

# The Evolution of Native Textiles - Part II

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# **Textiles of Orissa**

Applique has a long history in Orissa, situated on the East

coast of India with its beautiful coastline and hilly terrain, traditional cuisine, and folklore primitive tribes. **Applique** basically implies carrying over of

impression from one textile matter to another. The art form typically depended on four basic colours - red, white, black and yellow to produce a striking effect. In recent years, other colours have been added, improving the designs as well. This art form was patronised more by temples and religious institutions. The brilliant applique or patchwork of Pipli is famous for its bold character and vitality representing a modern look with exquisite brilliance and artistry. Pimpli artisans skillfully stitch traditional motifs of elephants, peacocks and flowers on umbrellas, canopies and fans on a cloth background resulting in a harmony of colourful patterns with embroidery work.

The umbrellas and canopies of Lord Jagannath and other deities carry some of the

finest examples of applique from Orissa. Applique work in present day Odisha, reflects contemporary trends and is to be found on furnishings, home decors, bags, lamp shades, etc., in diverse colours and shades, fulfilling the needs of the buyers; adding market value to these products and resulting in a flourishing

industry.

Principal Scientist, Division of crop improvement, is

Folk painting and palm leaves engraving another exquisite practised art the traditional Orissa

artisans. They diversified into pattachitras (painting on cloth) and illustrations on palm leaf manuscripts. The patras usually have mythological themes - from Mahabharata, Ramayana and legends concerning Radha- Krishna and Lord Jagannath.

The chitrakaras or the painters use indigenous methods by coating the cloth with a mixture of chalk and tamarind seeds which produces a surface of leathery quality on which the artist paints with earth and stone clouds giving meaningful expressions to their artistic skill and imagination. Now for a diversified products range, the painters have used the basic 2 • 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 COTTON STATISTICS & NEWS





Traditional Sarees from Orissa

patches and colours in synchronisation with the native character, maybe textiles, may be wooden items, etc. These new products have been fetching a good price in both the domestic and international market.

Hand-woven textiles of Orissa have entered the living rooms of people from all over the world. The textiles and handlooms of Odisha are a must to see, touch, try on and buy.

Ikat means ' to tie' and tie or bind the thread and dye it so that the tied portion is not dyed. This basic idea is carried out on the warp / weft threads as per a predetermined pattern which comes out prominently after weaving. When either longitudinal thread (warp) or horizontal thread (weft) is dyed, the fabric is called single Ikat. The dexterity of these weavers is so high that the motifs can be circular or curved, calligraphic or even portraits of humans or statues of Gods. Ikat has evolved in the form of Sambalpuri handloom fabrics that includes mostly sarees, dress materials, bedsheets, napkins and handkerchiefs.

The weavers are also adding beautiful motifs by using extra warp and weft threads to give it a unique texture.

Other specialised textiles are mainly confined to the Nupatana area of Orissa. The Nupatana hand – woven textiles are popularly known as Khandua fabrics. The Khandua has a link to the culture of the state, as these have been traditionally used for the costumes of Lord Jagannath. In these fabrics, the motifs are of larger size and typically include traditional designs of elephant, lion, lotus, creeper, temples, etc. woven only on sarees using fine cotton and silk yarn with bright colours.

Other natural organic dyed products are Katpada saree and scarves produced in Kotpad in Kotpad district, 560 kms from Bhubaneshwar. This is a traditional fabric woven with coarse cotton in natural dyes. The vegetable / natural dye used in this fabric is an extract of root bark of the Atul tree. These tribal fabrics usually have motifs like snake, water pot, temple, axe, hand fan, etc. Nowadays the motifs are developed on products like cushion covers, table mats, scarves and stoles for a wider market.

Specialised textile designs are created as extra thread ornamented hand-woven festooned drapes .The plain woven fabric is decorated with insertion of extra warp or weft thread in the direction of ground warp (longitudinal) or weft (horizontal) evolving a predetermined motif with desired colour and weave. Bomkai, Berhampuri, Karki, Siminol Habspuri and Dhalapatahar and Parada are the major extra thread ornamented hand-woven textiles having their unique strength and characteristics.

