



RESEARCH PAPER

Textile Dyeing and Printing Heritage in Pakistan: A Study of Khadi and Traditional Fabrics

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a country with rich traditions emerging from various faiths which are reflected in the expression of regional folk arts. Pakistan lies in an area where not only earlier known human civilizations flourished but it also witnessed continued march of vanguards of various civilizations from central Asia and Near East. The rich heritage of Pakistan's art and craft has evolved over an extended period of 5000 years. In this duration Pakistan became the crossroad of many splendid cultures and enriched the world with an amazing variety of cultural, religious, linguistic, and artistic expressions. This intermingling of cultures surprisingly influenced all kinds of arts and crafts, including textile arts. Due to diversified talents, interests and inspiration, different regions have their special identity for unique folk textile crafts. In this land, the traditional textile artisans of the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Kashmir have been pursuing their skills, as they have done for generations. Admitting diverse art heritage of distinctive regions of Pakistan, this paper overviews some historic traditional textiles nurtured here. Design is the backbone of graphic art, design that is a part of art actually a part of our life and personality and influences the enjoyment of everything to do and of everything to select. Textile designs developed from three sources the quality of the fabric the size and type of yarn and the way they are combined if more than one is used. The aim of this paper is to trace the history of textile designing and printing with special reference to khadi. It also explores the challenges of Pakistan's textile industry which has given recommendations to developing it for the progress of industrialization in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS *Doti, Handlooms, Kharkhanas, Motifs, Textile, Turban*

Introduction

The word tradition associates with manifestation of handing over or passing on, these are culturally significant ideas, and specific practices which are preserved over a long period of time. Designs of traditional textiles are links between people and regional arts; they are reflections of art movements as well as notions of human stages of development. Knowledge of historic traditional textiles is directly involved in the re-birth of the cultural awareness of place. According to Goldstein design is defined as any arrangement of lines, forms, colour, and textures. Textile design is classified into two types: structural designs and decorative designs. The first category, called structural design is characterized by construction. In other words, it can be said that the selected design is built into textile material as it is being manufactured. The design layout becomes integral part of the structure incorporated over it after its construction. The second category of textile design called decorative design is characterized as surface creation which is applied to the prepared surface for its enhancement. Among the textile designs weaving is the most frequent example of textile structural design. On the other hand, the common way of creating decorative textile design includes embroidery, printing, appliqué, dyeing and painting and various other means. At times, some decorative design can be the surface

enrichment of some already existing structural design. A wide range of diverse effects is created with the use of a single kind of textile design or creation some unique combinations of both types of textiles design techniques.

Literature Review

The art that is frankly decorative is the art to live with. It is, of all visible arts, the one art that creates in us both mood and temperament. The harmony that resides in the delicate proportions of lines and masses becomes mirrored in the mind. The repetitions of pattern give us rest. The marvels of designs stir the imagination. (Mackinsey,2019)

English cloth was symbolic of its colonial supremacy and hence of exploitation through its flooding of Indian markets with cloth from Manchester. Indians began appropriating English-styled clothing while others used Manchester Mill cloth for their traditional Indian garment of choice. This is why the Swadeshi movement became essential to the freedom struggle. Some sections of Indian society believed that if they dressed like the British gentlemen that they would be treated like British and given all that the British government would give its own people. Hence Bean concluded with the statement, "Thus a fascinating paradox was generated from the semiotic and economic characteristics of cloth" (Bean, 2014).

Thereby, inferring that that a nationalistic Indian could not promote the Indian handloom industry without dawning the khadi garb to promote self-sufficiency through economic growth by hand spinning khadi cloth. Once this was achieved the nationalistic Indian could never be considered as an Englishman or an Indian pretending to be one. It was this symbolism that Gandhi used throughout his freedom movement with the words Swaraj and Swa-deshi. "Whilst khadi represented a powerful symbolic challenge to British imperialism, Gandhi's dream that it would become the everyday dress of Indians after Independence was never realised" (Khadi Emma Tarlo "this is sacred cloth." M. K. Gandhi,2022).

To improve the situation, the government set up the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in 1956 to develop and promote Khadi production in rural India. It was faced with the tedious task of selling its products that no longer were associated with the upholding of nationalistic values. They were saddled with large quantities of unsold stock and the Herculean task of finding artisans who were motivated to preserve the art, tradition and nationalism rather than profit motivated individuals. It can therefore be understood that the KVIC needed a strategy to boost production and sales. It is probably for this reason that in the past decade, KVIC has focussed on transformations and innovations in the khadi sector and heralded the start of great interest in khadi by the new league of high fashion designers.

