

**WOODEN MASK (MUKHA)- THE ANCIENT FOLK HANDICRAFT OF  
KUSHMANDI BLOCK, DAKSHIN DINAJPUR DISTRICT, WEST  
BENGAL- A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Handicraft plays a very important role in representing the culture and traditions of any region. Handicrafts are a substantial medium to preserve of rich traditional art, heritage and culture, traditional skills and talents which are associated with people's lifestyle and history. Handicrafts industry comprises diversified products portfolio and there is large variety available in the market. In this context wooden mask (mukha) of Kushmandi block, Dakshin Dinajpur is one of the ancient handicrafts of West Bengal. The wooden mask craft recognized as one of the best example of elegance, exquisite beauty and finest craftsmanship. IN recent years, this traditional, decorated handcrafted goods of wooden mask artisans are in immense command in inland and abroad markets, despite of this the craftsmen are facing lots of problems. So the proposed research study is an attempt to present a detailed account of wooden mask (mukha) craft in Kushmandi Block, Dakshin Dinajpur, and also highlight the socio economic conditions of the craftsmen. In this paper the craft related problem of craftsmen has been addressed and an attempt regarding solution of problems has been also suggested.

**Keywords:** Handicraft, Rajbanshi, Flok, Gomira Dance, Wooden Mask

**INTRODUCTION**

The term 'Handicraft' encompasses a wide range of artifacts. According to definition adopted by UNESCO/CCI (Manila 1997) "Handicraft are the ones produced by the artisans, either completely handmade or with help of manual or mechanical tools, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisans remains the most substantial component of the finished product. Handicraft is made without restriction in terms of quantity and using raw materials from

sustainable resources. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally significant, functional traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.”

In India craft is the statement of a racial experience, and serves the purposes of life, like daily bread. For centuries, Indian handicraft has been distinguished for their great aesthetic and functional value. India is a country having a rich heritage of art and craft from time immemorial. For centuries, Its creation have fascinated the world. Even today the art and craft pull hundreds of tourist annually across the world. Exquisite workmanship converts the easily available raw materials into products of high aesthetic and functional values. Indian handicraft industry is engaged in the production of wood carving, delicate ivories, brocades, glazed potteries, jewelries, swales, fine silks, silver works and much more. According to World Bank Reports there are 9-10 million craft workers in India including part timers. The craft account for 15-20% of the country’s manufacturing workforce, and contribute 8% of GDP in manufacturing.

Handicraft of Bengal embodies our rich heritage of aesthetics, creativity and artistry. Actually Bengal is known all over the world for its expertise in art and craft. The unique rustic and mystic charm of Bengal craft is admired by art-lovers of the world over. The craft treated as the backbone of the rural economy of the state. Its skill in architectural splendors to its excellent works on wood work, Terracotta, Paintings, Sculpture, and Textile run unparallel and serves as home to many talented artisans in India. The age old traditional craft of West Bengal have been so well molded according to the present day demands that it seems that these artisans, apart from their traditional skills, have an expertise in the art of survival as well. The craft sector provides low cost, green livelihood opportunities, to more than 5.5 lakh men and women. The sector represents economic lifeline of the vulnerable sections of the society. In today’s globalised world the growing retail industry demand for green production, potential for e-commerce have created new opportunities for craftsmen like wood carvers of wooden mask of Kushmandi Block of Dakshin Dinajpur district. Here an attempt was made to study the detailed account of Wooden Mask (Mukha) craft of kushmandi, Dakshin Dinajpur.

## **OBJECTIVES**

In the context f above discussion the main objective of this article isto understand the detailed image of Gomira dance, Gomira wodden mask and livelihood of the craftsman of the study area. Specially

- To make an overview of the Gomira dance, its history and present practices.
- To focus on the production process of wooden mask crafts, the implements and Raw materials used in it and technological aspects associated with these craft.

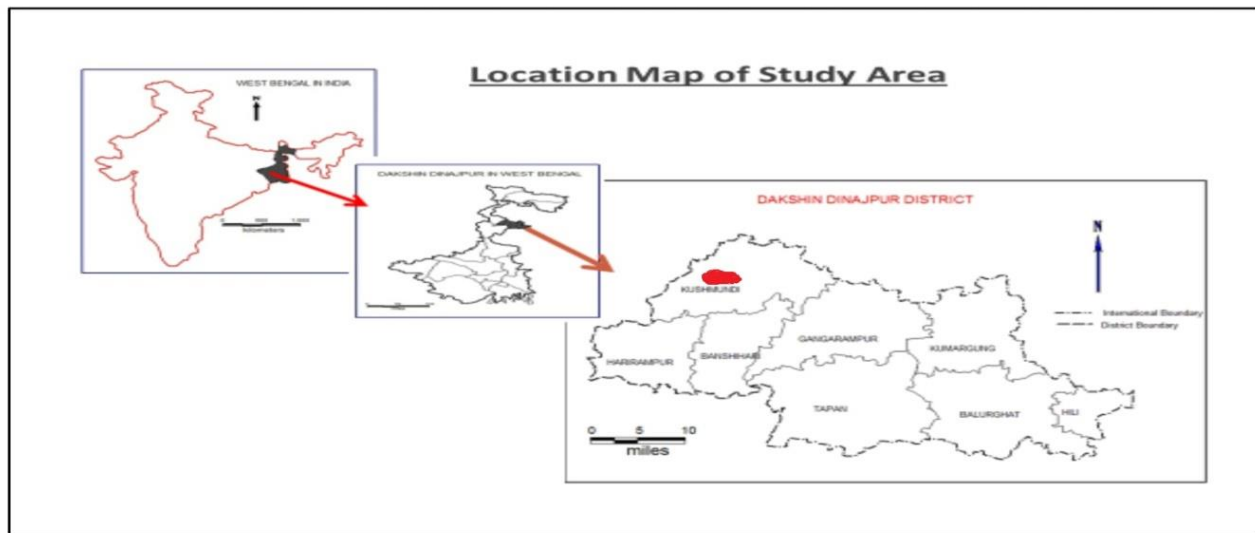
- To examine the Socio-Economic profile of the craftsman household.
- To know the Government policy, facilities and business awareness for the development of wooden mask industry and for the craftsman also.
- To identify the present problems relating with the crafts and craftsman and highlight some suggestion to overcome the major problem existing in the study area.

