

Panel (CUL): Cultural Diversity and Innovation

Papers: 11

Chair:

Sudha Gopala krishnan

Executive Director, Sahapedia

Co-Chair:

Susantha Goonatilake

Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka

Discussant:

Judy Frater

Time: 14:00-15:30

Venue: Class Room-1, KLMDC

1.

The main goal of this project is to acquire and capture the knowledge which has been locked up in the minds of a few remaining elderly persons

Tariq Zaman

The Penan was traditionally nomads of the Borneo rainforests. During their nomadic journey “Toro”¹, the Penan groups communicate with each other by making signs called “Oroo”². These signs are made from natural objects such as sticks, leave and branches. With settlement, many of the signs are being lost as Oroo’ is considered of no use by the younger generation. In 2014, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and the Penan community of Long Lamai from Upper Baram Sarawak initiated a research project on digitalising and preserving the Oroo’, sign language. As a first stage, we created an information repository of 50 signs. The information repository includes data such as photo and video description of the signs, the embedded messages, and the objects used to create Oroo’ signs. Furthermore, we also developed software tools for Penan kids to learn Oroo’ language.

The main goal of this project is to acquire and capture the knowledge which has been locked up in the minds of a few remaining elderly persons. These symbols serves as a means to connect indigenous wisdom, way of life, communication medium, cultural heritage that has been preserved across time. This rich repository has helped bridge the gaps across generation and is promising to preserve traditional knowledge and wisdom.

Keywords: Oroo', sign language, Penan, Indigenous wisdom

Making Indian Culture and Its Cultural Diversity Innovative

Parwez Nazir

Assistant Professor

CAS, Department of History

Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

Throughout the ages India is known for its cultural diversity, which makes it Unique of all the civilizations of the world. With the passage of time, the very unique cultural heritage became India's identity which attracted the foreign travellers, who kept coming from the time immemorial and left revealing and fascinating accounts of rich legacy of India's past. Traveller's accounts is the repository of information for understanding India's culture and cultural diversity. After globalization, information and communication technology has reshaped the orientation and perspective of the people's attitude largely and thinking broadly. Traditional and oriental learning somehow has lost its utility because it offers least opportunity of employability. To make cultural history creative, more innovative, people's friendly and attractive for the next generation, India's culture and cultural diversity needs to be preserved. Ever changing nature of the society with growing problems and more challenges, People in modern times are interested India in art and architecture, paintings, music etc. rather than dynastic political history. They want their leisure time to spend in a more fashionable way engaging themselves in creative and innovative distressed free pursuits to achieve more happiness and pleasure which they could find in the cultural related diversity reflected in the splendid historical monuments, diverse regional paintings, *sufiana* and *arifana kalam* in devotional and spiritual music, soothing *Bhakti* songs etc. Remains of rich cultural heritage is found in every city, small towns or even *qasbas* of the country which makes India a tourist friendly country. India's culture and cultural diversity has immense potential for the development of tourism and for a better economic prospect in the country. Only through scientific and target oriented planning and infrastructural development India can emerge as one of the best destinations for national and international tourist. India has remained famous for its handcraftsmanship, indigenous skill and craftsmanship, professional expertise and regional artisanal diversities which made its products valuable and were in great demand all over the world, cotton textile, silk products, ivory works, wooden works, stone cutting works are a few examples needs preservation at all cost to make India of 21st century culturally more creative and innovative with its traditional roots of multiculturalism. Religious places associated with Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity etc. and it's different sects and sub sects represents the diversity of cultural heritage as they had their own distinctive style of art and architecture and texture of paintings and every one significantly contributed to make India's distinctive composite culture. Multiculturalism developed in India by way of mutual cooperation and the philosophy of give and take, development of Indo-Islamic architecture is its best example. India's Classical music and later Indo-Muslim synthesis in it has made it more creative and innovative, promoting of which should be the motto for achieving unity and peace in the society, essential for the sustainable

development. Teachings and preaching of *Sufi* and *Bhakti* saints spiritually integrated the society by bridging the gulf and strengthening the bond of love between the communities and caste necessary for the healthy development of the society, their ideals like service of mankind and spiritualism needs revivalism in an era of consumerism to ensure happiness and peace in the society. The philosophy of *Ahimsa*, the core of India's cultural ethos, is to be fostered in the imaginative creativity of the people to ensure a violence free society which needs an innovative persuasion.

