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## AN INDEPTH STUDY ON EVOLUTION OF MOTIFS IN ODISHA HANDMADE TEXTILE AND ITS PROMOTION

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### ABSTRACT

The tradition of hand weaving is a part of our country's cultural heritage and symbolizes the ability of the weavers to design intricate artistic and attractive products by use of various kinds of handlooms. It may be noted that, India as a developing country in the world, where handloom is one of the largest economic industries for its innovations, productions, flexibility, promotions of individual weavers, and versatility as well. Among the states in India, Odisha has one of the richest traditions of handloom and handicrafts in the country, which goes back to the time of ancient period. Apart from that, handloom and handicrafts products of Odisha are appreciated all over the country and outside because of their unique and natural motifs, delicate designs, and aesthetical colour amalgamation. Odishan handloom products are known for their incorporation of some of the basic and known traditional motifs like wheels (*chakra*), shells (*shankha*), and which connected the towards tradition and culture through the deep concept of signs. These designs are derived from our ancient culture, tradition, folklore as well as mythologies like Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Jagannath culture of Odisha. Ikat of Odisha is woven with gem-colored, slightly-blurred motifs. Motif is the most basic unit with the help of which a design is created. At the same time, such motifs are frequently inspired by nature and are also closely linked to natural, daily life and socio-cultural-economic factors prevailing in any society.

### KEYWORDS

ODISHA, TEXTILE, HANDLOOM, MOTIFS, TRADITION

## INTRODUCTION

Since the ancient period, Odisha had one of the richest traditions of handloom and handicrafts in entire India. Like many other handicrafts in the Odishan cultural industry, textile weaving, and the associated crafts were handed down from generation to generation, where the art remained within the families of the craftsman. In contemporary time Odisha handloom products have widely demanded in the local as well as foreign markets. As a result, the handloom sector is next to the agriculture industry, and it is one of the major providers of employment to the rural people in Odisha. This is because of the wide difference in the skill level of weavers in Odisha and their division into different weaving sub-castes according to their weaving knowledge and skill.

## AIMS OF THE STUDY

This research paper has adopted anthropological methods and techniques such as people participation observation, focus group discussion, detailed interviews, and careful observation of the use of motifs in Odishan handmade textiles. The primary household survey was conducted among the weavers. The survey has focused on the origin and uniqueness of Odishan motifs. The main objective of this research paper is to describe the essence of Odishan motifs. The objective of the study is to measure the use of motifs in Odishan handmade textile products.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are several studies carried out by various researchers and scholars in this area. The following reviews try to highlight the needs, significance, and scope of the present research study. Dash and Mohapatra (1986) explained in their study that the art of weaving in Odisha was existence before 600 B.C. and we can find the evidence reveals from the ancient caves of Khandagiri, Khurda district. Some carvings in the temple walls and pillars of Boudh/Sonepur (Baidyanath) indicate that weaving was in existence in the area before 9th B.C. Moreover, Odisha has a history of exporting handloom to Southeast Asia countries like Thailand, Java, Borneo, and Sumatra (The last three are the Island of Indonesia) during the pre-independence period sea route. S. K. Panda (1994) elaborately explained in his article titled “Lord’s Fabric” published in that the sumptuous *Gitagovinda Khandua* (a silk fabric woven with tie & dye technique or Ikat technique) which we call calligraphy fabric, having verses of *Gitagovinda Kavya*. It is also a gift from Jagannath temple to Odisha *Ikat*.

