

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF GLOVE PUPPETEERS OF EAST MIDNAPUR, WEST BENGAL, INDIA: A CASE STUDY**

**Notan Haldar\*; Dr. Tapas Mistri\*\***

\*Junior Research Fellow,  
Dept. of Geography, The University of Burdwan,  
Burdwan, West Bengal, INDIA,  
Email id: notanhaldar222@gmail.com,

\*\*Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Geography, The University of Burdwan,  
Burdwan, West Bengal, INDIA  
Email id: tapasam76@gmail.com ,

**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2022.00376.8**

---

### **ABSTRACT**

*Puppetry has been one of the popular performing arts in India; Glove puppetry is one of them. Glove or Hand Puppetry is deliberated to be among the earliest puppetry. Padmatamali, a village of East Midnapur district of West Bengal is known for the Glove puppetry or Beniputul. In the time of British rule, most of the families (around eighty) of Harijan pally of Padmatamali village used to perform Beniputul door to door. Now the number of puppeteers has been reduced to 25. This study made an effort to study the perceptions of the puppeteers regarding status of puppetry and socio-economic condition of them. Snowball sampling and descriptive statistics have been used for better understanding and analysis. The result shows that there is no enthusiasm of current generation of puppeteers on puppetry, only the willpower of present puppeteers and governmental intervention and allowances help this art form to survive otherwise it can be wiped out like many art forms of rural India.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Performing Art, Glove puppetry, Beniputul, Puppeteers, Harijan*

---

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Rural areas are the nucleus or hub of the art form of diverse kinds. India is judged basically from its rural traditions and innovations and subsequent changes. Thousand of art forms have been created here and many of them have also been lost due to lack of care, attention and efforts.

Puppetry has been one of the ancient art form in India and still it's being practised throughout the length and breadth of the country (Ghosh & Banerjee, 2006). Puppetry has a long tradition in India .The art form is well extended throughout the World. Even in the great epic “Mahabharata” has mentions of it, but it is now confined to a small number of groups of traditional puppeteers in widely dispersed locations. One noteworthy nucleus of puppetry exists among some related group of families in Padmatamali village of East Midnapur District in West Bengal, India. Puppet makers of the area are one of the ancient cultural groups of Bengal. They have been carrying out their ancient tradition in spite of lot of problems from generation to generation. At present when everything has become highly globalized and technology has

replaced primitive lifestyle of human beings, various traditional art forms are on the verge of disappearing.

The word puppet has originated from the Latin word “PUPA” and French word “POUPÉE”. In Sanskrit puppets are termed as “Putrika” or “Puttalika” (Ghosh and Banerjee, 2006). Different types of puppets have different legends about their origins. There are different forms of puppetry, like – Glove puppetry, Rod puppetry, Shadow Puppetry and String puppetry. **Glove or Hand Puppetry** is deliberated to be among the earliest puppetry. Because of the comprehensibility in form and manipulation, that is known all over Asia. This is a type of puppetry where the puppeteer's hand is slipped inside the puppet and its gesture is acted out by fingers. Usually, the forefinger becomes the head of the puppet, and the thumb and the middle finger act as its two hands. These puppets have no legs and remain covered with decorated cloths. Hand/glove puppetry is quite recognized in Orissa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

The Glove puppetry or popularly known as “*Beni Putul*” of East Midnapur has an interesting folklore behind the formation of the puppet. Earlier 70 to 80 households were involved in this art. Around 5 year's ago, the numbers have been reduced to only 15 to 16 and the number was reducing day by day. Merely 4 to 5 artisans were actively engaged into the habit on that time. But now the engagement into the puppetry art form has been increasing day by day due to some government affords. Now around 25 puppeteers are engaged in to the glove puppetry. So, my present study reveals the significance of the culture of Glove Puppetry as well as the status of the puppeteers who are engaged and have been caring out their ancestor's profession that is quite in endangered position.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

There are numerous numbers of literatures available on various Indian puppetries have been discussed. **Serena Autiero** (2018) describes in her article ‘An Introduction to Indian Puppetry’ that different regional genres make puppetry one of the valuable heritages of India. Though there is enormous diversity, there are conventional traits. As per her article, in India, the origin of puppetry cannot be dated, but mythology provides at least two stories, according to one legend, the creator *brahma* gave life to the *adi*, the first puppeteer, and created the first puppet for the recreation of his wife *saraswati*. An alternative legend has as protagonist the god *shiva*, patron of puppetry, and his wife *parvati*.

The book “**Indian Puppets**” By Sampa Ghosh and Utpal Kumar Banerjee, an ideal literature, that is about Indian puppetry and his history and various types. Their concerns in their book are about Indian puppets, which are principally of four forms: glove, rod, string and shadow. There are a few composite and rare forms, which are also dealt with the book, apart from some special categories.