## **DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY**

In the present paper the researcher has been used both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has been collected from the study area through stratified purposive sampling techniques with unstructured interview schedule. Face to face interrogation of the local craftsman by the researcher to obtain data and to identify different problems related to their craft. The secondary data borrowed from different sources like book, journals, Published and unpublished research work, Govt. reports as well as internet. The primary and secondary were processed on computer using the MS Excel and MS Word.

## **STUDY AREA**

The study area confined to wooden mask craftsman concentrated different villages of Deul and Akcha G.P. of Kushmandi Block of Dakshin Dinajpur district, West Bengal. The geographical location of this area is  $25^{\circ}52'23''$  N and  $88^{\circ}85'26''$  E. The main villages are Mahisbathan, Mangaldaha, Madhupur, Ruanagar, Sabdalpur, Sindurmuchi, Ushaharan, Baishapara. For this study we select four villages namely Mahisbathan, Ushaharan, Mangaldaha, Baishapara. The main reason Behind this selection is out of 151 craftsmen household more than 70 household situated in those above mentioned village. This villages located just a almost distance of 6 km from the block headquarter Kushmandi or Buniadpur- Kaliyaganj high way.



**Fig No. 1: Location Map of the Study Area**

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Gomira Dance and Wooden Mask:**

#### **Gomira Dance:**

The wooden mask is closely associated with the Gomira dance from of Kushmandi block. The origin of Gomira dance are not exactly traceable, but researcher state that the Gomira dance originate in the diffusion of different cultural influences in North Bengal. It is believed to have its origin in Mahayana Buddhism. This also has a tradition of ceremonial masked dances. Northern Bengal was under the influence of Buddhism till at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century, gradually shifting to various shakti cults, which continue into present times.

The ecstatic Gomira mask dance of Dakshin Dinajpur district has ensued from animistic practices of the Desi and Poli communities of the Rajbanshis. The Rajbanshi community is the largest aboriginal community in the Northern region of West Bengal. The word Rajbanshi literally means "Royal community". Rajbanshi people have a mix culture of both Hindu and Buddhism. The Rajbanshi community has their own dialects, culture of and way of living. The culture reflects humbleness, peace, unity and harmony with nature as Rajbanshi are primarily animist.

The word Gomira is a colloquial from of the root word 'Gramchadi' (a local shakti deity), alternatively it could be derived from the 'Gamer' word which is use to make the mask. The Gomira dances of mukha khel are organized to propitiate the deity to usher in the 'good forces'

and drive out the 'evil forces' during the harvesting season. It is usually organized between Chaitra sankranti, the last day of the Bengali month Chaitra (March-April) and Ashada (June-July) which coincide with the sowing seasons. Dances are thus seen as a way of invoking the local village deities for good harvest.

The Gomira dances have two distinct forms. One is the Gomira format, which has characters with links to the animist tradition. The characters are Chamunda, Samsan Kali, Sikkidhal, Masan Kali, Dakini Biswal, Singhi Biswal, Bagh (Tiger), Nar-Rakhas and Narsingha Avtar. The dance commences with the entry of two characters, Buro-Buri, who are representations of Shiva and Parvati. The other dance form is Ram-Vanvas, based on the story of Rama's exile to the forest from the Ramayana. The characters in this dance include Ram, Sita, Laxman, King Dasarath, Kaushalya, Kaikeyi, Angad, Jatayu, Hanuman, Jambavan and Ravana. The Ram-Vanvas dance is not linked to any season and is actually organized year-round, but is more popular during October- November, closely matching the times for Durga Puja and Kali Puja.

Every village of reasonable size, say a thousand inhabitants has its own Gomira dance troupe. Each village organizes at least one Gomira dance during this period according to their convenience but there is no fixed date. The venue for the dance is an open area, known as Gomira Tala, which is usually located next to the shrine, called Thaan. The Thaan is dedicated to shakti deities and located below a banyan tree, a little distance from the village. The night before the dance the masks are brought out and placed for Nishi puja, conducted to the beating of dhaks (drum, ethnic to rural Bengal) and kansar (bell-metal used as cymbal).

The dancers are all male without exception and portray one or many characters; male, female or animal. The costumes are made by the dancers themselves or by their family members. The interesting aspect is that the total absence of any vocal or oral part in the dance. There are no songs or chants. The dance performances are not codified through specific bodily movements or gestures. The movements are spontaneous, instinctive and improvised by the dancers who often go into a state of trance during the performance, which is called Bhor. It is believed that while experiencing bhor, the dancers become possessed by the characteristics of the deity whose mask he is wearing. The audience believe that at that time the super natural spirits enter the body of the dancers. That time villagers pledge (manat) a certain type and number of masks to their favored deity for fulfillment of any wish.



