



Surface Ornamentation In Cheriya Paintings From Telangana

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Abstract: Cheriya paintings, originating from Telangana, India, represent a traditional narrative art form dating back to the 17th century. These scrolls paintings, created by the nakashi caste, depict mythological tales and villages scenes across panels measuring up to 60 feet. Cheriya artistry involves intricate process using natural materials like khadi cloth, rice starch and natural pigments, showcasing motifs of Hindu deities, flora, fauna and floral borders. Despite its historical significance, Cheriya art faces challenges in documentation and preservation. The study on surface ornamentation in Cheriya paintings involves surveying artisans to understand their preferences regarding surface ornamentation on various products and consumer surveys involves a study of awareness and appreciation of Cheriya art. The thesis highlights the significance of surface ornamentation in Cheriya paintings of Telangana, revealing diverse opinions among artisans and respondents. The survey of Cheriya painting practitioners shows a deep admiration for the art's cultural heritage and storytelling tradition, with experienced artists balancing authenticity and innovation. There is a rising demand for Cheriya paintings, especially those with intricate ornamentation. Consumer surveys indicate appreciation for various artistic elements and varied perceptions of cost. While many are unfamiliar with surface ornamentation, there's a notable Willingness to pay more for it, suggesting its value enhancement. Overall, the findings underscore the enduring significance of Cheriya paintings, their cultural importance, and the potential for future adaptation and promotion.

Keywords- Cheriya Art, Nakashi art, Surface Ornamentation, Cultural Heritage, Telangana.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cheriya scroll paintings, a vibrant storytelling medium, date back to the Qutub Shahi rule (1625) in Telangana, India. These scrolls up to 60 feet long, are traditionally crafted by Nakashi caste, representing one of the earliest forms of audio-visual entertainment for village communities. The Nakashis use vibrant panels depicting scenes from Hindu epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, aiming to convey moral values and cultural stories to largely illiterate audiences. The scrolls start with deities Ganesha and Saraswati, symbolizing blessing for the craft. Each painting is segmented with floral borders and showcases popular motifs, including gods, fauna and intricate borders. The Nakashi family, particularly artist Dhanalakota Vaikuntam has kept the tradition alive through generations. Cheriya artists utilizes natural colours made from ground materials like seashells (white), lamp ash (black), and stones like Ingilikam (red). The cotton canvas is prepared with a paste of rice starch, tamarind seed gum and white mud for durability. Brushes from goat and squirrel hair and pencils for initial outlines are among the tools used. The preparation process involves several days of coating the canvas, sketching detailed figures and applying colours. Cheriya masks, depicting characters from scroll stories are created using coconut shells, tamarind paste and sawdust crafted for both

decoration and children's entertainment. Cheriya paintings serve as a unique blend of artistic heritage, cultural representation and storytelling.

AIM-

The aim of study is to enhance appearance of Cheriya paintings by incorporating surface ornamentation techniques on motifs and other details.

OBJECTIVES-

- To study the rich cultural heritage of Cheriya paintings through the incorporation of traditional themes, motifs and techniques.
- To experiment with surface ornamentation techniques while maintaining the authenticity of the art form.
- To add surface ornamentation to the artwork, capturing the viewer's attention and making the painting visually striking.
- To check viability and acceptance of Cheriya paintings with and without surface ornamentation.
- Product development with incorporation of surface ornamentation on fashion accessories.

NEED OF THE STUDY-

1. Urgent need of the documentation on Cheriya paintings due to lack of available literature.
2. Experimenting with the traditional art while maintaining the authenticity of art form
3. To improve marketability about surface ornamentation on Cheriya paintings.
4. Studying surface ornamentation in Cheriya paintings serves artistic purpose, contributing to appreciation and marketability of this traditional art form.

