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## ROGAN ART OF KUTCH GUJARAT

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### ABSTRACT

*Kutch is a district in the Indian state of Gujarat. This location is well-known for its diverse traditional culture. Rogan painting is the art of painting on cloth that is practiced in NIRONA of Kutch. This painting was created using a thick Rogan color paste that was created by boiling castor oil to create a thick Rogan gel, which was then combined with pre-made pigments to create a thick Rogan color paste. Using a stylus and the prepared color paste, traditional motifs are painted onto the fabric. The most popular colors are red, blue, and yellow. The two most popular patterns are geometric and floral. The **Tree of Life** and **Happiness Concept Work** by Rogan painting is an extremely well known.*

*Originally, the Rogan art was only used to create skirts (ghagra), the traditional clothing of the Kutch region. Later, women began creating tablecloths, sofa covers, and dupattas. Rogan art practise supports the village's economy by creating jobs. Around 25 of the 300 girls Abdul Gafur Khatri had trained from various Kutchi tribes were now working for them. India and other countries both have a healthy market for Rogan art.*

**KEYWORDS:**-Rogan, Tree of Life, Happiness Concept Work, castor oil.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1-HISTORY

In the traditional history preserved in the Puranas, Kutch figures among the possession of the Yadavas. By 325BC Alexander reached to India and there is no evidence found that Kutch was a separate kingdom (Williams 1958). In 300 BC this region was ruled by Chandragupta Mauryan Empire broke up and Kutch passed under the rule of Sakas. In 1 century AD it was under Western Satraps followed by Gupta Empire . By fifth century AD the Maitrakas of Valabhi took over Gujarat. By tenth century Chaulukyas ruled Kutch and after fall of Chaulukyas Vaghelas come in power. In 13 century Kutch came under new dynasty of Jadejas. For three centuries Kutch was ruled by Jadeja dynasty (Williams 1958). In 16 century Kutch was unified under Rao Khengarji and till eighteenth century it was ruled by Khengarji decedents. The state accepted suzerainty of British East India Company in 1819, when Kutch was defeated in battle (Williams 1958). In 1947 Kutch become an independent state. The district was affected by tropical cyclone 1998 and the earthquake in 2001 .

## 1.2-KHATRI COMMUNITY :-

The Khatri derives from the terms Kshatriya. They take part in political and economic field in the society. Khatri took over trade activities, account keeping and worked as Kayasthas and Rajput in the society. Khatri community is founded in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh. Khatri are non Muslim community except in Gujarat. In Gujarat Kutch region a small Muslim society of Khatri are reported ( Kataria 2012 ). There is different theory on origin of Khatri community/ caste in the Indian society. The Chhipas are Khatri who become dyers and printer in society. The Sunars also have a story that they are the descendents of one of the two Rajput brothers, who were saved as boys by a Saraswat Brahman from the wrath of Parasurama. When he was destroying the Kshatriyas . The descendants of the other brothers were the Khatri (The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India) .

Bombay Presidency Gazetters establish Khatri as weaver's community in Gujarat and as skilled dyers in the Kutch region. The Khatri community migrated from the Sindh region of Pakistan to India in 1540 onwards (Kataria 2012) . The migration of the Khatri from Sindh started in 1542 and continued till 1600AD.

The account on the Khatri community say that the male ancestors were forced to embrace Islam as they were unable to remunerate Brahman services for the performance of life cycle ritual, but in spite of this Hindu and Muslim Khatri community work together ( Kataria 2012) At the present the total population is 130000 approx. Khatri men shave their head and keep beard. They follow Sunnis faith and follow the ordinary Sunni Mluvis . The handicraft work is main occupation and source of income for the Khatri community. Due to handicraft the economic prosperity also increase their social status and changes in the position of woman .In Khatri community woman enjoy high status. Khatri are involved in the art for the last 400 years in Kutch region. Khatri community has numerous handicrafts which is passed from one generation to other generation. The main craft are embroidery, rogan, bandhani, patchwork, block print, ajrakh, mud craft, terracotta, copper bell, pen knives, wooden craft and tribal craft etc. The Khatri community is famous for printing craft. Due to industrialization the handicraft product lost these demanded in the market. In 1973 establishment of Gujarat State Handicraft Development Corporation Ltd (GSHDC) took places. Its undertake programs of government of Gujarat with the main objective of GSHDC are identifications, reveal, development of handicrafts and handlooms of Gujarat. The organize exhibition for selling and creating awareness of handloom, handicraft among perspective buyers. They also organize training programmer for skill up gradation in various craft and weaving techniques to produce the products.The NGO like Shrujan, Kutch Mahila Vikash Sangathan, Kala Raksha, sewa, khamir craft, Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan (KNNA) has established Common Resource Centre (CRC) with prime objective to facilitate a sustainable recovery for the artisans.

