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Adaptation of *Aipan* designs (A floor art of Uttarakhand) for designing of saree

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Abstract

Design has the capability to reinvent itself and hold its significance even in adverse situations related to products and production. The *Aipan* designs are practiced in Kumaun region of Uttarakhand. The lush green hills have passed on this art from generation to generation but as the times have passed, the art form is slowly losing its significance. On the other side, traditional Indian wear such as saree is also losing their originality and essence with the increasing impact of the fashion trends. Therefore, an attempt was made in the present study for adaptation of *Aipan* in textiles usage. The detailed information was collected on *Aipan* design, their motifs and their use. The collection of different forms of *Aipan* was done for adaptation. The motifs of *Aipan* design were used for designing of handloom saree.

Keywords: *Aipan*, Folk art, Design, Saree designing, Adaptation

Introduction

A good art work, whether it is painting, sculpture and clothing, all starts from the design. The innovative use of design in art form creates a masterpiece. The application of design in fashion industry can be done in various techniques like printing, weaving, dyeing, embroidery etc. The inspiration of designers can be anything from their surroundings like nature, material, object, thoughts, folk paintings, folk stories, tribal art and craft, etc. Currently, lots of designers are focusing on the conservation and revival of fading folk art and crafts.

The art and craft Uttarakhand showcases the rich cultural and artistic history of state. Uttarakhand has multi-ethnic groups which included different communities like Kumauni, Garhwali and tribes namely Jaunsarees, Bhotia, Buksha, Tharu and Raji. Each ethnic group has its tradition and culture which make state rich in traditional art and crafts. The diversity in art and crafts reflects the inherited skills of local artist and artisans. The Uttarakhand represents unity in diversity which creates total perception of mini India.

In Kumaun region of Uttarakhand state, the folk art, *Aipan* is practiced among people at places of worship, houses, and has great religious importance. The basic concept of *Aipan* is based on to the deep faith of people in Hindu religion. In Hindu religion, specified ritual activities and ceremonies are required at every stage of life from birth to death like naming ceremony, thread ceremony, marriage ceremony, after death ceremonies etc. These ritual ceremonies required some type of worshipping, offerings, *Aipan* of Kumaun one such activity which is performed in every ceremony by drawing specific pattern in worship area, house entrance floor, wooden chaukies etc (Shah, 2006) [1]. The increased exposure to different cultures and change in social life of people has affected this floor art. Various researchers and designers are continuously working on the concept of using designs of folk art forms in innovative mode using different techniques such as printing, dyeing and weaving to bring folk art in the forefront of fashion world. The present research was conducted to collect and study the *Aipan* designs (floor painting of Kumaun). The collected designs were further adapted for the design development for saree. Different designs arrangements were developed for saree using *Aipan* designs and motifs which were suitable to be adapted by any textiles enrichment techniques like weaving, printing, embroidery etc.

Methodology

The researcher visited Kumaun region of Uttarakhand to collect *Aipan* designs. Different types of *Aipan* designs were collected by the researcher and classified into different categories, according to the media used, place where these are made and ceremonies on which they are made. The collected designs were analysed for the adaptation for saree. The designs were selected for the adaptation on the basis of their aesthetic appearance. The selected motifs were modified and classified into three categories namely buti, buta and border design. Buta is big size motif which consists of combination of small units. While buti is small size single motif and border is a longitudinal edge consisting of long continuous motif or repetition of motif in a specified manner. Total fifteen designs (five designs in each category) were developed and got evaluated by the faculty and P.G. students of Department of Clothing and textiles, College of Home Science, Pantnagar. Five point scale was used for the evaluation as showed in table 1.

Table 1: Five-point rating scale for arrangements

Preference	Marks
Excellent	5
Good	4
Very good	3
Fair	2
Poor	1

Total three designs were selected (one design from each category) for the preparation of design arrangements of saree. The saree designing can be done with in various ways, here five categories were formed on the basis of motif combination namely Category 1: Combination of buta, border and buti, Category 2: Single motif, Category 3: Combination of buta and buti, Category 4: Combination of buti and border and Category 5: Combination of buta and border. The motifs were arranged for the designing of saree according to categories. Total seven arrangements were developed for the saree.