LITERATURE REVIEW-

- **Introduction to Cheriya Paintings in Telangana-** Cheriya village in Telangana's Warangal district preserves the distinct heritage of Cheriya paintings. These narrative scroll paintings are akin to India's other traditional art forms, such as Pattachitra and Warli, and date back to the Nakashi art style believed to have Mughal influences (Baral et al., 2016). Known for vivid depictions of epics like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Krishna Leela*, the scrolls, up to 60 feet in length, narrate stories with rich colors sourced naturally from stones and plant-based ingredients, like "Gaddalu ranga" (stone pigments) and a khadi-based canvas. Artisans from the Chitrakara community in Cheriya carry forward this legacy, with contributions from key figures like D. Vaikuntam. In 2007, Cheriya received a Geographical Indication tag, honoring its historical and cultural importance.
- **Sustainable Design in Cheriya Craft and Art Forms-** Abhinav et al. (2020) explore Cheriya's sustainable design principles, particularly its use of natural colors derived from elements like lamp soot, seashells, and turmeric. Black, white, yellow, and other colors are produced by grinding stones, with tree gum as a binding agent, ensuring that Cheriya paintings remain both eco-friendly and long-lasting. As traditional colors are costly and sensitive to mixing, contemporary artisans may use pre-ground stone colors from the market while maintaining Cheriya's natural, sustainable essence.
- **Adaptation of Cheriya Art into Contemporary Accessories-** The preservation of Cheriya's essence in modern formats, such as keychains and smaller decor items, keeps the art relevant. Artists like D. Saikiran Varma continue the tradition, using natural colors and traditional khadi bases for more compact applications, finding new audiences and uses while honoring the style's roots in Telangana's rich heritage. Despite challenges due to technological changes, artists are committed to adapting and preserving Cheriya art in functional formats (Das, 2020).
- **Cheriya's Heritage and Modern Challenges-** Singh (2021) highlights the efforts of the Nakashi caste artists in Cheriya village who strive to sustain their craft in the face of decline, with only a few families continuing the tradition. The pandemic

caused significant economic strain, prompting workshops and collaborations to teach Cheriya painting online. Initiatives from organizations like Craft Council of Telangana have played a vital role in helping artists reach broader audiences and secure their livelihood, ensuring the legacy of Cheriya continues.

- **Surface Ornamentation in Garment Design-**

Surface ornamentation, as Verma (2022) notes, enhances the appeal of textiles through various embellishment techniques such as embroidery, laces, and beadwork. This timeless practice enriches garment aesthetics and adds value, often relying on hand-crafted methods. These decoration techniques allow designers to create unique, culturally resonant garments.

- **Ornamentation Techniques in Fabric Art-**

Kumar (2023) discusses the artistic depth that embellishments bring to textiles, emphasizing how these techniques infuse garments with cultural and visual richness. From sequins and beads to threads and buttons, these materials add charm and depth to clothing, transforming it beyond mere fabric to a representation of creativity and tradition.

- **Techniques of Fabric Embellishment-**

Kiron (2021) describes fabric embellishment as a decoration technique used across many art forms, including ceramics, wood, and textiles, to enhance visual appeal. The tradition of ornamentation spans centuries, employing methods such as embroidery, applique, and beadwork to add intricate detail to garments, combining craftsmanship with modern technology to produce high-quality decorative finishes on an industrial scale.

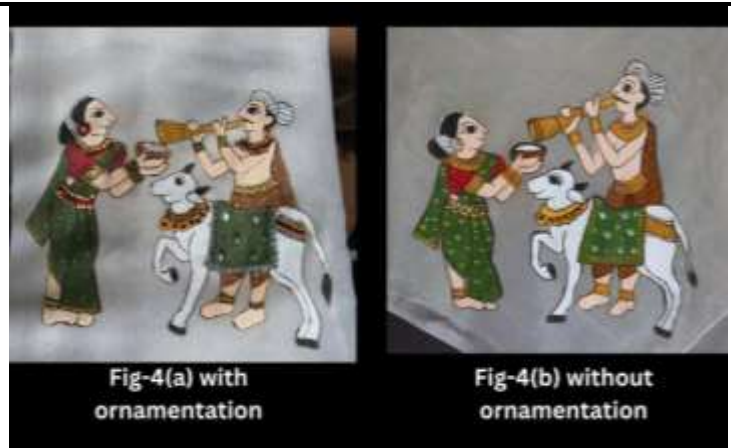
METHODOLOGY

Research Design- This research emphasizes the traditional themes and techniques of Cheriya paintings, exploring the potential of surface ornamentation to enhance marketability. Conducted in two phases, Phase 1 involves product development, while Phase 2 assesses acceptance through surveys.

