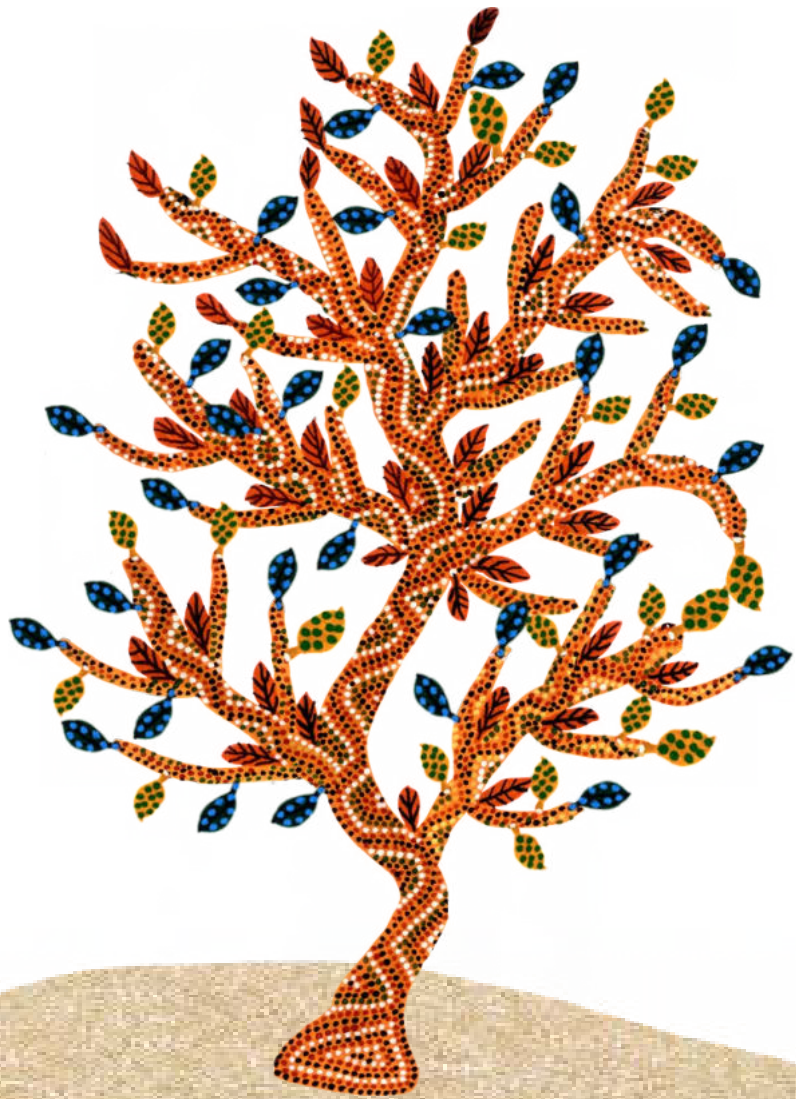




*Participatory Design
with
Bhil Artists*

Participatory Design with Bhil Artists

a Tata Center sponsored Project

Presented by:

Tapan Kumar 146250011

Under the guidance of:

Prof. Nina Sabnani

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Degree in Master of Design (Visual Communication, 2016)

IDC, IIT Bombay
Powai, Mumbai

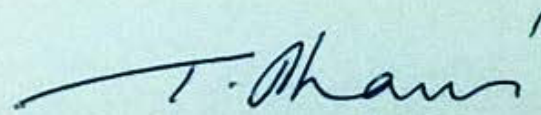
Approval Sheet

The Visual Communication-Project 2 titled "Participatory Design with Bhil Artists" by Tapan Kumar, roll no 146250011 is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design in Visual Communication.

Guide:



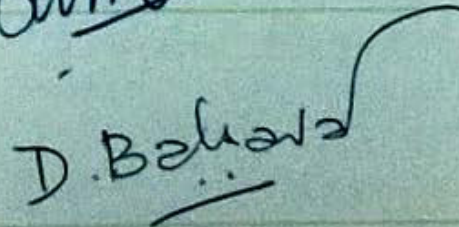
Chairman:



Internal Examiner:



External Examiner:



Declaration Sheet

I declare that this submission represents my ideas in my own words and where other's ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honest and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature:



Name of the Student: Tapan Kumar

Roll Number: 146250011

Date: 23 / 11 / 2015

Acknowledgement

I would like to sincerely thank my project guide Prof. Nina Sabnani for her guidance and support. I owe thanks to my faculty for their invaluable feedback, suggestions and encouragement. I would also like to thank Tata Centre for providing their support and a great opportunity.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouraging me to give my best all the time.

Tapan Kumar

Visual Communication-146250011

IDC, IIT Bombay

Dated:

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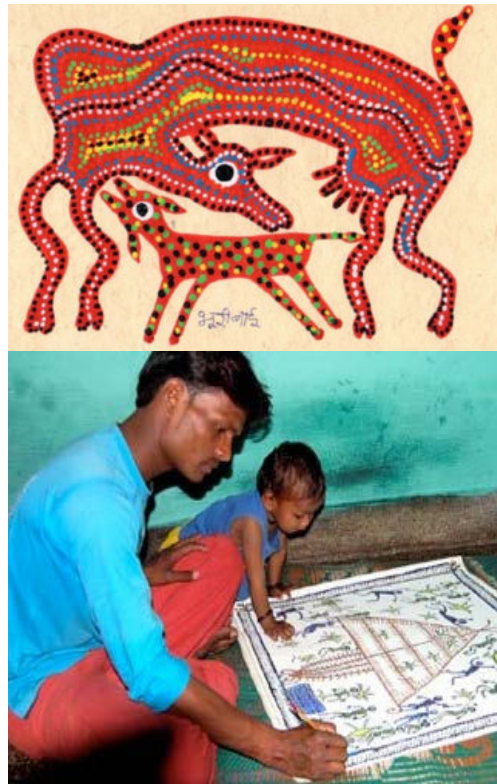
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1.

Introduction



Bhils being the third largest tribe of South Asia, have a population of over 25 million in India. Their art and culture has a big part in Indian tradition and folk art. Bhils have a lot of untapped and untold interesting stories and narratives that should be explored and put forward in front of large audiences.

People nowadays are more inclined towards western culture, films, art and theatre etc. Although its a personal choice, we should also be sensitive towards our own art and cultural heritage. This project is to bring awareness among today's fast moving tech savvy generation and give a totally new perspective towards Bhil art.

Through the support of Tata Centre for Technology and Design, Prof. Nina Sabnani, IDC IIT Bombay took this great initiative and started the project 'Telling it Together'. This project is concerned with the themes of craft development, education and technology. It brings together designers and craft communities to create media artifacts that enhance the reach through digital media and offer new opportunities for craft development and craft awareness. The objective is to engage and collaborate with the Bhil community of Madhya Pradesh that has its own unique form of painting and narratives that can be transformed into different artifacts, animated films and illustrated books.



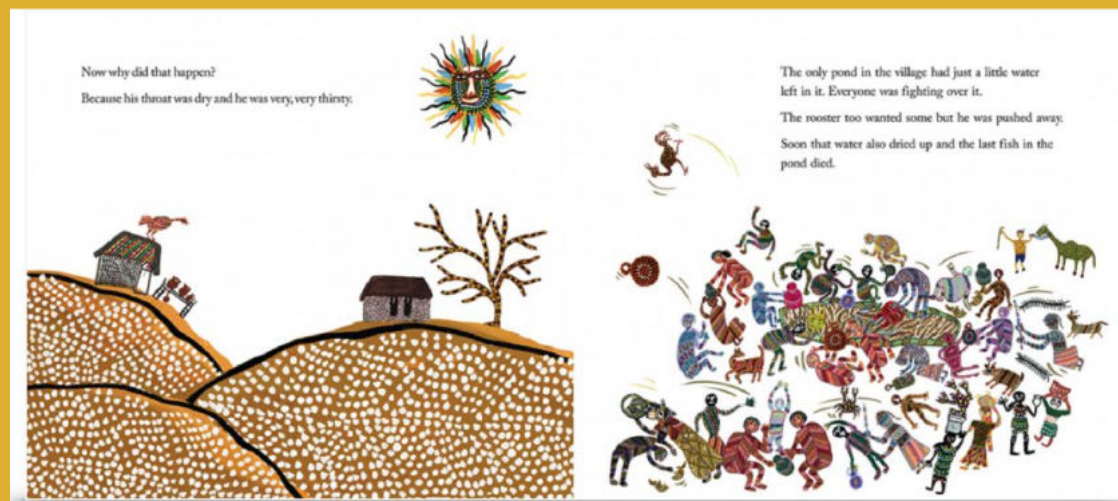
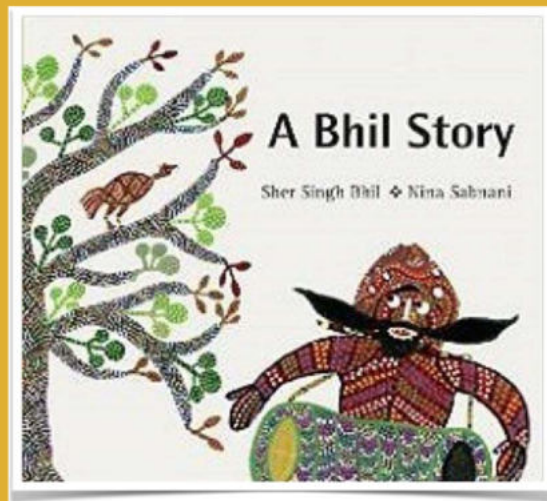
Tata Centre for Technology and Design, IIT Bombay

Tata Centre for Technology and Design (TCTD) was established at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) in 2014 with support from Tata Trusts. Currently, TCTD is a virtual Centre for teaching and research, drawing faculty members and students from various academic units of IIT Bombay. TCTD aims to address the challenges faced by resource-constrained communities within India and across the world by developing appropriate solutions. The Centre emphasizes on affordability as well as performance of solutions and focuses on the areas of Agriculture & Nutrition, Education, Energy, Healthcare, Housing, Water and Waste Management, which predominantly address the major problems faced by the common people.

In this view, the Centre undertakes various research projects in the above areas and trains future leaders in engineering and business to invent technologies and system solutions that serve human needs in the context of complex environment, social, and political factors.

The Centre closely works with its sister institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA and with other partner organizations and stakeholders throughout India.

Telling it Together



The Bhil Story by Sher Singh Bhil and Prof. Nina Sabnani

1.1

Telling it Together

The project ‘Telling it Together: Collaboration between designers and craft communities’ was started by Prof. Nina Sabnani in association with Tata Centre for Technology and Design, IIT Bombay. Prof. Nina Sabnani and the team of Research Assistants have been working dedicatedly with the Bhil Artists of Madhya Pradesh on the project since 2014. The focus of the project is to engage and collaborate with the Bhil community of Madhya Pradesh which has its unique form of painting and narratives that can be transformed into different media artefacts through technology such as animated films, illustrated books and many more interesting artefacts.

During this project Sher Singh did a One man show at Artisans Gallery, Mumbai. Sher Singh along with Subhash did a workshop on Bhil Art in IDC, IIT Bombay in 2015. Sher Singh and Prof Nina Sabhnani along with all the designers travelled all the way to Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh for field research.

