Re-inventing Braj's Sanjhi Folk Art through Hand Painting

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ABSTRACT

Indian traditional folk arts are an important part of the nation's traditions and identification, as they have a deep connection to the religious beliefs of the people. The Sanjhi art of the Braj region fills the mind of Indians with positive energy. This art form flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries. Even so, it is currently declining as an effect of modernity, migration, urbanization, education, and the time-taking process. With the goal of restoring Sanjhi art, the researcher focused on fashion accessories, including handbags and shoulder bags. A total of 25 designs were developed, like the tote bag, sling bag, belt bag, bucket bag, and clutch. 30 fashion and textile design specialists evaluated developed design sheets for best designs in each category. The researcher used software to prepare prototypes.

Keywords: Sanjhi, Design, Textile, Software

INTRODUCTION

Braj's cultural heritage has gained international recognition due to its abundance of artistic traditions. One of the artistic traditions is Sanjhi art. When Lord Krishna arrived in the evening with the cowherd boys, Lord Radha and her friends would greet him by covering the earth with various kinds of flowers and colors. In the temples of Braj, an even more advanced version of this Sanjhi is found today.

Kinds of Sanjhi:
1. Flower Sanjhi; 2. Color Sanjhi; 3. Overwater Sanjhi; 4. Underwater Sanjhi; 5. Cow Dung Sanjhi

This temple ritual, which originnated in Braj Mandal in the sixteenth century, took on new variations with each passing era. As a result, the Sanjhi festival was reflected in many forms. Professionals in the art field gather a variety of fragrant flowers, grasses, and leaves to create beautiful Sanjhi. In the temples of Vrindavan, there is a tradition of preparing flower Sanjhi for 5 or 7 days as the first phase of the Sanjhi festival. Color Sanjhiis prepared using dry colors in a figurative and geometric style. The art of water Sanjhi originated in the Krishna temples of the North. The story behind this Sanjhi is that it starts when Lord Radha in a pond sees an image of Lord Krishna in the water. It is prepared over water or under water and Gober Sanjhi is painted on the wall rather than the ground. Gober sanjhi, a local folk tradition, is painted on walls over a duration of 16 days. Cow dung is used to create Sanjhi, is one feature of Sanjhi that is also well-known to the general public in Braj. Virgin girls make this rural folk sanjhi. Every day, a new figure, such as a palm tree, swastika, or an eight-bud flower, is drawn on the wall in the rural areas of Barsana (Mathura) using cow dung. These figures are decorated with colorful ornaments consisting of flowers, leaves, and soil. Shri Radha herself performed Sanjhi's aarti and then started singing auspicious songs. This custom gained renown under the name Sanjhi. Pitra Paksha is the month during which the sanjhi festival is celebrated. It begins on the full moon day of Shukla Paksha in Bhadrapada month and lasts till the new moon day of Krishna Paksha in Ashwin month. Sanjhi, a traditional paper cutting art from Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, involves cutting intricate stencils depicting Lord Radha-Krishna's life and

using them in Sanjhi. Sanjhi is the specialty of Braj culture that both folk and religious forms of this traditional ritual have given a unique rendition of the traditional festival of sanjhi. Sanjhi is made by people associated with the temple tradition of Braj region. Sanjhi art is made at temples by young toddlers to the elderly. Sanjhi artists spend several hours making a design (Sharma and Sharma, 2014). The tradition of making Sanjhi is prevalent in the Brahmin families of the region. The age group of 15 to 30 years of adolescent girls and young women is widely involved in this art. They paint their houses, especially at the time of Pitra-Paksha (the fortnight of ancestors). Due to this specialty, this art of Braj has established a distinct identity on a global scale. The complexity and level of detail of a design determines how long it takes to complete (Babel and Sachihar, 2017). Mathura and Vrindavan, two virtually adjacent cities along the Yamuna River in North India, are important centers of Hindu pilgrimage. The area around these two cities is traditionally known as Braj or Brajbhoomi. The mythological place of Lord Krishna. Sanjhi is made here (Ghose, 2004). Vraja/Braj/Brij presently refers to a specific geographical area in and around Mathura that is related to the childhood activities of Krishna, the most well-known avatar of Lord Vishnu (Gupta, 2021). Krishna, king of the Yadavas, was the charioteer of Arjuna in the Bhagavata epic. And then there's Krishna of Gokula—the god who was raised by cowherds, the playful kid, and the charming lover (Bahl, 1984). For over two thousand years, the primary meaning of the word "bhakti" has been "personal devotion to a god." This meaning has been expanded to include such ideas as "to participate in," "to experience," "to feel," "to honor," and "to adore." It ultimately refers to a devotee worshiping a god (Lorenzen, 2004). Bhakti admires the sacrament as the vital essence of the entire, which ultimately allows humans to establish a connection with divinity (Goswami and Thielman, 2004). Radha as a symbol of the devotee's devotion for Krishna, or Radha as the embodiment of celestial wisdom whose purity contrasts with the lighthearted nature of the other Gopis. The Gaudiya Vaishnava school defines bhakti as a religious cult of love and connection to a specific God. Radha-Krishna legends became delightful themes for poets, with Radha playing a pivotal role and her means of bhakti to Krishna being seen as the ideal type of bhakti (Prasad and Nandagopal, 2016). In this artwork, various Indian stories of mythology are depicted with a primary emphasis on Krishna Leela.

