

## Chapter 7

# A Case Study on Pipli Craft of Orissa: Learning, Community Building Through Inclusiveness Leading to Development of Pipli Applique Craft

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### ABSTRACT

*India is known for its arts and crafts, handicrafts form the gateway to this ethnic nation. Primary research for this project started with a visit to Odisha to study the craft of Pipli appliqué. The state Odisha has a rich cultural heritage, which is a harmonious blending of art, religion, and philosophy interwoven around “Lord Purusottam Jagannath”—the internationally famous Vaishnavite God at holy city of Puri. Pipli applique textiles originated as temple offerings, chariot decoration, and ceremonial products. The technique itself was practiced by the selected few craftsmen of the village. Through this chapter, the author presents craft cluster study project through a learning together initiative project conducted by an on-site visit, stay at the cluster, at a small village Pipli located in the eastern state of India: Odisha. This chapter also gives an insight about the socio-economic factors that have affected the Pipli craft. An effort that has built a strong community relationship between the Hindus and Muslims of the village, all bound by the Pipli applique craft.*

### INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

India has had a rich cultural heritage since the beginning of civilization. There are 29 states and each state has its unique craft practice. Craft has been a strong inspirations and source of employment for several decades.

Although the country was ruled for many centuries by Mughals (1500s to 1850s) and later by the British (1600s to 1947), the cultural roots of Indians remain strong to this day. The variety of traditions,

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rituals and festivals has been passed over generations and are still a part of daily Indian life. Supporting and surrounding these traditions are the objects, symbols, garments that are based on the innumerable arts and crafts propagating for centuries from one generation to another.

Through this chapter the author wants to present a case study of the learning process that has had a significant impact on the Social Design and has further helped in Community Building and Inclusiveness through the Pipli appliqué craft. This study is done as a part of academic activity and the study is carried out on the Pipli craft in state of Odisha in India.

Fashion Design discipline at MIT Institute of Design in India encourages learners to study and appreciate on the traditional crafts of the country. India is a country that is rich in its crafts and culture. Throughout the length and width of country several unique and extraordinary arts and crafts are practiced. There are several crafts are prospering and are recognized throughout the world but also there are a few that have not got the due recognition and are fading away. As an academic project and an attempt to bring designers closer to the rich heritage a course facilitates study and visit to a craft practicing community. Staying on location is planned in a manner that the students not just get hands on learning of the craft but also experience the socio-cultural background and the economic factors that affect the artisans and the traditional crafts. This also presents opportunity to learn, identify, appreciate and interact with artisans. The students are able to witness the journey of craft from material to product, this is especially beneficial when designers set out to bring out their true identity and begin to reference historical, cultural and contextual backgrounds which have influenced their formative years. The students get opportunity to reflect on the character and ethos of the culture by researching its heritage and finding newer meanings, interpretations and opportunities. Their contemporary designs then further show an evidence of the rich heritage in the most individual creations.

The objective of such an exposure is much needed for the students, this also creates a platform to develop communication channels and connect between the craftsman / artisan and the upcoming designers. The exposure is not just limited to the fashion related crafts – i.e. textile based, surface development or artefacts but also shows the social development and lifestyle of community. It also brings to light all the layers of that work together to create the mater piece. The students also get to learn that they are also a part of change that will be seen in the Fashion industry in coming days. The budding designers and their interactions with the artisan community are seen as one step towards bringing the craft to the consumer. Also, the understanding that the change they bring has a significant social impact and not just on the artisan but also the community around them.

With the multifaceted approach towards studying the crafts and art of the country it must be recognised that the factors influencing are multi-dimensional. There is a huge influence of religion, historical traditions and community building in the survival of the craft. Nevertheless, the growing disconnect with traditional patterns of livelihood, encroaching urbanization, easy connectivity, exposure to visual media and education is leading to a vital loss of knowledge and skill repositories that are unique preserves of a cultural biosphere. With easy accessibility to mass produced goods and exposure to mass media, the shift from self-reliant and sustainable economy is fast being corroded both in terms of quality as well as in the aesthetics of material culture. The shift in livelihood patterns and education has led to a distancing of the regional inhabitants from their own identity and heritage leading to a decline in craftsmanship, a blurring of regional identities and a lack of innovation. The Pipli village and its study are to identify the traditional approach behind the craft, modern interventions over a period of time.

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### BACKGROUND OF PIPLI CRAFT

#### Introduction to the State of Odisha and Its Social Fabric

The state of Odisha in India is located in the eastern region of the country, marking the land of diversified culture along with its varied handicrafts to the beautiful landscape, bountiful nature, wild life sanctuaries and a coastline. All these factors have added layers to the beauty of state. Odisha was initially known as 'Kalinga' and then as 'Utkal' finally the name Odhisha came to being in the year 2011. Odisha is flanked by the Bay of Bengal to its East and shares its borders with the state of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Telangana. The capital city is Bhubaneswar and its official language is Odia. Orissa has a rich cultural heritage, which is a harmonious blend of art, religion and philosophy interwoven around 'Lord Purusottam Jagannath' the very famous God at Puri. The state has splendid historical monuments depicting glamorous heroic deeds and cultural upheavals. The ancient sculptures and monuments mark the opulent culture of Odisha. India is a country with strong belief in mythology, the people are multi-cultural and many religions co-exist. There are several monuments, temples and places / spaces where certain rituals have been given high importance. One of such space is the Jagannath Temple of Puri in Odisha. The temple is adorned with its beautiful carvings that show magnificent skills and historical exuberance of artisans who made it. The heritage is well preserved and presented in the state of Odisha.