Bomkai was originally woven in coarser cotton yarn in Bomkai, is at present mainly woven on finer cotton and silk yarn in the districts of Sabarnapur and Boudh. The main products are sarees and dress materials. The beauty of the products lies in the extra weft designs decorating the anchal / pallu having motifs of flowers, miniature tree forms, birds and animals combined with extra weft designs and border. Nowadays all the extra thread designs are mixed with a tie-dye touch evolving a special look. Sometimes gold coated threads are used for bridal saris.

Orissa is a leading tussar producing states in the country and has got a rich tradition of weaving tussar fabrics of lovely texture and lustre. Ranging from sarees, scarves and dress materials to latest home furnishings, tussar fabrics have now become a status symbol. Gopalpur in Jajpur district, Makiadia in Balasore district, Fakirpur in Keonjar district and Shirajul in Mayurbanj district are the main areas of tussar in the North- East part of the state. Generally the products are made by using cotton silk as warp and ghicha and noil (different types of raw silk yarn) as weft. The final product is a fabric in different shades of gold and brown and different textures used only on special occasion.

# **Traditional Textiles of West Bengal:**

This state is endowed with a rich culture of artists, painters, craftsmen preserving the native tradition since ages. In the early days, paintings used to be drawn on the palm leaves. The painting done on cloth were called Kanthapattas (kantha in Bengal means a cotton wrapper of patched sheet). Subsequently, handmade paper of cotton pulp was used for these paintings.

Kantha is a centuries old tradition of stitching patchwork cloth, which evolved from the thrift of rural women in the Bengal region. Kantha refers to both a style of embroidery as well as the finished cloth. In fact, it is one of the oldest forms of embroidery in India, with its origins going back to the pre-Vedic age.

A very clear, close and intimate link between the innovative spirit of women and the colourful traditions of those times, can be seen in the art of stitching Kantha for domestic use. Kanthas gave free reign to the imagination of women, their designs told of folk beliefs, themes and characters from Ramayana and Mahabharata, historical tales, gods and goddesses, and the personal lives, yearnings and desires of the artisans.

Some Kantha designs bear a close resemblance to the patterns which are used in the popular art of alpana. Truly exquisite designs were woven on these Kanthas, sometimes there would be a blooming lotus with a hundred petals.

Vintage Kanthas are preserved in the Ashutosh Museum, Gurusaday Museum, Indian Museum and in the Art gallery of Anand Niketan of West Bengal. The Gurusaday Museum holds the largest collection of Kanthas numbering more than two hundred. The Kanthas held in the above places have been collected from Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Mymansing and other districts of undivided Bengal (presently Bangladesh). Apart from this, some exhibits of Kanthas of different patterns have been found in the districts of Bankura, Birbhum and 24 Parganas of West Bengal. There are many variations in the types of Kanthas and their lengths varied between one metre and a 120 cm. Kanthas that were used to cover the body in winter were known as Lep Kanthas. These Kanthas were comparatively larger in size and were used to cover the whole body just like quilts stuffed with cotton.

A square shaped Kantha of small size known as Betan, was woven for covering boxes and trunks and for wrapping old manuscripts and works. Then again, the long - shaped Kanthas woven for wrapping around mirrors and combs, were known as arschilata. Small bags woven for keeping betel nuts and nutcrackers were called duryani and a thin variety of kantha was known as rumal kantha.

Most unique is that of an exhibit of a Sujni Kantha acquired from Jessore (Bangladesh). This Kantha carries some writing stitched all around a border of leafy designs surrounding a lotus with eight petals. The wording of the writing is reproduced as follows: 'The lines stitched by Mahasundari on this Kantha stitched with her own hand is dedicated to her revered father'. This brings out the humility and devotion





Kantha designs talk of folk beliefs, themes and characters from Ramayana and Mahabharata, historical tales, gods and goddesses, and the personal lives, yearnings and desires of the artisans

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which were prominent features of the social life of that period. Kantha is a symbol of deep love and affection of a Bengali woman - which prompted her to devote so much time and labour in producing such a wonderful piece of art for her father.