## MAIN TEXT

Motif is a very integral part of India’s cultural fabric and it is more so in Odisha. Traditional textiles such as Khandua from Nuapatna (eastern Odisha) Bomkai from the southern belt, Tusser from Mankedia and Gopalpur village, Bichitrapuri and Ekphulia from western Odisha, and Kotpad sarees from Koraput tribal belt hold a prime place in Indian textiles. These textiles are embedded with the cultural context of mythology and folk an exemplary art and skilled weaves enhanced with supplementary warp and supplementary weft and symbolic motifs. It is also a combination of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as the physical designs of Ikat are aesthetically appealing and visible to the onlookers as well as they have stored intangible messages from the history and specific culture of the land. Hence it is an essential responsibility of social and cultural researchers to revisit the potential aspect of craft and arts and reestablish their contribution to the philosophy of life. Otherwise, such tangible and intangible traditions of the land would be on the verge of extinction and it would be too late to hand these valuable crafts to the posterity. Motifs of Odishan handmade textiles have been used since the past in Odishan textiles are not merely a display but they are deeply associated with Odishan social, cultural, and religious life.

Odisha has one of the richest traditions of handloom and handicrafts in India, which began in ancient times. The existence of some ancient rock-cut caves and attractive designs and motifs of stone carvings drawn in the temples of medieval Odisha provided a flash of the rich tradition of the ancient time of art, craft, and sculpture. Due to the slow growth of the financial sector and industrial sector, the responsible administrations of the state

are unable to provide economic empowerment and gainful employment to the technically less qualified and educated experts, and poor in the rural non-farm sector to the following the industries like handloom and other popular handicrafts such as stone carving, wood carving, silver filigree, appliqué, patta painting, coir, dhokra casting, and bell metal works, etc.

The *Bichitrapuri* saris are one of the unique examples with motifs of duck, fish, lotus, creeper, elephant, lion, and deer; the Kumbha, temple or serrated edge, and fine white outline of the Ikat motifs. However, Sonepur saris are woven in mulberry and Tusser silk with calligraphy and Nagabandi, the coiled serpent motif. Ceremonial cloth called Gita Govinda Patta with calligraphic forms, produced in Nuapatna is used to dress the statues of the Jagannath trinity. Traditionally, the Patta or silk is enhanced with supplementary thread work patterns and Rudraksha, Kumbha, and Matsya motifs. Traditionally and naturally the colors from plants, flowers, and barks of trees were used for the process but these have been replaced by chemical dyes now. Odisha Khandua is a famous silk textile known for its curvilinear motifs and intricate weaves in Tusser and silk both for religious and local purposes. The handloom industry of Odisha has passed through many trajectories. Due to the complicated and various kinds in the skill level of weavers in Odisha and their fission into different weaving sub-castes according to their weaving of technical ideas and skill. There are several sub-castes of weavers in Odisha such as Bhulia, Kostha, Kuli, Dera, Saraka, Rangani, Gaudia Patara, Asani Patara, Bengali Tanti, Asani Tanti, Gaudia Tanti, Pana Tanti, Matia, Jhola etc. Along with this, there are some scheduled castes like Ganda and Pana and scheduled tribes like Bonda and Kutia Kandha, who also have weaving knowledge and skills.

## CONCLUSION

More or less handlooms form a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplify the richness and diversity of our culture and the artistry of the weavers. The tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country's cultural ethos. As I mentioned in the abstract, handloom is unparalleled in flexibility and versatility, experimentation, and encouraging innovation in terms of larger production of industry. Weavers with their skillful blending of myths, faiths, symbols, and imagery provide their fabric with an appealing dynamism. The strength of handlooms lies in innovative design, which cannot be replicated by the power modernized looms sector. Different districts of Odisha are famous for the religious weft Ikat textile – Geeta Govinda. It was inscribed with 12th Century poems of Jayadev written in praise of Lord Krishna. The resist tying is done finely on two-thread units giving greater detail and fine curves. These units are tied freehand. Ikat or Bandha, as it is called, has gloriously woven, blurred, and gem-coloured motifs in silk and cotton. Traditionally, the Patta or silk is enhanced with supplementary thread work patterns and *Rudraksha*, *Kumbha*, and *Matsya* motifs. As the design type is single Ikat, the designs on the material are blurred; however, this trace design has a beauty all its own. Odisha is renowned for its ancient handloom heritage, producing handcrafted goods that are unmatched in quality.

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