A beautiful storybook ‘The Bhil Story’ is designed and launched by Sher Singh Bhil and Prof. Nina Sabnani in Kala Ghoda Festival. A lot of work is still going on in the development of different deliverables :

- *An animation film*
- *Web presence of Bhil art*
- *Mobile games*
- *A documentary film on Bhils*
- *Bhil merchandise*

1.2

My Participation in project

There is great potential in all the artefacts this project is planning to deliver. Being a Tata fellow, I have to contribute to the same project in the form of my graduation projects. As the part of the project team, I was given the task to design a mobile game through which we can create awareness about the community in a playful manner. Mobile gaming is a challenging and interesting medium. Today's younger generation can not imagine their lives without technology. It's an integral part of their existence.

I believe that if we really need to carry forward a culture or tradition, we should put it in front of our younger generations in more relevant and appropriate form., so that they can relate and digest the information easily.

How do most young people spend much of their free time? On their computers or their mobiles. They are essential communication and information tools for them. They've grown up with computers in schools, and had mobiles since their early teens or before, so they're almost extensions of their bodies and lives. The approach is to make the deliverable appropriate for this generation. This would initiate a great change in the mindsets and perspective towards a tribal art form among the new tech savvy generation.



2.

Bhil Tribe & their Traditions

Bhil is the most populous tribe in the country with a total population of 1,26,89,952, constituting 37.7 per cent of the total tribal population of India. Bhil tribe is an indigenous non-Aryan tribal group mainly settled in the central region of the country. The Bhil tribes have two sub-divisions, namely Bhils and Rajput Bhils. The Bhils are found in the mountain regions in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh (more prominent in Dhar District, Jhabua District and West Nimar Region), Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Bhils are also found in some north eastern parts of Tripura.

These Indian tribes have been mentioned even in epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana. Legend talks about a Bhil woman Shabri, who offered 'ber' to Lord Rama when he was wandering through the jungles of Dhandaka, searching for his wife Sita. In recent history as well, these tribes of India were regarded as fighters who were in a war against the Mughals, Marathas and the Britishers.

Customs & Traditions

The lives of the tribal people are full of traditions and social customs from birth to death. The birth of a child is communicated by beating a plate. The mother of

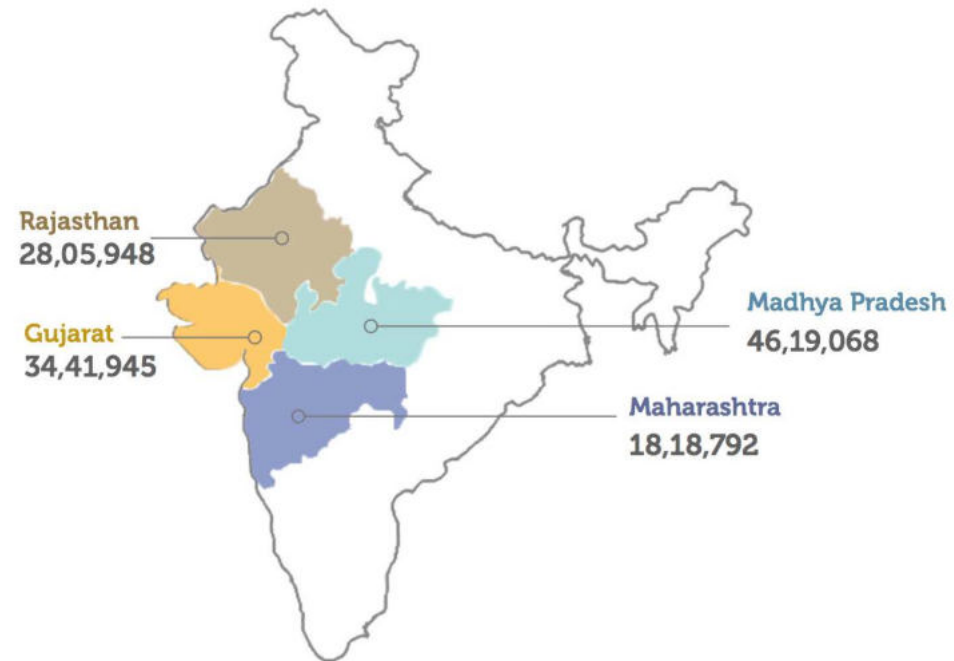
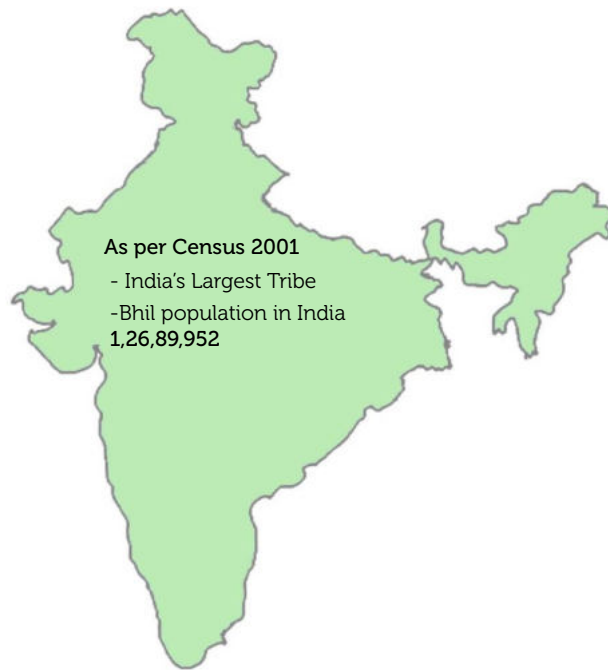
the child is given liquor in those days. The birth of the male child is given more importance than the female child. On the occasion of the birth the males indulge in drinking a locally made liquor called Khatiya. Tribes are very lenient towards marriage and most of their marriages are love marriages. **Polygamy** is the common practice among Bhils. **Dapa** is the tradition of marriage practiced in both the tribes in which in laws of the girls give money to the in laws of the boys. There are many types of marriages practices in the Bhils community. The Bhil who cannot afford to give money, forcefully kidnap the girl, marry her with all the traditions and customs of the society, and then parents of the girls are informed. Their funerals is done according to Hindu traditions. Only males takes part in the funeral. The ashes of the dead body are thrown in the river. The shock of the condolence is continued till the first festival arrives. In this period of condolence the males wear white Safa. The end of the condolence is done by the son in law or the brother in law. On this occasion males drink liquor and all of them talk about the dead person and his/her memories.

The Bhils use bows and arrows made of bamboo. Earlier they were the great hunters. They now practice agriculture as a source of livelihood, but they are facing a lack of water and other facilities.

Demographic Status of Scheduled Tribe Population of India

Tribes with more than 5 Lakh of Population as per census 2001			
S. No	Tribe Name	Population	States of Habitation
1	BHIL	12689952	Tripura , Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra , Karnataka
2	GOND	10859422	Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand , Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka
3	SANTAL	5838016	Bihar , Tripura , West Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand
4	MINA	3800002	Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh
5	NAIKDA etc.	3344954	Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Daman & Diu , Dadra & Nagar Haveli , Maharashtra , Goa
6	ORAON	3142145	Bihar , West Bengal, Jharkhand , Orissa , Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh , Maharashtra
7	SUGALIS	2077947	Andhra Pradesh
8	MUNDA	1918218	Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh , Tripura, Orissa
9	NAGA etc.	1820965	Nagaland
10	KHOND	1397384	Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa
11	BORO etc.	1352771	Assam
12	KOLI MAHADEV	1227562	Maharashtra
13	KHASI etc.	1138356	Mizoram , Meghalaya, Assam

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13	KHASI etc.	1138356	Mizoram , Meghalaya, Assam
14	KOL	991400	Orissa , Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh , Maharashtra
15	VARLI	974916	Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli , Maharashtra, Karnataka , Goa
16	KOKNA	926763	Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra , Karnataka
17	KAWAR	812770	Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh , Maharashtra
18	HO	806921	Bihar , West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa
19	GUJJAR	799344	Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh
20	KORKU etc.	774196	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra
21	BHUMIJ	769909	West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa
22	GARO	725592	Nagaland, Mizoram , Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal, Tripura
23	KOYA	692435	Orissa , Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka
24	ANY MIZO (LUSHAI) TRIBES etc.	667764	Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam
25	HALBA etc.	639094	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra
26	DHARUA	639409	Gujarat , Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa
27	DUBLA etc.	627599	Gujarat , Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra , Goa
28	MISING/MIRI	587310	Assam , Arunachal Pradesh
29	TRIPURI etc.	543848	Tripura
30	RATHAWA	536135	Gujarat , Maharashtra, Karnataka
31	SAHARIA etc.	527015	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh , Rajasthan



Population Distribution

Third largest tribe of South Asia. Over **1.26 crores** Bhils in India. Constitutes **39% and 37% of the total tribal population** of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh respectively.

As per Census 2001, Bhil is the largest tribe in India with a population of 1,26,89,952. Bhils are popularly known as the bow men of Rajasthan. They are the most widely distributed tribal groups in India. They form the largest tribe of the whole of South Asia. Bhils are mainly divided into two main groups: the central or pure Bhils, and the Eastern or Rajput Bhils. The Central Bhils are found in the mountain regions in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Bhils are also found in the north eastern parts of Tripura.

Bhil Mittichitra on Wall



2.1

Bhil Art

The tradition of Bhil painting first stemmed from the home. Upon visiting a Bhil household, one will discover a delightful myriad of images from myth and folklore adorning their walls and ceilings. Every year, a new plaster of mittichitra (clay relief work) and paintings are applied to the interiors of the house. Pigments are ground from natural materials and leaves and flowers, while brushes are made with *neem* twigs.

Pithora horses are a common theme among Bhil artists. The traditional painter or lekhindra often paints pithoras as an offering to the goddesses. According to legend, the people of the Kingdom Dharmi Raja have forgotten how to laugh. The brave prince Pithora rode on horseback through a dangerous terrain and brought back laughter and joy from the goddess Himali Harda. Similar to all adivasi tribes, the Bhils live close to nature and lead a largely agricultural life. Their paintings reflect the changing seasons, the natural phenomena that guide their harvest, and the gods that protect them.

They paint the simple human joys of birth and other ceremonial occasions like harvests that are often forgotten in our modern society. The art of the Bhils along with that of other tribal groups reminds us of what the simple pleasures in their lives are.

Bhil Paintings on paper





Shree Jagdish Swaminathan

Bhuri Bai from Zher

2.2

Bhil Art from walls to Paper

Jagdish Swaminathan popularly known as J. Swaminathan (June 21, 1928 – 1994) was a leading Indian artist, painter, poet and writer. He was a member of the Communist Party of India. He is one of the most influential artists of India, instrumental in establishment of the Bharat Bhawan, a multi-art complex in Bhopal, in 1982, and served as the director of its Roopankar art Museum till 1990. He discovered, Jangarh Singh Shyam, the first known modern-day Gond tribal artist of Madhya Pradesh state in India.

He established Bharat Bhawan in the 1980s. Most of the labour was from the Bhil Community who used to migrate from their villages to cities in search of work on construction sites. One day, Swaminathan saw two

Bhil women working in Bharat Bhawan. They were very well dressed in their traditional outfits and ornaments. Swaminathan called them and asked them to draw anything on a paper. These Bhil women were Bhuri Bai and Lado Bai. They started drawing their traditional forms which they use to draw on their walls. Jagdish Swaminathan discovered their talent and motivated them to carry forward this art further and practise it more. Since then Bhuri Bai and Lado Bai initiated painting with brush on canvas and paper with water, oil and acrylic colours. And a completely new genre of tribal folk painting started which is now known as Bhil paintings.



