



Fig.6.5 : Episodes from the legend of Lord Shiva  
 M. Kailasam, Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh  
*Kalamkari*, contemporary, 208 x 273 cm

Fig.6.6 : The *Ramayana* Canopy  
 Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh  
*Kalamkari*, 2002, 175 x 115 cm



The extraordinary diversity of styles of the hand-painted, printed, wax-resist, mordant-dyed cotton textiles crafted in India, variously known as *Kalamkari*, *chintz*, *pintados*, *sitz* and *indiennes*, held sway over global textile trade from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Alongside their trading and production centres, dotted across the Coromandal coast and the hinterlands of the southern peninsular of India, there coexisted a tradition of hand-painted pictorial narratives on cotton cloth, the *Ganga Duppatlu*, depicting sacred Hindu epics and scriptures. These temple-textiles, though lesser known, and generically also termed as *Kalamkari*, were rendered on hand-woven cotton in much the same manner as their cosmopolitan cousins; though their content and imagery, the purpose they served and their clientele were very different.

This essay reflects on these temple-textiles, their decline and near extinction in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and revitalisation in the 1950s to their contemporary rendering, Figs.6.2, 6.3, 6.4 & 6.5.

### Background

In ages of limited literacy, the portrayal of the intersections of religious canons through art had a long and enduring antiquity in India as is evident from the surviving stone reliefs on the gateways-railings of the stupas and Buddhist paintings in the rock-cut caves, datable between c. 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century CE. The *Ganga Duppatlu* temple-textiles from India's southern peninsular were part of this continuum of didactic reinforcement of religious principles and dogmas through narrative pictorial aids.<sup>2</sup> Serving a largely ecclesiastical purpose, these unfolded narratives from the epic literature of Hinduism: the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagvata-Purana*, from regional ballads, and depicted sacred pilgrimage sites, among other narratives.

Invoking and enhancing the experience of sacred spaces, these temple-textiles were commissioned for religious and ceremonial purposes by Hindu temple chiefs and heads of the monastic centres, by rajas and wealthy *zamindars* (landlords).<sup>3</sup> Principally, these had been used as hangings in temples, as back-drops, as screens to create a sacred space, as canopies, door and window framings. The cylinder-shaped hangings, banners and flags were displayed on the processional chariots of the gods. Furthermore, they found commercial favour in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Colonial Exhibitions in Britain ensuring "a ready sale when brought into notice at exhibitions".<sup>4</sup>

The narrations on these often-huge temple-textiles could extend to sizes up to 13x11 feet, though customarily episodic some covered events from across the entire chronicle.<sup>5</sup> Their depictions were usually formatted with a focus on a central square, rectangular or circular field, surrounded by registers or concentric bands containing the pictured narrative, Fig.6.6. Often vernacular commentaries and stanzas threaded the bands.<sup>6</sup> The visualisations followed canonical interpretations that dictated the manner of picturing the distinct attributes of major and minor divinities. The ritual grammar of portraiture is reflected in the stance, anatomical proportion and relative juxtapositions of figures in terms of commensurability. Their symbolic hand gestures, vehicle and other divine attributes, all followed the prescribed iconographic conventions. Even today, there is an immediate recognition of the divinities portrayed in these temple-textiles and a clear reading of the theme, as the tales remain as fresh



Fig.6.1 : Master artist J. Gurappa Chetty (1937-2021) finalizing the outlines with *kalam* soaked in iron mordant dye solution processed in fermented molasses

and relevant in the region, require no need for a mediator.

While their themes were quotidian, their place of purchase, markings on the textile and stylistic renderings offered up distinguishing evidence of their place of origin even though their place of acquisition varied. In 1880, George Birdwood, a key figure in the setting up of the Government Art Museum in Mumbai, typified the distinctiveness of Madurai temple-textiles as being rendered in only two colours, red and black, that were sometimes touched up in yellow.<sup>7</sup> Decades later, in 1902 George Watt, head of the Calcutta Industrial Museum, characterized the temple-textile from Salem as using paler colours: “more especially the lemon green, that takes the place of brilliant blue”.<sup>8</sup> It is also interesting that the style and hand of the artist is recognizable as was the case of a *Ramayana* temple-cloth hanging acquired from the 1886 Indian and

Colonial Exhibition in London, and now at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Its provenance listed as Kalahasti, with its artist/maker labelled as "unknown". On studying the hanging, J. Gurappa Chetty (1937-2021), Fig.6.1, himself one of the most distinguished masters of temple-textile cloth painting, identified the style and use of color as having been executed by the distinctive hand of his grandfather Neeli Gurappa.