3.

'Pabuji Ki Phad' a lost art or a social need

DINESH YADAV
BITS PILANI, PILANI CAMPUS

During a period of two years of tenure as an assistant professor in BITS Pilani, I witnessed six to seven children every day, performing with their stone pieces (using them as khartal) in buses and around the bus stand of Pilani. When, out of curiosity I started interacting with them, I came to know that these all are children of Bhopas leaving as nomads in Dera (a small tent made of row wood and pieces of cloths) around BITS boundary and few of them came from nearby village Morva, stays in bus-stand during the day time and leave by evening. They beg for money in buses while singing in their row rustic voice and playing this stone made Khartaal. I didn't like their singing but what I should appreciate is the playing of these small pieces of stone with a great amount of skill and style.

4.

Preserving Traditional Art through Social Business: A case of Mithilasmitha-Madhubani paintings

Ankur Joshi, S K Tapasvi

The paper explores how traditional art can be preserved through social business by studying the case of Mithilasmitha. It is a small organisation working for preservation and promotion of traditional art of Mithila region- commonly known as Madhubani paintings. The case brings to the light the concept of governance-which envisages role of multiple actors- which is becoming more and more relevant. The government which framed rules and regulations for preservation of art was not successful in achieving outcomes alone. An entrepreneur shares the same concern and tries to address the need of society through a social business model. It may be a beginning for Mithilasmitha, but the case provides learning for trying out similar model in different phenomenon. Through this conceptual paper we also present a framework of governance for improving implementation process and social well being.

5.

Folk Route: Changing Preferences in Urban Spaces

Utpala Desai

This paper verbally recites a crusade initiated by a young music composer and his (art) entrepreneurial efforts to create collaborative platforms for nurturing appreciation among urban audiences addicted to entertainment offered by television. Nishith Mehta, in his late thirties has spent the last decade of his youth in wandering, listening to different music, experimenting and creating fusion music. Armed with first-hand knowledge of folk/tribal music traditions he decided to provide a platform to these decaying, ignored traditions in urban spaces and inspire creative revival of grassroots' music.

Folk and tribal music have lost being an integral part of society, its celebrations and entertainment. The consequence is shifting of many traditional communities of singers and professional musicians to other means of livelihood. The relentless search to identify regional traditions of music led to discovery of many forgotten musicians and singers and identifies a few who have consciously recreated new traditions from the existing.

Armed with information, he ventured to reshape the aesthetic preferences of urban audiences and support livelihood of artists who have, for generations pursued art. His first endeavor in 2007-08 resulted in creation of fusion music of tribal, folk and Algerian singer digitalized as CD. This was followed by *Deshaj Sur*, a festival of regional folk music in 2013. By 2014 it has matured into a series of experimental music fests called *Folk Route/Tribal Route* in open air spaces of Amphitheatre. The movement has brought amazing changes in aesthetic preferences of the young audiences and inspired creativity among traditional performers to keep pace with the young. The paper identifies an art entrepreneurial effort that has captured full audiences in Ahmedabad's urban spaces.

6.

Intangible heritage transformations- Patachitra of Bengal exploring modern New Media

Dr. Lopamudra Maitra Bajpai

MA, MDMC, PhD

Assistant Professor and Visual Anthropologist

Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (UG), (SIMC-UG), Pune, India

A traditional performative art from eastern India- the *patachitra* tradition is an integral part of intangible heritage and is an important essence of folk and traditional media. Through centuries- the patachitra has been a platform where several methods of communication has converged- including visual messages, oral traditions and music- all of which helped to amalgamate, involve and portray nature, society and culture co-existing through a lucid dialogue. Thus, these paintings- on one hand portrayed society and its ideations like simple

photographs down the ages. On the other hand, they also helped to preserve valuable information about social transformations, stories of migrations and details of socio-political and religious reflections as well- all of which helps to form the framework of an important section of the history of the masses- which often goes uncharted. Thus, *patachitra* forms an important and integral part of traditional and folk media from India- especially represented through the Indian states of West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand. This paper especially focuses on the *patachitra* traditions from Bengal and is based on extensive fieldwork through various seasons in the region from 2004- through 2012 (especially in the districts of Bankura, Purulia, West Mednipur and Birbhum of West Bengal).