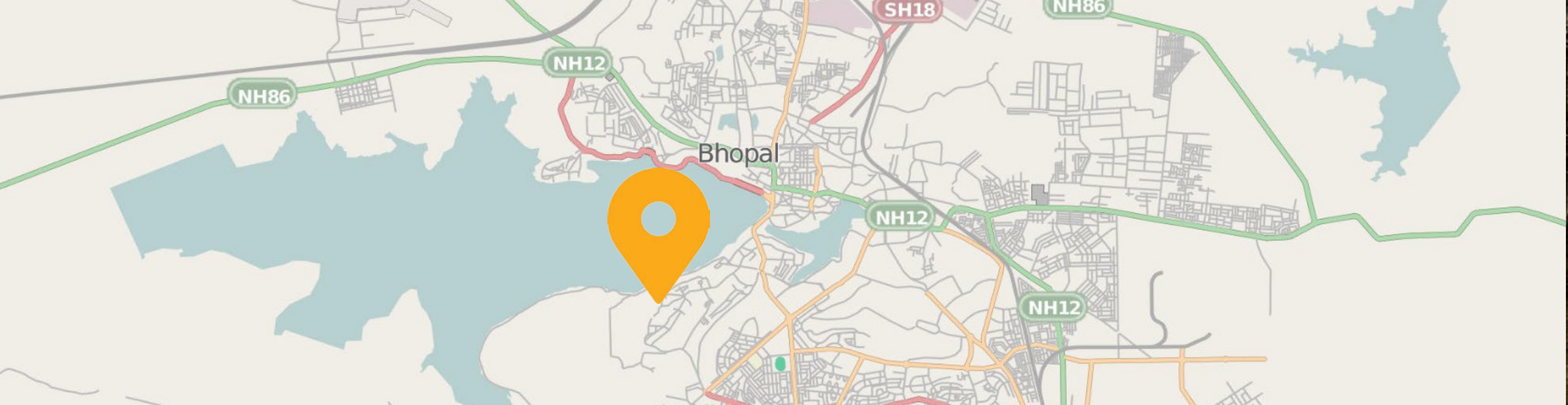


The IGRMS or the National Museum of Mankind is an unique museum spread over an area of 200 acres. The museum exhibits contemporary tribal cultures and has actual dwellings of typical tribal villages of Indian states in display. The IGRMS is an autonomous organization of the Govt. of India, Ministry of Culture which presents the story of mankind in time and space. Situated in a prehistoric site, this one of its kind museum also has a vivid collection of pre-historic painted rock shelters. There are three kinds of exhibitions in display including open air exhibitions, indoor galleries and periodical or temporary exhibitions. The open air exhibitions have a coastal village, a desert village, a Himalayan village, a mythological trail and a traditional technology park. However, the most striking part of this exhibition is the Tribal Habitat comprising life size dwellings built by tribes.

Understanding the life of Bhil Artists

in IGRMS, Bhopal





3.

Visit to IGRMS



Indira Gandhi
Rashtriya
Manav Sangrahalaya,
Bhopal

IGRMS was conceived during early 1970s, started as subordinate office of Department of Culture in Delhi in 1977-78 and set-up in Bhopal in 1979. When I was reading about the Museum in IGRMS library I came across some of the distinct features that contributes to the popularity of this beautiful museum.

Firstly, stretching over a territory of about 200 acres of land in Bhopal, this is the largest anthropological Museum in India and one of the biggest in Asia.

Secondly, open air exhibitions constitute a hallmark of this Museum enabling visitors to experience the rich cultural diversity of this country. Open air display of house-types are present in the form of Tribal Habitat, Himalayan Village, Coastal Village, and Desert Village.

Open air exhibitions, constructed by the concerned ethnic groups using raw materials brought from their respective localities not only exemplify the ingenuity of human adaptation in diverse eco-system, but also symbolize the aesthetic expressions bringing a soothing respite to the people living in urban settings and bring them closer to Indian heritage.

IGRMS is one of the few museums in the world which has prehistoric rock paintings within its own premises, such rock shelters are also a part of the open air display. Besides, this museum has been carrying out the documentation, preservation and dissemination of various arts, crafts and traditional knowledge in the forms of 'Do and Learn' educational programmes and workshops, seminars and artist camps.



In my stay I attended a Soura Painting Workshop. I also participated in the workshop. It was a great learning about the art form and the narratives that it unfolds. In these workshop many locals also participated. Housewives and their children, college girls, school kids and some of the males also participated. I talked to some of the children and asked them about their views on the art form. They were enjoyed doing it. I feel the Museum is playing a vital role n not only keeping and preparation of a database, but rather more important, in reviving and revitalizing such arts, craft and traditional knowledge systems linking them with livelihood as well as their preservation and dissemination at a community level.

Vithi Sankul

The indoor Museum in Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya played a complementary role to the overall activities of the museum. The Museum not only exhibits the art, culture and ways of lifestyle of the different communities of India, but also provides the complete history about its cultural heritage through audio and videos. IGRMS has a good collection of reading material available in its library.



3.1

Purpose of the visit

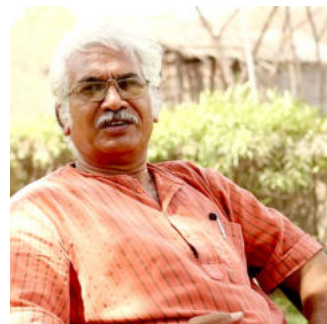
The Purpose of my visit to Bhopal was to improve my understanding about the origin and the meanings of Bhil Art by being in close proximity with the artist living in IGRMS. As I want to work with Bhil art, it is very important to understand the subject more closely in its cultural context. Ethnographic studies about the subject and to create sensitivity towards the subject are very crucial when you are planning to deliver a design solution to them. I wanted to meet artists and other people associated with Bhil art.

I also wanted to understand the model of IGRMS, how it works and how it is playing its part in the development and sustenance of such vast and vibrant Indian art form

and culture. History of Bhil lies in its Oral narratives, as there is no written history about this community. Stories are transferred and propagated through the oral narratives in the songs and mantras or prayers. Exploring more about the oral narratives from these artists living in IGRMS was one of my important motives.

3.2

Artists & People





Bhuri Bai

(Bhil Artist)

Bhuri Bai in IGRMS is a world famous Bhil Artist. I have mentioned 'Bhuri Bai in IGRMS' because there are two Bhuri Bai, both are famous Bhil artist from Bhopal. Difference between both is that the one I met is associated with IGRMS and the other Bhuri Bai is associated with Bharat Bhawan Museum. I met Bhuri Bai in the Bhil habitat section, where she works everyday on a daily wage basis in IGRMS. She was a very sweet and generous woman. She welcomed me to talk to her when I told her that I am Prof Nina Sabnani's Student and came there to understand more about their origins, how she got involved in painting and the stories she paints. She told me that they came to IGRMS almost 30 years ago when IGRMS was developing its model as a Museum of Mankind. They came from Jhabua village

to Bhopal because of very bad growth in farms and survival was difficult for them.

Her husband, who recently passed away came with his family and started working as labour in the museum for Rs 3 per day. She also explained to me the stories behind the tattoos that she has on her body and face. According to her, these tattoos are ornaments and will remain with her even after she dies. Its an impression on her soul. She also told me stories behind the name of her younger son Jungle as he was born in a forest. She gave a very clear sketch about involvement in the art and how she uses her life stories and experiences in her artwork.



Sher Singh Bhabor

(Bhil Artist)

Sher Singh Bhabor is the elder son of Bhuri Bai and is a very fine Bhil painter. He is an important part of the project 'Telling it Together'. His beautiful paintings that is being used for the development of different project artefacts are the soul of the project. He conducted Bhil art workshop in IDC and successfully did a one man show in Artisans Gallery, Mumbai. He works in the exhibition building of IGRMS which is called Vithi Sankul. He took me to a small tour of Vithi Sankul and explained different sections based on different regions of our country. He showed me his mittichitra work that he was doing on the walls of a totally new Bhil section in Vithi Sankul. He explained the narratives on his mittichitra artwork which were based on the pithoras that Bhil community makes every year on their festive occasions like Rakhi, Holi, Diwali

etc. In his wall art he depicted different festivals that they celebrate every year in the month of march for example *Bhagoria*- *In this festival everybody goes to the mela or fair in village.*

During this festival any girl or boy can choose their partners to get married. The boy either has to convince girl's family or can take that girl along with her to his house and start living with her.

He explained me many other festivals as well and promised to take me to his village 'Jhabua' in the month of March next year, during the whole week of fares and celebrations. In this week of march, everyday is a different festival and is celebrated with different sets of rituals associated with it.



Kalla Teja

(Bhil Artist)

Kalla Teja was a very shy man, and talking to him was not that easy. He is the elder brother of Bhuri Bai and works in IGRMS. His work in IGRMS is the construction of Bhil house types and developing the Bhil Habitat section in the museum. He comes to the museum daily and now a days is involved in the repairing of existing house types in Bhil section. He considers himself not an artist but a farmer. When I asked his name in front of the camera, he was so shy that he was not even making eye contact. He told me about himself, and how he came to IGRMS. Initially he came to Bhopal for some regular labour work, a trend commonly seen in Indian villages: a man from a village goes to the city to earn livelihood. After sometime when Bhuri Bai shifted to IGRMS, he also joined in.

Kalla didn't know much about the art form but he was dedicated to his work in IGRMS. I feel that the museum model is perfect for the people like Kalla. Experiencing a full day with Kalla was interesting. His dedication to his work in that age was remarkable.



Junesh Gomango

(Saura Artist)

Junesh Gomango is an Orissa based Saura painter. I met him when he came to IGRMS to teach Saura painting in a 10 days workshop. I spent a lot of time with Junesh as he was the only other person staying in the guest house. During my stay I attended the workshop and tried to understand the meanings and narratives from the beautiful pictographs in Saura paintings. He told me that Saura painting looks very similar to Warli painting that has its origins in Maharashtra. He mentioned that in Saura they have numerous stories about their God and Goddesses, For example Gram Devi, Bagh Devta(tiger), God of healing. They only draw rituals and prayers in Saura. He also told me that every thing good or bad in nature is God to them even if it is a bad spirit, any animal that attacks them, etc; whereas in Warli paintings,

narratives are based on everyday routines and their festive celebrations. He is the youngest son in his family and the only person who is involved in paintings. He has fixed and firm plans to carry forward this art to his next generations as he has firm beliefs in his Gods. Lack of tourism and demand in the village forces him to go to the city and sell his paintings. According to him, the government should check the community certificate before giving such precious awards to anybody. It affects genuine Saura painters because every tourists and organisation would want paintings from a national award winner.