## 1.3-Khatri community famous occupation is:

### **Bandhani:**

Bandhani is a type of tie dye textile. The fabric is tied tightly with a thread at several points according to the patterns required on the cloth. The main colors are yellow, red, blue, green, and black. About 70 % of population of Khatri community is involved in Bandhani work. Pethapur, Mandavi, Bhuj, Anjar, Jetpur, Jamnagar, Rajkot, are some of the main towns in Gujarat, where bandhani is done The city of Bhuj, located in the Gulf of Kutch, in Gujarat is well known for its red Bandhani product. Bandhani is also done in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

### **Ajrakh:**

Ajrakh is a type of block print mostly done by natural dye. Its only done in Gujarat and Sindh in Pakistan. About 25 to 20 days take to prepare the final product of ajrakh print. The Ajarkhpur village of Kutch where the major ajrakh work is done.

**Rogan Art:**

It is about 300 year's old art. Traditionally the craft was pursued to beautiful bridal clothing of the regional tribes, beautiful borders and floral patterns on bridal clothes. It's only done in Nirona village in Gujarat India.(Figure 2)

**2-METHODOLOGY:-**

- Survey was conducted at Nirona village in Bhuj district Kachchh Gujarat.
- An interview was taken, artist Abdul Gafur D Khatri and M. Jabbar Arab Khatri they are expert in rogan art.
- Going through published books and researches related to rogan art.

**2.1-ROGAN ART**

The art of Rogan painting on cloth goes back to centuries. It maybe had origin in Iran because Rogan is Persian word which 'oil'. In Rogan bright color like red, yellow, green, blue, orange and white etc are added to sticky pigment then applied in pattern on the cloth. The Rogan painting on cloth gives the impression of embroidery on the fabric. The Rogan art is a rare craft which is not well known in the society. The Rogan art was practice in India for about 300 years in Nirona village. The Rogan art was practiced by 4 to 5 family in Kutch village but present time only 2 family are left with Rogan art. Due to lack of awareness regarding this craft amongst the Indian consumers the younger is no longer interested in continuing with the craft. The cost of per unit product is very high due to it labor work limited product were purchased and mostly purchased by foreign tourists. In early times Rogan art is done on the fabric which is used in marriage ceremony for Aahir , Dhebaria Rabari , Mutwa and Node tribe.

**2.2-Survey**

The visit was conducted to Nirona village 40 km from Bhuj district Kachchh, Gujarat, India on January 6, 2019 Sunday. The main purpose of the visit is to see the process of Rogan art. Firstly I visited to the workshop of Abdul Gafur D Khatri who is specialist in Rogan art. In Rogan art only natural products used like castor oil and minerals colors.

**2.3-ABOUT THE FAMIL**

While during the interview of M. Jabbar Arab Khatri says that he himself is a nine generation artisan. He said that his ancestors were from Sind region Pakistan but due to climatic conditions and storage of water in 1540 his ancestor moved from Sind to India. When they migrated to India they were silk weaving community. Today also the Khatri community of Gujarat is engaged in Dyeing and printing of the fabric. About 300 years old tradition that once flourished in Gujarat, Kutch region. In 1983 Rogan art is about to disappear from the society because Abdul Gafur D Khatri father was only left artisan of Rogan art. Now days Mr.Gafur Khatri is working with his 10 family member Arab Hasam Khatri , Jumma D Khatri , Sumar D Khatri , M. Jabbar Arab Khatri , Sahil Abdul Gafur Khatri , M. Hanif Arab Khatri , A. Hamid Arab Khatri , Asarf D Khatri , Sakil Jumma Khatri . Gafur Khatri also trained girls from different tribes .As last year he had trained 300 girls from Jadeja , Maheshwari and Bhanushali and from them he had also appointed 20 girls as a Rogan artisan . In early times they make product for marriage ceremony for Aahir , Dhebaria Rabari , Mutwa and Node tribe . Abdul Gafur D Khatri received many award like National Award 1997, National Merit Certificates 1988, State Award 1989, and State Award 1989 and State Certificate by CM of Gujarat in 2013. Most of his family members have received National Award.

In Rogan printing various fabrics are used such as tussar silk, silk, jute, woolen and cotton is most used fabric. The fabric is purchases from Bhuj , mineral colors from Ahmadabad and castor oil is grown in Nirona village . Rogan artisan work for 6 to 7 hours per day. They work from month of February till November.

