



UNIT-5: OVERVIEW OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL EMBROIDERIES AND DYEING TECHNIQUES

5.1 INDIAN TRADITIONAL EMBROIDERIES

Embroidery is the art or handicraft of decorating the fabric or other materials with needle, thread or yarn. Elaborately embroidered clothing for religious purposes or as household items have been a mark of cultural heritage in India. India is a diversified country having varied range of cultures and customs. The Indian arts and crafts have become world famous. Traditional techniques of embroidery have been passed over from generation to generation thus creating heirlooms of techniques and products over the various geographical locations along the length and breadth of the country. A few of such crafts of each of the Indian states have been briefed as under:

5.1.1 Embroideries of Different States

i. Kashida of Kashmir

Kashmir embroidery and shawls are well known for the beauty of color, texture, design and technique all over the world. The wool embroidery of Kashmir is universally famous. Probably the best known of Indian embroidery is the **Kashida of Kashmir**.

The purpose of embroidery was to imitate the designs of the woven shawls but over a period of time the embroiderers created a unique style of their own. By the middle of 20th century the embroidered shawl completely overshadowed the woven shawl. The finest shawls with intricate embroideries have become a fascination in the market.

Colors Used: The most commonly used colors in Kashmir shawls are white (sufed), green (zingari), purple (uda), blue (ferozi), yellow (zard) and black (mushki). Crimson (gulnar) and scarlet (kirmiz) were also used.

Motifs Used: The motifs are mostly taken from nature. Animals and human figures are not seen in Kashmir embroidery probably because of the Muslim influence in the area.

- Birds motifs used are ; parrot, wood pecker, canary, magpie and king fisher
- Floral motifs used are; iris, lotus, lily, tulip and saffron flower



Fig. 23 Kashida Carpet



- Other designs are; grapes, plums, cherries, almonds and apple blossoms
- The chenar leaf is considered to be an important motif

Fabric used: The fabrics used for embroidery is all types of silk, cotton and wool. The threads used are wool, silk, cotton and art silk

Stitches used: The common stitches used are satin stitch, the stem stitch and chain stitch. Occasionally darning and herring bone stitch are also used

ii. Chikankari of Uttar Pradesh

Chikankari work is called white embroidery. It is said that chikan work originated in Lucknow. It dates back to the reign of Emperor Harsha who used to wear embroidered garments of muslin and those garments had geese designs.

It is believed that there are two stories told about the origin of chikankari embroidery. One story is that "One day a traveller while passing through the village in hot season asked for water from a peasant staying near Lucknow, who taking pity on the plight of the traveller offered him rest in his house before resuming his journey. The traveller was so pleased with his hospitality that he promised to teach him an art which would never allow him to go hungry. The traveller then trained the peasant in the art of chikankari. After his pupil has mastered the technique, the traveller disappeared. Chinkankars believe that he was sent by God himself."

Another story states that "chikankari was introduced into Lucknow only in the 19th century through the court of Oudh who had a large harem. A princess of Murshidabad was married to the Nawab of Oudh. This princess was a seamstress and so took to embroidering a cap for the Nawab. It was worked with cotton thread on muslin cloth. When it was ready she presented it to the Nawab. The other inmates of the harem were jealous of the princess and so started work at different items trying to compete with her in the fineness of their stitch and the delicacy of their patterns. Thus a great art was born at the harem"

Fabrics Used: The fabric used for this work is plain white fabric. It is mostly done white on white. Fine muslin cloth is usually used but today it is done on cambric and similar fabrics.

Stitches Used : Chikankari does not employ a large variety of stitches although it makes use of ordinary stitches like the satin stitch, the stem stitch, the back stitch, the herring bone stitch and the button hole stitch.

There are two types of chikankari work-the flat style and the knotted embossed for example jali or netting in varieties of designs. The stitches are named as Taipchi. Khatawa, Bukhia, Murri, Phanda and Jali.

Taipchi is a simple darning stitch used in a cheaper work. It is usually employed for outlines or running designs. Taipchi is the flat style of chikan work.

Khatawa or Khalao is applique work. It is an exceedingly intricate kind of applique work. This embroidery belongs to the flat style of chikankari.



Bukhia constitutes of an inverted satin stitch or herring bone with designs outlined on the right side of the fabric. The thread is chiefly below the cloth. It is also called shadow work because the stitches that cover the wrong side of the cloth are in herring bone producing a shadowy effect.

Murri falls under embossed knotted style. Murri means rice shape. It is usually done on muslin cloth, Murri is worked in the centre of the flowers. This is a knotted variety of stitch to give a rich heavy embossed effect. The stitch is the French knot.