The religions practiced in the state are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. Over several years due to the historical invasions, overseas trade and cultural overlaps there has been a blend of cultural mix to this secular state.

The place of reference and study is Pipli a small village located on the state highway on the Jagannath trunk road about 20 kms away from Bhubaneswar and 40 kms away from Puri. This village is home to Pipli artisans who are living and practicing the applique craft for decades now.

Table 1 details the population of Pipli.

*Figure 1. Orissa State shown on the Map of India  
Orissa Tourism, 2016.*



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Table 1. Pipli Religion Data 2011

Population	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Others	Not Stated
17,623	67.63%	29.06%	3.18%	0.03%	0.01%	0.01%	0.00%	0.08%

Census Population, 2015.

The tourist season during the festivals is all lined up by the latest products, during the visit by MIT institute of design it was an off season just at the onset of monsoon. This provided a good time to speak to artisans and further get to the nuances of craft.

### History of PIPLI Craft

A few kilometers from Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa, is a village where all houses and shops along the roads have one thing in common: beautiful appliqué work, in the making or on display, all giving out a loud burst of colour.

Pipli is a small town, situated about 40 kilometers from Puri, Orissa. The income of this town is essentially dependent on the sale of its handicrafts of which the appliqué works are the main source. During the visit to Pipli, the team met and interacted with the national award winner and Shilp Guru Dr. Raghunath Mohapatra who spoke and gave insights in the formation of Pipli village.

This famous appliqué work comes from Pipli village, which was established by the King of Orissa for accommodating the craftsmen who made appliqué umbrellas and canopies for the annual Jagannath Yatra.

The appliqué craft reached its peak in the 11th century AD, under the patronage of the king and nobility. A craft that originated as a temple art now finds its application in a wide range of household, decorative and ceremonial products. This handicraft is unparalleled in its flexibility and versatility,

Figure 2. The village lane of Pipli selling appliqué products



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permitting experimentation and encouraging innovation. Artisans with their skilful blending of myths, symbolism and imagination provide the craft an appealing dynamism.

The appliqué items are mainly used during processions of the deities in their various ritual outings. Items like Chhatri (umbrella), Tarasa – a heart-shaped wooden piece covered by appliqué cloth and supported by a long wooden pole and Chandua – an umbrella shaped canopy are usually seen during the processions. ‘Jhalar’, another popular item is a sort of frill which is used as a border to canopies and also independently as a decorative piece.

However, the appliqué work in its colourful best is most prominent in the cloth covers of the three chariots of the presiding deities in which they travel every year during the Ratha Yatra or Car Festival. As per tradition, the colour scheme of the three covers is predetermined, green and red for the chariot of Balabhadra, black and red for that of Subhadra and yellow and red for Lord Jagannath chariot. The basic design of all three is similar, being a combination of narrow and wide stripes while on the four sides above the openings, there are appliquéd mythical motifs like *Rahu*, *Chandra* as well as motifs from nature. It is these eye catching appliqué covers which help identify the chariots of the three deities from far away when thousands of pilgrims throng the main road of Puri on which the gods make their annual sojourn in the chariot festival. Appliqué work is also used in making seats and pillows for the deities and also for their ritual dresses.

Appliqué comes from the French word “appliquer”, which means to “put on”. In appliqué, one piece of fabric is placed over a base layer and is sewn in place. Another technique is the reverse appliqué, in which one layer of fabric is placed on another layer, and a shape is cut out from the top layer, exposing the lower layer. These two are then neatly stitched together. The base cloth, that includes waterproof material for umbrellas, velvet for tents, and cotton, is sourced from Kolkata and threads, locally called “Sutta”, are sourced from Surat. Since the designated colours for ceremonial pieces are limited, craftsmen find an outlet to their creativity in combining these colours in different proportions and combinations.

The motifs used consist of stylized representations of flora and fauna as well as a few mythical figures. Of the more common of these motifs are the elephant, parrot, peacock, ducks, creepers, trees, flowers like lotus, jasmine, half-moon, the Sun and *Rahu* (a mythical demon who devours the sun).

Flat motifs are first cut from cloth and then superposed on the base cloth in a predetermined layout and sequence. The edges of the motifs are turned in and In her book “traditional Embroideries of India’ author Shailaja Naik writes that the appliqué work of Pipli is the stitchery craft that had emerged due to the presence of Lord Jagannath and specifically the beginning of Rath Yatra as early as 1054 AD.