**Fig No. 2: Dancers wearing Gomira mask**



**Fig. No. 3: Gomira Dancers**

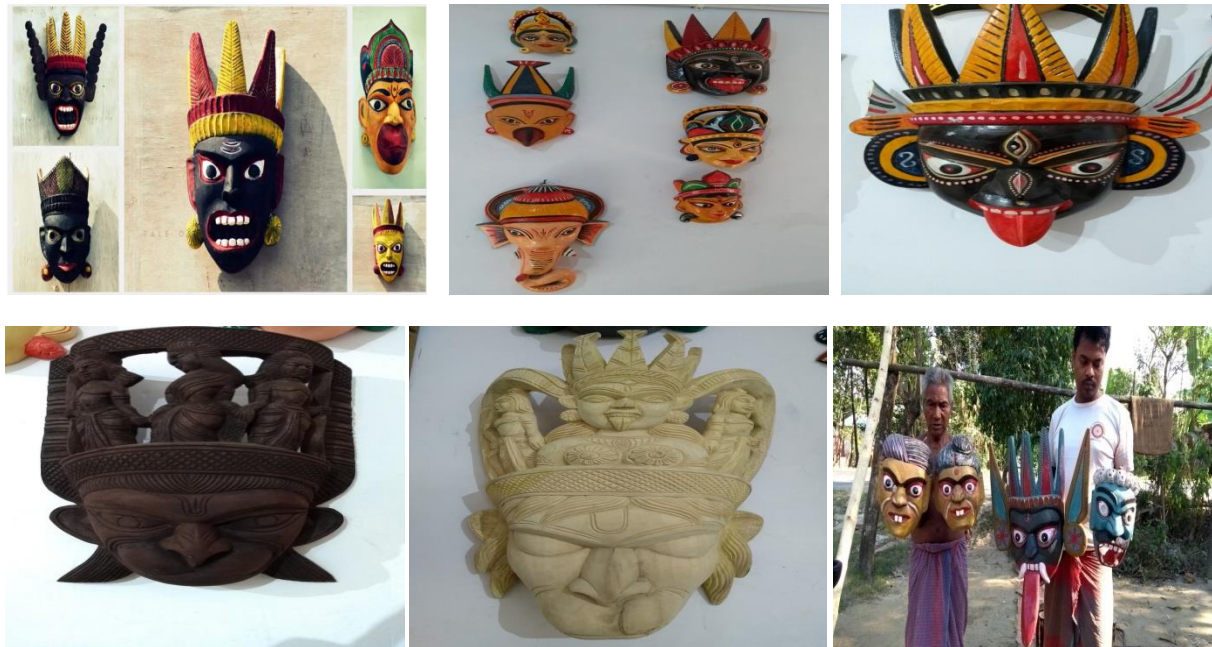


**Fig no. 4,5 & 6: Gomira Dancers performing dance at village field among villagers**

### **The Gomira Mask or Wooden Mask**

Wooden Mask craft is one of the primordial handicrafts of the state. It is recognized as one of the best example of exquisite beauty, elegance and finest craftsmanship. The Gomira Mask is inexorably linked to the Gomira mask dance prevalent in the area of Kushmandi Block of Dakshin Dinajpur district.

Actually a villager makes a 'promise'- called 'manat' to offer a mask to a deity if his or her wish is fulfilled. Thus the mask started its journey from religious aspect and dance performances to the urban drawing room. Over the years the Gomira Mask has gained recognition and emerged as a small- scale cottage industry.



**Fig. No. 7,8,9,10,11 & 12: Different Gomira Mask & Craftsmen with Gomira Mask**

## **RAW MATERIALS**

### **Wood**

Historically the masks were made from ‘pure wood’ such as Neem as per Hindu mythology. Later locally available and cheaper wood such as mango, pakur, kadam, gamar and teak come to used. Now a day’s masks are made mostly with wood of gamer tree which is locally grown in the area. This soft wood termite resistant and easily crafted and it is also preferred as it is light wood and Gomira dancers wearing light mask during the dance. The wood is purchased from a nearby saw mill or sometimes cut from a tree by the craftsman himself. The craftsmen are very conscious of the environment and always plant one tree for trees cut down, usually of the same species

### **Color & Vernish**

Although the masks used for dance are brightly painted, decorative mask are made without paint. In some cases ablack hue is used which comes from the fruits of tree ‘Batasbot’. Gomira masks are painted with natural dyes, red dye was made from segun (Teak), green from seem(a form of bean), violet from jamun (syzgium cumini), and black from Jia tree (*Lannea coromandelica*). However these dyes were not permanent and tended to fade with time and were very time consuming. The crafts man had to gather the material, grind it and mix with water and strain

through cloth before use. Slowly the use of chemical dyes and even enamel paints have gained acceptance mainly because of ready availability and permanence, which is not very appealing to traditionalist.

The mask gets a coat or two of natural varnish, which provides smoothness to the mask and ensures durability. Terpins are mostly used for this purpose which is collected from the locally available pine tree.

