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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIETAL REPRESENTATION OF 'MANBHUM CHHOW': A CASE OF 'CHHOW MASK MAKERS' OF CHARIDA VILLAGE, PURULIA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL.

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Abstract

Chhow is one of the vigorous folk cultures in the world. This is very famous in Charida village of Purulia district along with making Chhow Mask. Almost 85% people of Charida village are profoundly engaged in mask making activity. Both Sutradhar and Tribal community people are engaged in this type of cultural activity. Sutradhar community is eminent for Chhow Mask making while the Tribal community is well known for Chhow Dance. These two communities represent a distinct type of socio-economic attributes on the environment. However, Mask making industry is very much predominant in the small-scale sector of West Bengal and most of the rural people are trying to fulfil their economic desire through this activity in each part of Charida village. This research paper mainly focuses on the societal representation of ManbhumiChhow and the Chhow mask makers of Charida village of Purulia district.

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Introduction:-

Chhow culture is not only concentrated in Purulia, but also it is concentrated in Mayurbhanj (Odisha state) and Serailkela-Kharsawan (Jharkhand state) districts. However, Purulia Chhow is worldwide legendary folk art form because of its serious and grave dance form and mask. On the other side, instrumental music during Chhow *palas* is one type of vibrating music which rejuvenates the strength of power. All over, Purulia Chhow is a strong dizzy sensational folk art form which has derived from the destructive dance form of Lord Shiva. It is said that the king of Baghmundi has given some land to the *Sutradhar community people*, whom he has invited from Bardhaman District to make clay-models of Hindu gods and goddesses for various *Pujas* and festivals and today they are mainly engaged in making Chhow masks (Sarkar & Mistri, 2015). This research paper mainly focuses on the societal representation of Chhow Mask makers of Purulia to represent the aroma of Bengal's indigenous culture.

Concept of Chhow: Since the days of remote past, the diversified art & cultural forms generated by the tribal and rural people of India have continued to evince their creative magnificence. Apart from their outstanding brilliance from the perspective of aesthetics, the tribal/folk art and cultural forms have played an instrumental role (Maity, 2015). The districts of West Bengal, like Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapur are belonging in to the same cultural periphery. The popular folk dance forms are *Nachni, Natua, Karam, Pata, Kathi, Jhumur, Vagta, Chhow* etc. Among of these dance forms, the *Chhow Dance* is most popular in West Bengal, India and also various countries around the world (Maity, 2015). Socially and economically marginalised tribal people express their devotion to God 'Siva', through Chhow dance. Nowadays, the themes have expanded to encapsulate the stories of Puranas, hunting

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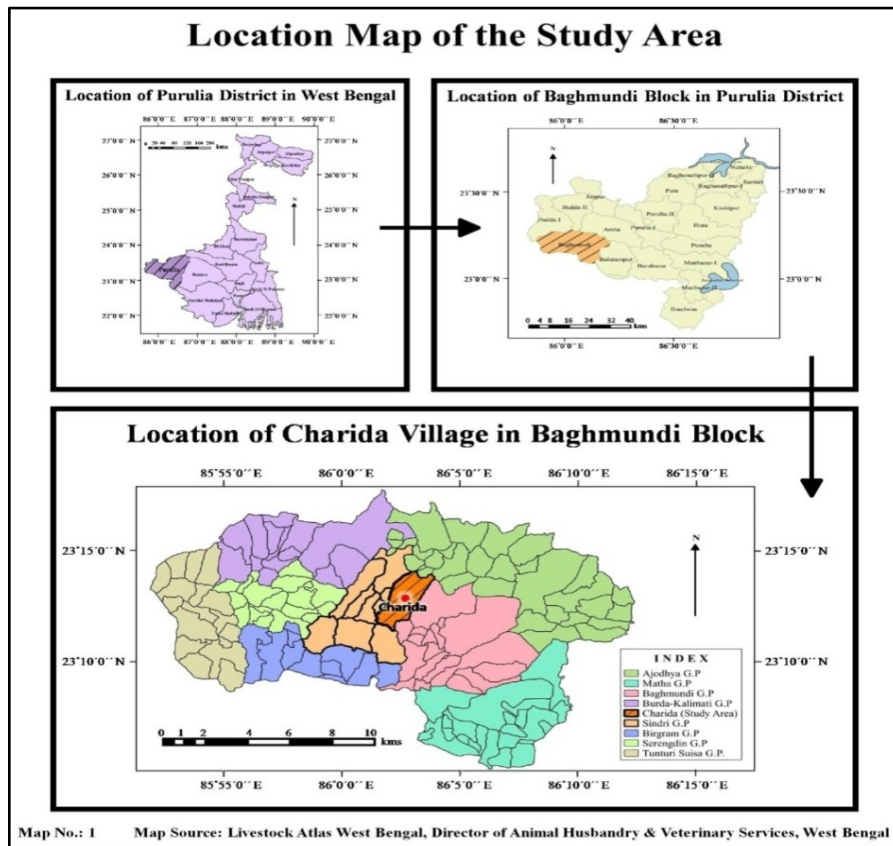
and social wild heroic story (Maity, 2015). Mask manufacturers, tailors, carpenters, musical instrumentalists, dancers, trading group, ordinance and supporters all of them are engaged in this culture (Maity, 2015). In purulia, the Chhow dance is mainly dynamic and it is predominated with ‘tempo’; ‘beat’; ‘rhythm’.

On the other hand, Charida, which is a small old-fashioned village at the foothills of Ajodhya, is home for some wonderful artists making Chhow mask. Wearing those masks, dancers perform in various *palas* and the *palas* become attractive to every people.

Objectives of the Study: The major objectives of this research work are enumerated below:

- i. To discuss the historical evidences of Chhow.
- ii. To state the mask making procedures and *pala* related types of masks.
- iii. To identify the marketing process and International & National markets.
- iv. To point out the socio economic status of the mask makers followed by their problems.
- v. To bring out various measures to solve the problems.