The material used for stitching a Kantha was a dhoti or a saree along with the threads of many colours taken out from the border of the saree. The skillful hands of the women transformed the product of these ordinary ingredients into an extraordinary work of art.

### **Traditional Textiles of North-East**

The women weavers of the North-East have preserved the legacy of native textiles since ages. These textiles are known for sustainability and durability and belong to the diverse tribes residing in the region, spread across the states, also maintaining their specific and unique characteristics of weaving. Different ethnic groups use material like cotton, silk, wool, endi, Muga, orchid skin and animal hair, for weaving. They deploy their own hand made wooden weaving loin cloth looms (also found in Mexico, Peru and Gautamela) and back-strap types designed from the available native wood.

These looms are different from the largesized fly shuttles, pit looms, back - strap looms commonly used in the plains and in other states though they are in use in Assam too. It's a skill acquired since long, mainly a source of livelihood.

The tribes involved are spread in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya and belong to different ethnicities. Whether the Monpas, Sherdupkens of Kameng,, Khamitis of Tirap in Arunachal



Pradesh, Khasis of Lohit, the Mishings of remote villages of Nagaland, it's only the women who weave, having acquired their skills since childhood.. The young girls build up their loin-cloth looms from wood. They observe, learn and practise the art of weaving and warping from their mothers.

The combination of designs, colours, texture and diverse motifs are created expressing their emotions and native themes. Colours like black, red, white and yellow are the most common ones found on these textiles. The material used are cotton, silk, endi, animal hairs and orchid etc.

The endi is a piece of cloth with red and white stripes on the border, with fringes on both ends. The patterns, themes, geometric designs, animals, etc. are specific to different tribes. The colours red, black and white are used in different colour combinations for creating simple and complicated designs. The combination of colours in the designs are found on skirts or 'galles' worn by girls.

While cerise red colours of Padams and Myongs of Siang district bear parallel lines and look stunning with no designs on the skirts. The Galong galles worn by girls are white in colour with black lines. The monochrome skirts give a spectacular reflection of light.

The Diagaro shawls of Mishing women are exquisite in design and pattern, unique to their traditional weaving. The base colour is mainly black warp but the weaving is done by threads in maroon, yellow, red and white.

The Apatini tribes of the Ziro Plateau in Suhasini district of Arunachal weave characteristic designs unique to them. While the women wear coarse cloth skirts woven in natural colours bordered with

The patterns, themes, geometric designs, animals, etc. are specific to different tribes of the North-East.

black, the men wear stylish jackets of white cotton with black designs woven in wool. Sometimes orange lines run in the middle to make the jacket more attractive. The jacket is woven into two halves made on the loin - cloth loom with armholes. Incidentally, the Mishmi men also wear smart jackets in black with various designs. The Adis wear 'galuks' (short green coats).

In Kameng district bordering Subansiri of Arunachal Pradesh, Monpas and Sherdupkens, wear rose coloured shawls woven in endi silk. Their Thangka paintings reflect the repertoire of Bhutanese techniques with similar patterns and designs. Thus, the region is endowed with a great diversity of designs, patterns, geometric designs, native themes in textile weaving characteristic of the various ethnic tribes prevalent in the North-East.

#### **Traditional Textiles of Western India**

Western India is also endowed with skillful refined creation of designs, weaving and cloth painting confined to specific tribes. Let's travel the west to know the beauty of this art.

