

Documentation of hand block printing of sanganer

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Abstract

Rajasthan is a hub of crafts that holds most of the traditional crafts and well known for the art of block printing that is practiced even till date. Block printing of in Rajasthan are the most popular and have emerged as important centers for hand block printing in Rajasthan. The aim of the paper is to document the changes in technique, designs and layout of motifs. It was found that the traditional motifs have evolved with the changing times due to the demand and current trends in the market.

Keywords: Sanganer, Block printing, Motif.

Introduction

India has a rich and diverse tradition in the field of textiles. It has been rightly pointed out that India is the only country in the world which can boast of continuity of history, culture, religion, society and textiles spanning thousands of years. India's textile tradition can be traced back to 5000 years to Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus valley. In fact, India remains the most original, creative and abundant source of hand printing products. One of the world famous traditional Indian textile printing is block printing. The art of block printing and dyeing produces attractive fabrics of rich colours and patterns. The earliest centers for block printing seem to have been located in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. From these centers, the craft appears to have spread gradually with the migration of craft workers to other areas.

In the early 16th Century, Sangaji, the Kachchwaha Rajput Prince, founded Sanganer in Rajasthan. Being located on the periphery of a broad riverbank, the village was ideally suited for cloth printing, as the wide riverbanks provided space to spread out the cloth. Moreover, mineral-rich water from the river was ideal for processing dyes. No wonder, then, that Sanganer gained reputation as a centre of hand block printing by the turn of the 18th Century [1]. Sanganer - a semi-urban locality, 10 km away from Jaipur is the major center of hand block printing. Hand-block printing is an integral part of residents in Sanganer town with a population of about 5,73,171 of which nearly 10,000 residents are involved in hand-block printing industry. The traditional Sanganer block printing is done by chippa communities who have migrated from Sindh and Punjab. The

printers are mostly Hindus who have migrated from Gujarat owing to the turmoil that brewed between the Mughals and the Marathas.

History of sanganeri printing

The hand block printing cluster of Jaipur has a 500-year-old history of naturally dyed hand-printed textiles. The 'Chhipa' community, either belonged to Jaipur or settled here from various parts of Northern and Western India, has gracefully carried forward this traditional art form, over successive generations. Prior to the 1950s, hand block printing was an art that served the need of mass consumption. Printing is a family tradition and every member contributes to the process.

Salient feature of sanganeri block printing

Sanganer is appreciated throughout the world for its famous Sanganer prints. Sober colours, vegetable dyes and floral motifs with delicate lines and intricate details are some of the distinguishing features of Sanganer printed works that portray a profound Mughal influence [2]. Generally, Sanganer block printing is done on a white or pastel background, and there are separate blocks for each colour. The wooden blocks are made of seesham or teak wood. In Sanganer printing, the outlines are made first, and then the colour is filled. Usually, there are bold patterns that are printed repeatedly in diagonal rows [3].

The motifs of Sanganer prints comprise a mélange of flowers, buds and leaves, while other designs include mangoes, betel leaves, daggers and earrings. There are little floral designs including those of rose, lotus, lily, sunflower and marigold.

Sometimes, folk designs are used, and these prints are conspicuous with the absence of animal motifs. It requires at least one and a half day to craft one piece of Sangneri hand block printed sari. The study was carried out to find the changes in practices, manufacturing process, motifs, colours, dyes, printing method and product manufactured and to document the motif of traditional sangneri block printing in terms of their inspiration, symbolism and use.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, exploratory research design was chosen to find out the changes that have come up in practice, manufacturing process, motif, colour, printing paste and product manufactured. The data was collected through survey with the help of interview schedule. Hundred artisans were approached to collect the data. Photographs were also clicked to document the traditional motifs of Sangneri and were later transformed to line drawing.