The kings of Puri were great patrons on art. The maintenances and development of the craft was the solely due to the fact that the Jagannath temple and Rath Yatra became one of the greatest attractions in the Hinduism in the state. The state was flanked by disciples and followers from all over the country. The annual Rath Yatra – chariot procession calls for the exclusive decorations and celebrations. The chariot itself is adorned with the appliqué embroidery of Pipli. Inside the chariot there would be a Canopy, banners all made using the applique craft. According to temple records, Maharaja Birakshore appointed certain sevaks or care takers who were predominantly artists following the traditional sewing, these were known as the *Darjis* - tailoring community. It was the responsibility of this community to supply hand crafted applique work to temple to perform daily rights of the Lord. The craft is traditionally practiced by a community of professional tailors, known as ‘*Darjis*’. Their beautiful work is considered a service for the Lord, or “seva”. The community, led by a chief, is well organized, with annual meetings to resolve any social or other problems.

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Pipli village hence forth has thus followed the tradition of hand and machine applique craft which is also embroidered. The word appliqué is derived from the French term *appliquer* that means ‘to put on’. The needle work technique helps create decorative effect which is obtained by superimposing patches on a foundation fabric and then stitches in place by hand or machine with the raw sides joined under covered decorative stitching. This is a distinct patchwork technique that has unique motif language, vibrant colors and patterns.

As described on the website for the Chariot festival (Rath Yatra, 2011-12) Rath Yatra or Chariot festival, one of the much-awaited Hindu festivals, is celebrated every year. The foremost epicentre for this festival is the Jagannath Puri temple, one of the four major Hindu shrines, which is situated in the state of Odisha. Rath Yatra Puri has always been popular among tourists due to its religious connotation.

The festival honors the Lord Jagannath visit along with his siblings to the temple of Queen Gundicha. During his journey, Lord Jagannath is accompanied also by the celestial wheel called Sudarshan Chakra.

Jagannath Puri temple is called ‘Yamanika Tirtha’ where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of ‘Yama’, the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath, popularly known as Lord Krishna, and his siblings – lord Balabhadra and deity Subhadra – in the Jagannath Puri temple. As many as three new splendid chariots are created for the Puri Yatra (the journey) of the Gods – Lord Jagannath and his siblings – every year. The carpenters, having rights for this job by heredity, follow century old styles, written in the holy Hindu text, for building and decorating the chariots.

Then comes the graceful day of Yatra, when these 45-feet high idols are pulled by millions of devotees came here from all over the world. The act of pulling the Rath by the ropes during Rath Yatra Puri is believed to be an extremely religious act, the belief which attracts millions of tourists from all over the world. The day of the Rath Yatra in Puri is the only day in the whole year when the non-Hindu devotees can have an opportunity to see the gods and goddess of the Jagannath Puri temple.

*Figure 3. Depiction of Lord Jagannath (on the left) with his siblings*



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### Pipli Appliqué Technique and Products

Orissa is one of those states of India that is world renowned for its handicrafts. One of the most popular crafts of Orissa is the gorgeous Appliqué technique work that comes from the town of Pipli. The applique craft of Pipli is an attractive product in the world handicraft market. Pipli, the small town situated on the golden triangle, Bhubaneswar- Puri -Konark, attracts the tourists, who stop for a while at Pipli. Very often guides are heard persuading tourists stressing that the craft products are something once could carry as a token of remembrance for the visit to Orissa. Applique works of Pipli, filigree works of Cuttack, horn works of Cuttack and leaf paintings of Raghurajpur are offered as objects of gift by the people of Orissa. Jagannath Pattanaik, a leading historian of Orissa, dates the origin of the applique works to 850 years back. The process of making the products remained unchanged for the past few centuries but during the last two to three decades, the applique products and their style have undergone a tremendous change. Darjis who make this craft for generations, now attribute two reasons for such change in the applique works. The first reason is the changing taste of the customers and the second is the commercialization of the products. Most of the Darjis are of the opinion that it is the customers who are primarily responsible for bringing about change to the traditional applique works. They are of the opinion that when the very survival of the applique work owes it to the tourists, it is rather the choice of the tourists that has imposed a change on the products and its making style. Customers want the products to be cheaper and attractive. (Mohapatra, 2005)

In the local slang, this technique of patching cloth design is usually known as “*Chandua*”. There are several products that have evolved around the rituals and the ceremonies of the annual chariot festival. There was further development and progress to improve the market and increase the product range for the craft. The village itself is small laned street with shops on either side of the road selling their products. The streets are kaleidoscope of colors and products. A wide range of *Tarasa* - banners, *Chandua*-canopies, *Chhattri*-umbrellas, animal puppets, wall hangings, covers for shrines, parasols, bags, pouches, cushion covers and lanterns. *Samiana* or canopies and *Chhattri* - umbrellas carry the most appliqué techniques of the utmost artistic skills. These crafts are mostly inherited, comes down from family to family. Pipli appliqué technique mostly uses cut patches of cloth which are then designed usually in flower, birds and animal patterns. They then are sewn into bedcovers, cushions, lamp shades, etc. The colors that are usually used are the four primary colors: black, white, red, and yellow but over time other colors have been introduced to enliven the craft.