## 2.4-PROCESS OF PERPARTION ROGAN PASTE

- In Rogan art first the Rogan paste is prepared for printing process.
- The castor oil is boiled for 14 hour in aluminum utensils as it is good conductor of heat and light weight metal. In early times earthen pots are used for boiling the castor oil. The boiling is done far away from residential area because during the boiling time it produces foul smell. If 3 kg of castor oil is boiled than only half kg of paste is obtained.
- After boiling the castor oil a thick paste is obtained. That paste can be used maximum two months without mixing the minerals colors in it. If colors are added to the paste it will dry up fastly and paste can be used only for 10-12 days only.
- Mostly primary and secondary colors are used like red, yellow, blue is taken from indigo , green , orange and purple . The mineral colors are purchased from Ahmedabad. Only natural colors are used because of harmful effect of chemical dye on human skin.
- In 100 gram of castor oil paste 120 gram of colors is mixed and stored in water so it does not dry easily.

## 2.5-PROCESS OF ROGAN PRINT

- The Rogan printing art is done on silk, tussar silk, jute, woolen and cotton. Mostly cotton and woolen is used for printing because cotton and woolen both fabric has higher absorbency power and fabric is purchased from Bhuj in Gujarat.
- Before printing the fabric color was mix on the palm.
- In traditional method drawing on fabric is done by spreading the fabric on the floor or keeping the fabric on the legs . In modern time the fabric is set on wooden frame table but sari is till done by traditional method.
- For drawing, on the fabric an iron pen is used which is about 5-6 inch long , which had a round surface to hold and pointed tip . Iron is heavy and Sharpe metal which help to mix the color properly and fast.
- In mostly product only half surface design is drawn and other half had a impression of drawn design.
- In some cases first a motif is made by pencil and then different color is applied on it . Otherwise it made directly on the fabric .
- Both fauna and flora pattern are made on the fabric . The most famous design in Rogan art is Life of tree which is believe to be symbol of good will and it is depiction of Neolamarckia cadamba tree (common names is burflower-tree) . It is also found on wall of mosque in present time.
- The drying of print took about 5 hours in summer and 5 to 6 days in rainy season. During printing one is applied and leave it for drying and after one is dried then the other colors is applied on the fabric.
- The fabric is dried on the floor.
- The wall handing took approx 25 days to complete which coast about 2,50,000 lacks in Indian rupees . The rate of product is 2000 rupees till 2,50,000 rupees.
- In workshop of Abdul Gafur D Khatri they make sari, hand bags, mobile cover, dress material, top, jacket, file folder, wall piece, woolen stole and traditional skirts.

## 2.6-MOTIFS

In Rogan art the flora, fauna and geometrical patterns are used. In early time calligraphy motifs were also in the art. The famous pattern of Rogan art is 'LIFE OF THE TREE' which had a belief to bring goodwill to person life. The LIFE OF THE TREE motif is also made by tribes of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. It's found on mosque wall, in step well, temple and monument of Medieval Period.

## 2.7-COST OF PRODUCT

- They earn about 35% to 45% of profit on the final product.
- The product is sale between 2000 rupees 2,50,000 rupees .
- They sale there product by online website like amazon , flipkart and they had their own sites for product www.roganartnirona.com and they make product on order also.
- They took part in exhibition take place at national and international level . They make wall piece for Gujarat ministry and there wall piece was gifted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Barack Obama on his visit to India.

## 3. OBSERVATIONS

The survey was conducted in Nirona village in Bhuj Kutch Gujarat. The study was done to document the process of Rogan art heritage art of Nirona village . Nirona is a craft village of Kutch in Gujarat . Nirona is famous for its Copper Bell, Rogan Art and art of Lacquer work (decorated wooden utensils and toys). The climate of Nirona is hot and humid and near Rann Way of Kutch . The climate of this region don't support the agriculture . The castor oil is only crop grown in village .After going throw the survey I have come to the following conclusion.

- Rogan art is a regional art of Nirona village Gujarat.
- It's not practices in other parts of India.
- Rogan art is passed from one generation to other generation .
- Now only 2 families are left who practices this art .
- The Rogan art is done with natural colors and castor oil is an important element of Rogan art. Castor oil is locally available in the village.
- As Rogan art is done from natural colors, so it don't cause any health issues to the producers and consumers .
- Rogan art practice generates employment in the village .
- Abdul Gafur Khatri had trained 300 girls from different tribes of Kutch and around 25 of them working for them.
- The Rogan art has a good market oversea and in India.

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Rogan art LIFE OF TREE motifs