The commonality of content and style of the temple-textiles was in consonant with the rendering of mural-paintings in the region. Testaments to shared traditions can be traced in remnants of the painted ceilings and walls of temples, reflective of the narrative mode, stylistic nuances and schematic layout.<sup>9</sup> It can be conjectured that there was a shared ecclesiastical connection between the artists. As has been underlined by a brief mention in 1915, two artist brothers resided in the village of Gollapalayam, one of whom “executes frescoes on walls at Rajahmundry, and one of them paints on cloth”.<sup>10</sup>

The location of these maker-artists was often in the vicinity of significant Hindu temples whose calendars regulated the rhythm of the ritual and social life of devotees, besides providing employment to a diverse range of artisans who settled in the nearby precincts.<sup>11</sup> Imperial gazetteers and other records reveal that production centres located in the Madras Presidency included the temple city of Madurai, centred around the Meenakshi Temple; Ponneri; Schikanaikanpet in Kumbakonam district with 188 Hindu temples in the region; Tiruchirappalli (formerly Trichinopoly also called Trichy); the major pilgrimage centres at Salem and Palakollu also known as Trilinga Desam defined by the Shiva lingas;

Nagapattinam, (present day Tamil Nadu); Kalahasti (now Srikalahasti) one of the five most sacred Shaivite places of worship, and Masulipatnam (now Machilipatnam); Gollapalem in the East Godavari; Jammalamadugu, the site of the ancient Hindu-Vaishnavite temple - Sri Narapura Venkateswara Temple (now in present-day Andhra Pradesh) to the Manakula Vinayagar Temple in Pondicherry (now Puducherry).

Though the earliest surviving pieces date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is more than probable that these temple-cloths were of an earlier antiquity and their complex production process were the precursors of the internationally traded *Kalamkaris*.<sup>12</sup> Quite like their cosmopolitan cousins, these ritual cloths exemplified a vibrant creativity, great mastery of free-hand drawing and dye-painting and the scientific knowledge of natural dye processes. In addition, the maker-artists were steeped in the Hindu scriptures, the vast assembly of characters and the iconographic conventions of image-making laid down in the *shilpa shastras*.

