

A DETAILS STUDY ON MADHUBANI ART OF MITHILA, BIHAR

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ABSTRACT:

India has a rich storage of art. From the traditional to the contemporary, India is fast budding itself as a key intention for those who love art. India is distinct from its rich traditional heritage of Tribal/Folk Arts and Culture. Since the days of distant past, the diversified art and cultural forms produced by the tribal and rural populace of India have continued to prove their creative splendour.

Women in the Mithila region of Bihar in north India have painted colourful propitious images on the interior walls of their homes on the juncture of domestic rites since at least the 14th century, it's called Madhubani Art. It is a famous and traditional art form of Bihar. Madhubani art of the Bihar state has been undergoing alteration where its application in the original composition has been diminished owing to social and economic changes nowadays. There is a requirement to explore possibilities for the conservation of this art form viz other artistic media for future generations. The cause of using traditional motifs in textiles is to keep our designs or motifs living. Indian folk arts with painting play an essential role in generating new designs. Escalating demands of customers need modification in the fashion industry with respect to design, colour, style and technique. So in an attempt to add one more measurement in the appliance of Madhubani designs on textiles, the present study was planned. The effort was targeted in the direction of finding the probability of applying Madhubani designs on textile articles utilizing the hand painting. Madhubani motifs/designs were adapted for centre design and border design. Total thirty-six motifs/designs were developed keeping in mind their suitability for articles like cushion cover, folder and table cloth. Developed design sheets were subjected to visual appraisal for selection of one finest design in each category by the pane of thirty respondents to find out the suitability of the developed designs for hand painting. Finally, three articles were ready by using selected designs and these prepared articles were highly acceptable by the respondents.

KEYWORDS: Madhubani Painting, Painting in Mithila region, Art,

INTRODUCTION:

Painting is generally done by folk artists or classical artists in three different ways:

A) wall-painting (*bhitti chitra*), B) canvas-painting (*pata chitra*) and C) floor-painting (*aripana*). Along with these the wall-painting and the floor-painting are very popular in Mithila region. The Wall-paintings or Mural paintings, popularly known as Mithila painting or Madhubani painting (Thakur: 1982). Madhubani is a district of North Bihar, a place where art and crafts have reached its step of excellence. This division of the country is famous for wall paintings, floor paintings, canvas painting and decorative crafts like wooden toys, Pottery toys and papier-mâché products (www.madhubaniart.com). The tradition of Madhubani painting of Bihar has continued unbroken to the present day and has yet developed with the times and changing more. These paintings are practiced by the women folk, which is an entirely feminine school of folk painting. The attractive canvas paintings seen at every house in Madhubani are very much gorgeous, whether painted with colours or black ink. Madhubani paintings are practiced till date in the village of Jitwarpur, Ranti, Rasidpur, Bacchi, Rajangarh, etc. Madhubani painting is a rich traditional style, rooted in region of Mithila in Bihar. It is not only limited to the artist of the villages of Madhubani. But also cannoisseur of art living beyond all over the country as well as abroad. This art is said to date back to the times of the Ramayana when

it is believed Janaka who ruled Mithila, commissioned artist make painting on the occasion of his daughter Sita to Rama (www.mithilaart.com). Origin of this durability may be traced to the constant spell of Hindu role in Mithila from 1097 AD to c1550AD under the *Karnatas* and the *Oinavaras* which continued uninterruptedly under the *Khandavala* dynasty (Darbhanga raj) till the present day (Thakur: 1882). About the history of Madhubani painting, artist Rajkumar Lal mentioned, "in around 1934 the place Madhubani attacked by a big earthquake. In 1960, few members of the All India Handicrafts Board, Delhi came to Madhubani for survey. At that time they attracted by the wall painting of Madhubani. They gave suggestions to some local artisans to paint on cloth and paper in their traditional way. They also encouraged the women of Madhubani for commercial sale". Since then the painting medium has diversified. Wall paintings were transplanted to handmade paper (which was of poster size) and gradually it commended for other mediums and motifs like greeting cards, dress materials, etc. It is presumed that this was the turning point of Madhubani folk painting. He also said that his grandmother Jagadamba devi was first artist of Madhubani painting who got national award in 1970 and Padmasree award in 1975 from government of India.