As times changed over the years- especially moulding mass media and communication to adapt to global technological transformations over the last hundred years, folk and traditional media got influenced as well. This was also reflected in India- especially over the last 15 years as the worldwide- web explored a common platform for all forms and types of existing media and communication. The transformations within the intangible sector of folk and traditional media got reflected in various ways. Animation media picked up stories from oral traditions to make popular television shows, folk music was explored extensively to blend with popular music for mainstream films from various regions in India- thus, *patachitra* tradition too found a new voice. With intervention of mainstream global media, the performative art gradually got transformed into a descriptive medium- reducing much of the participation of the artists, his/her music, rhythm as well as the impromptu methods of storytelling. In spite of several times being severely criticised by social scientists for these drastic changeover as the medium of expression changed from being a performative art to a mere demonstrative art, the transformation also bred new methods of marketing ‘ethnic clothing and accessories’. This also spelled a new breather for the survival of this dying art. Thus, as *patachitra* from Bengal got to be displayed within New Media- especially through the personal websites of various folkartists as well as patua villages- a transformation evolved within the paradigms of local modes of entertainment- it found a voice within the global platform. With changing market demands and increasing reach through New Media- *patachitra* traditions have also recreated artistic vision for the new generation of painters as they experience to mould their traditional profession to the demands of the modern consumerist global market. With several ethical issues questioning the survival, sustainability and continuity of the folk tradition of *patachitra* from Bengal and changing social roles, reflected in specific gender participations, this paper explores the various transformations which occurred within the representation of the old tradition in modern New Media and the issues involved therein.

7.

Intervention framework for transforming survival appropriations of music-skilled rural artistic and innovative persons with disability into sustainable livelihoods

Govind Dhaske, Ph.D., M. A. (Social Work)

(Research Assistant, Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, US)

Prashant Sude, M. A. (Social Work)

(National CSR Hub, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai-88)

The rural cultural entrepreneurship demonstrated by various rural artists skilled in music and other art forms is going through a phase of the crisis. With emerging market economic structures, the integral and culturally rooted rural artists are facing social as well as economic exclusion. Due to the lack of support through sustainable artistic structures and institutions, the decline in such potent creative entrepreneurship puts a question mark on the ethicality of dominant growth approaches. Within the range of excluded cultural, entrepreneurial groups, artistic and innovative persons with disability are the most vulnerable group found appropriating their survival through stressful livelihood. While a large number of persons with disability survive through various forms of beggary, their art-related entrepreneurial potential, and self-employment ability, is less recognized and supported by the existing policy system. Based on the cumulative learning experience of a non-profit programme on organization, skill development, and promotion of music focused artistic entrepreneurship of rural persons with disability, the proposed paper presents a policy and programmatic intervention framework for transforming survival appropriations of artistic persons with disability into sustainable livelihoods. In the light of the paucity of research and literature in the topical area, the paper uses primary ethnographic insights derived from direct practice, interventions, and mediation for rural artists with disabilities and secondary data from schematic policy and non-profit interventions.

Keywords: Rural cultural entrepreneurship, persons with disability, sustainable artistic structures, economic exclusion, intervention framework, policy.

8.