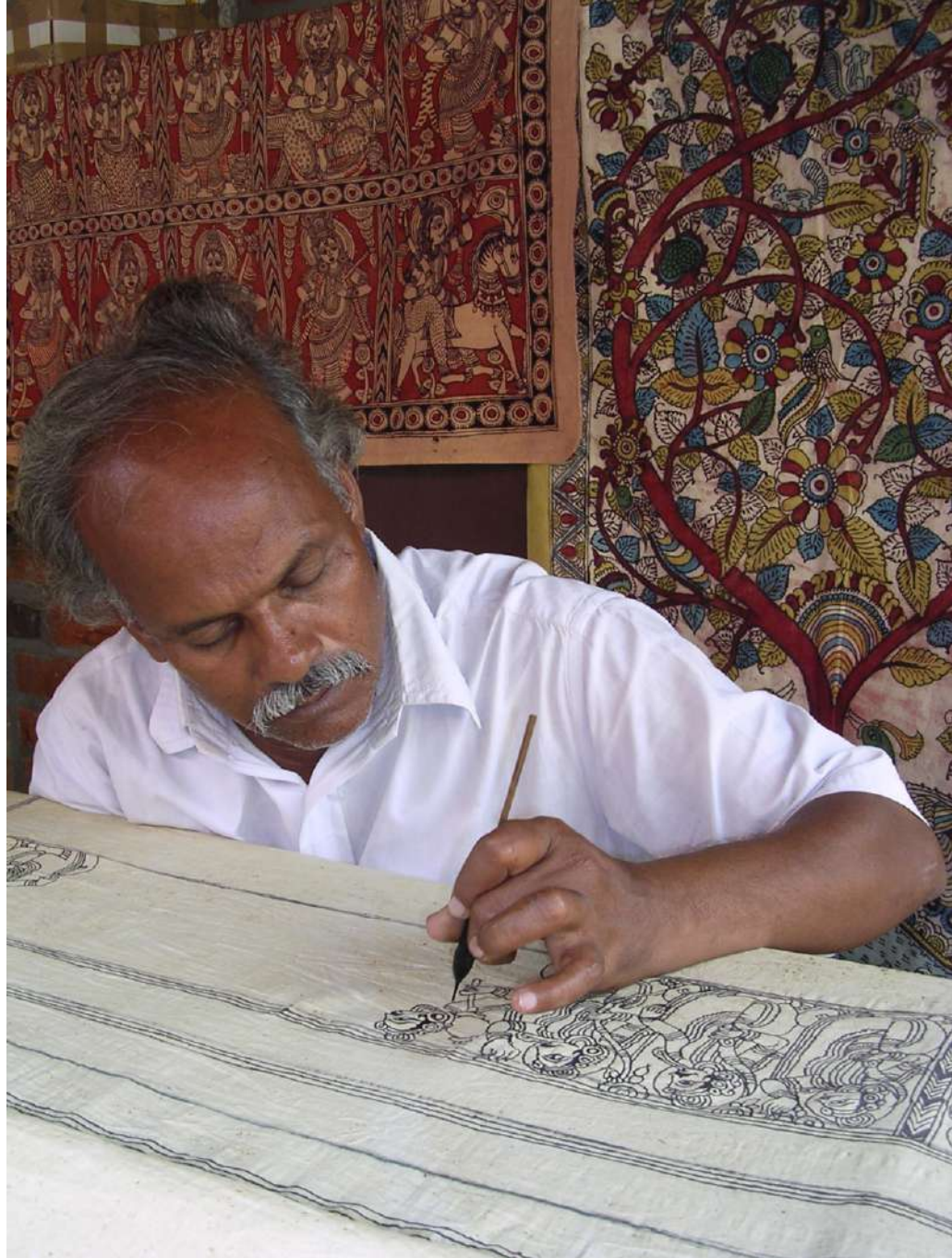


Fig.6.2 : Vijayakumar from Srikalahasti, *Kalamkari* craftsmen at Dakshinachitra adding the ink-drawn figural details, Image courtesy: Rekha Vijayashankar

## Decline

Travelogues, colonial record keeping, exhibition catalogues and other writings offered only epigrammatic notings on temple-textiles. This could perhaps be ascribed to several reasons, one being the exigencies of trade that would have dictated a focussed documentation on goods that found a large market overseas. The other reason for this could have been the very rarity of readily-available pieces as it was probable that the temple-textiles were especially commissioned given the purpose they served and the time and effort involved in their production.<sup>13</sup> In 1884 Birdwood noted: “large quantities of the stained cloth . . . with mythological subjects taken from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, are made chiefly for the service of the temples”. Elaborating further, he added that these pieces were “very rare to get, except by favour of the priests”.<sup>14</sup>

It could also be conjectured that the scarcity of old pieces were due to the established Hindu custom of disposing worn-out or damaged sacred manuscripts, idols and other consecrated offerings including ceremonial textiles. Left under sacred trees, immersed in flowing waters or consigned to fire, or as in the case of some worn-out temple-cloths, converted into lamp-wicks that were lit during worship in the shrine.<sup>15</sup> And, as always, with the ravages of the climate only a few historical textile



Fig.6.3 : Tilak Reddy working at Dakshinachitra during Tribal Art camp held from 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2019  
Image courtesy: Rekha Vijayashankar

specimens survived the humidity and heat of India.

