultural growth. It also guarantees that people's lives will be improved. Tourism and the preservation of intangible cultural assets are inextricably intertwined.

This article investigates the method, objective, technique, layout, and design characteristics of women artists' painted mud houses in each location. This study also examines the paucity of research on the aesthetic qualities of *Dewal Chitra* in Purulia, West Bengal. The purpose of this research is to investigate the artistic expressions of rural women artisans as well as the aesthetic elements of rural mural painting. The study focuses on the socioeconomic conditions, cultural values, reflections, and preservation of the rural *Dewal Chitra* in Purulia, West Bengal.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Subjective Vitality

Vitality is derived from the Latin word *viva* (life) and is defined as a dynamic phenomenon that influences both mental and physical components of functioning, such as activity, and hence refers to someone who is alive and energetic (Ryan & Bernstein, 2004). The concept of vitality is derived from self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and it has been defined as "energy that is perceived to emanate from the self" (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). A positive sensation of having energy available to oneself (Nix, Ryan, Manly & Decy, 1999) can be read "as reflecting a person's being (as) fully functioning and self-realized" (Greenglass, 2006, p. 66). Vitality has been highlighted as a personal resource among the ideas of personal energy (McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971; Thayer, 1987, 1996; Watson & Tellegen, 1985), described by Ryan and Frederick (1997) as the energy available to oneself, as in feelings of being alive, aware, and invigorated. They also defined and quantified subjective vitality as the subjective feeling of being alive and full of energy. A lively and happy person is attentive and fresh, as well as full of life and energy, and subjective vitality refers to an entity that is full of positive mental energy. Subjective vitality is a self-created energy that is believed to be an internal energy rather than an energy induced by a specific external threat. Subjective vitality is defined as the sensation of being alive, aware, and active (Mouto, Mendes, & Cid, 2013). Subjective vitality is described as "one's conscious

experience of possessing energy and aliveness” (Ryan & Deci, 2008) and is a component of psychological functioning (Juhl & Routledge, 2015). Subjective Vitality is a dynamic depiction of well-being (Ryan & Frederick, 1997) that an individual reports directly (Lucas et al., 2019). The apex of physical and psychological well-being is subjective vitality. Its creation, strengthening, and maintenance are critical in many parts of people’s lives. Furthermore, vitality is associated with psychological experience and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001), as well as well-being and life satisfaction (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Individuals with high subjective vitality are more motivated to engage in meaningful activities, cope with stressful circumstances, and demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being. Subjective vitality has been linked to life satisfaction, positive affectivity, self-esteem, and psychological well-being in studies (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Ortigosa-Márquez, Carranque-Chávez, & Hernández Mendo, 2015), as well as mindfulness (Visser, Hirsch, Brown, Ryan, & Moynihan, 2014). This essential element has a significant impact on the experience of life events and may provide a better understanding of customized tourism services. As a result, visitor vitality may be viewed as a feature of cultural tourism, given that such activities are often thought to require energy (Martin-Ruiz, Castellanos-Verdugo, & Oviedo-Garca, 2010). A tourist’s energy level may influence the quality of the experience and enjoyment in tourism activities such as visiting historical towns, museums, and engaging with local people. Tourists who feel vital are more likely to have favourable ideas and experiences, resulting in positive word of mouth in both the physical and virtual worlds.

2.2. Cultural Heritage

The two components of the term “cultural heritage” must be examined: “culture” and “heritage.” Material culture, ritual culture, symbolic culture, social institutions, organized behaviour, language as culture, values, beliefs, concepts, ideologies, meanings, and so on are all examples of culture. Second, it is not only practically everything in a society’s culture, but the term is also totalizing in the sense that everything in the society is expected to share the same culture and values (Blake, 2000).

According to Boston University, recognizing language distinctions and knowledge, as well as perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, is required for awareness of culture. Culture (from the Latin term “culture,” meaning “to cultivate”) refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic frameworks that give such behaviours meaning and relevance. Culture is “understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, lack fixed boundaries, are constantly in flux, interact, and compete with one another.” Culture is defined as a population’s way of life, encompassing its arts, beliefs, and institutions that are passed down from one generation to the next. The definition of culture is “the way of life for an entire society.” Culture can be defined in a variety of ways.

Heritage is described as “something of historical or cultural value that can be passed down, protected, or inherited from one generation to the next.” A “physical object” is defined as “a piece of property, a structure, or a location that can be ‘owned’ and ‘passed on’ to another person.” Legacy, according to Smith (2006), is “something that can be conserved through scientific measurements and investigated primarily through technical analysis or methodologies.” Nonetheless, the majority of contemporary heritage writing focuses on

physical heritage and adds to the debate over the need for precise scientific conservation of cultural item attributes (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006; Turtinen, 2000; Cardinale, 2019).

