

Dabu: A Comprehensive Study of Mud Resist Print's Evolution in Traditional to Contemporary

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Abstract: Indian textile history is very ancient and Prosperous. Indian clothing and motif style have always attracted the global marketplace. India's textile industry is rising and achieving innovation and sustainability to eradicate the increasing use of chemical dyes and materials to make them environment friendly. Even though the eco-designs and opting natural sources with regional character maintaining sustainability is a crucial aspect of these Eastern Rajasthan mud resist prints. Dabu or Daboo is mud resist block printed classic textile which has delicate and stunning design with elegant motifs on natural fabric with metal or wood blocks that have been carved and stamped utilizing mud-resist print techniques. This study pursues to changes of motives, methods, raw material and fabric materials in traditional to contemporary of Dabu prints methods that are in threat of going extinct in their original form. While the present study will focus on craft in terms of modification, painstaking method, chemical dyes, colours, motifs and beautiful pattern which are handed down preserved over generations. In terms of technique, it differs from Ajarakh and Bagru Prints. Simultaneously it is widespread that Dabu is valuable block printed textile that should be nearing extinction. Additional research on the technique, process, motifs, vivid colors, and final product was required for the conservation.

Keywords: Dabu prints, sustainability, motifs, mud- resist techniques

1. Theoretical Overview

The Rajasthani royals supported the printing industry. They were crucial to the persistence and advancement of printing. Despite royal patronage, many centers remained destitute. These centers engaged in the traditional printing technique known as "DABU."

In eastern Rajasthan, India, amongst the most primitive mud-resist printing techniques. Even though a diversity of printing methods is working in this area, "DABU" is Rajasthan's utmost commonly applied and ecologically beneficial printing technique.

Dabu was predominantly admired in Rajasthani regions with plentiful water supplies. Bagru, Barmer in the Marwar region, Kaladera near Udaipur, Jodhpur, Chittorgarh Akola, etc. are places in Rajasthan where people practice with nominal alterations to the material's composition, raw materials, colors, and motifs. Dabu, which derives its name from the Hindi word dabana, which means "to press," is a mud-resist printing method.

It is a form of mud-resist printing which is the practice of combining block print, resist techniques, and at times some dyes produced from botanicals. Along with this, it is a very detailed procedure that includes the addition of individual prints and motifs onto the fabric so that they are able to reveal the unique pattern of the design and its beauty. Dabu prints material performs a big position in the cultural area at the same time as it is cherished due to its first-class and aesthetic appeal.

Historical overview of hand block printing can be traced from Indus valley civilisation. Gujrat and Rajasthan is the most prolific producers of printed textiles in India, from the early 18th century. Chippas, the Hindu caste of textile printers and dyes is the printing community of Rajasthan. 'Chapna'- meaning 'to engrave' was derived because the Chhipa's community, prints colored designs on cotton cloths with the help of wooden blocks. Chippa community works in harmony with other communities of Neelgars (indigo dyers), Rangrez (dyers) and Dhobis (washer men) to create delicate "DABU" prints.

Types of Dabu:

Kalidar Dabu: *kali mitti* (clay) is kept in water for overnight. On a plain surface stone or floor, mud sink in water is kept. Finally stained *chuna* (Calcium hydroxide) and whole wheat flour is added to this mud. Then whole mixed material is blended & *Gond* (gum) solution is continually added to form this mixture. **Dolidar Dabu:** Is the techniques where *gond*, *chuna* and *Multani mitti* is mixed separately in water and kept overnight in the enormous amount. the solution of *gond* and *chuna* is brewed properly next day and to prepare thick paste required amount of *multani mitti* is added. This mixture is strained with thin muslin cloth to dispose rough particles. This solution is kept in clay vessel. **Gawarwali Dabu:** A bean vegetable (*gawar*) is roasted till they get brown to prepare fine powder. *Gwar* powder is mixed with a small amount of boiled sodium carbonate which is then dried and grind to make it fine, then mixed with gum solution. This solution is made thick or thin according to the requirement. **Mein ki Dabu:** In this techniques wax are used on cloths to resist the different designs this method is also popular in Rajasthan.



Figure 1: Images of Dabu print

MOTIFS

Motifs and designs: In dabu techniques motifs used are nature-based ones of peacocks, mangoes, leaves, boota also called boota, sunflower and animal figures.

Geometric shapes, and different lines may also be used. The designs are repeated over and over again on the fabric. Sometimes, the mud paste may be cracked and leaked due to consistency of paste, but this process creating a unique vein like effect similar to Batik.

Dabu process:

Wooden blocks play important role in Dabu printing. Craftsman prepare wooden Blocks like geometrical, floral n other varieties of various motifs. Mostly, wooden blocks are carved minimum half an inch deep which is made by Dalbergia sissoo also known as rosewood, teakwood and gurjan trees. Artisans use mostly three types of blocks, named – data, rekh and gond. *Dabu* is applied on the cloth using a *datta* block mostly. The *Dabu* printing is done on table while covering from lots of layers. The process of this printing fabric are washed in solution of castor oil for two to three days to remove all impurities and then dried in sunlight. This technique completed from the overnight soaked mud paste in two distinct steps. Firstly, washed cloths spread over the tables then apply soaked overnight mud paste to create different motifs. After applied paste wooden powder used on wet paste design to absorbed extra water. Next step of this technique's fabric is kept in sun light to dry the designed motifs and then dip in indigo dyes tubs for 20 minutes hold to absorbed dyes by cloths. After completion of this step again fabric will be kept in sun light to dry the indigo solution. At last dried prepare fabric will wash till remove extra colour perfectly. The process can be repeated for double dabu and triple times as per as required designs. Finally, the non-printed 'which is resist from dyes' area has been created a design after the washing and dabu fabric will be prepared.