Figure1: traditional Mithila painting depicting religious theme (Krishna leela)

ORIGIN OF MITHILA:

Madhubani paintings are alleged to be originated from the town of Madhubani of Mithila in the North Indian state of Bihar. The accurate cause or time of the origination of Madhubani art is unidentified. However, the legend has it that it came into fashion during the time of Ramayana, when Janak ordered the artists in his own realm to make gorgeous paintings for the wedding of his daughter Sita, to Lord Rama. This art, with a tradition going back to the centuries, is today an exclusive monopoly of women artists. They paint figures from nature and myth on household and village walls to mark the seasonal festivals of the religious year, for special events of the life-cycle, and when marriages are being arranged they arrange intricately planned wedding proposal. Firstly, the women in Madhubani started creation the paintings on the walls of their huts. With time, the artists began creating Madhubani art on paper, cloth and also canvas.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MADHUBANI ART:

In Mithila, this Madhubani painting is three forms-

1) Painting on Floor: Painting is made on the floor with the paste of crude (Arva) rice; this paste is called “pithar” in the local language. Apart from the floor, it is also made on banana leaves and pidhi (wooden seats). A woman or a girl does it using her right hand’s fingertips. In tusari puja, a festival celebrated by the unmarried girls in order to please Gauri and Shiva to have an appropriate husband; this painting is made with dry rice powder in white, yellow and red colours. These are made in various types of suiting different junctures.

2) Paintings on walls: Wall paintings are multicoloured. Three to four colours are usually used to depict the paintings. Pictures include those of carriers of fish, curd, jackfruit, trees of fruits such as mango and pomegranate and birds like the peacock. Attractive floral motifs decorate the wall on four sides of the entrance.

3) Paintings on movable objects: It includes those on clay models of pots, elephants, birds, bamboo structure, mats, fan and objects made of sikkhi (thin wood). Decorative multicoloured designs made on the faces of the brides and sumangalis also fall in this category. Many of these paintings have great tantric significance.



Figure 2: A traditional Mithila painting on wall depicting religious theme (God and goddess)

Madhubani painting is an emblematical expression of day-to-day experiences and ideas. As such, symbolism, plainness and prettiness hold them together in a single school of traditional art. The symbols that these Maithili painters use have their exact meanings as, for instance, fish symbolize fertility, procreation and good luck, peacocks are related with romantic love and religion, and serpents are the heavenly protectors. Characterized by vivacious use of colour, underlying symbolism and traditional geometric designs supporting the main theme, the Indian folk art form of Madhubani succeeded in generating a place for itself in the international house of fame and is now recognized globally. The Government of India is also paying its tribute by starting training programs educating people on Madhubani paintings.



Figure 3: A Contemporary Mithila paintings depicting symbolic themes

Till date the artisan of Madhubani paintings are used colours directly from nature. Lamp soot served as a source of black, White from powdered rice, green was made from the leaves of the apple tree and Tilcoat, blue from the seeds of Sikkot and indigo, yellow was drawn from the parts of singar flower or Jasmine flower, bark of peepal was to be boiled to make a part of saffron colour, red was made from kusum flower and red sandal wood. To make the painting last long as well as take vividness they mixed gum with colour. Artist Shanti Devi says that the use of synthetic colour and modern round brushes are programs the cotton tipped bamboo sticks and stiff twigs that used to serve as brushes still a few years back. A living artist Gouri Shankar interpreted that, at first he made rough sketch then detail drawing of subject matter is finished with bold strait and curve lines. At last the drawing is filled with various colours whenever it is necessary. The colours in the paintings are applied flat and the figures are rendered with double outlines with the space in between filled with thin crosshatchings or slanting lines. Over a period of time distinct style evolved with practitioners from deferent social background bringing their own word view and aesthetics understanding into their paintings. These styles can broadly be categorized as geru, bharhi, kachni, gobar and godna.

MATERIAL AND METHOD OF MADHUBANI ART:

The main focus of the study was to generate design Sheets, by the adaptation of *Madhubani* designs of Bihar region for textile designing through hand painting.