Location of the Study Area: The selected study area, village Charida is situated within the extension from 23°10'00" N to 23°15'00" N and 86°00'00" E to 86°05'00" E (Map No. 1.) under Sindri Gram Panchayat (G.P.) of Baghmundi C.D. Block, Purulia Sadar, West Subdivision of Purulia District in West Bengal. It is bounded by the parts of Ajodhya G.P. in the North, parts of Baghmundi G.P. in the East. Ghorabandha, Dhaba, Dhundhikhap, Khirabera and Baredi Mouza of Sindri G.P. make its Southern, South-Western, Western and North-Western boundaries respectively. Being a part of Chotanagpur Plateau, the village is characterized by undulating topography.



Literature Review: The mostly studied Research Literatures are:

- Satpathi, I. D. (2008) in her book, ‘Chhow’, *Loksangskriti O Adivashi Sangskriti Kendra, Calcutta* has made out the fact that when the primary form of Chhowdance got popularity in front of the *Raja*, full-fledged development of Chhowdance started with the incorporation of various mythological stories in different *palas*.
- Ghosh, D. (2012) in ‘*Banglar Mukhosh, Ananda Publishers Private Limited, Kolkata*’, has stated that, probably it was the first half of Eighteenth Century, when the *Raj Parivar* was converted to Hinduism, the ancestors of the recent mask makers of Purulia, settled in Charida village near Baghmundi .

- Mistri, B. and Sarkar, A.(2012) in their paper, ‘Folk resource utilization and sustainability of rural livelihood: an inquiry on PuruliaChhau mask making art in Charida village, Baghmundi C. D. Block, Purulia district’ has pointed out the fact that, Charida village of Purulia District is popular for mask making. It has provided a momentum to the overall economy of the concerned village and the village has become a place of tourist interest in Purulia.

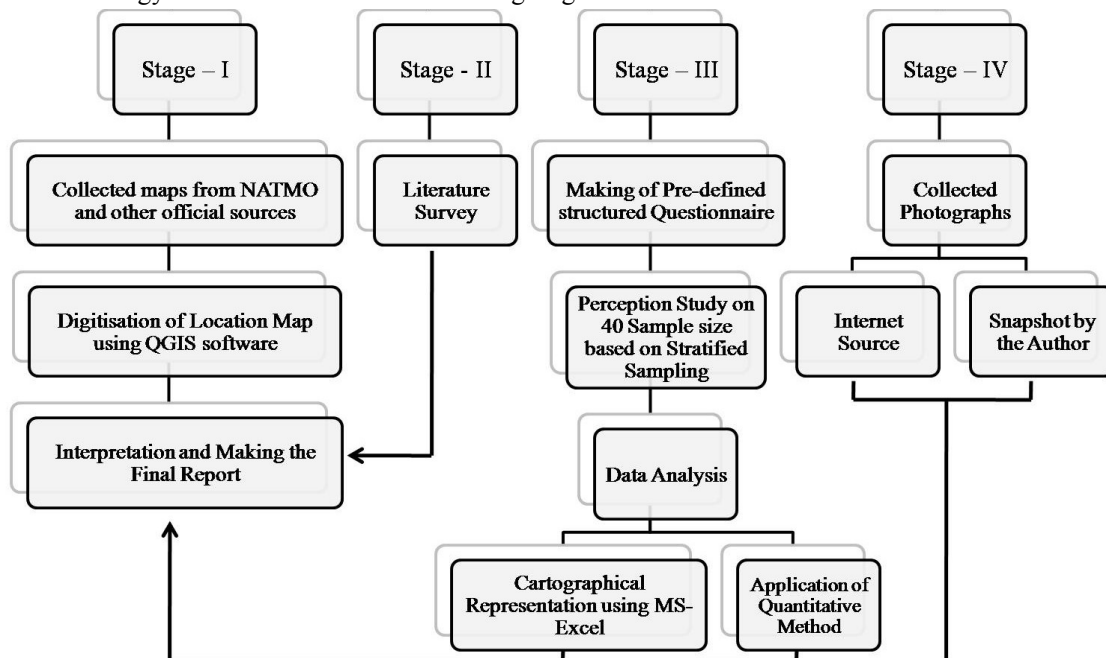
Database: This research work is based on both primary and secondary data, collected from different sources.

Secondary Database: Secondary data and maps have collected from various sources, which include various websites of internet sources, articles and brochure of banglanatok.com, B.D.O office, *Panchayet* office etc. Based on stratified sampling, 40 families were identified as sample size, which is 10% of the total families of Charida village. Chhow Mask Makers of Charida Village have taken into consideration as target group in this research work.

Primary Database: Primary data has collected from the local mask makers of Charida village based on perception study by the structured questionnaire and interview method to shape up the research paper.

Methodology:-

The methodology can be divided into the following stages:



Results and Discussion:-

Historical Evidences:

History of “Manbhum Chhow”—At the time of eighth century, there was an epistle *Sanskrit* poem engraved on *Dudhpani Mountain*, situated in *Hazaribag*. That epistle or story was related to three brothers named *Udaiman*, *Dhoutaman* and *Ajitman*, who went to *Tamralipta* from *Ayodhya* for their trading purpose. After earning a lot of money, they were coming back to their place. After travelling long distance, they were taking rest in *Bhramarshalmli* village and at that time, the king of *Magadh*, named *Adisingha* used to set out on a journey to hunt elephant. He was looking for *Avalgak* or *Avalgan* and villagers did not understand what that object is. But, *Udaiman* bought it to the king and the king was so pleased that he gave one village of that particular area to *Udaiman*. Villagers honoured him as their king and *Adisingha* gave another two villages to *Dhoutaman* and *Ajitman* too. After that, *Manbhum* was emerged from the name of *Man Kings (Udaiman, Dhoutaman, Ajitman)→Manbhum*, where ‘*bhum*’ means land). From the name of *Manbhum*, Purulia Chhow is also known as *Manbhum Chhow* because, Purulia was one of the part of *Manbhum*.

Origin of the word: “Chhow”—There are several origination of name has been spread all over West Bengal –

- Chhow, Cho are the two major words identified in West Bengal. As per the regional pronunciation, ‘*Chha Nach*’ or ‘*Cho*’ are the main communicative outlook of ‘Chhow’.