Sowing the Seeds Right: The struggle for cultural preservation vs. “cultural losses” in a globalized world: an innovation framework

Ravi Poovaiah
IIT Bombay

Introduction - the narrowing of the contours of innovation: Innovation is generally understood to be “the successful application of knowledge or techniques in new ways or for new purposes” (Bellon et al, 1991). But increasingly, as innovation continues to gain currency within industry to become a rallying point - rather disingenuously it would seem - around the singular idea of “organizing a business to exploit new opportunities profitably,” this overtly industry slant has predictably eclipsed the last of the residues of an earlier premise that “innovation is for all businesses whether using high technology or not” (Bellon, 19..). And which had clearly implied earlier that innovation is not about technology alone as is often thought to be today. And, thereby, squarely challenging the notion that those at a technological advantage are the ones really innovating. Addressing the asymmetries of a techno-centric world: The need to find a different way to re-organize the idea of innovation arises from our desire to address this asymmetry – located in two sets of biases:(i) firstly, in techno centric worldview that makes innovation and technology synonymous, leaving little room for an objective understanding of what technology realistically achieves for innovation, and equally, what it can equally destroy in its wake without leaving behind any documented

trail of destruction, blighted as they are, by the passage of time; and (ii) secondly, the mistaken notion that those who are technologically blessed do not need culture, nor is culture crucial to innovation. The altered perspective under which we seek to understand innovation will demonstrate that every society advanced or not - possesses technology, but not all technology translates into innovations, nor is that a necessary precondition for the flowering of society. Equally, every society by virtue of having social organization, will demonstrate some form of culture or the other and fostering culturally contextual ways to innovate. In other words, the reason to understand technology and culture place in society is crucial to realizing their relationship with innovation itself.

Keywords: localization, exogenous, marketisation, emerging vs. mature, multinational, ethnographic, culturally mediated, organic, intuitive, shapeshift, pedagogy

9.

Up scaling Local Creative Artisan ARCH Cluster: Case of Metalware Cluster in South India

V.P.Sriraman
Bharathidasan Institute of Management, Trichy

Up scaling of local creative artisan ARCH (Artistic, Rural, Cultural, and Heritage) clusters is the need of the hour. There are many artisan clusters in India that are in the verge of decline due to many challenges including the lack of manpower, money, and markets. Even though they are existing in small pockets, they are finding it very difficult to make the ends meet. If ignored, these creative artisan clusters will vanish. Even though Government is doing its might, it is still not enough for up-scaling this age old local creative artisan ARCH cluster. This case brings out such a handicraft cluster in Tanjore District of Tamilnadu. The case discusses about the Indian Handicraft Industry and specially the Art Metalware, Artplate and its manufacturing process, background of artisans, current ways of doing business and the existing institutional set-up.

Keywords: creative, cluster, ARCH, artisan, rural, cultural, upscale, artplate

10.

Creativity & innovation of the traditional Craftsmen of Kashmir Handmade Pashmina- perspective from the grassroots level

Asma
Mphil
Central university of Jammu

Crafts have been traditionally been regarded as a saleable thing. However craft in local lives of the people who inherit specific traditions is altogether different thing. The art and craft of making Pashmina shawls, indigenous to Kashmir region of India, is a perfect combination of innovative process, and aesthetic creativity, which has been perfected by the communities for

over 600 years. This traditional knowledge of making pashmina is a long held secret, as it is only the artisan communities of the Kashmir who have the skill and knowledge to create softest and lightest Kashmir Pashmina, that is famed world over and has been successful getting geographic indication (GI) for the name “Kashmir Pashmina”□. However, is securing the association of name with the place enough? What about the propagation of knowledge? Is sustainability only about securing future? What about the knowledge that was relevant in the past? In this era of Globalisation and hyper consumerism, the industry of Pashmina in Kashmir has been subjected to many blows, including the advent of power looms, machine made shawls, piracy of designs, subjecting it to unfair competition which once enjoyed monopoly. This has caused the artisans to discontinue this ancient art of weaving pashmina-their innovation and gift to the world. In addition the government policies are essentially too “welfare” and poverty alleviation oriented rather than innovation-led that fail in serving the purpose of guarding this traditional knowledge. I intend to give voice to the challenges faced by the artisan communities who create masterpieces with the use of their arcane and unique knowledge of the art inherited by them over centuries. Their social status and their knowledge of weaving Pashmina, believed to be originated here, remain unprotected in many other ways despite acquiring GI. It’s about time to give up the sympathetic attitude toward the craftsmen, who are regarded merely a producer of textiles for functional and purely economic use, and place them in an economy that harnesses their creativity & knowledge as resource that is directly beneficial to them giving them a legal standing and secure future without creating a distinction between high and low culture, the way it was intended before medieval India.

