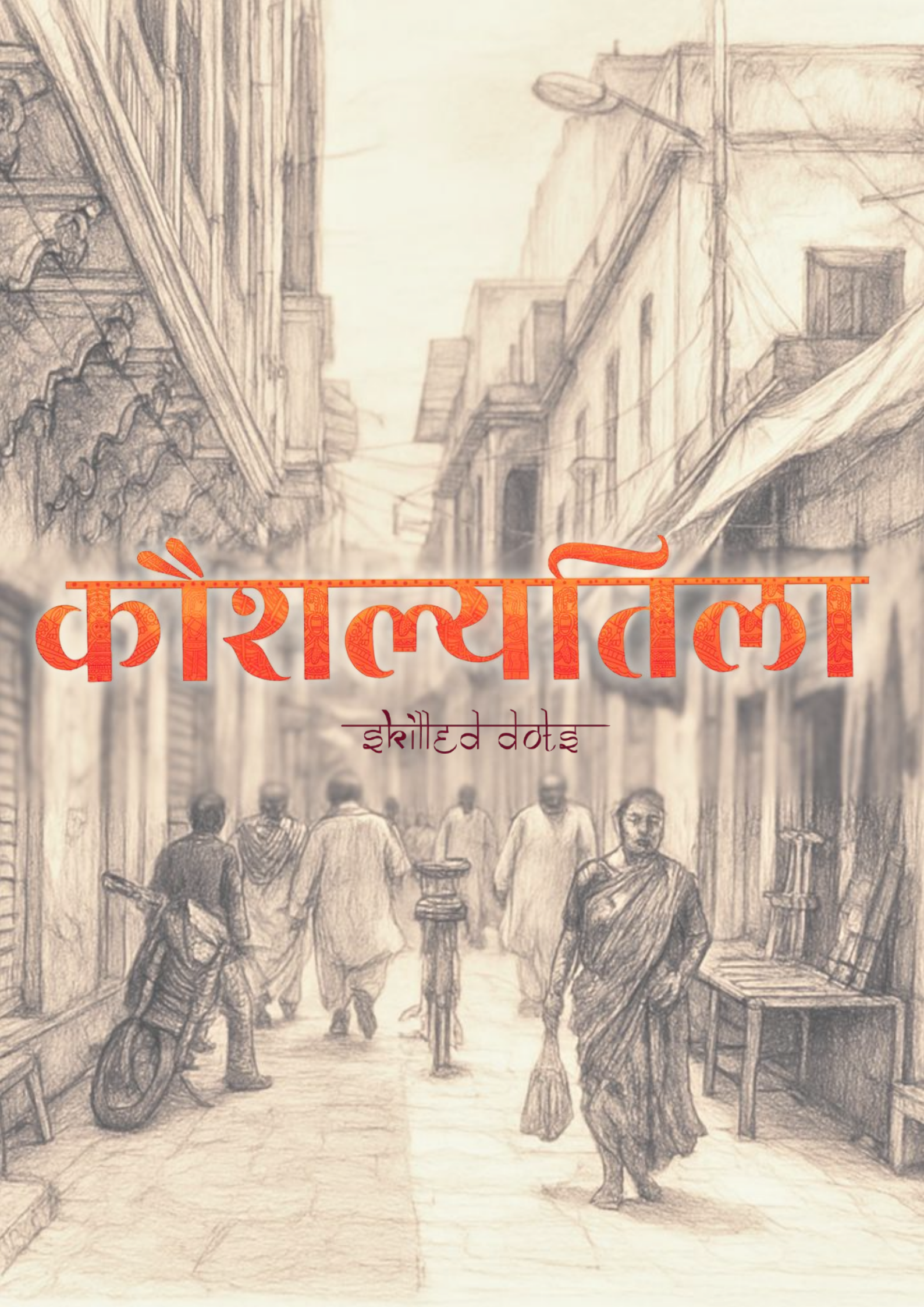
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Research on the craft of Tikuli of Patna, Bihar

National Institute of Fashion Technology
Patna

Craft Research Documentation

Department of Fashion and lifestyle accessories 2023-27

Research on the craft of Tikuli of Patna, Bihar

कौशल्यतिला

skilled dots

Submitted by :
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Neha Chhetry, Riya Agarwal, Saket Singh, Yuvashree Dellimohan

Under the mentorship of the Assistant.Prof. Ragini Ranjana, NIFT Patna

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DECLARATION

We, **Aastha, Aditya Abhishek Mohanty, Neha Chhetry, Riya Agarwal, Saket Singh and Yuvashree Dellimohan**, hereby declare that this Craft Research Document named "कौशल्यतिला" submitted to the department of Bachelor of Design(Fashion and lifestyle accessories) of National Institute of Fashion Technology as partial fulfillment of the requirement for Craft Research Documentation is originally carried out by us under the guidance of our faculty mentor, **Assistant. Prof. Ragini Ranjana, NIFT Patna,** as part of our academic curriculum.

This document has neither been previously submitted for a degree/diploma by us nor by anyone else, except as fully acknowledged within the text of this documentation report. All sources have been properly cited, and appropriate credit has been given to contributors.
We want to assure you that the work submitted is original and has been undertaken with full academic integrity.

Signature of Jury

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP & ORIGINALITY

We hereby declare that this document titled “कौशल्यतिला”(Kaushalya Tila) has been prepared and compiled as a part of our academic submission under the guidance of our Mentor, Assistant Professor. Ragini Ranjana and Dr. Vinayak Yashraj (Prof) , Assistant Professor. Bishwajeet Kumar, Fashion & Lifestyle Accessory (F&LA) Department, NIFT Patna.

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ABSTRACT

This craft research project , commenced on June 9, 2025, by the department of Fashion and Lifestyle accessories (F&LA) 2023-2027 of NIFT Patna, explores the traditional Tikuli art form of Bihar, India, a centuries-old craft known for its intricate glass paintings that blend vibrant colors with mythological and natural motifs which is now a craft done as paintings.

The study comprehensively documents the historical, cultural, social, and ritual significance of Tikuli, emphasizing its role in Bihari heritage. Fieldwork involved in-depth interactions with skilled artisans, including Siddhi, Shabina, Manisha, Neha, and Kiran, to understand the meticulous processes, materials, and techniques involved in creating Tikuli artworks. Engagement with Padmashree awardee Ashok Kumar Biswas and a visit to Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan (UMSAS) provided valuable insights into the craft's traditional practices and contemporary adaptations.

A market survey was conducted to evaluate public awareness and the craft's commercial viability across traditional and modern marketing channels. The research highlights the evolution of Tikuli's designs, its socio-cultural importance, and the challenges faced by artisans, such as resource limitations and market access, alongside opportunities for global outreach. By documenting artisan profiles, quality control measures, and the role of NGOs in supporting Tikuli clusters, this study aims to preserve and promote this culturally significant craft, fostering its sustainability and recognition in contemporary markets.

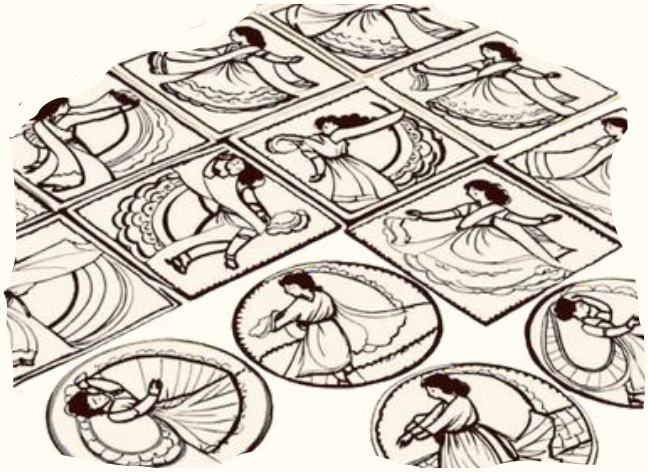
CONTENTS

LIST OF IMAGES 01-02
GLOSSARY 03-04

०१

INTRODUCTION TO BIHAR

01. ABOUT BIHAR 07-08
02. FESTIVALS AND CULTURE 09-10
03. CRAFTS OF BIHAR 11
04. ABOUT PATNA 13-14
05. OUR JOURNEY 17-20



०२

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PROVENANCE ABOUT TIKULI

06. ABOUT THE CRAFT 24
07. ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF TIKULI 25-32
08. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE 33-34
09. MAPPING TIKULI CRAFT CLUSTERS ACROSS PATNA 35-39

०३

TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS OF TIKULI CRAFT

10. RAW MATERIALS 43
11. TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT 44-45
12. PROCESS 48-50

03

DESIGN AND AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

13. EVOLUTION OF TIKULI DESIGNS 43
14. DESIGN AND MOTIFS 54-56
15. COMPOSITION , COLORS AND INFLUENCE 57-58

04

PRODUCTS AND PACKAGING

16. PRODUCTS & PRODUCT QUALITY IN TIKULI CRAFT 61
17. PACKAGEING OF TIKULI PRODUCTS 62
18. PRODUCTS IN ONLINE MARKET AND PROMOTION 64

05

ARTISANS OF TIKULI: SKILLS AND STORIES

19. DAILY LIFE OF AN ARTISAN 67
20. PROFILES OF ARTISANS 70-75
21. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES 77

06

MARKET DYNAMICS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

22. MARKET ANALYSIS 81-84
23. SWOC ANALYSIS 86-88
24. CHALLENGES 89
25. CONCLUSION 90
26. OUR TEAM 91
27. BIBLIOGRAPHY 92-93

LIST OF IMAGES

Fig 1.1 About Bihar : Patna Saheb (source: https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/bihar/patna)
Fig 1.2 About Bihar : Nalanda university (source: https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/bihar/patna)
Fig 1.3.1 Chhath puja celebrated in The Ganga river (source: https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/festivals)
Fig 1.3.2 Prasad Thali or Chhath Puja Thali (source: https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/festivals)
Fig 1.4 Traditional cuisine thali of Bihar (source: https://www.timesnownews.com/lifestyle/food/news)
Fig 1.5 Tikuli painting in saree by Artisan Siddhi Kumari
Fig 1.6 F&LA batch 23-27 NIFT patna, Bihar museum with Associate Director Ashok sinha
Fig 1.7.1 Day 6 of our CRD journey at Shri Ashok kumar biswas's cluster
Fig 1.7.2 Day 7 of our CRD journey at Shri Ashok kumar biswas's house
Fig 1.7.3 Day 8 of our CRD journey at Artisan Shabina Imam's house
Fig 1.8.1 Day 9 of our CRD journey at Bihar museum
Fig 1.8.2 Day10 of our CRD journey at Patna college of arts and craft

Fig 2.1 Tikuli painting in MDF by Artisan Neha kumari
Fig 2.2 Original tikuli bindi from mughal era
Fig 2.3 Tikuli painting found in Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan
Fig 2.4 Ashok kumar biswas recieving Padma shree from the President of India
Fig 2.5 Padma Shri medal of Shri Ashok kumar biswas
Fig 2.6 Tikuli painting made in 1979 by Shri Ashok kumar biswas with gold enamel
Fig 2.7.1 Tikuli painting made in 1980 by Shri Ashok kumar biswas depicting Lord Krishna
Fig 2.7.2 Tikuli painting made in 1982 by Shri Ashok kumar biswas , samples for Asian games
Fig 2.7.3 Tikuli painting made in 1980 by Shri Ashok kumar biswas depicting Lord Krishna
Fig 2.8 Tikuli painting made in UMSAS guided by Artisan Puja kumari
Fig 2.9 Tikuli painting on Hanuman chalisa made by Artisan Manisha kumari
Fig 2.10.1 Map of Patna pointing Danapur
Fig 2.10.2 Map of Patna pointing Patna city
Fig 2.11 Map of Patna pointing Lalit kala academy
Fig 2.12 Map of Patna pointing Kilkari Bihar Bal Bhawan
Fig 2.13 Map of Patna pointing UMSAS
Fig 2.14 Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan

Fig 3.1 Tikuli painting made by Artisan Siddhi Kumari depicting Lord ganesh
Fig 3.2.1 Process : MDF preparation
Fig 3.2.2 Process : Sanding
Fig 3.2.3 Process : Base coating
Fig 3.3.1 Process : Drying
Fig 3.3.2 Process : Sketching
Fig 3.3.3 Process : Tracing
Fig 3.3.4 Process : Painting
Fig 3.4.1 Process : Decoration
Fig 3.4.2 Process : Drying
Fig 3.4.3 Process : Packaging

Fig 4.1 Tikuli painting by Ashok kumar biswas depicting story of Lord krisha and radha
Fig 4.2 Tikuli painting on Saree by Artisan Siddhi Kumari depicting a village scene.
Fig 4.3 Tikuli painting by Artisan Kiran devi

Fig 5.1 Tikuli painting on a cup and coaster by Artisan Siddhi Kumari

Fig 6.1 Brush used to do base of Tikuli painting on MDF
Fig 6.2 Artisan Siddhi Kumari working on Tikuli painting
Fig 6.3 Artisan Siddhi Kumari
Fig 6.4 Artisan Shabina Imam
Fig 6.5 Artisan Manisha Kumari and Neha Kumari
Fig 6.6 Artisan Shri. Ashok Kumar Biswas
Fig 6.7 Artisan Shri.Ashok kumar Biswas teaching his students at his house
Fig 6.8 Bihar Museum's souvenir shop

Fig 7.1 Market survey form
Fig 7.2 Bihar museum Shop products
Fig 7.3 Team image.