Phanda resembles grains like millet. This also is in embossed knotted style. This is a smaller and shorter form of the murri stitch. These are used to fill petals or leaves in a pattern.

Jali Work or netting or lace like trellis are somewhat like drawn thread work. This is done by breaking up the fabric into holes and not by drawing out the threads. The warp and weft threads are pushed apart with the needle into holes and tightened to give the cloth the appearance of a net.

This embroidery is of supreme excellence comparable only with the best European laces to which it corresponds in purpose and effect. Chikan reflects a purity that is dainty and delicate. Sari borders, blouses, kurtas, collars, hankies and white caps are all embroidered in chikankari.



Fig. 24 Chikankari of Uttar Pradesh

iii. Chamba Rumal of Himachal Pradesh

Chamba is a part of Himachal Pradesh. Chamba developed a distinct style of painting under the patronage of the local princes. It was once noted for the exquisite style of Pahari or Kangra school of painting. This style of painting influenced the embroidery of the place.

Embroidery is purely a domestic art. Chamba embroidery can be considered as a needle painting. The Chamba rumal is a square piece of cotton material on which fine and delicate embroidery is worked.

There are two different kinds :

- Pahari style of paintings which depicts the miniature style.



- Folk style in which the women embroidered their cholis and rumals (scarves) using their own patterns and designs.

Motifs Used: The designs on the rumal are embroidered to depict themes from Indian mythology, Mahabharata and Ramayana, Ras dances, Krishna Leela, Pahari paintings, Ragas and Raginis, hunting and marriage scenes and the game of chaupad (dice). Floral motifs are used for borders

In the folk style the designs are strange with bird like heads with



Fig. 25 Chamba Rumal

Beak like lips forming special characteristics. Also the figures of Krishna Radha and the Gopis drawn in folk style appeared very peculiar.

Fabrics Used: The fabrics used for Chamba rumal were fine cotton fabrics. Usually the ground material is cotton in white or cream color. This 'Cloth is generally unbleached and so appears cream colored. The cloth specially used for this purpose is hand spun, thin fabric like mal-mal. Another cloth used for base is hand spun and hand woven Khaddar.

Stitches Used: The designs are worked out with silk thread. The untwisted and dyed silk thread of wide variety of colors are used in this embroidery. The stitches used are double satin stitch carried forward and backward alternately one on the two sides of the cloth at the same time, so that the space on both the sides is filled-up and the embroidery comes out in identical fashion on both the sides. The stem stitch was used whenever necessary for the outlines to serve the purpose.

Colors Used: No Chamba rumal is in single color. Blue is predominant in some of the earlier samples. Krishna whenever depicted in a bare body, is embroidered in blue, with crimson feet. In few cases it is mauve. Green, orange, yellow and blue are the other colors used.

The Chamba rumals had special significance. The embroidered rumals were used to cover offerings, to deities to cover presents from the bride's home to that of the bridegroom and vice versa. They were also used as presents for occasions or festivals. The rumals were worn round the neck or tied round the head. It was also used on household accessories such as dice-cloth caps, hand fans, pillow covers, wall hanging, ceiling covers etc.

iv. Kanthas of Bengal

A folk art of Bengal, is referred to as the "art of rags", since the base is of waste / used



material. Kanthas are originally made as quilts. It is said that to prepare a Kantha it sometimes takes six months to one year. It is a treasured possession in every home. The women in Bengal mostly wear white sarees. Hence, the base material was always white for Kanthas. This embroidery is done by all classes of people and worked by women only.

The fabrics used for Kanthas are old saris or dhotis pieced neatly together in layers in running stitches using white thread covering the entire field. The discarded old saris are placed on top of each other. The edges are folded and tacked together. The field is filled in with fine quilted work by means of a white thread. Further, detailed designs from stories and well known legends are depicted through embroidery.

Motifs Used: Human, animal figures, floral and foliage symbols are mainly used. The central design is usually a lotus with a number of petals and the field is interspersed with diverse patterns. The most common being the tree of life, conventional animal figures, birds, boats, chariots. The borders consist of creepers, floral scrolls, spirals and several linear devices. The common ritual motifs are lotus, the bull, the tiger and the mouse.

Colors Used: The colors of the threads used are blue, green, yellow, red and black. The threads normally used are taken out from the borders of the discarded saris which are used for the base. Today instead of threads drawn from the borders, vividly colored silk or bright embroidery strands are used.

