

ABSTRACT

The art and craft of sub – Himalayan Darjeeling region is predominantly a religious art, which through the centuries has communicate the faith and consummate of monks, their philanthropist and the local people. The major religions thus acknowledge the Hinduism and Buddhism. The religions and art of the Sub – Himalayan Darjeeling is derived from those of northern and central India and remains closely federated or integrated to them, but the isolation , the geographical hard ship and the splendor of the area have given its beliefs and the culture which expresses them a grandeur and mystery of their own. In addition, the Sub – Himalayan Darjeeling was open to influences from other parts of Asia, including China and from Tibet. Art is the visual expression of impression and is the result of some intense experience which the artist tries to communicate to the spectator. The traditional Indian art had attained a higher degree of excellence at a very early period and specimens produced by artists are truly marvels of human natural thought and skill. Traditional art also represents an outlet of expression, that is usually influenced by culture and which in turn helps to change culture. As such the art is a physical manifestation of the internal creative impulse. The Himalayan region is unique and diverse and a repository of a wealth and cultural resources. The population of the Sub-Himalayan region has generally conserved the traditional cultural identities.

There is need to assess that how did communication and transportation system improve the life style of the people who living in sub-Himalayan region. How the modernization is affecting the traditional cultural and social system of the areas. The ideas of art and craft are intrinsically associated with the ideas of traditional thought. However, there was a unique creativeness to such traditional mentality which evolved around the religious, social and economic frame, making attempts to flourish the new creativity and idea.

To understand that the generation of relative seclusion of the valleys amidst the high mountain ranges has also helped nature a multiplicity of cultures with their distinctive arts, architecture, traditional knowledge and ways of life. The traditional arts and crafts of Sub-Himalayan track are among the most interesting phenomena in the world. This region displays a whole range of cultural features or combinations. A very interesting aspect of traditional art and craft in sub-Himalayan region is that it is highly realistic.

To understand the fine artistic sensibilities of the people are pretty much evident in their works. The expression of people's attitude in the form of traditional art is truly fascinating and helps us to analyze the journey travelled from previous to present day. The traditional art played the most significant role in the societal change that accompanied the economic restructuring of the Sub-Himalayan track. More intensively in the early period of Sub-Himalayan track through institutions such as the Buddhist monastery and guild in changing social and economic context dominated by trade and commercial activities. Here is one important thing that the puranic religion introduced the temple as the super ordinate institutional means, both as the centre for worship and as an innovative focus of socio-economic political and cultural integration.

Himalayan art not only represents the religio-aesthetic aspirations of the various ethnic people that inhabit it, but it also reflects their innate desire and concern for the Himalayan eco-system in its entirety. The very inter-relation between the emotive objectiveness and the physical environment, between the internal feelings and the external ambiance in the artistic creative process has been fundamental to the traditional arts of the Himalayan region since the primitive times.

There is need to assess that how the traditional art and craft is an effort to present an overall view of the creative process of the people through the ages to ignite sense of dignified

self consciousness, identity, and affinity with the Himalaya and polychromatic culture that they have inherited. There is also need to discuss this relationship is even more pertinent today than ever, when we tend to lose our mooring with the inheritance for modernism, seeking solace in synthetic amusements, which can only dope us. Therefore there is dire need to reorient our thinking and re-discover to ourselves the solace and joy that our religio-aesthetic traditions have vouchsafed for us.

To understand the community and ritual art in Sub-Himalayan track on different manifestations through varied media such as pottery, painting, metal work, weaving and designing of objects namely jewelry and toys and also wooden craft. These are not just aesthetic objects but in fact have an important significance in people live and are tied to their beliefs and rituals. The objects can range from sculpture, masks (used in rituals and ceremonies), paintings, textiles, baskets, kitchen objects, arms and weapons and human bodies itself (tattoos and piercings). There is a deep symbolic meaning that is attached to the objects themselves, materials and the techniques used to produce them.

It is also analyzed the role of folk spirit on the traditional art and craft of Sub-Himalayan track. This is the art of people who are exposed to changing landscapes as they travel over the valleys and highlands of India. They carry with them the experiences and memories of different spaces and their art consists of the transient and dynamic pattern of life.

On the whole formal elements in Sub-Himalayan traditional art represent purely mental attitudes. This makes its largely introspective. The main concern of Indian iconography, even when it adopts certain features in ornaments, costumes, etc. from contemporary life, is religious and metaphysical. The question of environment in Indian art needs to be viewed on the context of the idea of *sadrishya* in Hindu and Buddhist aesthetic,

which does not imply naturalism, illustration in any superficial sense. According to the Hindu aesthetics, art is essentially conventional, for it is only by convention that nature can be made intelligible and only by signs and symbols that communication is made possible so that symbols play such a crucial role in Sub-Himalayan art. In this concern this study might usher a new aspect in looking at the traditional art and craft.