Pipli Appliqué formed the backbone of Orissa’s craft industry initially but over the years they had fallen into decline until recently it found its way back to popularity by catering to a wider array of customer needs. Usually casement, suede and velvet goes in the making of Pipli appliqués with women acting as the main designers of the work while the men merely involving themselves in the cutting of the cloth stylistically. There has been a lot of demand for Pipli works and one of the major sources of income for these artisans are the Pipli appliqué lamp. A lot of effort goes in the making of something that looks really simple and stylish. There’s a lot of cutting and sewing involved apart from the embroidery and mirror work that goes into the making of a lampshade.

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Figure 4. Canopy made for temple decoration using Pipli craft



## Process of Making a Product

Pipli lampshades are intricately made and the time taken to put up a lampshade is entirely dependent on the complexity of the pattern. Usually a smaller sized lampshade takes about a day but sometimes the bigger pieces with more intricate workings of patterns and designs take up about two to three months.

The designing of the lampshades begins with a simple stenciling of the size of the lampshade required and then cutting the shape out on a cardboard paper. The stencil outlines are then traced out neatly over the cloth. The important thing to note is the artisans' need to preserve the cloth because they believe in minimal wastage and try to rescue and recycle as much cloth and material as possible. The traced outlines are then cut onto many identical layers of cloth which then are bundled together. This makes it easy to store and use them when required. Lampshades usually make use of a coarse and low cost material cloth onto which the appliques are then machine stitched in simple and decorative patterns. Then the artisans make use of wooden or iron rings to mould it into the shape of the lampshade. And once the cloth is stitched onto it the embellished mirrors are stacked onto it using simple stitching process. Many artisans even add borders and other forms of embellishment to enhance the beauty of the lampshades. These lampshades are usually prepared in bulk because they are extensively used during festivals. But since they have even picked up a market in many cities, they are constantly in demand. This has meant a steady means of employment for many men and women in the town of Pipli. Amazingly, in lampshades alone, over 1000 designs and patterns are available. This coupled with the fact that they produce the most serene ambience has ensured that these lampshades won't go out of trend for a very long time.

A growing demand for Pipli art, especially by foreign tourists has resurrected this previously neglected cottage industry. Machine stitching has also caught up with the artisans of this town which is a proud achievement for these workers. But the people of this town are mostly proud of their handcrafted achievements because that is the purest way of keeping their art heritage alive.

These lampshades are skillfully stitched onto the base cloth or embroidered as necessary. Craftsmen use straight stitch, blind stitch, satin stitch or buttonhole stitch for attaching the pieces of cloth. Some-

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times they also make use of decorative stitches and mirror work for more elaborate pieces. Characteristic style of the Orissa appliqué involves three dimensional patterns made by folding of the upper piece of cloth into triangles and attaching them to the base. While there has been very little change in the use of motifs, there is a trend towards greater experimentation in colour for non-ceremonial items such as bags, cushion covers, bed sheets etc. Appliqué items are also being used in combination with other crafts to produce composite products. An interesting new use is the superimposition of appliqué on grass mats and used as partitions. From grand sanctified ceremonial items in prescribed colours and designs, to small souvenirs and utility products for an urban dweller, the craftsmen of Pipli have mastered the art of creating the most attractive objects from simple pieces of cloth.

### Traditional Color Palette

The applique work in its colourful best is the most prominent in the cloth covers of the three chariots of the presiding deities in which they travel every year during the Rath Yatra or the chariot / car festival. As per the tradition, the color scheme of the three covers is predetermined – the chariot of Balabhadra known as Taladhwaja has cloth covering of bright green and red. The cover for Subhadra is known as Padmadhwaja, the chariot of Lord Jagannath is called as Nadighosha has cover of bright red and yellow. The significance of the colors in craft plays a major role in describing the importance of the deity.

- **Black:** Even though many religions and cultures have considered black as inauspicious it is considered sacred in Odisha as it depicts Lord Jagannath.
- **Red:** Red indicated sensuality and power. It is used auspicious occasions as a sign of marriage and prosperity.
- **Yellow:** Yellow is the color of happiness and peace and is associated with sandalwood powder which is offered to deities in the state.
- **Green:** Green is associated with fertility and nature.

### HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE

Though certain dates are unknown to any scholar of History, it is believed that Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra is more than 5,000 years old dating back to Harappan Age. It is said that Shankaracharya, the great philosopher and saint of 8th-9th century India established 4 Mathas or shrines in all 4 corners of the country.

Puri Rath Yatra is considered as a spiritual Journey. Rath Yatra at Puri Odisha is originally a Hindu Festivity yet enjoyed by all and doesn't have to do anything with entirety of Hindu Religion alone. It is said to be the symbolic of spirituality and journey of Atman or soul from material existence to the abode of God. It is described in scriptures that body is the Ratha and soul is the charioteer which ultimately leads one to super soul, god after a long journey. Thus, Rath Yatra at Puri doesn't have only a ritualistic relevance but also a symbolic significance to spiritualism.

In Hinduism, Lord Jagannath literally translates to "Lord of Universe." Every June or July Rath Yatra Festival, also called Car or Chariot Festival takes place to commemorate journey of Lord Krishna from Gokul to Mathura.

