



# 4

## MODULE – 3

Wall Painting



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## PITHORA PAINTING

Dear learner, in the previous lesson you have learnt the Sanjhi art. In this lesson, you will draw about the folk art Pithora. Pithora is a folk art related to religious rituals among Bhil and Rathwa tribes of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat that is painted on walls of the house. Pithora is a tradition of wall painting related to religious rituals of Bhils and Rathwa in which paintings are made by the name of 'Pithora Baapdev'. The painting is made once a year on an inside house wall, where the Pithora is worshipped. The whole family and society gather for the purpose. The Pithora wall paintings are usually made by men called 'Likhandra'. Only a 'Likhandra' is entitled to write a Pithora in society and no other person.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the Pithora art;
- explain the tradition of Pithora wall painting;
- differentiate between the different styles of Pithora painting;
- draw Pithora painting.

### 4.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Pithora is a complete pictorial legend of the Bhils. Along with Pithora Kunwar, the story of Indiraja, Kajal Rani, Dharmi Raja, Himala Behn etc., is painted and sung. Horses are depicted the most in Pithora. The Bhils believe that their Gods manifest as horses, coming down to the Earth and going back to heaven.

Every activity of the Bhil-bhilala life is given a place in Pithora wall painting. Various motifs are shown such as farmer ploughing the field, cow-calf, monkey,



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well-pond, women churning curd, paniharin, bhisti, palm tree, tadi picking man, camel, king, dasamundya, snake, scorpion, lion, sun-moon, banyan tree, khajur, beehive, chhinalayi, shop, train, car, plane etc.

Vegetable and clay colours are used for making Pithora paintings. Black colour is prepared using kohl, green colour from balod leaf, white from white clay (khadia), yellow from turmeric, saffron from red clay, blue from indigo etc. These days new readymade colour are also used.

Pithora Baap ji resides on a holy wall in the house of Bhils. It is the firm belief of Bhils that wherever Pithora Kunwar resides, that house farm is filled with riches and prosperity. There is no fear of invisible bad energies and disease, or external difficulties do not enter the house. Pithora Baap Ji is the protective god of the house.

In the Pithora house, the portion beneath is land, and portion above is the sky. The sky only has space for heaven. Gods live in the sky, whereas men, nature, flora-fauna, and air-water are on the land beneath. It is also called Jami mother. Jami mother is shown divided into four sections. All four sections are filled with separate colours and represent the four directions east, west, north and south of the Earth. Horses of Deshi Bhabhar are made right below horses of Pithora Baap Ji using white colour only. Deshi Bhabhar is Gramdhani God responsible for protecting the village. Pithora is protector of the house and Gramdhani is the protector of the village. The reins of Gramdhani's horses are in the hands of 'hali'. 'Ghugharmal or Kathali' is put in the neck of Pithora's horses.

## 4.2 TRADITIONAL PITHORA MOTIFS

Learner, you need to understand the traditional motifs used for making Pithora art.

**Pithora Baapji:** Since this is the main God two white horses facing each other are made with the 'hali' holding reins in between them, wearing bandi, pagadi and shoes. Both horses are shown with Kathi and without any rider. The horses are decorated with 'shobhavar' or a line of colourful dot around the horses. Moon, Sun, and stars are made near the top portion of the Pithora house's door. The Sun is shown in a circular shape as a chakari emitting rays. The half Moon is made alongside. Stars are made in the form of dots surrounding the Sun-Moon.

**Rani Kajal:** The horse is made along with a colt using vermillion colour. It is made towards the left without Kathi and decoration. This is representative of maternal energy.

**Hatharaja Kunwar:** This is the forest lord. Tribals see their Gods-Goddesses in vegetation, river mountains, forests etc. that protect them in the forest.

**Baaramathya:** A being with twelve heads. It is usually made on the right corner of the Pithora. Twelve heads are made over broad shoulders using a fine stick in

the form of lines. A serpent or stick is shown in the hands. It is usually made of white colour.



**Fig. 4.1: Traditional Pithora motifs**

**Meghani Ghodi:** This motif has a marvellous form. It has two white heads. It eats with one head while it talks to the Megha Raja, facing him with the other. It does not have Kathi on its back. This horse brings rain.

**Lion:** The image of a lion/tiger is usually made above the Pithora door. Sometimes one and at other places, two lions are made.

**Elephant:** The making of elephants in Pithora is a symbol of prosperity. It is made in blue or black colour. The elephant is depicted usually near the Pithora door. Sometimes a palanquin is made over it.

**Bhil women:** Bhil women are shown holding pots on their heads (paniharin). Special attention is paid to their Bhil clothes. The Likhandra uses those colours only which they wear. These paniharins take water to the gods.