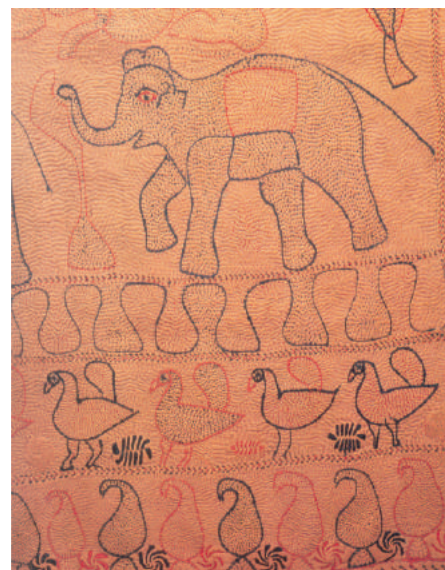


Fig. 26 Kantha work

Stitches Used: Main stitches used are Darning, satin, and loop. For the border stem stitches are used. Most common and typical stitch used is very small darning stitches giving dotted lines. Applique work also is seen on the Kanthas.

There are seven types of Kanthas:

Lep: This is a thick quilted wrap used in winter as a cover.

Sarfni: This is also a quilted wrap or cover and used for ceremonial purpose.

Bayton: Used as wraps for books, valuables etc. It is square in shape. Has a central motif and two to three borders.

Oar: Is rectangular in shape, is used for pillow cases.

Arsilata: Used as a wrap for mirrors and combs.

Durjani: It is square in shape and is supposed to be a wallet cover.



Rumal: This is a handkerchief of the size twelve inches square.

Sujni: It is a bed spread with less thickness and is used as a spread during ceremonial occasions.

v. **Kasuti of Karnataka**

Famous in the areas of Karnataka, the art of Kasuti embroidery was purely, a domestic art. Kashida in Hindi means embroidery while in Kanarese which is the language of Karnataka, Kasuti is its equivalent. Kasuti embroidery was famous in many places especially in the districts of Bijapur, Dharwar, Belgaum, Miraj, Sangli and Jamkhandi. Kasuti has not developed into a cottage industry but only a handicraft and a pastime for women. This embroidery is prepared by women for their personal use.

The five garments on which kasuti was done were kunchi (bonnet and cape combined), lenga (skirt), sharagu (pallv of a sari), kusuba (bodice) and kulai (bonnet). These were the garments the women and children used and so, the mother was more than happy, if she could embroider them.

The material on which the Kasuti embroidery was done earlier was mostly khanns used as, blouse, pieces and sarees.

Today, Kasuti embroidery is done on any type of fabric. It is done on curtains, cushion covers and many other household articles of hand woven cloth. As far as designs are concerned, Hindu motifs predominate here and Muslim influence appears to be completely absent.

Motifs Used: Are from temple architecture, the gopurams of South India and also lotus flower, raths and palanquins, bird motif such as the parrot, the peacock, the swan, and the squirrel are common. Animal motifs used are sacred bull, the elephant and the deer. The other designs used for Kasuti embroidery are rattle, cradle, flower pot and tulsi pot. One will rarely see horses, lions or tigers but cats and dogs are never seen. Among the floral motifs lotus is mostly used.



Fig. 27 Kasuti work

Stitches Used: Stitches are simplest. Four types of stitches are used in Kasuti, namely Gavanti, Murgi, Negi and Menthi. Kasuti is done by counting the threads and the wrong and right sides are alike

1. Gavanti is a line and back stitch or double running stitch, This name is derived from Gaonti meaning a knot in Kannada Language.
2. Murgi appears like the steps of a ladder as the stitches are zig zag running.
3. Negi is ordinary running or darning stitch. It has the overall effect of a woven design.



The design created resembles woven patterns and hence the wrong and right sides are not identical.

4. Menthi is the ordinary cross stitch..

Today, mercerised cotton threads such as Kohinoor and Anchor threads or pure silk threads of strong nature and fast colors are suitable for Kasuti embroidery. A single strand is commonly used. A knot is never put at the end of the thread before the beginning of the work or at the end of the work.

Colors: The colors mostly used for Kasuti are orange, green, purple and red. White is predominant on a black and dark background.

Now Kasuti is done on clothes, saris, pillow covers, door curtains, table cloth etc., and also on fabrics of any kind.

vi. Phulkari of Punjab

Phulkari literally means flower craft. Phulkari is considered as an important part of the trousseau in Punjab. Each of the important ceremonies connected with marriage is associated with wearing of a particular type of Bagh. The maternal grandmother or mother took pride in embroidering chope. The grandmother starts embroidering the chope on an auspicious day by inviting neighbours and friends to a solemn ritual. Later on, it grows into a lovely and magnificent shawl. A bagh or Phulkari, therefore, is not only a beautiful traditional art but a symbol of maternal love and faith expressed in embroidery.