The name “Dharohara” is derived from two words: *Dhar* (Prithvi’s mother earth) and *ihara* (the pursuit of identity over time). The terms ‘carrying’ and ‘safeguarding’ the Earth’s surface are utilized. As a result, a country’s or culture’s history, customs, and qualities that have existed for many years and are considered a significant component of its character must be deemed legacy. Heritage can be preserved by establishing a cycle of understanding, evaluation, care, and enjoyment (Thurley, 2005; Singh & Rana, 2019). Heritage is a knowledge-enhanced asset; it is the foundation structure upon which an individual, community, society, or country stands and recognizes how it evolved or was created, as well as what it needs to learn and absorb from the past to move forward (Gireesh & Singh, 2022).

2.3. Intangible Cultural Heritage

The name ICH, despite being passed down from generation to generation, has a limited history. At the time, the concept of cultural heritage was predominantly centred on physical and cultural assets as a result of UNESCO and ICOMOS’s Authorized Heritage Discourse (Haddad, N.A. et al., 2021). The intangible nature of cultural assets was not legally recognized until UNESCO established the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Assets in 2003 (Melis & Chambers, 2021). According to Kuutma (2011), cultural legacies enable individuals to acquire social, political, and economic capital.

ICH refers to knowledge and information passed down from one generation to the next through interaction with their surroundings. As a result, it can be seen that ICH is twofold: on the one hand, there are fundamental concepts that persist and always represent the cultural identity of their holders; on the other hand, there is ICH. The historical and social context, on the other hand, sculpts and modifies the flexible ICH over time. Since ICH is constantly changing, it can quickly adjust to historical and social contexts. ICH is passed down from generation to generation, and its survival is contingent on the willingness of the elder generation to pass it on, most usually through oral transmission (Lenzerini, 2011; Giudici, 2013).

Culture and intangible cultural heritage have evolved from a static display to a living experience, underscoring the significance of intangible cultural heritage and tourism in fostering creative change and innovative growth. Cultural heritage, particularly in the form of material tourism, has been identified as a technique for actively preserving and promoting the long-term development of intangible cultural resources (Bie & Liang, 2008; Zhang et al., 2018; Zhang & Lee, 2021; Lu et al., 2022). Potential issues include the increasing demand for craft and cultural experiences among tourists and residents, as well as various modes of displaying and educating traditional craft and intangible cultural heritage, and the interaction of multiple stakeholders in various scenes of intangible cultural heritage (Wu, 2020).

2.4. Intangible Cultural Heritage & Tourism

Tourism related to ICH may operate as a facilitator in a two-way connection, actively transmitting identity-oriented attitudes that represent the marginalized. At the same time, cultural carriers add authenticity and value to cultural activities. Ultimately, barriers may be

addressed depending on how civilizations have adapted to external forces. ICH can be linked to tourism using suitable methodologies, and light commercialization approaches are congruent with the expansion of the experience economy. With the ICH economy's strong development momentum, ICH will be able to play a more significant economic and research role by focusing on authenticity as the firm foundation, quality of experience as the driving force, and sustainable development as the ultimate goal (Lu et al., 2022).

The Ministry of Culture has published India's National List of ICH. The purpose of the National ICH List is to document the diversity of Indian culture as reflected in its intangible heritage. This project is also included in the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture (Mishra, 2020).

Tourism may also harm the processes of cultural heritage. The appropriation of perspectives in tourist worlds produces two opposing effects: homogenization and differentiation. These are two binary paradigms that relate to intangible forms of heritage in harmonizing or particularity-oriented ways, encompassing geographical and other dimensions. Both effects may jeopardize cultural bearers' efforts to continue ICH-related practices. For example, homogenization processes put pressure on cultural bearers to conform their ICH to public expectations, causing harm to the essence of some cultural practices and threatening their very survival. The concept of difference limits communities' cultural self-determination in deciding the meaning, significance, and visibility of ICH, providing a narrow perspective on particularities and singularities linked to the tourist sector.