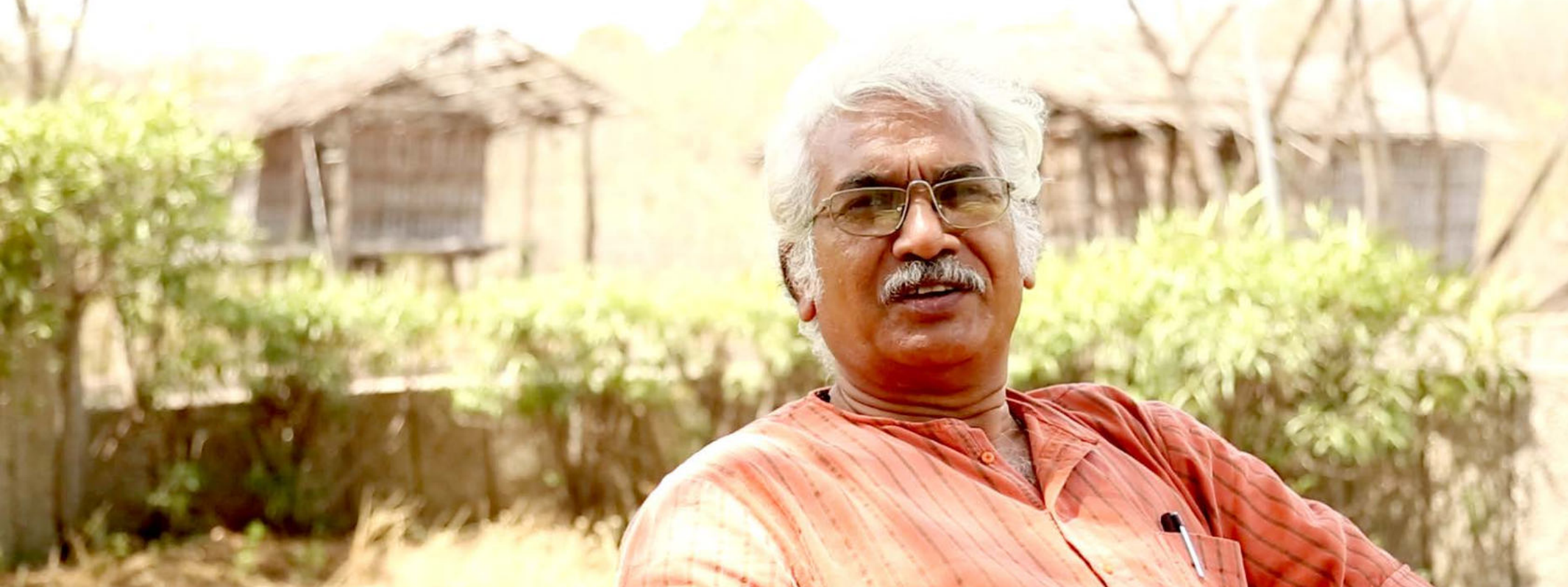


Rajendra Kr. Jharia

Assistant Keeper, IGRMS)

Rajendra Kumar Jharia is working in IGRMS for 14 years as Assistant Keeper and is very closely associated with the Bhil community working in the museum. According to him the Bhil community is a migrating community, that migrates from their origin to different places in the search of work like roads and building constructions, factories etc. He explained to me that Bhil painting is a traditional painting which has no parameters like fine Art or contemporary art. These paintings are the expressions of the thoughts, rituals and lifestyle of the community. It can not be taught as a subject. A person has to live the life of a Bhil to understand, explore and learn the narratives and the beautiful art form.

Therefore, young Bhil generations does not have much interest in taking it forward as their profession. The Museum conducts regular workshops to help these artists earn and teach. In this way they are helping this art form survive in future. He motivated and congratulated me for my project and supported me throughout my stay in IGRMS.



Vivek Tembe

(Painter, Designer
& Art Collector)

Vivek Tembe is a famous Bhopal based painter, artist, sculptor, designer and art collector. He played a very crucial part in the core team of art collectors while Bharat Bhawan was getting established under the guidance of Mr Jagdish Swaminathan. While discussing the purpose of my visit to IGRMS, he guided me to visit Bharat Bhawan and some other museums in Bhopal. He explained me that taking one art form and doing research around a single form will never give me a deep understanding and sensitivity. He suggested that I read a book by the name of Jangadh Kalam, which was based on the life of a boy named Jangadh who initiated working in his own style and became a world famous Gond painter. Mr Vivek explained the origins of Bhil art and Gond and how over time Gond became more

popular than Bhil paintings. He told me that when it is the time of crop cultivation, Bhils draw their gods on the walls, called Pithora Dev to worship them. This could only be done by their Badwa (pujari). As the Indian society was male dominated that time, that is why it was a male job to draw on walls. He also explained the difference between different castes existing in Bhil Tribes and how their nature varies.



3.3

Museums Visited



IGRMS, Museum of Mankind

IGRMS was my home in Bhopal. I stayed in the Museum for around ten days. Visiting IGRMS was very nice experience and I got to learn a lot from the people there.

State Museum, Bhopal

On the way to IGRMS, there lies a beautiful museum by the name of State Museum Bhopal. The museum is classified into 16 different galleries that showcase excavated objects, paintings, textiles, pre-historic articles, epigraphs, sculptures, miniatures and royal collection of the state of Madhya Pradesh. It is also known as India's best designed museum.



Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal

Bharat Bhawan is a beautiful museum in Shamla hills, Bhopal. It showcases beautiful Bhil art works by Bhuri Bai and Gangu Bai. They also have a great collection of Indian Folk Art and their lifestyles. Museum has a contemporary paintings section also that exhibits Raza and such prominent painters. It has an art gallery, a studio, libraries, an auditorium and a fine art workshop.

3.4

Takeaway



Visiting Bhopal was a totally new and different experience for me. There are numerous reasons that makes this city so special and beautiful. Gifted with vibrant landscapes, rich flora and imposing hills, it is one such place where one can experience the mixture of old era and modern period. Visiting IGRMS has also played a vital role in knowing my subject more clearly and enabled me to see the future possibilities in the project. The main purpose of visiting IGRMS was to collect information about this unique art form. Meeting Bhil Artists, Saura Artists, Gond Artists and the people associated with this cultural heritage kindled a sensitivity in me towards these art forms.

Here, in IGRMS Sher Singh explained to me about the meanings of his beautiful Bhil Paintings and why these paintings are so important to him.

I believe that no individual can be held responsible for bringing about change in the mind set of a billion odd people. Change can only happen if there is awareness at an individual level. There should be a great awareness about this vibrant art form to different levels of audience

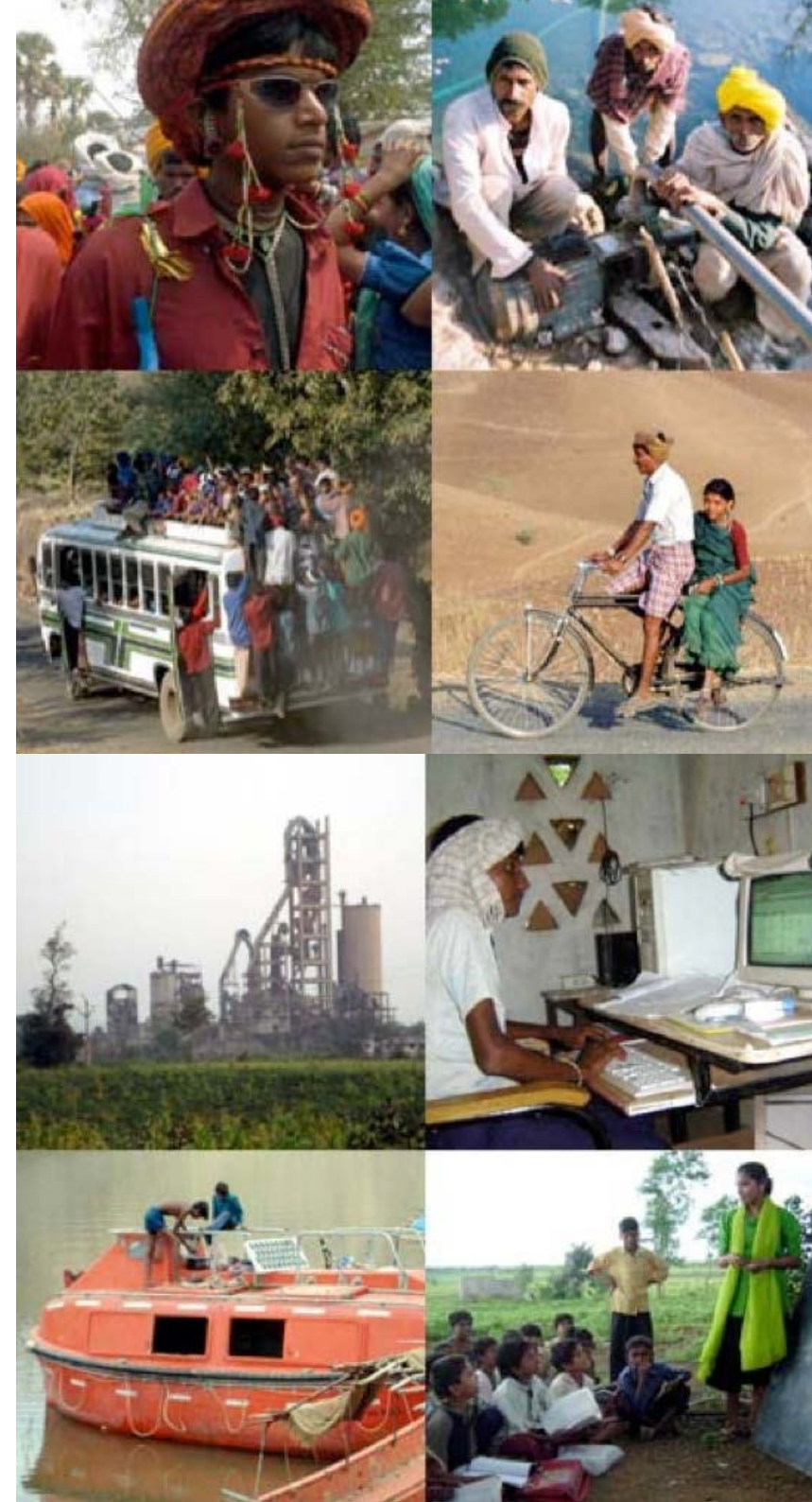
in the most simplest and easy to understand medium. I have plans to visit Bhagoria in the month of March in 2016 to attend their one week festive celebration. I also want to visit Gujarat and Rajasthan to meet more Bhils living in those regions.

3.5

Understanding the Problem

Visit to IGRMS and the meeting different artists and people associated with the museum helped me to identify certain problem areas:

- Young Bhil generation are not willing to carry forward their traditional Art form. They are more attracted to the flashy urban lifestyle
- How to keep modernization and tribal identity in tandem so that both occur simultaneously but not at the cost of each other.
- Bhil Tribe has rich oral narratives which remains untapped and unknown.
- Lack of awareness among general public regarding Indian folk art and art forms.
- Can we come up with some solution through which we can bring them forward, make them self sustainable and reduce brokerage?
- One of the biggest problems is that we are not able to identify the potentials that our Indian folk art posses. There is a need to change the mindset and perspective of general public about traditional folk art. We can see a lot of western art influence in our younger generations and there is a need to make these Indian traditional art forms more relevant to them by giving it a contemporary medium, so that more and more people can relate to it and find it interesting.





4.

Focus Area

Awareness & Visibility for Bhil Art

As 2003 UNESCO's Convention explains, any intangible cultural heritage could only be kept alive when the heritage or art form is relevant to the community. Relevance means it should be useful to them and the community should be able to survive its existence by carrying forward the art-form. If we talk about Bhil Art in this context, there are only a handful of artists who are doing Bhil painting. And rest of the community is struggling for the basic necessities of life. Even the young generation of these artists do not want to carry forward this tradition of painting. Therefore this intangible art form is going to die. Art survives when there is audience to admire or appreciate it. Even prominent painters and artists always look for patrons to carry forward their art.

In this scenario, there is a great need of creating awareness about Bhil Art. If we want to carry forward any tradition, one has to teach its values and meanings to their younger generations, so that they can pass it on to their younger generation and so on. Through this project I will try to create awareness and attract more audience to Bhil Art by creating new artefacts which would be more relevant and contemporary. And we would be able to bring change to the mindsets of people that Indian art forms could be as interesting as they find western art form and should start appreciating and promote Indian traditional Art forms.