For the purpose of creating and presenting images, pictures are precisely cut using small, fine scissors. After which the image is created using a stencil. The major change in the art is that the stencil itself has become the final artwork, and all ritual or religious significance has been lost (Singh, 2022). 'Sanjhi' art was traditionally done by hand, which is a tedious, time-consuming, and laborious process. To popularize and generate revenue, the art is blended into contemporary textile design via software, transforming textile design into more creative and new approaches. It can also increase artists' income by providing them with a new platform to showcase their work. This will also help to promote traditional art and prevent it from disappearing. Textile design is an ancient art form and the oldest craft in India. Design has gradually evolved into a more cerebral activity over the years. The designs on the fabric are created using a wide range of techniques (Singh *et al.*, 2021). The creative abilities of rural women as home decorators have been documented by Indian art history. Each decorated house reveals cultural aspects of its community. Madhubani, Sanjhi, Mandana, and Lippan arts are known for their places and techniques (Rani *et al.*, 2016). This study takes a look into the development of fashion accessories using Hand painting, taking inspiration from Sanjhi folk art of braj, highlighting the belt bag, sling bag, tote bag, bucket bag, and clutch bag. Hand painting has become a trendy trend that adds a unique and attractive touch to garment (Yani *et al.*, 2022). Designs and motifs are essential in textile design. Designs can be inspired by a range of sources, such as nature, folk art, and craft (Purwar, 2018). The aim of the study was to revitalize the Sanjhi art form by integrating it into contemporary fashion accessories.

Objectives :
1. To collect "Sanjhi" art motifs and use them to create designs using software
2. To evaluate the design sheets of developed designs
3. To develop prototype using hand painting technique
4. To evaluate developed prototype

METHODOLOGY

The goal of the present study was to adapt the motifs of Sanjhi art for designing bags using the hand painting technique.

Phase 1-Collection of Sanjhi motifs:

Various motifs and designs of "Sanjhi" art were gathered from primary and secondary sources, including journals, the internet, and existing literature. Sanjhi is a celebration of Lord Radha-Krishna. The subject has always been Radha-Krishna Leela. The motifs and designs seen in traditional Sanjhi paper cutting depict scenes from Vrindavan, including peacocks, cows, trees, vines, temples, cowherd boys, mansions, the child form of Radha-Krishna, peacocks, butterflies, etc. are made in Braj's temples following the several Leelas of Radha-Krishna, like raas leela, Makhan chori leela, Kaliya-Dahan, and Goverdhan leela, among others, are cut carefully.

Fig. 1 : Seva Kunj leela

Fig. 2 : Goverdhan leela

Fig. 3 : Gehver Vanleela

Fig. 4 : Maharaas leela

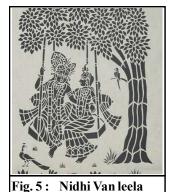**Fig. 5 : Nidhi Van leela**

Fig. 6 : Krishna is playing the flute

Phase 2-Designing of bags:

A total of 25 designs were developed, *viz.,* 5 designs for tote bag, 5 designs for sling bag, 5 designs for belt bag, 5 designs for bucket bag, and 5 designs for clutch. The designs were executed using Photoshop software.

Evaluation of developed designs:

The designs were evaluated by 30 fashion and textile design specialists, 10 Home Science and Design students, and 5 Sanjhi artists. The evaluation focused on determining the arrangement of motifs, the suitability of designs for a specific product, the color combination, and the overall appearance. A five-point rating scale performa was used to accomplish the goal. The designs were graded on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. Software was used to apply the selected 5 designs from each bag category to the bag designs. The highest average-scored design was applied to the fabric for the construction of a prototype using the hand painting technique.

Phase 3- Product development:

For the product developmant,canvas fabric was selected in the same color of selected design for the development of the product. Hand painting was done by the researcher. Tote bag was stitched carefully according to the size and design.

Determining the cost:

The cost of each product was determined by calculating the cost of raw materials, hand painting, stitching, and finishing. The product's sale price was determined by adding a 20% profit margin to its actual cost.

Acceptabilityof developed product:

Prepared product was visually evaluated by the same panel of judges who evaluated design sheets. The product was assessed based on fabric suitability, color combination, economic feasibility, and overall appearance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were based on practical work and given through subjective analysis and tables. The designs were evaluated for their preferred appearance.

Table 1 shows that the bucket bag (design no. 4) got the highest average score of 4.47 out of the prepared

(50)

Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci. |Jan. & Feb., 2025| **12** (1&2)|

bucket bag designs; the pouch bag (design no. 7) got the highest average score of 4.37 out of the prepared pouch bag designs; the tote bag (design no. 11) got the highest average score of 4.67 out of the prepared tote bag designs; the belt bag (design no. 18) got the highest average score of 4.22 out of the prepared belt bag designs; and the sling bag (design no. 22) got the highest average score of 4.39 out of the prepared sling bag designs.

