

INTRODUCTION

Odisha (formerly Orissa) is one of the 29 states of India, located in the eastern coast. It is surrounded by the states of West Bengal to the north-east, Jharkhand to the north, Chhattisgarh to the west and north-west, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south and south-west. Odia (formerly known as *Oriya*) is the official and most widely spoken language, spoken by 33.2 million according to the 2001 Census.^[1] The modern state of Orissa was established on 1 April 1936, as a province in British India, and consisted predominantly of Odia-speaking regions.^[2] April 1 is celebrated as Odisha Day

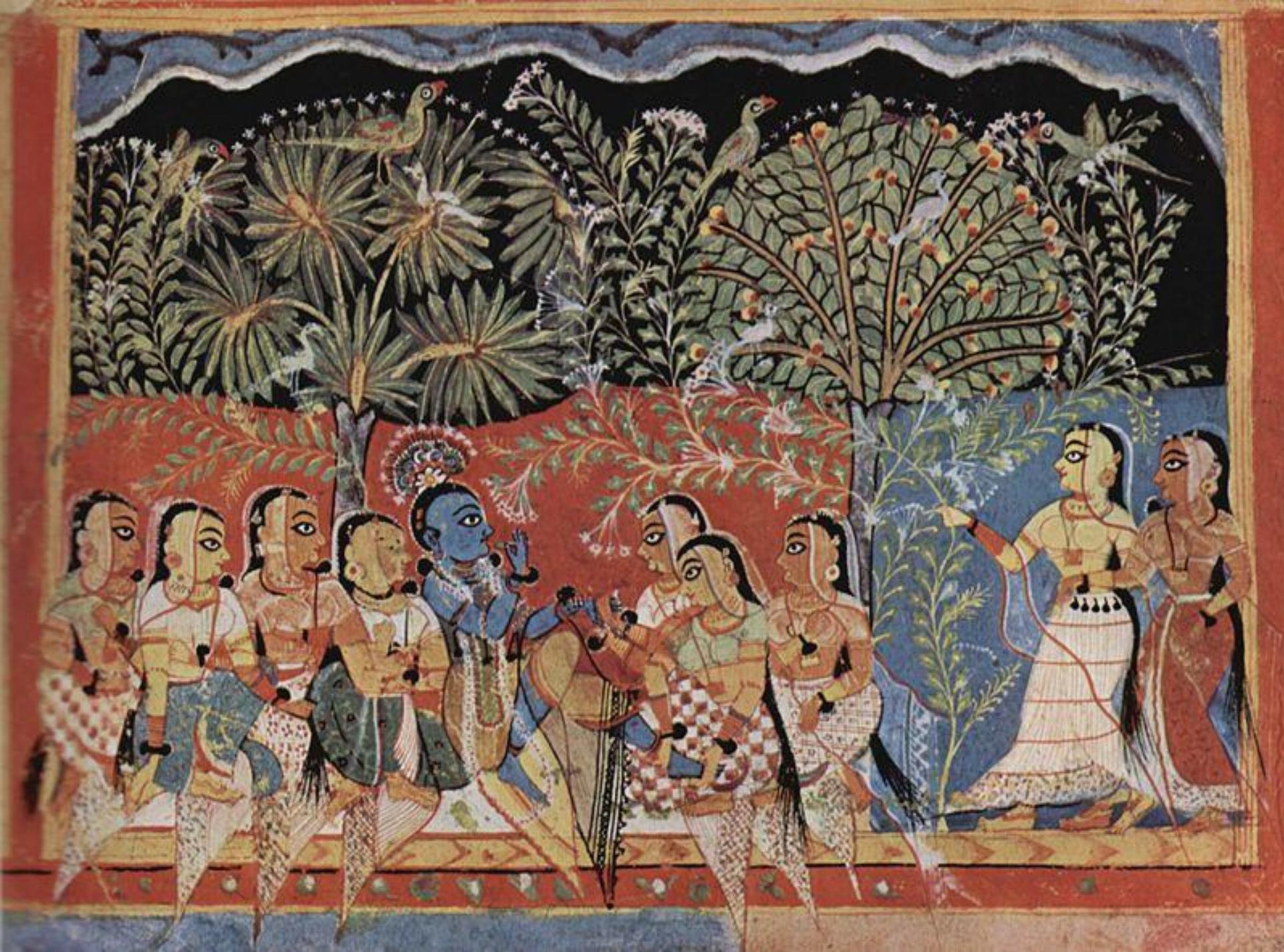
VISUAL ARTS

- ▣ Other cultural attractions include the Jagannatha Temple in Puri, known for its annual Rath Yatra or Car Festival, the unique and beautiful appliqué artwork of Pipili, silver filigree ornamental works from Cuttack, the *Patta Chitras* (palm leaf paintings), famous stone utensils of Nilgiri (Balasore) and various tribal influenced cultures. The Sun Temple at Konark is famous for its architectural splendour while the *Sambalpuri textiles* equals it in its artistic grandeur.

SAND ART

- ▣ Sand sculpture is practised on the beaches at Puri. Fine-grained sand is mixed with water and shaped by the fingers. Odishan legend says that
- ▣ "Poet Balaram Das, the author of Dandi Ramayan, was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath. Once during Ratha Yatra (Car Festival), he tried to climb the chariot of Lord Jagannath to offer his prayer. Since he wasn't allowed by the priests of the chariot to climb it and also insulted by them. With a great frustration and humiliation he came to the beach (Mahodadhi) and carved the statues of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra on the Golden sand."

- In its long history, Odisha has had a continuous tradition of dharmic religions especially Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Ashoka's conquest of Kalinga (India) made Buddhism a principal religion in the state which led to establishment of numerous Stupas and buddhist learning centres. During Kharavela's reign Jainism found prominence. However, by middle of 9th century CE there was a revival of Hinduism as attested by numerous temples such as Mukteshwara, Lingaraja, Jagannath and Konark, which