Fabric Used: The beauty of the Phulkari depended a great deal on the color of the ground material. Khadder cloth was always used for embroidering baghs and Phulkaris. It was hand spun and hand woven cotton material. The color of the khadder fabric was mostly red, white and blue or black.

Thread Used: The thread used was pure silk. It is untwisted silken floss called pat. Golden yellow, green, white, crimson red and orange are the five colors prepared in selecting silk floss for Phulkari work.

Motifs Used: The motifs are made up of horizontal, vertical and diagonal stitches producing geometrical pattern in Phulkari designs. The designs are necessarily geometrical since it is done by counting the threads.

Stitches Used: Long and short darning stitches are used in Phulkari. It is a unique method of embroidery that, it is worked entirely on the wrong side of the cloth. The design is neither drawn nor traced.

In Phulkari the ornamentation is dispersed, whereas in the bagh, the whole field is covered with Pat or silk floss and not even a thread of the base fabric is visible with beautifully blending colors.

Kinds of Phulkari:

There are many types of Phulkaris. They may be grouped into four or five main classes.

The chope and suber were wedding Phulkaris and were presented to the bride by her maternal relations during the marriage ceremony.

The plain red or dark red khadder shawl known as saloo was used for daily household wear.

Til patra shawls have very little embroidery and are of inferior quality khaddar, and are often gifted to servants during marriages. Til patra literally means dotted with "til" seed design.

Nilak is worked on black or navy blue khaddar with yellow and crimson red pat. This is popular among the peasant women.

Kind of Baghs:

Ghungat Bagh or the veil shawl because it has a triangular patch of embroidery on that portion of the shawl which covers the head when worn.

Varida bagh presented by the bridegroom's mother to the bride.

vii. Kutch Embroidery

Kutch lies in the extreme west corner of Gujarat. The most important Kutch embroideries are represented by Mochis, Kanbis, Ahirs and Rabari. The embroidery of Kutch is mostly carried out on articles of rural use and personal clothing like trappings for cattle, ghagras, cholis, torans or door hanging all indicating pastoral mode of life.

Mochi Bharat: The needle work in Kutch is popularly known as Mochi Bharat that passes generally under the name Kutchi Bharat. Mochis or the members of the traditional shoemaker community were engaged in this particular craft earlier. It is also referred to as aribharat named after a hooked needle 'ari'.

The material generally used is satin. The stitch appears throughout as chain stitch.

Kanbi Bharat: Kanbis are farmers, known for their patient work. Kanbi Bharat is done in cotton thread using herring bone, chain stitches and darning stitches. The colors used are yellow white and



Fig. 28 Phulkari



Fig. 29 Kutch Embroidery



saffron as basic colors and green and purple are sometimes also used. Motifs used are parrots, sunflower mango shoots, creepers, sunflowers, cactus flower (keyda) parrots, peacocks. etc

Ahirs: The Ahirs are one of the ancient peasant community of Saurashtra. The embroidery was done by these rural folk on their own garments in their leisure hours and not for sale. Their embroidery is similar to the Kanbi embroidery. They also use 'ari' or the hooked like crochet needle Designs are large and flat and sometimes small mirrors are added to give a touch of glamour. The work is very fine and has a special delicacy.

Rabaris: Rabaris were a wandering tribe. Their style of embroidery is quite different when compare to that of Ahirs. The embroidery is quite impressive done on a dark background usually maroon with lighter color of threads worked in to highlight the stitches. Like patch work, pieces of colored and patterned fabrics are cut in different sizes and then sewn together on a plain background. It is done on canopies, wall decorations, and other items of household use, but not on garments. Rabaris also use double cross stitch in their embroidery which is mostly done on borders of skirts

viii. Gold and Silver Embroidery

Among all Indian embroideries gold and silver embroidery is probably the earliest and the most striking. Gold and silver embroidery is practised almost all over the country at places like Agra, Delhi, Lucknow, Kashmir, Bhopal, Varanasi, Surat, Bombay and Hyderabad are known for this type of work. There are two types of embroidery heavy and light work. Zardozi is the heavier embroidery and Kamdani the lighter type. In Zardozi the stitches are very close together and they are very elaborate too. The lighter type Kamdani is used on fine fabrics and it is of a simpler kind, and less elaborate



Fig. 30 Gold and Silver Embroidery

Zardozi is prepared with the use of

- badla :thin strips of metal
- Gijaj : circular thin wire
- sitara : a small round metal piece to look like a star
- salma

Zardozi is prepared on curtains, heavy coats, cushions, shoes and animal trappings, whereas Kamdani which is of lighter type is done on apparel products like, caps, veils, etc.