**R. Bhanumathi** (2004) describes about ancient south Indian shadow puppetry in his thesis which is performed in all the states of south India. His research tried to analyze the socio-economic status and the problems, prospect of the puppetry art.

According to **S. Haldar** (2004) in his article ‘**The Tarer Putul of West Bengal**’, string puppet is popularly known as *Tarer Putul* (string puppet) in West Bengal. He expressed there are more than a hundred troupes in various districts of West Bengal. Puppeteers perform for almost eight months a year over most of rural part of eastern India. They perform based on mythological stories, folk tales, and contemporary social, political, and historical events. According to him, these traditional puppeteers not only provide low-cost entertainment to the masses in the rural

pans of eastern India, but, despite their own miserable condition, they also provide non-formal adult education.

According to **Serena Autiero**, 2018 in glove puppetry, puppeteers function from below slipping their hand in the puppet; usually the forefinger lead the head, while the thumb and the third finger move the hands and glove puppets are widespread in Odisha (*sakhi kundhei*), Kerala (*pavakathakali*), Tamil Nadu (*pava koothu*), Uttar Pradesh (*Gulabo-Sitabo*), West Bengal (*benir putul*).

As per the book of **Ghosh & Banerjee** (2006) Glove puppets are a simple form where the puppeteers put on the puppet-like glove and manipulates the head of the puppet with his forefinger, controlling the arms with his thumb and middle finger. Puppeteers operate either from below or squatting on level ground, seldom hiding themselves from the audience.

**M. M. Ali & M. A. Ali**, 2015 described in their article the traditional glove puppetry as still practiced in the Padmatamali village of East Midnapur district of West Bengal. Popularly known as '*Beni putul*' or '*Bener putul*' in Bengal, their paper attempts to pursue how this performing art enforced as a tool for colonial resistance against the British Indigo-Planters. It also highlights the present condition of the art form and the artists who all are still practicing the glove puppetry dance.

### 3. OBJECTIVES:

- I. To identify the status of the Glove Puppetry
- II. To observe the present socio-economic status of the puppeteers
- III. To analyse the initiatives have been taken by the Government for protecting this art form
- IV. To understand the problems and prospects of this art form and artistry

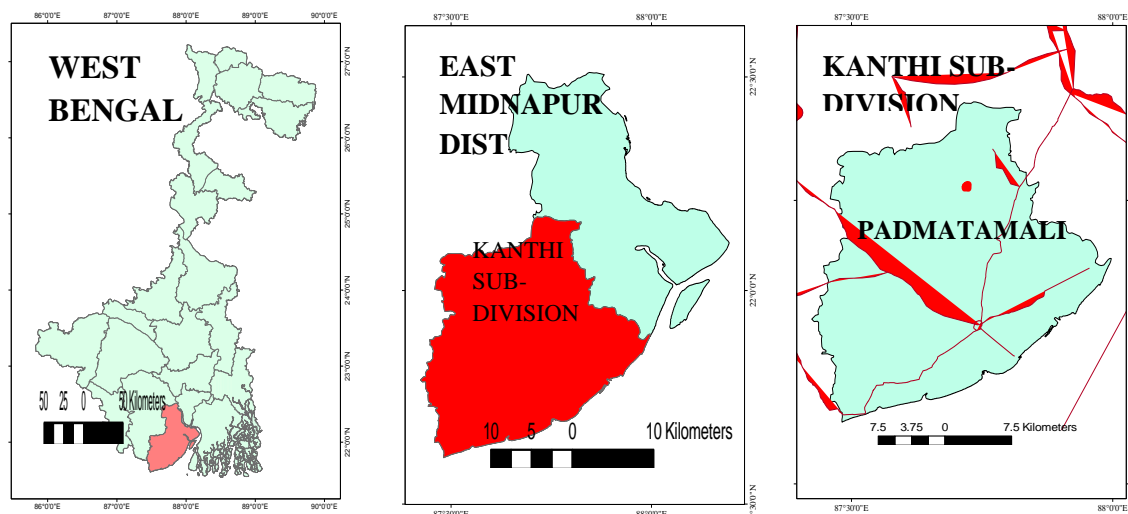
### 4. SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The area under study is named 'Padmatamali' mouza, situated in Bhagawanpur – II Block of the Kanthi(Contai) subdivision of the district of East Midnapur. The village is located at 137 km away from Kolkata. The village is located at 52 km away from the district capital Tamluk. The village is connected to Kolkata by rail and road ways. The nearest railway station is Henria station, which is only 15 km from Padmatamali. N.H 116 B is passed from 16 km away from the study area which is connected from Kolkata.