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*Figure 5. Horses decorated with Pipli appliqué for religious ceremony*



### **COMMUNITY BUILDING AND LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

This small yet vibrant lane with just one main road showcases all the products made by the artisans; there are smaller lanes that branch out where the artisans have small workshops along their residences. The place is flanked by tourists and travellers who stop by to purchase the Pipli products. There are about 70-80 shops in all, there are about 2 crafts man along with 3-4 helpers who also act are sales and marketing persons for the craftsman.

As read in the history, the Pipli village was formed by a group of Darjis or tailors who were appointed by the king of Puri to supply appliqué work adorned textiles to the temple for prayers and decorations. These were also used for the temple rites and rituals. Craftsmen created canopies, umbrellas and banners that are traditionally associated with the temples of Odisha, especially Puri.

The community has two large divisions namely the Mahapatra's and the Maharana's. As the craft grew and gained recognition the two groups settled near the city of Puri. This settlement then grew into

**A Case Study on Pipli Craft of Orissa***Figure 6. Banners carried during religious processions*

a small village. Immigrants from neighbouring villages, towns and states came and settled in and around Pipli village. The population graph shows Pipli is multi religion. Both Hindus and Muslims reside with peace and are cordial with each other. There is a peaceful environment in the village. They celebrate all the festivals together. Since last decade there has been a positive change that has brought the communities closer and creating a stronger bond. Inclusivity by not just religions but also among the genders has been inculcated.

The most senior artisan of the village started the trend by teaching the applique craft to boys and girls of neighbourhood. This small hobby gradually found many takers and more and more families started showing liking towards the crafts. The neighbourhood had several Muslim households and the craft kept improving and developing with time and practice. Government too initiated support and funding through centres that taught the skills to women and other minor religious groups of the village. The students undergo training and are paid on daily basis with minimum wages to learn the craft. This project is a part of 'Learn Also basic health care awareness, cleanliness drives are associated with the learning centres to promote and inculcate sensitivity at grass root level.

The community development to create opportunities as well as social inclusion especially for minorities has been successfully done through the craft of – Pipli. This initiative has further received support from the Government of India through – Learn and Earn Scheme.

A simple tool of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has been helpful to bring this association of artisans and community. This holds significance for the minority community and its inclusivity in community.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on. Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. Once these growths needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level called self-actualization. Every

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Figure 7. Pipli appliqué work done for the instruments played during religious processions



person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization. The five models (McLeod, n.d.) include:

1. **Biological and Physiological Needs:** Air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep.
2. **Safety Needs:** Protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.
3. **Love and Belongingness Needs:** Friendship, intimacy, trust and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. Affiliating, being part of a group (family, friends, work, community, society).
4. **Esteem Needs:** Which Maslow classified into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige). Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity.
5. **Self-Actualization Needs:** Realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. A desire “to become everything one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1987, p. 64).

**A Case Study on Pipli Craft of Orissa***Figure 8. Master craftsman displaying his craft work***Community Building Through Craft Training and Forging Inclusiveness**

The approach benefits and creates an environment where the women and minority communities can participate. The aim through the craft development and teachings is to create better life style, inclusiveness and acceptance. Pipli appliqué craft has been a source of livelihood for the artisans for decades. Through the religious connect and significance that has a high influence on a sense of acceptance. Community building and inclusiveness is built through learning and practicing the craft that was prevalent among the selected few nominated artisans of the village. As explained in the initial part of the chapter the craft was exclusive to a particular community and religious strata of the village. Over last few years through collective efforts of artisans and government it has been popularized among minority of the village.

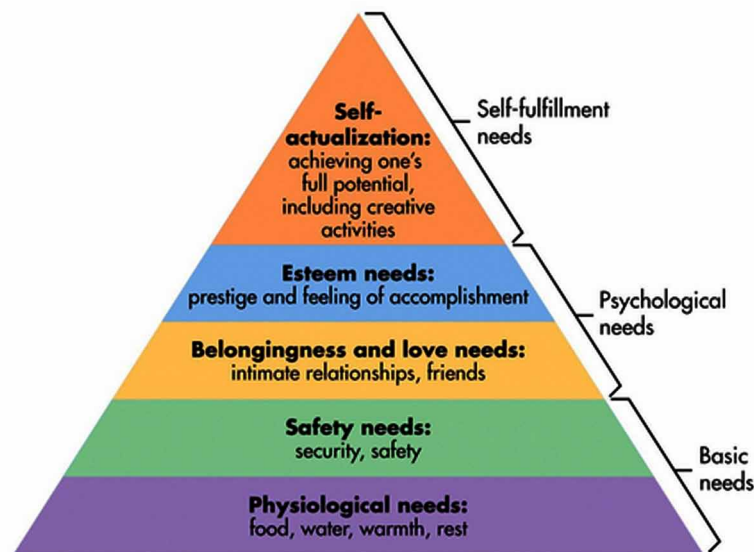
A major step by a local artisan Mr. Jabbar Khan in last 2 decades has finally started to bear the fruit. He is the first Muslim artisan of the village who was guided by a master crafts man against all the norms of society. Since then there has been no looking back. Mr. Jabbar Khan now has set up his own training

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Figure 9. Students and mentor with the Pipli appliqué Craftsman during the research stay in Orissa



Figure 10. The Maslow's hierarchy of needs



center and a production workshop. This facilitates the learning for several students – especially for the minority communities and the women of village.