- b. Dr. Asutosh Bhattacharya pointed out that, at the very beginning the word was known as 'Cho' but tourist people pronounced that word as 'Chhow'.
- c. According to Sunil Kahari, Chhow means three types of name - *Chhowka* (means attacking with suspiciously) *Churi* (an armoury) *Chhowni* (military field).
- d. In Sanskrit language, Chhow means "Chai dance" means 'mask dance.'
- e. However, "Chhow" means traditional and ritual dance. "Chhow" dance is very much associated with "ChaitraParab". In Bengal and Orissa "Chhow" word is mostly revealed the fact that 'dressing up as a clown'.

Emergence of Chhow Dance and Chhow Mask: According to Anil Stradhar (eminent mask maker and dancer of Charida village),

- Chhow Dance was started with '*Proloy Nrityo*' (destructive dance form) of lord '*Shiba*'. After that, this dance was associated with Bengali festival '*Chaitra Sankranti*' or '*Shiber Gajon*'. During the ceremony of '*Chaitra Sankranti*', most of the Bengali women experience with fasting throughout the day and night. At that time, this type of Chhow dance was started to entertain them to awake all night.
- At that time, local people of Purulia used different types of colour soil, flowers, fruits, plant leaves etc. to paint and decorate their body and face. However, that was not an ideal representation of the actual god and goddess of Bengali culture. To overcome the situation, Chhow masks were first made out to reflect the real outlook of Hindu god and goddess.
- Expected 300 years ago, the king of Baghmundi, *Gopal Singh* started this dance to entertain the people and later, King *Madon Mohan Singh*, who was the son of *Gopal Singh*, extended this ceremony all over Purulia.

The most famous ChhowPalas in Purulia: The following open-air dramas are performed in Purulia –

1. **Mahishasur Badh:** This performance runs for 20 to 25 minutes. It mainly deals with the destruction of bad entity like *Mahishasur* by good power such as *Devi Durga*. It is most popular *pala* in Purulia.
2. **Tarakarakhshasi Badh:** This performance runs for 10 to 12 minutes. Here destruction of *Tarakarakhshasi* by *Lord Rama* is the main mythological story.
3. **Sumbha - Nisumbha Pala:** It is a dualistic performance and continues for 10 to 12 minutes. *Sumbha* and *Nisumbha*, who are two brothers from *Shree Shree Chandi Upakhyan*, are two main characters of this *pala*.
4. **Ganesh Bandana Pala:** This *pala* mainly depicts the worshipping of *Lord Ganesh* by a narrative dance performance.
5. **Sri Krishna Nidhan:** This dramatic performance mainly deals with various perspectives from *Mahabharata* where a hunter shot *Sri Krishna*, who is the main and only one spiritual character in this *pala*.
6. **Bobhrubahan Pala:** This is another popular *pala* in Purulia, which mainly deals with the collision between *Arjun* and his son named *Bobhrubahan*.
7. **Kiratarjun Pala:** This is another dramatic performance, has taken from *Mahabharata* where a battle was formed between *Mahadev* as *Kirat* and *Arjun*.
8. **AbhimanyuBadh:** This *pala* reflects another incident of *Mahabharata* where *Abhimanyu* was killed by a pre-planned strategy. This *pala* also runs for 20 to 25 minutes.
9. **Ravan - Jatayu War:** A reflective dramatic performance has taken from the incident of *Ramayana*, where a battle was formed between *Ravan* and *Jatayu*.
10. **Bali - Sugrib War:** This dramatic performance deals with the battle between *Bali* and *Sugrib*. This *pala* has also taken from *Ramayana*.
11. **RavanBadh:** This performance mainly deals with the conflict between *Rama* and *Ravana*, where *Rama* killed *Ravana* in the battle.

In the year of 1975, 8th February, the *Bostan Globe* painted out that, "the Chhow dancers from Purulia, India, told their epic story/stories with fierce child like clarity. Moreover, the pantomime representing the battles has a child like simplicity and directness." (Satpathi, 2008)

The most famous Chhow Masks: Various Chhow masks (table: 1) are being used for various *palas*, which are as follows-

Most Famous Chhow Masks			
Related to Ramayana	Related to Mahabharata	Related to Mahishasur Mardini	Related to Ganesh Bandana
Ram, Lakshman, Hanuman, Sita, Ravan, Bali, Jamboban, Sugrib, Bivishan, Meghnad, Kumbhakarna, Biswamitra, Parasuram, Rakshas, Daitya, Mahavir	Yudhisthir, Bhim, Arjun, Nakul, Sahadev, Karna, Avimuniyu, Duryodhan, Vishma, Sakuni, Sri Krishna, Drona, Bogasur, Gosingha, Agasur, Brahma, Vishnu, Nrisingha, Maheswar, Vakta Prahlad, Byadh, Kirat, Kiratin, Baraha, 7 Rathis	Durga, Mahisasur, Ganesh, Kartik, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Pencha, Indur, Mayur, Hangsa	Ganesh, Kartik, Durga, Shiva, Parasuram, Mayur, Indur, Singha, Pencha

Table: 1 Source: Folk Resource Utilization and Sustainability of Rural Livelihood: An Inquiry on Purulia Chhau Mask Making Art in Chorda Village, Baghmundi C. D. Block, Purulia District

