

Terracotta art its influence on Nirmal paintings: A Study

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Abstract

Andhra Pradesh has a rich fascinating range of art forms which are unique in style, theme concept form and expression. A small town called Nirmal in Adilabad District of A.P. (Presently Nirmal is a district head quarter) of the same name in Telangana State) it is famous for toys and Paintings. Nirmal Toys and folk paintings are highly stylized and have a striking individuality.

A wide variety of articles are made in the painting themes centered round their in the life styles.

Key words: Terra Cotta , Handicrafts, Material Culture, Dominions, Physiognomy, Mother, Goddess. Human figurines, influx, Animal figurines, Hybridization. Archaic terra cottas, Stucco art.

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I. INTRODUCTION

An attempt has been made in this paper to study the terracotta art its influences on Nirmal paintings. Handi crafts making is not new, but exist since Indus valley civilization 3000 B.C. to 1700 B.C. For Centuries of Indian handicrafts have been distinguished for their great assthetic and functional value, crafts not only cater to the day-to-day, needs of the people but also used for decorative and religious ceremonies of India. The traditions of handicrafts making is formed since generation on with a cluster of passing on the skill and knowledge of their community to the next generation and each generation adds something extra to what they have received. This process has helped in flourishing the craft traditions of India.

Indian diverse cultural and social dimensions are perfectly displayed through various forms of art and craft of the regions. India has a glorious tradition in toys and paintings. The Nirmal toys and paintings made at Nirmal in Adilabad district of A.P Presently which is the district head quarters of the same name in the Telangana state) points out the rich artistic abilities of the crafts men. The artisans of the craft who combine their imagination and diligence to excellent pieces of art forms. Joys are usually models of animals, birds fruits and human occupations painting are from Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharatha themes and other historical and mythological stories.

The Study of material culture is gaining importance in recent days. Studies made by scholars like Margabhandhu S. Krishna Sastri and others have contributed substantially to this new field. Archaeological explorations and excavations conducted by various organizations all over Andhra in recent past have yielded a mine of archaeological of information bearing on the cultural aspects of Andhradesa during the early centuries of the Christian era. But no systematic study has been undertaken by the scholars so far to obtain a comprehensive picture of the culture of Andhradesa of the period culling out information from the excavated material in different Satavahana rulers.

Satavahanas who ruled Deccan for nearly four centuries and a half during the early centuries of the Christian era was one of the most powerful dynasties of the period. Their immediate successors in lower Deccan were the Ikshvakus, another celebrated dynasty under the patronage of these illustrious dynasties. Andhradesa witnessed a glorious epoch in all walks of life. There was continuity in the cultural life of the people under the Satavahanas and the Ikshvakus. Hence the study of the material culture of this period has been made as a single unit for better understanding. An attempt is made in the Terracotta art. Paper to study the terracotta arts and its influence on Nirmal Paintings clay being plastic, gets any required shape very early availability and being non-expensive it always met the demand of the common man in ancient India. The terracotta art supplies valuable information about the life and culture of the people of a particular period and class it was an integral part of day-to-day life of the present day.

Throughout Andhra, terracotta art flourished as one of the media of expression and many places have revealed this activity. Special mention may be made of the following places where terracottas were discovered

in abundance kondapur, Nagarjuna konda, Yeleswaram, Pedda bankur, Dhulikatta and Nelakondapalli. These places formed the part of the Satavahana-Ikshavakas dominions. The terracotta's were not only made of river rine clay but also of Kaolin which is a product of the Deccanese trap. Terracotta's of the Satavahana and Ikshavakas times formed a distinctive type by themselves. They are characterized by bold physiognomy and extremely sensitive modeling and are also noted for their vitality and plastic simplicity of form. They mark a distinct technological advance when compared to the earlier one. The artists were successful in producing hollow terracottas in round using double moulds which were joined together later. Some of the terracottas have holes at the back to serve as air ducts while heating Deshpande observes that this technique was fully developed in about the first century A.D. When the enterprising traders from the west were busy in exchanging their products with those from the Deccan. (Deshpande M.N.1965 New Delhi pp606-607") Yeleswaram excavations recorded a large number of terracotta moulds from the both the Satavahana and Ikshavakas levels. Khan. V.H. Hyderabad P.46)

They included a double mould of Ram, Mother Goddess a Scythian soldier, besides mould for making designed miniature pots and mould for stamping on bigger pots. There was a spectacular growth of terra cotta art in the first three centuries of the Christian era. There is an enormous demand for terracotta perhaps due to the Indian Roman trade during that period. (Amita Ray, 1964 Calcutta P.198) Archaeological excavations at various places also indicated that the production of terra cottas suffered a sharp set back by the end of the 3rd century A.D. with the decline of Indo – Roman trade.