Barely had notice of the temple-textile emerged when its timing coincided with the deleterious decline in both the numbers of maker-artists and in the quality of work. The “conspicuous” decline was noted in 1908 when production was compared to earlier temple-textiles produced in 1886 and 1903, just a few years before.<sup>16</sup> Several reasons could be ascribed for this decline, some of which could be laid at the door of colonial intent as policies dictated in favour of the commercial interests of the rulers that advantaged imports from Britain. A rare account on an individual level of the impact of this policy on the maker-artists community of the temple-cloth was noted in 1897 by Edgar Thurston, Superintendent of the Madras Government Museum.<sup>17</sup> Presenting a gloomy picture, he wrote:

The Kalahasti cotton fabric painters, whom I recently interviewed, were at first afraid of me, suspecting that I was a commercial traveller on behalf of some firm, and had come among them with the base object of annexing their patterns for reproduction by machinery in Europe. They complained bitterly that British manufacturers are now copying patterns, which they . . . had turned out for many generations . . . a piece with similar devices made at Kalahasti with vegetable dyes used to cost Rs.4 whereas the British imitation being machine-made with mineral dyes can be sold at Rs.2 . . . The demand for them has greatly declined in recent year owing to the importation of British printed cloths, which are used as a cheap substitute for them . . . and the workmen, who are very skilful artisans, cannot even earn four *annas* a day.<sup>18</sup>

This precipitous decline in earnings, and in custom, resulted in the falling numbers of master-artisans.

This was noted by E.B. Havell, Superintendent, Madras School of Art (1884-1894) who referred to the village of Pallakollu on his tour of inspection where “only one man and his family occasionally make this to order” while in Masaulipatnam and Salem the sacred hangings were made only “to a limited extent . . . the out-turn by the two families who make them is so limited that it is not easy to procure good specimens”. By 1913 the tradition in Salem had died out and, by 1915, centres where formerly many families practiced only one or two and, in some cases, none continued their work. The few remaining maker-artists were in Jammalamadugu, Masulipatam, Sikkinayakanpet, Kumbakonam and Kalahasti.<sup>19</sup>

### The Significance of Kalahasti

By the late 1940s, the practice had died out in all the centres except in Kalahasti where the knowledge remained alive though the temple-cloth was no longer produced.<sup>20</sup> Kalhasti, now renamed Srikalahasti, was renowned as a holy town that had grown organically around the ancient Sri Kalahastheeswara Swami Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Hindu god of creation and destruction. This positioned it on the pilgrimage map as a standalone site, and on the ritualised pilgrimage circuit.<sup>21</sup> Its significance also lay in it being an important 19<sup>th</sup>-century centre for the production of temple-cloth with the mineral-rich river waters of Svarnamukhi rendering brightness and depth to the dyes. The flowing waters had been used in many stages of crafting the temple-cloth. The maker-artist community that resided here had received their patronage from the temples, from the Raja of Kalahasti, one of the powerful landlords of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, and from others who commissioned their work especially at the time of religious festivals for use as canopies, as draping on the chariot of the deities during their annual sacred processional circumambulation, and other uses.<sup>22</sup> The Raja himself being known to posses

Fig.6.4 : M. Viswanath Reddy working at Dakshinachitra during Tribal Art camp held from 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2019  
image courtesy: Rekha Vijayashankar



magnificent temple-cloths costing "many hundreds of rupees" that were displayed on state occasions as well as being loaned to Colonial Exhibitions.<sup>23</sup> In addition, reports from 1888 and 1903 noted that the best temple-cloths were produced in Kalahasti and some of the pieces were commissioned or sourced for Colonial Exhibitions and sales.<sup>24</sup>

The dismal downturn that had decimated production in other places affected Kalahasti as well, and by the early 1940s, the few surviving maker-artists had taken up other professions.<sup>25</sup> Fortuitously in the late 1950s, soon after India's independence from Colonial rule, the All India Handicrafts Board, a government body charged with regenerating the sector, took pivotal steps to revive several endangered practices including that of temple-cloth making.

In 1958, a pilot production-cum-training centre was set up on the outskirts of Kalahasti. The oldest surviving maker-artists in Kalahasti, J. Lakshmaiah, then in his mid-50s, was persuaded to return to his hereditary profession, even though he had not practised it for more than a decade. Appointed as the Chief Artist, he taught all aspects of the making of temple-cloth to his son and initial six students, some of whom were from families with a tradition of temple-cloth making. Besides teaching, he re-started working on special commissioned pieces.<sup>26</sup> This was the beginning of the process of revitalising the practice and a continuation of the tradition.

