



Patachitra

Naya is a quaint little village in West Bengal's Midnapore district. However, it is not an ordinary village. Around 250 patuas or chitrakaars or artists live there. These folk artists are painters, lyricists, singers and performers all rolled into one. They practise an ancient folk art called Pata Chitra. This is a type of storytelling using painted scrolls. The scrolls have stories painted on them and the artists sing the story as they unroll the scroll. This art has been practised since the 13th century.

Traditionally, such story tellers took their painted scrolls from village to village. In every village they unrolled the scrolls frame by frame and sang pater gaan or the story songs. In return for their performance, the villagers gave them rice, vegetables and money. Their stories included mythological stories and tribal folklore. Nowadays the artists sing of social messages and contemporary events as well.

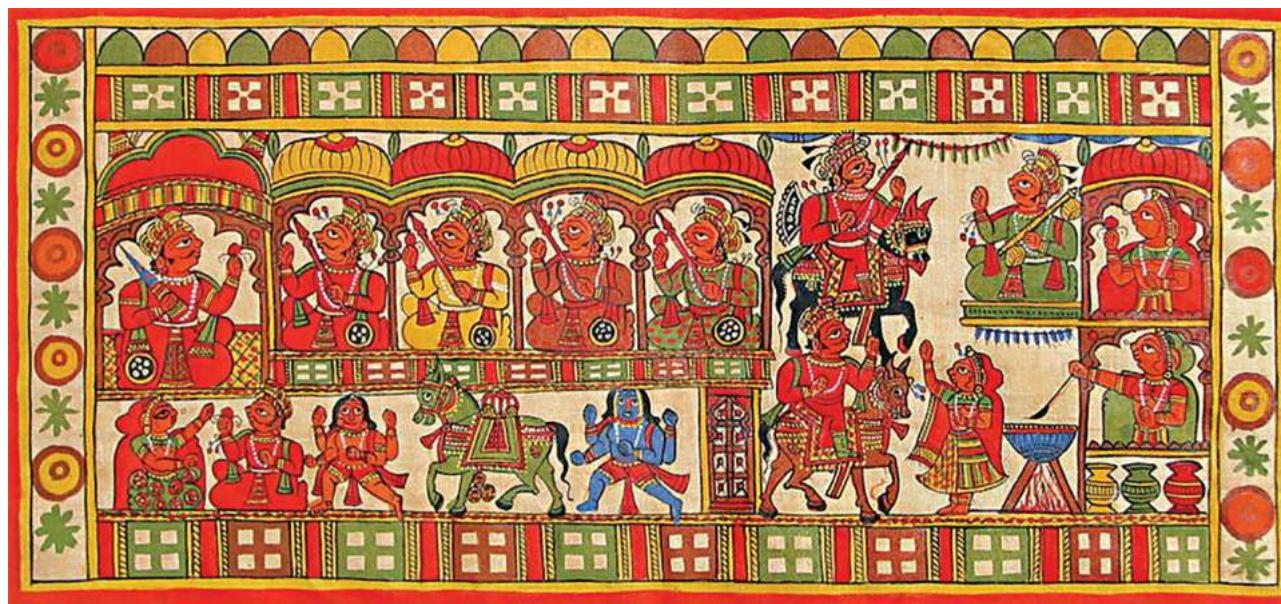
Over time, however, people lost interest in this art form and there were few artists and fewer listeners. To keep their art alive in the modern world, the patuas adapted their skills and themes to the times. An innovative step, they took to do this was to establish a patachitra village at Naya. Slowly, the efforts to revive their artistic heritage started paying off. Today, the patachitra art is flourishing again in the village, with village youngsters taking up the traditional art form as a passion and profession.

A traditional *pata* was painted on a canvas made of jute fibre. Now, it is made by stitching together sheets of commercial poster paper. The colours come from plants such as marigold, indigo, teak leaves, saffron and turmeric. They also use lamp black. The colours are mixed in coconut shells with the sap of the bael tree (wood apple) which acts as a glue. After finishing, a thin cotton cloth is glued to the back of the painting so that it will last long. Next, the completed scrolls are dried in the sun before they are stored in rolled up bundles.