Stitches used: many types of stitches are used in this type of embroidery. The laid stitch or couching, the satin stitch, the chain stitch, the stem stitch and the running stitch are the basic types of stitches. To be embroidered the cloth needs to be stretched on a wooden frame and designs such as leaves and petals of flowers are padded to give a raised effect.

There are many forms of gold and silver embroidery:

- The Kathiawar work has gold and silver spangles and twisted gold wire. It is called as badlani in Surat
- Kamdani or badla is a form of gold and silver embroidery where flattened wires of gold or silver are stitched into the white cloth with the help of fine needles.
- Makaish work is done with the use of untwisted pure silver wire called badla. The work is very popular in the Northern part of India.
- Popular at Jaipur, the Gota work gives an overall effect of enameling. The Gota is cut into fine shapes of birds, animals, human figures, attached to the cloth and encased in wires of silver and gold, while the space around is covered by colored silks,

Gold and silver embroidery can be easily done on any type of fabric with a fusing below. The design is first traced on the fabric. Fine needles and thread need to be used to embroider the gold and silver work. The gold and silver work remains on the top and the wrong side will reveal only threads.

5.2 Traditional Dyeing Techniques

Textiles have occupied a prominent place in the world, in different geographic regions and in all climatic conditions, since ancient times. People naturally utilized whatever material was conveniently available; when they learnt weaving, garments were made. Over a period of time, the designing of textiles developed in the hands of artisans and they enriched fabric and garments through different techniques.

There are three main techniques of traditional textile decoration in the traditional Indian textiles of India : loom weaving and decorating, resist dyed work, which includes tying and dyeing as well as painting and printing process; and embroidery.

5.2.1 Tie Dyed and Ikat Textiles

Known throughout the world as ikat, a derivative of the Malay word mengikat, meaning 'to tie' or 'to bind'. This technique entails binding (resisting) and dyeing the warp and wefts before weaving. Within the subcontinent the cloths produced by this yarn resist work are called tie –dyed textiles – bandha and patola.

I. Bandhani

Bandhana and bandha are sanskrit words meaning to 'tie' and it is from this Indian word that the English name for a spotted handkerchief 'bandana' derives, but this tie and dye technique is internationally known by its Malay -Indonesian name, plangi. The term

bandhani refers both to the technique and to the finished cloth. By pinching up and resisting areas of the fabric before dyeing. Rajasthan and Gujarat are famed for their production of fine and prolific bandhani. Coarser bandhani is worked in Sind and Madhya Pradesh. The traditional garb of the rural women of western India includes odhni shawl, choli, gaghra and saris.

When simply tied bandhani textiles are inexpensive and this is one of the cheapest ways for women of the poorer communities to dress in a colorful fashion. When tied with many fine knots, the price of bandhani rises steeply and is then preserved for rich classes. The tie-dyed fabrics of Gujarat are perhaps the best produced in India. Also known as Bandhej, it is produced on superfine cotton mulmul, muslin sometimes combined with gold checks and motifs worked in the jamdani technique. In Gujarat very fine bandhani are made on silk and fine quality cotton which are worn as wedding garments.

The centres for this fine work and for much simpler work are Kutch and Saurashtra. Bhuj, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Morvi, Rajkot, Sundernagar, Pethapur are the other places in Gujarat.

This craft is also practised in many places of Rajasthan but the finest bandhani is tied at Bikaner and Sikar districts. In Rajasthan, a greater number of colors are used than in Gujarat and many of the colors are spot dyed by hand, rather than by being submerged in a dye bath. The tying of bandhani textiles is mostly carried out within the home, mainly by women or young girls. The material used is thin mill-made cloth, either a loosely woven silk known as georgette or a cotton known as mal-mal. This fabric is generally sold with the ties intact which represents the genuineness of the original tie dyed fabrics.



Fig. 31 Bandhani with Ties Intact



Fig. 32 Bandhani with Ties Removed

ii. Leheria

In the 19th century and early twentieth centuries, the Marwaris, merchants of Rajasthan and dominant business community of India, wore as their distinguishing mark elaborately tied, brightly colored striped turbans. These turbans were made with

leheria technique which literally means 'waves' in Hindi. This process is practiced in the dyeing towns of Rajasthan - Jodhpur, Jaipur, Udaipur and Nathdwara. Fabrics generally turbans or sari lengths are rolled diagonally from one corner to the opposite selvage and then tied at required intervals and then dyed.

iii. Patola

The techniques, the quality and the originality of design of the ikat textiles of India are unsurpassed. Of special significance is the patola cloth. Patola weaving is an ancient Indian craft well known as a luxury export to Malaya and Indonesia in the 16th century, where the patola was cherished as the grab of nobility and revered for its magical and sacred properties. Today, these fabulous and costly silk textiles are made in Patan Gujarat on a very limited scale. Whereas, the double ikat and single ikat weaving tradition of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh are prospering and flooding the handloom cloth market with fashionably colored and patterned saris, garment and furnishing fabrics.