### **Traditional learning of human skill**

The intrinsic excellence of wooden mask makers of Kushmandi block of Dakshin Dinajpur district gives a distinct identity to the wooden mask craft by their human skill. The knowledge, skill and tradition that flow generation to generation have a great deal in the craftsmanship of the wooden mask makers. Traditional techniques heavily reflect in the mask making process. Cutting the log of wood in the proper size and the seasoning the wood require high amount of human skill. The final shape of the mask is made by the use of a broad chisel and hammer and this part of the mask making process provide the required shape and look to the mask. The shape and look of the mask have to be a proper representation of mythological character. Due to the skill and technique of mask making artists of Kushmandi are able to provide the proper link between mask and mythology

### **Tools**

Craft persons use some basic tools and instruments to carve out the mask from wood. All these tools are made locally. The tools are Hammer, Scissors, and Chisel and hand drills, Sickle, bench knives, bent gauges, straight gauges.



**Fig. No. 13: Different tools used in Mask making**



## **Production Process**

**Step-I** The wood is easily purchased from a nearby saw mill or sometimes cut from at nearby the craftsman himself. Sometimes small businessman of wood supplies the wood to the craftsman.

**Step-II** The mask making begins with the cutting of the log of wood according to required size for mask. The initial piece of wood is about 18 feet to 24 feet. A chunk of wood is split with machines into blocks of 3-4 feet, then the wood undergoes a process of seasoning and chemical treatment before the mask are carved. The natural process of treatment includes soaking (i.e, soaking of the wood block in a solution of boric acid, borax and copper sulphate in 1 liter of water in the proportion of 3:4:5) drying of wood block alternatively over a considerable period of time. This makes the wood crack resistant and reduces chances of infestation.

**Step-III** The basic emerges fist with the use of a sharp tool called Banshla or adze. This is followed by the use of a broad chisel and hammer to bring out the final shape. Once the broad structure of the front of the mask is complete, the reverse side is chiseled to fit the face of the dancer. Chisels are used to gouge out cavities such as the opening of the mouth and eyes. If the mask is to be used for the purpose of dancing, only then the eyes, mouth, etc are hollowed out.

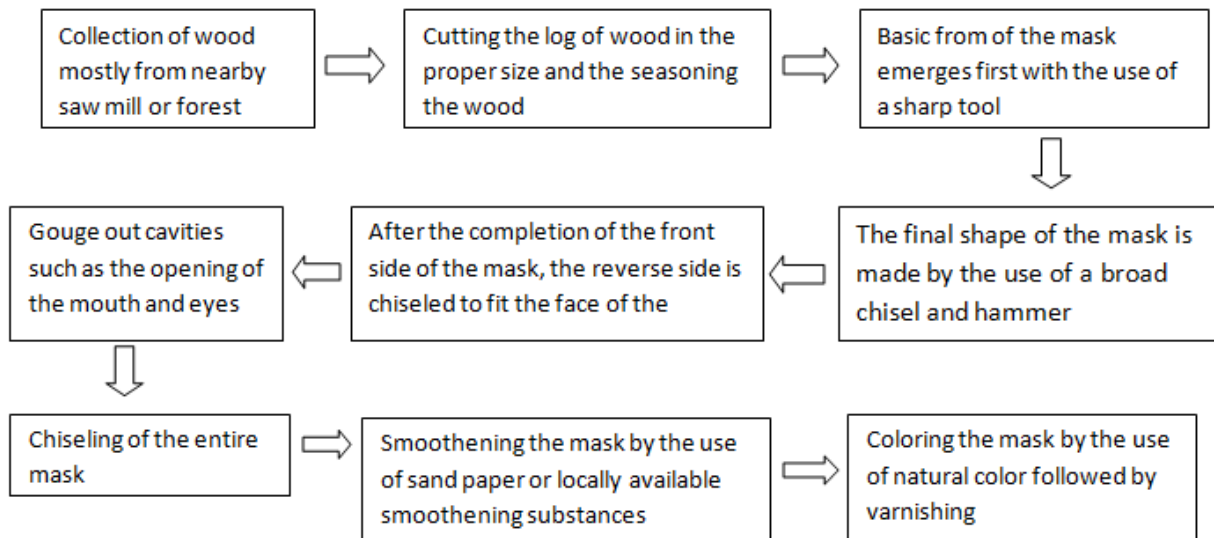
**Step-IV** The fina procedure involves fine chiseling of the entire mask. This whole process takes about 4-5 days, or more depending upon the complexity of the mask. Once the mask is complete, then comes finishing; the first step to which is smoothening of the mask, which is done by using sand papers of various grades.

**Step-v** Next, the mask gets a coat or two natural varnishes, which provides smoothness to the mask and ensures durability. They mostly use terpenes which are collected locally. Many times the masks are sold in this condition itself. In case the masks are to be sold in to the Gomira dance performers' or in the market they need to be hand painted. The colors particular to the characters to be portrayed. Actually depending on requirement, the masks are painted.



Fig. No. 14,15,16,17,18,19: Different stages of Gomira mask Making from wood carving to final varnishing and color

**Flowchart of the Preparation Process**



**Government and Non Government Support & Marketing:**

Gomira craft is evolving according to changing markets. In the last two decades there has been a shift in the market trends as the masks have become a coveted collector’s item. This was the

beginning of a new journey for the craft. Now a day's Govt. and different non Govt. organization extended their support for making of wooden mask and craftsman also. The department of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises and Textiles (MSME&T) in association with UNESCO and Banglanatak.com has developed Rural Craft Hub in Mahisbathan, Kushmandi. This craft hub runs by Mahisbathan Gramin Hasta Shilpa Samabay Samity. West Bengal Khadi & Village industry Board has supported the infrastructural development at the craft hub. Every year this Samity organized a village fair namely ' Mukha Mela' to extended the platform for craftsman and create market for wooden mask. UNESCO provides funding for Mukha Mela. UNESCO also takes initiative to send the artisans in different handicraft fair world over. A renowned artisan Mr. Sankar Das take part in Handicraft exhibition in France 2015, he also visited London, Edinburg and Glasgow last year with Mukhan Handicrafts. There has been continios effort by MSME&T, Govt. of West Bengal to market exposure, direct market linkage, and design diversification and improvement. Biswa Bangla and District industrial centre (DIC), Balurghat inform the artisans time to time about the handicraft fair & festivals all over the India and also arranged journey fair, accommodation to join and sell their product.