Today the *patuas* make rectangular and square-shaped paintings of different sizes. Social messages like conservation of trees, female infanticide, child-trafficking and AIDS awareness figure in their paintings. They also paint images of traditional subjects, such as a cat eating a lobster or fish, tigers, rows of cows or white owls. The *patuas* today do not make too many long story scrolls. A few of them still sing their self-composed songs but only on demand.

The *patachitra* art tradition was traditionally passed down from father to son but today many *patua* women have also taken up the craft. Under an initiative 'Art for Livelihood', some of these women are leading local development.



Patachitra

Since 2010, an annual three-day festival *Pot Maya* has been held to celebrate the success of the local artists. Held in November every year, the festival exhibits modern paintings as well as scrolls dating back hundreds of years. At this time, the villagers paint the mud walls of their houses with colourful *patachitra* motifs and hang scrolls on ropes in the courtyards. They also clean up the surroundings and decorate the entire village with flowers to get ready for visitors. As there are no hotels in the village, the visitors stay in tents.



A display at the Pot Maya festival

During the festival, the quiet hamlet is transformed into a vibrant cultural hub where visitors can learn about the craft of *patachitra*. Several workshops are held, stories are told, and different types of *pata* artwork are displayed for sale. Musical and dance performances by well-known artists start in the evening and go on well into the night. The *patuas* hold demonstrations on natural colour extraction from sources.

Watching a *patua* singing gently as he or she unfurls the scrolls is an unforgettable experience. The play of light and shadow from the oil lamps on the soft colours and delicate imagery of the paintings is magical. If you are interested in traditional art and crafts, do visit this unique village. It will be a delightful experience in a beautiful rural setting.

A. Fill in the blanks choosing the words / phrases given in the box.

Midnapore folk art chitrakaars Pata Chitra painted scrolls unrolled

Naya is a quaint little village in West Bengal's _____ district. However, it is not an ordinary village. Around 250 patuas or _____ or artists live there. These folk artistes are painters, lyricists, singers and performers all rolled into one. They practise an ancient _____ called Pata Chitra. This is a type of storytelling using_____. The scrolls had stories painted on them and the artists sang the story as they _____ the scroll. This art has been practised since the 13th century.

B. Write the apt word for the given phrases.

1. The traditional folk art of West Bengal - _____
2. Annual festival to celebrate the success of local artists - _____
3. The other name of story tellers - _____
4. Conservation of trees, female infanticide etc.. - _____

C. Fill in the details of the mind map.



CHARACTERS

1. The artists of Naya are called_____.
2. These folk artists include_____,
_____, _____ and_____.
3. The number of artists_____.

SETTING

State -----

District -----

Village -----

SOLUTION

PROBLEM

This art form faded
over a period of time.

D. The process of making a Patta is in jumbled form. Read the sentences and number them in proper order.

- ❖ The sap of the wood apple tree acts as a glue.
- ❖ It is made by stitching multiple sheets of poster paper together.
- ❖ Finally they are stored in rolled up bundles.
- ❖ Plant-based colours and lamp black are mixed in coconut shells.
- ❖ A Patta is created by painting on a canvas.
- ❖ The completed scrolls are dried in the sun.
- ❖ Jute fibre canvas was used in olden days.
- ❖ A thin cotton cloth is glued to the back of the painting for long life.

E. Write a few sentences about Pot Maya festival.

PROJECT



F. Make a diary entry about your visit to a Science Exhibition.

G. Design a certificate, a badge or a medal for sports day.

CONNECTING TO SELF



H. Draw the pictures in the given boxes using the clues.

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- ❖ The snake is next to the owl.
- ❖ The owl is not next to the bird.
- ❖ The kite is on the right.
- ❖ The owl is between the snake and the kite.

Now where is the bird? _____

**I. Draw an envelope with the flap open without lifting your pen from the paper.
Indicate the numbers to show how it was drawn.**



STEP TO SUCCESS



J. Find their group name and write them in the blanks.

literary art martial art visual art textile art performing art

1. Kuchupudi, Bangra, Dandia, _____
2. prose, poetry, drama, novel _____
3. photography, film making, sculpture _____
4. Karate, Kungfu, Capoeira _____
5. weaving , embroidery, carpet designing _____

LEARNING LINKS AND REFERENCES



e-links :	https: www.indianholi-il-nadu/arts and crafts crafts of india - wikipedia.
Book :	The Complete books of Arts and Craft My Book of Art and crafts