India as a country and Orissa here for the specific case study shows that it has the advantage of being demographic dividend along with strong diversity in religion. Harnessing the demographic dividend and diversity through appropriate skill development efforts provides an opportunity to achieve inclusion and productivity within the country by the communities and also a reduction in the global skill shortages. Large scale skill development is thus an imminent imperative.

**A Case Study on Pipli Craft of Orissa***Figure 11. Mr. Jabbar Khan at the workshop*

Financial security and prosperity are the key constituents that bring together various strata of society together. The approach also envisages that the skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities. India is in transition to a knowledge-based economy and its competitive edge is determined by the abilities of its people to create, share and use knowledge more effectively. This transition requires developing workers into knowledge workers who will be more flexible, analytical, and adaptable and multi skilled.

Skill up gradation, education and credit availability are important factors that act as key ingredients for change. The artisans are bringing about a gradual shift in how the community views a job. It is no longer the privilege of a few but an opportunity to bring about change. The craft is a medium that creates inclusiveness through employment generation, fair wage creation and growth. The self-help groups can also seek intervention to help workers engage and enter growth-oriented sectors to become part of the larger network of market-oriented firms engaged in that sector. (Ministry of Minority Affairs, 2013)

The government schemes for employment generation have also propelled the movement. According to the Report of National Sample Survey Organization – 61st Round (2004-05) published in March 2007, self-employment in the Rural areas– in agriculture as well as non-agriculture – was the main statue for the Religious Groups. In 2004-05, 26% of Muslims and 35% of Christians depended on “self-employment in agriculture”, whereas in “self-employment in non-agriculture sector”, 28% of Muslims and 15% of Christians were involved. (Ministry of Minority Affairs, 2013). In Urban India, during 2004-05, proportion of Muslims households depending on “self-employment”, “regular wage/salary” and “casual labour” were 49%, 30% and 14% respectively, whereas for the Christian it was 27%, 47% and 11% respectively. In Rural areas, the Workers Population Ration (WPR) among the males of all ages in 2004-05 was the highest among Christians (56%) followed by Hindus (55%) and then Muslims were the lowest (50%). Similarly WPR for Females for Christians (36%) and Hindus (34%) was much higher than that for Muslims (18%). In Rural India, the unemployment rate was higher in Christians

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(44%) followed by Muslims (23%) and Hindus (15%). Similarly in Urban India the unemployment rate was highest among Christians (86%) followed by Hindus (44%) and Muslims (41%).

A majority of India workforce does not possess marketable skills which is an impediment in getting decent employment and improving their economic condition. While India has large young population, only 10% of the Indian labour forces – 8% informally and 2% formally have acquired vocational skills. About 63% of the school students drop out at different stages reaching class- X. Only about 3.1 million vocational training seats are available in the country whereas about 12.8 million persons enter the labour market every year. Even out of these training places, very few are available for early school dropouts. This signifies that a large number of school drop outs do not have access to skill development for improving their employability at one side and availability of 12.8 million jobs at the other side. As per estimates of 2011, in India there is a skill gap of about 244 million across 21 key sectors.

The high growth period combined with an effort to bring together communities for harmonious growth is the key focus through the self help group initiatives. This is a time to help the underprivileged to utilize new opportunity through Skill development and education. A large segment of the Muslim community is engaged in self-employment activities. Besides, a significant proportion, especially women, is actually engaged in home- based work. While some of these workers are engaged in sectors that have experienced growth, many are engaged in occupations/ sectors that are stagnant.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned points and the craft sector has been a key area of focus and recommendation to create prospects of social inclusiveness, development and growth. The objective is focused and works with minority communities. The initiative and its approach through the Pipli appliqué craft works towards conserving and updating traditional skills of minorities. Also establishes their linkages with market place. The craft also creates employment opportunities. Bringing inclusiveness through employability and work generation, better livelihood, developing the human resource and improving connect with the growing market. Working with the trained artisans who have exposure to market and have a consumer base creates

The chart below shows the growth and development of Pipli appliqué craft and eventually its impact on the social fabric of the village – Pipli in Orissa.

*Figure 12. Unemployment in rural Indian communities*



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### Components of the Scheme: Learn and Earn

The scheme –‘Learn and Earn’ scheme is implemented for the benefit of the 5 (five) notified minority communities under National Commission for Minorities Act 1992 (viz. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis). The scheme is beneficial and can be taken up anywhere in the country but preference will be given to organizations which aim at developing traditional skills of minorities with ensured market linkages and propose the programme for identified minority concentration districts / blocks / towns/ cluster of villages Under the scheme, priority will also be given to promote the traditional skills including arts and crafts practiced by minority communities and establish their linkages with the national and global market. However, the training for various modern trades having employment potential in the region shall also be encouraged. The scheme also works at employment for women through reservation for candidates. The focus of this programme is that the training should result in gainful and sustainable employment for the youth and generate employment opportunities.