# Gujarat

Many tribes in the rural parts of Gujarat, have their own identities and specialities, which are specific to these tribes. Northern Gujarat is famous for Garasia tribes, while Ratvas dominate in South eastern and Central Gujarat. Many of these tribes still continue their traditional handicrafts like wood carving, langoti weaving, basket weaving and arrow grafting. In Kutch, you will find a unique form of painting on fabric with wooden or metal sticks, known as Rogan painting. Another form of hand painted fabric called Mata ni Pachedi used for ritual purpose by the Vagheri community is also a unique form of art.

Beadwork: The Kathi darbar community from Saurashtra is expert in creating decorative objects

made of beadwork. These articles are mostly on a white background, with very bright colours in the foreground.

Block Printing: Printing fabrics with the help of wooden blocks is an age- old practice in many parts of the world. In Gujarat, the town of Jetpur near Junagadh is famous for its textile block printing. These blocks are made from wood and carved with the design, which need to be transferred to the textile. Kutch also specialises in block printing with vegetable dyes. One of the most complex forms of block printing is Ajrakh, prevalent in the villages of Dhamadka and Ajrakhpur near Bhuj.

The exquisite Patola saree produced in Patan is considered to be one of the best hand-woven fabrics in the world, and is rightfully called 'Queen of Textiles'. The weaving of the Patola was introduced in Gujarat and specifically in Patan by Sadhvi silk weavers from Maharashtra and Karnataka who arrived in Gujarat and established this handicrafts industry in the 12th century, long before the advent of the weaving machines. The Patolas of Patan are woven in the 'double ikat' style which is perhaps the most complicated form of weaving in the textile world. While creating the Patola, each fabric consists of a series of warp threads and each weft thread binds the warp threads together. Each one of the warp threads is tied and dyed according to the pattern of the saree. The craft of producing these Patola sarees is really unique and not seen anywhere else in the world.

Embroidery is a house old business in the arid region of Kutch. Colourful embroidery is done with a simple needle but produces extraordinary results. This is completely done by hand and does not involve any automation process. The embroidery techniques vary within communities and regions. This embroidery, done by the wives of herdsmen, nomads and farmers provides an alternative income for their family. The many



Ajrakh Block printing



Patan Patola saree



Kutch embroidery with Mirror Work

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varieties of embroideries include the fabulous bright yellow and red Banni embroidery of the Rabari cameleers with triangular square and almond shaped mirrors; the geometric design and floral motifs of the Ahir community with circular mirrors; the chain stitches and tiny mirrors used by Jats; the symmetrical patterns with tiny triangles of embroidery of Sodha Rajputs around Lakhpat; the tiny broken mirrors embroidered into fabrics by the Mitwa cameleers and the exquisite Mitwa embroidery of the Hali Putras and herds people.

Surat specialises in zari work, wherein gold and silver threads are embroidered on cloth borders, shoes, bags and accessories.

Bandhani work involves tying and dyeing of pieces of cotton or silk cloth and is widely practised in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The main colours used in Bandhani are yellow, red, green and black.

Jamnagar is very famous for its Bandhani work, where Bandhani is printed using ancient block printing techniques and handmade colours.

Gujarat is proud to have one of the best textile museums in India, the Calico Museum of Textiles, established in 1949 and housed in the old haveli of the Sarabhai family located in Shahibag, Ahmedabad. The exhibits include a historic collection of Indian fabrics, court textiles used by the Mughals, Pashmina shawls from Kashmir that took three years to make, double ikat patola made of 100,000 threads and many others.

# **Native Textiles of Rajasthan**

Rajasthan is endowed with a rich diversity and preserved textiles patronised by different kings

Bandhani in Rajasthan is also known as Bandhej and Piliya. After processing the Bandhej fabric transforms into many avatars, from sarees, dupattas and lehegas for women and turbans for men.