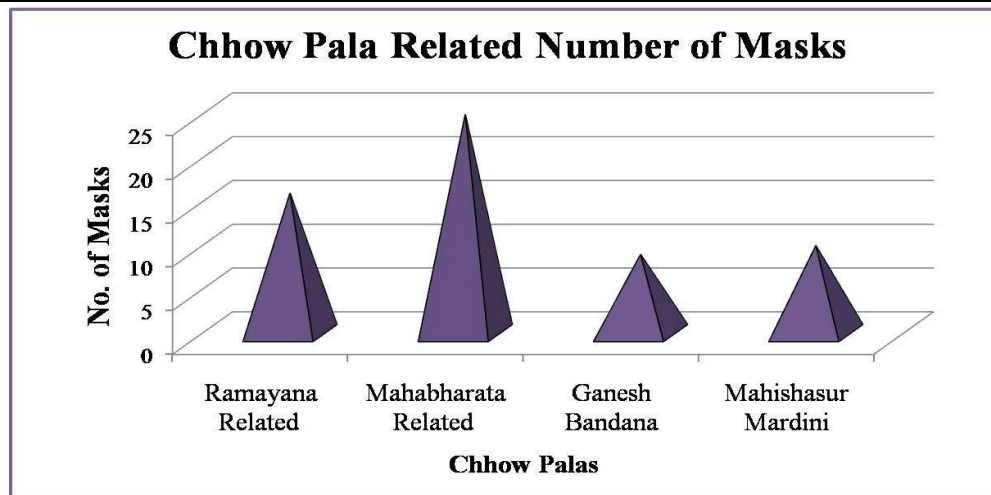


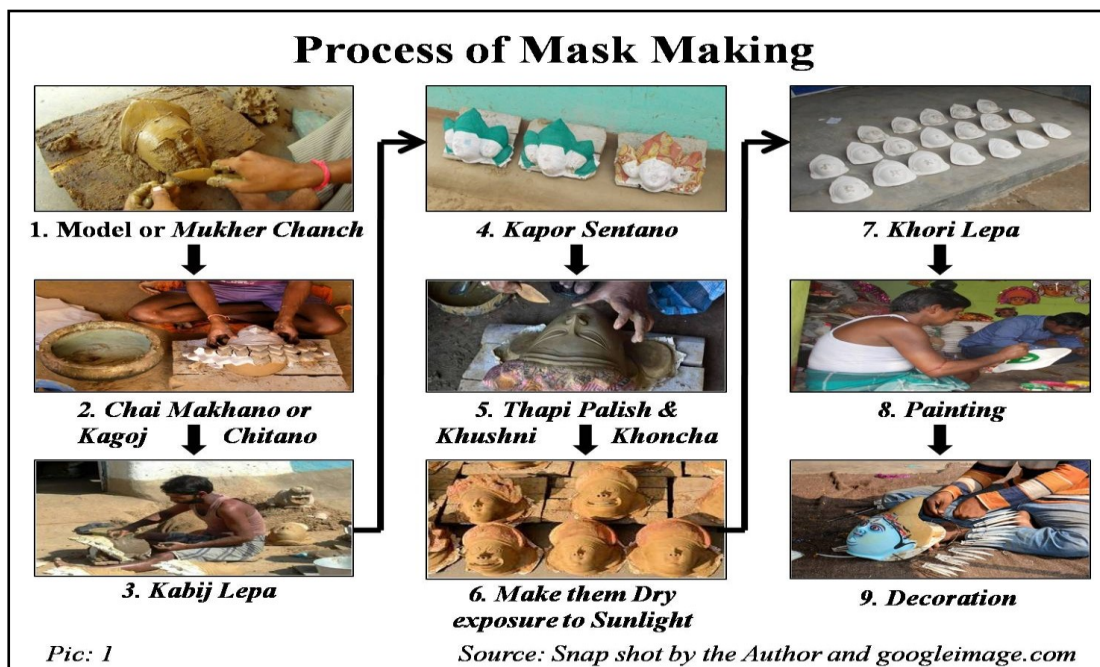
Fig: 1

Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

Therefore, while it has been discussed the use of various masks in performing the Chhow dance in Purulia (fig: 1), it can be pointed out that, almost 25 types of Chhowmasks are used in various *palas* related to *Mahabharata* (*Sumbha-Nisumbha pala*, *Shree Krishna Nidhan*, *Babhrubahanpala*, *Kiratarjunpala*, *Abhimanyu Badh pala* etc.). However, almost 16 types of masks are used in various *palas* related to *Ramayana* (*Tarakarakshasi Badh pala*, *Ravan and Jatayu Badh pala*, *Bali-Sugrib Badh pala*, *Ravan Badh pala* etc.). On the other hand, 10 types and 9 types of masks are used in *Mahishasur Mardini* and *Ganesh Bandana palas*.

Process of Making Chhow Masks: Making of Chhow Mask is aesthetically very delightful and creative in nature. People from Charida Village reflect their creativity in making the Masks very passionately and dedicatedly. Therefore, (pic.: 1) several steps are followed in order to make and decorate masks -

1. **Model or Mukher Chanch:** This is the first phase, where mud is used to make a shape of an object and dry it with the help of sunlight. This is also called *mati gara*.
2. **Chai Makhano or Kagoj Chitano:** After drying the mud structure, a thick ash layer is spread over the dry structure. After that, parted newspapers are attached on the mud structure with the help of gum. This is called *kagoj chitano*.
3. **Kabij Lepa:** After drying the ash structure, a thin layer of mud is layered on the structure, this is called *kabij lepa*.
4. **Kapor Sentano:** After drying the structure of *kabij*, a thin cotton cloth is placed over the *kabij*, this is called *kapor sentano*.
5. **Thapi Palish:** 'Thapi' is a small wooden tool. This *thapi* is used for smoothing the mask, it is also called *matha-mathi* or *chikon*. After that, it is exposed to dry under the sunlight and removes the mask from the main structure.
6. **Khushni Khoncha:** With the help of small *batali*(tool), eye, nose etc. are created on the mask, this stage is called *khushni khoncha*.
7. **Khori Lepa:** In this phase, the dry mask is layered with the help of white chalk and again makes it dry under the sunlight.
8. **Colour:** As per the requirement of the mask character, various colours are used to decorate the mask.
9. **Decoration:** 'Shirabhusan' or 'Mukut' decoration is the part of mask making. Decoration is the final stage of mask making. Small crib of wood, Rolex, feather of birds, peacock's feather, tinfoil, small pearl shaped ball, the citron leaf, *Salma Chumki*, *Matar-Kathi*, *Kiran Pokhri*, plastic jasmine flower, paper flower, hemp or flax, jute etc. are used for decorating the mask. These decorative raw materials are purchased from *Burabazar*, *Kumartuli*, *Bagri* market etc. However, special type of decorative mask is known as '*Pancha Khillan*'.



