



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

### CONTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GRAPHIC ART IN ODISHA BY PIONEER PRINTMAKERS OF ODISSA

Arts

**KEY WORDS:** Odisha Graphic Art, Development Printmaking, Graphics Contribution.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study is based on the discovery and emphasizes on history, contribution and development of Odishan Printmaking, Odisha culture, visual and aesthetic expressions. Of course this is an educational documentation of Graphic art in Odisha. The word Odishan printmaking sound very small, but it has a big history and character behind it. I am describing the printmaking trend that has been going on from the British period to contemporary world. The credit for nurturing Odishan Printmaking as an art goes to the legendary pioneers printmakers specially Ajit Keshery Ray, Bana Bihari Parida, D.N.Rao and Ramahari Jena. [2]

#### Introduction

An artistic expression that finds its roots way back to Indus Valley Civilization, Printmaking as an art has an interesting historical evolution. This medium of artistic expression was primarily used as a mean of mass communication or a mode of documentation. As per evidence, land grants records during Indus Civilisation were engraved on copper plates. People would etch on various surfaces like bones, ivory or wood- this was a craft of documentation at that time.

But contemporary **Printmaking in India** was introduced in the year 1556. Till that time, Prints were largely used for duplication. Chiefly used in Bible printing, posters, playing cards, manifestos and book covers using woodblock illustrations. It was more like reproducing images or texts. In last ninety years, Printmaking evolved as a medium of visual art. [1]

Like other States of India in Odisha also the Printing Process was first introduced by the Christians, in the later past of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, established a press at Srirampur in West Bengal.

It has become highly essential to print Bible areligious book by Christian and others religious leaflets in the large number to circulate Christianity among the Indian Peoples. This had created a situation to install and establish printing press to produce large number of religious documentation of Christ.

In the year 1822, the first printing press in the year 1836-37 at Cuttack to spread and the propagate Christianity in the state. The name of first press was "Mission press" this was the first Press in Odisha. [2]

#### Contribution and Development of Graphic Art in Odisha

The modern scientific advancement in Graphic Art has now offered plenty of artist to experiment with new techniques and evolve anew aesthetic vocabulary for self expression.

Ajit Keshari realized that the atmosphere in Odisha was not favorable for the development of Odisha Art, at that time there were no Art School or Art galleries and the educated people looked down upon artists as only drawing masters and nurtured the opinion that only unintelligent people, who proved to be failures academic studies, took to painting, Music, and Dancing.

He joined Kala Bhawan and comes across Lino and Wood cut prints by students. The dramatic opposition of a white design against an intense black background fascinated him very much and hence he started taking keen interest in Wood cut and Lino cut. He learned wood engraving from Mr. John Buckland Wright (a famous etcher and wood engraver in U.K.). He got a variety of interesting effects from Wood engraving which more interesting and satisfying than Wood cut.

In 1957, he started teaching wood cut and wood engraving to the students. But the Graphics Art at that time was conformed only to Wood cut, Lino cut and wood engraving as there was no

etching or Litho press in the Govt. School of art and crafts, Khallikote. The development of graphic art in the state was almost negligible. It had not gained much popularity nor created any interest for itself amongst the people in the State. But with the establishment of B.K. College of Art and Craft, Bhubaneswar, a significant change in outlook and attitude of the Artist and public took place, and all realize the vital aesthetic value of graphic art and recognized it as an important discipline of fine art.

Ajit Keshari was as naïve and restless in his endless exploration in to the new idioms or from of artistic expression which transforming to the students of Govt. School of Art and craft, Khallikote and other Artist.

Bana Bihari Parida as an Artist in the Reveneshaw College, Cuttack. His works are more bold and original which gave the flavor of soil. The mood of the composition is not one of violence or anger, rather the atmosphere is one quiet interest. It is clear that the Artist felt a deep sympathy for the mother land.