ICH contributes to the development of additional tourism products and activities for the area, as well as increased revenue for the local community and higher employment rates. The effects of various interactive methods and management factors on tourists and intangible cultural assets should be studied in tourism for intangible cultural heritage. An intangible cultural heritage tourist management plan may have materiality, direction, economy, and education components (Wu, 2021). Furthermore, since tourists respect ICH, it increases tourist spending, lengthens visitor stays, attracts visitors outside of peak season, and encourages tourist satisfaction, while ICH contributes to tourist sustainability and hence to destinations' socioeconomic well-being, tourism has a detrimental impact on ICH and destinations (Lovrentjev, 2015; Godinho, 2022).

2.5. Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

On multiple occasions, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has stressed the need to conserve cultural identity through the preservation of physical and intangible cultural assets. The ICH is a risky asset. Even if there is information, it is incomplete and unclassified. As a result of the lack of a record, knowledge is relied on by individual practitioners. Homogeneous ethnic communities are experiencing distinct vocational and lifestyle classes as a result of family money passed down from generation to generation. One strategy to conserve living culture is to combine ICH with tourism, and community residents have long been essential stakeholders in these programmes. Tourism based on heritage and culture benefits both the local people and the local economy. The overarching goal of cultural heritage tourism is to preserve and share urban heritage and

culture with visitors, while also benefiting from the tourism industry. A greater appreciation for cultural heritage will strengthen its uniqueness and preservation (Idris et al., 2016; Isa, Montalvo et al, 2017; Lu et al, 2022).

2.6. *Dewal Chitra*

The Santhal tribe had a significant influence on the development of this art form. This tribe paints new artwork on the walls during Kali Puja to commemorate their Badna Festival (Panda et al., 2023). According to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the primary activities of Santhals are everyday agricultural and manual labour (*Dewal Chitra & Alpana: Santhal art displaying “simplicity, honesty, and quiet vigour”*). The supreme deity in the Santhal faith is Marang Buru or Bonga. Tribal painting art is passed down from generation to generation, and communities and groups continually reinvent it in response to their surroundings and history. Women have played a significant role in the evolution of numerous artistic disciplines. This home painting style was swiftly adopted by the pastoral and agricultural classes, commerce and industrial castes, and high castes (Tapan Kar, 2022).

Murals were first created by women painters from *Adivasi* communities in *Santhal Pargana*. According to Uttam Mahato (Kalpattam), the main feature of Purulia wall painting is its transience. These will remain until the rain stops, once the wall painting is completed. After that time, visiting entails witnessing the wall painting's incomplete brilliance. The Santhal tribe had a significant impact on the creation of this art style. During Kali Puja, this tribe paints new artwork on the walls to honour their Badna Festival (Panda et al., 2023).

Uttam Mahato (Kalpattam) believes that girls and women from families can enrich the art of painting by making basic, natural topics their primary source of inspiration. It is not their profession or addiction to paint on walls. Despite significant changes in their lifestyle, such as shifting from secluded locations surrounded by hills and forests to more civilized settings, their unflinching dedication to the art of wall painting, passed down from generation to generation, has not wavered (Panda et al., 2023). As a result of the influence of modernization, abrupt changes in the field of wall painting are now being witnessed (Ghosh & Mandal, 2021).

2.7. *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage from West Bengal*

Between 2013 and 2016, the National Inventory included genres of various Intangible Cultural Heritage elements derived from ICH applications submitted by practitioners and stakeholders engaged in promoting, conserving, and preserving India's intangible cultural heritage. The 'Safeguarding India's Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions' programme was established by the Ministry of Culture. The goal was to fortify and conserve India's vast intangible cultural heritage. The plan was launched in 2013 to enhance the diverse cultural manifestations necessary for the ongoing evolution and interpretation of India's intangible cultural assets, as well as their transmission to future generations.

Sl. No	Genre/Form	Description
1.	<i>Baul</i>	A Melodious Custom of West Bengal
2.	<i>Bidroher Loka Gaan</i>	Folk Songs of Rebellion
3.	<i>Bonobibir Pala And Tarja</i>	It is a ritual in which the Sundarban residents honour the Guardian Spirit of the Forest.
4.	<i>Chadhia-Chadhiani and Lalita-Sabar</i>	Folk Dramas of West Bengal
5.	<i>Chhau Dance of Purulia</i>	It is a West Bengal Chhau dance form and a UNESCO representative list element.
6.	<i>Dewal Chitra And Alpana</i>	A type of visual art that entails sketching on the wall and the floor with rice flour.
7.	<i>Guadiya</i>	Bengali Traditional Dance Form
8.	<i>Hapu Gaan</i>	Midnapore, West Bengal, Traditional Folk Song
9.	<i>Jangal Mahal</i>	West Bengal Tribal Culture
10.	<i>Maatir Taan Bratachari</i>	In 1932, a spiritual movement was launched.
11.	<i>Mandakam</i>	North Bengali Songs and Dance
12.	<i>Pala Gayan</i>	It is a West Bengal musical tradition.
13.	<i>Rajbanshi Folklores</i>	Folklores of the Rajbanshi Society of West Bengal's Cooch Behar District
14.	<i>Shasthi Mangal and Shitala Mangal</i>	West Bengal's Dramatic Folk Songs of Midnapore
15.	<i>The Technique of Shree Khol</i>	The Making of a Terracotta Drum for Devotional Music