GLOSSARY

CHHATH PUJA : A major Bihari festival dedicated to the Sun God and Chhathi Maiya for blessings and well-being.

TEEJ : A Hindu festival celebrated by women for marital bliss and the well-being of their husbands.

SAMA CHAKEVA : A Mithila festival celebrating sibling love with clay idols and folk songs.

LITTI CHOKHA : A traditional Bihari dish made of wheat balls stuffed with sattu and served with mashed vegetables.

JAT - JATIN : A traditional folk dance of Bihar that narrates love stories of rural couples.

JHIJHIYA : A dance performed by women during Durga Puja to ward off evil spirits using earthen pots with lamps.

SATTU : Roasted gram flour used in Bihari cuisine, known for its high nutrition value

TIKULI : A hand-painted decorative bindi made with lacquer and glass, traditional to Bihar.

BINDI : A forehead dot worn by women symbolizing beauty and cultural identity.

ZARI : Metallic thread used in embroidery and weaving, often seen in saris and festive wear.

TIKLI : A forehead ornament usually worn during traditional and bridal occasions or other name of tikuli.

AJNA CHAKRA : The third-eye chakra, symbolizing intuition and spiritual insight.

TIKISAZ : Artisan involved in making tikuli or decorative forehead art.

TABAQUE : Gold or Silver foil

MINAMORUSSAS : Traditional artisans who made false stones for rings by enclosing colored substances between glass plates and also colored gold and silver for ornamental purposes.

SHISHAHGURS : Traditional glassblowers who crafted mirrors and ornamental glass items using fragments of European glass

CHIMKIS : Small shiny sequins or embellishments used in embroidery and craft.

ANNAS : An old Indian currency unit.

SAWAN : A monsoon month in the Hindu calendar associated with love, rain, and festivals.

TIKULIHARS : Another term for Tikuli artisans or those engaged in the craft of tikuli making.

KHURACHNA : The act of scraping, used in craft before.

BANS KI KHURCHI : A scraping tool made out of bamboo.

MANAJANS : Traditional traders who financed artisans and helped sell their products in local and regional markets.

BABOOL KA GOND : Gum derived from the babool tree, used before to stick the tikuli bindi on the forehead.

AARI : Refers to a handsaw used for cutting wood.

SRES KAGAZ : Sandpaper used to scratch the MDF board before base coating in Tikuli painting

GILHAREE KE BAALON KA BRUSH : A brush made using squirrel hair, used for fine painting or detailing.

JAYMALA : A garland exchanged by bride and groom during Indian wedding rituals.

MANDAP : A decorated canopy or structure under which Hindu wedding rituals take place.

DOLLI : A traditional palanquin used to carry brides during weddings.

GOPI : Female devotees of Lord Krishna, symbolizing love and devotion.

SWAYAMVAR : An ancient practice where a bride chooses her husband from a group of suitors.

MICA : A shiny mineral used in decoration, cosmetics, and sometimes in traditional art.

CHAPTER ০২

INTRODUCTION TO BIHAR

Fig 1.1

बिहार के बारे मे
ABOUT BIHAR

Bihar, located in eastern India, is a historically rich and culturally vibrant state. Bordered by Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Nepal, it sits at a strategic point in the Indo-Gangetic Plain. The Ganges River runs through the heart of the state, making its soil incredibly fertile and ideal for growing rice, wheat, and sugarcane. Patna, the capital, is a growing urban center that still echoes the grandeur of its ancient identity, Pataliputra once the proud capital of the Maurya and Gupta empires.The state is divided into 38 districts, with towns like Gaya, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur contributing to its economic activity. Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Bihar's economy, but steady development in roadways, railways, and rural infrastructure is gradually improving connectivity and market access. Beyond its economic and political significance, Bihar is a place where tradition and modern life blend daily. From historic monuments to bustling villages and emerging artisan hubs, the state continues to evolve while staying rooted in its heritage.

Fig 1.2

It was once the center of the powerful Maurya Empire (321–185 BCE), with Pataliputra now Patna as its capital. This is where Emperor Ashoka ruled and built one of India's first major empires. Later, during the 4th to 6th centuries CE, the Gupta Empire rose in the region, marking a golden era of science, mathematics, art, and astronomy.

The state also sat along important ancient trade routes that connected India to Central Asia, helping ideas and goods flow across continents. Even in politics, Bihar was ahead of its time. The ancient city of Vaishali, located here, was home to the Licchavi republic, which is believed to be one of the world's earliest democratic governments.

Medieval Bihar saw invasions and the rise of regional dynasties, while the Mughal and British periods reshaped its socio-political landscape. Post-independence, Bihar faced economic challenges but retained its historical prominence through sites like Bodh Gaya and Nalanda, testaments to its enduring legacy as a center of governance, intellect, and global influence.

बिहार के त्यौहार
FESTIVALS OF BIHAR

Bihar's festivals are vibrant celebrations that reflect its deep spiritual and communal ethos. Chhath Puja, a four-day Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun God, is the state's most iconic event, marked by intense devotion along the Ganges River. Devotees undertake rigorous fasts, offer prayers at sunrise and sunset, and perform rituals like holy bathing, symbolizing gratitude for life and prosperity. Teej celebrates marital harmony, with women fasting and engaging in colorful processions, accompanied by traditional folk songs. Sama Chakeva, a Mithila folk festival, honors sibling bonds through storytelling and clay figurine displays, fostering community ties. Buddha Purnima, held in Bodh Gaya, commemorates Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death, attracting global pilgrims. These festivals, enriched with music, dance, and local cuisine like litti-chokha, unite communities and highlight Bihar's spiritual fervor, making them integral to its identity.

Fig 1.3.1 : Chhath puja celebrated in The Ganga river

Fig 1.3.2 : "Prasad Thali" or "Chhath Puja Thali"

बिहार की संस्कृति
CULTURE OF BIHAR

Fig 1.4 : Traditional cuisine thali of Bihar

Bihar's cultural heritage is a rich blend of traditions, literature, and performing arts, shaped by its ancient history. The state's literary legacy includes ancient Sanskrit texts from Nalanda and vibrant Bhojpuri poetry, capturing rural life and emotions. Folk music, particularly Bhojpuri songs, resonates with themes of love and labor, while dances like Jat-Jatin and Jhijhiya narrate stories of rural Bihar through rhythmic movements. The state's cuisine, featuring staples like sattu, dalpuri, and litti-chokha, reflects its agrarian roots and culinary simplicity. Bihar's cultural fabric is woven with its historical significance as the cradle of Buddhism and Jainism, with sites like Vaishali and Rajgir preserving spiritual traditions. Social customs, including traditional attire like sarees and dhotis, and community gatherings during festivals, underscore Bihar's collective spirit. This dynamic cultural heritage, passed down through generations, continues to thrive in daily practices, performances, and communal celebrations, defining Bihar's unique identity.

बिहार के शिल्प

CRAFTS OF BIHAR

Fig 1.5 : Tikuli painting in saree by Artisan Siddhi Kumari

पटना के बारे में
ABOUT PATNA

Patna, the capital city of Bihar, holds a unique place in the historical and cultural fabric of India. Recognized as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, its origins trace back to around 600 BCE, when it was known as Pataliputra. Over the centuries, it served as the capital of powerful dynasties, including the Mauryas under Emperor Ashoka and the Guptas, during a time often referred to as India's golden age. Its strategic location along the banks of the Ganges helped it flourish as a center of administration, trade, learning, and spirituality.

Modern-day Patna continues to reflect its layered past. The western part of the city, developed during the British colonial period, is marked by spacious avenues, colonial-era architecture, and government establishments, echoing a more structured urban vision. In contrast, the eastern side often regarded as the heart of the old city is a dense web of lanes, traditional markets, and historic structures. Here, one encounters the everyday life of a city deeply connected to its heritage.

Despite facing the typical challenges of urban growth such as congestion, infrastructure strain, and population density ,Patna remains an important hub for education and governance. Institutions like Patna University and landmarks such as Golghar, Kumhrar, and Agam Kuan serve as enduring symbols of its intellectual and historical significance.

What distinguishes Patna is not only its remarkable past but also its capacity to evolve. The city embodies a quiet resilience, maintaining a delicate balance between preserving its historical identity and embracing the pace of contemporary development. In this way, Patna remains both a symbol of continuity and a testament to transformation.

Fig 1.6 : F & LA batch 23-27 NIFT patna, Bihar museum

हमारी यात्रा
OUR JOURNEY

This documentation chronicles a 10-day research journey in Patna, the birthplace of Tikuli art, to explore its origins, cultural significance, production processes, artisans, markets, and challenges. Each day focused on specific aspects of the craft, with visits to key locations and interactions with artisans, experts, and institutions.

PATNA SAHEB
RAILWAY STATION

DAY 1

On Day 1, our exploration of Tikuli art began with a journey from NIFT Patna to Patna Saheb Railway Station, which took around 27 minutes by college bus, covering a distance of 12 kilometers. Patna Saheb, located in the historic Patna City area, is known not only as the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh but also as the origin point of Tikuli art. Here, the craft began with the creation of delicate glass bindis decorated with gold foil. We then visited Noon Ka Chauraha, once a bustling hub of zari and Tikuli artisans, now facing decline due to industrialization. Our final destination was UMSAS, where Ms. Anu Kumari guided us through original Tikuli pieces, explaining the craft's cultural journey and evolution into a decorative art form.

DAY 2-3

On Days 2 and 3, we traveled from NIFT Patna (Mithapur) to Digha, covering 11 kilometers. Digha, a semi-urban area near the Ganges, , where few work from home-based setups of artisans were found. At Ramji Chauk in Bata Ganj, we met artisan Siddhi Kumari, a 21-year-old BA graduate with three years of experience in Tikuli art. She shared her journey from trainee to artisan, emphasizing Tikuli's roots in bindi-making and its evolution into a decorative craft. She expressed her desire to innovate designs and expand the reach of this traditional art. We also observed the production process and detailed hand-painting techniques that bring Tikuli artworks to life.

DAY 4

On Day 4, we traveled from NIFT Patna to Atal Path, Digha, covering 9 kilometers. We met Shabina Imam, a 38-year-old Tikuli artisan, state awardee, and MFA graduate with over two decades of experience. Trained under Ashok Kumar Biswas, she manages a pre-production space where raw materials are prepared. In our interview, she shared valuable insights into the craft's scope, stressing the need for modern marketing and product diversification. She highlighted Tikuli's identity as a women-centric art form and its potential to be reimagined through contemporary home decor and design collaborations.

DAY 5

On Day 5, we visited Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan (UMSAS), traveling 8.3 kilometers from NIFT Patna. UMSAS, a key government institution, supports artisans through training, innovation, and marketing via outlets like Ambapali (Delhi), Bihar Emporium (Patna), and a soon-to-open shop at Patna Airport. Guided by MD Isfaq Khan, museum curator and senior designers Anu Kumari and Ayushi, we explored UMSAS's efforts in promoting Tikuli. We interviewed artisan Kiran Devi, who runs a shop there, and observed creative Tikuli products like coasters and fabric paintings. Trainee discussions revealed ongoing government support, exhibition opportunities, and challenges. We also gained insights into other traditional Bihari crafts, like Sikki and Madhubani.

Fig 1.7.1

DAY 6

On Day 6, we traveled from NIFT Patna to Shahpur, a semi-rural area 17 kilometers away, taking approximately 40 minutes. Shahpur is emerging as a thriving Tikuli artisan cluster, with community-based workshops promoting skill development. We engaged with artisans like Pooja Devi, Gudiya Devi, and Khusbu Kumari (2 years of experience), along with Manisha and Neha Kumari (3 years). All were trained under Padmashree awardee Ashok Kumar Biswas. They shared insights into their training journeys, daily work routines, and challenges. The cluster featured artisans with experience ranging from 3 months to 10 years, highlighting Tikuli's growing appeal among young women and its role in fostering empowerment through creative livelihoods.

