ABSTRACT:
By fact of Ethnologies, there are 6,912 numbers of languages worldwide and out of that there is list of 415 ‘living languages’ used alone in India. Although all of them do not have writing system and some of them use modified forms of existing writing systems. There are fourteen basic scripts seen in world. These are: 1. Latin, 2. Georgian, 3. Arabic, 4. Hebrew, 5. Cyrillic, 6. Greek, 7. Armenian, 8. Indian, 9. Syrian, 10. Japanese, 11. Korean, 12. Ethiopian, 13. Chinese, 14. Mongolian. Within them there are many subcategorized scripts. Therefore, we have thousands numbers of writing styles or typefaces in the world. As the future design educators we insist to know different typefaces as many as we can in terms of their vernacular and cultural influences. In the process of having many conferences and seminars, we would be able to exchanging and sharing each other with our dialect design forms and get some valuable inspirations.
Since my root is based in Orissa, India, so I have to bring out to the world audience some notable aspects from Orissan (Oriya) script - one of Indian writing systems as it is part my research process. The Spectrum of Indian Typography is very vast ranging from Devnagari to various regional scripts. When we talk about Orissan Typography in particular as one of Indian scripts especially in outdoor context, it becomes an asset to the Orissan culture, by embracing lot of layers & forms of decorative values, motives and various folk forms of its rich cultural and political backgrounds.

Fig 2: A glance of Orissan culture.

Oriya (Orissan) culture is very wide in terms of its variety, starting from Odissi Dance to Temple sculptures & motives, Palm leaf manuscripts with engraved miniature illustrations to PataChitra, Puri Car-festival, Pipili Appliqué works to Silver filigree works and surprisingly some typical Orissan fast food culture. Eventually it is endless. Here I am trying to reflect on those various native influences in traditional street Typography of Orissa as the connotative visual-verbal messages.

As we all know, type form has a strong link with visuals as it is derived from visuals itself. In contemporary scene due to urgencies of the readability and reproducibility it is become more abstract, symbolic, simplicity and technical. The human touch is missing in terms of natural aesthetic and expressive
value. This aesthetic value may consist of cultural and environmental reflections. As part of my academic research, I came across a lot of environment typographical element reflecting the vernacular visual language associated with deep cultural base. Evidence shows Oriya script consists of rounded shapes quite similar to south Indian counter parts. That is because of the ancient Orissan writing process was being scratched on palm-leave manuscripts by means of a sharp stylus. Practically it was easier to write rounded strokes as there was risk of tearing the leave in case of straight strokes. In linguistic aspect, it has much similarity with other northern Indian languages like Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati. On closure look, you can find the upper part without shiro-rekha (Horizontal line at top unlike Devnagri) with the curvilinear stroke similar like southern. But in bottom part it has similarity with Devnagri scripts. That ‘curvilinear’ or circular part would be my prime focus of my analysis in the presentation. Is there a practice on circular forms established in all forms of Oriya cultural, folk arts and crafts?

Remarkably, in the outdoor and environmental scenario the Oriya typography looks different with lot of visual entities. My visual based presentation will focus also on these elements by analyzing how and where they derived from and which aspect of those cultural dominances forced the artisans and
craftsmen to produce such design forms. About the circular forms in particular which I have discovered is clearly a common visible element in entire Orissan culture associated in many ways. (Please see the Fig 4 – Fig 10)

Fig 4: Circular forms in Orissan Dance (Odissi).

Fig 5: Circles in Orissan Sculptures.
The state Orissa is missing proper design education and as a result the excessive advent of digital media controls the present situation of Orissan Typography particularly in outdoor context. The Typography Environment is going in an unethical direction by losing its traditional decorative values and ingenuity. There is urgency among type design academicians to intervene the issue by confronting with a task.
where, they have to indicate the fundamental understanding and knowledge of its cultural connections. One leading question will be: how is it possible to convey knowledge about aesthetic principles of this environmental typo form in a vernacular backdrop without knowing a language?

The core area of my visual facts based presentation will emphasize the association of rich aesthetic, heritage, visual perception and cultural
understanding with the Orissan environmental and outdoor typography which is now on helm of negligence and under cover with respect from the scope of future design education. The presentation and paper is based on one ongoing academic research project and shows the attempt of investigating the relation between visual and verbal aspects of such traditional expressive writing systems in certain environments.

The young designers should know these various cultural aspects reflecting on Typography from this cultural territory and subsequently their possible implementations in future Type Designing. Traditional Indian typography especially outdoor environments are purely visual perspective created by typical roadside signboard painters. In west, design emerged as a response to industry and mass production. But in India, there has always been a direct link between design and art. They feel Design is all about decorativeness. That is an evident clearly visible in the approach to typography which sees the ‘character’ as an ‘image’. It has really a great value in education which we cannot ignore to know much about the root.
The overtone and inspiration from Bollywood (Indian Film Industry) also has major role to deciding factors in designing cultural Typography in India. Each and every character of the typeface tells the story individually about a particular place or culture or a festival.

As we all know, Indian traditional public transport system carries a lot of Typographical elements, which has express cultural connection as well with embellished value to the vehicle. It could be Truck or Auto Rickshaw and horse-cart.

The real challenge for Design learners is to study their own tradition with its cultural diversifications and apply them with their works in various ways. Translating the foreign brands into the regional scripts could be one area of tasking with the regional cultural reflections and retaining the brand identity as well.
Figure 14 is from my recent past visit to London. I found these giant environment typographical installations which have inspired me a lot. These Roman typographical installations are extensively visual perception based.
Each type character says a different story. My findings from the cultural reflection in Indian Typography would help young designers to take a new route around the world.

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