Table 1: Intangible Cultural Heritage West Bengal Based Inventory [Work-In-Progress]

(Source: Sangeet Natak Akademy, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India)

3. Research Gap

According to the assessment of available literature, a gap exists between the conceptual notion of sustainable cultural tourism and its practical application, particularly in ICH-based tourism practices. Hence, it is essential to explore the effects of women artisans' contribution to the subjective vitality and preservation of Purulia's *Dewal Chitra*.

4. Objectives

The primary goal of this research is to evaluate the subjective vitality, sense of belonging, and contribution of women artisans, as well as to preserve and conserve *Dewal Chitra*, while investigating the effects of sustainable tourism practices based on this Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) product in Purulia.

5. Research Design and Procedure

Initially, a pilot study was carried out in key areas of *Santhal Pargana*; then, extensive research was conducted in Usuldungri, Banbandha, Munibera, and Shalidih in Purulia to meet the research objectives. Various previous queries regarding the participants' artistic genres were addressed through semi-structured interviews, followed by a thorough study of the art forms after categorization. The separation of the raw data into units with practical applications enabled a better understanding of the motivations behind the behaviour being studied. The collected narratives and field notes were carefully examined.

When compiling the data, primary and secondary sources were used. To collect primary data, field trips, videos, photographs, and semi-structured interviews were employed. Secondary sources included the Internet, books, and journals. Interviews were conducted with fifteen female artists, ranging in age from fifteen to eighty. The majority consisted of young, middle-class, and lower-class female housewives and students, with a few notable exceptions. They truly lived in the Santhal community. Through the use of photography, audio and video recordings, interviews, and observation, the majority of the research material from village homes and society was gathered on-site.

6. Data Analysis

For the analysis of data, a grounded theory approach was used in the study. It helped in exploring the significant role of women artisans in conserving and preserving the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of *Dewal Chitra* in Purulia, West Bengal. The lived experiences and cultural contributions of these women were recorded through the use of qualitative methods, primarily semi-structured interviews and field studies. To fulfil the research purpose, data was collected through detailed statements of 15 female participants. Their narratives provided an in-depth understanding of how the traditions and cultural practices are passed on. To analyze further, word clouds were used to highlight the recurring themes and keywords. These helped identify core values and concepts closely entwined with *Dewal Chitra*, such as authenticity, cultural tradition, and community participation.

7. Findings & Discussion

7.1. Dewal Chitra

According to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the primary activities of Santhals are everyday agricultural and manual labour (*Dewal Chitra & Alpana: Santhal art displaying "simplicity, honesty, and quiet vigour"*). The Supreme deity in the Santhal faith is Marang Buru or Bonga. Tribal painting art is passed down from generation to generation, and communities and groups continually reinvent it in response to their surroundings and history. Women have played a significant role in the evolution of numerous artistic disciplines.

The Purulia community of Santhals is well-known for its use of wall painting, as are other communities such as the Bauri, Sarak, Kora, and Kamar. However, the times of these distinct groups' wall paintings differ, and there is a distinction among the wall paintings of other societies. The introduction of *Adivasi* arts and crafts takes three forms: ritualistic, utilitarian, and personalized (Rani et al., 2016). Wall painting has been found to be popular among the Santhal and other communities in the Purulia district, including Raghunathpur, Balarampur, Neturia, Bagmundi, Bandwan, and other locations (Ghosh & Mandal, 2021).

Despite the residency of Santhal, Ho, Ashur, Bhumij, Munda, Oraon, Khediya, Shabar, Kol, Birhar, and other communities in Manbhum, the Santhal community is a leader in the processing of mud homes and wall painting, according to Tapan Kar (2022). Bhumij's and Khediyas' works appear to complement each other well. Women artists from *Adivasi* groups in Santhal Pargana were the first to create murals. This method of house decoration was rapidly adopted by the pastoral and agricultural classes, as well as commerce and industrial

castes, and high castes. The majority of women artists in this area are homemakers who are responsible for all household tasks. These ladies also manufacture brooms, dolls, wall hangings, and embroidered work for domestic use in their spare time (Rani et al., 2016).