D.N. Rao was appointed as a lecturer at B.K. College of Art and craft, Bhubaneswar. He Developed and experiments in serigraphy which was now became very popular. It could inspire a lot of his students in this area of printmaking. Which gave a wider spectrum and opened up its possible application by the industrial house. Within these few years Serigraphy has become a House hold Industry in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar but its application to the creative field is tremendously lacking.

Ramahari Jena, a talented Artist, joined as graphic art supervisor in the Art Centre in the Bhubaneswar in 1986 and introduced Etching and Lithography. Under his guidance and Direction, graphic arts has now taken tremendous strides in its development and made excellent work.

Now with its growing interest amongst the people its heralds a very bright future for graphic art in Odisha. Graphic art in Odisha has now carved out a comfortable niche for itself in the national forum of Art. It can be easily evinced from the excellent work Produced by the Artist in the recent years. There is now increased awareness of the Art of printmaking and the Scope of its practice has considerably widened. Suddenly Artist all over Odisha are creating prints in sizeable editions of multiple originals of signed and Numbered Etching, Lithography, Serigraphy and Wood engraving.

Ajit Keshary Ray is cosmopolitan in spirit with a touch of restricted bohemianism. His entire ambition was to imbibe this spirit of the new wave and create a movement for the future of Odisha. Compositions rather in tin formats are free in their expression connotative appeal. These carry in them the reflective mood of Kala Bhawan and technological excellence available in Western countries. This group of works mirrors the inner resonance with delicate abandon. Perhaps this group of works is unique in the history of printmaking in Odisha and are not to be seen with the Younger generation of printmakers. In terms of Ajit Keshary's

development as an Artist, these wood engravings offer a decisive break with both western classicism and eastern revivalism of the immediate preceding years. They standing as buffer between his days of learning and days of experiment, represent a yearning for the change that was to come later in his Artistic personality. Realizing their importance as unique pictorial language in the Odishan context we have included them the body of the text.

To draw the context of modernism in Odisha and value their efforts as first attempts will be relevant. Modernism emerged under different circumstances in different language in relation to literature, and often meant different things, though its common thrust was anti-romantic and meant innovation of idiom that was essential to articulate the new perception of life in the context of industrialization and urbanization.

Cubism was at the root of the modern art movement in Odisha. It turned out to be a "scheme of theory" to traverse through cubism to be modern. Of course, the manner of color application in general was expressionist. Surrealism came much later, surly not in Khallikote. These Movements brought about a complete revolution in the language of art, taking Art from the ateliers and bringing it in direct contact with nature. The Artist gives form to nature and values of his time, with in there turn form him. The ideological, philosophical and formal concerns they reflect, the art historical moment in which they appeared. [2]

### Ajit Keshary Ray

Ajit Kesari Ray one of the predominant Trends of pre and post independence Indian art has been naturalism. Lyrical in quality naturalism in Indian Art in deep slumber, as if in permanent coma. However, from the mid sixties, Indian Artists introduced elements of physicality. Disappointment, anger, violence brought Body to the four in artist practices. The notion of artistic freedom voted 'nay' and crossed the zebra line. Yet, it was not radical enough to represent fund from the other. The other radical break had to wait till 1990. That is another story. Unlike the west where modernism is always seen in opposition to classicism. Indian Modernism cannot be understood in simple opposition to naturalism, realism or anything else. For reason other than artistic Indian modernism may not be seen in fundamental opposition to any preexisting condition.

The total grasp of his life story wood reveal in a fourfold panorama. He calls it panorama, because each has a multi-vision with bearing on the unfoldment of his life. There are the Dehradun days, the Shantiniketan the London and the Khallikote. Doon School has given him the discipline; Shantiniketan, rhythm, colour and creativity, London, a window to the world and finally Khallikote, the confessions of a Pursuit.