Thematically terracottas may be broadly studied under three heads viz (1). Human figurines (2) animal figurines (3) Miscellaneous Human figurines may be classified further as secular and religious.

Human figurines : - They comprise of male and female figures, amorous couples, male and female heads, figures with up-raised hands. Yaksas and Yakashinis, Mother goddess divinities etc. Mother Goddess has great antiquity and it represented by a made Goddess in a squatting position. These figurines are reported from Kondapur (Kept in the Kondapur Museum) Nagarjuna Konda (Museum) Yeleswaram, (W.H.Khan, P.46) Peddabankur (A.P. Museums Hyderabad) Dhulikatta (APMuseums, Hyderabad) At Nagarjuna Konda a sculpture of the Mother Goddess fully decorated with ornaments is kept in the hill-top museum. A queen of the Ikshavakas dynasty and her family members were the devotees of this goddess. An inscription engraved at the bottom of the figure authenticates this fact Another class consists of the mother and child figurines. (Ei. Vo. XXIX P. 137.) The lady is shown standing with right arm at rest and left supporting the child Agrawala classifies them as Ankadhatri type. They are found at Nagarjuna konda, Yeleswaram some male and figurines have elaborate coiffure, Costumes, head dresses and quit site jewellery. A diadem is also seen hanging from the rich head dress and coiffure at the centre. Some of the figures have Roman affinities. Among human depiction, one comes across people of central asia and Persia whose influx in to the local population introduced new features. (Margabhandhu C. Pp.88-89)

Animal figurines : Horses are found in large numbers, bulls occupy the second place. Elephants rams monkeys and certain hybrid type with beaks and heads of birds and animals are also recovered. The hybridization of animal figurines may be seen in Scythian art of central Asia and in indicative of close Indo-Scythian cultural contract,(Amita Ray-2001.pp70). To Support the cultural contracts further, it may be pointed out that a sculpture depicting Scythian soldier is till kept-in the Hill top Museum. (Amita Ray-pp70)

Miscellaneous Items : Ornaments like ear rings bangles, pendants and arm lets, various designs like Pipal leaf and Svastikas, toys carts etc., form part of this category. The most interesting example is a beautifully modeled chaitya window motif in Terracottas recovered from the Nagarjunakonda excavations. (Nagarjuna Konda Museum).

Archaic Terra cottas : Archaic terracottas were found at various places like Nagarjuna Konda, Pedda bankur, Nelakondapalli and Dhulikatta. The figures are hand made by modeling the clay to the desired shape. The breast are shown as protruding and pointed, hands are pinched like pointed masses, No, genitals are shown the face is bereft of any expression. The hind part is flat. There is a possibility that these archaic Terra cottas were made at one place and probably exported to other places.

Stucco art work is Animal and bird figurines of terra cotta are definitely used as toys. Figuriness of horses bulls and rams are the common toy animals modeled in terra cotta which in real life might have drawn the carts. (Desai, Devanga, 1976. IHC, Calicut, pp166)

From the above study we concluded that animal, birds, floral and other motifs have deeply influenced by terra cotta art in the Nirmal Paintings.

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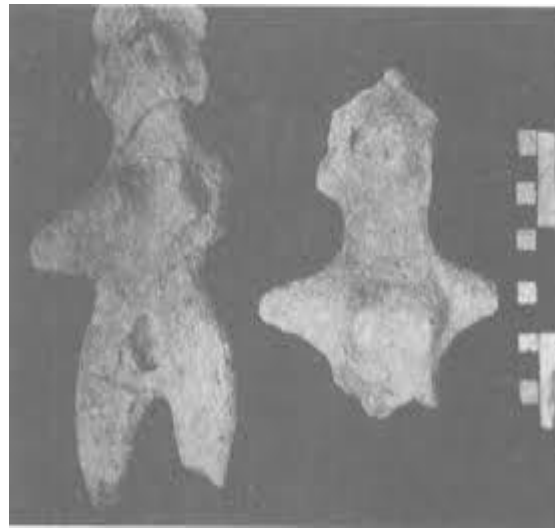
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Figure -1- Ancient Terracotta's.







