



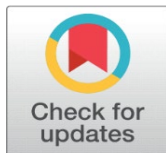
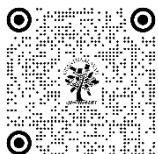


A STUDY ON TRADITIONAL MOTIFS AND TECHNIQUES OF DHABHLA AND ITS CHANGES OF KUTCH REGION

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate the traditional motifs and techniques of Dhabhla and its change in the Kutch region. Kutch district of Gujarat is a religious centre for pilgrimage and is interesting for historical lovers. The weaving craft of Kutch has its origins in the barter system in the past time. Weavers were very dependent upon other communities to get work. Traditional weaving has been accepted from generation to generation; the passage of time has created newness in design to retain its interest. The Dhabhla was available in various traditional motifs based on the daily life of the weavers - mostly geometrical motifs. The weaving of Kutch is famous for its traditional intricate designs, arrangement of motifs, and rural-based handicrafts. Usually, the effect of delicacy, rich-vivid, and contrast color combinations are imparted in patterning. The Centre of weaving is Kutch and Sunder Nagar.

Keywords: Traditional, Dhabhla, Motifs, Techniques

1. INTRODUCTION

India's wide range of textiles is influenced by region, surroundings, rich culture, and needs of the local people. Each state of India has a craft embedded in its culture and tradition, influenced by different empires and tribes. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, every region is known for its handloom technique and raw material that create unique fabrics. Handlooms are symbols of national pride nurtured in various segments of India. For the craftsmen-community, it outlines their critical

economic activity. The art of weaving has ancient roots in India, with remains of woven fabrics dating back to 3000 AD found in Mohenjo-Daro excavations. Evidence also suggests that the people of the Sindh and Balochistan regions had weaving skills dating back to 5000 BC making it the oldest textile record in the subcontinent. Kutch is geographically connected to Sindh and has a shared history that is still reflected in the local skills, products, and cultures of its communities. Handloom is an ever-evolving and well-researched craft in India, with each region presenting its distinctive features of design, techniques, styles, and use of raw materials. About 600 years ago, the Meghwal community migrated to Kutch from Rajasthan. They brought the art of hand weaving using hand-spun yarn supplied by the Rabaris, a nomadic community of pastoralists.

2. REVIEW LITERATURE

A good system of available literature related to the domain was searched for conducting the present study. The researcher visited many museums and libraries. After searching literature-referenced journals, magazines and reference books and visiting many museums and libraries, it emerged that research on the weaving field was very subjective. Thus, the issues identified for this sector can only be reviewed from other craft sectors.

Craft defined as fine artistry; in the material form, it expresses the human spirit that bestows delight. In the context of the need and importance of craft and handicraft, the author stated that these objects were simply ahead of the realization of the physical necessities of people. If we investigate the antiquity and cultural progression of craft, then we will experience that earlier craftsman had good status in society, and the notion behind art and craft was analogous. Handicrafts and crafts were elementary activities and essential parts of our everyday life. The values of crafts were such that they were more unified to our life than language. Language may have geographical hurdles, but crafts do not; they communicate equally everywhere. Art and history are connected. Still, historians have scarcely focused on uncovering the past of art in chronological order, like history and literature [Chattopadhyay \(1975\)](#).

The action of weaving is related to the human body rhythms and is a powerful act. In this context, the functioning of a loin loom, an ancient variety of loom used worldwide since ancient times, can be functionally and intuitively related. One of the warp bars of the loin loom (also called back strap loom) is strapped to the waist, where the body weight of the weaver is used to build the tension. 'This is linked with prana, the breath or life force'. Tension is created for weft beating when the weaver breathes in; as the weaver breath in reed is lifted for shed preparation & throwing of shuttle across the loom. So, overall, the breathing process is utilized to execute various stages of fabric weaving. [Dhamija \(2014\)](#).

The history of the Dhabhla weavings is ancient and related to the local skills, products, and cultures of the Kachchh and Sindh geographical areas. Some famous stories related to the journey of Dhabhla weavers and the origin of the craft are prevalent among the locals. One suggests that the daughter of a wealthy Rabari family in Rajasthan was married to a groom from Kutch. As part of the dowry, a weaver was sent with the girl to weave all the clothes the girl needed. The weaver family flourished and eventually formed a large community that spread across various settlements in Kutch, giving the region a rich weaver community of pastoralists.

