

FOLK ART IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION WORLD: AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

From the early civilization days, human beings believed in appreciation of one or the other form of art or craft. Despite the rapid industrialization of the world, the rural communities continue to be the real flag bearers of our heritage traditions.

India's centuries old tradition of ornamenting fabric has survived with the ravages of time and preserved local crafts, which reflect ample testimony to this great culture. Dyeing, printing, painting, brocading and embroidery have been traditionally used by women all over the world to decorate textile and apparel articles for their personal use. Embroidery, an expression of aesthetics, rendered with patient labor, is an art described as "painting by needle". Embroidery adds grace and elegance even into articles of everyday use garments in the modern society is in increasing demand due to the fast changing fashion and their gracious look.

Warli, Aipan, Madhubani, Kantha, Kalamkari, Thappa, Bandhej etc. are the few name of art forms, which are entering the fashion field, is a revolution to these art itself. Designers were inspired by the simplicity of these art and have tried to implement them into today's fashion. Everything about these arts, is natural and beautiful. They have the aptitude to create the nostalgia. They can make you feel the smell of the culture and tradition. Today, anyone can see these folk art forms as a wall hanging, as a home decor, as a garment, as a craft items, as an accessory and still more.

Present paper will give an insight about the folk arts and their implementation and effect to the recent fashion scenario.

Key Words: folk art, aipan, thappa, bandhej, nostalgia etc.

Introduction

"Culture is a way to bond with the nature, divine and our fellow human beings.

Indian folk art consists of variety of art forms which includes plastic arts, visual arts and textile arts etc. Broadly it covers pottery, sculpture, painting, woven silk, etc.

India is rich in diverse and versatile art forms which are characterized on the basis of its geographical land area. A strong sense of design is characteristic of Indian art and can be seen in its modern and traditional art forms respectively.

Indian art lives from about the 3rd millennium BC to the modern times. People, in India are not aware of most of the art forms as they are too vast. This vast area of cultured art is being divided into states, communities above 600, districts, dialects, tribes which are the main reasons to this rich diversity in art forms. Though these art traditions are a lot in number, many of them are in an extinct stage and few don't exist. Each form has its own aesthetics and elegance. There are very few people who have the concern towards the art forms, and they come up with great plans amongst which quite a few are breathtaking.

The sustainable development of these art forms are influencing to a great extent to the global fashion industry. Fashion, as mentioned earlier has played a major role in not only bringing the art to limelight but also has ultimately made the art live. Following examples would speak about few of the many traditional folk art forms of India, their growth, development, and their contemporary life and how are they being manipulated by the fashion industry, with its originality in place.

Most of our folk art traditions are at the verge of becoming extinct. But still, there are resources to help them out. Fashion is a major platform that has given folk art its due recognition through its creativity yet retaining its originality. The fashion industry has adapted the various Indian folk art traditions and the consumer behavior towards it.

The warli or varlis are native tribe or adivasis, living in the hilly as well as coastal regions of Maharashtra-Gujarat border and near areas. Warlis have their own style of living, culture, customs, tradition, beliefs, etc which they show in their art work that is they depict their lifestyle through their art work.

Warli art is based on rudimentary technique. These paintings are done on inside the walls of village huts. On the walls red ochre is coated as a base or background for the warli paintings which is a mixture of branches, earth, and cow dung. And for the foreground warlis uses white pigment made from the mixture of rice paste and water, with gum as a binder. And a bamboo stick is chewed at the end to use that as paint brush. Walls are painted only on special occasions such as weddings and harvests.

Warli entering the fashion field was a revelation to the art itself. Designers were inspired by the simplicity of the art and have tried to implement them into today's fashion. Everything about Warli is earthy and soothing. They have the aptitude to create the nostalgia. They can make you feel the smell of the wet soil. These even today succeed in adding elegance to a rural hut or a five star hotel interior with the same charm. Today, one can see the art as a wall hanging, as home decor, as a garment, as a toy and still more.

Madhubani painting originated in a small village, known as Maithili, of the Bihar state of India. Initially, the womenfolk of the village drew the paintings on the walls of their home, as an illustration of their thoughts, hopes and dreams. With time, the paintings started becoming a part of festivities and special events, like marriage. Slowly and gradually, the Madhubani painting of India crossed the traditional boundaries and started reaching connoisseurs of art, both at the national as well as the international level.