Ajit Kesari Ray was born in December 1922 in Sakhigopal in Puri District. He has five sisters and three brothers, with an arrogant army doctor father and a loving and brave mother. His father was captain kshetra Mohan Ray, mother Srimati Dei, his two sisters are doctors, his brother Brig. Keshari Ray was the first Kings Commissioned army officer in Orissa and his younger brother Ranjith Kesari Ray was the first railway engineer, trained in Jamalpur, Bihar and UK

He first studied in Stewart School, Cuttack, Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack and then his father, who was a competent surgeon and had worked under British surgeons during the first world war and a great admirer of Englishmen, wanted to give the best education to his children and hence sent him and his younger brother to the prestigious Doon School in the inaugural year in 1935.

Doon School, the first public school in India in Dehradun runs on the lines of Eton and Harrow Public School in England. He had a predilection for drawing and modelling but in the school at Cuttack there was no scope for the development of art as there was no Art School, gallery or art exhibition and no aesthetic sensibility amongst the people. For the first time there, He met Sudhir Ranjan Kashtagiri, a very talented and famous painter and

sculptor. He saw in his Studio and reproduction of paintings of Nandalal Bose, Abanindranath Tagore, Asit Halder and many other famous artists, and he was very impressed by their works and immediately resolve to become like them. Then he started to going to the art classes on every Saturday and Sunday under Kashtagiri's guidance, and also won many awards and prizes in painting in local exhibitions.

Eventually his father was convinced and soon he proceed to Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan. He took his admission in Kalabhavan in 1940. He came in close contact with the lake Nandalal Bose, Biswaroop Bose, Ram kinkir baij, Binod Bihari Mukherjee, Rabindranath Tagore and many important person and dignitaries there. He learnt the technique of painting from Mosoji, graphic art, i.e. wood cut and lino cut from Bisuda, Modelling from Kinkarda, out door studies from Binodeda and design, alpina and leather craft from master mahasaya's (Nandalal Bose) daughter Gouridi but black and white designs always attracted and fascinated him. A white design against the black background and he learnt the techniques of lino cut and wood cut under Biswaroop Bose. He was a master in wood cut and had learnt the technique in China and Japan. He did a few colour wood cuts under him.

The five year that is spent in Shantiniketan were perhaps the most profitable and happiest period of his life is spent with his teachers and friends and won his diploma with distinction in 1945.

Soon after finishing his training at Shantiniketan he joined in Sadul Public School at Bikaner, Rajasthan, in the month of July 1945. Then he goes to UK in March 1949 for his higher studies. then he completed his two-year course in modelling, stone carving, wood engraving and etching and came back from UK in March 1951. When he was in London he visited many country like Scotland, Switzerland, Germany at Sector and learned many. After that, Mr. Ray settled down in Cuttack many of his wood engraving got published in local papers and magazines at that time. Later on he was appointed as lecturer in painting in the [10:46 AM, 7/11/2018] Palab: Government school of art and craft Khallikote in 1957 there along with painting, he started teaching woodcut and wood engraving to the students. But the graphic art at that time was confirmed only two woodcut, lino cut and wood engraving is there was no etching or litho press in the school. In December 1966 Ray took over charge as Principal and at first he confronted with so many problems like hostel for a student, and a good environment class rooms for art school. In 1978, the degree course was introduced and the art School was raised to the status of college and he has also done many commendable works. In December 1980 he retired as principal of the college. In 1984, he was appointed as the vice president of the Orissa, Lalit Kala Academy and in 1994 he was appointed as the President of Orissa, Lalit Kala Academy.

Ajit Kesari is basically a painter but also he worked in Graphic and its sculpture. When he was in Khallikote he appointed to teach Indian painting. Mr. Ray is Cosmopolitan and in spirit with a touch of restricted bohemianism. His entire ambition was there was to imbibe this spirit of the new wave and create a movement for the future of Orissa.

