



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

ODISHAN CULTURAL ARTIFACTS AND TRADITIONAL PACKAGING

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ABSTRACT

In typical Odishan folk way of life traditional packaging process and technique with decorative design produced several objects and wonderful packaging products of natural and metal materials which make Odishan traditional packaging something special and artistic. In rural Odisha, packaging process and skills are also known as work of art. Odisha as the home of art and crafts always provide rural artisans plenty of raw materials to produce artistic products for various purposes. The socio-cultural life of Odisha has influenced by traditional art and crafts from very ancient period. The rural artisans engaged in making various packaging products from clay, palm leaf, brass and bell metal and bamboo etc. Like other packaging process, the bamboo particles are popular for its high tensile strength and bamboo splits are woven to make baskets for various traditional packaging purposes.

In Odisha traditional packaging culture is an important factor to be considered. In the language, lifestyle, religion and other aspect of the culture always shaped the traditional packaging. Each traditional packaging of rural Odisha exudes of charm and originality of its own and pristine beauty that remain untouched by time. The beauty and charm of Odisha traditional packaging system mirrors a heritage in its past and present flowing into entity. The rural artisans of Odisha have increased their skills in traditional packaging with traditional and visual manifestations of Odisha folk culture. Since time memorial Odisha as the land of culture famous for its traditional art and crafts in its sociocultural way of life. Since ancient period the artisan groups have been producing huge varieties of excellent articles of utility and of traditional decorative values based on artistic quality and beauty. Since post a number of such decorative articles used for storage and packaging purpose by Odishan people in their Socio-Cultural life.

The most vital artifacts related to Odishan traditional storage and packaging purposes is pottery. Since ancient period Odishan pottery indicated the artistic heritage as well as development of culture. Traditional pottery making has been adopted as an occupation of a specific community. Making of different types of artifacts for storage and packaging purposes from clay is particularly the hard work of the Kumbhara Community in the rural Odisha. Most of these artisans are typical farmers while making such traditional crafts is their basic occupation. The artisans of rural Odisha collect required raw materials like Clay from nearby river bed or field and make different kind of attractive artifacts and products generally used for storage and packaging purposes in domestic and socio-cultural rituals.

Pottery making is a product of man's imagination and creativity of local artisans of Odisha living in the traditional agrarian society and influenced by their rituals, legends, ceremonies, myths, festivals, cultural traits and social institutions. The pottery products in Odisha are widely used for storage of foods, dried woods, cooking, liquid and in various festivals and religious rituals. In Odisha the artisans engage in the pottery work are popularly known as Kumbhara as the potter caste in rural areas. The word Kumbhara or Kumbhakarais derived from original Sanskrit term "Kumbha" means Pot. In Odisha generally, the potters prepare varieties of pots, vessels and domestic objects and articles for use in every day life which includes storing food and water and ceremonial as well as religious purposes. Some most popular artifacts for storage and packaging purposes in Odisha are as follows:-

- Large earthen pot with an opening is used for storing different food grains.
- Handi- a spacious pitcher basically used for storing and religious purposes.
- Kalasi- An earthen vessel is used for domestic purposes.
- Surah- An earthen vessel used for storing water.

- Kumpi- A close earthen vessel with a small opening on the top is used for saving money.
- Palama- A flat bowl-shaped saucer is used for domestic purposes.
- Small Kalasa- An earthen pitcher is used for religious and cultural purposes.

Palm leaf basketry is another well known handmade craft of Odisha used for storage and packaging purpose. In Odisha particularly in rural areas of Coastal districts palm leaf traditional baskets are made of in a very decorative and artistic way. The palm leaf baskets are mainly used packaging purposes in daily activities of rural life. The rural skilled and experienced artisans make a wide variety of designs from palm leaf for packaging purposes according to the requirement of the local people and market. The palm leaf products are durable and last for a very long time. Basically, the palm leaves are harvested during the month of April and May and left to dry under the sunlight. The dried palm leaves are stored safely from water contact. The dried leaves shaped with knife as per required size need for different size of basket and then these strips are taken for dying process. Different local colors used for decoration purposes. Some shaped palm leaf stripes are dipped into color water for multi-coloring, which gives very attractive look after weaved as baskets. The palm strips are arranged vertically and horizontally as per required size with inter locking each other. As the end process of basket making the artisans try with different thread for strength and enhancing the outlook of palm leaf product. In Odisha for storage and packaging purposes the palm leaf baskets are flexible and are easily deformed. Mainly women artisans are engaged in Odisha for making palm leaf baskets. For packaging purpose, the palm leaf baskets are done in a very typical traditional way. The palm leaf baskets in coastal Odisha are used for different purpose of storing grains and food products. Basically the palm leaf baskets are used for multi purposes as decorative items for storage containers and packaging requirement with some typical Odia local names. Due to use of different color of palm leaf baskets are very eye catching. Both for storage and packaging purposes the traditional palm leaf baskets are mainly woven by rural women artisans in the household. In Odisha the palm leaf basket played a vital role in socio-cultural rituals particularly for carrying food and sweets items to the relative's house during the time of marriages or packaging different gifts for the groom's family and the containers filled with varieties of offerings to give at family functions and in traditional rituals.