Results

The information about *Aipan* was collected by the researcher by visiting Kumaun region of Uttarakhand. *Aipan* is one of the traditional arts of Kumaun. It has great social, cultural and religious significance. *Aipan* designs are drawn by ladies over red coloured back ground of *geru* (filtered red earth powder) with white colour of *biswar* (rice powder paste). The motifs of *Aipan* are mainly drawn by three fingers. The women manipulate their finger with extraordinary swiftness to draw beautiful motifs. These are mainly drawn on religious ceremonies or occasions like naming ceremony, *janeu* ceremony, marriage, and festivals as *Diwali*, *pujas*, and *havans*. These creations have religious importance and are drawn during religious ceremonies or occasions and mostly drawn at places of worship, inside the house, at entrance of the house and in front courtyard. *Aipan* designs made with *geru* and *biswar* are not durable therefore these are removed over the time. Traditionally, these were drawn regularly by women of the house after cleaning old ones and drawing a fresh one daily to welcome the visitors. The designs of *Aipan* have their own significance. The geometric figures, symbolic figures of gods, goddesses and natural designs are used in *Aipan*. Some of the motifs such as *Shankh*, *Swastika*, mango designs (*keri*) and floral

patterns are commonly drawn. Motifs in *Aipan* have set pattern according to the festivals and rituals such as Lakshmi *Padchinha* are drawn during *Diwali*, as it is associated with the visit of the Goddess of wealth, Lakshmi.

Classification of *Aipan* designs

The *Aipan* designs can be classified in three categories namely,

1. According to the place where *Aipan* are drawn
2. According to the festivals and ceremonies on which *Aipan* are made
3. According to style of *Aipan*

1) According to the place where *Aipans* are drawn

This classification of *Aipan* includes the type of places where these are drawn on religious ceremonies. The details are given below:

a) Floor painting – The *Aipan* developed on floor are known as Floor paintings and into two categories like *Aipan* at door steps (creepers) and at place of worship (*Shiv peeth*, *Laxmi peeth*).

b) Wall paintings- *Aipan* designs are also drawn on walls. Wall paintings has two traditional forms namely painting on the wall of kitchen and on the walls of the area where ritual ceremonies are performed. Traditionally, wall were replastered twice a year with a mix of cow dung and mud and then painted with *geru* and motifs were drawn. Now, these were replaced with paper posters. The kitchen wall has motifs of *Nata* and *Laxmi Narayan* and at ritual ceremonies places *Patas* are used.

c) Wooden chaukies- These are worshipping seat of the idols. These made through the *Aipan* designs and used on different occasions either for worship, ceremonies or on festivals.

d) On cloth- *Aipan* designs are also drawn on cloth like *pichhora* (traditional wedding *dupatta*) where *khodia chauki* is drawn. Another example is a yellow coloured ritual cloth with *shiv peeth* design on it.

2) According to the festival and ceremonies in which *Aipans* are drawn

Pandey (2009), stated that *Aipans* have religious importance and are drawn during festivals and ceremonies or occasions from birth to death such as marriages, thread ceremony, naming ceremony, *pipalpani* etc.

a) Festivals- Different types of *Aipans* are drawn during different festivals such as on *Diwali*, *Mahalaxmi chauki and patta*, *Laxmi Padchinha*, *Laxmi Yantra*, etc are drawn. In *Dusshera* and *Navratri*, *Navgurga patta* is drawn. On *Shivratri* and *Parthiva pooja*, *shiv peeth* and *shiv chaukies* are drawn. On *Janmasthami*, *Janmasthami patta* is used for worshipping Lord Krishna.

b) Ceremonies: In Hindu religion, man is required to attach his activities according to prescribed rules during different stages of his life right from birth to death. These stages require appropriate ritualistic performance by a person, including specific type of worship and offering, a part of which also find an expression in the *Aipan* drawings prepared for and used during such occasions.

i) Pujans and Havans- Acharya *chaukies*, *upasna chaukies* and *jyunti patta* are used for worshipping god and goddess in any *pujan* and *havan*.