Ajit Kesari Ray set of remarkable wood engraving is done during his London days he speaks to the artist's dexterity in handling the media these compositions rather in tiny formats are free in their expression, but nostalgic in their connotative appeal. These carry in them the reflective mood of Kala Bhavan and technological excellence in available in western countries. The group of works minors the inner resonance with delicate abandon. Perhaps the group of works is unique in the history of printmaking in Orissa. In terms of Ajit Kesari's development as an artist, these wood engraving sofa decisive break with both western classes and and eastern revivalism of the immediate preceding year. His early experiment had been mainly with wood engraving this period was also one of growth and self discovery in his own work the graphic art of Ajit Kesari Ray can be studied according to the various measure techniques he has practiced. [2]

### Bana Bihari Parida

Sri Bana Bihari Parida has lot of contribution to the field of Graphic art in Odisha. He is one of the thematic artist among the all other artist. His color wood cut could be comparable. He also worked in lithographic and Etching medium. Bana Bihari Parida was born in 1934 November in Cuttack, Odisha. He took Admission in Kala Bhawan (Santiniketan) in the year 1955, and he interested in Printmaking. In that time Printmaking activities were limited only on Wood cut, Lino cut and engraving in Kala Bhawan.

How ever with great enthusiasm he started learning under his guidance. He was fresh from Japan after getting trained in Japanese and Chinese Wood cut, Lino cut & Engraving etc. He completed his diploma, specialization in Printmaking from from Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan in the year 1960. During his studentship at kala Bhawan, on behalf of "Chitra Sammilani" a magazine entitled "Saptapani" on Art and literature was published. In the year 1960 an art entitled "Composition" of Sri Parida was published in a bicolor wood print and that was 1<sup>st</sup> wood cut print. He was delighted to see his 1<sup>st</sup> wood cut print published in the magazine and from that day he had decided in himself to be a Graphic Artist of Printmaker, for which he has personalize the Graphic art. While he was a student at Santiniketan, he had also developed some wood cut prints and Lino cut prints, but could not get opportunity to do some Etching and Lithography. He came back to Odisha in the year 1960 and he got opportunity at basic training collage at Anugul and he exhibited his art works inside Odisha, Nationally and Internationally.

He worked at lalit Kala Kendra for three years 1989-91. It is found from the state Lalit Kala Academy that the maximum Graphics print were purchased from him. His graphics Prints are high standard with good technical printing quality. He is the artist of Odisha, who has done maximum Graphic prints among all the artist of his time.

Bana Bihari Parida created an impressive oeuvre of colorful and black white imaginative works in Wood cut, lithography and Etchings medium is early experiments had been mainly with Wood cut and Wood engraving but he took up Lithography and Etching exploring each medium more intensively.

Through his works continue to be figurative or imagist, they consist of an association, in line and texture play and experiments through in space, in color Juxtaposition, In Line and texture play and in experiments through which he could discover for himself what could and could not be done. [2]

### D. N. Rao

Sri D.N. Rao was born in the Bhanjanagar area of Berhampur district. He is an artist of Different test and temperature in the world of Art. The man and women, the boy and girl of the remote village enriched with cultural heritage, while busy in dance, drama and music at that time the child Rao was also activated and hopes and aspiration came into mind. From his childhood Sri Rao created something new, which made him to think and opt for unique and different way from others so that he get praise and appreciation from many others even from all. Every lip will be opening with sweet words, of appreciation for him that was his ambition and feelings of his life.

His unique hidden artistic potentiality Sri Rao was boomed out in one remarkable occasion, Govt. School of Art and Craft located at Khalikote in the year 1968, to materialize the childhood aims of his life. On the year 1971, After completing the diploma course in Art. He come to Bhubaneswar and Joined as an Artist -cum- Photographer in the B.J.B. College then he joined the newly established B.K. College of Art and craft as a lecturer in the department of Graphic Art. At that time there was no such facility in the department and students are worked with Wood Cut, Lino Cut only. There was no opportunity for the teaching of Lithography and Etching work in the college. In the year 1990, with the dedicated efforts of Dr. Pathy the Litho machine was bought and installed in the collage, but the facility was not available to the senior students of the newly setup Litho machine.