Type wise Demand and Price of Chhow Masks:

i. **Type wise Demand of Masks :** As per the demand level, (fig: 2) most demand is related to the masks of *Mahishasurmardini*, *Kiratarjun*, *Avimanyu Badh* and *Ogasur Bogasur Badh* because of high demand in the open air dramas among the local and foreign tourists. However, most of the people are seeking for masks as showpieces for decorating their room. Therefore, in this modern day society, various society centric *palas* have evolved i.e., *Kannyashree*, *Santhal Bidroho* and these *pala* related masks have less demand compared to that of others.

ii. **Price of Various Types of Masks:** Chhow masks are mainly used in different open air dramas (*pala-gaan*) such as *Mahishasurmardini*, *Kiratarjun*, *Avimanyu badh*, *Ogasur – Bogasur Badh*, *Santhal Bidroho*,

Kannyashree etc. However, these masks are also being used as showpieces. (Fig: 3) The price range of this mask is varying from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000. *Kiratarjun Pala* related masks sell in the market near about Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20,000 because of costly raw materials, ingredients and hard making process.

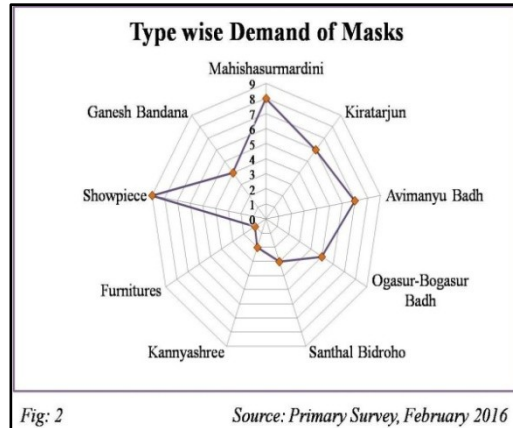


Fig: 2

Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

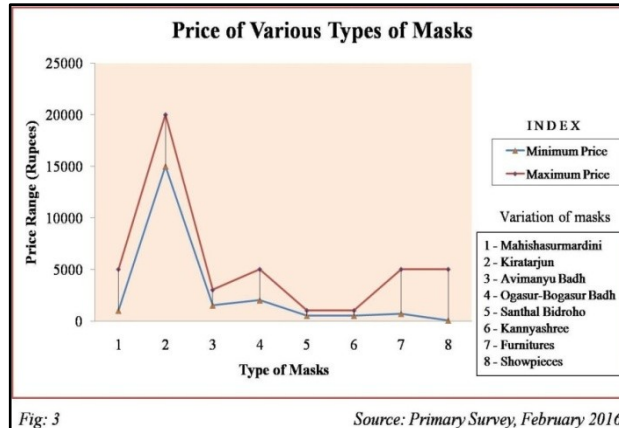


Fig: 3

Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

Utilisation of Chhow Mask: Chhow masks are basically used for Chhow Dance or Chhow *Palas*. However, at present, Chhow masks are being utilised for decorating house too. From every corner of the world, people are seeking for those kinds of Chhow Masks to decorate their rooms or houses.

Therefore, every mask can be used 5-6 times for Chhow Dance. Later, those masks become useless. After completing 5 to 6 *palas*, dancers need to use new mask for their next performance. So, production of Chhow Mask is very relevant in this context.

Marketing of Chhow Mask: From the primary survey, it has been pointed out that, mask producers sell their masks in India and outside of India also-

International and National Market:-

International Market – Very few mask makers sell their products in international markets. However, they got order of making Chhow masks from *America, London, Paris, Iran, Scotland, Dubai, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Japan* etc.

National Market – Most of them sell their products in several districts and cities of West Bengal i.e., *Kolkata, Durgapur, Bardwan, Bangaon, Siliguri, Jalpaiguri* etc. Moreover, they also sell their products in national markets i.e., *Ranchi, Bhupal, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Mumbai, Tamil Nadu, Goa* etc.

Marketing Process: Every mask makers of Charida village have their individual catalogues of various types and size of masks and individual price range. They collect email id from interested people or tourists and send that catalogue via e-mail. After choosing the product by the customers, they make that masks and deliver that required products to the customers by speed post or by home delivery service. On the other hand, they sell their products to *Biswa Bangla Haat* and *Biswa Bangla* stores in Kolkata.

Socio-Economic Condition of the Mask Makers: Most of the mask makers of Purulia are Hindu and Bengali by religion. They are *Sutradhar* from the clan relationship. According to Anil Sutradhar, all the mask makers were migrated from Burdwan District. Baghmundi king invited them to make the idol of god and goddess but later, they engaged in mask making. The socio-economic conditions of the mask makers are as follows –

i. Population and Household:

As per the Census data (2011), provided by the office of BDO, it has been observed that in Charida village, the total number of households are nearby 415 and it is dispersed compared to the household density of other villages of Baghmundi block. Therefore, the total population of Charida village is 2087, which is composed of 1089 male and 998 female population, that means 52 percent population are considered as male whereas 48 percent population is female. As the percentage of male population is high so these male people are very much associated with mask making, however women are also engaged in this same activity. While it has been discussed the caste-wise division of population, in Charida village, scheduled tribe population is more compared to that of scheduled caste population and male population is more in both the caste divisions.

ii. Male Female Ratio:

The primary survey depicts the percentage of male female ratio. It is observed that the population of Charida village is male predominant with 54% (fig: 4) male population and 46% female population. Therefore, Charida village reflects a significant feature that there is no gender discrimination between male and female population because women are engaged in mask making activities too.

iii. Age-Sex Structure:

A stratified sampling has been done during primary Survey and it reflects that (fig: 5) 31% male and 28% female population are under the age category of 0 to 15 years where as 6% male and 4% female population are under the old age category i.e. more than 60 years. Therefore, 23% male is under the age category of 31 to 45 years and they are mainly engaged in mask making activity in Charida village. However, this pyramidal diagram denotes that, Charida village is quite underdeveloped.