ii) Child birth ceremony- On the eleven day after child birth, naming ceremony is done. *Surya darshan chauki*, *syo Aipan* and *jyunti patta* are used to perform this ceremony. When a child goes to school for the first time, *Vidhyarambh* ceremony is performed by using *Saraswati Chauki*.

iii) Late childhood stage (9-11years) ceremonies- A threading ceremony, *janeu*, is performed on the boy who has odd age group such as eleven, thirteen, fifteen, etc. This ceremony is conducted before marriage. It is believed that after this ceremony, boy becomes mature and responsible. In this ceremony, *janeu jyunti patta* and *janeu chauki* are used while performing the rituals.

iv) Marriage- At the time of marriage, *Aipans* are drawn, for example, *Khodia chauki* on piece of cloth, *jyunti patta* on wall and marriage seat and *dhuliargh chauki* is on wooden seat etc.

v) Death- On the thirteenth day of death *Aipan* designs is drawn without dots. This ceremony is known as *peepal pani*.

3) According to the style of Aipan

Chattopadhyay (1981) discussed the three styles of *Aipan* namely, *Siddha*, *Davia* and *Loukika*.

a) Siddha- *Siddha* is the style of *Aipan* which is drawn on floor and *chaukies*. *Vasudhara*, *patta*, *nata*, *Lakshmi Padchinha* and different type of *chaukies* are the example of *Siddha*.

b) Davia- *Davia* is also known as *patta*. It has astrological motifs, manual designs and *dwar pattas*. *Navdurga patta*, *jyunti patta*, *janeu jyunti patta* and *Mahalaxmi pattas* are example of *Davia*.

c) Loukika- *Loukika* is style of *bar boond*. *Bar boond* is a spiritual geometrical patterns with dots. These are drawn on walls. *Sanglia bar*, *swastik bar*, *machia bar*, *bhadra* and *gaur tilak bar*, etc are example of *Loukika*.

Collection on Aipan motifs

Different forms of *Aipan* designs were collected for the selection of motifs which are drawn during various religious ceremonies and festivals. Image of the collected *Aipan* design are shown in plate 1-7 and their details are given below:

a) Creepers are used for the decoration of doorsteps. The commonly used creepers are *leheria bel*, *singalia bel*, *ghiroli bel*, *shanki bel*, *phulari laharia bel*, *machia bel*, etc.

b) Lakshmi padchinha (footprints of Goddess *Lakshmi*) is drawn on Diwali day from main entrance of the house to place of worship (Plate 1).

c) Peeth is an ethnic motifs which is used on the floor at the place of worship as it is considered as seat.

i) Lakshmi Peeth is drawn at the place of worship on Diwali (Plate 2).

ii) Shiv peeth is drawn on day of *Parthiva Pooja*. The symbolic mystic pattern is prepared over cloth with yellow colour.

d) Lakshmi Narayan consists of two human plates inside a square framework of dots. They are made on front side of winnower (*soop*) on *bari ekadashi* just after Diwali and is shown in Plate 3.

e) Bhuiyan is symbolizes a demon or the poverty of the household which is supposed to be away from the house. *Bhuiyan* is drawn on the reverse side of the *soop* (Plate 4).

f) The Durga thapa has figurative drawing of *Nav Durga* which is painted on paper for *Durga Pujas* held twice during the year (Plate 5).

g) Jyunti pattas have figurative drawings of god or goddess, drawn on wall. The *pattas* has three deities in the centre and the creeper designs and *bar boond* in outer edges as shown in Plate 6.

h) Syo Aipan is a geometric pattern drawn to ward off evil spirit on eleventh day of child birth (Plate 7).



Plate 1: Lakshmi padchinha



Plate 2: Lakshmi Peeth



Plate 3: Lakshmi Narayan



Plate 4: Bhuiyan



Plate 5: Durga thapa



Plate 6: Jyunti pattas



Plate 7: Syo Aipan

Design Development For Saree

The motifs were selected from the collection of different Aipan designs, on the basis of their aesthetic appearance and suitability of design for saree. The selected *Aipan* designs were adapted for development of motif in three categories, *buta*, *buti* and border. The adapted designs were evaluated

by the faculty and P.G. students of Department of Clothing and textiles, College of Home Science, Pantnagar. The designs which got highest weighted mean score were selected. Total score and weighted mean score are shown in figure 2.