### **About technique**

In historic accounts of the technique, about 26 major and minor steps had been listed from start to finish with the cloth passing through several specialised artisanal processes. Each step in the technique is as fundamental to its processing as the other.<sup>27</sup> The contemporary process of creating the temple-cloth remains time consuming and complex, it varies from workshop to workshop as maker-artists have experimented and fine-tuned the technique to suit their needs.

The broad framework of the process followed starts with the first step of the choice of narrative to be depicted and its conceptualization, the layout details dependent on its eventual usage determine the size of the piece to be executed. Once determined, the cotton cloth, usually finely woven for the brush-pen to move smoothly and freely over its surface, is bleached and processed. The process involves the cleansing and softening of the cotton fibres to make it ready to absorb and accept the dyes and also ensure that the fine ink-drawn details do not blot or smudge the textile. This takes place over several days, with the cloth soaked and treated in a solution of buffalo milk, cow dung and powdered myrobalan (*Terminalia chebula*), a tropical fruit that contains tannins. The processing remains interspersed with repeated washing and sun drying.

When the cloth is prepared for the next stage, the maker-artists draws the subject free hand, using a charcoal 'pencil' of burnt tamarind tree sticks, to allow for easy edits. Once the design is perfected the outlines are inked in black made from an iron mordant dye solution that has been processed in fermented molasses. The areas earmarked for red are painted in with an alum mordant that helps fix the dye to the cloth. As alum itself is colourless, it tinted with a fugitive colour that renders the drawing visible but washes off easily.

The inking and line-work is painted in with specially made brush-pens, *kalam*, constructed with a variety of tips. Ingeniously crafted out of bamboo shoots; their flow of ink being regulated by a cotton cloth or coil of goat's hair or a strip of woollen blanket that is wound and fastened just above the tip. The squeezing of the cotton ball helps regulate the even-release of ink and prevents smudging, Figs.6.1 & 6.2.

After resting and allowing for the absorption of the alum mordant and black dye the cloth is then ready for immersion in the boiling alizarin dye vat. The iron mordant reacts to the tannin in the

myrobalam to deepen the black, while shades of red, maroon, browns are developed in areas treated with the alum mordant. Through closely held family dye recipes the depth of colour, and its range is achieved with repeated dips in the dye pot.

As the entire fabric has taken on a dull reddish hue after dyeing it is processed to remove the unwanted colour by immersing it overnight in a dunging solution, and then allowing for a natural bleaching in the sun, ensuring the cloth remains damp with frequent water-sprinkling. This process continues, sometimes for over a week, till the unwanted portions are bleached to white.

Dye recipes for yellow, shades of green and orange use a mix of powdered myrobalan, alum, dried pomegranate rind and other plant and mineral matters. Between each step the fabric is rested, washed in running water, sun-dried, to strengthen and deepen the colours. For blue, indigo is used. After this, the cloth is washed again in water, with special starches applied before it is finally ready for the finishing.

### **Breaks from the past**

The practice of temple-cloth making has moved from being an almost extinct tradition to a resurgent robust practice. However, the "new avatar" had some striking changes from its traditional past. The first being the loss of the technique of wax-resist dyeing with indigo that provided a palette of shades and deep rich tones from pale to dark bluish-blacks. The process followed was described in detail in historic records wherein the melted wax was hand-painted on to the cloth with wire brushes. The waxed areas resisted the indigo dye and retained their colour. These wires were sized from the very fine and thin made-up of only one or two wires to create fine lines to the very large forming "something like a mop" to cover larger areas that resisted the indigo dye. Depending on detailing or broad coverage, the applied hot wax was allowed to soak through the cotton and the surface was ready for the multiple dips into cold indigo vat dye.<sup>28</sup> The loss of the waxing technique was noted in Kalahasti in 1915, more than a century ago, when the master-artisans faced with low-cost competition from machine-made temple-cloth abridged the process and substituted natural indigo with imported chemical blue dyes to reduce their prices. These dyes, then as now, were painted directly on to the cloth resulting in "the ruin of the colour of these once beautiful cloths".<sup>29</sup> Despite the fact that natural dyes are now in use again, the master-artisans have not yet been able to make a breakthrough in reviving the wax-resist technique though experiments are being conducted. Similarly, it is more common to find the use of the synthetic compound Alizarin instead of the harder to source and more expensive Indian Madder (*Rubia cordifolia*) for shades of red.