**Well-pond:** The well-pond is shown near the paniharin in Pithora. Alongside the well pond snake-scorpion, frog, lizard, and Bhishti (kawadiya) who fills water are shown. Bhishti carries a Kawad on his shoulder and is also called Kawadiya. He is shown in white colour.

**Bandara:** Monkeys are shown in the top right corner of Pithora, four or five in numbers in a line. Black, white and red colours are used to colour them.



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Fig. 4.2: Traditional Pithora Motifs

**Tota-popat (parrot):** It is the symbol of love. It is shown through a parrot in a cage in Pithora. The cage is made with white or black colour, and inside it, a green coloured parrot is shown. Along with it, peacocks and birds are always shown. Cock-hen, heron, kite, crow, butterfly, bee etc. are also shown. The peacock is made in blue colour. The vulture and owl are shown together.

Horse, elephant, ox, lion, monkey are made as an essential part of Pithora. Apart from these, camel, deer, cat, dog, donkey, owl, rabbit, bear, goat, cow, buffalo, bull, barahsingha, etc. are also made. This depiction shows the relation of humans with animals. It is also a symbol of mutual interdependence.

The ant to the honey bee finds a place in Pithora. Lizard, chameleon, spider, tortoise, fish, crocodile etc. are seen in Pithora with their activities.

**Palm tree:** The palm tree is a boon of nature from which tadi is obtained that has filled the life of Bhils with joy. Hence, it is also shown in Pithora. Palm and date palm trees are shown in green or blue colours.



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**Fig. 4.3: Traditional Pithra Motifs**

On the left side of Pithora, farmer's plough ox is made, which symbolizes farming. Two hunters carrying the body of a dead lion on sticks in Pithora gives evidence of a cave painting. Supad Kanya is a woman with long ears, and one-legged man represents the disabled people of the village. In every village, a bull is released for the fertilization of cows which is called 'Handya Saand'. The bull shape is made in the Earth portion of Pithora. Many images are also seen outside the Pithora house. Some beginner level Likhndras or other amateurs make images on the space left around the Pithora wall in which birds, animals, vegetation etc., are made.



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### 4.3 MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR PITHORA PAINTING

- Drawing board
- Pencil
- Scale
- Round soft brushes of 1, 3, 7 number
- Small piece of plastic
- Drawing pin
- Eraser
- Drawing sheet or markin cloth
- Poster colour
- Colour pallete/plate

The basic colours for Pithora are red, white, vermillion, black, green, yellow and blue. All these colours are local. Particularly clay colours are used. The Likhandra and his assistants prepare colours in bowls or donas prepared from leaves. The brush is prepared by wrapping cotton over bamboo skulls. These days poster or acrylic colours and brushes are used.

White is obtained from white clay (Khadiya), black from Kohl, green from Balod leaf, yellow from yellow clay, blue from indigo, saffron from red clay, and vermillion is mixed in oil or ghee, while the rest are mixed in water. To make the colours fast, glue or fevicol water is mixed. In this way, the paintings made on the wall become bright and durable for many days.

### 4.4 TRADITIONAL METHODS

Now you will gain knowledge of the traditional methods of Pithora art.

#### Preparing of Background for Painting

The place for painting Pithora traditionally is the central wall inside the house. The Pithora painting remains durable and secure on this wall. The length of this wall is 15-20 feet, and height is 5-8 feet. Women prepare it by coating it with cow dung, red clay and yellow clay in advance.

#### Painting the Pithora House or Threshold

Measurements are taken before making the Pithora threshold. By taking correct measurements, the Pithora house does not become distorted. After measurements, with the help of a thread, double lines are made on the edges using white clay or red clay in which the border of Pithora is to be made. Finally, on the lower border, an open door is made, which is the main door of the house.

The threshold is made of two parallel lines using white lines. It is decorated with triangles of red, yellow, blue, white etc. colours or leaves on a climber. Lines used for the threshold may be red, black, blue and white. In between the lines of the border, decoration is done by making fork, shakarpara, water, chestnut (singhara), flowers, leaves on a climber etc.

### Painting of various characters in Pithora painting

Pithora wall painting is started with an image of Ganesh smoking Huqqah. After his invocation, the image is made towards the left of the threshold inside the border. Hukkah smoking Ganesh is made using black colour in Pithora.

The Kathiya horse has Kathi fitted on its back. Thus it is called 'Kathiya' horse. A horseman is seated on it. Three to four gunmen are shown waiting in front of it. The horseman riding Kathiya horse is called 'Kathiya Kunwar'. This is an invitation horse that invites gods and goddesses to attend Pithora ceremony.

### PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1

Now let us prepare a Pithora Painting on a sheet.