The village is under Mugberia Gram Panchayat. The area of the village is 52.16 hectares. The village is surrounded by village in the north by Haripur and Radhapur village, in the south by Bayenda village, in the east Ichhapur village, in the west Dumurdari village. The glove puppet tradition is an art which has been in this village for several times. Still the performing art is being nurtured here but the situation of the art form is quite endangered.



Picture No.: 1 the signboard indicates the way of glove puppet village



Map No.1.1: Location of the study area (Source- <https://www.diva-gis.org/gdata>)

## 5. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

For conducting the study both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary study area is Padmatamali, a village near Madakhali in Purba Medinipur district, is popularly known as 'Beni Putuler Gram' (the village of glove puppetry). For selecting the study area is justifiable because of the following reasons:

1. The village is the only village in West Bengal where the Glove puppetry art form is still being practiced by few puppeteers.
2. Once, there had been 70–80 families engaged in this performing art, but now this has decreased to less than 10 in around 2015. But after consideration to them as a folk artist by the State Govt. and provide monthly allowance to them, the number of puppeteers has been increasing from 2015. Presently around 25 puppeteers are actively performing the glove puppetry. That's why the study area is relevant to describe the shifting occupational habits of puppeteers and present socio-economic condition of them.

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Padmatamali village has population of 1382 of which 720 are males while 662 are females as per Census of India, 2011. Only 20 puppeteers from the village of Padmatamali and 5 others puppeteers from surrounding villages are selected for collecting primary data. Snowball sampling technique has been adopted to collect primary data. This study comprises in-depth interview and participatory observations. Primary data is collected from personal interview as well as discussions and observations and secondary data has been collected from various journals, articles, reports and govt. databases. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been used to address the objectives of the study. Selected respondents from study area have been interviewed with semi-structured questionnaire. Data have been analyzed using the basic descriptive statistics and simple cartograms are prepared to represent the result.

## 6. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

### 6.1. Glove Puppetry

There are so many people of the surrounding villages of Padmatamali, like- Baina, Basudebberia, Khejuri, Rasdhapur etc were involved with this puppetry, but now this art form

has passed away from those regions. Padmatmali is the only village in the West Bengal has retained the tradition of this type of puppetry. The glove puppet tradition is an art which has been in this village from times immemorial. The residents of this village mainly belong to *Harijans*. This type of puppetry is very common among them.

There are so many names of Glove puppetry or 'Beniputul' – '*Dastanaputul*' , '*Hat putul*' , '*Khendiputul*' , '*Sohagir Nach*' etc. But there is no specific cause for calling this Glove puppet as '*Beniputul*'.

According to one of the favourite Glove puppet artist Basanta Kumar Ghorai –

“As like women hair's 'BENI' is retract, like that the Glove puppet also retract as women's 'BENI'.

So, these types of puppet are called as '*BENI PUTUL*'.

In Bengal, the traditional *Beni Putul* evolved first in the Bagura and Rajsahi areas of pre-partition Bengal (now Bangladesh). Rajasthani Kathputli troupes used to perform such puppet shows before the rural masses there. Later, poverty forced the puppeteers to migrate to nearby areas like Ranaghat in Nadia, Sundarban area, Contai and Tamluk areas in Purba Medinipur district. (Mir Ahammad Ali, 2018).

There is a local hearsay about *Beniputul*, the hearsay is---

The Glove Puppetry was popular even when the British ruled the country. Legend has that the villagers sources got they heard about the news of the Englishmen arrival they fled. On a day like this, an old man saw a British entering their village and he was shivering with tears. Then he escaped and entered a jungle nearby .There was a pond in the jungle .Suddenly ,the man saw that one white haired Englishman was already there .The man was trembling with fear. But after a long and close inspection he realized that the it was not the head of the British soldier but a seed of palm fruit .After a long throughout process he thought go himself that if the fruit could be improvised with eyes, nose and ear, then it could well look like a head of a man .So, this new type of art form was born, which was even a story favourite of the colonizers.

There is no text where the origin of glove puppetry into this particular area has been figured out. All the stories related to the origin history of Glove puppetry are a kind of fiction.

## **6.2. Present Practice of Glove Puppetry**

50-60 years ago from now this type of puppetry did not have any direct audience of its own. The puppet makers roamed from door to door and begged for food. They used to take out the puppets from their work out bag and perform at the doorstep of the house hold .This was their own mean of livelihood. These artists were often neglected and even insulted and harassed by their audience.

During that time 70 to 80 households were involved in this art form, but the numbers had been reduced to around 5- 7 in 2014. After recognised them as folk artist by the govt., the number of engagement into the puppetry has been increasing from 2015. Now around 25 puppeteers are involved in glove puppetry. Out of 25 puppeteers, 20 puppeteers are from Padmatamali village, 3 puppeteers are from Baidia village and 2 are from Radhapur village. All the villages are adjoining. There are some legends about the origin of this type of puppetry .Some parts might be unlike.

