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INFLUENCE OF LEATHER PUPPETS ON UPCOMING TRENDS IN FASHION & TEXTILE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

India has always been considered as the land of vedas, sagas, cultural and the country is enriched with an aesthetic artistic philosophy. Different regions have their different methods of representing their art and culture. Dancing, singing, poetry and dramatic performances were and are considered as an



integral part of rendering the beauty of art. As the great philosopher Charles Dickens said "an art is more beautiful when it can be remembered". There is one integral and utmost important in southern India, which is one of the most natural and realistic form of art and that is Leather Puppetry. Leather puppetry is one of the most significant and beautiful

creation of human race through which people engrave their feelings and vision on leather and then deliver the same to world to inspire the view of various trends and dimensions of diversified culture and art. It started indeed with Vedas and historical announcements and with passage of time also turned into memento of decorations and ambience. The folds of leather puppets have changed its character from time to time, earlier it was a mode of entertainment, the characters from holy books to historical heroes and then performing several acts with moving pace of development where open theaters have turned into townships leather puppets have also turned into equipment of decorations of houses but the appreciation of this art has remained intact and appealing.

Art of leather puppetry has reach of its beauty almost in every part of the nation from Karnataka to Kerala from Orissa to Rajasthan the art has its own sphere and concepts but the beauty has remained splendid and breathtaking. It is a pertinent fact that puppetry requires utmost skills and dedication a puppeteer feeds all the essence of his innovation and creation in making a puppet because a puppet is

the mode through which a puppeteer expresses his art.

KEYWORDS : *Leather Puppets, Southern India, Togalu Gombeyatta, Fashion Industry.*

INTRODUCTION:

Puppetry origin in India can be traced back to the pre-historic period when man used to reside in caves. Famous author Coomaraswamy in his book refers to the Hindu Demi-God Vishwakarma as the “holder of every thread” and thereby hints at the analogy between the demi-god and the puppeteer, who attains the status of the former by giving life to his puppets.

Leather puppets a type of Shadow puppetry are flat figures which are made up of leather treated with natural chemicals to make it transparent. Shadow puppet figures are pressed against the white screen made up of cotton cloth with illuminating source of light behind it during the performance. The articulation between the light and the screen make silhouettes or colorful shadows, for the audiences who sit in front of the screen. These colorful shadows coupled with background music and narration makes it both visual & audio delight for the spectators.



Fig 1: Leather Puppets of Karnataka (Togalu Gombeyatta)

Being one of the ancient forms of art in India, it is derived from the traditional visual art performances like Chitra Katha or scroll paintings, Jadano Pat or rolled painting from Bengal, Chitrakathi or single paintings from Maharashtra, Yampat of Bihar and the Phad or panel paintings from Rajasthan. . This art itself is an amalgamation of various temple murals like Ajanta, Ellora, Lepakshi etc. and paintings such as Pithan, Madhubani, Chitrakathi etc. This tradition of shadow puppetry still survives in Southern India states of Orissa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Table 1: Leather Puppetry of India

S.No.	Puppetry Form	State	Attributes
1	Togalu Gombeyatta	Karnataka	Small Puppets, Colorful Shadows, Mahabharata, Ramayana, PanchTantra
2	TholuBommallata	Andhra Pradesh	Human Size Puppets, Colorful Shadows, Mahabharata, Ramayana
3	Ravanachhaya	Orissa	Black & White Shadow, Narrates stories only from Ramayana
4	TholpavaKoothu	Kerala	Small Puppets, Tamil Ramayana from Poet Kamba written 500 year ago
5	ChamdyachaBahuliya	Maharashtra	Colorful Shadows, Only perform Valmiki Ramayana
6	TholuBommallattam	Tamil Nadu	Same as of Andhra Puppets but language used in narration is Tamil

FROM TRADITION TO FASHION

Change is the imminent way of life it is the basic natural fundamental which impacts every aspect of life in one or another form. With continuous change in time and rapid growth and development, the concept of art has also widened its altitudes. There was a time when puppets were used solely to depict the famous epics, sagas and historical figures by way of performances in rural parts of the country, but with rising exposure to electronic media the art of puppetry has been gaining acknowledgement in urban areas too. Even in urban parts people started admiring the art of puppetry and the techniques by which puppeteers deliver various traditional and historical aspects. People from across the country were mesmerized to see the great stories and characters from epics engraved in the form of murals on temples, on piece of leather which can be touched and even kept along with themselves.