- Firstly, observe the Pithora painting made by Bhil tribals carefully, recognise the figures that are made and understand the design of the painting.
- Now keeping the original painting in mind. Think about the procedure that you will follow to make the painting and understand the form of the characters.
- Firstly, prepare the surface or background for printing. Take a drawing sheet of size 14" × 20" paper. Leaving space of one inch on the edges, draw a line using a pencil and scale all around it. In this way, a rectangle of 12" × 18" will be obtained.



Fig. 4.4



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- Now fill this rectangle with a light colour like yellow or brown with the help of a brush. Move forward, filling the colour from top to bottom. Try to keep the colour flat and uniform without patches. Now let it dry.
- Make a border with a geometric pattern or creeper with flowers and leaves in the drawn threshold.
- In this way, you can prepare the background for painting on paper or cloth.
- Then draw the Pithora house or threshold on the prepared background. Follow this by giving a place and shape to various characters you wish to paint inside the threshold using a pencil. Now define each figure clearly.



Fig. 4.5

- After that, fill each figure using three number brush with a flat colour of your choice.



Fig. 4.6

## Pithora Painting

- Using one number brush, make the detailing of different shapes and decorate them with dots of bright colours.

Make the shapes of horses bigger than the other shapes and decorate them more.



Fig. 4.7

- Now your Pithora painting is ready.

## PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2

This is your another exercise. The theme is Pithora painting related to the daily life of Bhils.

- Select five motifs related to the daily life of Bhils. Firstly, observe a traditional Pithora painting, and select five motifs that you wish to paint.



Fig. 4.8

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- Now draw the threshold of Pithora house on the previously prepared background. First of all, colour the threshold with white colour using a brush. Make triangular shapes all around the threshold and fill it with colour making curves of three leaves. Inside the threshold, decorate angular lines of white, red and black colour.

Outside the threshold, conceptualize the five selected motifs and lightly draw them.



Fig. 4.9

- Define the characters with clear and bold lines once the painting has been composed.
- Now using a brush fill the characters with initial flat colours, and also colour the decorations inside the threshold. Thereafter, using one number brush paint the detailing of each character, and complete the painting.



Fig. 4.10

- Colour neatly without patches. Your Pithora painting is ready.



## WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Pithora  
Painting

- Traditional art of Bhil
- Made of wall
- Likhendra the Pithora maker
- Lakhendra invited honourably in every house
- Indiraja, Kajal Rani, Dharmi are themes
- Manifest horses in Pithora wall painting
- Protect insects, bad energies etc. in the house



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## TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Make Pithora house using two lines.
2. Make Huqqah smoking Ganesh on the left side of threshold in black colour at the bottom.
3. Make Kathiya horse on the top left corner.
4. Make two white horses in the centre facing each other. In between them make the figure of a man holding their reins.
5. Make moon-sun, stars over the door.
6. After that, make the horses representing Kajal Rani, Hatharaja Kunwar, Meghani and the other birds, animals, insects, snake-scorpion, vegetation, paniharin, farmer ploughing field, monkey etc. Complete the wall painting of Pithora by making traditional figures.

## GLOSSARY

1. Pithora : a traditional wall painting related to religious rituals among Bhil tribe
2. Pithora Baapdev : a protective God of Bhil and Rathwa tribe
3. Pithora Kunwar : being the son of a king he has been given the title of Kunwar (prince)
4. Likhandra : the person who makes the Pithora is traditionally called 'Likhandra'

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5. Pithora house : the Pithora house is the threshold made on the wall. Pithora and other Gods and Goddesses reside inside the house.
6. External difficulties : spirits, diseases, epidemic, anger of paranormal energies etc.
7. Balod : Sem ki Phali (Hyacinth bean)
8. Pevadi : yellow clay colour
9. Deshi Bhabhar : gram swami god/Gram-devta
10. Kajal Rani : Goddess of rain
11. Meghani horse : horse representing the cloud god
12. Rakhi Behna horse : horse representing the sister who ties rakhi on the festival of rakhi
13. Diwali Behna horse : horse representing Diwali sister
14. Indiraja : king Indra
15. Kathiya horse : a horse with saddle (kathi)
16. Hali : horse driver
17. Shobhavar : decoration
18. Jami mother : mother Earth
19. Paniharin : women holding pots on their heads
20. Kawadiya : bhishti, man carrying kawad of water
21. Bandara : monkey
22. Papat : parrot
23. Tadi : fruit of palm from which a drink is made (Palmyra)
24. Supad Kanya : a women with long ears
25. Handya Saand : fertile bull
26. Manifest : to come into being
27. Reside : live
28. Dasamundya : ten headed
29. Khadiya : White clay
30. Baaramathya : a being with twelve heads
31. Vermillion : red Sindoor
32. Dona : bowl made of leaves