Methodology:

The primary data of this thesis is the fabric of Khadi which is used from Centuries and its transformation. Qualitative research method is used for sources to develop the empirical epistemology of khadi fabric. The evidences of fabric and its various forms are visible in the text.



Fig.1



Fig.2 Traditional textile

The history of ancient Indian weaving right from the Vedic period and explains how from consequent and significant periods of ancient Indian history references are made to the weaver, the implements used and the cloth. Buddhist Literature refers to weaving and mentions subsequent texts from the Jaina period that talk of cotton thread (Pandey, 2005).



Fig .3The Buddha wearing kāṣāya robes, Gandhara, 1st-2nd century CE. Height about 1 meter. Tokyo National Museum



Fig.4

Indian grammarian, Panini, also talked of weaving in his texts. Panini’s grammar texts can be traced to between the 4th and 6th century BCE. Hence, the existence of a weaving sector dates back to a very ancient period. Proof of India’s ancient weaving history is also seen in references by historians like Herodotus who talks of ancient Indians of the time wearing clothes woven from cotton. The Mauryan period in Indian history saw the textile sector show great development according to Kautilya or Chanakya. Both men and women are seen to have been part of the spinning and weaving industry in the Mauryan period as seen earlier in ancient Indian Vedic periods (Pandey, 2005).

Hindush soldier, wearing a Dhoti and a turban.

Patanjali, the ancient sage famous for his “Yoga Sutras” has mentioned about the quality of cloth woven in India at the time. This points to the fact that as early as 200 BCE which is when the Yoga Sutra is said to have been written, the cotton weaving industry was in existence and was thriving in India (Pandey, 2005).As documented history moved towards the Mughal period, Varanasi, which was the capital of Kasi and a religious city became the capital of the brocade and silk weaving industry. In the ancient Jatakas of the Buddhist period, Kasi is mentioned as the centre for cotton and silk weaving.



Fig.5The Region of Kasi where Silk was used for fabric

During the Mughal period which lasted until approximately 1720, textiles were considered to be significantly important. Emperor Akbar gave great prominence to he textiles, their designing, weaving, printing and embroidery as seen in this statement, “Akbar set up royal workshops (karkhanas) patterned on the workshops of the Safavid Persian court, over much of his empire”(Dey, 1970).



Fig.6 Maharaja Shri Ishwari Prasad Narayan Singh Bahadur, the Maharajah of Benares (1822 - 89), wearing a handwoven Banarasi brocade sherwani (Source: Royal Collection Trust, UK)

Antique Indian Silk and Gold Brocade Robe - Mughal Dynasty 1526 - 1857 C.E.

Through the entire Mughal period great innovations were made to the industry and intricate weaves that were highly sought after by the nobility were produced. During this period two types of weaving industries were seen to develop. One that was independent and was owned and financed by the weaver or artisan and the other was the “Karkhana” as mentioned earlier. The Karkhanas were controlled by the rulers. Large Karkhanas were spread all over Mughal controlled India and hence when the Mughal empire’s control over India waned so did the Karkhanas and so did the weaving industry (Dey, 1970).

Antique Indian Silk and Gold Brocade Skirt - Mughal Dynasty 1526 - 1875 C.E. (Source: Textileart.com)



Fig.7 Mughal Era Male Coat



Fig.8 Female Slik Costume

Handloom Industry in the Colonial Era

The East India Company (EIC) came into existence in 1600. The EIC secured exclusive rights to trade with India which led to the establishment of a trading post in Surat in 1613 (Abelow, n.d.). The Company was actively involved in the trading of handloom textiles which were much sought after for their fine and rich textures. The company The battle of Plassey in 1757 which was fought under Robert Clive’s leadership paved the way for greater profits as the EIC assumed control of three districts as seen to be stated in the paper, “However in 1757, after Fig.9 the battle of Plassey, the flow of money increased significantly since they came into possession of three districts from Midnapore, Burdwan, Bengal as well as Chittagong. Along with these districts they also got hold of the Calcutta Zemindary” (Van & Singh, 2020). Hence, their territorial dominance provided the EIC the authority to control the market and procure taxes on behalf of the Emperor. Such control ensured that they had a complete monopoly allowing them to utilise the market

advantageously. Large stocks of precious handlooms were purchased at very low prices and sold in Europe for a high cost.