Fig 1.7.2

DAY 7

On Day 7, we visited Bhikana Pahari, located 6.6 kilometers from NIFT Patna. This area is close to the College of Arts and Crafts and is home to Padmashree awardee Ashok Kumar Biswas, a pivotal figure in the revival of Tikuli art. In our interaction, he shared his journey of transforming Tikuli into a globally recognized decorative art form. Having represented Bihar in over 1,000 exhibitions, his innovative approach merged tradition with modernity. He emphasized Tikuli's deep cultural roots in women's adornment and its empowering role for female artisans, highlighting how the craft fosters socio-economic independence within Bihar's traditional communities.

Fig 1.7.3

DAY 8

On Day 8, we revisited Atal Path, Digha, to study the complete pre-production and production process of Tikuli. At Shabina Imam's workshop, we observed each step from selecting and cutting MDF boards to applying enamel paints and creating detailed hand-painted designs using brushes, stencils, and layering techniques. Shabina explained the use of raw materials like MDF, paints, and adhesives, and showcased finished products such as wall hangings and coasters. The session highlighted Tikuli's craftsmanship, adaptability, and potential in modern markets through innovative applications of this traditional art form.

Fig 1.8.1

DAY 9

On Day 9, we conducted a market survey to understand the marketing channels for Tikuli products, visiting Bihar Museum, Khadi Mall, and Bihar Emporium located 5 to 10 kilometers from NIFT Patna. Our team split into three groups for the survey. At Bihar Museum, we interviewed Ashok Kumar Sinha, Additional Director, who discussed Tikuli's cultural significance and its curated display. At Khadi Mall, senior textile designer Subash Kumar highlighted market trends, noting Tikuli's growing use in home decor and gifting. Bihar Emporium showcased artisan-made products supported by government initiatives. While these platforms promote local crafts effectively, challenges remain in global outreach due to minimal digital marketing. The visit emphasized the need for stronger online presence and modern branding to expand Tikuli's market.

Fig 1.8.2

DAY 10

On Day 10, the final day of our field study, we visited Patna College of Arts and Crafts, located 2.7 kilometers from NIFT Patna. Established in 1939 on Vidyapati Marg, this premier art institution currently does not offer Tikuli as a formal course. We met Dr. Rakhee Kumari, the Principal, who explained the institutional challenges, including the absence of Tikuli trainers and the shift in student interest toward contemporary, market-driven art forms. She also reflected on the broader definition of craft and the need to integrate traditional arts like Tikuli into academic frameworks. This visit provided critical insights into the educational gaps and helped us conclude our SWOC analysis of Tikuli, summarizing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

CHAPTER ০২

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PROVENANCE ABOUT TIKULI

Fig 2.1 Tikuli painting in MDF by Artisan Neha kumari

शिल्प के बारे में
ABOUT THE CRAFT

Tikuli,derives its name from **"Tikli"**, the colloquial term for bindi is a traditional art form from **Patna, Bihar,** began in the ancient city of Pataliputra as a craft for creating intricate bindis on glass, adorned with gold foil. Rooted in women-centric traditions, it symbolized cultural adornment. Today, Tikuli has transformed into a vibrant decorative art, adapting to modern materials and aesthetics. Artisans now use medium-density fiberboard (MDF) instead of glass, applying enamel paints to craft vivid designs inspired by Bihar's heritage, including, mythological narratives, and natural elements. The process involves meticulous hand-painting, layering colors, and detailing to create durable, visually striking pieces. Contemporary Tikuli products include coasters, wall art, and fridge magnets, appealing to modern markets while retaining traditional charm. Despite challenges like competition from machine-made goods and limited global reach, Tikuli thrives through artisans' innovation, blending heritage with contemporary appeal. This evolution ensures Tikuli remains a cherished emblem of Bihar's artistic legacy, empowering artisans, particularly women, while captivating audiences with its intricate beauty and cultural depth.

Fig 2.2

टिकुली की उत्पत्ति
ORIGIN OF CRAFT

Tikuli, also known as bindi, originated over 2,500 years ago in Pataliputra (modern-day Patna, Bihar), a major cultural hub during the Maurya and Gupta empires. Traditionally placed between the eyebrows the ajna chakra or third eye it symbolized female beauty, spiritual awareness, and marital status. Worn by women across social classes, Tikuli became especially popular during the Mughal era.

In its early form, Tikuli was handcrafted by Tikisaz artisans in bustling Patna neighborhoods like Gurhatta, Malsalami, and Lodhi Katra. They used thin glass pieces, decorated with tabaque (gold or silver foil), and painted them in bright colors. These shimmering bindis were affixed to the forehead using bee's wax according to the book Bihar and Patna in 1811-1812 by Francis Buchanan. Other artisan groups, such as the Minamorussas, made false stones for rings by sandwiching color between two glass plates, while the Shishahgurs blew glass for mirrors and ornaments, though their tools often produced flawed, greenish glass.

The Tikuli craft expanded in the early 20th century when artisans in Hariyat village (Siwan district) began contributing. It became a women-led craft, empowering female artisans and integrating them into the region's cultural economy.

However, during British colonial rule, Tikuli suffered a decline due to the introduction of cheaper, mass-produced bindis. By the mid-20th century, it was nearly extinct. In the 1960s, artist Upendra Maharathi revived the craft. Inspired by Japanese enamel techniques, he transitioned Tikuli from fragile glass to wooden surfaces, using enamel paints for durability. This transformation, carried forward by artisans like Lal Babu Gupta, preserved the cultural essence of Tikuli while making it more sustainable and versatile.

Today, Tikuli remains a symbol of Bihar's rich cultural heritage, blending ancient traditions with modern artistic expression.

औपनिवेशिक बिहार में टिकुली शिल्प
TIKULI CRAFT IN COLONIAL BIHAR

Tikuli craft in colonial Bihar stood as a unique blend of tradition, local artistry, and economic struggle. Rooted in the cultural heart of Patna, the craft flourished as a hereditary occupation, passed down through generations of artisans. These artisans produced intricate decorative pieces traditionally worn by women during weddings, religious events, and festive occasions. During the early 20th century, Tikuli had already evolved into a specialized cottage industry, but its survival was tethered to the rigid economic systems of the colonial period. The Fifth Annual Report of the Patna College Chanakya Society (1914–15) provides a rare and comprehensive look into the craft's condition during this era.

TIKULI ITEMS WERE CLASSIFIED INTO THREE MAJOR TYPES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN BIHAR :

1.Mica-Based Tikuli (Chimkis) – thin discs of mica shaped into star-like forms, prized for their affordability and decorative sparkle.

2.Glass-Based Tikuli with Gold Leaf – small glass circles overlaid with delicate gold leaf, aimed at wealthier buyers and special occasions.

3.Cloth-Based Tikuli with Beads – sets of decorative ornaments made by sewing colored beads onto cloth, sold widely in wholesale and retail.

These products were not only aesthetically rich but also served significant social and ceremonial functions. However, behind the visual allure of Tikuli lay a struggling artisan community. The craft relied heavily on recycled materials, such as broken glass transported from Calcutta, which lacked the clarity and finish of factory-made glass. Furthermore, the artisans often confined by caste or family lineage were dependent on Mahajan's (traders) who controlled both the supply of raw materials and the purchase of finished goods. This monopolistic structure trapped artisans in cycles of debt and limited financial mobility. Most workers earned only 4 to 8 annas per day, a stark contrast to other crafts like embroidery, which paid nearly double.

The Chanakya Society's records reveal growing awareness of these challenges. On multiple occasions, figures like Moulvi Abul Hasan M. Taiyab and Professor Samaddar publicly criticized the exploitative dynamics and proposed the formation of co-operative societies. These co-ops were envisioned as alternative support systems that could provide raw materials at fair prices and offer credit at reasonable interest rates (such as 9%, inspired by models like the Nawada co-operative). Such reforms aimed to replace Mahajan control with artisan-led economic structures, building esprit de corps and a sense of collective empowerment.
Tikuli products found markets in Patna and Tirhoot divisions and were popular at regional fairs like the Urs in Bihar and Somari Mela at Bankipore, where they were sold every Monday during the Sawan month. The report describes the Tikulihars' work as so precise and labor-intensive that it could rival modern machinery, underlining the immense skill and dedication embedded in each piece.

In essence, Tikuli craft during colonial Bihar was more than an aesthetic tradition, it was a site of resilience, exploitation, and reform. It symbolized both the richness of indigenous creativity and the economic hardships faced by traditional craftsmen in a rapidly modernizing world. Efforts to organize artisans into co-operatives signaled an important turning point, one that laid the foundation for the survival and gradual transformation of Tikuli into the art form we recognize today.

Fig 2.3 Tikuli painting found in Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan

टिकुली के पुनरुद्धार में श्री अशोक बिस्वा की भूमिका

SHRI ASHOK BISWAS'S ROLE IN THE REVIVAL OF TIKULI

Fig 2.4 Shri Ashok kumar biswas recieving Padma shree from the President of India

Shri Ashok Kumar Biswas has played a pivotal role in the revival and reinvention of Tikuli art, transforming it from a fading tradition into a celebrated cultural and economic craft. Trained in 1973 at the Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan under Shri Lal Babu Gupta, Biswas carried forward the legacy of Upendra Maharathi, who began reviving Tikuli in the 1950s. After Maharathi died in 1981, Biswas became the leading force behind the craft's evolution.

His most impactful contribution was his technical innovation shifting the base material from hardboard to MDF, paired with enamel paint. This made the artworks more durable, cost-effective, and accessible. He creatively fused Tikuli's traditional motifs with elements from Madhubani, Mithila and Patna Kalam to produce a range of contemporary utility items such as wall plates, coasters, trays, mobile holders, and fabric wall hangings. These designs resonated with modern buyers while preserving Tikuli's artistic essence.

Biswas's revival of Tikuli is deeply rooted in social empowerment. In 1993, he established a training center in Nasiriganj, Digha, providing free training to economically underprivileged women. Since then, nearly 8,000 artisans , 98% of them women have been trained, with many achieving financial independence and several receiving state-level recognition. Alongside his wife, Shibani Biswas, he expanded this initiative from 300 to over 7,000 women artisans.

A turning point came during the 1982 Asian Games when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi selected Tikuli artworks as official gifts for athletes, leading to a 20,000-piece order. Biswas has exhibited in over 1,000 events globally and across India. Despite funding setbacks, including the withdrawal of government grants in 1984, he continued his work through personal resources. Honoured with the Padma Shri in 2024, his efforts have made Tikuli a part of national initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'One District, One Product.'
Biswas's vision, innovation, and unwavering dedication have turned Tikuli from a near-forgotten tradition into a vibrant, evolving, and empowering craft that supports thousands of women artisans across Bihar. His work not only revived an art form but also redefined it as a tool for cultural preservation and social change.

Fig 2.5 Padma Shri medal of Shri Ashok kumar biswas

EVOLUTION

FROM GLASS TO WOOD

Tikuli art traces its origins to ancient Bihar, where approximately 500 families (around 5000 people) were involved in the craft. Initially, Tikuli was crafted on glass sheets, primarily for creating bindis. The process involved melting glass into thin sheets, cutting them into circular pieces, coating them with gold foil, and decorating with intricate designs using natural colors with the technique “khurachna” with “bans ki khurchi”. A final layer of gum which was babool’s gond (Acacia’s gum) at the back and was sold. These bindis were popular among queens and aristocratic women, worn for social status.

The decline of handcrafted glass tikulis began during the British era due to industrialization, which introduced machine-made alternatives that were cheaper and more accessible. The fragility of glass and the high cost of gold foil prompted artists to seek alternative materials.

Due to the question of survival for traditional tikuli artists it was necessary to change the process for livelihood. Wood emerged as a viable substitute due to its decline in the market. To overcome this artist started making paintings in the bigger pieces of glass. After Upendra Maharathi’s revival artists began doing it in wooden base using enamel paint instead of gold foil, making the art form more cost-effective. However, wood presented challenges, such as its weight and susceptibility to damage, which limited its practicality for transportation and large-scale production.

FROM WOOD TO HARDBOARD

By the mid-20th century, hardboard became widely available and was adopted as an alternative to wood. Hardboard was lighter, durable, and easier to transport, addressing the limitations of wood. Paintings from the 1970s, as documented by artist Shri Ashok Kumar Biswas, were made on hardboard, indicating this transition likely occurred around this time. Hardboard allowed artists to create larger and complex designs, expanding the scope of Tikuli art beyond small bindis.

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENTS

The hardboard era marked a significant evolution in Tikuli art's style and themes. Paintings from the 1970s and early 1980s, as shown, included traditional figures (e.g., women, Lord Buddha, Durga) and experimental designs influenced by Japanese art, fine art, and Patna kalam. For instance, a 1978 painting inspired by Japanese style depicted a king and queen. By 1979-80, a new era of Tikuli art emerged, characterized by changing background colors (e.g., darker backgrounds for later works) and more standardized motifs, as seen in paintings from this period.