Phase 1 (Product Development): Focused on experimenting with various materials (e.g., sequins, beads, tassels, gold colour) to create multi-dimensional effects while preserving Cheriya's authenticity. This phase involves developing products with surface ornamentation.

Fig-1(a) to Fig-5(b) Articles with and without surface ornamentation





Phase 2 (Acceptance Survey): Utilized purposive sampling to interview 5 Cheriya artisans and snowball sampling to survey 50 fashion industry participants, assessing the market's perception of these ornamented pieces.

Sample Size-

The study targets a sample of 55 individuals, consisting of 5 Cheriya artists and 50 fashion industry professionals, aiming to assess market perceptions of Cheriya paintings with surface ornamentation.

Data Collection-

Tools for Data Collection-

- **Quantitative Survey:** A self-constructed survey questionnaire was designed to evaluate consumer preferences and knowledge about Cheriya paintings, incorporating consent forms and participant information sheets.
- **Data Collection:** Google Forms were employed to distribute two separate surveys for artisans and fashion industry professionals, from March to April 2024.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with frequency tables and graphical representations (e.g., pie and bar charts) for responses from artisans and fashion industry respondents.

Results and Discussion

- **Artisan Insights on Cheriya Paintings-** Cheriya artisans demonstrated an affinity for the storytelling elements of Cheriya art, with 60% favoring its storytelling tradition and 40% appreciating its cultural heritage. In terms of artistic style, 80% preferred preserving Cheriya's traditional motifs and colors, while 20% favored fusion with contemporary styles.

- **Challenges for Artisans-** Maintaining traditional materials poses significant challenges for 40% of artisans, while another 40% find it difficult to integrate innovative styles into Cheriyal art. Only 20% face challenges sourcing traditional materials.
- **Future of Cheriyal Art -** Most artisans (75%) feel a pressing need for cultural awareness to preserve Cheriyal's legacy, while 25% noted a shortage of skilled artisans as a threat to the art's survival.
- **Appreciation for Surface Ornamentation-** Surface ornamentation received mixed reviews, with 60% appreciating the added texture, 20% uncertain, and another 20% indifferent. Responses were particularly positive for keychains and necklaces, suggesting market potential for these items.

Consumer Awareness and Acceptance

- **Awareness and Exposure -** Among respondents, 61.2% were familiar with Cheriyal paintings, while 28.6% had never heard of it, indicating opportunities for outreach and education. Furthermore, 50% had seen Cheriyal art in person, and 30% had encountered it online.
- **Preferences in Cheriyal Paintings -** Survey results showed preferences for colors (73.2%), intricate detailing (58.5%), motifs (46.3%), and borders (31.7%) as central elements in Cheriyal paintings
- **Perception of Cost -** A significant portion (60.4%) perceived Cheriyal paintings as costly, suggesting that cost may impact market viability for this traditional art.

Evaluation of Product Acceptance with Surface Ornamentation

Product-Specific Preferences- The study explored consumer preferences for items such as keychains, coasters, necklaces, scarves, and canvas pouches with and without surface ornamentation.

- **Fig-6(a) and 6(b) Keychains:** Willingness to pay more for ornamented versions was high, with 38% prepared to pay ₹200.



Fig-6(a) and 6(b)

- **Fig-7(a) and 7(b) Coasters:** Ornamentation had less impact on willingness to pay, as a functional surface was preferred.