Table 2: WMS obtained by adapted designs in different categories

Design Category\ Design no.	Buta design	Buti Design	Border Design
	WMS	WMS	WMS
1	4.7	4.2	4.3
2	4.7	4.1	4.2
3	4.5	4.3	4.5
4	4.8	4.1	3.2
5	4.4	3	4.2

n = 30

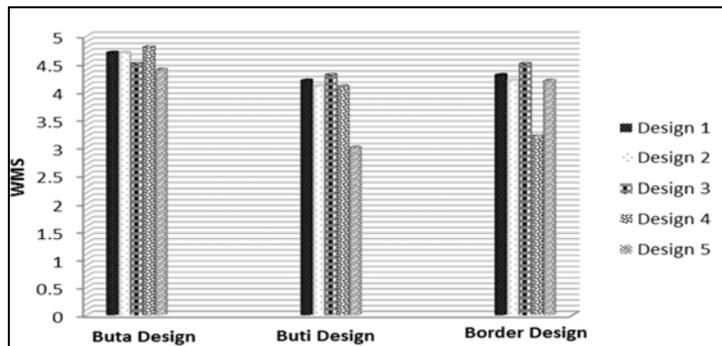
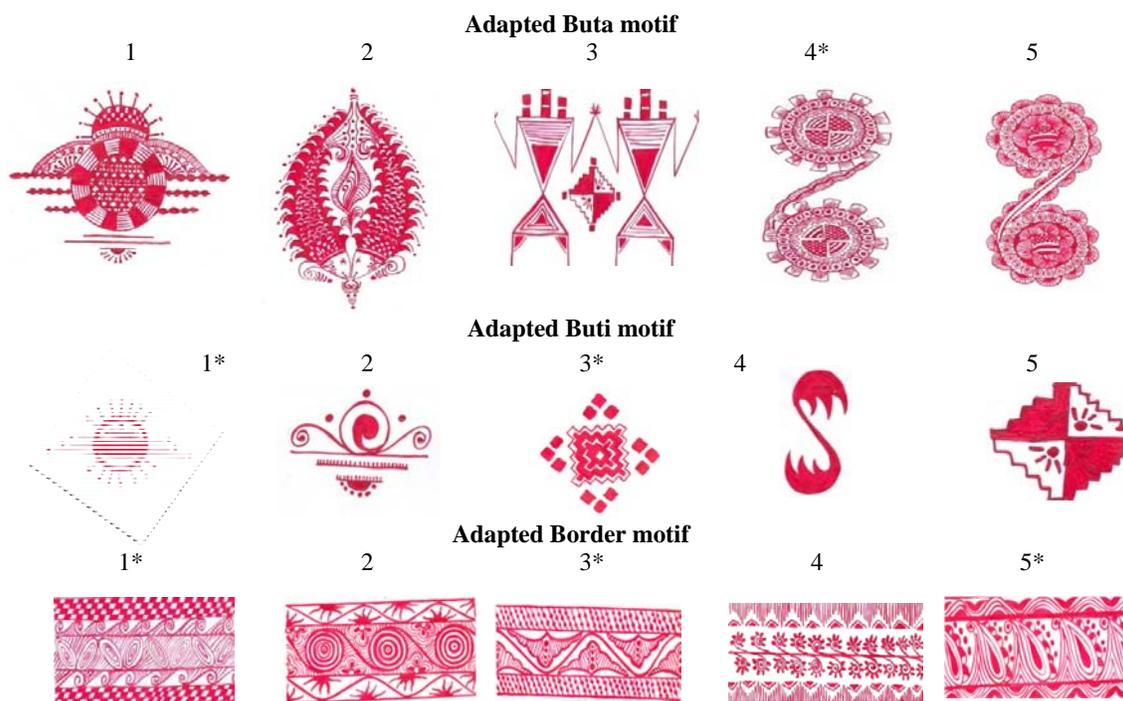


Fig 1: WMS obtained by the designs under three categories (Buta, Buti and Border)

In buta design, design 4 got highest (4.9) WMS followed by design 3 (4.3 WMS) in buti design and design 3 got maximum (4.5) WMS in border design. Total three motifs