7.2. History of the Dewal Chitra

There are no recorded accounts of how these murals were created. It appears to be the outcome of a planned reaction. According to Chandra (2017), initially, one villager adorned the house with paint, and when the neighbours saw this, they were inspired to paint pictures on their house walls as well. Tribal wall paintings change rhythmically depending on the age, lifestyle, economic structure, and geographical region and are transformed into various patterns. It changes depending on the sect and celebration. Outlying villages with wall paintings include Hura Village, Lakhanpur Village, Hatimara Village, and Shuknibasa Village. According to Narendrapur Ram Krishna Mission, these are the villages famous for wall painting in Purulia district: Jagdakocha, near Gopalnagar, Purulia; Katlagora, near Jitujuri, Purulia; Lonkagora, near Jitujuri, Purulia; Patharkata, near Manbazer, Purulia; Matha Range, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia; Chatni, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia; and Usuldungri, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia district.

7.3. Purulia Dewal Chitra Heritage and Diversity

The Santhal tribe had a significant impact on the creation of this art style. During Kali Puja, this tribe paints new artwork on the walls to honour their Badna Festival (Panda et al., 2023). Manbhum primarily refers to the Purulia district and its surrounding region. Manbhum and Purulia are tribe-inhabited areas. As a result, the practice of wall painting is widespread in this region. Other localities in this region have this wall painting tradition in addition to Santhal. The Santhal tribe played a significant role in the development of this art form. This tribe paints new paintings on the walls during Kali Puja to commemorate their Badna Festival (Panda et al., 2023).

Wall painting is generally done once a year in tribal life. They paint pictures on the walls during the Badna festival, whereas other villages celebrate this at different times. This Badna event is held in some places following Durga Puja and on the eve of Kali Puja. On the contrary, it has been established that the Badna celebration is held in some locations on the day of the full moon in the month of *Kartik*. In the Malbhum region, two painting techniques are used: relief and fresco. In some instances, colour is employed, whereas in others, no colour is used. The Bauri and Sarak groups have a practice of painting on the walls with liquid rice paste. Creating a paste with rice powder is an excellent method for sketching. Rice powder and water are mixed to make a thick paste. To draw various designs, a small piece of paper or fabric is folded into a wick and dipped in rice paste. The coloured paste is occasionally mixed in with white paste (Panda et al., 2023). Cakapura, for example, is performed as a new type of 'Bandna Alpana' by the Kurmi and Kumhara clans, particularly those with surnames such as Mahata or Mahato. It is their ladies who produce this ordinary sort of painting with natural ease and expertise every year. Their images possess a strong visual appeal due to the use of decorative lines and diagrammatic frames. Each motif and pattern exhibits extraordinary spontaneity paired with maximum precision—a trait essential for any successful piece of art.

Vertical surface feelings can easily coexist with the horizontal range of linear emotions. Overall, it produces an unequalled union of painted images and graphic symbols in tribal folk art (Gupta, 2020).



Image 1: Badna Festival at Bandwan, Purulia

Source: Author

The tribal community begins planning its event one to two months in advance. They begin by neatening and cleaning their dwellings, and then prepare for the task of painting the walls, and finally, the portrayal process begins. The wall painting endeavour will continue till the day before the festival. Painting with white rice paste is still done by the Bauri, Baghdi, and Sarak groups, in addition to the Santhals. They commonly paint the walls with white rice paste during the Durga Puja and Kali Puja festivals. Visitors can witness *alpana* adorning in the Bauri and Sarak localities or neighbourhoods (Ghosh & Mandal, 2021).

The wall painting features birds and animals, flowers, twigs and tendrils, trees, various types of goods, and so on. The colours black, blue, yellow, violet, and purple are used for these. They largely represent the images on the walls of the chambers and around the door. There is an inner chamber wall in the entrance door. Every Santhal home in this area has exquisite wall paintings that add to the beauty of the homes.

7.4. Dewal Chitra Drawing Skills

To begin, the wall must be prepped for wall painting. Since this preparation work is a time-consuming event, they begin it one to two months in advance. Furthermore, the wall is divided into two sections. The upper section is known as the “wall/parapet,” while the lower part is referred to as “Pirha” in the tribe’s dialect. The upper half of the wall has been painted. Since paint cannot be applied directly to the wall, the surface must be prepared before painting. The wall is being built in stages. “Karach Soil,” red soil, sticky/tenacious soil, and white soil are among the soils required to prepare the surface of the wall (Kar, 2022; Ghosh & Mandal, 2021).