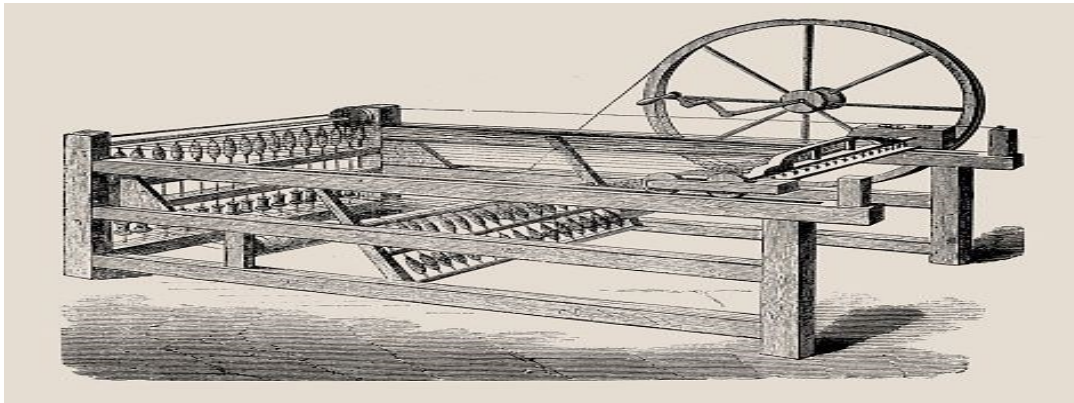


Fig.10.Handloom

The whole environment of trade of Indian goods saw a shift in 1760 with the advent of the Industrial revolution (IR) in England. The Industrial Revolution which created a shift from human and animal driven labour to the use of machinery and manufacturing processes created an increased use of steam to generate energy to drive machinery. A myriad of tools entered the production arena during these years. The Industrial revolution signalled a significant phase in Colonialism as it led to the takeover of the Indian markets by machine-made British cloth, destroying the Indian handloom sector. In 1773 a Governor General and a supervising council were appointed to monitor the actions of the EIC. By 1784 with the passing of the "India Act", the powers of the EIC would have been restricted, giving most of the power over India to the Governor General, thus signalling the decline of the EIC and the rise of colonial supremacy over India (Abelow,n.d.).Between the Industrial Revolution and Colonial supremacy over India, England began using India as an easy market for machine-made cloth from Lancashire's Mills, leading to the decline of the Indian handloom industry (Van & Singh, 2020).

Owing to the risk of succumbing to poverty many uncompensated weavers switched to agriculture and other low paying professions. The loss of income predestined their inability to invest in advancing technology or other resources to boost production. Thereby initiating a major decline in the Indian handloom industry. The decline of Mughal patronage and consequent shutting down of Karkhanas are a contributing factor to the decline of hand spun and handloom textiles.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress (INC) was formed; the organisation's early aim was not to revolt but to ask for certain reforms. W Travis Hanes 111 states that western educated Indians wished for a place in accordance with their rights under British rule in the colonial government. (Hanes, 1993). Hence, it is seen that the INC's aim was to establish a sort of amalgamation of the two cultures that they were part of. It was when Gandhi began gaining prominence in the Congress that the freedom struggle gained high momentum and became a movement that needed to encompass the country as a whole. Therefore, it was necessary to unify the country against the British and for this Gandhi needed a unifying factor which would symbolically bring the country together. Khadi was then strategically utilised and projected as this unifying factor. (Khadi Emma Tarlo "this is sacred cloth." M. K. Gandhi).

Khadi in Colonial India

To examine the role Khadi played in the nationalist struggle a study of its association with Gandhi must be made. Gandhi played a pivotal role in the rise of Khadi to becoming a

national identity which could be equated to being sacred. (Khadi Emma Tarlo “this is sacred cloth.” M. K. Gandhi). Gandhi embodied his own ideals, by changing his own style of dressing and stressing on the “symbolism of cloth”(Khadi Emma Tarlo “this is sacred cloth.” M. K. Gandhi). Gandhi set an example and practised what he preached, thus effectively making Khadi a symbol of freedom and self- sufficiency. But this change was not adopted by Gandhi from the advent of his political life. His own experiences led him to make this decision. His autobiography, “My Experiments with Truth describes his various experiences as a young man who was drawn towards western culture. One can observe its function in portraying his oneness “with the values of modernity, civilization and progress.” (Khadi Emma Tarlo “this is sacred cloth.” M. K. Gandhi).