As per the article [Times of India. \(2012\)](#), One more tale associated with the beginning of craft definite that 'Ramdev Pir' once stayed at Narayan Sarovar for his trip, and his followers constructed a temple for him. The followers also requested the baba to call his kin from Rajasthan to take care of the temple. This migration and settlement introduced the weaving of shawls in the Kutch. The loom used for the Dhabhla weaving is generally paddle-equipped and based on the tapestry techniques of inserting design [Anjali \(2019\)](#). The motifs inserted in the craft are inspired by nature, such as the surrounding flora, fauna, and daily objects. According to the report [Chaand et al. \(2011\)](#), "The core motifs of Dhabhla weaving are jaad, lath, chaumukh and satkhadi. Minute dots surrounding the Satkhadi motif with a diamond-shaped motif at the centre symbolise traditional Dhabhla weaving.

Dhabhla is the common term used by a few native communities, such as Bharwad and Rabari, for connoting woolen blankets or quilts. The textured white exterior surface of sheep wool, ornamented with yarned in addition to extra weft motifs in different shades and hues, is the signature feature of Dhabhla. There is a plain portion in the middle with a range of colorfully lively acrylic yarns, generally along the craft borders. It is widely practiced in the districts of Gujarat such as Sunder Nagar, Patan and Kutch. However, for the past few years, the craft has been restricted to Kutch's regions. At present, only a few weavers are working independently, and few are attached to various nearby NGOs. The economic condition of weavers associated with or employed by NGOs is much improved than individual weavers due to higher wages from NGOs. In addition, weavers are also engaged in other alternative occupations such as farming, labor, and tourism. [Renu \(2018\)](#).

A few Master weavers had widely travelled and written about in documentation on Kachchhi or Bhujodi and Dhabhla weaving. Weavers associated with Kutch craft express pride in community's rejection of the government's offer to introduce jacquard cloths and modernized looms and stick to reviving hand spinning using the local sheep wool. This decision was based on an understanding of the more lucrative market for textiles produced on the traditional pit loom utilizing the extra-weft technique for patterning. This decision reflects what Wilk terms 'subversive naturalization' [Venkatesan \(2009\)](#), in which weavers are not passive to technological changes but actively choose to adapt or not depending on what suits the community.

Currently, a few crafts of Gujarat put forward an important example of sustainable living for upcoming generations by showing the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. Natural and local materials have been indigenously used to create such products, which are an excellent combination of aesthetic, practical forms with suitable functions. Here artisans are employing traditional skills to produce objects suitable for the existing world, indicating persuasively that natural and handmade products are flexible over time and traditions can be meaningful in modern times [Mirza & Mallya \(2012\)](#).

2.1. OBJECTIVES

This paper expects to study detailing of Traditional Motifs and Techniques of Dhabhla and its Changes of Kutch Region. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To study history of Dhabhla from past to present.
- 2) To study of Dhabhla techniques.
- 3) To describe traditional motifs of Dhabhla.
- 4) To preserve cultural heritage of India.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

After the literature review, the qualitative research is guided by the method of self-referential analysis of traditional Dhabhla objectives and techniques. Keeping this in mind, Dhabhla Traditional motifs and techniques explored the socio-economic profile of the unit owners and artisans and the raw materials, tools and techniques used in Dhabhla traditional motifs and techniques. The younger generation has adopted the field of design as their profession using modern tools and techniques and various materials. It is their responsibility to preserve the richness of Indian culture and adapt the traditional motifs to the contemporary people of the Kutch region. Keeping the above points in mind, this study on handwoven textiles of Kutch has been devised.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Research Was taken with the purpose of identifying the traditional motifs and technique of Dhabhla craft. It was documented in terms of past to present status, Motifs, Design layout and construction. Result and Discussion have been discussion under for implementation of the objectives.