With rising demand and admiration of puppetry many manufacturer's realized the need of people in market, and innovated the idea of integrating puppetry on paper and other types of clothes apart from leather. Puppetry seems to be an emerging concept of future commercial market as it is a bower where tradition and modernization serve the same purpose and without any conflict. Even cinema industry also realized this phenomenon concept of puppetry and a movie name "PAHELI" was also made on the sole concept of puppetry.

**Fig 2: Still from Shahrukh Khan Starrer Bollywood Movie Paheli (2005)**

Also in order to extend the commercial scope and popularizing this glorious art form called leather puppetry, various characteristics of puppets like color combinations, styles of jewellery & clothes based on ancient paintings & murals, background motifs were introduced as a concept in women clothing styles & accessories, furnishing articles like curtains, cushion, decorative items like leather lamps, wall hangings, watches, even on basic day to day utensils and various other household articles some of these ideas can be observed in the below mentioned articles in the paper.

1. Decorative Items—Leather Puppetry is started making its presence felt in the various decorative items like Leather Lamps & Clocks engraved with patterns found on puppet, Wall hangings inspired by puppet characters (like fish, elephants), Paintings based on ancient puppets & scenes from epics, Clay Vase and Tea Coaster with various designs inspired from ancient leather puppets etc.



Fig 3: Decorative items like Clock, Wall Hangings, Tea Coasters, Leather Lamps & Vase

2. Furnishing—Furnishing industry provides unprecedented opportunity of growth for puppeteers who were looking for alternate option of employment, due to lack of interest amongst new generations in this ancient art. Curtains, cushion covers, bed sheets, pillow covers, carpets, quilts, blankets, table covers etc. are some of the possible articles which can get influenced with this art form & earn revenue in mass scale due to high demand from end users.



4: Furnishing items like Cushions, Table Covers & Wall Separators

3. Women Accessories— In a recent research study conducted by renowned market place across worldwide provides a clear picture of sharp increase in demand of women shopping accessories like

Purse, Jewellery, Sari, T-Shirts, and Dress Materials etc. In order to cater growing demand of consumers, manufacturers need to introduce new improved design & concepts to fulfill their requirements. Color combinations, design concepts, traditional jewellery designs of leather puppets can serve as exciting proposition to achieve modern style with traditional values, which will turn win-win condition for both end user & manufacturer.



Fig 5: Women Accessories like Dress Materials, Jewellery.

4. Kid Toys & Clothes – Introduction of bright colors & super-hero like characters (Hanuman, Bheem etc.) from traditional fables imitated using leather puppetry may lead to huge splurge in demand for related products like toys, kids room furnishing, clothes, school accessories etc. amongst kids. With the advent of electronic age, most of the children are aware of ancient characters from epics, through their favourite child shows like Chota Bheem & Hanuman. Thus, by introducing concepts from leather puppetry into this area can lead to another source of huge revenue for manufacturers.



Fig 6: Kid Toys & Accessories

CONCLUSION

On the basis of current market observations, it is found that articles based on leather puppetry concepts can act as major source of value additions to cater growing demand of traditional designs in fashion & textile industry in near future for consumers. Introduction of this ancient art form will not only let us explore the roots of our civilization, but will also act as a major source of trigger for inspiring latest trends for fashion & textile industry.

Leather puppets & its color combination can act as an inspiration source for dress designing, ornaments, home furnishing and accessories etc. This research will also support in reviving a slowly

dying ancient art form, by providing a new platform in current world, which can turn into a win-win condition for consumers who can follow traditional forms in modern way while providing breather to puppetry practicing communities.

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