This puppet born from the seed of palm is however long forgotten. Instead of it, an earthen pot was used as a face of the puppet. Similarly for the hair and other parts of the puppet leaves, wood and mud was used. Later to make the body of the puppet lighter paper and cloth was clamped on the outline of the wooden body. This goes same for the arms of the puppet.

The dressing and costumes of the puppet to holds equal importance to speak the mouth. The glamour of the puppets were made from used up clothes. Now a days, the clothes which are decorated for the god quality puppet.

A male puppet and a female puppet counterpart are needed for this purpose. In the long gone days, only one person performed this glove puppetry without any music. However, nowadays puppets are controlled with threads and drums are used for the music. Basically they sing various popular folk songs, turn songs or old Hindi and Bengali film songs. Recently they are also scripting songs for promoting social awareness as well as romantic love songs by the choice of audience. Ankle-bells are also tied up on the hands of all puppets and they rang as the puppets danced. Two to three even five peoples formed a group for this art. Puppeteers are also divided various groups. There are five groups and each group has 4 to 5 members and one head. The 5 group heads are Basanta Kumar Ghorai, Shaktipada Ghorai, Rabi Ghorai, Arabinda Ghorai and Ranjit Ghorai. One single person cannot perform at a time more than 5 days long.

During the Covid-19 pandemic situation and as effect of lockdown, the number of calls for performance has been decreased severely. Puppeteers do not visit door to door for puppet dance due to various courses like, majority of puppeteers are old aged and the lack of interest into puppetry and puppeteers' reluctance to go door to door and perform etc. Now the puppeteers are mainly dependent on the monthly allowance given by the govt and the call for performance from govt. offices.

### **6.3. Socio-Economic Condition of Glove Puppeteers:**

Puppetry has been popular forms of traditional entertainment in India for long. Total number of puppeteers is not enrolled into any govt. record yet. As per Susanta Halder in his 'discussion: Tarer Putul of West Bengal', there are estimated about five thousand traditional puppeteers in West Bengal. Only 25 puppeteers are engaged and performing glove puppetry. Total family members of all the puppeteers are around 110. Age is a determining factor in an individual physical growth, mental maturity, decision making, physical and confidence level differs on the basis of age. The figure no.1 shows the age wise distribution of the puppeteers. There are 25 puppeteers, of which only 1 puppeteer (4 percentages) belongs to the age group of less than 30, 17 puppeteers (68 percentages) belong to the age group of 30 - 59, and 7 puppeteers (28 percentages) to the age of 60 and above. In this table it is found that out of 25 puppeteers, 14 (56 %) puppeteers age is 50 and above.

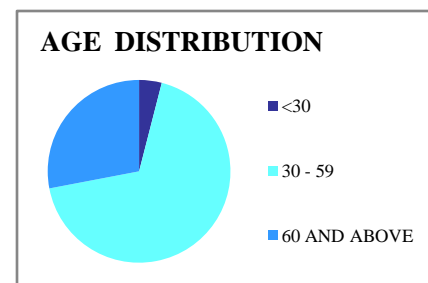


Figure No.: 1 Age Wise Distribution of Puppeteers. (Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.2 shows the sex wise distribution of the puppeteers. In this figure, out of 25 puppeteers female comprises of only 3 and 22 puppeteers are male. In this context out of 25 puppeteers only 12 percentages belongs to the female puppeteers where they are engaged in puppetry as a secondary activity. The female members are mainly belongs to any male puppeteers' relative like as a wife or daughter. Male puppeteers are rest of 88%.

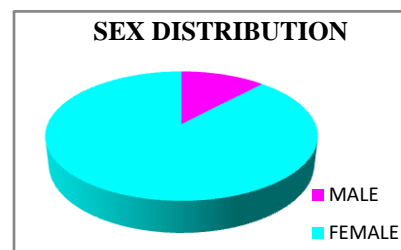


Figure No.: 2 Sex Wise Distributions of Puppeteers.  
(Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.3 explains that out of 25 puppeteers, 5 puppeteers (20 percentages) are illiterate. 10 puppeteers (40 percentages) are up to the primary level. 6 puppeteers (24 percentages) are up to high school and 1 puppeteer (4 percentages) is up to the higher secondary level of education and 2 puppeteers (8 percentages) are up to the graduation level of education.