were erected starting from the late 7th century CE. Part of the revival in Hinduism was due to Adi Shankaracharya who proclaimed Puri to be one of the four holiest places or Char Dham for Hinduism. Odisha has therefore a syncretic mixture of the three dharmic religions as attested by the fact that the Jagannath Temple in Puri is considered to be holy by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.



- Presently, the majority of people in the state of Odisha are Hindus. As per the census of 2001, Odisha is the third largest Hindu populated state (as a percentage of population) in the country as illustrated in the 2001 census table and in this table. However, while Odisha is predominantly Hindu it is not monolithic. The state also has a Christian and Muslim minority. There is a rich cultural heritage in the state owing to Hindu faith. For example, Odisha is home to several Hindu saints. Sant Bhima Bhoi was a leader of the Mahima sect movement, Sarala Dasa, was the translator of the epic Mahabharata in Oriya, Chaitanya Dasa was a Buddhistic-Vaishnava and writer of the *Nirguna Mahatmya*, Jayadeva was the author of the Gita Govinda and is recognized by the Sikhs as one of their most important bhagats. Swami Laxmananda Saraswati is a modern-day Hindu saint of Adivasi heritage.

CLOTHING

- Western-style dress has gained greater acceptance in cities and towns among men, although the people prefer to wear traditional dresses like Dhoti, Kurtha and Gamucha during festivals or other religious occasions. Women normally prefer to wear the Saris (Sambalpuri Sari, Bomkai Sari, Kataki Sari) or the Shalwar kameez; western attire is becoming popular among younger women in cities and towns.
- The Saree of Odisha is much in demand throughout the entire world. The different colors and varieties of sarees in Odisha make them very popular among the women of the state. The handloom sarees available in Odisha can be of four major types; these are Ikat, Bandha, Bomkai and Pasapalli. Odisha sarees are also available in other colors like cream, maroon, brown and rust. The *tie-and-dye* technique used by the weavers of Odisha to create motifs on these sarees is unique to this region. This technique also gives the sarees of Odisha an identity of their own.



MEN ATTIRE



brock whittaker
photography

Thank You