Traditional designs of *Madhubani painting* of the Bihar region were collected for the study from a variety of secondary sources like books, cards, internet and library.

The selected motifs were used to develop designs sheets for hand painting. Thirty-six designs in different categories i.e., centre design and border designs were adapted to make them suitable for hand painting. The designs were developed keeping in mind their suitability for articles.

Development of designs sheets for the textile article was followed by the predilections of respondents for identifying the best design for preparing each article inspired by *Madhubani* painting. The developed designs were shown to 30 respondents in the age group of 20-35 years, selected randomly which included faculty members of the Department of Home Science and PG students. The respondents were evaluated the one developed design for each article on the basis of motifs. Weighted mean scores (WMS) were calculated and ranks were assigned to the developed designs. The designs of all the articles which obtained the highest rank were considered best for preparing articles.

Finally, three articles namely cushion folder and table cloth were developed using one preferred design by the respondent. The prepared particles were evaluated by 30 consumers to assess their acceptability and colour combination, innovativeness, overall appearance using a three-point rating scale.

DETAILS STUDY ON MADHUBANI ART:

Thematically, Madhubani paintings are mainly based on religion and mythology. In the paintings of slight tradition, Gods like Raja Salesh, Buddheshwar, Jutki Malini, Reshma, and the likes happens in profusion. Great tradition is a honour to the Hindu Gods like Krishna-Radha, Shiva-Parvati, Ganesha, Maa Durga, and the likes. Nonetheless, natural scenes of villages, everyday life, flora and fauna which are so much a part of life of this school of painters also entered the area of Godhna paintings. A trip to the Jitwarpur village of Madhubani district enlightened about the Madhubani painting. The attempt of the artists makes one realize about the time they give for their painting and how their lives are completely involved around their painting as this is the any source while fetches then bread and butter. Everybody knows that Mithila is the place of birth of Sita and that is why the artisan envisaged sundry scene of Ramayana. According to them fish is symbol of good luck and sanctity. Fish also symbolize water with which it is related. Besides nonfigurative human figure the motifs and design are seen in Madhubani painting such as; flora and fauna, curve linear devices, circle in series, series of short lines ,peacock, fish, flower, birds, animal and other natural life. The vital subject of Madhubani paintings is the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The outline is generally left uncoloured, in order to make an optical depth and aesthetical taste. Whereas religious painting contain different god and goddesses, material and attractive paintings contain verity symbol and prosperity and fertility such as elephant horse, lion parrot, turtle, bamboo, lotus, flower, *purania* leaves, *pana* flower, creepers, swastika, *samka* etc. forms on the background. The human figures are mostly abstract and linear in forms and the animals are usually naturalistic and are consistently depicted in profile. Border of Madhubani painting has equal important as like as theme and style. To make border attractive the artists are applied strong linear design of geometrical symbols and other flora and fauna. Madhhubani painting has become major part of their daily life and it is easily understood when anybody visits their house then he/she will be found somebody is working on this painting like sharee, bad cover, mural painting, paper painting etc. Artist Komolesh Korn express his view, at first he prepared line drawing of different image with water proof ink on handmade paper where these two products are accessible in the market. And this way they made various line drawing painting near about 100/150 of deferent size (small size). Many foreigners come to the village of Madhubani for research purpose and they purchase these painting and also give commercial order to the artisans and then they apply colours on these black and white linear paintings on the spot and sale. All the artists of Madhubani are used natural and synthetic colours and no doubt they are enjoying their tradition but present days they make painting according to customers demand. Some artists are expert in free hand drawing. *Kohober* is one of the essential types of Madhubani painting which prepared at the time of marriage. Marriage of *Bihari* people and *kohober* painting is synonymous to each other. *Kohaber* indicates a especially painted room with elaborate paintings on the walls were married couple enters for their first meeting after marriage. These particular wall paintings are done only by some expert women artist. They used only red colour on *kohobar* painting, no other colour is allowed to be used except red which is traditionally supposed to be very propitious.