In the request of Dr. Dinanath Pathy, Mr. Ramahari Jena was coming to the college sometime to discuss about the technical operations of the Litho machine and was giving demonstrations on Lithography to the students of the college. The Graphic section of the college was slowly and carefully built up by Mr. Rao's devotion to it His experiments had been mainly with Wood cut and Serigraphy. [2]

### Ramahari Jena

Ramahari jena born in a middle class family in Ghatakuri village of Aska, Orissa, he gave vents to his artistic bent quit early in life, leading a carefree childhood in his village, the child indulged in various forms of artistic & creative works, writing script for the street drama, holding plays in noon times in the back yard along with gaggle of noisy village kids. After matriculation got himself admitted into the Khalikote Art College. With receive inspirations from different source, he decided to enroll himself for higher studies in Govt. Art. College, Calcutta. He proceeded on a research grant in 1986 to carry on research in Graphics in Regional Lalit Kala Kendra, Calcutta. On his return from Calcutta he joined as Graphic supervisor as Rashtriya Lalit kala Kendra, Bhubaneswar.

In his hundreds of Paintings and Graphics, many of which have been highly appreciated by the discerning public and critics at various exhibitions and artist camp. With tonal involvement in his work Ramahari a busy life gathering plaudits in his stride. He won the state Lalit kala Acedamy Award in 1987-88 for Graphics and he has been the invitee representative in 2nd Bharat Bhawan Binnial of Contemporary Indian Art 1987 and 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Art Biennial, Bangladesh. He also the rare distinction of being the only Oriya and the youngest artist among 122 participants at "Nature and Environment", image reflected in Indian Culture heritage 1988-89, an exhibition held in Delhi on the occasion of the Neheru Centenary year.

Sri ramahari Jena had completed his Art education from Calcutta. Attempts have been made to present some thing on the artist Sri Ramahari Jena, who is considered as the shining star in the Art Orissa. After forty-three years, Ramahari Jena (Oriya Artist) win the National Award by Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi. for the year 1987. It is the strange that though there was never a dearth of talent, Orissa had. Never the one to be stuck in groove Ramahari shifted from watercolor to mixed media to pastel to Oil and finally Graphics. Slowly he restored to surrealism and his say through primitive, disproportionate human figure. Graphics for he was hurt to find no worthwhile achievement's in his field of national Graphic movement. His expertise in Graphics developed at Culcutta and the emerging textual quality in his work of art. After return Odisha he found a congenial place in Rashtriya Lalit Kala Kendra, Bhubaneswar and he worked in a free atmosphere. And practice Painting and Print both medium and he participated many National and International Art exhibition and he got National Award 1988-89, State Lalit Kala Academy Award, Eastern Print Binnial Award 1995 etc. also Awarded Research Grant by Lalit Kala Academy and Charles Wallace (India) Trust Award and studied Glasgow School of Glasgow, U.K.

With tremendous energy for work Ramahari today worked at Bhubaneswar and guided many young Graphics students down the intricate way of Graphics. He is happy for Odisha has recognition. [2]

### Conclusion

After a vivid discussion on the contribution of many artist of Odisha specially Ajit Keshery Ray, Bana Bihari Parida, D.N.Rao and Ramahari Jena and many artist, it can be conclude that our state Odisha, the accident Utkal of the Bharat is no longer in the darkness in the field of Printmaking.

The people of Odisha purchase this Printmaking keeping in mind that which color will suit of there wall and infector what will be the price of there art world. In India the print market as well as printmaking is not good accept some few artists.

Only few selected people are buying the work of art interior

decoration. I think the day when we will find every house holder are have in at last a single art work to decorate there house then also we can say "Art has been Appreciated". For that artist themselves has to be very aware of that. There are many artists who are making prints and who walking for personal interest. At present a numbers of Odishan artist have involved themselves in graphic Medium.

Odisha is developing as per with national status and position in the world of printmaking. The contributions of these eminent pioneers of the soil are land mark in the Printmaking in state.

If problem can be solved by getting enough studio facility and fine quality equipment's in abound on, definitely a new door will be open to the world Graphics in Odisha. If join hands together and contribution generously to develop and create further land markers in the field of Printmaking. [2]

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