Fig 2.6

THROUGH TIME

Fig 2.7.1

Fig 2.7.2

Fig 2.7.3

FROM HARDBOARD TO MDF

In the late 20th century to early 21st century, Medium-Density Fiberboard (MDF) became the preferred material for Tikuli art due to its smooth surface, which is ideal for intricate detailing. The transition to MDF likely began around the late 1990s or early 2000s, as evidenced by paintings from 2000 onwards being made on MDF boards. MDF's versatility and ease of use have made it the standard material for contemporary Tikuli art.

MODERN TECHNIQUES

The process on MDF mirrors that of hardboard but benefits from the material's smoother texture. Artists cut MDF into desired shapes, apply several layers of enamel paint with sanding for smoothness, and paint detailed designs with fine brushes (size 000). The use of acrylic paints has also become common, enhancing the vibrancy and durability of the artwork. MDF's heat- and water-resistant properties make it suitable for a wide range of applications.

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

Today, Tikuli art on MDF is used for various decorative items, including wall hangings, coasters, trays, pen holders, and even sarees with Tikuli motifs. The art form has expanded its thematic scope, often depicting stories from Indian folklore, particularly tales of Lord Krishna and the Ramayana. Paintings showcased modern interpretations of these stories, reflecting the art's continued evolution.

Fig 2.8 : Tikuli painting made in UMSAS guided by Artisan Puja kumari

सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक और अनुष्ठानिक महत्व
SOCIAL, CULTURE & RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Tikuli art has become a powerful medium for women's empowerment, with over 300 women in Bihar earning livelihoods through the craft, thanks to artists like Ashok Kumar Biswas who has trained nearly 8,000 artisans. Predominantly practiced by women, it fosters economic independence and social upliftment. Concentrated in areas like Digha and Danapur, it supports 300–500 families and strengthens community identity. Revived by Upendra Maharathi and Biswas, Tikuli resists the decline of traditional crafts, preserving cultural heritage against industrialization.

Fig 2.9 : Tikuli painting on Hanuman chalisa made by Artisan Manisha kumari

Originating in ancient Pataliputra over 2,500 years ago, Tikuli is deeply embedded in Bihar's cultural identity. While sharing stylistic elements with Madhubani, Tikuli stands apart through its use of MDF or hardboard and fine, miniature motifs. By depicting scenes from festivals, daily life, and epics like the Ramayana and Krishna-Lila, it preserves Bihar's storytelling traditions. Artists like Siddhi Kumari emphasize its narrative power, while Ashok Kumar Biswas's global exhibitions from Bihar Diwas to Seoul and Germany, have made Tikuli a symbol of India's artistic diversity. Its cultural importance was firmly established during the 1982 Asian Games, where Tikuli artworks were presented to 5,000 athletes, showcasing Bihar's rich artistic legacy on an international stage.

Tikuli traces its roots to the traditional bindi worn by Indian women, once a powerful symbol of spirituality and feminine strength. Positioned at the ajna chakra or 'third eye,' the red or gold tikuli signified marital status, prosperity, and protection from negative energies. It played a sacred role in religious rituals, festivals, and daily worship especially for married women, as a marker of fertility and devotion.

With industrialization, the original glass-and-gold tikulis declined, but the essence lived on. The symbolic dot evolved into Tikuli painting, where spiritual themes persist through depictions of deities like Krishna, Ram, and Durga, and scenes from village rituals and mythology. Today, Tikuli art continues this sacred legacy through storytelling and intricate visual expression.

पटना में टिकुली क्लस्टर/कार्यशाला का मानचित्रण
MAPPING TIKULI CRAFT CLUSTERS AND WORKSHOPS ACROSS PATNA

Below is a mapping of key Tikuli craft clusters and workshops in Patna, including their origins and locations.

SHAHPUR CLUSTER
LOCATION: SHAHPUR , DANAPUR, PATNA, APPROXIMATELY 17 KM FROM NIFT PATNA, IN THE PATNA DISTRICT.

Established by Ashok Kumar Biswas, a Padma Shri recipient, the Shapur cluster is a pivotal hub for Tikuli art, focusing on empowering women. Biswas set up a training center to teach rural women the techniques of Tikuli painting. Over 300 women, including artisans like Arti Devi, have been trained here, transforming the cluster into a symbol of economic independence. This cluster produces decorative items like wall plates and coasters, contributing to the art's revival.

PATNA CITY WORKSHOP BY KHUSHBU KUMARI
LOCATION: PATNA CITY, A HISTORICALLY RICH AREA IN EASTERN PATNA KNOWN FOR ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE.

This workshop is led by Khushbu Kumari, a skilled Tikuli artist and recipient of the State Award. Held in the traditional quarters of Patna City, her initiative focuses on hands-on training for youth and women in the community. Through her mentorship, participants not only learn the intricate skills of Tikuli painting but also gain insight into product development and marketing. The workshop encourages artistic expression while building confidence and economic opportunity, making it a key grassroots effort in the preservation and spread of Tikuli craft.

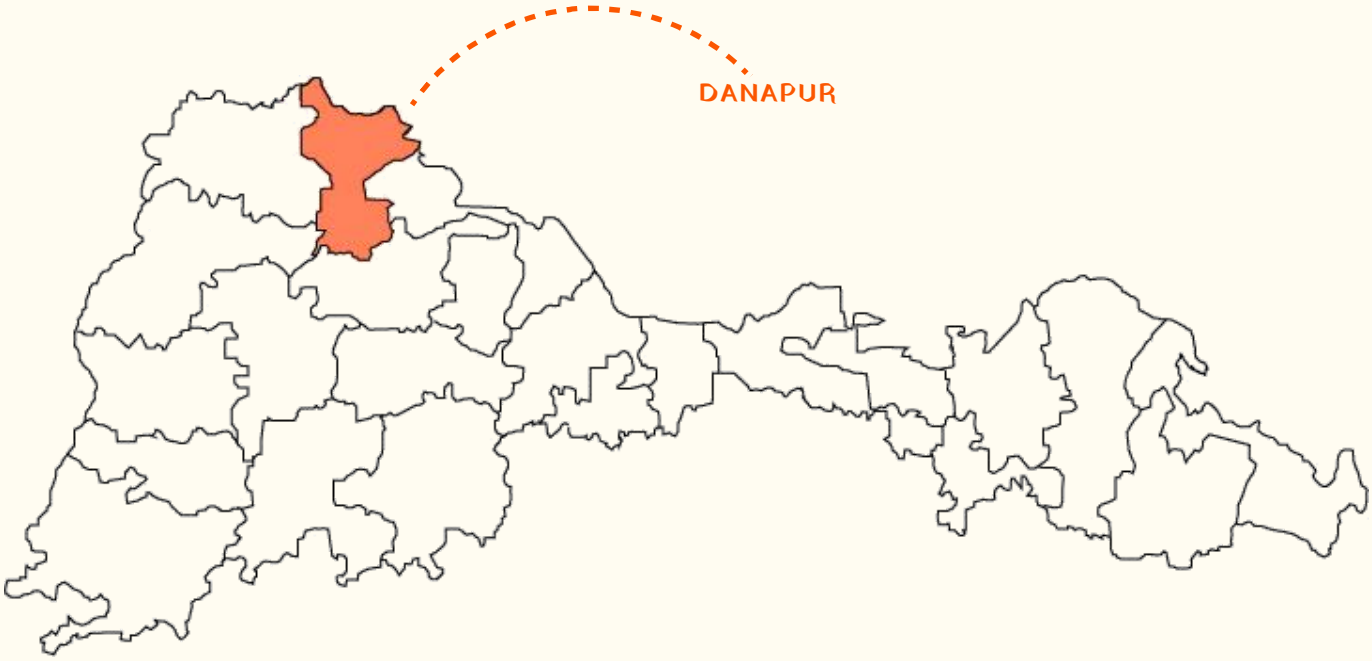


Fig 2.10.1

Fig 2.10.2

LALIT KALA TRAINING CENTRE

LOCATION: LALIT KALA ACADEMY, PATNA – LOCATED IN OPP VISHAL MEGA MARKET FAZER ROAD, PATNA, BIHAR 800001

Lalit Kala is a renowned government-affiliated art institution that conducts regular training programs in a variety of traditional crafts, including Tikuli painting. It serves as a formal platform for aspiring artists especially students and craft enthusiasts , to gain exposure to the techniques, history, and cultural significance of Tikuli art. The center often hosts short-term workshops, demonstrations, and exhibitions, helping keep the art alive through educational outreach. By incorporating Tikuli alongside other Indian crafts, Lalit Kala supports cross-disciplinary learning and builds awareness among urban audiences.

Fig 2.11

KILKARI WORKSHOP BY KHUSHBU KUMARI

LOCATION: KILKARI BIHAR BAL BHAWAN,SAIDPUR RD, NAYA TOLA, RAJENDRA NAGAR, PATNA, BIHAR 800004

Organized by Khushbu Kumari, this workshop targets younger audiences and beginners through creative engagement at Kilkari. The initiative introduces school children and teenagers to the art of Tikuli in an interactive, accessible environment. By integrating craft into early education, this workshop fosters cultural appreciation from a young age. It also helps in identifying young talent and nurturing future artisans. Khushbu Kumari's effort here reflects the importance of passing on traditional knowledge to new generations in fun, inclusive, and educational ways.

Fig 2.12

UPENDRA MAHARATHI SHILP ANUSANDHAN SANSTHAN
LOCATION: PATLIPUTRA INDUSTRIAL AREA, PATNA – 800 013, BIHAR, INDIA, CENTRALLY LOCATED IN THE CITY.

Origin and Significance: The Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan (UMSAS), established in 1956 by the Department of Industries, Government of Bihar, serves as a key cluster for Tikuli craft. UMSAS is a nodal agency for handicraft development, offering training programs, workshops, and a museum showcasing Tikuli art alongside other crafts like Madhubani and Sikki. It supports artisans through six-month training programs, providing stipends and skill development in Tikuli techniques, such as painting on hardboard with enamel paints. UMSAS facilitates market linkages through its e-commerce portal and events like Bihar Diwas, benefiting over 200 artisans, including women, by promoting product development and economic sustainability.

Fig 2.13

Fig 2.14 Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan

CHAPTER 03

TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS OF TIKULI CRAFT

MDF BOARD

सामग्री
RAW MATERIALS

SANDPAPER

These are the general raw materials commonly used in the creation of traditional Tikuli paintings. Each material plays a specific role in preparing the base, transferring the design, and achieving the vibrant, detailed finish that defines this unique art form.

MDF BOARD
Medium-density fiberboard serves as the primary base for modern Tikuli paintings, cut into desired shapes for durability.

ENAMEL PAINT / ACRYLIC PAINT
Provides vibrant, glossy colors and long-lasting finish for detailed artwork.

ENAMEL PAINT

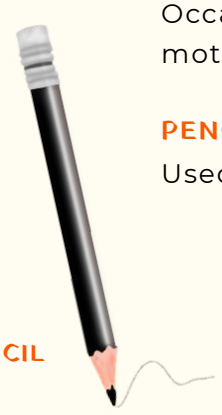
SANDPAPER (120 GSM)
Used to smoothen the MDF surface between coats for a polished texture.

THINNER
Helps dilute enamel paints and clean brushes during the process.

TRACING PAPER
Used to transfer designs onto the painted MDF surface.

CHALK

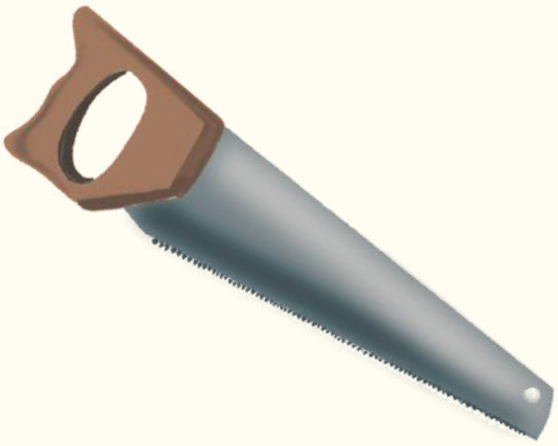
CHALK
Occasionally used to outline designs or assist in transferring motifs.



PENCIL

PENCIL
Used for sketching the base design before tracing.