As per **2003 UNESCO's Convention** for the
Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

"The convention emphasized the fact that intangible inheritance could be kept alive only if it has relevance for its community and was continuously recreated and retransmitted from one generation to another".

“

*We cannot always
build the **future** for
our youth,
But we can build
our youth for the
future.*

- Franklin D Roosevelt

”

4.1

Target Audience

Through out the research process in this project I was very much sure that if we want to spread awareness about Bhil Art among general public. We should always start focussing on our younger generation because to carry forward some customs and tradition one should always introduce it to the children of the society from the very beginning so that they can learn to like, enjoy and appreciate it, and it will automatically be transferred to the upcoming generations.

The youth now a days are very involved in :

- Internet
- Social Media
- Mobile Applications and Games
- Sports
- Entertainment media

For this project I tried to understand the level of information IDC students have about Bhil Art. I chose IDC students for this small survey because we are design students and are expected to be in close proximity to art and traditions. This survey helped me a lot to strengthen my target group which was the youth.

Awareness Survey on Bhil Art in IDC

Sample Size : 20 students | No. of Questions : 3

Questions:

1. What is Bhil Art ?
2. It belongs to which region of India ?
3. Could you recall its visuals ?

Results:

- 2 students knew about it (not fully).
- 8 students have heard about it.
- 10 students never heard about it.

10% were aware about Bhil Art

40% can not recall Bhil Art

50% were not aware about Bhil Art

Through this small survey I was able to finalize my target group which was younger generation which is living with technology and constantly moving away from Indian Art and traditions.



“

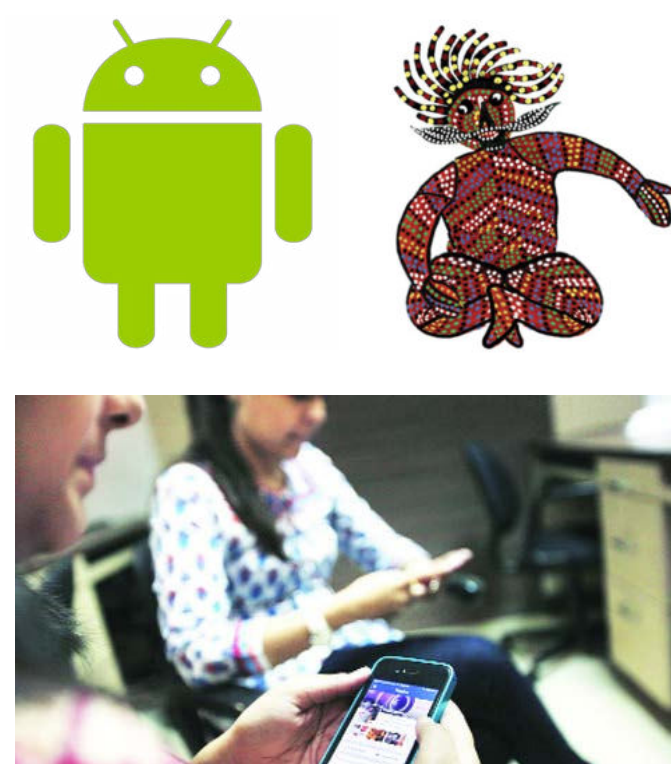
*Games are architecture
for engagement*

- Prof. Constance Steinkuehler

”

4.2

Proposed Solution



In this project the solution I will be working on is a mobile game for Android platform which will be based on the daily experiences from a Bhil Life. In this game we will bring the user closer to this community by giving them different tasks to complete that a Bhil perform in his daily life to survive. This game will also help the user to understand their rituals, traditions and festivals through totally different, interesting and addictive game play.

The game visuals will be in the form of animated Bhil Art. This game will initiate a change in the mind set of the people that Indian folkart rich to use in such artifacts as well. It will collectively give a new interactive experience to the user and one can experience movements in Bhil Painting visuals in a game format.

Initially this game will be designed for Android platform because Android is the highest used platform in today's scenario. By 2013 there were almost **800 million Android users in the world**. Therefore it would be result in great penetration.

“

*Games have **hopes, motivation, fun and inspiration**. Games are powerful tool to reach new people*

”

- Sheryll WuDunn

Author: Half the Sky

4.3

Why Game?



PLAYING SHOULD BE FUN! If we think of attaining knowledge about something we always look for “educational” toys, games with built-in lessons, books with a “message.” Often these “tools” are less interesting and stimulating than the people’s natural curiosity and playfulness. Everybody likes playing. Play is by its very nature educational. And it should also be pleasurable. When the fun goes out of play, most often so does the learning. Therefore an interesting game could be a powerful tool to spread some message or to create awareness. Games always requires maximum attention to win. And that want to win the game will subsequently engrave the awareness in the mind of the players.

Now a days, if we look at the population which is involved in daily online gaming, the numbers are quite huge. By 2013, over 1.2 billion people were playing online games regularly as per numbers given by www.venturebeat.com.

A survey conducted among 2000 teenagers and 100 parents by ASSOCHAM India (Associated Chambers of Commerce of India) states that :

- *About 1200 teenagers (76%) play games regularly.*
- *18% plays 3 to 4 times a week.*
- *36% play games on weekly basis.*
- *50% teenagers play games everyday.*



4.4

Future Possibilities

Video game Culture (more accurately a subculture) is a form of new media subculture that has been influenced by video games. As computer and video games have increased exponentially in popularity over time, they have had a significant influence upon popular culture. This form of entertainment has spawned many fads. Video game culture has evolved over time, particularly in connection with internet culture. Today, the impact of computer and video games can be seen in politics, television, popular music, and film.

As it is a totally new genre of gaming involving Indian folk art visual style, it will give us a new perspective and vision towards folk art. a totally new interactive experience to enjoy. If we get the desired outcome through this game project and people start liking it, we can actually work upon different segments to popularize Bhil art form by taking this game as a unique selling point. For example, creating kids school merchandising, Lifestyle accessories, home decor etc. Through all these we can bring this idea of going back to our own art and culture in front of the world. We can actually make people realise the potential of our Indian art forms such as Bhil art.

In this way we can pay something back to the artists who have been carrying forward this beautiful art form despite of all hardships in life and preserved it for us and for our country.





5.

Bhagoria: The Game

This game will be based on the themes of a colourful Bhil festival known as Bhagoria. In this festival beautiful fairs are arranged which are also known as Bhagoria Haat. Every one gathers in these haats to celebrate this festival of love, joy and happiness. During this festival, young boys and girls are allowed to elope after choosing their partners. These haats are organized in the districts of Jhabua and Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh. The haat is organized in the form of a 'swayamvar' or a marriage market where young girls and boys are allowed to choose their partners. Bhagoria Haat Festival has an agricultural significance attached to it, that is, it coincides with the end of harvesting. Some people also celebrate it to mark the completion of harvesting.

But the star attraction of Bhagoria Haat Festival of Madhya Pradesh is the running away of young boys and girls with their partner who are later accepted as husband and wife by the society. During the Bhagoria Haat Festival in Madhya Pradesh, the boys put red powder on the face of the girl to whom he wants to get married, if the girl too wishes to marry the same boy, she has to put the same red powder on the boy's face after which both of them run away. But if the girl does not agree in the first chance, the boy can go behind her to persuade her and may win her heart. Bhagoria Haat Festival at Madhya Pradesh is celebrated in the month of March before the Holi festival.

5.1

Game Description

This game will revolve around the festival Bhagoria and will explain the significance of this festival in Bhil marriage through fun game play. During this game, the player would discover the important aspects in a Bhil life. Game will consist of different levels in which player have to face certain situation which are important in Bhil life. For example: learning archery, importance of mahua tree, importance of water etc. Game would also take the player through the process of impressing a girl by different activities in fair and convince her to marry him. If the girl's father is not ready for marriage, in that situation he has to earn money to pay bride price which is called Dapa.

Through this game, one would know that in Bhil community, there is a freedom of choice in terms of choosing their life partners that is recognized and accepted by their community (very different that most of the civilized urban communities). It would also be interesting to know that in the Bhil community, the groom has to pay money (Dapa) to Bride's father which is totally in contrast to the Dowry system being followed in urban or rural settings.

5.2

Characters in the story

There are four main characters in the story which we will be using in our game:

Playable Character

1. Prema

Gender : Male

Age : 21 years

Place : Bhagor, Jhabua

Characteristics : He likes singing. He is energetic and likes adventure. He is brave and intelligent.

About : Prema is a young 22 years old boy who lives with his mother in a small house in Bhagor village of Jhabua district. He belongs to a poor Bhil family. His father died because of dengue when Prema was 12 years old. Since then, Prema started earning for his house and stood up for his family. He is an intelligent, brave and energetic boy. He likes singing and loves going for long walk in deep forests.

Non Playable Character

1. Lado

Gender : Female

Age : 18 years

Place : Bhagor, Jhabua

Characteristics : She likes dancing and painting. She likes to dress up everyday with ornaments and makeup. She likes to play with her friends.

About : Lado is an 18 year old girl who lives with her father and mother in Jhabua district. She helps her mother in making food and household work. She is a very beautiful and sensible girl. She likes going out with her friends. She believes in love. She studied till class 10th and after that she stopped going to school.

Characters in the story



2. Ramsingh (Lado's father)

Gender : Male

Age : 45 years

Place : Jhabua

Characteristics : He is very hard working man, he loves his daughter very much. He believes in the words of Shaman (Badwa)

About : Ram Singh is a 45 year old man belonging to the Bhil Tribe. He likes his daughter very much. He is a farmer and owns some land in Jhabua. He is worried now, as Lado's age is 18 and she is ready for marriage. He keeps on consulting the Shaman (Badwa) regarding his daughter's marriage. He believes that our ancestor should be happy and they should bless us whenever we celebrate something. He believes that Shaman is a very important link between them and their ancestors. They should always make shaman happy before any occasion.