The training self-help group supports the trainees by providing rental/lease expenditure including Computers, tables, chairs, workstations etc. The candidates are also given help in terms of stay rental, electricity, water, generator and other running expenses Lunch, Tea and Travel expenses during training. Financial aid during the learning process helps them focus on the craft and understand the nuances rather than worrying about the arrangement of meals. Significant changes in behavior and a comparatively peaceful mind has helped the community to forge a stronger bond with the trainees of the minority community.

The training center itself is a community center itself where all the activities are planned to forge a stronger sense of commitment and acceptance of all the members. Financial assistance to trainee’s i.e. Boarding/Lodging of outstation trainees at the learning center which also acts as a residential facility for the trainees for three months and a trainee stipend of Rs.1500 (about 22 USD) is provided. The benefit will also be entitled for monthly stipend @ Rs.750 per month (about 12 USD)

Figure 13. Chart showing the flow of activities and events



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### **PIPLI CRAFT CLUSTER: INTERVENTION FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING AND A COMPARISON OF FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS**

The training of Pipli craft that involves the minority community aims at upgrading the skills of the minority youths in various modern/traditional crafts depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which can further help them earn them suitable employment or make them suitably skilled to go for self-employment. The engagement of artisans with self-help groups and welfare organizations has been beneficial for the community of Pipli village. The training of craft has been established with the capacity to mobilize minority community, particularly minority women.

Through the continuous support and encouragement from the local artisans along with the financial help from the Government of India the craft has emerged to be a leading source of livelihood for the community in Pipli of Orissa. Every year about 200 women from the minority community are being introduced to the craft. They are also improving the lifestyle and sustenance for the people. The artisans are building stronger bond with these learners. This in turn is helping social inclusiveness and community building.

A craft practice that has brought community together by simply extending its boundaries and including people from all communities is an example that could be followed by many. A small village is setting up an example which breaks boundaries of religion, caste and gender. This is an example that follows the teaching of the God himself – no differentiation and an open invitation to learn and grow. This may seem to be a small amount in comparison to the minimum wages that are accepted worldwide but it has the potential to bring significant changes in lifestyle and self-belief.

Referencing within the Maslow's hierarchy pyramid (Maslow, 1987) there are significant changes that are helping to fulfill social inclusiveness by this small scheme centre at Pipli village.

Financial support and aid has helped improve life and livelihood of the lesser privileged and economically back ward stratum of society. The learning center itself is a space for people coming from the neighboring villages to learn the craft.

- The availability of a training centre that is clean, safe and hygienic is a huge motivation for learners. Many students at such centers may not have seen a roof on their heads. It fulfills the basic Physiological needs the needs of air, water, food, clothing and shelter. The amenities required for the survival of human. Since there is a sense of community and the learners are together there is an emotional connects along with the safety of the individual, environmental and emotional safety and protection. Being together with same age group is also an added benefit.
- The centre not only focuses on teaching these skills but activities like cooking, having tea and having some recreational time together is also necessary to bring together the people. It brings a sense of camaraderie among individuals. The Social needs for love, affection, care, belongingness, and friendship are established through these training sessions. The interaction during the training period and post training placement creates strong connections and bonds that facilitate the sustenance of inclusiveness in society.
- **Esteem Needs:** Once the trainee has earned the living and become an independent individual it creates a sense of self- respect, confidence, competence, achievement and freedom. There is also credibility for being part and completing a significant training that will empower the individual. There is recognition, attention and admiration from peers and seniors which is a huge boost to the confidence.

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- **Self-Actualization Need:** The need of self- growth and contentment is at later stage. The urge to be better than what one was today. Desire for gaining more knowledge. The self- actualization needs are never fully satiable.

## CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

India as a country is rich with its crafts and culture. The vast and young population of the country is also an added strength when looking at the future where these could be the potential designers, manufacturers, artisans and consumers. There are hundreds of crafts that are practiced and several others that are diminishing due to non –availability of finance, design intervention, dis-interest of new generation to name a few. The Crafts Council of India in effort to list down all the crafts carried out extensive research and documentation of all the crafts that are practiced in India. The website lists down 91 crafts that are practiced just in the state of Orissa. India has 29 states and each state has its own unique crafts / textile and art form that are practiced for decades (Crafts Council of India, n.d.). Each craft has its own environment and socio-cultural background. The case study could be used as a model study that could benefit the communities of those regions.

The activity to involve student community in the process is to bring grass root understanding. The young learners are the future designers of this country. Right exposure, interaction and understanding the crafts, artisans, socioeconomic factors that affect community may bring the inclusiveness between the designer and the craftsmen. This is also an opportunity to step in the shoes, try hands on and gather valuable experience. The visit and project conducted with the artisans and community of Pipli by the author and students at Pipli in Orissa brought forth several learning and gave opportunity for bringing more developments. This was also an opportunity for the young designers to connect with the future workforce.