iv. Educational Status of Mask Makers of Charida Village:

From the primary survey, it can be observed that, (fig: 6) 14% people are illiterate. Nearly 32% people are educated up to primary level and 22% people are educated up to Class VIII. However, only 24% people are qualified up to the Secondary level. A significant change has been observed that only 4% people are graduated. Therefore, in most of the cases, educational status of female population is low compared to that of male population.

v. Primary Educational Status of Charida Village:

Charida Primary School (CPS) is one of the primary school in Charida village where most of the villagers enrol their name. Considering the caste-wise variations in education, Charida village comprises of mostly scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribe (ST) as well as other backward class (OBC) people. As per the data (year- 2016) provided by CPS, (Fig: 7) 45% students under OBC category have enrolled their name in this school and the percentage is high because, most of the students are *sutradhar* (OBC category). However, 20% and 26% students under ST and SC caste have enrolled their name in this primary school too.

vi. House Materials:

As per the house materials are concerned, (fig: 8) 65 percent and 35 percent families have the room wall made by mud and Brick respectively. However, Brick wall is mostly found in middle and high-income group families. However, 58 percent and 30 percent families have roof made by *khapra* (*khapra* is one type of thin heated clay) and brick respectively, 4% have straw, asbestos and tiles roof. While 65 percent families and 31 percent families have floor made of mud, cement and brick respectively, and rest 4% families have mud floor. Therefore, most of the houses are made of Khapra roof, mud wall and mud floor, which denotes the poor condition of the mask makers.

vii. Number of Rooms with Respect to Number of Families and Family Members:

Lack of rooms and space problems are primarily concerned among the respondents (Fig: 9) of Charida village. From the matrix diagram, it reflects that 3 families have 10, 6 or 5 number of rooms and 13 families have only 2 rooms. On the other hand, (fig: 10) it can be observed that, mask makers of Charida village have inadequate number of rooms with respect to number of family members. Therefore, number of family members is high; but, number of rooms is very less.

viii. Standard of Living of Mask Makers:

As per the standard of living is concerned, (fig: 11) approximately 50 percent families have lack of toilet facility (they go jungle and use pond water for their latrine and urine) followed by 62 percent families are not getting water facility in their houses. In this regard, they have to collect water from local drinking water tube well. All families have electricity as well as mobile phone facility. However, 31 percent, 4 percent and 69 percent families do not have television, bicycle and motorbike respectively. A significant fact has revealed that, 92 percent families do not have refrigerator and 77 percent families are facing lack of sewerage system in their houses. Therefore, standard of living of the mask makers is quite poor.

ix. **Satisfaction Level of workers:**

From the primary survey, it has been reflected that, approximately 29 percent of the mask makers are least satisfied because they are not getting high profit from market. 35 percent respondents are moderately satisfied and satisfied. (Fig: 12) However, 1 or 2 percent respondents are highly satisfied because these families are getting maximum profit by selling their products to international market and they are being awarded from the Presidents of India, Prime Minister etc.