3. Shaman (Badwa)

Gender : Male

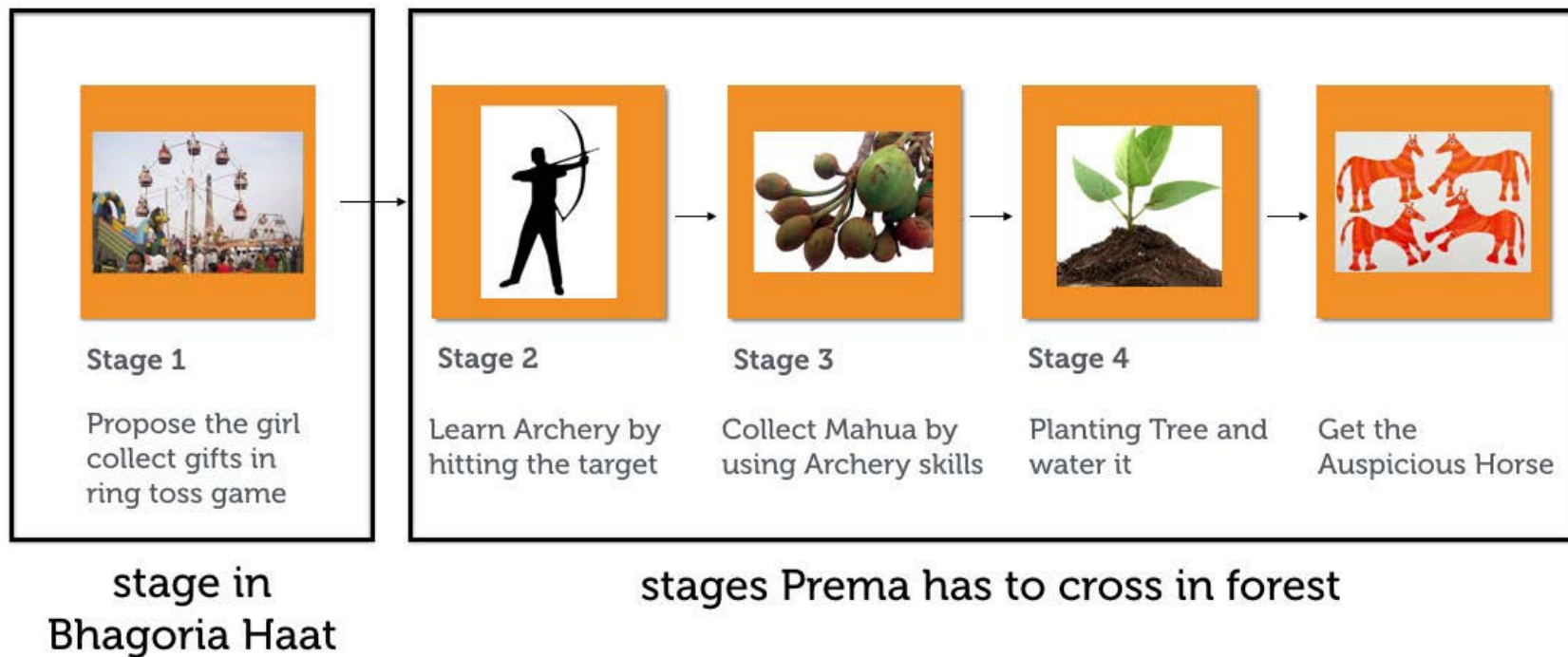
Age : 60 years

Place : Jhabua

Characteristics : He believes in supernatural activities. He likes to eat non veg and drink taadi (Mahua Liquor)

About : Shaman is a 60 year old man who lives in forest and keeps on wandering in forest. He believes that he has all the powers to contact with Bhil gods and ancestors. Everybody in the community invites him to perform rituals in their houses and to guide them for future in terms of harvest, illness, marriages. He asks for the sacrifice of rooster and some liquor (tadi) as an offering to gods and ancestors to make them happy and convince them to do good for the family.

Gameplay & Stages



5.3

Game Story

It is a beautiful bright morning. Young Bhil boys and girls in the whole Bhagor village are very excited and happy because of the most awaited festival Bhagoria is starting today. Bhagoria is considered to be the festival of love, life, music and colors. Everyone is getting ready for the Bhagoria Haat, where they can find their perfect life partner or express their feelings to someone they already like and convince them for marriage.

Prema is also very much excited for Bhagoria. He likes a girl from his village. Her name is Lado. He has been waiting for this day for one year as he decided to propose to Lado on Bhagoria by convincing her in the haat.

Lado is a very beautiful Bhil girl. She lives in the same village with her father RamSingh and her mother BhuriBai. Lado is also going to the haat with her friends. She is very happy with a feeling that she might find someone special for her in the Bhagoria Haat.

It is almost noon now, everybody is enjoying, dancing and singing songs. Young girls and boys are enjoying the haat and proposing to the one they like. Boys are trying to persuade girls in different ways. Prema is a bit nervous and hesitant as he is approaching Lado to propose to her. After a lot of hesitation, he asks Lado to come along with him for a small walk in the haat. Gradually they start talking and enjoying each others company. Prema takes her to different rides, shops and fun places in the

haat. Finally they reach a shop where they have to play a game by throwing the rings on different items placed at some distance to win them. Lado sees a set of bangles placed among different items in the game. She insists that Prema win her those bangles. Prema starts playing the game and promises Lado to get her at least three gifts with those rings. Finally, Prema throws the rings and collects three gifts for Lado - Bangles, a pack of Red Gulal (holi color) and Paan.

With all these gift items Prema proposes to Lado for marriage. Lado is surprised and happy as well in her heart, as she has also started liking Prema. Lado, being shy, takes some gulal and rubs it on Prema's forehead, and then they both shares the paan as a symbol of agreement. They are very happy, dreaming about their future life, and go back to their village. Both of them tell their parents about their choice, who had no objections with their marriage.

Ram Singh sends an invitation to Prema and calls him and his family to meet him for lunch. Ram Singh also calls the Shaman to give blessings and consults him regarding marriage dates. Everybody gathers at Ram Singh's house next day. Prema reaches Lado's place with his mother. The couple is very excited and filled with joy for their marriage dates. Ram Singh asks the Shaman to tell them some auspicious dates suitable for the marriage and bless their children. After deep meditation shaman tells Ram Singh that Prema is not eligible for Lado. He

has some doubts regarding their future. Ram Singh always had a firm belief in Shaman. He gets scared and ask Shaman to give some solution regarding the problem. The Shaman tells Prema that if he really want to marry Lado, then he has to pass certain tests which are very important in Bhil Life.

The Shaman Says:

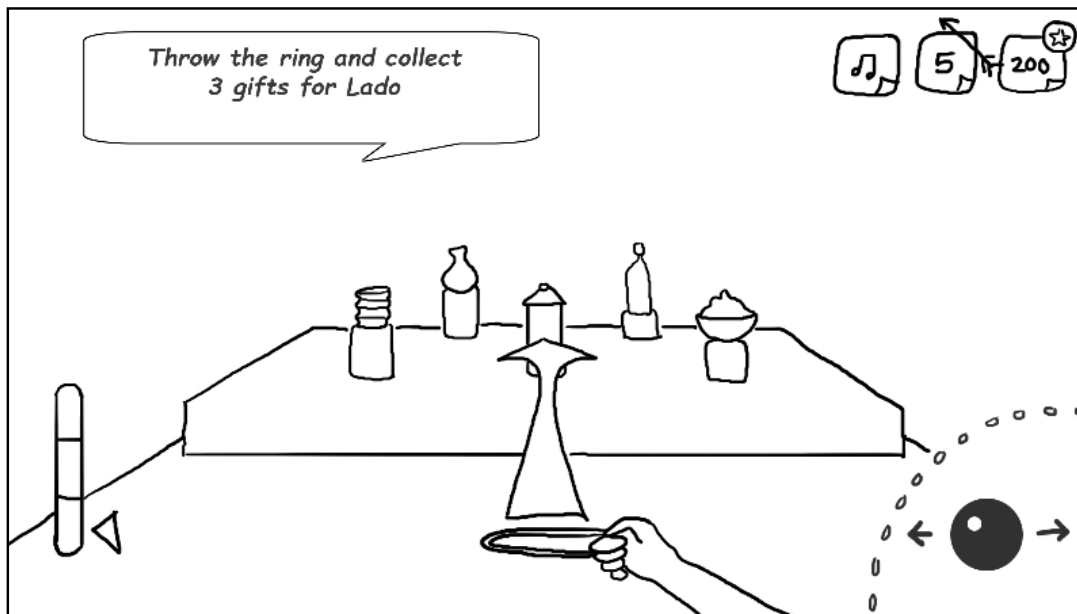
- You have to go deep into the forest and learn archery.
 - Use your archery skills to collect Mahua fruits as mahua plays a vital role in our lives to make medicines etc.
 - Use those magical Mahua seeds, plant a tree and water that plant by breaking clouds through your bow and arrow. Most importantly, do not waste the cloud water as it is limited source of water. Use it wisely.
 - Your last task will be to find the auspicious horse from the forest as you have to present it to our holy ancestors for their blessings in your marriage'.
 - Earn at least 500 golden coins throughout your journey and give it to your father in law (Ram Singh) as Dapa (Groom has to pay bride price to bride's father)'.
- These are the conditions the Shaman puts in front of Prema. Prema is a bit worried initially but he promises Lado and Ram Singh that he will fulfill all the conditions and will definitely come back to marry Lado.

5.4

Game Plot Points

Stage 1:

Convincing Lado in Bhagoria Haat



Prema asks Lado to come with him for a small walk in the haat. They are enjoying the haat very much. Now they have reached a stall where they have to play a ring toss game and can win multiple items by throwing rings over them. Prema starts playing the game and he has to win at least three gift items which are :

1. A pack of bangles (Lado insisted him for it)
2. A packet of Gulal (Necessary to propose Lado)
3. A Paan (Token of Acceptance)

There will be many more items placed in ring toss game. But the number of rings would be limited. After getting 3 mentioned items, he can target other items as well (as bonus).

Game Plot Points

Cutaway Scene 1

Shaman giving tasks to Prema

After this, when both of them tell their parents about their choice. Ram Singh calls Prema with his family to his place to fix the marriage dates by consulting a Shaman. After meditation Shaman tells Prema that he is not fit for Lado right now. He has to go through different tests if he really wants to marry Lado.

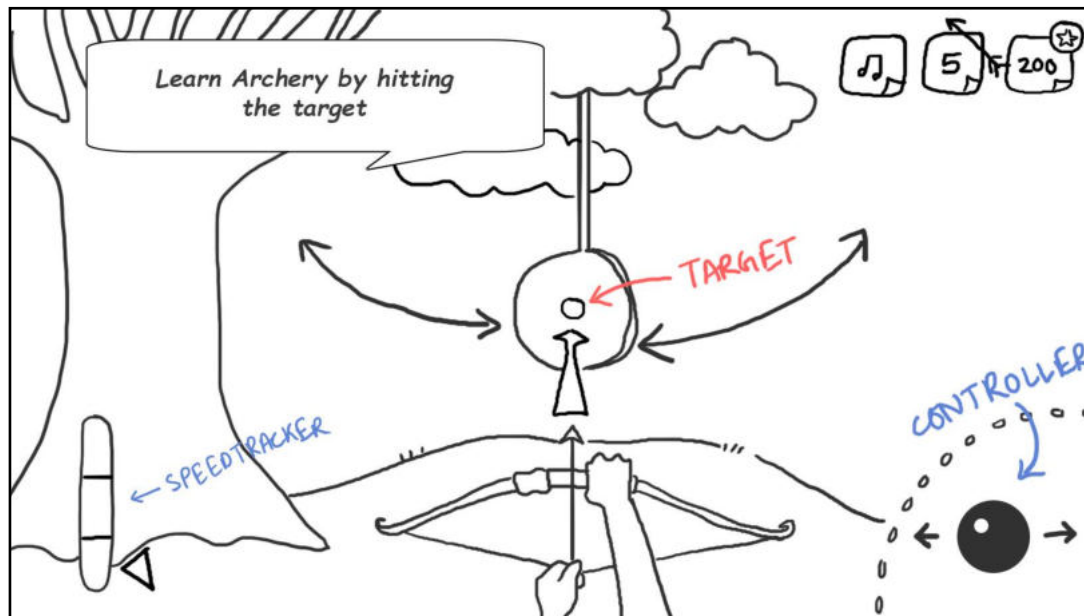
Test are :

- Learning Archery ,**
- Collecting mahua fruits using Archery skills,**
- Use mahua seeds to plant a tree and water it through rain water from clouds**
- Find the auspicious horse in the jungle which is very important for the marriage.**
- Collect at least 500 gold coins and give it to RamSingh as Dapa (Bride Price)**

Game Plot Points

Stage 2:

Learning Archery



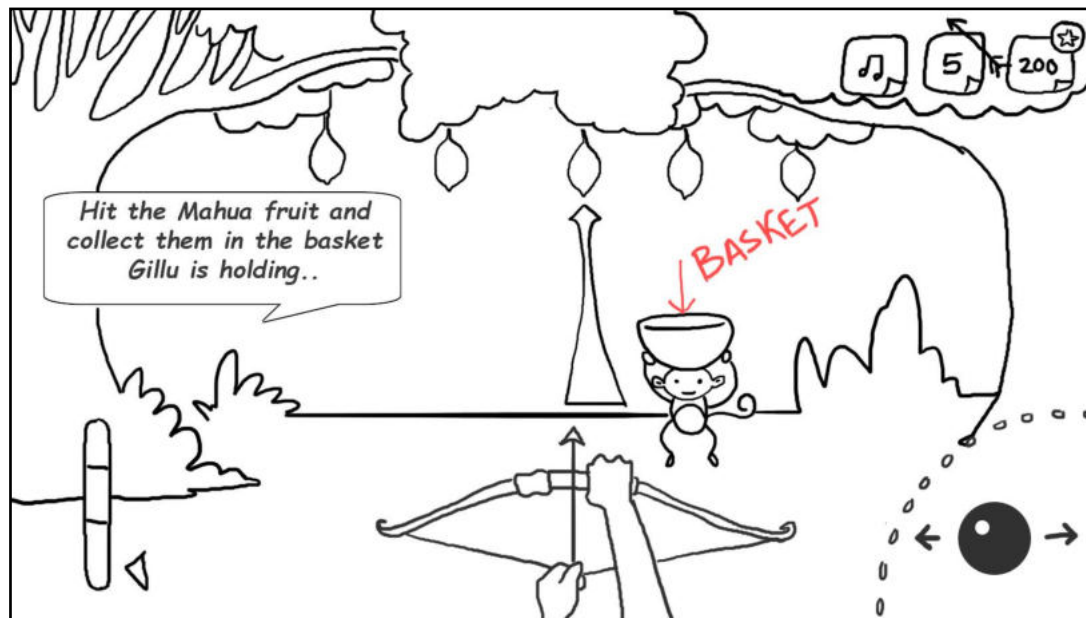
Prema is now in the middle of the forest with his bow and arrow. He has to complete this journey and finish all the tasks successfully. For that he need to learn archery because all the future tasks will require archery skills. In this stage he has to practise archery in the middle of the forest.

He has to hit a moving target suspended from a tree branch. He has limited arrows. He has to anticipate the movement of the target and hit at least 5 arrows correctly to prove himself to be a good in archery and cross the stage. Every correct hit will add some golden coins in his baggage.

Game Plot Points

Stage 3:

Collecting Mahua Fruits with Gillu (the monkey)

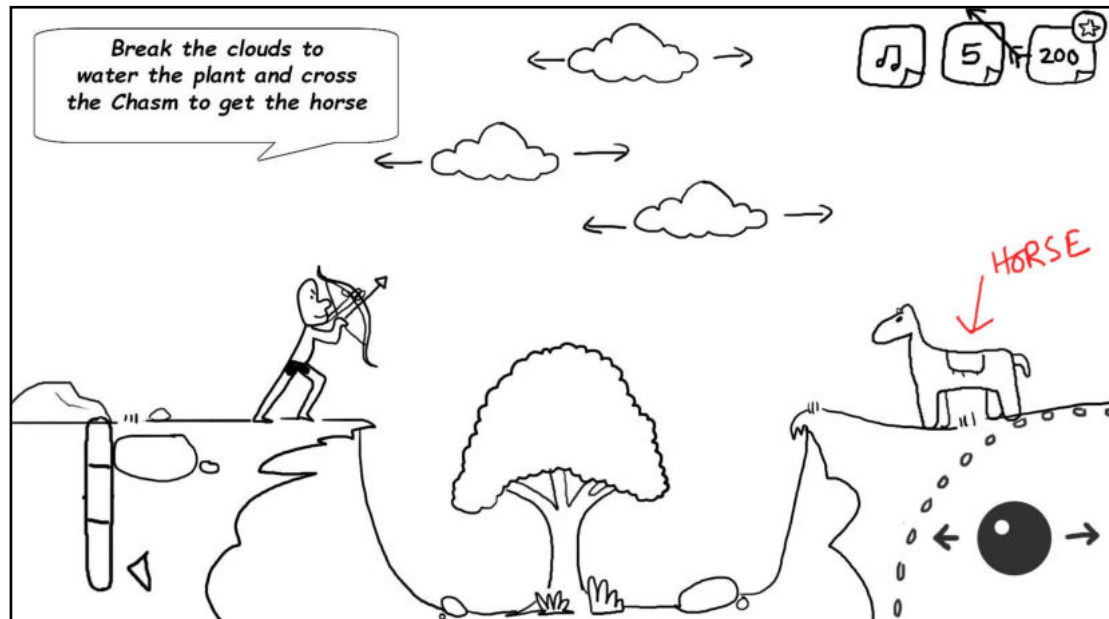


Prema is now in front of a Mahua tree with his bow and arrow. He can see some mahua fruits hanging on the tree branch. In this level a monkey will move continuously on the ground with a basket on his head to collect the mahua fruits in it. In this level Prema has to anticipate the movement of the monkey and hit the mahua fruit with arrow and successfully collect them in the basket with the monkey. Every fruit collected in the basket will add some golden coins in Prema's baggage.

Game Plot Points

Stage 4:

Plant a tree, water it carefully



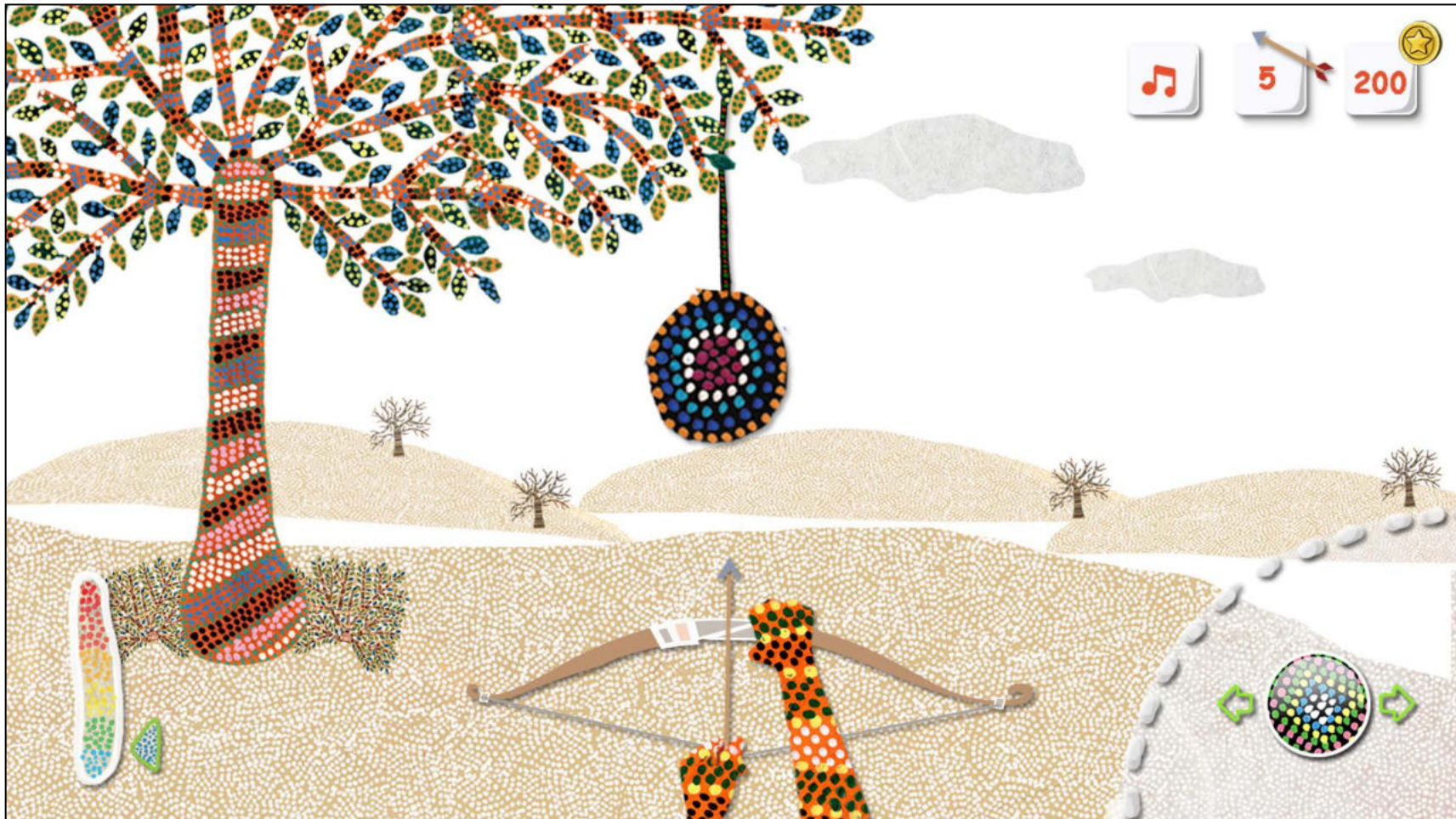
Moving ahead Prema sees the auspicious horse which he has to get for his marriage. But between him and the horse there is a big chasm which he has to cross to reach the horse. The only way is to plant a tree with magical mahua seed (that he has collected from in stage 3) in the chasm and grow it bigger by watering it. The only source of water is available in the clouds moving in the sky. He has to break the cloud to bring water on the small plant in the chasm.

The biggest challenge in this stage is that he can not afford to waste water from the clouds as these clouds come once in a year and he has limited water resource. He has to target clouds when they are exactly at the top of the plant. Every time he wastes the water by hitting the cloud in wrong position, it will deduct some amount of golden coins from his baggage. Every time he hits the cloud in right position, the plant will grow big. In this stage, not only does he have to grow the tree bigger by watering it carefully but he has to maintain enough golden coins in his baggage for Dapa as well because it is the final stage of the game. After successfully growing the tree, he can easily cross the chasm and reach the horse successfully.

In the end, after completing all the tests in the forest. He goes to Lado's place and marry her.