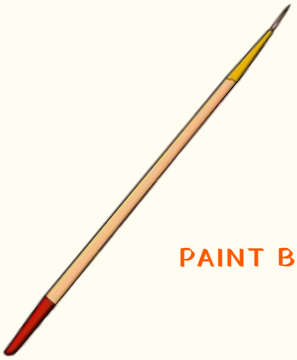
साधन
TOOLS



HAND SAW

CUTTING TOOLS

Jigsaw Machine – Used to cut MDF or wood into desired shapes and sizes
Hand Saw – Traditional tool for manual cutting of wooden/MDF boards



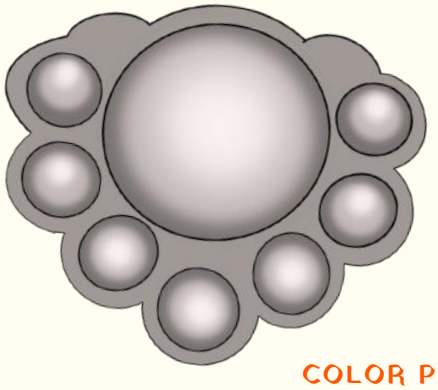
PAINT BRUSH

PAINTING TOOLS

Flat Brushes (1.5 inch) – Used for applying base coats
Round Brushes (00, 000, 001) – For fine detailing and outlining

DRAWING & LAYOUT TOOLS

Pencil – For initial sketching of designs
Chalk – Used for tracing on the board
Compass – To draw precise circular shapes or symmetrical motifs (optional)
Tracing Paper – Used to replicate and trace finalized designs onto the base



COLOR PALETTE

UTILITY & SUPPORT TOOLS

Color Palette – For mixing paints before application
Water Container – For washing brushes during acrylic painting (especially on cloth or canvas)
Cloth Pieces – Used to wipe brushes, clean surfaces, or blot excess paint

CLOTH

TOOLS AVAILABILITY

Most tools and materials for Tikuli craft are sourced from local markets and commercial suppliers in Patna. Round brushes (₹20–₹50), mainly synthetic and used for detailing, have replaced the older squirrel hair brushes (₹100–₹200) due to bans. Flat brushes for enamel coating (₹30–₹60) come from brands like Asian Paints. Packaging materials like bubble wrap, cloth, and cardboard are bought from wholesale markets such as Mithapur or Patna City (₹50–₹200 per batch). Brushes are cleaned with thinner and replaced every 3–6 months, while packaging is disposable. Increasingly, artisans also buy supplies online from platforms like Amazon and Flipkart for convenience.

IMPACT OF NEW TOOLS

The introduction of new tools has improved the efficiency and accessibility of Tikuli craft. Machines like the jigsaw have replaced manual saws, speeding up MDF cutting with less effort. Synthetic brushes, now common, are cheaper and widely available, though some artisans feel they reduce the finesse of detailing. Enamel paints remain popular for durability on MDF and ceramics, while acrylics on cloth and canvas have expanded Tikuli to products like tote bags and clothing. These changes have made the craft more marketable and appealing to younger artisans, though some worry about a decline in traditional quality. Overall, modern tools have helped adapt Tikuli to contemporary markets and ensured its continued relevance.

Fig 3.1 Tikuli painting made by Artisan Siddhi Kumari depicting Lord ganesh

प्रक्रिया
PROCESS

01

MDF PREPARATION

Medium-density fiberboard (MDF) is selected as the primary base. Using a jigsaw machine or aari (hand saw) according to the artisan's resources, artisans cut MDF into shapes (3–24 inches) for coasters, trays, or paintings as required. The process takes 30–60 minutes per board, ensuring precise dimensions for durability and aesthetic appeal.

Fig 3.2.1 : Process of preparing MDF board

02

SANDING

The cut MDF is sanded with sanding machine or 120 GSM sres kagaz(sandpaper)(₹10–₹20 per sheet) to remove imperfections, creating a smooth surface for paint adhesion. This step, taking 15–30 minutes per board, is repeated between enamel coats. A dust-free workspace is maintained to prevent particles from sticking, ensuring a polished, mirror-like base ready for coating

Fig 3.2.2 : Process of Sanding the MDF board

03

BASE COAT

Enamel paint (black with red, 3:1 ratio) is applied using a 1.5-inch flat brush. The red tint counters cultural taboos and enhances vibrancy. Applied in 2–3 coats, each layer ensures a glossy, water-resistant base. It is emphasized for careful application to avoid streaks, preparing the surface for detailed painting.

Fig 3.2.3 : Process of base coating the MDF board

04

DRYING

Each enamel base coat dries for 1–2 days, longer in winter due to humidity. The process, spanning 6–8 days for 2–3 coats, ensures a hard, glossy finish. Artisans store boards in dry, dust-free rooms to prevent moisture damage. Ventilation is critical due to thinner's odor, ensuring the base is ready for sketching.

Fig 3.3.1 : Process of drying the MDF board

Fig 3.3.2 : Process of sketching

05

SKETCHING

Artisans sketch designs on paper), focusing on mythological or village scenes. Sketches include oval figures, floral borders, and proportional motifs, taking 30–60 minutes per design according to artisan's experience. This step, ensures accuracy before tracing, reflecting Tikuli's cultural storytelling.

06

TRACING

Sketches are transferred to the MDF base using tracing paper and chalk. Artisans align the design carefully, tracing outlines with chalk for precision with a empty pen refill. Taking 15–30 minutes, this step ensures accurate figures and borders, crucial for detailed painting. White carbon paper is also a alternative instead of tracing paper.

Fig 3.3.3 : Process of tracing on the MDF board

Fig 3.3.4 : Process of painting on the MDF board

07

PAINTING

Painting begins with white lining using round brushes (00, 000, 001) to outline figures and floral borders, taking 1–2 hours. Enamel paint (golden yellow, light blue) fills figures, followed by detailed motifs (e.g., leaves, dots) in red, green, or blue. Some artisans, fill colors first, then add white lining, completing in 2–3 days.

08

DECORATION

Decorative elements, such as additional white or black lining for borders or motifs, are added using fine brushes (00, 000). This step enhances visual appeal, emphasizing Tikuli's intricate patterns (e.g., floral designs, village scenes). Taking 1–2 hours, it ensures stylistic adherence to Bihar's heritage.

Fig 3.4.1 : Process of finishing the painting

Fig 3.4.2 : Process of drying the painting

09

DRYING

The painting dries for 1–2 hours, longer in winter due to humidity.Stored in dry, dust-free rooms, products are protected from moisture to maintain enamel integrity. Artisans ensure good ventilation, confirming readiness by checking for a tack-free, glossy surface before packaging, ensuring product longevity.

10

PACKAGING

Finished products are wrapped in bubble wrap, cloth, or cardboard to prevent damage. Small items like coasters are packed individually, while paintings are batched. Artisans like Shabina Imam label products for outlets like Bihar Museum or fairs, ensuring safe transport and market-ready presentation.

Fig 3.4.3 : Process of packaging

CHAPTER 08

DESIGN AND AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

टिकुली डिज़ाइनों का विकास
EVOLUTION OF TIKULI DESIGNS

Over the decades, Tikuli painting has undergone a rich and layered evolution in terms of its visual language, intricacy, and thematic depth. Beginning in the 1970s, early Tikuli designs emphasized minimalism featuring solitary figures or ornamental motifs with simple golden enamel finishes. These compositions had limited color schemes and relied on clean symmetry, flat forms, and basic decorative patterns to evoke elegance. The use of space was cautious, and the focus was more on shape than story.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Tikuli artists began experimenting with fine detailing, introducing more expressive facial features, refined hand gestures, and detailed clothing textures. Influences from Japanese art and Patna Kalam became visible resulting in softer lines, more fluid body movements, and naturalistic elements like flowing hair, delicate postures, and scenic backgrounds. The designs became more narrative-focused, often portraying, mythological moments, or deity-inspired compositions. Decorative motifs like miniature flowers, ornamental jewelry, and architectural backdrops were added, increasing the visual density and cultural richness of each piece.

With the emergence of fine art sensibilities, the complexity of form increased. Artisans experimented with depth, layering, and even perspective in some cases. This shift made the painting more nuanced but also less accessible to mass artisans. To retain the appeal while ensuring replicability, a simplified visual structure was eventually adopted most notably in the form of the now-standard oval torso, stylized eye shapes, and a balanced mix of dotted detailing and bold white outlines.

As the craft moved into the 1990s and 2000s, color theory began to play a more prominent role. Strong contrasts, complementary tones, and vibrant enamel shades gave the figures a bold yet harmonious appearance. Detailing extended to background patterns, repeated floral or geometric borders, and increasingly elaborate costumes. Fine white and black linework was used to contour the figures and add decorative precision often done with “gilaharee ke baalon ka brush”. This level of intricacy required control, patience, and significant training.

In the 2010s and beyond, Tikuli designs achieved a high degree of polish and consistency. The motifs became more compact, the compositions denser, and the narratives richer. While mythological themes continued, newer stories of village life, festivals, and social messages began to appear. Figures were drawn with improved anatomical proportion and heightened expression, often surrounded by vibrant foliage, musical instruments, or intricate jewelry rendered in miniature detail.

What remained consistent through this journey was the artistic discipline in symmetry, balance, and rhythmic layout whether in a single figure or a multi-character scene. The layering of decorative elements such as dots, floral borders, and ornaments never lost their significance but became more integrated and contextually meaningful.

Today’s Tikuli art carries within the memory of its minimalist roots, the finesse of fine art, and the vibrancy of folk culture,a unique convergence of storytelling and visual mastery, expressed through years of continuous refinement in design and detail.

डिजाइन और रूपांकन
DESIGN AND MOTIFS

The design language of Tikuli painting is rooted in Indian mythology, folk narratives, and nature-inspired symbolism. It is known for its vibrant colors, intricate detailing, and balanced compositions that combine symmetry with storytelling. At the center of each artwork is a main motif—often a human figure with an oval-shaped torso, side-facing features, and expressive hand gestures—depicting mythological characters, village life, or women in cultural roles such as dancing or performing rituals.

Animals and birds are key elements in Tikuli's visual vocabulary. Peacocks symbolize beauty, cows represent purity, and elephants and horses convey strength and movement. These motifs are not merely decorative but contribute to the narrative and emotion of the artwork. Floral patterns, vines, and trees are commonly used in borders and backgrounds, adding rhythm, balance, and a connection to nature.

Sacred symbols like earthen pots and birds appear frequently, especially in festival scenes. Deities such as Krishna, Shiva, Durga, and Ganesh are central figures, portrayed with vibrant colors and signature elements like Krishna's flute or Shiva's snake. Through its recurring motifs and symbolic elements, Tikuli painting communicates cultural values, spiritual depth, and artistic elegance, preserving its traditional essence while remaining visually timeless.

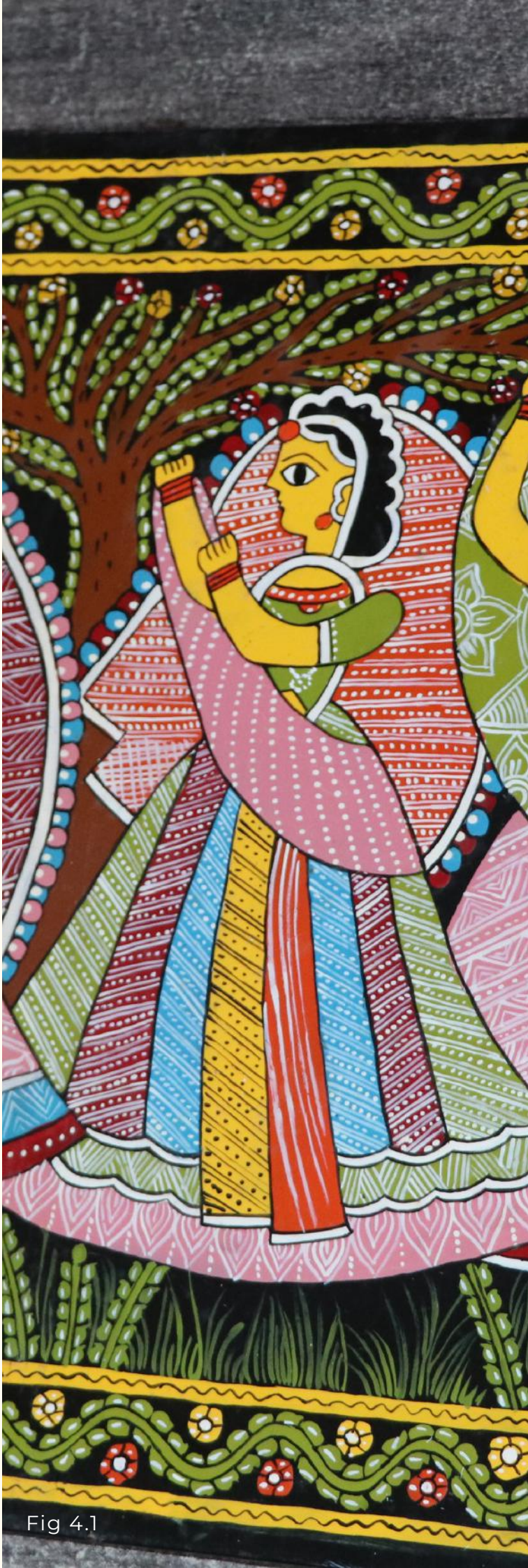


Fig 4.1

रूपांकन
MOTIFS

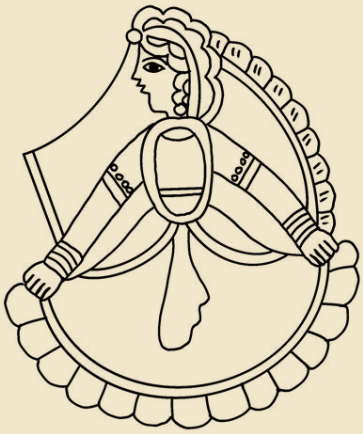
Nature has been a big part of Tikuli motifs, often shown through trees, birds, and flowers, alongside graceful human figures and vibrant deities that narrate stories from folklore and mythology. These are the few motifs seen in tikuli painting.