These double ikat textiles were woven in Patan, Surat and other centres, but there are now only families of Jains weaving them in Patan. Cheaper patola imitations are woven in single ikat at Rajkot, Saurashtra and both single and double ikat in Andhra Pradesh in the south.

Motifs were of flowers and jewels, elephants, birds and dancing women, used either around the border or in the central field and often with some geometric elements. Muslim communities restricted themselves to abstract designs.

Although the loom of the patola weaver appears simple, the methods of yarn preparation, weaving and adjustments to the woven cloth are labour intensive.



Fig. 33 Leheria



Fig. 34 Patan Patola from Gujarat



Fig. 35 Rajkot Patola



iv. Bandhas of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh

The ikat textiles of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh are woven and prepared with essentially same technique as the ikats of west, but the looms and tools are quite different. In Orissa the fine, detailed and curvilinear patterns are achieved using very thin yarn and by tying and dyeing small numbers of threads - commonly 2 or 3 in a cluster on a rectangular frame when compared to 12 in Gujarati patola ikat.

Western Orissa consists of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Phulbani districts, with Sambalpur & Bolangir being the primary handloom weaving areas. The sarees from this area are often called 'Sambalpuri sarees'. Most of western Orissa's traditional sarees were woven by Mehers, with the Bhulia Mehers specialising in ikat work.

The designs usually are in floral patterns, with animals and certain traditional motifs like fish, conch, rudraksha, gaja (elephant), stars, elephant, deer, parrot, nabagunjara, lotus, and other flowers, creepers, khumba (small triangles), danti (tooth like) patterns have been used in silk and cotton fabrics.

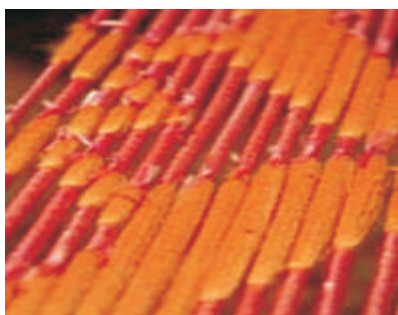


Fig. 36 Tied Yarns as a Pattern



Fig. 37 Yarns after Ties Removed



Fig. 38 Ikat of Orissa

v. Bandhas of Andhra Pradesh

Chirala is a village near the coast of Andhra Pradesh. The square double ikat cloths known telia or Asia rumals were produced here for the muslim market, to be used mainly for head cloths. They were sold in what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh and exported to countries of Middle East, Africa and to Burma. In Chirala, telia rumals were dyed with alizarin dyes, which left an oily smell from which the name derived. The Padmasali and Devangula communities are engaged in Ikat weaving in this region.



Fig. 39 Telia Rumal of Chirala

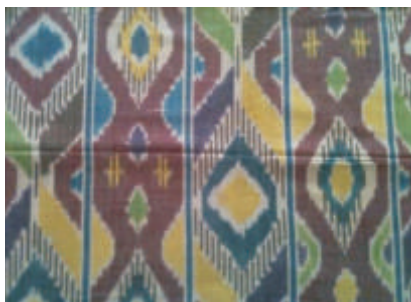


Fig. 40 Yardage Fabric

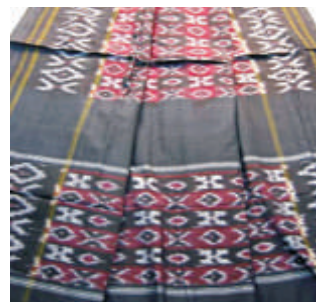


Fig. 41 Pochampalli Sari



Designs were either geometrical or figurative, sometimes of clocks and aeroplanes. Today, the few surviving weavers supply local customers such as fishermen, who use them as lungis or turbans.

The ikat weaving declined in chirala and started flourishing in Pochampalli and the surrounding villages. Pochampalli is a large village, about fifty kilometres from Hyderabad, the historic capital of Andhra Pradesh. Ikat weaving in Andhra Pradesh is also called as Chitka weaving in Andhra Pradesh. The 'ikat' textiles in Andhra Pradesh, especially of Pochampalli and Chirala are equally attractive. Typically, these areas produce silk saris, cotton saris, shirting materials, furnishings, bed sheets and so on.