To conclude the chapter there are a few key learning's that are listed as below:

The craft practice and production promoted the following in significant manner:

- **Engage the Minority and Youth in the Village Community:** Inclusion of the minority, underprivileged and young people as meaningful contributors in the social and economic aspects of community building is a significant and plays a vital role in the growth and development. Engaging these has several benefits and prepares a strong reservoir of skill based individuals. It provides avenues to become socially conscious and engaged entrepreneurs who bridge economic and cultural differences. This could further help to build confidence and gain business experience while working with professional artists as mentors and instructors. The trainees are encouraged to participate, learn problem solving and create high quality products. This is helpful to tap their intrinsic creativity.
- **Promote Interaction:** The craft is a community project. Right from its historical significance it shows that the craft developed for the religious purpose and the village itself was dedicated for its preparation. Coming together as community is therapeutic. Today, there are millions of people all over the world who are lonely because it's forgotten to understand and live in a commune. In any craft that is practised at home, from generation to generation, everybody's roles are defined. It becomes like a community activity which today is like watching a film. There is a sense that all of it is coming together. It's all so cyclical, everything is planned. Because a craft activity of that

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village is so important for its nourishment that if it is not sustained, the next generation will lose touch with their roots. It's because of the craft that the community is together and it further needs to grow because had there been a community there would not have been craft.

- **Promote the Power and Preservation of Craft:** When artisans and the people around them come together and are involved in the design, creation, and upkeep of the craft, they develop a vested interest in ensuring that the craft continues to play strong role in the development of the community. There is a true sense of “ownership” or connection to the craft and its practitioners. The village itself then is a better place to live, work, and g. The residents’ feelings of respect and responsibility for the place bond them to that place and to each other. No project or scheme can work if the community is not involved. Involving community to come forward and embrace is the most significant change that is desired. As the trainees develop and learn the craft they are encourages staying involved throughout the improvement effort so that they become owners or stewards of the craft as it evolves.
- **Increase Participation:** Participation of the entire community to and openness to be inclusive. The annual Jagannath Chariot festival is an ideal platform to create connections between people. This is especially effective as this is a period of great social, ethnic, and economic diversity. The craft and the festive atmosphere itself is such that it stimulates the creative juices of its citizens in shaping and uplifting their community’s self-image. The craft has made people believe good living and communal harmony is possible. With a strong focus of employment generation, this creates a commitment towards each other. The understanding that design intervention is always important but it has to be done in a context of the craft practice without losing out on its vocabulary. The applique craft of Orissa has this as its unique identity and significance. The support from the Government of India to work with minorities and improve on their social and economic class has lead to “professionalization”. The ‘Learn and Earn’ scheme is one such example of financial and technical support that the government wants to extend for the development of these communities. Participation in cultural activities (as opposed to spectatorship) connects people to each other and to their community institutions, providing pathways to other forms of participation. Thus, crafts and culture can create opportunities for expression, community dialogue, shared cultural experiences, and economic development. Within the arts, there is a vital yet lesser-known field of practice that strives to develop cultural understanding and civic engagement. Community-based arts practitioners bring members of a community together to solve problems, build relationships, and get involved in ways that rebuild and grow together. The government schemes are funded to find a way to upgrade and improve economic conditions, while respecting the aesthetic, economic, and cultural fabric of the community. While practicing the craft and popularizing it through these project based interventions there is always a thought that most valuable of all – exclusivity and aesthetic of the craft will be lost. It is seen that appliqué craft of Pipli may lose its sense of delicate hand work and replaced by machine work which makes it look like a factory made product. This has worked in favor of Pipli so far and has helped it develop economically and socially. The aim to bring community together and be responsible for the growth and development that promotes employment and efficiency while preserving the community’s vision of itself. Working closely with the artisan community and understanding individual and community values, feelings, and aesthetics makes sense—and it works.

**A Case Study on Pipli Craft of Orissa***Figure 14. A local artisan displaying a product using Pipli craft**Figure 15. The students along with mentor during the visit for Pipli for the research*

- The case study of Pipli can be a leading example of community building and inclusiveness for the minorities. Though the case presents positive sustenance and development there are limitations when comes to implementing the same process for other such community projects. India has 29 states and the number of crafts in each state varies from about 10 to about a few hundred. The documentation and aligning all these crafts and art can add value the community. Since the geographical and ethnographic differences are vast within the country a direct implementation may not be effective. Rather an approach with modifications to suit the community will be effective.

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### KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- Balabhadra, Subhadra:** Younger siblings of Lord Purusottam Jagannath.
- Chandra:** Hindi word meaning moon.
- Darjis:** Hindi word for a tailor.
- Kalinga, Utkal:** Ancient names for state of Odhisha in India.
- Lord Purusottam Jagannath:** Lord of universe.
- Mahapatra's, Maharana's:** Sub-caste in Hindu religion.
- Nadighosha:** The cloth covering of Black and Red color for the car festival.
- Padmadhwaja:** The cloth covering of yellow and red color for the car festival.
- Queen Gundicha:** Mother of Lord Purusottam Jagannath.
- Rahu:** A mythical demon who devours the sun.
- Ratha Yatra:** Car Festival held to celebrate for deities.
- Seva:** Hindi word for service.
- Sudarshan Chakra:** The spinning, disk-like weapon.
- Taladhawaja:** The cloth covering of bright green and red color for the car festival.