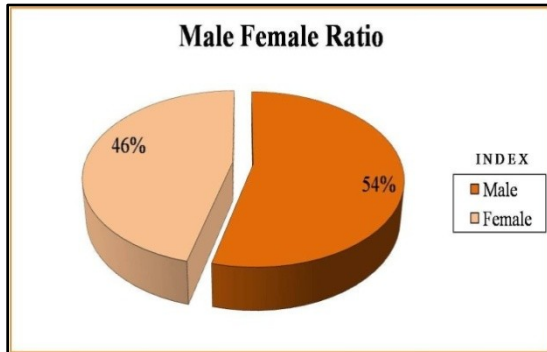


Fig: 4 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

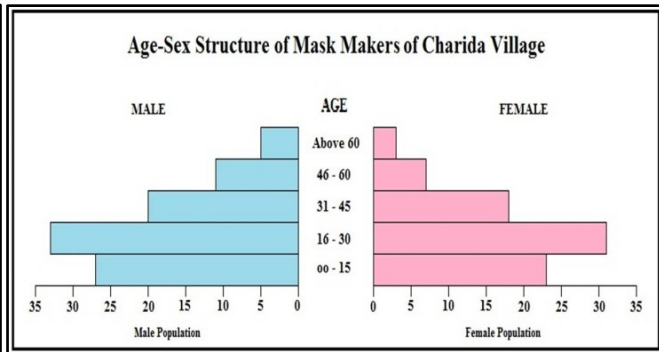


Fig: 5 N=40 families Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

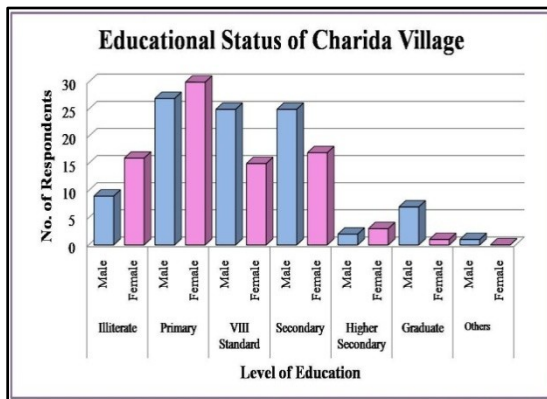


Fig: 6 N=40 families Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

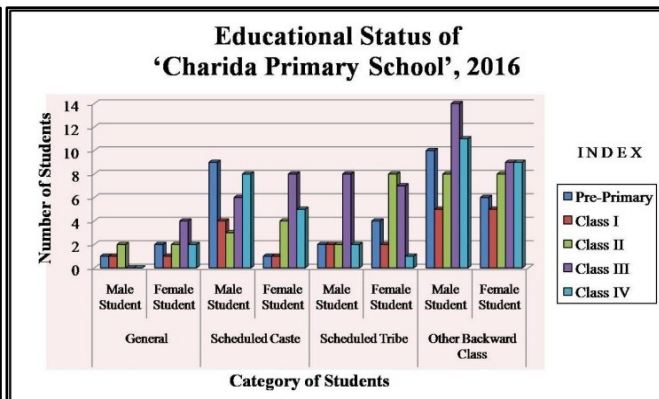


Fig: 7 Source: Charida Primary School, 2016

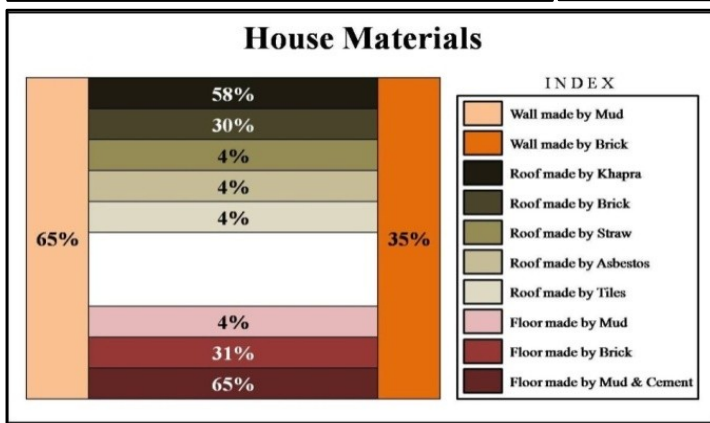


Fig: 8 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

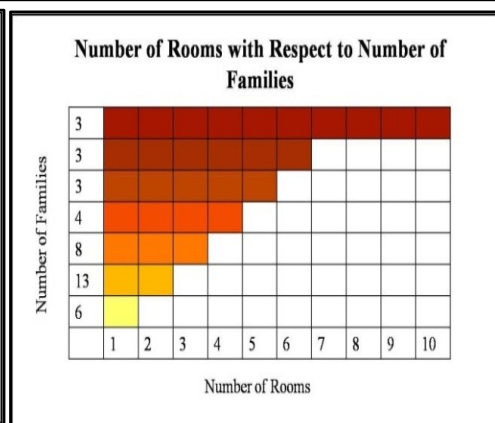


Fig: 9 N=40 families Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

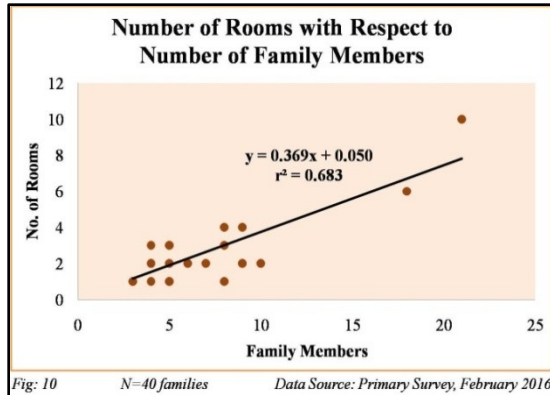


Fig: 10 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

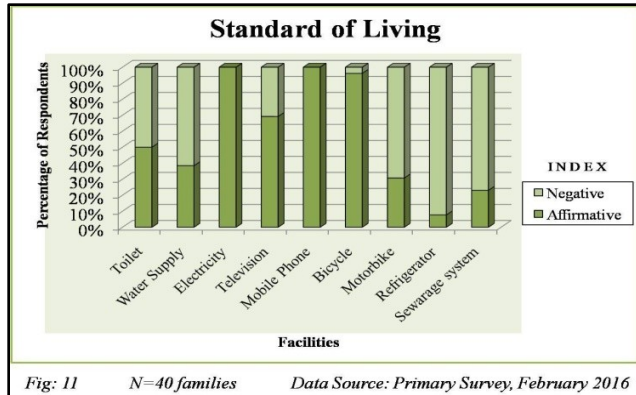


Fig: 11 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

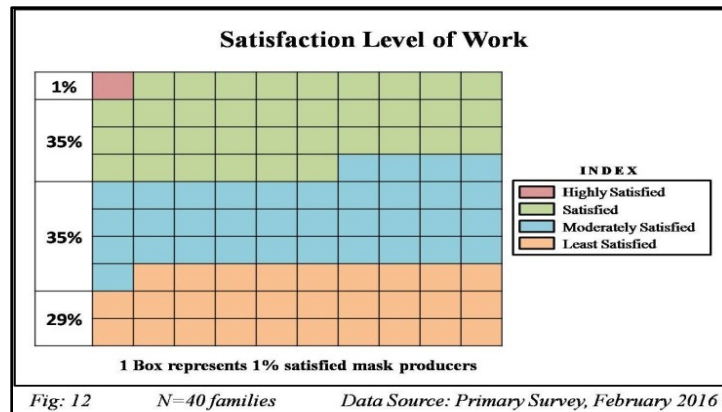


Fig: 12 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

Problems of Chhow Mask makers:

i. **Problems related to Mask Making:** Mask makers of Charida village are facing several problems (fig.: 13) related to their business or their small-scale industry, which are as follows-

a) **Lack of Banking Loan:**

According to *BholanathSutradhar* (mask maker of Charida village), State Bank of India (SBI) offered them *Artigentcard* at 10% interest. So, Mask makers were unable to get that card. On the other hand, banking loan is available there, but the interest rate is very high, so they are being unable to get that loan.

b) **Lack of Proper Market:**

Unavailability of market in Purulia for selling masks is a major problem and (fig: 8.1) the respondents have given their opinion as this is very high severe problem.

c) **Less Number of Tourist Lodges:**

Lack of Tourist Lodges is one of the major issues that, tourists have to stay far away from the Charida Village, which reduces the selling possibility.

d) **Load Shedding Problem:**

During making of masks, mask makers of Charida village are facing load-shedding problem during peak season and this is the main obstacle for their business.

e) **Other Problems:**

Lack of rooms for making mask, lack of Governmental help, financial problem, space problem as well as less profit are other severe problems. However, banking loan problem, problem of localized raw materials, less number of NGOs and lack of buyers are also severe problems. On the other hand, unavailability of own shops as well as pensions are moderately severe and least severe problems respectively.