ELEPHANT MOTIF

BIRD MOTIF

HORSE MOTIF

DEITY MOTIF :
LORD KRISHNA WITH GOPIS



DANCING LADY MOTIF

HUMAN FIGURE MOTIF :
WEDDING SCENE

टिकुली में रचना और कहानी सुनाना
COMPOSITION AND STORYTELLING IN TIKULI

Tikuli painting is not just a decorative art; it is a narrative tradition that brings to life the cultural fabric of Bihar through detailed visual compositions. The scenes depicted in Tikuli paintings often reflect rituals, mythology, daily life, and folk traditions, making each artwork a storytelling canvas rooted in memory, belief, and environment.

Some of the most commonly illustrated compositions include:

Mandap or Jaymala Scenes: These wedding-themed paintings portray the ritual exchange of jaymala (garlands) or the couple seated in a decorated marriage mandap. Rich in symbolism, these compositions celebrate union, festivity, and tradition.

Dolli Procession: A poignant and nostalgic scene, often showing a bride being carried in a dolli (palanquin) accompanied by family members — capturing the emotional essence of a traditional Bihari wedding.

Village Daily Life: These compositions depict women fetching water, men farming, or children playing providing a visual diary of rural existence, where rhythm and simplicity define everyday beauty.

Radha-Krishna Leela: A frequent and beloved theme, scenes of Krishna playing the flute or dancing with Radha and the gopis bring in both divine romance and spiritual symbolism.

Ram Leela: Episodes from the Ramayana, such as Sita's swayamvar, the exile of Ram, or the battle with Ravan, are often illustrated with vivid expressions and dramatic posture.

Festivals and Rituals: Tikuli artists portray major festivals like Chhath Puja, Durga Puja, or Janmashtami, showcasing processions, prayers, and community gatherings through layered compositions and multiple characters.

Local Folk Tales and Legends: Regional stories passed down through oral traditions also find space in Tikuli art, often illustrated in panels to maintain the flow of events.

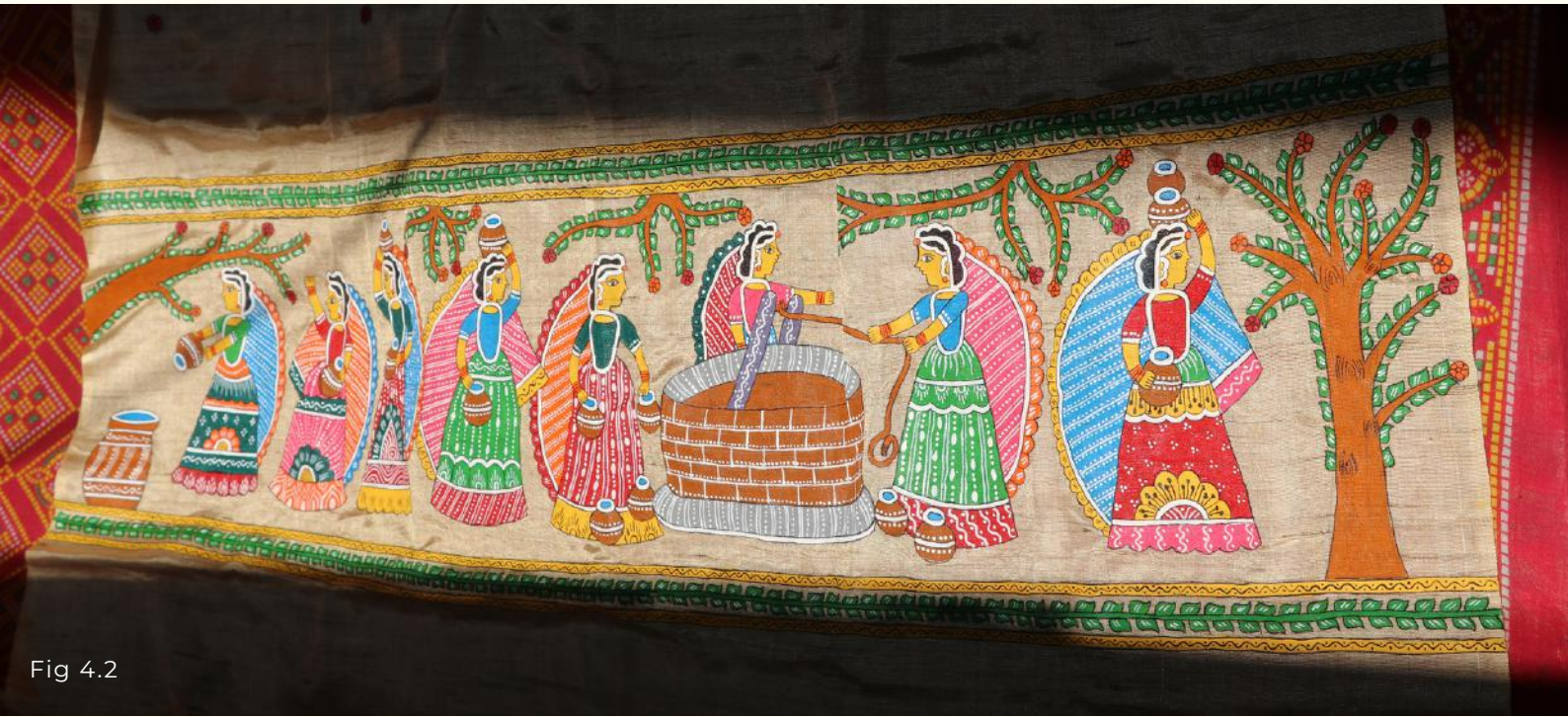


Fig 4.2

Fig 4.3

टिकुली कला में कहानियों का प्रभाव
INFLUENCE OF STORIES IN TIKULI ART

The themes and compositions in Tikuli are largely influenced by the artist's environment, cultural memory, and religious beliefs. Living amidst rich traditions, Tikuli artisans often draw inspiration from what they see and experience , whether it's a marriage procession in the neighborhood, a village fair, or a myth retold during festivals. The art thus becomes a mirror of Bihari society, shaped by its ritualistic customs, seasonal festivals, and spiritual narratives.

Religious devotion, especially within Hinduism, heavily influences Tikuli content leading to a prevalence of deities like Krishna, Ram, Durga, and Ganesh, often depicted in narrative contexts rather than as static icons.

In recent decades, artists have expanded the narrative boundaries of Tikuli. While preserving traditional forms, they have introduced modern-day themes that reflect current societal issues and aspirations.

Shabina Imam, a state-awarded Tikuli artist, created a groundbreaking piece on women empowerment. Her painting integrated traditional Tikuli elements with scenes of women driving auto-rickshaws, studying, and working showing that the medium can powerfully reflect gender equality and social progress.

Ashok Kumar Biswas, the leading figure in Tikuli revival, has explored themes like Unity in Diversity, using the Tikuli format to depict harmony among India's varied religions, cultures, and communities. His works often feature composite narratives where people from different backgrounds are united in festivals, music, or daily life.

CHAPTER 04

PRODUCTS AND PACKAGING

टिकुली में उत्पाद
PRODUCTS IN TIKULI

Tikuli craft today extends far beyond its traditional role as a forehead adornment and has evolved into a diverse array of both decorative and utilitarian products. While originally limited to small circular bindis made of glass or mica, modern-day Tikuli has expanded to include intricately hand-painted wall plates, tea coasters, trays, jewelry boxes, keychains, fridge magnets, bookmarks, photo frames, clocks, and nameplates. The versatility of the art has also given rise to wearable creations such as sarees, dupattas, stoles, tote bags, and even clothing items, where artisans adapt motifs onto fabric using acrylic paints. Many artisans now design religious and mythological panels, festival-themed décor, and scenes from village life or traditional folklore, creating products that are rich in narrative as well as aesthetic value.

In terms of product costing, Tikuli items are generally priced based on the complexity of the artwork, size, material used, and time required for detailing. Small items like keychains and fridge magnets typically range from ₹50 to ₹200, while mid-range products such as coasters, trays, and bookmarks can cost anywhere between ₹300 to ₹800. Larger and more detailed pieces like hand-painted wall plates, sarees, or framed panels may range from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 or more. Custom and premium artworks especially those made for exhibitions or commissioned orders can go significantly higher, reflecting the artisan's skill and the intricate labor involved.

This expansion reflects not only the adaptability of the craft but also its growing appeal in contemporary markets. Today, Tikuli products cater to both local buyers and international audiences, with increasing demand from exhibitions, craft fairs, and e-commerce platforms. Locally, these products are used as home décor, spiritual or cultural symbols, gifts for weddings and festivals, and souvenirs representing the heritage of Bihar. The blending of age-old techniques with new formats has made Tikuli a vibrant and living craft tradition in the modern era.

एक अच्छे और असफल उत्पाद का विवरण
DESCRIPTION OF A GOOD AND FAILED PRODUCT

According to Tikuli artisan Shabina Imam, who has over 20 years of experience, a good Tikuli product is defined by several quality markers: a smooth black enamel base, fine detailing, no smudging or paint bleeding, and precise white and black linings. The product must be smooth to the touch, with no visible overcoating of paint and must feature glossy, even finishing. Additionally, the figures must be proportional, and both sides of the product, including the back, must be properly coated to prevent damage or moisture penetration. A failed product, on the other hand, may have rough base textures, smudged or uneven lines, paint overflow, dull finish, or off-balance compositions. Shabina explains that common causes of failure include the use of low-quality enamel paint, improper sanding or drying, hasty application of detailing, or tracing errors that distort proportions. Poor weather conditions (especially humidity) and hurried packaging can also affect product quality. She emphasizes the importance of patience and consistency in every step from MDF sanding to varnish finishing to avoid these failures.

बिक्री और परिवहन के लिए पैकेजिंग
PACKAGING FOR SALE AND TRANSPORTATION

Given the fragility and decorative value of Tikuli items especially those made on MDF or ceramic bases , careful packaging is essential. Products are typically wrapped in multiple layers of bubble wrap, followed by foam sheets, and then packed into cardboard boxes to prevent scratches, paint chipping, or breakage. For heavier or bulkier products like trays or framed artworks, artisans sometimes use thermocol padding and reinforced boxes. During exhibitions or online shipping, packaging is even more meticulous, with items cushioned individually and labeled as fragile. Materials such as bubble wrap, cloth pieces, cardboard, and sometimes shredded paper or newspaper are sourced from local markets like Mithapur, Hathwa Market, Gandhi Maidan, and Exhibition Road in Patna. This packaging process is crucial not only for safe transportation and display but also for creating a professional presentation, especially when catering to national or international buyers.

Fig 5.1 Tikuli painting on a cup and coaster by Artisan Siddhi Kumari

ऑनलाइन बाजार और सोशल मीडिया में टिकुली के उत्पाद और प्रचार

PRODUCTS AND PROMOTION OF TIKULI IN THE ONLINE MARKET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In recent years, Tikuli art has evolved beyond its traditional form to find a place in modern utility and decorative products. While earlier it was primarily limited to framed paintings or wall hangings, today artisans are experimenting with a diverse range of items such as trays, tea coasters, mugs, jute bags, tote bags, jewellery, keychains, phone stands, pen holders, bookmarks, and even apparel like sarees, t-shirts, and dupattas. This shift not only reflects the creativity of the artists but also caters to the contemporary market's demand for usable art. Customised gift items and souvenirs are gaining popularity, especially among tourists and patrons of handmade crafts. These new formats help bridge the gap between folk tradition and modern lifestyle preferences.
Despite the expansion in product categories, Tikuli struggles with promotion and visibility in the digital world. Most artisans continue to rely on local exhibitions, handicraft fairs, and government-sponsored events for sales. While a handful of artisans have begun using platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube shorts to share their work, their digital presence remains limited due to lack of professional training, access to resources, and support in navigating online platforms. Many artisans are unaware of or lack the means to list their products on e-commerce platforms like Amazon or IndiaMART, which could significantly expand their customer base beyond Bihar.