Designs which were rated best in each category, are shown in design no. 1 to 5.

The tote bag (design no. 3) receiving the highest average score of 4.67 out of the prepared designs reported in Table 2. Therefore design no. 3 of Tote bag was selected for prototype development.

Cost of developed product:

Table 3 shows the cost of the tote bag. The costing focused on fabric rate, fabric painting charges, and

Design no. 1 : Bucket Bag   **Design no. 2:** Pouch Bag   **Design no. 3:** Tote Bag   **Design no. 4 :** Belt Bag   **Design no. 5:** Sling Bag

Table 1: Average rating of developed designs							
Design No.	Product name	Motifs arrangement	Appropriateness of designs for specific products	Colour combination	Link to Sanjhi art	Overall appearence	Average
1.		3.45	4.1	3.78	2.35	3.9	3.51
2.		2.34	3.45	3.56	4.36	4.38	3.61
3.	Bucket bag	4.2	4.32	3.45	3.33	4.45	3.95
4.		4.6	4.26	4.28	4.36	4.86	4.47
5.		2.9	2.97	2.95	2.89	3.2	2.98
6.		2.12	3.45	2.78	3.4	3.67	3.08
7.	Pouch bag	4.45	4.38	4.25	4.25	4.69	4.37
8.		2.89	2.43	3.67	2.32	3.72	3.00
9.		3.67	3.89	4.56	4.12	475	4.19
10.		4.7	3.78	3.23	4.1	4.11	3.98
11.		4.54	4.75	4.55	4.68	4.87	4.67
12.		3.8	3.78	3.98	4.5	4.23	4.05
13.	Tote bag	3.34	3.45	3.6	3.87	3.96	3.64
14.		4.8	3.76	3.5	3.78	3.55	3.87
15.		2.78	2.56	3.1	2.87	3.13	2.88
16.		4.5	4.23	3.98	3.67	4.3	4.13
17.		2.67	3.56	3.76	2.98	4.1	3.41
18.	Belt bag	3.89	4.35	4.37	4.24	4.25	4.22
19.		1.45	2.34	3.56	1.98	3.75	2.61
20.		4.32	3.89	3.54	3.7	4.46	3.98
21.		2.34	3.5	3.45	2.33	3.62	3.04
22.		4.36	4.65	3.94	4.35	4.67	4.39
23.	Sling bag	4.3	3.7	3.7	3.87	4.5	4.01
24.		2.45	3.22	2.56	2.98	3.67	2.97
25.		4.23	4.3	3.77	4.5	4.24	4.20

Table 2 : Average rating of best designs in each category

Serial No.	Product name	Motifs arrangement	Appropriateness of designs for specific products	Colour combination	Link to Sanjhi art	Overall appearence	Average
1.	Bucket bag	4.6	4.26	4.28	4.36	4.86	4.47
2.	Pouch bag	4.45	4.38	4.25	4.25	4.69	4.37
3.	Tote bag	4.54	4.75	4.55	4.68	4.87	4.67
4.	Belt bag	3.89	4.35	4.37	4.24	4.25	4.22
5.	Sling bag	4.36	4.65	3.94	4.35	4.67	4.39

Table 3 : Cost of Tote bag

Items	Tote bag	
	Quantity (m)	Value (Rs.)
Canvas fabric	1 meter	110
Fabric painting charges	-	250
Stitching charges	-	200
Actual cost (Rs.)		560
Profit (20%) (Rs.)		112
Sale Price (Rs.)		672

Table 4 : Acceptability of developed product

Serial No.	Product name	Suitability of Fabric used	Color combination	Economic feasibility	Overall appearance	Acceptability
1	Tote bag	4.8	4.38	4.25	4.4	4.25

Plate 1 : Prototype of bag

stitching charges.

Acceptability of developed product:

Table 4 shows that the prepared prototype was highly praised for its visual examination and cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion:

Sanjhi art is not about making stencils; Sanjhi art is that which is made with flowers and colors by Sanjhi artisans in temples. Creating a stencil of Sanjhi is the first step in creating Sanjhi. India's folk art holds significant potential in the international market, and these modern forms of art and craft could have a strong future in the world of design. Due to changes in fashion trends and rising consumer expectations, there is a need for a wide variety of designs from traditional folk art sources. According to the findings, Sanjhi artisans mostly depict traditional Hindu mythological patterns and places, as well as human figures, natural flower, animal, and bird motifs, and use of the hand and scissor paper cutting technique. The transfer of this art to textiles helps to maintain historical designs while also opening up new opportunities for designers working in the field of textile design. Sanjhi Folk art is unfamiliar to today's youth. It is limited only to temples and folk traditions. Vrindavan Research Institution and many such agencies are working hard for the restoration of the endangered craft. This research aims to expand the world of textiles by combining traditional art and craft with fabric painting technique. The software-generated designs were successfully applied to the designs, and the resulting prepared prototype was highly praised for its visual examination

and cost-effectiveness.

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