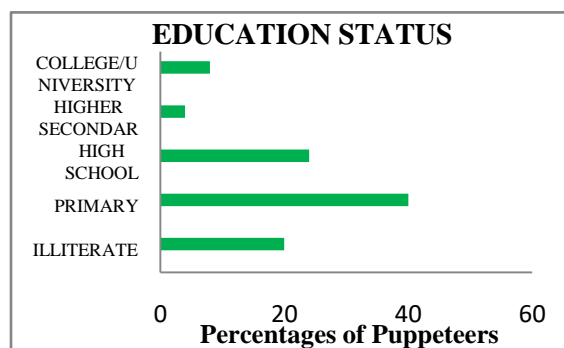


Figure No.: 3 Education Statuses of Puppeteers.  
(Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.4 shows the marital status of the puppeteers in the study areas. It explains that out of 25 puppeteers, only 1 puppeteer (4 percentages) of the respondents are married and 24 puppeteers (94 percentages) of the puppeteers are married.

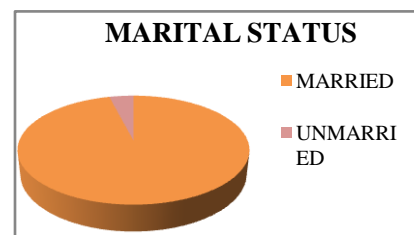


Figure No.: 4 Marital Statuses of Puppeteers. (Source-Field Survey 2022)

All the puppeteers belong to Hindu religion and the figure-5 shows out of the 25 puppeteers, 24 puppeteers belong to the schedule caste community which comprises of 96 percentages of the total respondent and 1 puppeteer out of 25 belongs to the general community, which comprises of only 4 percentages in the area. This is a hereditary occupation of the particular 'Hari' community of Padmatamali village. The study area is mostly dominated by the schedule caste community.

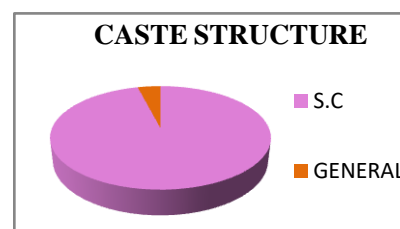


Figure No.: 5 Caste Structures of Puppeteers. (Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.6 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of the size of land holdings among the puppet artisans. Here the chart shows that 15 respondents, 71.4 percentages of puppeteers do not have any agricultural land holding area, followed by 5 puppeteers, 23.8 percentages having the land holdings of 1 to 10 katha. Only 1 puppeteer (4.8 percentages) of the respondents are having the land of 1 Bigha of lands in the area. So the chart can be concluded that maximum of the respondents does not have any agricultural land holdings. For that the puppeteers are very less active in agricultural activities.

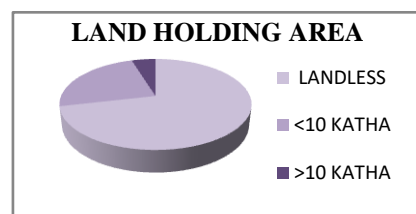


Figure No.: 6 Land Holding Distribution of Puppeteers Family.

(Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.7 shows the other economic activities in which the puppeteers basically involve as their other sources of income. Out of 25 puppeteers, 5 puppeteers or 20.8 percentages involve themselves as a seasonal labour. 16.7 percentages of puppeteers into farming also 4 puppeteers (16.7 percentages) do puppetry as a secondary activity but they do not get any artisans allowance till date. One of them is a retired job holder; another 3 are the female members of the puppeteers' family. 12.5 percentages puppeteers are involved as musical instrument player.

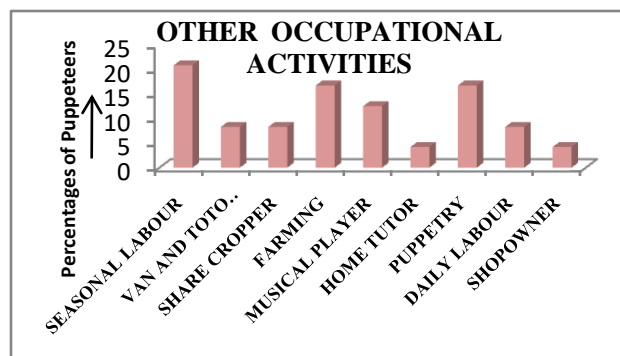


Figure No.: 7 Distributions of other Occupational Activities of Puppeteers. (Source – Field Survey 2022)

The figure no.8 shows the type of houses among the puppeteers in the study area. In the study area, out of 22 families of puppeteers, only 6 families' (27.3 percentages) have *pucca* houses. Four families' (18.2 percentages) houses are not fully *pucca* or mixed of mud and bricks, also don't have concrete roof. Majority 12(54.5 percentages) families have mud or *kutchha* houses.