**Fig. No. 20,21 & 22: Maketing aspect of Gomira mask, A rural Fair in Study area**

## **Socio-Economic profile of the study Area**

### **Population Composition**

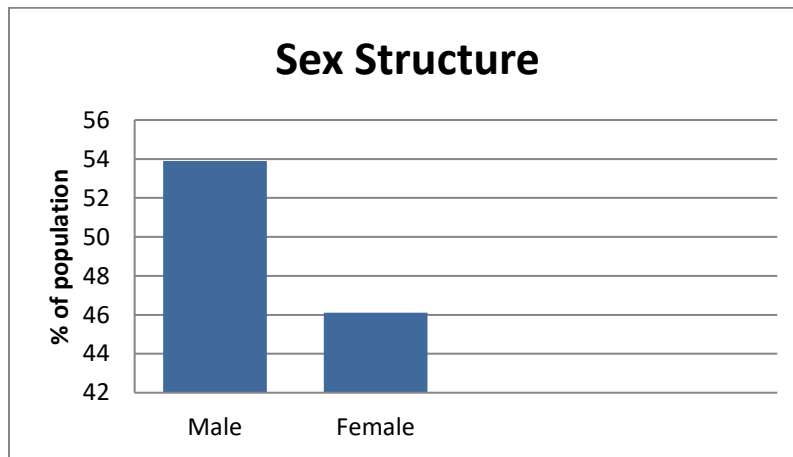
Population or Human Resource is an important factor of economic development. As it is a craft village the prosperity of the study area is determined by the skill, efficiency, and attitude of the human resource. From the surveyed household the total no. of Male population is 166 (53.90%) and the total no. of female population is 142(46.10%). So it is a normal male- female distribution in the context of Bengal rural village as the male population is higher than female.

**Table No. 1: Sex structure of the study area**

| Sex    | No. of Population | % of population |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Male   | 166               | 53.90           |
| Female | 142               | 46.10           |
| Total  | 308               | 100.00          |

Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

**Fig. No. 23: Sex Structure of the Study area**



Distribution of craftsman:

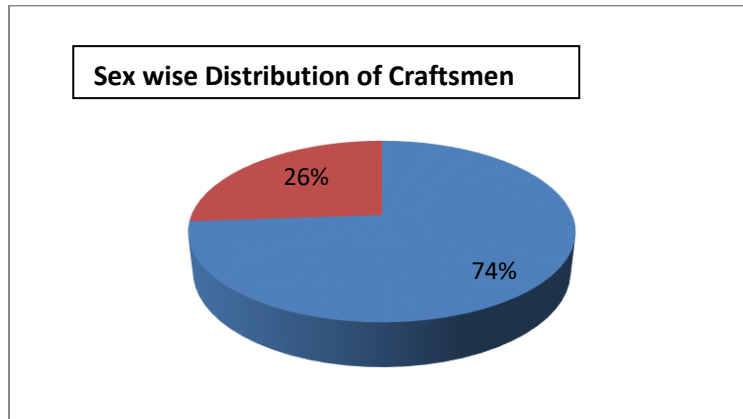
The wooden mask making work mainly done by the male artisans of the study area. Actually the carving of wood has mainly done by the male craftsman member of the family and other work like soaking of wood dying the mask with different colors have been assist by the female members. The total craftsman of the study area is 88. Among them male craftsman are 65(73.86%) and female craftsman are 23(26.14%).

**Table no. 2: Sex wise distribution of Craftsman**

| Craftsman | No. of People | % of people |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| Male      | 65            | 73.86       |
| Female    | 23            | 26.14       |
| Total     | 88            | 100.00      |

Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

**Fig. No. 24: Sex wise distribution of craftsmen**



**Level of Education:**

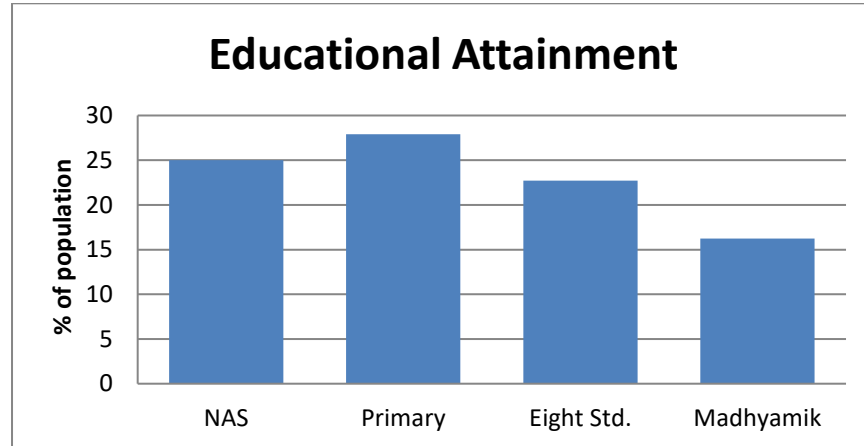
Education is a process by which one can understand his/her position in society. It is not a process of learning of living best but a leading process of socialization for future adjustment. Here we highlight the level of education of overall household. In the study area out of total population 77 (25%) people are never attended school (NAS). Out of total literate person 86 (27.92%) people are attended up to primary level, 70 (22.72%) people complete their study up to eight standard, 50 (16.23%) passed the Madhyamik level, and 25 (8.13%) people reached the level of H.S. & above. Rural backwardness, lack of awareness are the reason behind the poor standard of education in the study area.

