

Madhya Pradesh Showcases Gond & Baiga Tribal Art through Aadirang Platform

State-backed digital initiative empowers MP's master tribal artists to connect directly with global collectors — transparently, authentically, and fairly.

BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA, May 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Madhya Pradesh, home to the largest tribal population in India, is scripting a powerful new chapter in the preservation and promotion of its rich Adivasi heritage. Through Aadirang — a dedicated e-commerce and digital empowerment platform launched in March 2021 by Vanya Prakashan, the publication wing of the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Affairs Department — Gond and Baiga artists from the forests of Dindori, Mandla, Shahdol, and adjoining tribal regions are now reaching collectors across India and abroad without the intervention of exploitative middlemen. What began as a pandemic-era support initiative has evolved into one of the country's most significant models of cultural commerce and indigenous empowerment.



Gond Art

Madhya Pradesh carries a tribal legacy unlike any other Indian state. With 43 recognised Scheduled Tribes constituting nearly 21.1 per cent of its population — more than 1.53 crore people — the state remains a living repository of artistic traditions that have endured for centuries. Among these communities, the Gond and Baiga tribes occupy a particularly important cultural space. The Gond community, the second-largest tribal group in Madhya Pradesh, is concentrated across districts such as Dindori, Mandla, Chhindwara, and Balaghat, while the Baiga — recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) — are primarily found in Mandla, Dindori, Shahdol, and Anuppur. With over 4.14 lakh Baigas residing in the state, Madhya Pradesh is today the country's single largest custodian of this ancient community and its artistic traditions.

The global story of Gond art traces its roots to Patangarh village in Dindori district, where art is

woven into everyday life and nearly every household nurtures painters. It was here that the legendary Pardhan Gond artist Jangarh Singh Shyam was discovered in the 1980s by renowned artist and Bharat Bhavan director J. Swaminathan, bringing Gond art into national and international prominence through exhibitions in Delhi, Tokyo, and New York. Today, that legacy sustains hundreds of artists in Patangarh alone and thousands more across eastern Madhya Pradesh.

A landmark moment came in April 2023, when Gond painting from Madhya Pradesh received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, jointly awarded to Vanya Prakashan and the Tejaswini Mekalsuta Mahasangh. The recognition not only affirmed the authenticity and uniqueness of the art form, but also strengthened legal protection against imitation and ensured greater economic value for artists. The transformation has been profound: paintings that once sold for a few hundred rupees now command several thousand, while leading tribal artists are increasingly finding sustained national and international patronage.

The Baiga community is similarly witnessing a cultural and economic resurgence. Traditionally among the most economically marginalised communities in central India, Baiga artists are now gaining visibility through deeply evocative paintings rooted in their spiritual connection with forests, tattoo traditions, rituals, and festivals such as Birhanniya. Their earthy visual language and intimate storytelling have attracted growing interest from folk and indigenous art collectors worldwide, with works by Baiga artists from Madhya Pradesh finding representation in international galleries, including in the United States. Most importantly, the financial returns are now reaching the artists themselves.



Gond Painting



Baiga Tribe of Madhya Pradesh

At the centre of this transformation is Aadirang, designed and operated entirely by the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Affairs Department through Vanya Prakashan. The platform represents all 43 recognised tribes of the state and functions through a three-dimensional model: a digital marketplace for tribal art and handicrafts, certified online training programmes in Gond and Bhil Pithora art in collaboration with Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal, and a growing community radio network headquartered in Bhopal with multiple digital stations being established across tribal districts.

Artists are identified through district-level outreach and surveys, onboarded with banking and logistics support, and trained by master artisans from within their own communities — ensuring that tribal knowledge systems remain community-led and self-sustaining. Vanya Prakashan has also initiated international cultural exchange programmes that enable indigenous artists from Madhya Pradesh to engage with global audiences as cultural ambassadors of the state.



Tribal Museum of Madhya Pradesh – a journey through the heart of indigenous traditions



Tribal art workshop attended by guests

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board views tribal art not merely as cultural heritage, but as a living economic and creative force integral to the identity of the “Heart of Incredible India.” Institutions such as the Tribal Museum in Bhopal, inaugurated in 2013, continue to provide immersive cultural context to these traditions, attracting visitors, scholars, collectors, and researchers from around the world. Likewise, the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) has played a major role in sustaining national visibility for Gond and other tribal art traditions through workshops, exhibitions, and outreach initiatives.

Together, these institutions and the Aadirang platform have created a comprehensive ecosystem that spans preservation, training, exhibition, storytelling, and commerce — positioning Madhya Pradesh at the forefront of India’s tribal art renaissance.

The momentum is unmistakable. Madhya Pradesh's tribal artists are no longer waiting to be discovered. They are reaching the world directly — on their own terms, through their own voices, and with the backing of a state committed to protecting and celebrating its indigenous cultural wealth.

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