The motifs now are abstract, modernist and geometrical with plenty of brilliant colors.

5.2.2 Resist Printed and Painted Textiles of India

Apart from the direct application of pigment on to the surface of prepared cotton yardage, the techniques of fixing color to woven cloth to create patterns and compositions again involves either the use of resist, mordant resist, or combinations of the two, applied with a pen, brush, metal or wooden block or through a stencil. In order to resist the dye, areas of the cloth that are to form the pattern or design are coated with impermeable substances such as wax, gum or rice paste, resin, starch or mud. Once the cloth has been dyed, the resist substances are removed by immersion in hot or cold water, or by ironing or brushing.

In mordant resist textile decoration techniques, the printing or painting of dyestuffs react with mordant prepared cloth; or alternatively, the painting or printing of mordants on to the cloth when immersed in a color bath, will cause the dyes to react and be fixed in patterns of applied mordant. Some of the examples of textiles printed by this technique are ajrakh, kalamkari, bagru, dabu, etc.

i. Ajrakh prints of Gujarat and Rajasthan

Ajrakh literally meant aaj ke din rakh, or 'keep it for today'. Textiles printed in this style are hand-printed using natural dyes on both sides by a laborious and long process of resist printing.

Colors: The usual colors of the craft are Red, Yellow, Blue and Black. Rich crimson and a deep indigo, with black and white highlights.

Motifs: Prints are dominated by geometrical shapes. Champakali, Raiya, Kharek, Nipad, Grinari etc

End Uses: Used on cradle spreads, lungis, sarees, dress materials, pillow covers and table cloths.



Fig. 42 Ajrakh Prints

ii. Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh



Fig. 43 Masulipatnam Style Kalamkari



Fig. 44 Kalahasti Kalamkari

Kalamkari or Qalamkari is a type of hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, produced in parts of India. The word is derived from the Persian words kalam (pen) and kari (craftsmanship), meaning drawing with a pen. The name kalamkari translates as pen (kalam) work (kari) in Hindi/Urdu, and was most likely derived from trade relationships between Persian and Indian merchants as early as the 10th century CE.



Fig. 45 Kalamkari wall Hanging

European merchants also had names for this type of fabric decoration: the Portuguese called it pintado, the Dutch used the name sitz, and the British preferred chintz. There are two distinctive styles of kalamkari art in India - one, the Srikalahasti style and the other, the Machalipatnam style of art.

Colors Used: The dyes are obtained by extracting colors from parts of plants - roots, leaves along with mineral salts of iron, tin, copper, alum, etc., which are used as mordants. Red, blue, yellow, green and black are commonly seen.



Motifs Used: The motifs used were floral and animal designs. The Persian influence on the designs is visible as ornamental birds, flowers, creepers, and mehrabs or archways found chiefly from mughal architecture.

End uses: bed sheet, bed covers, dress material, table covers, saris, wall hangings, etc

iii. Bagh Prints of Madhya Pradesh

Bagh, which lends its name to the Bagh prints is a small tribal town in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. The khatri community, who comprise the 'chhipas' or printers came here about 400 years ago from Larkana in Sind which is famous for its Ajrakh prints. Bagh's proximity to the river was an important reason for its choice as flowing river water is vital to the process of printing.

Motifs: geometrical and floral compositions

Fabric Used: cotton, tassar, crepe, silk

Colors Used: The colors used in this process are vegetable and natural dyes like Indigo, turmeric roots, pomegranate skin, lac, iron. These natural colors do not fade, permeate the fabric and lend it a pretty look.



Fig. 46 Bagh Prints of Madhya Pradesh

End Uses: bed-covers, sarees, dress material, dupatta, pillow covers & cushion covers

iv. Bagru Printing

Bagru, a rural Indian village in Rajasthan is situated around thirty kilometers east of Jaipur city. Its traditional process of hand block printing on textiles, with rich natural colors has been known for many centuries. The elaborate and rich colored floral prints of Bagru are very distinctive. The village had a community of CHHIPAS, or traditional crafts people who printed fabrics by hand. Bagru is also famous for



Fig. 47 Bagru Printed Bed Sheet



its mud resist process Dabu and direct printing. Imprints are made with wooden blocks containing engraved designs

Until about fifty years ago, Bagru prints were used mostly for ghagras (skirts) and odhnis (scarves) for women in surrounding communities, and the chhipas relied solely on this local market.