Social media platforms like Instagram, which are highly visual and ideal for storytelling, remain underutilised. With the right guidance on digital marketing, photography, content creation, and branding, Tikuli artisans can build a stronger online identity. Creating short videos on the process of making Tikuli, sharing artisan stories, and consistently showcasing new collections can boost visibility. Furthermore, collaborations with influencers, design studios, or sustainable brands can help reach a broader audience.

If given the proper support in building e-commerce skills, packaging, pricing strategies, and digital literacy, Tikuli has the potential to establish itself as not just a regional craft but a globally appreciated art form. Digital platforms, when used strategically, can serve as a powerful tool for both preserving the heritage of Tikuli and empowering the artisans who sustain it.

CHAPTER 06

ARTISANS OF TIKULI: SKILLS AND STORIES

एक कारीगर का दैनिक जीवन
DAILY LIFE OF AN ARTISAN

The daily life of a Tikuli artist is a balance between routine responsibilities and quiet dedication to their art. Many artists begin their day early, managing household chores or personal tasks before setting aside time for their creative work. For women, this often includes cooking, cleaning, and helping their families before they can sit down to paint.

Artists who are still students juggle their academic schedules alongside their artistic commitments. Mornings may involve attending college or completing assignments, while evenings are reserved for painting. They often carry their creative thoughts throughout the day, planning their next piece mentally even while in class or commuting.

Afternoons are usually the most productive, when the surroundings are relatively calm and they can focus deeply. Time often slips by unnoticed as they sit in a quiet corner, immersed in detailing their work. Some may listen to music, while others prefer silence as they concentrate. The work demands patience, but also brings a sense of peace and fulfillment.

Evenings are spent finishing up leftover tasks, preparing for the next day, or simply resting. For many, their art is not just a source of income or creativity it's part of their identity. Each day is shaped by the effort to grow, balance responsibilities, and stay connected to a craft they love.

Fig 6.1 Brush used to do base of Tikuli painting on MDF

Fig 6.2 Artisan Siddhi Kumari working on Tikuli painting

कारीगर प्रोफ़ाइल

ARTISAN PROFILE

SIDDHI KUMARI

SHABINA IMAM

NEHA KUMARI

MANISHA KUMARI

ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS

सिद्धि कुमारी
SIDDHI KUMARI

NAME: SIDDHI KUMARI
AGE : 21
EDUCATION : BA 2ND YEAR
ADDRESS : PAMJICHAUK BATAGANJ, PATNA, BIHAR
FAMILY : PARENTS AND 4 SISTERS
PHONE NO : 6204354677
CRAFT : TIKULI PAINTING
EXPERIENCE : 4 YEARS
TRAINED : UMSAS
ARTISAN CARD NO : ERPTC 1268055
AADHAAR CARD NO : 240063705525

"Tikuli connects me to my roots and identity. I began learning young and grew passionate about its stories and colors. My goal is to promote this art so more people value its cultural depth and the hands behind it and one day recieve state award."

Fig 6.3

Fig 6.4

शबीना इमाम
SHABINA IMAM

NAME: SHABINA IMAM
AGE : 38
EDUCATION : MFA GRADUATE
ADDRESS : SANGAM COLONY, ITI DIGHA, PATNA, BIHAR
FAMILY : SPOUSE AND 2 CHILDERN
PHONE NO : 9798989222
CRAFT : TIKULI PAINTING
EXPERIENCE : ABOVE 20 YEARS
TRAINED : ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS
ARTISAN CARD NO : ERPTC 03370
AADHAAR CARD NO : 587771776031

"My motive is not just to paint, but to make people recognize Tikuli — a folk art rooted in Patna — for its true identity and not confuse it with others like Madhubani. Tikuli is vibrant, precise, and deeply narrative. Through every brushstroke, I aim to revive its legacy, give it rightful visibility, and ensure artisans like me find dignity and livelihood in it."

नेहा कुमारी
NEHA KUMARI

NAME: NEHA KUMARI
AGE : 24
EDUCATION : BA HISTORY HONORS
ADDRESS : SHAHAPUR,DANAPUR PATNA, BIHAR
FAMILY : PARENTS AND 4 SIBLINGS
PHONE NO :8603640086
CRAFT : TIKULI PAINTING
EXPERIENCE : 3 YEARS
TRAINED : ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS
ARTISAN CARD NO : ERPTC 1295808
AADHAAR CARD NO : 488637170461

"I began Tikuli with curiosity, but it became a passion. Creating new designs keeps me inspired. Though we work under Ashok Sir now, I dream of growing independently in this craft and sharing its beauty with others."

Fig 6.5

मनीषा कुमारी
MANISHA KUMARI

NAME: MANISHA KUMARI
AGE : 26
EDUCATION : BA PSYCHOLOGY HONORS
ADDRESS : SHAHAPUR,DANAPUR PATNA, BIHAR
FAMILY : PARENTS AND 1 SIBLINGS
PHONE NO : 9341190358
CRAFT : TIKULI PAINTING
EXPERIENCE : 3 YEARS
TRAINED : ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS
ARTISAN CARD NO : ERPTC 1295764
AADHAAR CARD NO : 259488136357

"Tikuli gave my painting skills purpose. Working on Hanuman Chalisa challenged and shaped me. It's more than art—it's growth, confidence, and identity. I hope to take it forward and explore my own creative path someday."

Fig 6.6

अशोक कुमार बिस्वास
ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS

NAME: ASHOK KUMAR BISWAS
AGE : 69
EDUCATION : BA GRADUATE
ADDRESS : adevash ray apartment, pahari, PATNA, BIHAR
FAMILY : SPOUSE AND 2 CHILDERN
PHONE NO : 9431426715
CRAFT : TIKULI PAINTING
EXPERIENCE : ABOVE 40 YEARS
TRAINED : LAL BABU GUPTA
ARTISAN CARD NO : ERPTC 1038582
AADHAAR CARD NO : 574072057356

"With decades in Tikuli, my aim has always been to revive and modernize this forgotten art. I train young artists, not just to preserve tradition, but to empower them with a creative livelihood and pride in our cultural heritage."

Fig 6.7 Artisan Shri.Ashok kumar Biswas teaching his students at his house

सरकारी योजनाएँ
GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

To support the preservation and growth of traditional crafts like Tikuli art, both the Central and State Governments have introduced several welfare and entrepreneurship schemes. These initiatives aim to empower artisans through financial assistance, skill development, market exposure, and social security. Below are some key schemes that are particularly relevant for Tikuli artists, helping them sustain their livelihoods while promoting India's rich cultural heritage.

1. MUKHYAMANTRI UDYAMI YOJANA (BIHAR GOVERNMENT)

Launched in 2021, this scheme offers ₹10 lakh (50% grant, 50% loan) to promote entrepreneurship among SC/ST/OBC youth, aiding small-scale craft businesses with training and mentorship.

2. PM VISHWAKARMA YOJANA (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT)

Launched in 2023, it supports traditional artisans with ₹15,000 toolkit aid, skill training, marketing support, and collateral-free credit up to ₹3 lakhs at subsidized interest rates.

3. NATIONAL HANDICRAFTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (NHDP)

Implemented by the Ministry of Textiles, NHDP promotes sustainable development of handicrafts through design workshops, skill training, financial aid, infrastructure support, and marketing assistance for artisans and clusters.

4. AMBEDKAR HASTSHILP VIKAS YOJANA (AHVY)

Implemented since 2001, AHVY supports artisans through cluster development, design workshops, exhibitions, and financial aid for raw materials, packaging, and branding under the Ministry of Textiles.

5. HANDICRAFTS ARTISANS COMPREHENSIVE WELFARE SCHEME

This scheme ensures artisan welfare via health insurance, education support for children, pension plans, and eligibility for national/international fairs, strengthening artisan livelihoods and craft sustainability.

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER (HANDICRAFTS)
Ministry of Textiles, Government of India

सम्मान · सामर्थ्य · समृद्धि

बिहार सरकार
बिहार मुख्यमंत्री उद्यमी योजना
ऑनलाइन रजिस्ट्रेशन

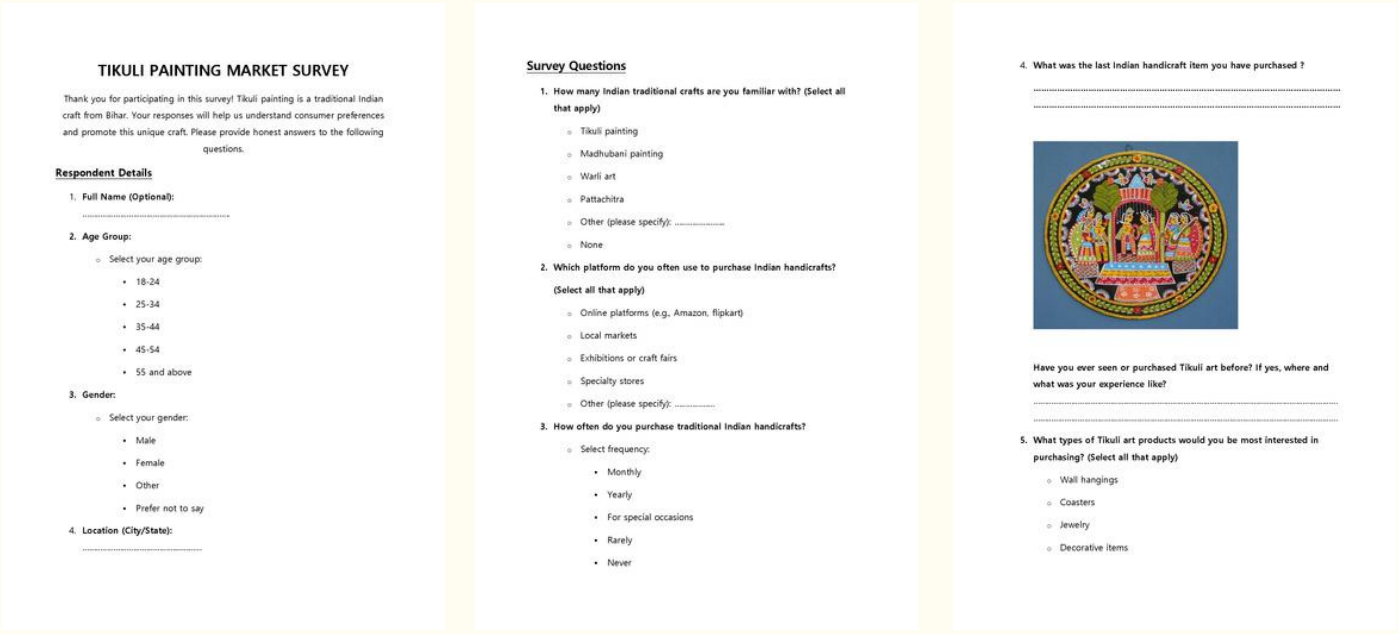
Fig 6.8 Bihar Museum's souvenir shop

CHAPTER ٥٧

MARKET DYNAMICS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

बाजार सर्वेक्षण प्रपत्र
MARKET SURVEY FORM

Our team conducted a market survey to understand public awareness and interest in Tikuli craft. The survey was carried out across locations such as Khadi Mall, Bihar Museum, Bihar Emporium and other public spaces , with total of 58 respondents.



TIKULI PAINTING MARKET SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this survey! Tikuli painting is a traditional Indian craft from Bihar. Your responses will help us understand consumer preferences and promote this unique craft. Please provide honest answers to the following questions.

Respondent Details

1. **Full Name (Optional):**
   .....
2. **Age Group:**
   - Select your age group:
     - 18-24
     - 25-34
     - 35-44
     - 45-54
     - 55 and above
3. **Gender:**
   - Select your gender:
     - Male
     - Female
     - Other
     - Prefer not to say
4. **Location (City/State):**
   .....

Survey Questions

1. **How many Indian traditional crafts are you familiar with? (Select all that apply)**
   - Tikuli painting
   - Madhubani painting
   - Warli art
   - Pattachitra
   - Other (please specify): .....
   - None
2. **Which platform do you often use to purchase Indian handicrafts? (Select all that apply)**
   - Online platforms (e.g., Amazon, flipkart)
   - Local markets
   - Exhibitions or craft fairs
   - Specialty stores
   - Other (please specify): .....
3. **How often do you purchase traditional Indian handicrafts?**
   - Select frequency:
     - Monthly
     - Yearly
     - For special occasions
     - Rarely
     - Never

4. **What was the last Indian handicraft item you have purchased ?**
   .....
   .....

Have you ever seen or purchased Tikuli art before? If yes, where and what was your experience like?
.....
.....