Livelihood Problems of the Mask Makers:

Mask makers have several livelihood problems (fig: 14) mainly include lack of rooms, space problems, lack of water supply, ill-maintained house. 88 percent respondents stated that, they have lack of toilet and it remarks as very high severe. 75 percent respondents have severe problem of roof made by Khapra, which causes infiltration of rainwater during monsoon period, and it hampers their livelihood. Sewerage system as well as Sanitation is not there in most of the houses and it is very high severe.

Problems Regarding Mask Making					
Problems Regarding Mask Production	Least Severe	Moderately Severe	Severe	Highly Severe	Very High Severe
Load shedding Problem during Season time					100%
Lack of Rooms for making Masks				67%	
Lack of Banking Loan Facilities			100%		
Lack of Governmental Help				75%	
Economic Problem				40%	
Unavailability of Raw Materials			100%		
Space Problems				100%	
Lack of Markets for selling Masks					73%
Less number of Own Shops		75%			
Unavailability of Pension	80%				
Less no. of NGOs			40%		
Lack of Buyers			80%		
Less Profit				100%	

Fig: 13 *N=40 families* *Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016*

Livelihood Problems of Mask Makers					
Problems	Least Severe	Moderately Severe	Severe	Highly Severe	Very high Severe
Lack of Rooms				55%	
Space Problem				35%	
Lack of Water Facility				50%	
Lack of Toilet					88%
Lack of Maintained House				100%	
'Khapra' Roof			75%		
Land Acquisition Problem	100%				

Fig: 14 *N=40 families* *Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016*

B. Initiatives: Government has already been initiated pension and the facilities of selling the mask in Biswa Bangla Haat, (fig: 15) and the respondents are highly satisfied. While, the facility of bank loan is not adequate, so they are least satisfied. On the other hand, NGO's such as Rose group, Banglanatok.com, SHG Group, Shilpa Sangha have initiated various measures for the exploration of talent of these mask makers in front of the tourists from local and abroad and they are moderately and highly satisfied in this regard.

Initiatives		Least Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
Governmental	Pension			50%	
	Bank Loan	60%			
	Biswa Bangla Haat				50%
NGO	Rose	40%			
	Banglanatak.com		50%		
	SHG Group			40%	
	Shilpa Sangha				50%

Fig: 15 N=40 families Data Source: Primary Survey, February 2016

Recommendations:-

The major recommendations are as follows:

- i. **Pension Scheme:** Government of West Bengal has already started Pension scheme for the Chhow dancers only however; there is a need of this scheme to Chhow mask makers also. Here, the main contradiction starts between dancers and mask makers. It is necessary to start pension scheme for all the mask makers who have BPL card to support them economically.
- ii. **Market:** As per the perception survey, it has been pointed out that there is no local market in order to purchase the raw materials of making mask and selling the final product of mask. So some localised market should be established in Charida village and near railway station of Purulia, where the people or the mask makers can easily access this market in order to fulfil their regular demand and supply.
- iii. **Banking Loan:** As per the data provided by the local inhabitants, it is pointed out the fact that there is less banking facility that will give the loan to those mask makers to make the mask or to purchase raw materials. Bandhan bank has already taken some initiatives but some others nationalised or private bank should be established in order to give the loan facilities at less interest to these inhabitants of Charida village.
- iv. **Tourist Lodges:** In Charida village there is no tourist lodge, so the National as well as International tourists who are interested to purchase those masks from the mask makers, have to travel long distance either from Purulia town or other places from Baghmundi block. So, West Bengal Government as well as some private hotel enterprises may establish some hotels for the tourists in order to show natural beauty of Ayodhya hills as well as traditional culture of Charida village.
- v. **Sewerage System:** Charida village do not have any underground sewerage system, as a result, inundation may take place due to high rainfall. Proper garbage disposal site is not there and it results environmental pollution. So garbage disposal site should be there for the betterment of local inhabitants of Charida village.
- vi. **Sanitation:** Approximately 15 to 20 percent families have the sanitation system in their own house and others use open field, jungle, pond for sanitation. So concrete sanitation system should be established in order to improve the environmental quality in support of "Swaccha Bharat Cess" or "Nirmal Bangla" for the betterment of the livelihood pattern of the mask makers.

Major Findings: From the primary survey, several findings have been explored which are as follows-

- ii. The Chhow mask makers are originally idol makers by profession. The masks are generally made during the months of *Falgun* (Bengali Month), January to February.
- iii. Most of the mask makers are less qualified so, they are not getting more profit from their business. On the other hand, few mask makers are educated up to higher secondary and graduation and it helps them to communicate with the international tourists as well as national tourists.
- iv. The educational status of OBC cast students is significantly high compared to that of SC, ST and general caste students. It reflects that, most of children from Charida village are Chhow mask makers because; *sutradhar* community people are under OBC category.
- v. There are so many mask production houses in Charida village but, very few of them are being invited in governmental fairs. So, a contradiction arises among the mask makers.

- vi. High-income group families are getting BPL card instead of low-income group families. For that reason, high-income group families are getting pension facility from the government.
- vii. Government of West Bengal has already started pension scheme for the dancers, not for the mask makers. Here, contradiction arises between Chhou dancers and mask makers.
- viii. However, from the primary survey it records that, the mask makers are very much interested to prepare and shape the mask and sell it in various fairs such as in *Milan Mela* near Science City, *Biswa Bangla Haat* at Eco-Park or various fairs throughout West Bengal and India. In this way, Mask making becomes more popular among the local as well as National and Foreign tourists.

Conclusion:-

Any research paper makes an ultimate layout of thinking. Creativity of human being may always touch the finishing point, which creates concluding observation. At the end of the discussion of this empirical research paper, it has been pointed out that, mask-making industry is very much predominant in small-scale sector in West Bengal and most of the rural people are trying to fulfil their economic desire through this activity in each part of Charida village. However, due to poor socio-economic condition, the mask makers are not getting enough exposure to show their talent and they are not getting enough profit from international and national markets. A contradiction is there among the mask makers and dancers due to high, middle and low-income group families and less education. Therefore, some creative strategies and multilevel planning should be initiated to solve the immediate problems and make this creative industry more attractive and acceptable for all the people all over the world.

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