Colors Used: beige, red, black background. The base color of Bagru prints is off- white.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Natural dye colors | madder, indigo, pomegranate rind, turmeric, etc |
| Pigment colors | Green, Pink, Brown, Violet, Blue, Rust. |
| Basic color combinations | cream, maroon and black; black and white and blue (indigo) and white. |

Motifs : PATASHI with its tiny floral designs of buds, leaves and stems. JHAD with its interviewing trendrils and distinctive border lines. HATHI- the elephant.

Besides these the other motif used are floral, spiral, geometrical and figures like fishes etc.

End Uses: Bagru prints are immensely used in contemporary as well as conventional garments. Conventionally, Bagru prints were used mostly for ghagras (skirts), odhnis (scarves) and pagris (turbans). Today, the products made with Bagru block prints have entered into Home Furnishings, apparel and accessories.

v. Dabu Resist Dyeing



Fig. 48 Resist Paste Applied with Block



Fig. 49 Saw Dust Sprinkled Over the Resist Paste

Dabu printing is also a unique art form Found alongside Bagru prints. In this, a design is sketched onto the background cloth. The resist process called Dabu used here involves using wax or gum clay mixed with resin. With the help of brush or block or by hand this resist paste is applied to the portions of the cloth and sprinkled with saw dust. The saw dust sticks to the cloth as the



Fig. 50 Dabu Printed Fabric



clay dries. The saw dust also acts as a binder which prevents color penetration while dyeing. Thereafter, the entire cloth is dyed in selected colors in a cauldron of dye. The area where clay and sawdust mixture is present does not catch the dye and remains colorless. After dyeing and drying, the cloth is washed to remove the clay and the mixture. Some of the color penetrates onto the fabric caused by mud cracking. The result is veining which gives it batik like look to the fabric. The fabric is highlighted by printing specific outlines and patterns against the contrast color.

This unique form of printing is also environmentally non-toxic and uses no harmful or synthetic dyes. This resist process called Dabu used here involves using wax or gum clay mixed with resin.

SUMMARY

India is a diversified country having varied range of cultures and customs. The Indian arts and crafts have become world famous. Traditional techniques of embroidery have been passed over from generation to generation thus creating heirlooms of techniques and products over the various geographical locations along the length and breadth of the country. A few of such crafts of each of the Indian states are Kashida of Kashmir, Chamba rumal of Himachal Pradesh, Phulkari of Punjab, Kasuti of Karnataka, Chikankari of Lucknow, Kanthas of Bengal, Gold and Silver embroidery, etc.

People naturally utilized whatever material was conveniently available; when they learnt weaving, garments were made. Over a period of time, the designing of textiles developed in the hands of artisans and they enriched fabric and garments through different techniques.

There are three main techniques of traditional textile decoration in the traditional Indian textiles of India : loom weaving and decorating, resist dyed work, which includes tying and dyeing as well as painting and printing process and embroidery.

Examples of some of these techniques are bandani, leheriya, Ikat textiles – bandhas, patola, etc

Apart from the direct application of pigment on to the surface of prepared cotton yardage, the techniques of fixing colour to woven cloth to create patterns and compositions involves either the use of resist, mordant resist, or combinations of the two, applied with a pen, brush, metal or wooden block or through a stencil. Some of the examples of textiles printed by this technique are ajarakh, kalamkari, bagru, dabu, etc.

Test your learning:

1. Match the following;

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| Kashida | Punjab |
| Chamba | Kashmir |
| Chikankari | Art of rags |
| Phulkari | White embroidery |
| Kasuti | Ahirs |



| | |
|--------|------------------|
| Kantha | Karnataka |
| Kutch | Himachal Pradesh |

2. Answer 'T' for True and 'F' for False

- a) Til patra is a type of phulkari ()
- b) Mochi bharat employs a chain stitch ()
- c) Kamdani is the heavier embroidery and Zardozi is the lighter embroidery ()
- d) Kutch embroidery is from Rajasthan ()
- e) Running stitch is mainly used in kantha embroidery ()
- f) Silken floss used for phulkari embroidery is known as pat ()
- g) Cross stitch of kasuti is referred to as Menthi ()
- h) Taipchi, Murri and Phanda are types of kashida embroidery ()
- i) Gold and silver embroidery is practiced only in North India ()

3. The following traditional techniques belong to which states:

- a) Dabu ()
- b) Ajrakh ()
- c) Bagh ()
- d) Kalamkari ()

4. What is tie and dye?

5. True or False

- a) Kalamkari is hand painted textile only ()
- b) Bandhani is found in Orissa ()
- c) Chippas are the traditional printers ()
- d) Bandhas, patola and telia rumal are ikat textiles ()
- e) Leharia is a traditional printing technique ()