5. **What types of Tikuli art products would you be most interested in purchasing? (Select all that apply)**
   - Wall hangings
   - Coasters
   - Jewelry
   - Decorative items

   - Other (please specify): .....
6. **How much would you be willing to pay for a high-quality Tikuli art piece?**
   - Select a price range:
     - Under ₹500
     - ₹500 - ₹1,000
     - ₹1,000 - ₹2,000
     - ₹2,000 - ₹5,000
     - Above ₹5,000
7. **Would you prefer Tikuli art products that are purely decorative or those with functional uses?**
   - Purely decorative
   - Functional (e.g., trays, coasters, phone cases)
   - Both
8. **What factors influence your decision to purchase traditional Indian handicrafts? (Select all that apply)**
   - Design
   - Quality
   - Cultural significance
   - Price
   - Eco-friendliness
9. **What is your perception of the quality and durability of Tikuli art products compared to other handicrafts?**
   - Better
   - Similar
   - Worse
   - No opinion
10. **How likely are you to recommend Tikuli art products to friends or family?**
    - Very likely
    - Somewhat likely
    - Not likely

    .....

Fig 7.1 Market survey form

The questions in the Tikuli Painting Market Survey were carefully designed to capture both demographic and behavioral insights of respondents, as well as their awareness and preferences regarding traditional Indian handicrafts, particularly Tikuli art.

Demographic Questions (Age, Gender, Location)

These helped identify the target audience segments most aware of or interested in Tikuli art. Age groups and locations provided a basis for comparing interest levels across different demographics.

Awareness of Traditional Crafts

Asking about familiarity with various crafts helped measure how well Tikuli painting is recognized compared to other popular crafts like Madhubani or Warli. This provided context for Tikuli's current position in the craft market.

Purchase Behavior and Platforms

Questions on where and how often respondents buy handicrafts helped identify the most effective sales channels for Tikuli products, such as online platforms, local markets, or exhibitions.

Product Preference and Price Range

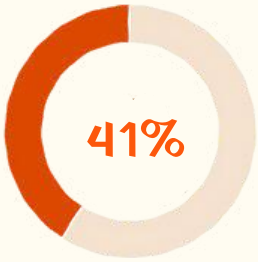
Knowing what product types (e.g., wall hangings, jewelry) and price ranges appeal to customers allowed for better market positioning and product design to match demand.

Perception and Purchase Influences

Questions on quality perception, functional vs. decorative preferences, and decision-making factors (design, quality, cultural significance) offered insights into consumer priorities and how Tikuli products can be improved or marketed.

Recommendation Likelihood

This measured customer satisfaction potential and the likelihood of word-of-mouth promotion, which is crucial for traditional crafts with niche markets.



बाज़ार विश्लेषण
MARKET ANALSIS

AWARENESS AND FAMILIARITY WITH TIKULI ART

We analyzed the survey data and discovered that only 24 out of 58 respondents (approximately 41%) are familiar with Tikuli painting, a traditional craft originating from Bihar. In comparison, Madhubani painting, another prominent craft from the region, is recognized by 50 respondents, indicating significantly higher awareness. Other crafts, such as Warli art (18 respondents) and Pattachitra (7 respondents), also appear more familiar to some respondents than Tikuli art. The majority of those aware of Tikuli art are from Bihar, particularly Patna, suggesting that its recognition is geographically concentrated. This limited awareness outside Bihar highlights a significant opportunity for growth. By increasing exposure through targeted marketing efforts, such as showcasing Tikuli art at national craft fairs, cultural exhibitions, or online platforms, we believe its visibility could be enhanced to reach a broader audience across India and beyond. The data suggests that educational campaigns about the history and uniqueness of Tikuli art could also help bridge this awareness gap.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE DECISIONS

We identified that design is the most critical factor influencing the purchase of traditional Indian handicrafts, cited by 45 respondents, followed by quality (23 respondents), cultural significance (20 respondents), price (10 respondents), and eco-friendliness (5 respondents). These preferences indicate that buyers are drawn to visually appealing and well-crafted items that carry cultural value. For Tikuli art specifically, 28 respondents expressed a preference for products that serve both decorative and functional purposes, such as trays, phone cases, or coasters, while 17 prefer purely decorative items like wall hangings. This balance between aesthetics and utility suggests a market opportunity for versatile Tikuli art products that combine intricate designs with practical applications. For example, coasters or trays featuring Tikuli art could appeal to buyers seeking both beauty and functionality. To capitalize on these influencing factors, marketing strategies should emphasize the unique, handcrafted designs of Tikuli art, its cultural heritage rooted in Bihar, and its potential for practical use. Additionally, highlighting eco-friendly production methods could attract environmentally conscious consumers, further broadening the appeal of Tikuli art products.

PURCHASING PATTERNS AND PRODUCT PREFERENCES

Our examination of purchasing behavior reveals a strong preference for physical marketplaces when acquiring Indian handicrafts, including Tikuli art. Local markets are the most popular purchasing platform, cited by 33 respondents, followed by exhibitions or craft fairs (24 respondents) and speciality stores (18 respondents). Only 10 respondents reported using online platforms, indicating that buyers value in-person shopping experiences where they can physically interact with the products. Specific locations like Khadi Mall and Bihar Museum were frequently mentioned as places where respondents encountered or purchased Tikuli art, underscoring the importance of these venues for market reach. In terms of purchase frequency, 25 respondents buy handicrafts for special occasions, 16 purchase rarely, 7 do so yearly, and only 2 buy monthly, suggesting that Tikuli art is often an occasional or impulse purchase rather than a regular acquisition. The most sought-after Tikuli art products are wall hangings, favored by 40 respondents, followed by decorative items (21 respondents), coasters (17 respondents), and jewelry (7 respondents). Pricing preferences lean toward affordability, with 25 respondents willing to pay under ₹500, 20 open to ₹500–₹1,000, 10 considering ₹1,000–₹2,000, and only 3 prepared to spend above ₹2,000. This strong inclination toward budget-friendly options suggests that producers should focus on offering cost-effective Tikuli art products, such as smaller wall hangings or functional items like coasters, to appeal to a larger market segment.

PERCEPTION OF QUALITY AND RECOMMENDATION POTENTIAL

Our analysis indicates a generally positive perception of Tikuli art's quality and durability, with 22 respondents rating it as better than other handicrafts, 24 viewing it as similar, and only 2 considering it worse. This favorable perception is particularly strong among respondents who have seen or purchased Tikuli art, often at cultural hubs like Khadi Mall or Bihar Museum, where they reported positive experiences with its aesthetic and longevity. Remarkably, 41 respondents stated they are very likely to recommend Tikuli art to friends or family, even including some who are unfamiliar with it, while 15 are somewhat likely, and only 3 are not likely to recommend it. This high recommendation likelihood, especially in Bihar, points to significant word-of-mouth potential, which could be a powerful tool for expanding Tikuli art's market presence. The enthusiasm for recommending Tikuli art, even among those with limited exposure, may stem from its visual appeal and cultural resonance, particularly in its home state. To leverage this, we suggest increasing visibility through strategic placements in cultural exhibitions, museums, and local markets, while encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences through testimonials or social media campaigns. This approach could amplify Tikuli art's reach and foster greater consumer trust and interest.

Fig 7.2 Bihar museum Shop products

एस डब्ल्यू ओ सी विश्लेषण
S W O C ANALYSIS

ताकत
STRENGTH

1. Tikuli art has a unique aesthetic appeal with intricate motifs and vibrant colors, making it visually striking and versatile.
2. Market surveys indicate high demand, especially for products like paintings, coasters, and handcrafted home décor.
3. Artisans possess exceptional skill and patience, essential for the detailed enamel-based painting process.
4. The craft represents Bihar's rich cultural heritage, drawing from Hindu mythology, folklore, and local traditions.
5. Tikuli has evolved from being purely decorative to including functional utility items such as trays, bookmarks, jewellery, and more.
6. The craft requires low initial investment and uses affordable materials, making it accessible to beginners.
7. Most Tikuli items are handmade, adding authenticity and value in today's sustainability-conscious market.
8. Recognition through Padma Shri and state awards lends authenticity and credibility to the craft.
9. Successful senior artisans have created opportunities and a platform for new artists to thrive.

कमजोरी
WEAKNESS

1. Tikuli suffers from low local awareness and recognition, even within Patna, where the craft originated.
2. The intricate time-consuming nature of the craft discourages many learners from continuing their training specially younger generation
3. Artisans face irregular income, relying mainly on seasonal exhibitions and personal commissions, with minimal online market exposure.
4. Lack of standardized pricing often leads to undervaluation of work.
5. The enamel-based process is slow and labor-intensive, limiting production speed and scalability.
6. Gender disparity exists, with women primarily involved in production and rarely taking lead roles in sales or marketing.
7. Tikuli has limited global visibility and remains overshadowed by more prominent crafts like Madhubani.
8. Younger generations show declining interest in preserving and practicing traditional Tikuli techniques.
9. Confusion with Madhubani and concerns about the non-eco-friendly nature of enamel reduce the craft's appeal and market clarity.

चुनौती
CHALLENGE

1. Many artisans engage in Tikuli only as a means of earning, without a deep-rooted connection to the craft's legacy.
2. Mass-produced imitations and machine-made products threaten the authenticity and income of genuine artisans.
3. There is a declining interest among youth to pursue or preserve traditional crafts.
4. Traditional materials like enamel lack eco-friendliness, and sustainable alternatives are expensive.
5. Recognition of Tikuli among younger buyers is fading, making it harder to distinguish from other folk arts.
6. Artisans lack awareness of existing government support, funding schemes, and policies.
7. There is limited interconnection among Tikuli artisans, affecting collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
8. Tikuli lacks a GI (Geographical Indication) tag, leaving the craft vulnerable to imitation and market dilution.

अवसर
OPPORTUNITY

1. Rising demand for handmade and sustainable products creates new market potential for Tikuli.
2. There is strong potential for Tikuli art as souvenirs and cultural merchandise.
3. Export opportunities exist in countries that value traditional arts, such as Japan, the U.S., and parts of Europe.
4. Tikuli can be promoted under national campaigns like 'Vocal for Local' and 'Make in India'.
5. Product diversification into jewellery, fashion accessories, and stationery can attract new customer segments.
6. Tikuli has the potential to be a cultural tourism highlight, especially within Bihar.
7. Art and craft workshops in schools, colleges, and design institutions can raise awareness and interest.
8. Online marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart, and social media can increase visibility and sales.
9. Government-led digital literacy and marketing training can empower artisans and improve online presence.
10. The craft holds promise for empowering women artisans and strengthening community livelihoods through collective initiatives.

प्रमुख चुनौतियाँ
MAJOR CHALLENGES

Identity Confusion

Tikuli is often confused with Madhubani due to visual similarities. This affects the craft's individual recognition and reduces its cultural and commercial value.

Income Instability

Most artisans face irregular or project-based income. Dependence on fairs, personal orders, or third-party commissions makes financial planning difficult.

Market Visibility

Tikuli art suffers from low visibility. Without proper promotion, digital platforms, or consistent branding, the craft struggles to reach wider audiences and combat mass-produced imitations.

No GI Tag

Unlike many other crafts from Bihar, Tikuli still lacks a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This limits its legal protection, identity recognition, and potential for national and global promotion.

Limited Access

Many artisans lack awareness or access to government schemes, training support, or exposure to broader markets, restricting their professional growth.

CONCLUSION

This 10-day research journey into Tikuli art offered our team not only a deeper understanding of the craft itself, but also valuable insight into the broader cultural, social, and economic landscape in which it thrives. From exploring the rich history of Bihar and Patna to tracing the intricate evolution of Tikuli motifs and designs, we gained a newfound appreciation for the cultural heritage and creative resilience of the artisans who continue to sustain this tradition.

Through firsthand interactions with artists, field mapping, and market analysis, we uncovered both the strengths and the pressing challenges facing Tikuli today including identity confusion, lack of recognition, and irregular income. Despite this, we also witnessed the immense potential of Tikuli to grow through innovation, digital promotion, and institutional support.

Understanding the tools, processes, materials, and stories behind each product allowed us to see the craft as more than just decorative it is a reflection of lived experiences, generational wisdom, and cultural pride. We learned how design can be a bridge between past and future, tradition and modernity.

Most importantly, this documentation project taught us the power of collaborative field research. It deepened our empathy, sharpened our observation skills, and reminded us of the designer's responsibility to create with purpose, respect, and cultural awareness. We now walk away not just with documentation, but with a strong desire to preserve, promote, and innovate within the world of Indian handicrafts starting with Tikuli.

हमारी टीम
OUR TEAM

Fig 7.3 : Team image

From left to right : Yuvashree , Riya, Neha, MS.Shabina Imam(Artisan), Saket, Aastha, Abhishek

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