Figures 2 : Nirmal Human Figures :



Krishna and Balarama, tempera on card, 36 x 63.5cm, 1940s





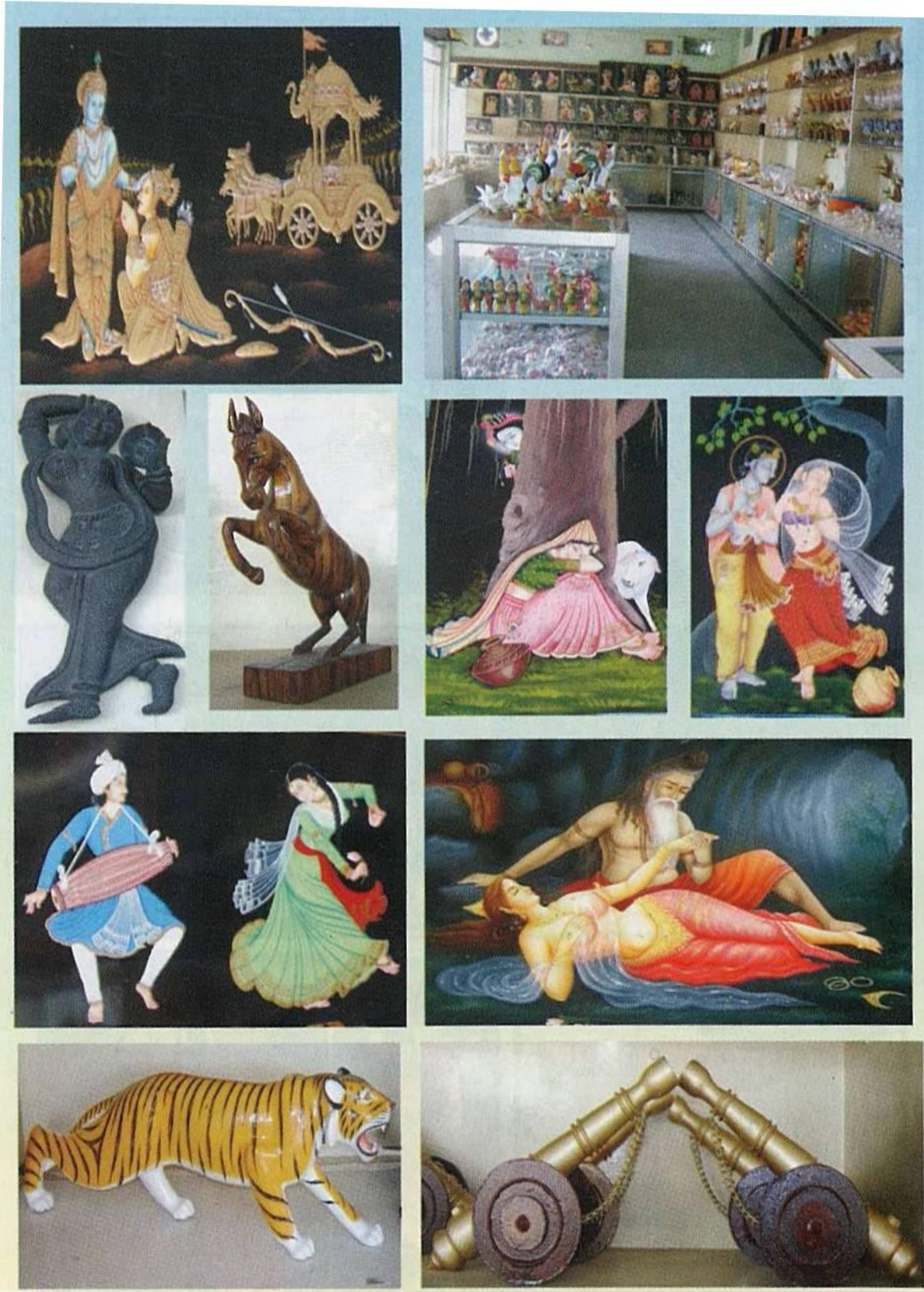


Figure 3 : Nirmal Animal Figures :





Figure.4 : Miscellaneous Figures.



Figure 5. Stucco Art Figures :



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