According to Anjali Tudu of Purulia’s Shalidih village, there was no tradition of this wall painting. At the time, three types of colours and borders were represented. Then, in mud-built houses, ‘Pirha or Pindo’ are typically made thick on the extension part of the outer wall to be used as an outside sitting space. The bottom section was black, the middle area was red soil or an earthen hue, and the top section was limestone or white. Following that, the border

was black-bordered. This process has continued from ancient times to the present. These *alpana* (ornamental lines) and wall paintings have been done figuratively for ten to twelve years. According to a few villagers, this has been going on for six to seven years.

According to all Purulia locals, soil and cow dung are mixed and plastered over earth-made walls with this mixture. After smoothing, cotton thread is used to split the three main portions. The lower division is black, the upper division is red soil colour, and the top division is white or limestone. Following that, the border is lined up with cotton thread, and designs are portrayed after painting the base with a yellow shade. Following that, the black border is laced up with cotton thread known locally as 'Paar'. The word "Paar" comes from the word border, which is found in the lower section of a woman's saree or a man's dhuti.

At the moment, after gathering white soil from Kharban and red soil from Galudih, artificial colours in containers are painted using artificial hair pencils or hair pencils made of the thrashing part of the local sal tree (*Shorea robusta*) by grinding stone from the kitchen, which is actually used for brushing teeth locally known as 'Datun'.

Mud-building houses are renovated every year after the monsoon, according to Samir Murmu and Bhaduri Besra of Usuldungri, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia, and then redecorated with new *alpana* (ornamental lines) and wall paintings.



Images 2 & 3: Traditional Geometrical Design

Source: Author

7.5. Women Artisans & Their Views

According to Kabita Murmu, the Santhal tribe generally depicts beautiful lines and wall paintings. This elegant line and wall painting is commonly shown by village women. Currently, the male sector performs this type of employment as well. There is no old traditional history of this wall painting, according to the eldest woman of the Kisku family in the Matha hamlet in the Matha Forest of Purulia. This custom has been going on for the previous twelve to fifteen years. Painting is typically done to beautify a wall. It is not based on any religious beliefs. Similarly, it is not based on mythology or traditional practices/customs. Wall painting begins each year at the Badna festival, which takes place during the Kali Puja holiday. Badna festival lasts from *Amavasya* (new moon) to *Purnima* (full moon). During this moment, most people are still painting. A major village fair is held at Purnima (full moon time), and then the event ends. Each home produces a unique rangoli during Badna. Females of all ages in the household, regardless of financial position, perform

this job. The form of art is simple. It is remarkable to watch their natural ability to create patterns from memory on the go.

Wall painting is done during the festivals of the local gods, 'Matha Budu' and 'Sarhul' (Holi, Festival of Colours), according to Alpana Mandi and Budni Murmu of Munibera village near Bagmundi. *Alpana* (ornamental lines) and wall painting are done in the individual household at the marriage ceremony, according to Chabika Besra and Ramnath Murmu of Usuldungri, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia. Birbaha Murmu asserts that these wall paintings are typical in style. Wall painting is done during the festivals of the local gods, 'Matha Budu' and 'Sarhul' (Holi, Festival of Colours), according to Alpana Mandi and Budni Murmu of Munibera village near Bagmundi.

According to Chabika Besra and Ramnath Murmu of Usuldungri, Ajodhya Hill, Purulia, *alpana* (ornamental lines) and wall paintings are done in individual families at the marriage ceremony. Mural making is a ritualistic art practised during various local festivals such as Sohrai (harvest festivals) in the Bengali *Poush* month, Baha (flower festival) in *Phalgun* (February-March), Sarhul (February), Bandana (October), Diwali (October-November), Durga Puja (September-October), and Christmas (December) (Rani et al., 2016).

Female artisans in Shalidih village, Purulia, estimate that a minimum of Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 7000/-, or nearly Rs. 10000/- and more, is spent per year on *alpana* (ornamental lines) and *dewal chitra* (wall painting). Each property is decorated in a different style each year. The same design does not appear twice in the same house. The total time required is one to three months. The paintings are all done by hand. It is just a matter of time. There is no mould utilized in the drawing design. This wall painting is not permitted to be drawn in a secret or concealed position; rather, the painting is chosen for walls that are readily visible from a distance.