Leheriya: Women in Rajasthan celebrate the festival of teej during the monsoons. They deck out in beautiful leheriya sarees, sing, dance and feast. Leheriya is made of lighter fabrics like cotton, silk, chiffon or georgette. The cloth is tied and folded in such a manner that when opened post - dyeing there is a stripped pattern created on the cloth with colour on every alternate stripe. Natural colours are used and completed with



Leheriya

Bandhani



Sangamner printing

Indigo for shades of blue and Alizarin for the hues of red in the final stages

Sangamner printing: Near Jaipur, the village of Sangamner is a major centre for fine block - cutting and printing. Almost 500 years old, Sangamneri printing gained high popularity in Europe in the 16th and 17th century, when the British exported this printed fabric.

- 1. Pichwai: Pichwai paintings are traditional paintings in Rajasthan. 'Pichwai' means 'at the back' of the idol of Srinathji. These lyrical artworks are done on the cloth which are hung as the backdrop in a Krishna temple showing the various moods of Lord Krishna. These paintings are characterised by refined and detailed strokes, with colours made from natural sources.
- 2. Patchwork: This craft is to be found in making quilts, warm jackets, skirts, wall hangings, cushion covers and other items of clothing. The Block, Overall and Strip piercing are the three major types deployed for patchwork.

Besides the above highlighted there are main styles of creating fabric designs characteristic of its own in Rajasthan not covered here.

## Native Textiles of Maharashtra

Here, there are in existence centuries old diversified textiles of varying material of cotton and silk that have co- evolved with the artisans.

Himroo is a satiny fabric, a mix of silk and cotton made locally in Aurangabad. Himroo

was brought to this region by Mohammad- bin-Tughlaq, when he shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, Aurangabad. The word Himroo originated from the Persian word 'Hum-ruh' which means 'similar', as this fabric is a replication of Kinkhab which was woven with pure gold and silver threads exclusively for royal families in the olden days. Since the Himroo fabric uses a lot of Persian motifs, it is quite in demand for its unique style and design. Himroo is woven near Delhi Gate and Zaffar gate neighbourhood in Aurangabad.

Mashru is a vibrant hand-woven fabric made by interlacing silk and cotton yarns, that has been in existence since long, as it finds mention in the Ain - i- Akbari, a 16th century detailed document written in the Persian language during Emperor Akbar's rule by his court historian, Abu'l Fazi.

Mashru is a warp-faced fabric, as in its weaving, the loom brings the cotton yarn down and the silk fibres on top, resulting in a cloth that has a silk exterior and cotton backing. This luxurious fabric is of great practical utility as the inner fabric which stays in contact with the skin is made up of cotton, while the outward look is satiny and silky.

In Ganeshpur Tussar weaving is done by the Koshti Community. Tussar silk is called Kosa in Sanskrit. The varieties produced in Tussar weaving are the 'mothe choukada' (big squares) and 'lahan choukada' a weave with smaller squares.

Paithani: This weaving technique is unique for its art and tradition and has a legacy of 2000 years. Born in Paithan, the splendid capital of Satavahana Dynasty in 200 BC, on the banks of the divine Godavari river, Paithani grew under







Himroo

the royal patronage of King Shalivahana. Later its popularity grew throughout the Deccan region. Paithani uses the ancient technique of tapestry involving multiple threads of different colours along with gold and silver threads, resulting in a fascinating piece of silk.

In the distant past, Romans imported this golden woven fabric in exchange for gold of equal weight. This art survived under different rulers. Aurangazeb brought it back to its glory but also incorporated many new motifs. The well-known floral motifs and Amravel are contributions from the Mughal era. The Peshwas during their reign, encouraged a set a weaver clans to settle in Yeola, a village near Pune. The Asavali floral motif is credited to the Peshwas.

In the days of Peshwas, the borders and the pallu were made of pure gold mixed with copper to give it strength. The proportion was 1 kg of gold to 1 tola of copper. The combination was spun into a fine wire called the zari. In recent times, the zari is made of silver, coated with gold plating. The borders are created with interlocked weft technique either with coloured silk or zari. In the border woven with a zari, ground coloured silk patterns are added as supplementary weft inlay against the zari usually in the form of flower or a creeping vine.