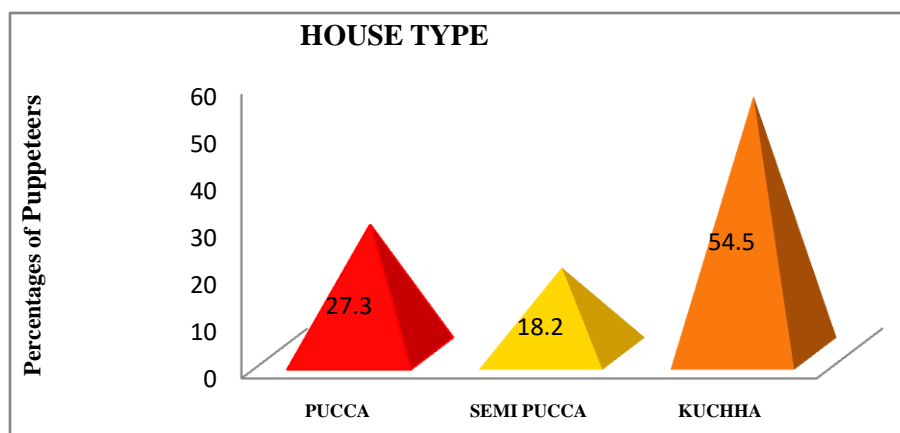


Figure No.: 8 House types of Puppeteers. (Source: Field Survey 2022)

The figure no. 9 shows the income of the respondents of the study area. It state that 31.5 percentages of puppeteers monthly family income is below 5,000 followed by 40.9 percentages have an annual income of between 5,000 to 10,000 and 27.3 percentages have their annual income of above 10,000 per month.

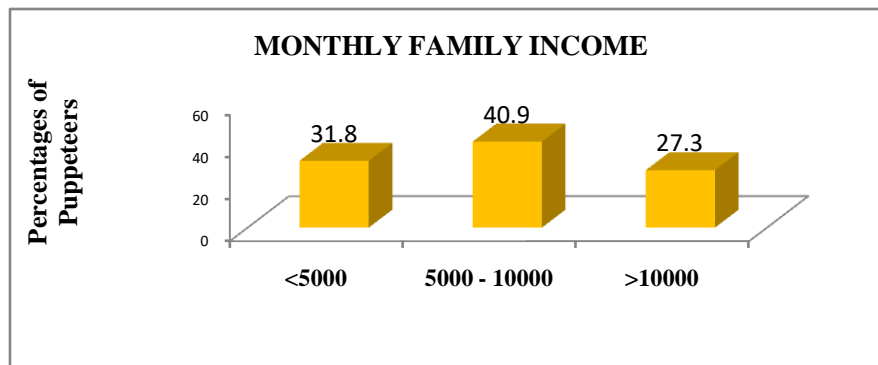


Figure No.: 9 Monthly Family Incomes. . (Source: Field Survey 2022)

#### 6.4. Status of Puppeteers:

**6.4.1.Reason for choosing Puppetry:** The ‘Beniputul’ or glove puppetry art form has mainly a hereditary root, so all group heads have mainly chosen puppetry as a hereditary profession. Due to some govt. initiatives for them and providing monthly allowance, more villagers of the study area even members from the nearby villages are expressing interest to the puppetry and they are getting training from the group heads also. Some are already become members of puppet groups.

**6.4.2.Distribution of Puppeteers According to Nature of Employment:** The figure no. 10 shows that 20 puppeteers (80%) out of 25 are actively engaged into the glove puppetry. They are always ready to perform their art form whenever they get call to perform. From the inactive puppeteers, 3 puppeteers are female, they can perform puppetry but not active always. Another two are very senior puppeteers, they are inactive to perform for their health issues. From the all active 25 puppeteers, only 3 puppeteers (12 percentages) are the member of present generation.

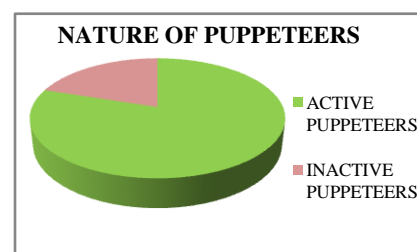


Figure No.:10 Distributions of Puppeteers According to Nature of Employment. (Source – Field Survey 2022)

#### 6.4.3. Distribution of Puppeteers According to The making ability of puppet:

All the group heads can only make various glove puppets. Glove puppet is made with only head and hands and these are decorated and covered with colourful cloths and shaped like a braid of women.