**Table No. 3: Level of Education of the Study area**

| Level of Education | No. of People | % of People |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| NAS                | 77            | 25.00       |
| Primary            | 86            | 27.92       |
| Eight stad.        | 70            | 22.72       |
| Madhyamik          | 50            | 16.23       |
| H.S. & Above       | 25            | 8.13        |
| Total              | 308           | 100.00      |

NAS: Never attended School  
 Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

**Fig. No. 25: Educational Attainment of the Study Area**



**Sanitation & Drinking Water:**

Hygiene and Sanitation play an important role in maintaining family health. Open defecation means no sanitation. Healthy sanitary system determines the conscious of healthy life. In the study area out of 50 household 47(94%) have the sanitation and only 3(6%) household have no sanitation. Out of 47 household with sanitation only 7(%) household have kacca sanitation and 40(%) household have proper pucca sanitation.

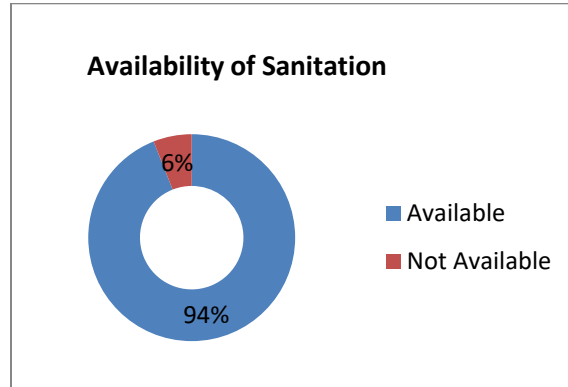
Apart from sanitation and hygiene supply of safe water at home is the most basic requirements for human health and all countries have a responsibility to ensure that every can access them. In the study area most of the household i.e, 35(70%) arrange the drinking water by its own and 15 (30%) household depends on Govt. arrangements. Notable fact is that the only type of drinking water is tube well.

**Table No. 4: Availability of Sanitation, Condition of sanitation, Availability of Drinking water**

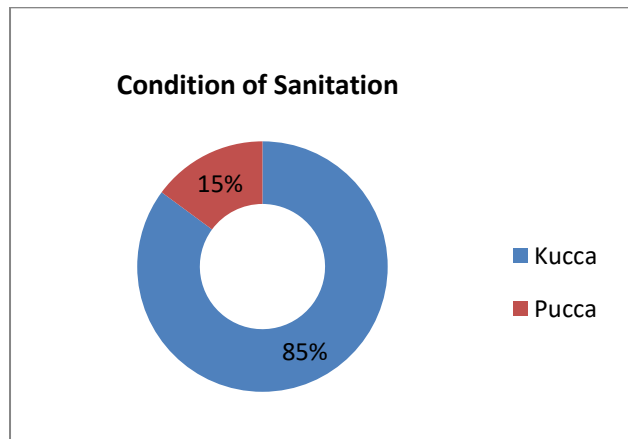
| A.O.S. | N.O.H. | % O.H  | C.O.S. | N.O.H. | % H.H. | A.O.D. | N.O.H. | % O.H. |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Ava.   | 47     | 94     | Kucca  | 40     | 85.11  | Own    | 35     | 70     |
| N.Ava. | 03     | 06     | Pucca  | 07     | 14.89  | Govt.  | 15     | 30     |
| Total  | 50     | 100.00 | Total  | 47     | 100.00 | Total  | 50     | 100.00 |

A.O.S.: Availability of sanitation, C.O.S: Condition of sanitation A.O.D: Availability of drinking water  
Source: Field survey,Oct,2018

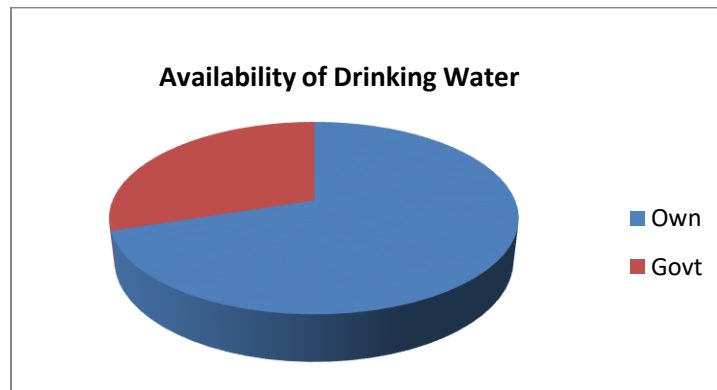
**Fig. No. 26: Availability of Sanitation**



**Fig. No. 27: Condition of Sanitation**



**Fig. No. 28: Availability of Drinking Water**



**Housing condition, Fuel & Electricity**

Housing is not just a shelter for population but home and its surroundings affect identity and self respect. Housing also indicates the level of economic development of the household of any area. In the study area out of 50 household 34(68%) household are have Pucca and 16(32%) household have Kacca household respectively.