Images 4, 5 & 6: Women Artisans

Source: Author



Figure 1: Word Cloud Analysis for the Opinions and Views on Dewal Chitra
Source: Author

7.6. Current State and Conservation

Despite the fact that wall painting is becoming less popular in the Purulia region, there are still enough examples to go around. The method/process of wall painting, colour, subject, and so on have evolved with time and are now extinct. Education is currently being spread throughout tribal communities since people have less time to spare when they go out to work. Since drawing on a wall takes time, many wall painting works go unrecognized or overlooked due to a lack of time.

As the delicate girls or adolescent girls undertake the labour of wall painting, many changes have occurred in the field of subject matter; thus, their favourite flower(s), sketch, cartoon figure, and even the usage of glass in the design is observed. Glass bits or small mirror glass are used to provide beauty and brightness. The method/style of painting on walls has changed in technique/style, with a touch of variation/modification, but the practice of wall painting has not been hampered.

Uttam Mahato believes that girls and women from households enrich the art of painting by focusing on simple, natural subjects as their primary source of income. It is not their profession or addiction to paint on walls. They do this work while dressing and staging the furnished room.

Young ladies and school-age girls who learned to sketch through school, mobile phones, YouTube, and other means now paint the designs on the wall. The locals also discuss wall painting, claiming that certain fine arts students from various colleges are currently visiting villages to portray new trends in painting, such as 3D painting, and that village women cover the paintings with paint in their spare time.

To keep up with the modern lifestyle, close intimacy/oneness of spirit with nature is falling short/falling off, an effect that has even fallen on the residents of this Purulia village. The young people in the area are less interested in studying or comprehending these ancient and wonderful arts. Even in such a small village, the number of houses is steadily declining.

Code System	Frequency	Average Density Score	Average Groundedness Score
Code System			
Intellectually less connected	3	2.09	1.31
Domestic tourists are less interceptive	2	4.87	2.34
Lack of tourism infrastructure	1	4.91	3.98
Seeking for more NGO support for development	1	2.11	1.07
Training required for professional and authentic performance	2	4.55	0.51
Negative for conservation	3	1.19	4.06
Engaging performance	1	0.91	5.54
Simulated by the dance form	1	0.87	3.22
Peculiarities about the dance form	1	0.54	5.87
Portraying accuracy	1	1.77	4.21
Skillfulness	2	0.51	5.87
Leadership	2	0.33	4.11
Tourist experience	2	0.04	0.91
Contemporary/Current trends of performance	4	0.81	2.34
Authentic performance/Showcasing originality	6	0.91	2.98
Folkloric and mythical	1	1.98	2.09
Roles of artisans	1	1.23	0.51
Mythological Characters for performance	1	3.98	4.06
Pride	2	3.45	8.57
Rich tradition	2	1.93	5.02
Ethnic Cultural information	2	0.76	1.56

Table 2: Code System: Dewal Chitra

Source: Author

The 'word cloud' tool was used on the retrieved (coded) segments to obtain precise inputs. Word clouds were used to find context-relevant keywords. Figure 1 displays the word cloud along with the most significant keywords highlighted. The entire keyword corpus was examined alongside the quantitative outputs to provide additional context for the data-centric output. Through factor analysis, the underlying factors (dimensions) that the word cloud revealed were investigated and confirmed. Terms that capture the spirit of the ICH, its implications, and its interaction with tourists, including authenticity, experience, conservation, tradition, skill, artisan, community, ornamental, painting, festival, benefit, practice, process, and so forth, were generated by the circumstances surrounding *Dewal Chitra*. Subjective vitality and experiential authenticity, two important key variables under investigation that are connected to conservation, are represented by the words (Figure 2).

The subjective vitality and experiential authenticity that conservation enhanced had a significant impact on the psychological profiles of tourists visiting Purulia for *Dewal Chitra*. Subjective vitality shapes travellers' intentions to participate in various activities, and how authentic these activities are viewed shapes the distinctive arrays that emerge. Sincere

interactions influence tourists' observable plans, resulting in a more rewarding and sustainable tourism experience for both visitors and local populations. The study area's uniqueness, emotional depth, cultural connection, personal relevance, and ethical considerations set it apart from other intangible cultural heritages. When combined, these components create a travel experience that is more profound and meaningful and encourages a genuine respect and comprehension of the cultures and customs of other people.

Ten (10) sub-codes were discovered to be part of the code category "subjective vitality." Using the code-sub-code-segment model, each sub-code was examined in this category. The model looked for sub-codes within the designated code category. Figure 3 displays the code segments and code-subcode mappings for the code category "subjective vitality." The main linked sub-codes were "energetic," "vitality," "strong feeling," "aesthetic and mesmerizing," and "stimulated by the dance form" (Figure 3).