Results and Discussion






- It was found that 45 % units in Sangner were small scale and 37% were medium scale block printing units. Sourcing of raw material in earlier days was from local market but now the demand has changed and hence artisans purchase the raw material from other states.
- Raw material required for dyeing and printing were mainly natural dyes like henna, haldi, casula flowers, pomegranate rind. Other material use is neel, blocks, limestone, geru etc. Seventy two percent of artisans purchased raw material from local market.
- Various equipment's used in dyeing were tamda, tarseai and dastana. Dyeing was carried out with harda, alizarin, indigo blue dyeing and alum. Various motifs used in printing were flowers leaves and buds, motifs of intertwined tendrils, motifs of trellis designs motifs of figurative designs and motifs of geometrical designs.
- Common colours used in printing are red, black, yellow, green, white and maroon. Colour combination used in printing are blue, black and white, green and yellow, yellow and white and maroon and yellow.
- Type of blocks was gad blocks and rekh block. Most common shapes of blocks were rectangular, oval and segmental. Maximum size of blocks is of size 18" by 18". Various equipment's used in block making were kabani, aari, randha, guniya, choursi, choursa, reti, bharra, prakar, tikora and aadha gola. Earlier wooden blocks were used for printing but now some industries metal blocks are used for printing.
- Various printing pastes were beggar syahi printing paste prepared with rapid dyes and indigosol dyes.
- Different kinds of processes used in processing of fabric, such as tapai or whitening process, steaming, calendaring. Earlier artisans used only cotton fabric in greige stage but now are used synthetic fabric like georgette, chiffon and silk fabric like chanderi silk, Maheshwari silk. are used. Minor changes in washing and bleaching are also seen. Earlier artisans used cow dung but now caustic soda and shop are used for desizing the cloth.
- Main equipment used in finishing are "mogri" and "dhansa"





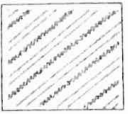



which were used in calendaring. Earlier artisans used sunlight for whitening the fabric but now majority of artisans used bleaching powder for whitening the cloth.



- Traditional printing was mainly done with black and red colours extracted from natural sources. Natural dyes madder, indigo, harada, pomegranate rind, dhawai and kesula flowers, turmeric, limestone, geru and clay were used as colouring, mordanting and resisting material. Printers these days use synthetic alizarin and indigo in place of madder and natural indigo for producing different colour. Synthetic pigments are also used in printing paste. In the past colours used were red, black, yellow, green and maroon but now the different types of colour shade is available in the market according to customer demand. Earlier sangneri printing was done on white background fabric but now brought colours are used in the background. Earlier colour combination was decided by the artisans but now the colour scheme varies and is according to the customer's demand.
- Earlier artisans only produced local varieties of printed fabrics, mostly fadats, lugdis, angochhas, bichhanunis, rezais etc. Now they have shifted their production from traditional products to other products like dress materials, sarees, kaftans, aprons, home textile products etc.

Artisans reported that most of the motifs used were inspired from flora and fauna. In olden days most common motifs in flora and fauna were vegetative in character and were in linear pattern. Animals like elephant and birds like parrot, pigeon and peacock are some other common motifs of Sangner. Some of the traditional motifs have been documented. These motifs are recognized for their fineness and were commonly have brick placement.

Table 1: Documentation of traditional Sangneri motifs of Hand Block Printing

Motif	Inspiration, symbolism and use
 Motif No.1 Pankhi buti	Pankhi buti- Originated by the sangneri printing artisans take the inspiration from pankhi, probably modern motif, borrowed from typical Sangner printing, having Persian inspiration.
 Motif No. 2 Chakari buti	Chakari buti- The only freeform motif pattern that exists in sangner. Symbolic form of clouds and also related to the trefoil pattern found in Mohe-jo-daro.
 Motif No. 3 Mirchi buti	Mirchi buti- Inspired from the green chilies. It is look like a floral pattern but the shape of leaves is look like green chilies. It is originated in bagru and sangner but the motif of bagru have little changes.
 Motif No. 4 Ladoo buti	Ladoo buti- The motif is inspired from the Ladoo. The sangneri printing artisans do some little changes and mix the Ladoo and sun motif because it is also look like a sun
 Motif No. 5 Mordi buti	Mordi buti- The basic shape of the motif is inspired from Lotus flower and the artisans use peacock with the lotus flower, represented by an eight-pronged star. Used as an important pattern in the field of traditional sangneri printing.