Two types of border are the Narali (coconut) and the Pankhi (hand held fan).

Even if a very good weaver has woven the main body, a master weaver is needed for the intricate inlay border paths. The borders and the pallu are woven in zari regardless of the colour of the sari.

Later, in the absence of royal patronage, Paithani remained an ignored art of Maharashtra, until the Government of India along with the State Government and private enterprises took special interest in its revival. Once again Paithani is becoming an iconic art of India transcending geographical barriers and religion.

Thus we can see the enormous diversity of native textiles and how imperative it is to preserve the traditions across different regions.

(The views expressed in this column are of the author and not that of Cotton Association of India)

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					UPCOUI	NTRY SP	OT RAT	ΓES				(R	s./Qtl)
Standard Descriptions with Basic Grade & Staple in Millimetres based on Upper Half Mean Length [ By law 66 (A) (a) (4) ]								Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2020-21 Crop March 2021					
Sr. No	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade		Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 - 7.0	4%	15	10657 (37900)	10657 (37900)		10629 (37800)	10601 (37700)	10573 (37600)
2	P/H/R (SG)	ICS-201	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 - 7.0	4.5%	15	10798	10798	10798	10770 (38300)	10742	10714
3	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 - 6.0	13%	20	9448 (33600)	9448 (33600)	9448 (33600)	9448 (33600)	9420 (33500)	9336 (33200)
4	KAR	ICS-103	Fine	23mm	4.0 - 5.5	4.5%	21	8998 (32000)	9139 (32500)	9139 (32500)	9139 (32500)	9111 (32400)	9280 (33000)
5	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	24mm	4.0 – 5.5	4%	23	11107 (39500)			11107 (39500)		11107 (39500)
6	P/H/R (U) (SG)	ICS-202	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4.5%	26	12373 (44000)		12373 (44000)	12288 (43700)	12204 (43400)	12120 (43100)
7	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine		3.0 - 3.4	4%	25		10995 (39100)		10995 (39100)	10995 (39100)	10995 (39100)
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 - 4.9	4%	26	12513 (44500)		12513 (44500)	12401 (44100)	12317 (43800)	12204 (43400)
	M/M(P)/ SA/TL/G	ICS-105			3.0 - 3.4	4%	25		(40500)		(40500)	11389 (40500)	11360 (40400)
	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105			3.5 – 4.9	3.5%	26	11529 (41000)	(41000)		(41000)	11529 (41000)	11529 (41000)
	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine		3.5 – 4.9	4%	27		(44900)		(44500)		
	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		(44500)		(44300)		
	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		(44600)		(44400)		(44200)
	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 – 4.5	3%	27		(44800)		12541 (44600)		
	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	28		(44600)	` '	(44300)		
	. ( )	ICS-105				3.5%	28	(45600)	(45700)	(45700)	12795 (45500)	(45500)	(45300)
		ICS-105				3%	28	(45700)	(45800)	(45800)	12823 (45600)	(45600)	(45400)
	GUJ	ICS-105				3%	28	(45800)	(46000)	(46000)	12879 (45800)	(45700)	(45500)
	M/M(P)	ICS 105				3.5%	29	(47300)	(47500)	(47500)	13329 (47400)	(47400)	(47400)
		ICS-105			3.7 - 4.5	3%	30	(47400)	(47600)	(47600)	13357 (47500)	(47500)	(47500)
	M/M(P) SA/TL/	ICS-105 ICS-105				3%	30	(48500)	(48500)	(48500)	13582 (48300) 13610	(48300)	(48300)
	K / TN/O SA/TL/K/				3.5 - 4.2	3%	31	(48600)	(48600)	(48600)	(48400) 13779	(48400)	
	TN/O	ICS-107				4%	33	(49000)	(49000)	(49000)	(49000) 19881	(49000)	
		ICS-107				3.5%	34		(70700)	(70700)	(70700) 20528	(70700)	
	· Figures in hrack					J.J /0	94				(73000)		

(Note: Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)