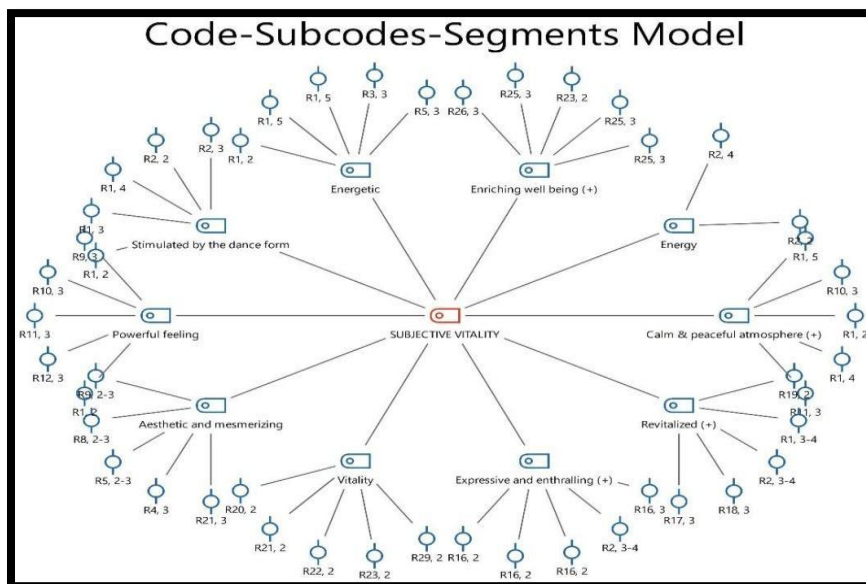


Figure 3: Codes-Sub-codes Segment Model of the Code Category 'Subjective Vitality'
Source: Author

8. Conclusion

This paper aims to increase public awareness of the self-initiated efforts by rural women artists in Purulia's Santhal village to preserve their cultural legacy. Visual analysis of existing mural art can now be used to critically examine design elements with symmetrical operation. The working methods are the same, but distinct visual forms are created in each district based on the local environment. The study sheds light on the extraordinary diversity of Sathal Village's self-taught female artists, who comprise the traditional art world. Unfortunately, this creative legacy is slowly vanishing as more and more homes are constructed with concrete rather than mud.

These artistic forms are not commercially appealing, which has deterred younger generations from engaging with them. Design guidelines play a major role in the preservation

of this art form. Furthermore, they might contribute to maintaining the authentic essence of this age-old art form while making it a business venture. Furthermore, the commodification of traditional art forms is becoming a more prominent theme in global cultural heritage movements.

The level of visitor participation in cultural tourism has an impact on the effectiveness of information exchange as well as the overall quality of the tourism experience. The scholar persisted in her exploration of “Traditional Craftsmanship: Dewal Chitra and Alpana.” Proto-Austroloid in nature, the Santhals are known for their traditional craftsmanship, which includes their pictorial folk art forms like *Alpana* (floor drawing) and *Dewal Chitra* (wall drawing). These paintings feature traditional realistic themes such as fish, elephants, floral creepers, the sun, the tree of life, and lotuses. The two main parts of the hut where the *Dewal Chitra* is painted in natural colours are the Pinda, or plinth, and the Kanth, or wall above the plinth. In the ceremonial art form of *alpana*, one dips a finger into a paste made of rice powder to create flowing, rhythmic patterns.

Using a range of data sources resulted in rich data that captured the subjective vitality, preservation, and conservation arising from the interaction with women artisans. A word cloud was used to identify the context-specific keywords. The entire corpus of the keywords was studied in the context of the quantitative outputs to reinforce the data-centric output with further explanation. The word cloud provided a preliminary set of output concerning the underlying factors (dimensions) that were explored and validated with factor analysis. *Dewal Chitra* produced certain keywords that are indicative of the nature of the ICH, its implications, interface with the tourists, and issues of preservation/conservation, namely, authenticity, experience, conservation, tradition, skill, artisan, community, ornamental, painting, festival, benefit, practice, process, etc., for *Dewal Chitra*. The words are indicative of the three major key variables under study: subjective vitality, preservation and conservation.

Preservation and culture authenticate visitors’ experiences by meeting their expectations for genuine cultural immersion and engagement. This validation increases their overall level of satisfaction, fosters the development of emotional bonds, creates special moments, elevates their appreciation of culture, and promotes positive word-of-mouth. The legitimate power to improve visitors’ experiences and promote sustainable tourism practices that benefit both tourists and local communities can be shaped by participants in the tourism industry.

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