However, this western form of dressing did not save him from openly racist attacks while in South Africa where he was a lawyer and activist between the years of 1893 and 1914. According to Bean it was this realisation that changed Gandhi by 1908 when he stated in the “Hind Swaraj” that just by adopting the English style of clothing instead of the traditional garb that is suited to home environments it could not be considered as a benchmark of civilisation and that the lack of it in an Indian did not prove an Indian to be uncivilised or savage (Bean, 2014). Gandhi then began talking about the significance of the “Economics of Cloth” (Bean, 2014). One can observe that its role was fundamental for each Indian to understand how the British had systematically destroyed the Indian economy and that was the sole cause of poverty and famine in the country. (Goswamy,2000)

Traditional Textile in Pakistan: A textile is any flexible material consisting of a network of natural or artificial fibres. For every piece of textiles, design is an integral part of its form as well as its embellishment. Textile Design is classified into two types: structural and decorative. Structural textile design is the one which is built into the cloth during the process of its manufacturing, weaving is the most common method of producing structural design. Decorative design is applied to the surface of the cloth to further ornament it. The common method of producing decorative design in the field of textiles includes printing, dyeing, embroidery, appliqué, painting as well as any other surface enrichment. As a textile decorative technique embroidery has possessed enormous potential since early days. Some evidence show that embroidery was a craft known to the Indus Valley civilization people. Embroideries from Sind had been known and admired by the visitors since Marco Polo’s Day. The folk embroideries of Sind are among the richest in South Asia, Tharparker produces some of the most spectacular embroideries. Embroideries of Sindh region Historic PHULKARI of Punjab consists of Floral patterns abstracted and arranged into geometric motifs indicative of strong Central Asian influence. Dense areas of stitch very often cover the entire ground cloth.

EMBROIDERIES OF SINDH

AN INSIGHT TO THE EXQUISITE CRAFT OF HAND EMBROIDERY

COMPILED BY: SABIKA QAISAR, SADIYA TARIQ, MAHAM ADNAN AND WAJEEHA KHAN

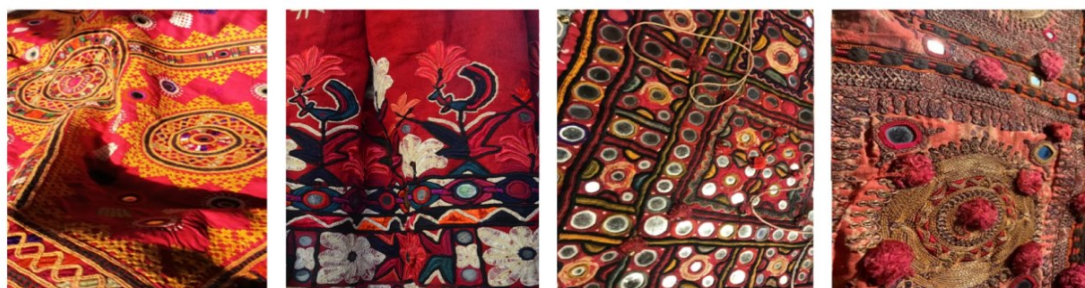


Fig.11



Fig.12



The Kashmiri motifs are exclusive in their own way, depicting nature and are strongly influenced by the naturalistic Chinese style. Chinar leaves, fruits such as cherries, plums and grapes, local birds such as the parrot and kingfisher, and a wide range of flowers including lilies, tulips and lotuses are composed into flowing arabesques. The handloom weaves of Pakistan have been spinning their magic for generations. Cotton and silk fabrics produced today carry on a century 'old tradition in design and craftsmanship incorporating modern quality and design techniques. The weavers are not only expert craftsmen, but artists who capture the spirit of the past in the unique traditional designs through bold use of colours and textures. The wonders of handloom include Sussi, striped and checked material in silk and cotton; Dari and Khais, used in bedcovers or wraps; Brocade and Kumkhuab, a fine hands pun creation of silk interwoven with gold or silver thread in a rainbow of colours and designs.