Keywords: pashmina, traditional knowledge, creativity

11.

Max Weber’s Bureaucracy and Buddhist Monastic Organisation as Possible Templates for Management

Susantha Goonatilake

Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka

Around 100 years ago, one of the most influential theorists related to management, Max Weber, described what he and others considered a “modern” form of administration, namely bureaucracy. This was an additional source to the literature on management which had begun in the early 19th century with writers like Babbage, and around 100 years later with the so-called Scientific Management school of Taylor. In subsequent decades, many of the assumptions of these early theories have been overtaken by actual developments in Western management systems, just like the classic work of Rice “The Ahmedabad Experiment” showed the limitations of Western assumptions. But much earlier, there had been theorists in the subcontinent. Chandragupta’s Chief Minister Kautilya (Chanakya)’s *Arthashastra* (4th century BCE) was one such theorist. But a more detailed description of organisational structure and workings are found in the workings of Buddhist monasteries some of which had

thousands of members and with nearly 2600 years could be the oldest surviving organization form. Weber among other formulations theorised that Asian cultural systems unlike the Protestant one, did not have the prerequisites for industrial development. With Asian countries currently developing faster than the Protestant ones, a comparison between the Weberian and the Buddhist organization forms could have lessons for our own creativity. The present paper attempts such a comparison.

Weber formulated his tripartite, “ideal type” classification of authority as traditional, charismatic and rational-legal which latter was the bureaucratic form. He defined the last as following rules considered legitimate by a state that has the monopoly of using physical force. His bureaucratic system has participants who are full-time, personally free, and appointed on the basis of impersonal criteria. His three systems of authority have been described in detail and so will not be gone into here except to note that it was a product of his place and time, namely of a Protestant Germany that had emerged into nationhood, was rapidly industrializing and that his theory of bureaucracy was but a subset of his major interest on what he considered the unique characteristics of a presumed Protestant Ethic. Although extrapolated from his place and time his formulations were as he admits ideal types in the philosophical sense ultimately “idealistic”, pure mental constructs.

Weber among his many errors in interpreting Buddhism mentions that the Buddhist monastic community "lacked all firm organization" (Weber 1958 p 229). But the actual situation was very different. The initial handful of disciples of the Buddha rapidly multiplied requiring residents in monasteries with rules to govern their everyday behaviour. He derived the system partly from seven principles used by *Liccavis* – republican kings. Unlike the Weberian system the rules were not plucked out in a vacuum but were gradually added as concrete situations arose leading to 227 formal rules and described in detail in the text *Vinaya* (Davids and Oldenberg 1881). Some of these characteristics parallel those in the Weberian system. Although governed by impersonal rules and procedures this organisation structure had unlike the Weberian system, democratic systems of decision-making built-in. Such decisions were often an attempt to arrive at a consensus but failing that through a system of voting. But this is not the rule-based “iron cage” of the Weberian bureaucracy but allowed freedom of thought. It was not subject to the depersonalisation in Weber’s scheme but in the attitudes required to be cultivated by Buddhists combined detachment (*upekkha*) with loving kindness (*karuna*) and sympathetic joy. (*muditha*). There was no coercive means but internalized norms and a hierarchy was built into the monastic order, based on achievement as defined by Buddhist impersonal norms for which there was guidance for proper mental training. There was also a “division of labour” corresponding to the hierarchy. Like the Weberian system there was no private ownership by the individual monk but property was collectively owned and its income and use governed by formal criteria. Some of the required Buddhist mental training has crept into modern management via such practices as mindfulness and theories built on Maslow who’s last book (1971) used Buddhist metaphors. It is argued that as the economic axis of the world turns towards Asia, examination of earlier Asian practices in organisations like those in Buddhist monasteries could provide insights into better management forms and practices.