5.5

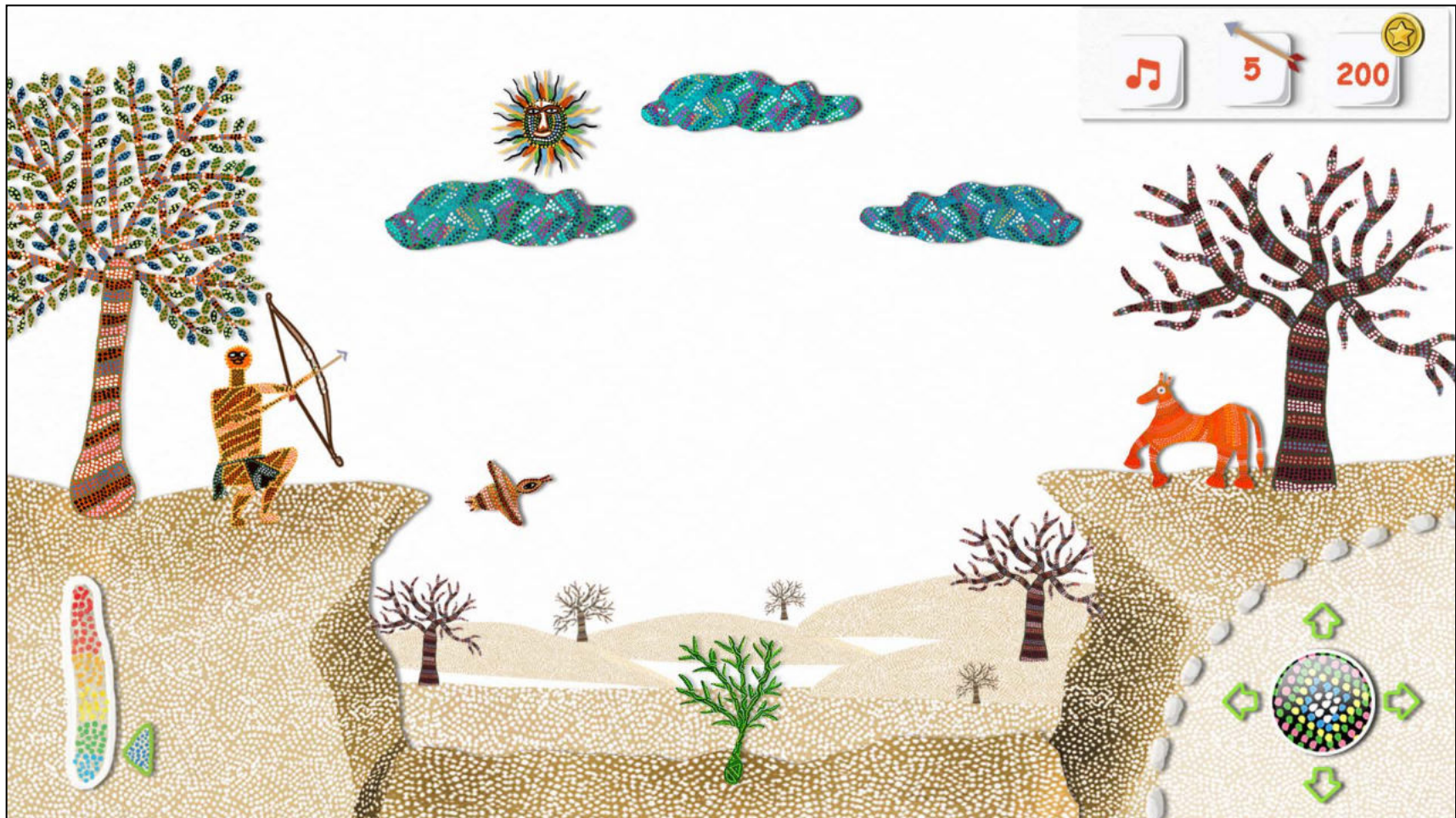
Game Screens



Game Screens

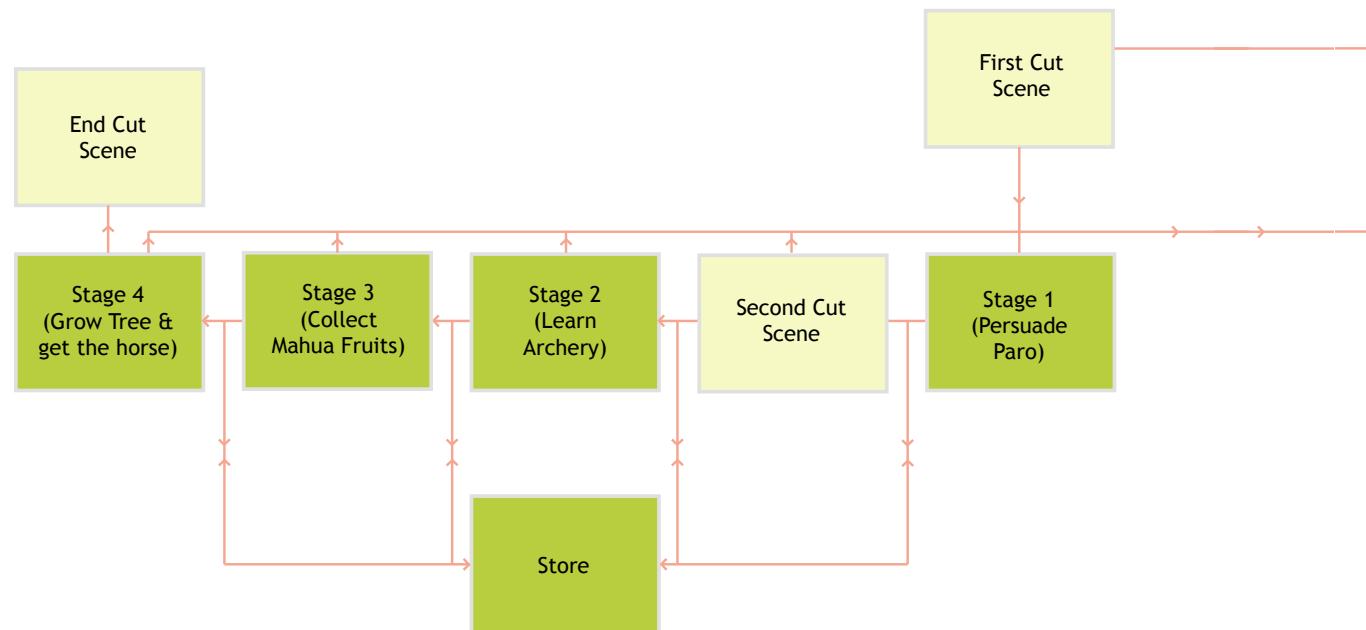


Game Screens

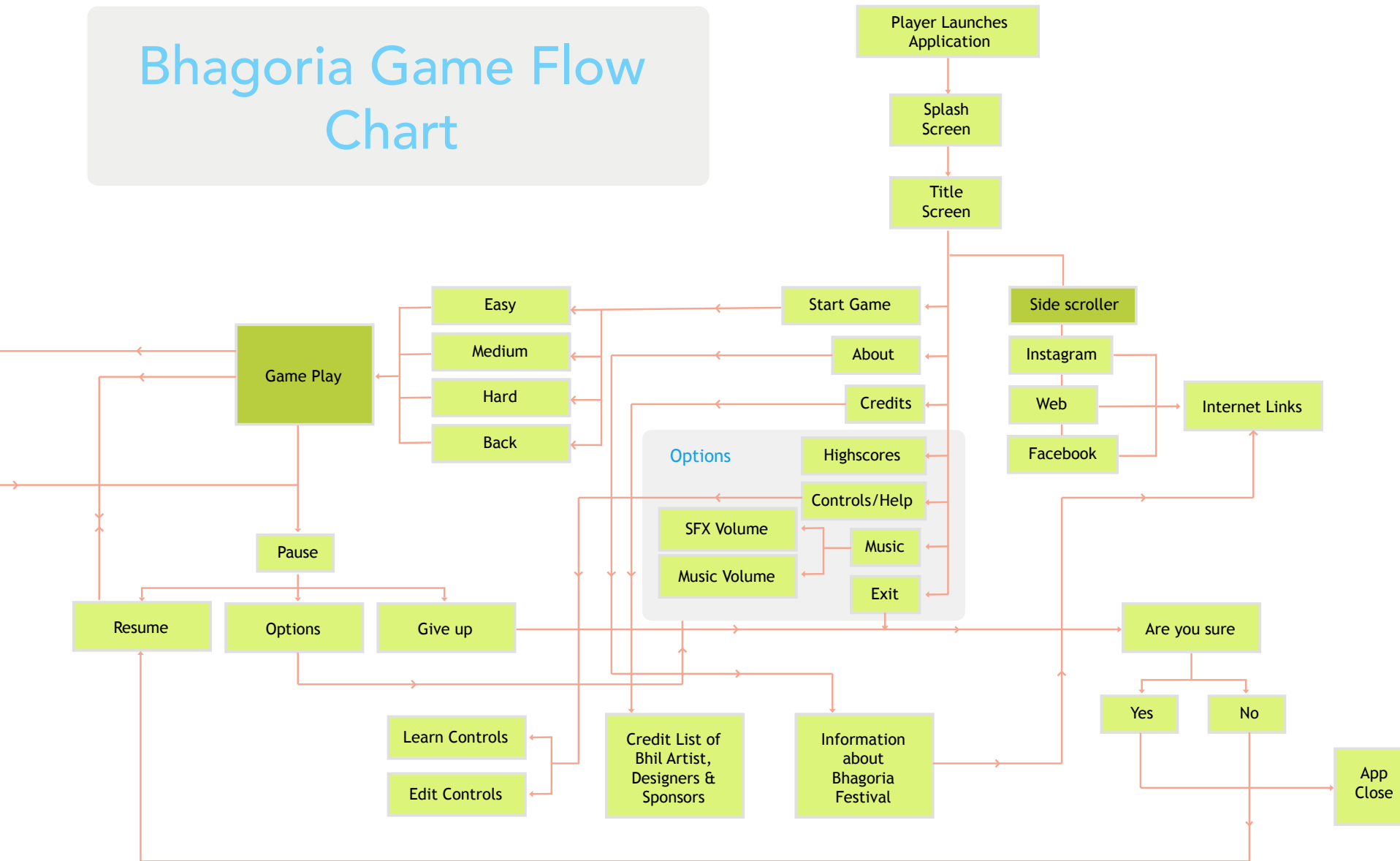


5.6

Game Workflow



Bhagoria Game Flow Chart



5.7

Mockup Screens



6.

Challenges in the Project

Through out the process of this project there was a big challenge to understand the rich and vibrant culture of Bhil Tribe. It becomes very important to thoroughly understand the Art and tribe in their cultural context. Diving deep into their culture and looking for a totally new story was a challenging task.

As we are designing a digital game through Bhil art visuals, we have to consider that it is going to be a totally new visual language for gamers and audiences with which they are not familiar with. At the same time using the Bhil visuals for designing a game also created limitations in terms of visual design rules. Bhil art includes pictographs with dots. These dots collectively creates cognitive load on user while playing the game. While designing the game, we have to design or arrange game visuals in such a way that it should not hinder the game play.

Without making it exotic, coming up with a new story and a ritual which can be converted into an interesting game play was a big challenge in itself. Incorporating every aspect of the ritual in different stages of the game and preserving its consistency in game levels was also an important aspect.

We always tend to consider a tribe to be backward and orthodox in their ways of thinking and doing things. We have to understand that tribal peoples are as modern as us in different ways. They have developed ways of life that are largely self-sufficient and extraordinarily diverse. Even so, tribal people are portrayed as backward and primitive simply because their communal ways are different. This was the main view point this project has to deliver to the audience that tribes have a lot with them through which urban people can learn and incorporate their approaches towards life and way of living. For example: issues related to love marriages, dowry, water conservation and living in harmony with nature were some of the main touch points in the game.

7.

Conclusion

I realised that this project has increased my personal understanding and sensitivity towards Indian Folk Art and Culture.

Games can be an excellent way to understand an abstract concept. They encourage peer interaction which enhances learning. As a player has to pay maximum attention to win the game, the involvement level is always high. The strength of Games as a tool to spread any information in a fun way is impacable.

The project is in development stage. The game concept along with game story, game stages and game play is finalized. The structure and the work flow of the game application is also finalized. Visuals in the screens of different game stages are done. A working mock up of the game application to show the work flow is ready. I would like to carry forward this project to my Academic Project 3 and take this game to the final developed stage.

In Academic Project 3 I have to work on the complete game animation, Visual design of the application. Compilation of the whole game along this game sounds needs to be done. Final development of the game through coding, debugging the application for final product for android platform is the aim for my Academic Project 3.

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