Motif	Inspiration, symbolism and use
 <p>Motif No. 6 Chemali buti</p>	Chemali buti- Flowering shrub in a vase. A commonly used floral motif used by many textiles in the Indian subcontinent. Symbolically refers to the abundance of nature. Used as field pattern or in border
 <p>Motif No. 7 Bichoo buti</p>	Bichoo buti - It was an ornamental design in which the effect of Buti was produced by points or dots
 <p>Motif No. 8 Chaubundi</p>	Chaubundi- Designed by design team at FabIndia. The motif originated in 2006 to 2008, made for getting piece cloth/yardage printed for making modern apparel like kurtas etc.
 <p>Motif No. 9 Sura buta</p>	Surabuta- Inspired from the parrot. It is originated in sanganer by the artisans and give the little touch with floral buti.
 <p>Motif No. 10 Bel</p>	Bel- A modern freeform overall pattern inspired from Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh.
 <p>Motif No. 11 Kamal ki buti</p>	Kamal ki buti- The lotus flower plays an important role in "Indian Art". The leaves are shield shaped and bluish green in colour. Sometimes, the lotus was depicted with two buds at two sides and a straight or bent leaf on either side.
 <p>Motif No. 12 Gulla buti</p>	Chaubundi- Designed by design team at FabIndia. The motif originated in 2006 to 2008, made for getting piece cloth/yardage printed for making modern apparel like kurtas etc.
 <p>Motif No. 13 Hathi buta</p>	Hathi buta- The size of buta is larger than comparison the buti. The motif began to gain importance in the reign of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605–27), and by the time of Shah Jahān (1628–58). The motif is used In all products of sanganer printing

 <p>Motif No. 14 Keri buti with border</p>	Keri buti with border- Traditional border, originated from the earliest times. Inspired from the wall painting of Shah Jahan mosque in Thatta, Sindh.
 <p>Motif No. 15 Peacock buta</p>	Peacock buta- The peacock was a very popular motif in Indian printed textiles. This motif was a favorite motif of the Chippas of Gujarat and Rajasthan. The origin of the motif is Indian, Peacock can be seen on the potteries of Indus valley. This motif was frequently found in Indian sculptures as well as in paintings.

Four forms of block designs were the most popular i.e. Buta-large motif, Buti-small motif, Bel-creeper and Jaal-interconnected designs. Buta is a single, large detailed block varying from 3" onwards and going upto 10" or more depending on the design and end product. Buti is a tiny motif, repeatedly carved on a single block mostly in brick placement. There are different designs used like flowers, leaves, paisley, dots and lines etc., in a buti. 20 butis or more could be carved on a single block. Bel is a narrow border design block, generally 2" inches to 4" wide, given on the pallu or edges of the cloth, made to look similar to the butis. Jaal designs can vary from floral to geometric and are used to cover the majority of empty space on the cloth. As per the respondents the use of bel and jaal has become very limited today as it is more time consuming to print. Printing a variety of butis was the popular choice for mass markets.

Conclusion

To conclude traditional hand block printing of Sanganer has undergone major changes in dyes, colours, pattern, motifs, due to heavy demand in India and abroad. Presently a variety of designs are seen besides floral pattern and animals. The motifs have figurines, geometrical motifs, insects and reptiles' motifs. Committed to their inherited art form, some printers continue to print the traditional motifs to keep them alive. All over motif placement, brick placement, and linear placement are popular today too. Earlier, the placement was very dense and the motif placement were less busy.

References

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