Madhubani artist has a sufficient demand in foreign country and it is proved by the experience of some eminent artist of Jitwarpur village of Madhubani. According to Rajkumar Lal, on his second visit to Mauritius had a very positive reaction by the audience about the workshop, he said "*I was surprised to receive New Year card this year (2010) on madhubani painting in Mauritius style*". The principal of the college of art and crafts (patna) Anunoy Choubey said, "*The world of Madhbani painting continues to evolve and influence other forms of contemporary art today*". About contemporary field of Madhubani painting, Choubey express her view "*I was invited to Mauritius to set up the department, there was tremendous enthusiasm. It was a new journey for Madhubani painting crossing over boundaries and culture*". .Now painting are done on jute bags, sarees, other attire, pen holders, file covers, mobile cover etc. It had picked up fast to provide a full of Bihar far away from our shores. What is however distinct is the innovations in the Madhubani painting to portray Mauritius culture and history. It has become quite popular, with the combination of regional colours and theme giving it an completely new aspect. Madhubani art has been introduced in a new place and a new context and its relevance and meaning tasted by non Madhubani artist, so successfully, to be a testimony to the eminence of this art form from Bihar (Hindustan Times, Saturday 2010). This proved that

Madhubani is amalgamated with other foreign style and this type of workshop will help to prolong the tradition of Mithila or Madhubani painting.

Beside this, some centres are playing crucial role to increase the cultural scenario of Bihar. Amongst them Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Ministry of Textile, Government of India is working under Government in Bihar state and this give chances to convey their (Madhubani artisans) own cultural activity in the deferent places. Carpet training officer Bipin Kr Das says that 38 training centres in Bihar state are running on. 21 centres in North Bihar and 17 in South Bihar are located. The main objective of these kinds of centres are to develop the skill of artisans of various places of state, to give a financial assistant for capacity building and to conduct awareness-cum-training workshops/seminar for artisans, NGOs etc. office of development commissioner (handicrafts) ministry of textile, government of India has various type of schemes like design and technology up gradation, training and extension ,financial assistance SHDC/Apex societies, marketing support and service, Babashaheb Ambedkar Hastashilp Vikash Yojona etc. up gradation of artisan skill, enhancement and diversification of product, progress of new design and prototypes, supply of improved/modern equipment to the craft persons renewal of rare crafts to preserve the traditional heritage, preservation of traditional art and crafts of high aesthetics value, etc. A training centre Upendra Maharathi handicrafts institute of Patna, bearing a six months course of Madhubani painting under the scheme of Indian government. There some particular teachers are employed to train Madhubani paintings to students. Some odd collections of painting and decorative crafts are well preserved in this institution. Sri Nagar Kishore Das a Madhubani based artists of Jitwarpur is one of the trainers in this organization. The materials which are used for the paintings are; hardboards, papers, fabric colours and enamel colours. As it is a short term course so organic colours which takes a long process and time are replaced with readymade colours.

CONCLUSION:

Madhubani paintings, one of the most celebrated works of art from Bihar are accomplished by generations of skilled artists. Being vivacious and symbolic at the same time, these successfully depict all aspects of tribal life. In other words, these are the arch representative of folk art in visual form. Madhubani paintings is one dominant artistic expression among its peers of handicrafts made by natural resources like Bamboo and other herbal ingredient, arts like siki-mauni, sujni and sitalpati, godhna, sculptures of mythological sama-chakeva and numerous other folk art forms which are very close to daily life style of Maithali rural peoples are equally vibrant. In fashion world, there is all the time a demand of something novel and artistic. The mix of Madhubani design with hand painting is providing an imaginative and fresh collection to the people who want to adopt their tradition with minute modernization. Adapting and improving the designs refers to modify it such that it will be easier to produce or easier to maintain. With the changing world of fashion the field of textile demands for unique, different and fresh designs which give us the opportunity to use the adapted traditional motifs.

All the designs and the product prepared by us are preferred by the immediate consumers. Thus, in the textile sector the adapted design can be used through the surface enrichment for product diversification and value addition. The continuing market in this art through art the world is a tribute to the resourcefulness of the women of Mithila who have successfully transferred their techniques of bhatti chitra or wall painting to the medium of paper, and have resisted the temptation to adopt their traditional designs too freely in pursuit of unpredictable public tastes.

This type of work also motivates people to come up with an ingenious work, which indirectly help in promotion the art and craft.

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