Bhujodi is the biggest and oldest village in 5 districts associated with the Dhabhla craft. The investigation was carried out by collecting the necessary information from the weavers, retailers, and customers with the help of an interview schedule. Information has also been collected from various museums and libraries and all Indian handicrafts of Bhuj. The questionnaire was formulated, making it suitable for studying Dhabhla weaving, craft marketing, and customers' response. To obtain information regarding aspects like the weaving background, technique, motifs, and Colours. Dhabhla Is on Off- white blanket or shawl of Bhuj or Kutch. The Main center for the weaving of this shawl is Bhujodi, a small village 10 km from Bhuj. Weaving is one of the main centers of the traditional craft sector of Kutch. The origin of handloom is Kutch can be traced back over 600 years when the Meghwal Community from Rajasthan migrated to this region and with them came the art of handloom weaving in which weavers used in hand spun yarn provided by the Rabaris, a nomadic community of cattle herders. Among the Meghwal, The Maheshwari and the Marwada sub-casters excelled at Weaving and facilitated the induction of handloom weaving in Kutch. Motifs -Fourteen traditional motifs were found in the old products conserved by the few weavers. These motifs were discussed with the respondents for their distinguished features and identity in woven products. These traditional motifs were inspired by nature and surroundings, which weavers had developed as motifs and incorporated into their woven craft. Recently weavers have developed several newer motifs by creating changes in the original traditional motif. Thus, they have exploited their creation and changes. It was also said that some Rabari ladies used to make permanent tattoo designs, which weavers have incorporated into their woven products as motifs. It was also tried to find out the name given by the weaver to their new creation to identify their motif. Hodathiyo, Choumukh, Dholki, Dhungalo, Latth, Chokadi, Dhandha mutarno or ladhar or vankiyo, Satkhani, Undhi Sathkhani, Sachchi Kor, Panchako, Miri, chhad, popati, etc. are name of the traditional motifs. The base colour is typically off-white, grey -black or brown with vibrant colour used in the extra weft patterning. The colour used are panchrangi -pink, purple, marron, black and orange. The other general colour are red, yellow green, brown violet and white.

Figure 1



Figure 1 Traditional Motifs of Dhabhla

Designs (Pattern & Layouts) - No changes were observed in the layouts of the woven products. Shawls incorporate traditional motifs inspired from Dhabhla weaving and similar placements as that of Dhabhla. Layouts of Dhabhla could be divided into 3 sections namely pallu, field and borders. Very common layout of Dhabhla had horizontal borders running from selvedge to selvedge at pallu, vertical borders parallel to the selvedge and plain field. Layouts of shawls and placements of motifs were similar as Dhabhla. Dhabhla: Plain, 2 Tara, 4 Tara, 2 Tara with design, 2 Tara with full designs, 3 Tara with less designs, 4 Tara with design and Dhabhla with design, Jesal Mera, blanket Dhabhla. The articles are woven in Desi wool, blended yarn, Teri wool and polyester blended yarns. The design is interwoven during the weaving process. A few designs are woven by inserting the loose separate yarn (weft) through a separate shuttle or by hand size of Dhabhla plain Dhabhla with half designs and Dhabhla with full designs is 54"x 96".

Artisans usually use readymade yarn from Barmer and other places to make Dhabhla crafts. The wool primarily used by the artisans is Marina wool. Marino wool is obtained from the hair of Marino sheep of the Kutch district. The weavers themselves do not dye & bleach this Marino yarn but directly purchase coloured yarn from

Punjab. Marino wool is slightly loose but much smoother and of time count, giving the finished product a good and bright look. Articles made from Marino wool are beautiful. Initially, pure woolen yarns were used in the starting days of the weaving, thus making the product very costly and away from the reach of the customers. The weavers using cotton and woolen used to get many complaints regarding issues in dyeing, such as color fading. These forced the artists to move towards "Acrylic yarn." Different color is yarn is available in the market.

5. CONCLUSION

This article attempts to study the motifs and techniques used in the Dhabhla craft from ancient days to the present. The result could encourage using creative and technical approaches among Dhabhla manufacturers for growth and sustainability for Dhabhla Craft. The literature review section thoroughly reviews the history of traditional motifs and techniques. In addition, the article also focuses on the problems faced by the Dhabhla manufacturer, from the fiber level to the blanket production. The entire process of making Dhabhla is inspected during the researcher's survey. The results of this study can also be extended to uplift the current status of traditional Dhabhla Saree and Shawls.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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