The responses from the craftsman households indicates that the most accessible and preferable cooking fuel was conventional (firewood, cow dung cake). About 30(60%) household use this type of conventional fuel. While the least accessible and preferable fuel was LPG and only 20(40%) households use LPG.

Electricity has many uses in our day to day life. It is used for lighting room and domestic appliances. In the study area 43(86%) household are connected by electricity and 07(14%) Household till not connected with electricity.

**Table No. 5: Housing Condition, Fuel & Electricity**

| <b>Housing condition</b> | <b>N.O.H</b> | <b>% O. H.</b> | <b>Fuel</b> | <b>N.O.H.</b> | <b>% O.H.</b> | <b>Electricity</b> | <b>N.O.H.</b> | <b>% O.H.</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Kacca                    | 34           | 68             | Con.        | 30            | 60            | Have               | 43            | 86            |
| Pucca                    | 16           | 32             | LPG         | 20            | 40            | Have not           | 07            | 14            |
| Total                    | 50           | 100.00         | Total       | 50            | 100.00        | Total              | 50            | 100.00        |

\*N.O.H.: No. of household, Con.: conventional  
 Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

**Fig. No. 29: Condition Of Household**

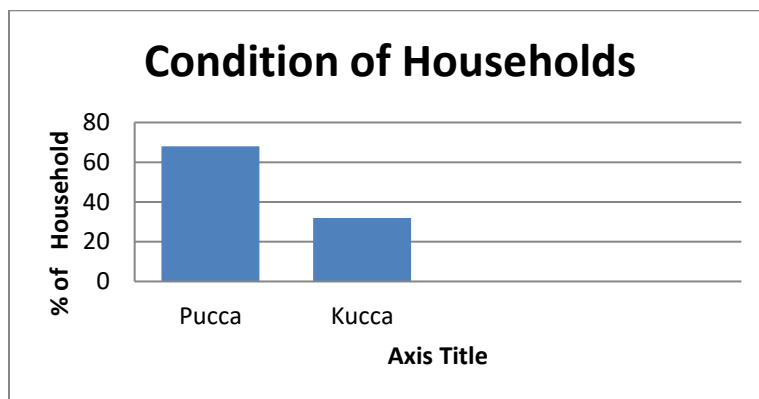




Fig. No. 30: Use of Fuels

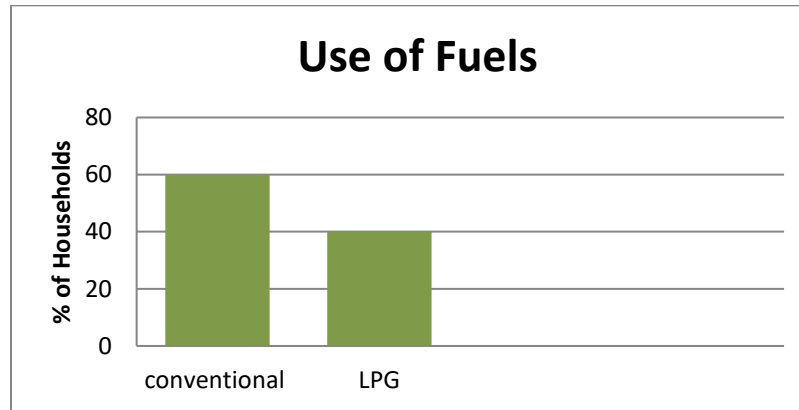
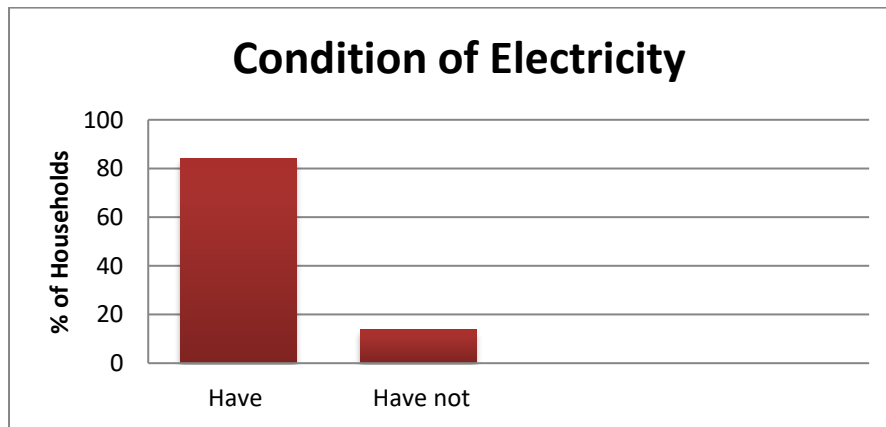


Fig. No. 31: Condition of Electricity



### Income, Expenditure & Savings

The number of earning members in the family is important parameter for the prosperity of any household. In the artisan's household both male and female are engaged in craft making and ensure family income. The following table we categorized the households into 3 groups i.e,

From the following table it is very clear that majority of the household income and expenditure is almost equivalent, therefore they are not able to save much for their future.