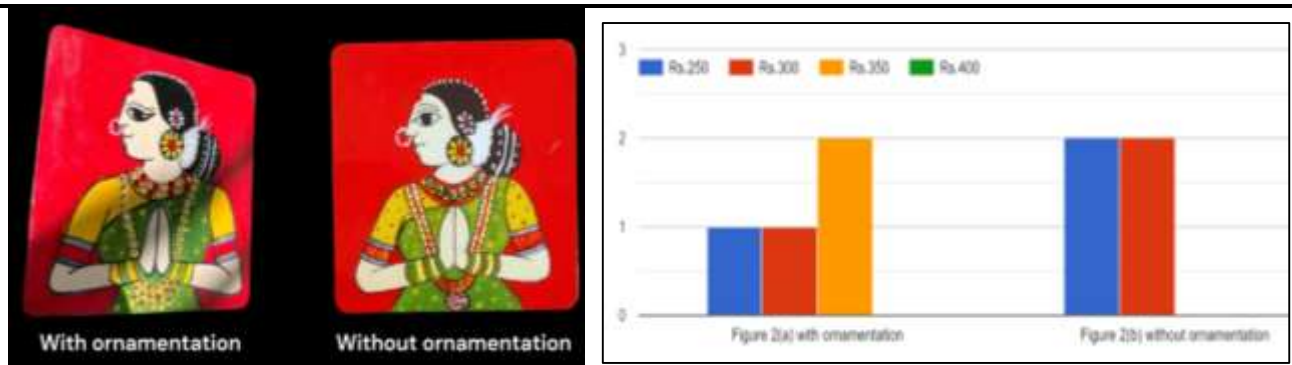


Fig-7(a) and 7(b)

- **Fig-8(a) and 8(b) Necklace Sets:** 32% of respondents indicated they would pay more for ornamented pieces, reflecting a positive perception of added value.

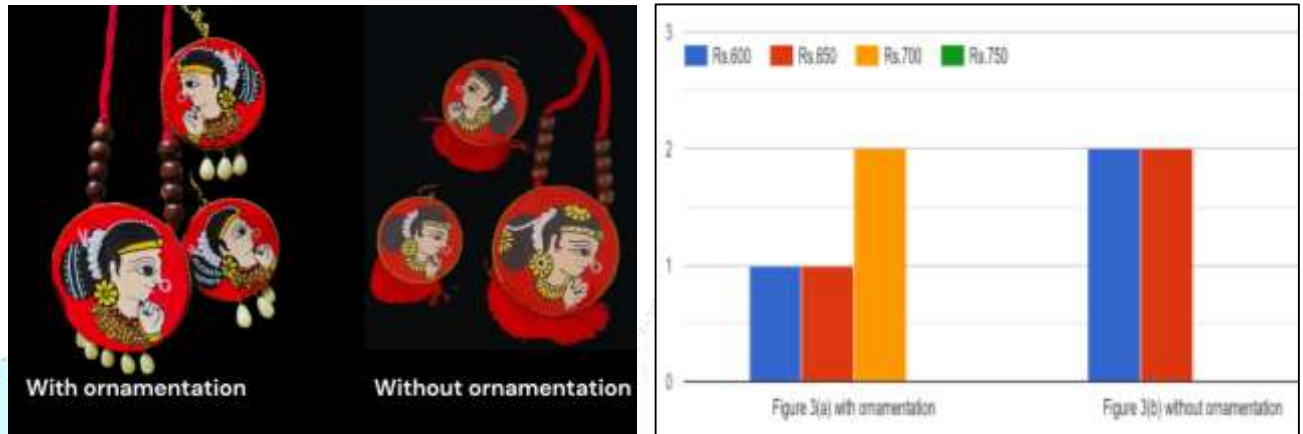


Fig-8(a) and 8(b)

- **Fig- 9(a),9(b)Scarves and Pouches Fig-10(a), 10(b):** Ornamented versions received favorable responses, though there was an emphasis on maintaining affordability.