Kashmiri Motifs

The Subcontinent's ancient techniques of applying designs on textiles with pigments and dyes are admired as one of the greatest Block Printings the essence of Sindh and the crafts that make Pakistan stand out in the world, it is one of the numerous arts and crafts that are slowly dying and so have to be renewed and brought back to life. Ajraks are traditionally used for bedcovers, skirt material, men's turbans and women and men's cheddars. Tie and dye is an ancient technique of the Subcontinent. Tie and dye is more commonly termed Chunari / Bandhanna or Leherya. (Khtsenkova,2017)

It is highly endorsed to embrace our textile heritage as our unique identity. Efforts should be made to enhance the adornment of textile products for these historic traditional textile applications. Traditional textile applications can be used as contemporary designing a, in fashion, and home textiles. There is a great need to

establish a well-connected chain of institutes throughout the region to preserve and promote these historic traditional textiles. It is recommended that this is a high time to proudly step in modern world with our textile heritage as our unique identity. While Pakistan's textile heritage is a source of pride and cultural identity, it also faces various challenges that threaten its sustainability and viability in the modern era. (Sumner,2019)

Economic Pressures: The globalization of the textile industry and the rise of mass-produced, machine-made textiles have placed economic pressures on traditional artisans and craftsmen, many of whom struggle to compete with cheaper, factory-produced alternatives. As a result, traditional textile crafts are at risk of being marginalized or lost altogether, jeopardizing the livelihoods of artisans and the preservation of Pakistan's cultural heritage. (Crang,2009)

Technological Advancements: While technological advancements have led to innovations in textile production and design, they have also contributed to the decline of traditional handcrafted textiles. Automated machinery and digital printing techniques offer faster, cheaper alternatives to handcrafted textiles, posing a challenge to artisans who rely on traditional techniques and skills. Balancing the preservation of traditional craftsmanship with the adoption of modern technologies is essential for the sustainable growth of Pakistan's textile industry.

Sustainability and Environmental Concerns: The use of synthetic dyes, chemical treatments, and non-biodegradable materials in textile production poses environmental risks and sustainability challenges. Traditional textiles, which often utilize natural dyes, organic fibres, and eco-friendly techniques, offer a more sustainable alternative to mass-produced textiles. Embracing sustainable practices, such as using natural dyes, promoting organic farming, and supporting fair trade initiatives, can help mitigate the environmental impact of textile production and preserve Pakistan's natural resources for future generations.

Cultural Appropriation: The commercialization and appropriation of traditional textile designs and motifs without proper attribution or respect for cultural heritage pose ethical and cultural challenges. Protecting traditional designs, techniques, and intellectual property rights is essential for safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of Pakistan's textile heritage and ensuring that artisans receive fair recognition and compensation for their work. (Nupur,2019)

Pakistan's Textile Heritage

Despite the challenges facing Pakistan's textile heritage, there are numerous opportunities to preserve, promote, and revitalize traditional textile crafts for future generations.

- **Education and Training:** Investing in education and training programs that teach traditional textile techniques and skills to the younger generation is crucial for preserving Pakistan's textile heritage and ensuring the continuity of artisanal traditions. By providing opportunities for apprenticeships, workshops, and vocational training, artisans can pass down their knowledge and expertise to the next generation of textile craftsmen.
- **Market Access and Fair Trade:** Creating market access and fair trade opportunities for traditional artisans can help support their livelihoods, empower local communities, and promote the value of handcrafted textiles in the global marketplace. Supporting initiatives such as craft fairs, artisan cooperatives, and online marketplaces can connect artisans with consumers who appreciate the beauty, quality, and cultural significance of traditional textiles.

- **Innovation and Collaboration:** Encouraging innovation and collaboration between traditional artisans, designers, and entrepreneurs can drive creativity and revitalization in Pakistan's textile industry. By combining traditional techniques with modern design aesthetics, artisans can create innovative products that appeal to contemporary consumers while preserving the authenticity and heritage of Pakistan's textile traditions.
- **Cultural Preservation and Documentation:** Documenting and preserving Pakistan's textile heritage through research, documentation, and archival initiatives can help raise awareness of its cultural significance and promote appreciation for traditional textile crafts. Museums, galleries, and cultural institutions can play a vital role in showcasing traditional textiles, educating the public about their history and cultural significance, and fostering pride in Pakistan's rich textile heritage. (KVIC,2019)

Conclusion

Pakistan's textile heritage is a treasure trove of artistic expression, cultural identity, and craftsmanship that reflects the country's rich history, traditions, and creativity. From the hand-woven fabrics of Khadi to the intricate embroidery of Kashmiri shawls, Pakistan's textile industry encompasses a diverse array of traditions, techniques, and textiles that are celebrated and admired worldwide. By preserving, promoting, and revitalizing traditional textile crafts, Pakistan can ensure the continued vitality and sustainability of its textile heritage for generations to come. In the present context textile is thriving for energy crisis in Pakistan. To overcome these difficulties Pakistan must take drastic steps to preserve her cultural and textile heritage.

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