(one from each category) were selected. The adapted and selected motifs are shown below:



*Selected design in each category

Arrangement of Motif in Layout of Saree

Selected motifs were arranged in saree lay out in five categories namely combination of border, buti and buta motif, combination of border and buta motif, combination of border, and buti motif, combination of buti and buta motif and arrangement with single motif. Total seven

arrangements were developed for the saree. Developed arrangements of designs were given below:

1) Saree arrangement with category 1-combination of border, buti and buta motif



Fig 1: Saree arrangement with combination of border, buti and buta motif

The border was placed at the lower edge and pallav of the saree. Butas were arranged in side repeat on pallav and buti were arranged all over with cheker board repeat in the body of sari as shown in figure 1.

2) Saree arrangement with category-2 single motif

a) Single buti arrangement

A single buti was repeated at both the edges of the saree to give the effect of border. In case of pallav, single buti has been arranged in side repeat pattern as shown in Figure 2.



Fig 2: Single buti arrangement

b) Single buta arrangement

The single buta was arranged in repetitive manner at the lower edge of the saree like border. The same buta was

repeated at the width of the pallav. The buta was also arranged diagonally to fill the space at pallav. The arrangement of motifs is shown in Figure 3.



Fig 3: Single buta arrangement

c) Single border arrangement

The border was placed at the lower edge of the saree and repeated horizontally at the pallav (Figure 4).



Fig 4: Single border arrangement

3) Saree arrangement with category-3 combination of border and buta motif

The border was arranged at the lower edge and at the pallav of saree. The butas were placed over the border in specific

manner at lower edge of saree. The buta was also repeated in ablock manner at the pallav of saree as Figure 5.



Fig 5: Saree arrangement with combination of border and buta motif

4) Saree arrangement with category-4 combination of border and buti motif

The border was arranged at the lower edge and at the pallav of saree. The butis were

Repeated over the border at the lower edge of the saree and scattered in half brick repeat at the pallav of saree. figure 6 showed the arrangement of motif.



Fig 6: Saree arrangement with combination of border and buti motif

1) Saree arrangement with category-5 combination of buta and buti motif

In this arrangement, the buties were arranged in the lower and upper edge of the saree as border. It is also placed

horizontally at pallav. The buta was repeated over the buties at lower edge and arranged in block repeat at pallav. The arrangement of motifs were showed in figure 7,

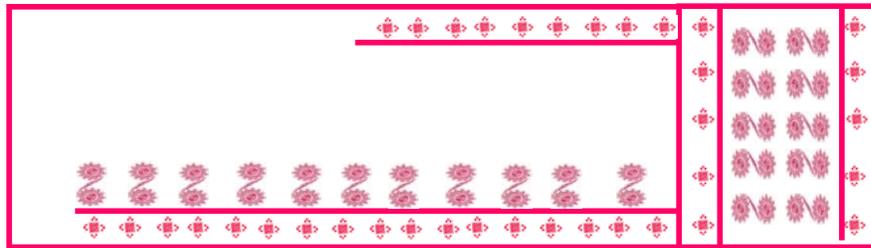


Fig 7: Saree arrangement with combination of buta and buti motif

These design arrangements of saree can be applied to the sarees through weaving, screen printing, block printing or digital printing techniques. Developed designs arrangements for saree provide a new avenue to the Aipan Folk art for making its place in fashion.

Conclusion

The collected information about *Aipan* provides specified information in the organised manner about prevalence of *Aipan* art. It was observed that the *Aipan* designs are practiced in Kumaun region of Uttarakhand. This folk art is a skill which is passed from one generation to other like from grandmother to mother and mother to daughter, but due to the modernization and need of good life style, people migrated from their native places and live in nuclear family, where all traditions are not followed by them. Consequently, this traditional art is facing challenges and losing its significance continuously. Presently, the local population of Kumaun is not much aware about significance of the *Aipan*. They are using *Aipan* in modified way like stickers and paint in place of biwsar and geru. Various non-government organizations and government organization are working on conservation of this art. Present study was also an attempt in this direction where the designs were developed for saree through adaptation of *Aipan* designs. It creates a new definition for the value addition of *Aipan* and provides new range of designs for saree.

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