One welcome change is that unlike in the past, as in many Indian textile traditions, where a veil was cast over the makers, and only a few names emerged either through signed pieces or mentions in exhibition catalogues, today they are no longer anonymous.<sup>30</sup> In fact, quite to the contrary: they have been recognised and lauded and presently over 18 maker-artisans have received the President's National Award. Women too are increasingly taking on the role of maker-artists shifting the gender balance considerably.

However, the major break has been the severed custom of making the cloth for the temples. While scenes from the epics continue to be painted, Fig.6.6, they are largely prized for their artistic rather than didactic values. The commissions received are now rarely, if ever, from the temples as the hieratic connection has been severed and the temple-cloths that were once "purchased more especially at the time of religious festivals" are now no longer commissioned.<sup>31</sup> In Srikalahasti while the sacred Rathotsavam, ceremonial chariot procession, celebrated for twelve days in February-March continues

its annual perambulation and is witnessed by many thousands of devotees the canopy cloth that covers the chariot of the *utsava-murtis*, processional idols, is no longer hand-painted. Only time will tell what the impact of this disconnect from the mother lode of inspiration and the *raison d'être* of the form that lay at the very heart of the Indian tradition.

## References

1. One of the reasons for the many terms used to describe them was the trade in these textiles in global commerce, and their impact on fashion and design from the 17<sup>th</sup> c. onwards. *Kalamkari*: Hindi/Persian - The genesis of the term is literally pen-work; chintz: British; *pintado*: Portugese; *sitz* : Dutch; palampore: British, and *indiennes*: French.
2. Some of the other didactic pictorial religious traditions rendered on cotton textile in India include the following: The *Mata-ni-Pachedi* temple cloths of Gujarat that are painted in veneration of the mother-goddess who is worshipped by the Vaghari community. The technique used includes hand-painting, block-printing and mordant dying on cotton cloth. The *Phad* scroll paintings illustrate the deeds and events in the life of the folk hero-gods of Rajasthan. Unrolled to the accompaniment of music and story-recitation in all-night performances, these horizontal large format pictorials are pigment-painted on cotton cloth. The Nathdwara *Pichhvais*, pigment-painted cotton hangings, venerate and depict episodes from the life of Lord Krishna celebrated in the avatar of Shri Nathji. Further reading: Sethi, Ritu. *Painters, Poets, Performers – The Patuas of Bengal*, India Foundation of the Arts. 2018. Chapters 1-3.
3. Royalty and *Zamindars* from as further afield as Puri in Odisha in Eastern India commissioned the temple *Kalamkari*'s. Two pieces from the Raja of Puri's collection, depicting scenes from the *Ramayana*, are inscribed with Oriya and Telugu scripts. They are on display at the Odisha State Museum. <http://odishamuseum.nic.in/?q=node/100>. Loan pieces of temple-textiles were also sent from personal collections to Colonial Exhibitions. These included two pieces from the Raja of Kalahasti that were loaned to the 1883 Calcutta Exhibition. *Official Report of the Calcutta Exhibition 1883-84* Vol. 2, p.204. The Raja of Pithapur, East Godavari, also loaned a piece to the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London. While the Raja of Gollapalayam (now renamed Gollapalem), East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, loaned a piece to the Delhi Durbar Exhibition of 1911. *Madras District Gazetteer*, 1915.