**Table No. 6: Family Income and Expenditure**

| Income of the family |    | Expenditure of family |    |
|----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| No. of Households    |    |                       |    |
| 10000-15000          | 31 | 10000-12000           | 34 |
| 15000-20000          | 15 | 15000-16000           | 12 |
| >20000               | 04 | Upto18000             | 04 |

Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

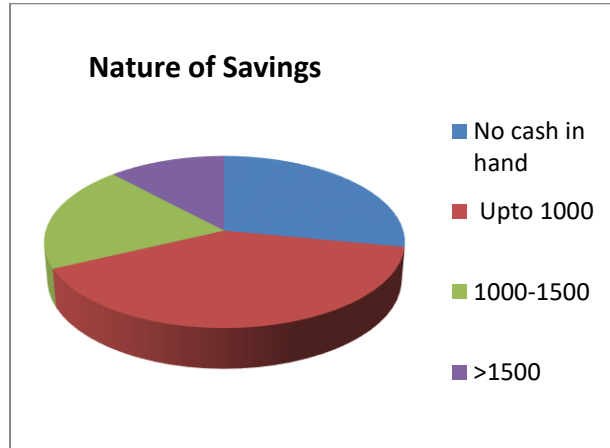
Savings is very important for any family to meet unexpected expenses or to run the family. Most of the families, who do not save, become debtor in hands of moneylenders, MFI and other financial agencies and also taking advances from order supplier. Following table show that out of 50 household 20(40%) under up to 1000 category, 10(20%) under 1000-1500 category and 06(12%) under >1500 category. 14(28%) household has no cash in hand.

**Table No. 7: Nature of Savings**

| Savings Amount   | No. of Household | % of Household |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| No. Cash in hand | 14               | 28             |
| Upto1000         | 20               | 40             |
| 1000-1500        | 10               | 20             |
| >1500            | 06               | 12             |
| Total            | 50               | 100.00         |

Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

**Fig. No. 32: Nature of Savings**



**Financial Satisfaction & Problems addressed by the Craftsman**

We gathered data about financial satisfaction of the craftsman from the study area. The following table reveals that out of 50 household 08(16%) household are moderate satisfied, are 14(28%) well satisfied, 28(56%) household are very well satisfied, and in case of not satisfied the number is nil.

We gathered responses about the problems faced by the craftsman. Here we diagnose the major problems. Which are 1. High price of raw material, 09(18%) household facing that problem 2. Improper marketing facilities which was addressed by 10(20%) household. 3. Lack of proper advertisement addressed by 12(24%) household. 4. Insufficient output of labour capital addressed by 19(38%) household.

**Table No. 8: Financial Satisfaction & Problems addressed by the Craftsmen**

| <b>Financial Satisfaction</b> | <b>No. of Family</b> | <b>% of Family</b> | <b>Problems addressed by the Craftsman</b> | <b>No. of Family</b> | <b>% of Family</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| Not satisfied                 | nil                  | 00                 | High price of raw material                 | 09                   | 18                 |
| Moderate                      | 08                   | 16                 | Improper marketing facilities              | 10                   | 20                 |
| Well Satisfied                | 14                   | 28                 | Lack of proper advertisement               | 12                   | 24                 |
| Very well Satisfied           | 28                   | 56                 | Insufficient output of labour capital      | 19                   | 38                 |

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|       |    |        |       |    |        |
|-------|----|--------|-------|----|--------|
| Total | 50 | 100.00 | Total | 50 | 100.00 |
|-------|----|--------|-------|----|--------|

Source: Field survey, Oct, 2018

### **Major Findings about Craft**

#### **Weakness:**

- Unorganized marketing and inadequate market in India
- Inadequate support mechanism for product development
- Infrastructural deficiencies
- Inadequacy of raw material at appropriate prices
- Lack of investment for fulfilling international requirements
- A general image of the country as a supplier of quality goods with consistency
- High cost of packing material

#### **Strength:**

- Rich tradition of excellence in arts & crafts
- Development of supply chain with skill specification
- Component level manufacturing providing in the efficiency and skill requirement.
- High employment potential
- High export-driven, for foreign exchange accrual

#### **Recommendation for the development of the Craft & Craftsman**

- Policy needed to empower artisans by making them active entrepreneurs-cum-primary stakeholders in the process of development.
- To provide adequate infrastructural support for improved quality and productivity and to enable artisans access to a larger market segment both domestic and international.
- Need to organize tour pack packages to craft centers, this will promote new employment opportunities especially among the young in local craftsmanship.
- Development of prototype/ standardized showrooms/Kiosks for display and sale of handicrafts objects from selected suppliers denoting good quality at fair price. Such kiosks will have a distinct identity, set up at vantage locations like museums, important hotels, airports and large railway stations. Those outlets need to be managed by properly selected sales persons.

- A critical review needs to carry out by a reputed non-government agency/institution to evaluate the efficacy of the schemes and the programs initiated so far by the state for the growth of handicraft in the study area.

## **CONCLUSION**

The wooden mask artisans of West Bengal represent an ancient craft. These artisans are not primitive; they are twenty first century people. So they must be free to determine their own future. The craftsmen embody countless generation of knowledge which is part of the cultural heritage not only of Bengal but of humankind. Whatever direction the craft takes in the future, it would be tragic if all this knowledge and the accumulated wisdom of millennia were to be lost. This is our duty to preserving the age old form of art and its basic beauty of nativity. All over the world every civilized country chose the way to marching ahead in a balance of protecting their basic culture and amalgamating with modern technique and approach. Many suggested that necessary technical research should require that how can the form of art be represented with its essential reality with modern demand. Fusion is necessary not only inter cultural spectrum but also in its making. In this context in recent times to augment their product range, newer products have been adopted from Adivasi culture which includes the Bas relief decorative panels. Hope these endeavors pave a judicious way forward for this rich craft art.

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