Similarly, the metal works of Odisha also played a vital role in traditional packaging system. The simple and decorative metal containers or boxes have been used in Odishan household since long period. The people who are engaged hereditarily in this traditional professional bell metal work are typically known as "Kan Saries". Different types of brass and

bell metal products have been used in our daily life for storage and packaging purposes. Both the brass and bell metal products, boxes and containers, utensils are also considered as assets of our family. The typical artisans of brass and bell metal work traditionally following two processes of production for these products – One, by way of casting in moulds and the second by constant beating to get the required size and shapes of different products and these metal products are used not only in our very day life but also in various traditional ceremonies, festivals, rituals and marriages for packaging purposes. For different types of packaging purposes in Odisha bamboo products are largely manufactured by the local artisans for everyday consumption as well as for rituals. Particularly for storage and packaging purposes several types of bamboo products. All these products fulfill the storage and packaging requirement of Odisha people and also useful in marriage ceremony and highly demanded during several festivals. As a fast-growing plant that is virtually indestructible bamboo is grown and available in most regions of Odisha. Most of the storage and packaging objects like baskets, food containers, pots etc. are made of bamboo. The rural folks of Odisha used to carry vegetables and other agricultural things grown by them to different places carrying in bamboo baskets. The designs of these baskets are very according to the type of vegetables they carry. Small measuring baskets, thickly woven are still being used in some rural areas of measuring grains. In some areas of rural Odisha bamboo baskets used for poultry birds, the birds are carried in loosely woven bamboo baskets specially designed for the purpose. Poultry products like eggs are also used to carry in small bamboo baskets. Even bamboo baskets are also used for storage and packaging purposes made in different shapes by local artisans of Odisha.

Generally, the poorer class people of Odisha used to keep their grains in large bamboo baskets plastered with cow dung. Both for storage and packaging purposes bamboo baskets of various kinds are used profusely by peoples for various reasons. The goods both agricultural as well as those categorized as minor forest produce are marketed in local village markets by carrying them in a bamboo basket. Agro-products and vegetables are collected and carried in bamboo baskets. In Odishan tribal areas women folk usually carry them and sell them either to small traders or local consumers. The pottery items are carried by tying them on both of a bamboo stick and are carried on the shoulder. Minor forest produce is carried in bamboo baskets. All these baskets are mostly thick woven and double weave type. Bamboo baskets are also associated with certain tribal rituals of Odishan tribes. In some primitive tribes during marriage the bride sits in a double weave bamboo basket and its lifted by her relatives to take her around the groom. The Tribal after fixing the marriage pay bride price to bride's parents. Such type of token gifts is necessarily being carried in bamboo baskets of specific design. Similarly, brass and bell metal pots, wooden boxes with fine engravings are important aspects of Odisha traditionally art of packaging. There are several households' articles made out of brass and bell metal for small packaging in different shapes and sizes. In some tribal areas of Odisha tobacco container is used as a handmade article to store and pack tobacco powder. Traditional crafts from bamboo have been made by silvering the bamboo stem into thin and flat strip woven or inter lased to make storage containers for paddy and carrying baskets. A typical Odisha lacquer ware is called "Joupedi " or nesting box sets made from lacquer. Trinket boxes in small sizes are traditionally a part of the bridal ornament packaging in Odisha. Bamboo craftsperson make the structure of using either bamboo or can and women apply successive layers of lacquer on it to create these attractive packaging and decorative boxes. For small and decorative packaging in lacquer collection of laces and its preparation for use in lacquer ware is an elaborate process lace is found on many species of trees in the forest areas of Odisha. Odisha lacquer

ware is distinct for its bold designs in comparison to the highly ornate works in other part of India. In Odisha traditional packaging has a major impact on the socio-cultural life of rural people. Local and folk cultural factors played a vital role in traditional packaging of rural Odisha.

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