Madhubani paintings basically is characterized by figures that are prominently outlined and bulging fish-like eyes and pointed noses. The themes usually include natural elements like fish, birds, elephant, turtle, sun, moon, tree and lotus. Geometric patterns are also seen in these pictures that are often symbolize feelings like love, valour, devotion and fertility and prosperity. This ancient art form is also known to depict scenes of wedding, religious rituals, war and different cultural events, from mythology like Ramayana.

Modern Madhubani art

Madhubani painting are still being practiced by many women in villages of Bihar. In fact, Karpuri Devi, sister-in-law of known artist Mahasundari Devi and, Dulari, and Mahalaxmi are women from three generations of the rati village who have made efforts to keep the art form alive by educating women in the village and teaching them the ways of making Mithila painting a way of life and take the folk art forward. Works of the three women have been commissioned by government of India and also found a respectable place in the Mithila museum of Japan.

Today, Madhubani art piques interest in art lovers from different countries like USA, Australia, UK and Russia. Patterns from this art form have also found their way onto various items like bags, cushion covers, coasters, mugs, crockery and mouse pads.

So, how exactly did an art form from rural India get noticed around the world? In 1960's when draught hit Bihar, the All India Handicrafts Board encouraged upper caste women in villages around Madhubani town to make the ritualistic paintings on paper to generate income. Slowly the style of painting found its way onto many articles from greeting cards to salwar kameez materials.

Madhubani remains popular on home decor front in the form of prints or table linens, napkin rings, lamps and importantly on wall hangings. Mostly Mithila arts were originally used for decorating walls, floors of homes.



Modern Madhubani Paintings



Contemporary Use Of Madhubani Art

Textile printing is the process of applying color to the fabric in definite patterns or designs. In properly printed fabrics the color is bonded with the fiber, so as to resist washing and friction. Textile printing is related to dying difference is that in dying a textile is colored in a single color whereas in printing one or more colors are applied in a specific pattern.

The Indian folk arts with printing and embroidery play important role in creating new designs. Escalating demands of consumers requires modification in the fashion industry with respect to design, colour, style and technique. So developing a design pool using folk art of Uttarakhand (aipan) for applique work has been also developed for making it more contemporized and fashionable. This also provides the opportunity to use the adapted traditional motifs on textiles and to preserve the beautiful traditional folk art. Aipan motifs were adapted for center design, border design, and buti design. Motifs, designs were developed keeping in mind their suitability for articles like bags, pencil purse and mobile holder.

The expression "**Batik**" is an Indonesian-Malay word. Batik is a procedure of decorating material by covering a piece of it with a layer of wax and afterwards coloring the fabric. The waxed areas keep their unique shading and when the wax is removed, the difference between the colored and undid zones gives the pattern.

Rangwali Pichhaura is an article of clothing worn at ceremonial events in Uttarakhand. The design of this garment are totally inspired by the lady bride to great-grandmother, each lady in the family wears it on events be it namkarna or marriage, upanayan or mundan. It has a unique significance and compulsory for every single wedded lady in the family or close connection. Another notable element of Rangwali Pichhaura is that it can be put on by widows likewise, those according to social conventions, they shouldn't wear brilliant pieces of clothing.

In the centre, a 'Swastik' is drawn and in four quadrants of a swastika, Sun, Shankh (Conch shell), A Bell with 'Om' and Goddess are drawn. The swastika is made by drawing some geometrical drawings or leaves and flowers and then surrounded by small dots. Then dots of larger size are printed all over. This printing is surrounded by a beautiful border. After the border, lace and kinari or jhalar are stitched to make it more colourful, attractive and lively.

Adaptation of Batik printing with Rangwali Pichhaura is a very new innovation for design development and to represent designs in the form of garments. Since designing is the field where there is always a need of fresh ideas and newer designs, traditional batik and Rangwali Pichhaura cannot be ignored. The designs were collected from various sources like books, internet and newspapers.

New designs were developed. These new designs were created to check the adaptability of these designs. Designs were created on the premise of its visual interest and look. One outline was chosen for the article of clothing development by the concerned personnel.