4. Temple-textiles exhibited for sale included those at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886, London, and the 1902-1903 Delhi Durbar Exhibition 1902-1903, amongst other exhibitions. *Imperial Gazetteer of India 1908: Kotchandpur to Mahavinayaka*, Vol.XVI, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, p.64. Wardle, Thomas. *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886. Empire of India. Special Catalogue of Exhibits by the Government of India and Private Exhibitors*, Royal Commission and Government of India, Descriptive Catalogue, W. Clowis: London, pp.285-286. Thurston, Edgar. *Monograph on the Cotton Fabric Industry of the Madras Presidency, Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, 1897. Reprint. *Art in Industry through the Ages*, Vol.III, Monograph series on Madras Presidency, Navrang, New Delhi, 1982, p.39.
5. This 13 x 11 ft. temple-textile canopy painted with episodes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* was exhibited at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886, London. Wardle, Thomas, *ibid.*, pp.285-286.
6. Tamil and Telegu were the quotidian scripts. However as noted above an Oriya language text in the Raja of Puri's collection with Oriya scripts is on display in the Odisha State Museum. <http://odishamuseum.nic.in/?q=node/100>.
7. Birdwood, George. *Industrial Arts of India*, Vol.II, 1884, p.342.
8. Watt, George, *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903. Being the official catalogue of the Delhi Exhibition, 1902-1903*, p.265.
9. This consonance of themes and pictorial depictions extended to other folk narrative visual traditions of the Deccan region. It includes the scrolls painted by the Nakashi artist caste that were commissioned by itinerant priest-performers who travelled from village to village reciting tales to the ritual showings of these scroll. The quotidian choice of themes was based on regional versions of the epics, creation myths and heroic deeds of local communities. Similarly, the leather shadow-puppeteers, *tholpava bommatata*, of Andhra also formed part of this ancient continuum. For further reading on mural arts of the period and region: C. Sivaramamurti, *South Indian Paintings*, Publication Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1994; and Anna Lise Seastrand, *Praise, Politics, and Language: South Indian Murals, 1500-1800*, Doctoral Thesis. Columbia University 2013. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/161444309.pdf>.
10. Hemingway, F.R., *Madras District Gazetteers Godavari 1915*, SSDN Publishers & Distributors. New Delhi : 2014, p.106. It maybe of interest to recall here that the Raja of Gollapalayam was known to possess very fine temple-textiles that he had loaned to the Delhi Durbar Exhibition of 1911.
11. Sources of information for these production centres include: The Imperial Gazetteer 1908-09; Watt, George, *Indian Art in Delhi 1903. Being the official catalogue*; *Official Report of the Calcutta International Exhibition 1883-84* Vol 2; F.R. Hemingway *Madras District Gazetteer. Godavari 1915*. Vol 1.; George Birdwood, *loc.cit.*, et al. Similarly, the makers of the trade *Kalamkaris* were largely induced to reside and work in and around the port towns of the Coromandal coast and in areas that were easily accessible to traders. Further reading: Ramaswamy, Vijaya, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India* Oxford University press. Delhi. 1985.
12. For a 17<sup>th</sup> c. - temple-textile see Guy, John and Karun Thaker, *Indian Cotton Textiles - Seven centuries of Chintz from the Karun Thaker Collection*. A *Ramayana* temple-cloth dated 1566, is in the Krishna Riboud collection at the Musee Guimet, Paris.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Collection\\_Krishna\\_Riboud#/media/File:%C3%89pisodes\\_Ramayana\\_1566.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Collection_Krishna_Riboud#/media/File:%C3%89pisodes_Ramayana_1566.jpg) in Paris.