Dabu and Communities:

The *Chhipa* community has expertise their tradition from 450 years, transferring knowledge onto generations of other artisan. The *chhipa* community involve the mud resist technique also known as dabu with help of natural source dyes to create different patterned and delicate coloured printed textiles. *Chhipa* is community and also called society of block printers, the *chhipa* originated of hand block printing techniques. Most of the products of hand block is printed with vegetable and organic dyes. The term "*Chhipa*" created history of dyeing, printing, and other related crafts work like bandhej and varieties of tie n dye method. The art of printing is connected from Indus Valley Civilization. When the *Chhipa* took up the craft then unique art of printing techniques form eventually spread over the countries and slowly covered all over world. Contribution of *chhipa* community is remarkable

to this society, economic growth, and also in cultural diversification. *Chhipa* has also contribution in industrialization of textile sector especially in dyeing and printing field.

2. Review of Literature

Kaur, Jasminder (2012) The study focused on the various types of Dabu print motifs and the Dabu print production process. The study discovered that the Chippas community is experiencing difficulties as a result of the time commitment and low profit, and they have chosen another craft for employment; however, some Chippas are still working on regaining their lost glory.

Sharma, Madhu & Chauhan, V. & Kaystha, H. (2016) study reveal that Dabu prints are also known as Akola prints. It has been observed in this study that batkhare terms are used for wooden blocks that are used in Dabu prints. Bat = design, kade = printer, and Akola (place of Chittorgarh) is the second Sanganer of Rajasthan.

Apingekar, Megha & Srivastava, Srishti (2020) study underline that Hand block printing can be used in interiors such as walls, doors, and so on. In this study, it was discovered that wooden blocks can be used in plaster and were successful. Some artists are struggling as traditional printing methods become extinct. This experiment has been very useful for the employment of artisans.

Khan, Asma (2022) the study focused on their motifs, sustainability, and fastness, among other aspects. In this study, *dabu* is regarded as an embodiment of elegance, as it utilizes paste derived from natural dye sources.

Singh, J. Hada, & Meena, Chet Ram (2022) study was conducted on the sustainability of resist printing techniques. The findings indicate that Dabu printing differs from Ajrakh prints and also requires enhancements in its design techniques to achieve sustainability.

Preetha, R. (2024) research on the origins of Dabu revealed that it was created before to the Mughals' invasion of India, as well as on its methods. Study found that Dabu, also known as Daboo, is a traditional mud resist block printing technique that produces amazing designs and traditional patterns on natural fabric with dark earthy tones. Blocks of metal or wood that have been carved are used. researcher uses mud-resist print techniques to create the stamp.

Singh, Shraddha. (2023) study examined the methods and procedures of Dabu in this study, including its history and an explanation of the various themes that were employed. It was noted that although Dabu and batik share similarities, their

methods are very different; Dabu is a labour-incentive approach, and its washing, dying, and printing is intricate.

Objectives

- To study product development, diversification, and the mud-resistant Dabu print technique.
- To evaluate knowledge regarding the transition of *dabu* from traditional to modern methods and products

3. Material & Methods

The study employs a descriptive and analytical design, using secondary data sources, the study employs an analytical and descriptive design to thoroughly investigate the research problem. This design is suitable for examining previously collected data and finding trends, connections, and revelations relevant to the study's objective.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Dabu print cloth is a testament to the cultural history and artistic ability of talented craftspeople. It is a unique textile art form because of its intricate designs, unique printing methods, and historical relevance. Examine the history and methods of Dabu print cloth to fully appreciate its beauty and discover all of its potential applications in home décor and fashion. Dabu pattern fabrics add priceless elegance and cultural depth to the textile world. Dabu print fabric has become a widely sought-after textile in the current fashion era. The exquisite patterns and classic charm of Dabu print captivate designers and fashionistas. A wide range of apparel items, including ethnic wear like kurtas, gowns, scarves, and sarees, are made from the fabric. Any ensemble is enhanced by the diverse elegance and cultural richness of *dabu* pattern cloth. It may also be found in home décor pieces like cushions, tablecloths, and variously styled curtains, which demonstrate its timeless appeal. Although Dabu print artisans are experiencing a rise in popularity, they encounter numerous challenges. A significant concern is the competition with machine-printed fabrics, which can be manufactured more rapidly and at a reduced cost. Moreover, artisans frequently face limited access to essential resources and markets, restricting their capacity to expand their craft and attract a broader audience. Indian handicrafts play a vital role in the economy of country and sustain the over 7 million artisans. Nevertheless, traditional Dabu printing provides notable environmental advantages that machine-printed fabrics cannot replicate. Followed by the by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Report, sustainable fashion industries are expected to grow by 10-15% annually, and printing techniques like Dabu printing are obtaining distinction for their minimal environmental impact. This process utilizes natural dyes and sustainable materials, which minimize the ecological impact and eliminate harmful chemical waste. This environmentally conscious approach not only safeguards the ecosystem but also sustains the livelihoods of artisans committed to preserving these time-honoured techniques. Initiation of government Ministry of Textiles recently signed as MOU (memorandum of understanding) with Flip kart India” Flip kart’s ABHIYAAN Flip kart– Kaarigarkedwar” limited to provide online marketing platform to handloom weavers to boost handloom sector, empower the weavers and boost the manufacturing in the country.

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