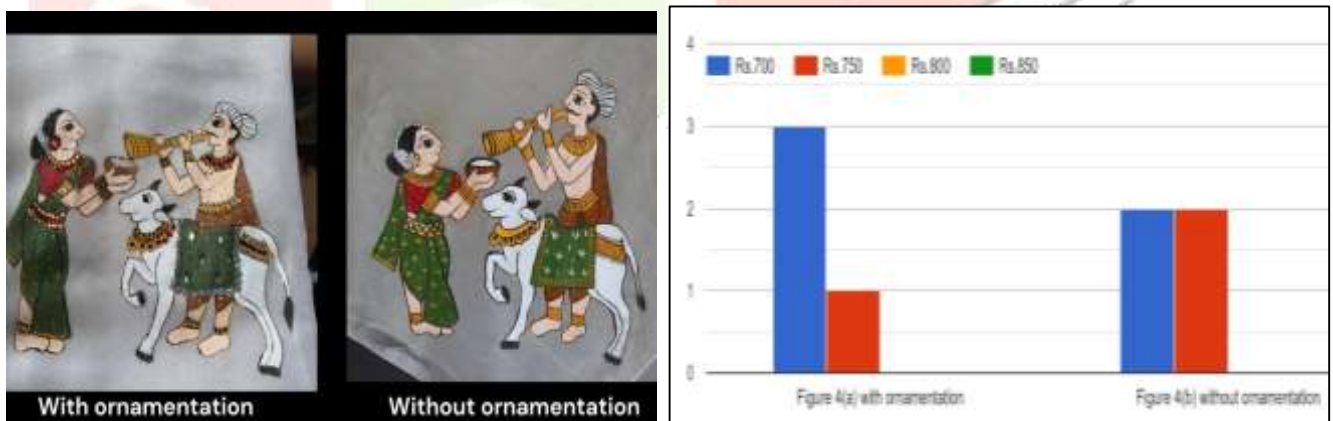


Fig-9(a) and 9(b)

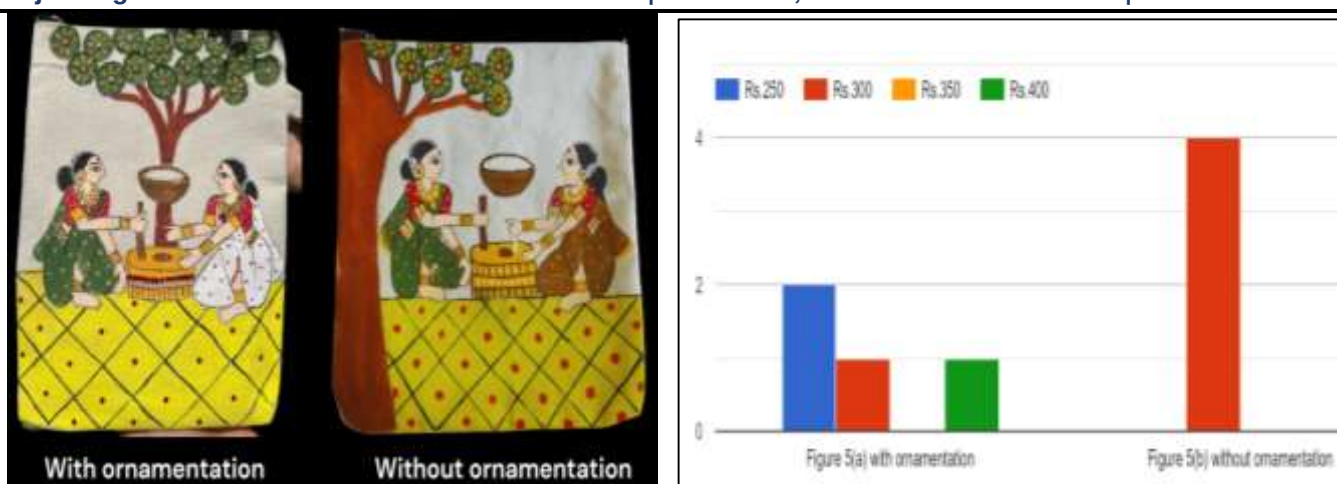


Fig-10(a) and 10(b)

Impact of Ornamentation- Overall, 36.7% of respondents were willing to pay more for Cheriyal paintings with intricate surface ornamentation, indicating market potential for these enhanced products.

Summary and Conclusion

This research on surface ornamentation in Cheriyal paintings of Telangana underscores the intersection of traditional art with contemporary enhancements. Key findings include:

- **Craftsmanship Appreciation:** Surface ornamentation has been positively received, though it is essential to maintain the art's authenticity.
- **Artistic Resilience:** Cheriyal painting demonstrates adaptability to modern tastes, while preserving its narrative tradition.
- **Community Engagement:** Expanding awareness and engagement is critical for sustaining Cheriyal art.
- **Affordability and Accessibility:** Cost-effectiveness remains a priority, ensuring Cheriyal paintings remain accessible to a broader audience.

Conclusion

This study highlights the enduring value of Cheriyal art, revealing a strong appreciation for both its cultural heritage and surface ornamentation enhancements. Positive responses to mixed media techniques indicate a forward-thinking approach among artisans and consumers alike. Balancing innovation with tradition will ensure Cheriyal paintings continue to inspire and thrive in Telangana and beyond.

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