13. Thurston, Edgar (1897), *op.cit.*, “on account of the tedious process of repeated boiling, two months are required for the preparation of each cloth”, p.37.
14. Birdwood, George. *Industrial Arts of India*, Vol.II, p.342.
15. Vardarajan, Lotika, *South Indian Traditions of Kalamkari*, Ahmedabad, National Institute of Design, 1982, p.93. Footnote on the use of old temple painted-cloths at Airavatesvara Temple in Darasuram, Thanjavur.
16. *Imperial Gazetteer of India 1908: Kotchandpur to Mahavinayaka*. Vol.XVI, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, p.64.
17. From 1885 to 1908.
18. Thurston, Edgar, *op.cit.*, p.39.
19. Thurston, Edgar, *ibid.*, p.27, 39.
20. A single family continues the tradition of painted cloth in Sickkalnayakenpet in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, though the style and subject is very different.
21. Located in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, at a distance of 140 km from Chennai. Srikalahasti is regarded as one of the locations of one of the five most important and ancient temples of Southern India dedicated to the Lord Shiva. The temple here is a part of the five *Pancha Bhoota Stalam* temples. Each temple representing one of the five elements of nature: earth, water, wind, sky, and fire. The Sri Kalahastheswara Swami Temple at Srikalahasti represents the wind element. Built during the reign of the Pallava Kings (3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> c.) and rebuilt in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. by the Chola King Kulothungava Chola (1070-1120 CE). In the 16<sup>th</sup> c. a huge hundred-pillared *mandapam* (hall) was added on by Sri Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara dynasty.
22. Thurston, Edgar. *Provincial Geographies of India: The Madras Presidency, with Mysore, Coorg and the associated states*. Vol.I. London: 1913, Cambridge: University Press, p.255. The population of Kalahasti at this point was 11,992. A temple-cloth loaned by the Raja of Kalahasti was believed to be more than 100 years old. The piece was described as having a white ground with a patterning “entirely in soft but bright madder red, the spaces for the various scenes being richly canopied in foliage.” Displayed over the door in the Loan Collection Gallery. Watt, George, *op.cit.*, 1902-1903, p.265.
23. Thurston, Edgar, *op.cit.*, p.39.
24. Havell, E.B., *The Printed Cotton Industry of India*. *Journal of Indian Art*, Vol.II, No.19, London, 1888. Havell noted: “The best are produced at Kalahasti in North Arcot”. This was reiterated in George Watt, 1903, p.262: “The most important centres for the production of Hindu canopies may be said to be Kalahastri (sic) in North Arcot.” Temple-cloths provenanced from Kalahasti included those displayed at the 1883-84 Calcutta International Exhibition where the piece had been “procured in the local market”, the Delhi Durbar exhibition of 1902-1903 where a temple-cloth from Kalhasti won a bronze medal, one illustrating scenes from the *Ramayana* was chosen for showing at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London in amongst other instances. *Official Report Of The Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84*, Vol.2. Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta: 1885, p.204. Watt, George, *op.cit.*, 1902-1903, p.265. Displayed as ceiling cloths in the main transept of the Exhibition the piece was described as having “large bold patterns, the human forms being in brilliant blue and bright yellow with the background in dark claret colour.” Watt, George, *op.cit.*, Awards for Division 32 - Painting and Waxing. Third Prize with bronze medal to Changalrayadu of Kalahastri (sic) for painted cloths, p.267.
25. *Census of India*, 1961, Volume II, *Andhra Pradesh*, Part VII-A (I) *Selected Crafts of Andhra Pradesh*. Census publication, p.40.
26. One of his *Ramayana* cloth paintings is in the collection of the Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmadabad. Dated 1958 it is inscribed in English with the legend “Drawn by J. Lakshmaiah, Chief Artist, Pilot centre training school of Kalahasti”. Length 256.7cm x 366 cm. Irwin, John and Margret Hall, *Indian Painted and Printed Fabrics*. Ahmedabad, 1971, pp.70-74.
27. For further readings: Baker. p.11. The 1742 process written by Father Gaston Couerdoux, a Jesuit missionary in Pondicherry p.18. Others who have described the process include Antoine de Beaulieu (1743), William Roxburgh (1795), Havell (1889), W.S. Hadaway (1917), Lotika Varadrajana (1982), Nelli Sethna (1985) amongst others.
28. Watt, George, *op.cit.*, 1902-1903, p.230.
29. Hadaway, p.20.
30. George Watt, *op.cit.*
31. Thurston (1898) p.39. While memories of temple priests declaiming stories from the epics pointing to episodes on the painted temple-cloth that they held up for viewing are still talked about among the older generations. J. Lakshmaiah's son, J. Gurappa Chetty, remembers that till he was 13 years of age the temple priests continued to declaim stories from the epics pointing to episodes on the painted temple-cloth that they held up for viewing.

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