Rangwali Pichhoda is an article of clothing worn at ceremonial events in Uttarakhand. From lady bride to great-grandmother, each lady in the family wears it on events be it namkarna or marriage, upanayan or mundan. It has a unique significance and compulsory for every single wedded lady in the family or close connection. Another notable element of Rangwali Pichhaura is that it can be put on by widows likewise, those according to social conventions, they shouldn't wear brilliant pieces of clothing. In the centre, a 'Swastik' is drawn and in four quadrants of a swastika, Sun, Shankh (Conch shell), A Bell with 'Om' and Goddess are drawn. The swastika is made by drawing some geometrical drawings or leaves and flowers and then surrounded by small dots. Then dots of larger size are printed all over. This printing is surrounded by a beautiful border. After the border, lace and kinari or jhalar are stitched to make it more colourful, attractive and lively.



Rangwali Pichhaura



Contemporary Aipan Art

These sketches drawn in the pichhora has religious significance also. The Swastik represents all the gods and goddesses. It is drawn in some form or the other at all the religious rituals. It denotes the 'karmyoga'. Its four arms pointing forward inspire to move ahead. The centre of a swastika is 'Om' which has great importance in meditation and spirituality.

The first quadrant of Swastik houses Sun, the god with great power. Sun is worshipped for the well-being of sons. The second quadrant houses Goddess for prosperity and wellbeing of all nears and dears, the third quadrant has a 'Shankha' (Conch shell)

Batik is a very important technique as it lays the foundation for all the other printing techniques. Batik technique offers enormous potential outcomes for a creative opportunity as patterns are drawn instead of by weaving with string. It is also one of the oldest known printing techniques so it will always have a great impact on the modern techniques.



Contemporary Aiphan Art Used in Batik

Rangwali picchaura also is of great cultural importance as it is the traditional dress of northern India especially Uttarakhand. These designs are well known for their beauty.

In the field of designing there is always a need for new designs. Rangwali picchaura with Batik can provide with this enormous demand of new designs as it has a lot of scope for innovation. Being a popular traditional dress in Uttarakhand, it can be introduced to other costumers in other parts of India. This in turn can provide new job opportunities and a new source of income for the people involved in this art. Hence, it has a very huge potential to be introduced in other markets on a larger scale.

India's centuries old tradition of ornamenting fabric has survived with the ravages of time and preserved local crafts, which reflect ample testimony to this great culture. Dyeing, printing, painting, brocading and embroidery have been traditionally used by women all over the world to decorate textile and apparel articles for their personal use. Embroidery, an expression of aesthetics, rendered with patient labor, is an art described as "painting by needle". Embroidery adds grace and elegance even into articles of everyday use. Indian embroidery takes its inspiration from nature and the products of various regions reflect the colors of the flora and fauna of that area. The taste for embroidered garments in the modern society is in increasing demand due to the fast changing fashion and their gracious look. The fashion industry demands a fast production schedule, but hand embroidery is a time consuming craft. If mass production is achieved by

hand embroidery, the cost would be high and the quality would be unstable. Fabric painting gives fabulous surface decoration in lesser time as compared to embroidery.

Conclusion

Indian art lives from about the 3rd millennium BC to the modern times. People, in India are not aware of most of the art forms as they are too vast. This vast area of cultured art is being divided into states, communities above 600, districts, dialects, tribes which are the main reasons to this rich diversity in art forms. Though these art traditions are a lot in number, many of them are in an extinct stage and few don't exist. Each form has its own aesthetics and elegance. There are very few people who have the concern towards the art forms, and they come up with great plans amongst which quite a few are breathtaking.

India is a land of cultural diversity but we can always witness that all these differences only makes it more interesting. Ancient Indian folk art is a tradition in India and it has been practiced through various generations in many parts of the country. With time, art forms tend to adapted modern resources but there are still few unpretentious forms who have survived the test of time. Most of the Indian folk art forms illustrate religious stories about God and Goddesses, and yet they are different from each other

Passed down from one generation to another, Indian folk art is still alive in many parts of the country. Being culturally diverse and distinct, a variety of art forms have evolved over the years; .As now a days there is a fashion race to cope up with the fast-changing fashions so as a part of larger revival movement in the Indian art & culture industry, many of the folk art forms are adapting to new trend ,colors and materials. Each depict religious epics or Gods and Goddesses mostly, but they're all unique, admirable and enjoying their contemporary trends and forms globally.

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