**6.4.4. Sources of Raw Materials:** Most of the puppeteers use homemade materials for making puppet. Basically they use light wood to make head and hands of puppet. Papier-mâché and thermocole (polystyrene) are also used to make head and hands, even palm fruit and mud also be



Picture No.: 2 Raw materials of puppet

used. For dressing and decoration, puppeteers used to use old cloths of their home, now for making more nice-looking puppet they use various decorative equipments. It takes minimum one week for making a new puppet. So the making cost is more than the raw materials. The price of one puppet is around 2000- to 3000.

#### 6.4.5. Distribution of Puppeteers on the Basis of Artisans Card:

From the 25 puppeteers, 21 puppeteers have been recognised as folk artist and they have Artisans Card and they are availing monthly allowance from the state government. But other 4 members don't have any Artisans Card.

Most of the puppeteers' expressed about the puppetry is the very less number of calls for performance. Now a day's, Puppetry performance is mainly dependent upon the invitation to perform in various workshops,

fairs, social awareness campaign etc.



Picture No.: 3 Artisan card

#### 6.5. Steps of Government towards Glove Puppetry

One of the big initiatives to revive the old puppetry art form of West Bengal is the “*Lok Prasar Prakalpa*” (*Shilpi Bhata*), which has been initiated by the Govt. of West Bengal in 2014. About 1, 84,300 artists have registered themselves into the scheme from all over West Bengal. In East Midnapur district, 11,491 artists enrolled into the scheme. Around 25 glove puppeteers are presently enrolled into this scheme.

According to the following programs '*Lok prasar Prakalpo*' under The Department of Information and Cultural Affairs: maximum puppeteers have been Issued identity card as folk artist and they are getting monthly pension for veteran and distressed folk-artistes. Also Granting of retainer fee to artistes and arranging for the minimum income by engaging them in the public campaign programmed in various development projects. '*Lok prasar Prakalpo*' has already achieved a great success through its implementation. The monthly allowance helped a lot to survive them in the time of lockdown. The so called neglected rural folk artistes of Bengal are taking part in this scheme with great enthusiasm.

Various initiatives have been taken to organise workshops in each district with the assistance of the researchers on folk culture for upgrading the traditional folk forms for presentation to new generations in a more attractive way.

Apart from the *lokprashar prakolpo*, puppeteers are main getting call for performance of puppetry from the local govt. bodies. Their main platforms to perform puppetry now a days are '*Duare Sarkar Camp*', Polio Camp', Social awareness programs, Election campaign etc.

'Sangeet Natak Academi' by Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India also invites them to perform and attend in various exhibitions, workshop in all over the country. Recently one group of puppetry attended a workshop '*PUTUL UTSAV*' in Hyderabad on 21-23 March, 2022 by Sangeet Natak Academi initiative.

Most of the puppeteers belong to BPL category, so the free rations are being provided to them and the women members are also engaging into SHG (Self Help Group) groups to get loans and women with the age of 25 and above also availing the monthly allowance for '*Lakshmir Bhandar*' project .Puppeteers don't take any loans to make puppets; basically they borrow money from local money lenders.

## **V. MAJOR FINDINGS:**

The study finds less involvement among the youth in the Puppetry. Only 12 percentages of successors are involved into their ancestors' tradition. The mean age of the puppeteers is 49 years. In the study males are a part of puppetry as it comprise of 22 puppeteers out of 25 puppeteers which is 88 percent. Majority or 40 percentages of the puppeteers have the educational status up to primary level and 24 percentages of the puppeteers are having an educational status of high school. It also finds out that 20 percentages puppeteers are still illiterate, that means the educational background of the puppeteers is very poor. Most of the puppeteers are married that around 95 percentages. All puppeteers belong to Hindu religion and Schedule Caste (S.C) population has dominated the study area. Mainly this puppetry is a hereditary occupation of the *Hari* community of the study area, 96 percentages of puppeteers belong to the schedule caste (S.C) category. Maximum houses of puppeteers are *kutchra* or mud house due to their poor economic situation. Some puppeteers got govt. allowance of 45 thousand rupees to build their house under the *Indira Awas Yojna* at the time of 2006 - 2010 and majority of puppeteers did not make house fully *pucca* and they are not being allowed further allowance to make new *pucca* houses, as they have got one time facilities.

The study finds that about 70 percentages families of puppeteers' monthly income are less than 10,000 rupees and most of the puppeteers live in joint family and average family member of puppeteers is near about 5 that mean the dependency rate is very high among the puppeteers' family.

The study also finds that this puppetry art form is a hereditary occupation system for the *Hari* community of the study area and all the puppeteers learned the puppetry from their previous generation. But few puppeteers don't have any hereditary background, they have chosen puppetry because of their own interest as well as for the monthly allowance and recognise puppeteers as folk artist, they are from the nearby villages of Baina and Radhapur. Due to the effect of lockdown, number of call for puppet shows has been drastically declined. So, majority of puppeteers are very less active to make puppet as well as practicing puppetry. It has also been observed that engagement of present generation into puppetry is very less. For their poor economic condition, they basically use natural or homemade and un-used home materials to make new puppet and for making more decorative puppet, they borrow least amount of money for buying new cloths and jewelleryes.

The study finds that all male active male puppeteers have been recognised as folk artist and are given monthly allowance to them. Local govt. and govt. organisations like Sangeet Natak Academy also provide them opportunities to perform puppetry across the country in various workshops. Apart from that, puppeteers are also being provided various Govt. projects like – MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), *Swastha Sathi*, *Laxmir Bhandar*, *Duare Ration* etc.

## **VI. SUGGESTIONS:**

The present study mainly aims at evaluating the socio-economic status and the problems of Glove puppeteers in the area.

There should be more active involvement among the youth for the development of the traditional performing art of Glove puppetry that can be improvement for both the status of puppetry as well as the puppeteers.

More involvement of female artisans is required into the glove puppetry. There are 3 female artisans are involved into the puppetry but they are not recognised as folk artist and are not getting any type of govt. allowance. So they can be provided the facilities as the other men puppeteers are availing. Local govt. should focus on that.

Cluster centre should be establish in the study area for providing training to the young generation as well as other non active puppeteers and improving the design and puppet design and quality.

Workshop and seminars should be conducted in the village level in order to bring awareness for the puppetry and also the schemes related to the sector.

.Puppeteers should modify their way of performance. New modern decorated puppets should be made and they should follow the taste of their audience. The artisans should be encouraged to approach the bank for the purpose of borrowing the money for the purpose of investment in the sector and also they should be encouraged to make small puppets as handicraft products to sell in various handicraft fairs and exhibitions.

More emphasis is to be provided in order to increase the income of the artisans involved in the sector.

Workshops and training programmes are required for the development of skills and extension activities.

This village can be connected with the other popular tourist circuit of the area nearby. It further can be mentioned that the village is very nearer to Digha, a very popular tourist destination of west Bengal. Therefore if it is shown as the tourist spot and some revenues can collected from the tourists for showing this performing arts regularly, that can be a source of income for the puppeteers.

## **VII. CONCLUSION:**

We are living in the era of postmodernism and globalisation, where society is full of consumerism that defines our social standards and lifestyles. Our demand for goods and services are growing day by day.

In this state of our living the way the performers of 'Beniputul' are still retained their fore father's occupation and practices for so long period of time. It is a matter of surprise. The result shows that Governmental intervention and allowances, this art form have just been survived otherwise it can be wiped out like many art forms of rural India ,the negative process that probably have been started under the British rule who attacked the indigenous art forms and household industries for their smooth monopolistic trade operations. It may be a question that 'why this art form to be preserved or patronized?' The answer lies in the fact that no art form and artistry can be judged from the economic values only but from the broader cultural and aesthetic senses. It is the valid point and this endangered art form could be protected at any cost by helping artisans for the sake of true cultural sense of unity in diversity. Otherwise, we never tasted such type of performing arts and the artistry. From sense of aesthetic value and artistry concerned authorities for e.g. govt. organisations, NGO's, local administration and above all the common people should come forward to save this art form by supporting artisans and make arrangement for wider popularity and extension activities.

**REFERENCES:**

Ali, M. M., & Ali, M. A. (2015). Beni Putul or the Glove Puppetry: A Performing Tool for Resistance to Colonialism. *Chitrolekha International Magazine on Art & Design*, 5(2).

Autiero, S. (2018). Foreign Iconographic Elements in South Arabian Art: The Indian Contribution. In *Stories of Globalisation: The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf from Late Prehistory to Early Modernity* (pp. 408-442).

Bhanumathi, R. (2004). A study on the status of traditional shadow puppetry and puppeteers of South India.

Dash, M., & Mishra, B. B. (2021). Problems of Handicraft Artisans: An Overview. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research (IJMSR)*. 9(5), 29-38. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0349.0905004>

Debbarma, S. (2020). A Study on the Socio Economic Status of Rural Handicraft Artisans in Hezamara RD Block West Tripura District, Tripura.

Ghosh, S. & Banerjee, U. K. (2006). Indian puppets. Abhinav Publication. New Delhi.

Goswami, A. (2012). 'BENIPUTUL'. Terracotta publication. Bankura.

**Online Sources:**

Census of India, 2011, Padmatamali village, East Midnapur, Available at:

<http://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/345288-padmatamali-west-bengal.html>, accessed on: 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.

<http://ourhero.in/villages/padmatamali-345288>, accessed on: 12th May, 2022.

<http://purbamedinipur.gov.in/>, accessed on: 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

<https://wblpp.in/about.html>, accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.