

THE ETHNIC PRINTING CLUSTERS – SANGANER, BAGRU AND BARMER



1. Rajasthan, the land of beautiful colours :

Throughout Rajasthan, the flaming red and dazzling yellow of women's odhanis, defiantly breaks the monotony of desert landscape. There is a saying that the fastening of men's turbans and patterns of women's odhanis in Rajasthan alter around every 25 kms. Fabrics with hand block printing, tie and dye, baltick, Kota doria sarees, light weight quilts are a few famous products from Rajasthan which is known world over for it's hand crafted textiles.

RAJASTHAN LOCATION MAP



2. Historical background :

The history of emergence of textile printing in Rajasthan goes back to several centuries. Fabrics printed in Rajasthan were exported to various western countries and Japan. Even the East India company was exporting vegetable printed fabrics from Rajasthan in major quantities to various countries.

It was during 18th century, the reign of Maharaja Jaisingh II, that Rajasthan experienced a great deal of cultural extravaganza. Traditional hand block printing was patronised to a great extent and flourished to many dimensions, during his rule

3. Major printing centres in Rajasthan :

Rajasthan is heartland of hand-block printing. Various printing centres are Barmer, Jaipur, Sikar, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Pali, Chittaurgarh, Udaipur, Nathdwara, Sanganer, Bagru, Kaladera, Bassi and Jairmapura. Cultural and market compulsions have however transformed these centres into different specialised segments of products. **Sanganer** is virtually flooded with block makers and printers to the extent that textiles are hand block printed in the courtyard of homes. The art of Khadi (Printing of white pigment on fabric) or overprinting with gold is also practiced here.

The town of Bagru excels in delightful circular designs in dark glowing vegetable colours printed on bed spreads, table linens and clothes. The textiles printed here have won the hearts of millions of people worldover.

From the shimmering deserts of Barmer come the geometric Ajrakh prints in dark shades of blue and red for protection from the sun.

Nathdwara scores high with its sarees, wraps, kerchiefs and quilt covers similar to the Pichwais made here. The red, black, olive green and mosaic like patterns of the pajamas of Chittaurgarh are used for women's skirts, wraps and floor coverings.

4.Sanganer, Bagru and Barmer - Where are they located?

Sanganer and Bagru are in Jaipur district. Jaipur is the capital city of Rajasthan. It is about 272 kms from New Delhi, connected by rail, road and air. Founded by Maharaja Jaisingh II in 1727, Jaipur is the planned old city with pink colour buildings surrounded by walls. It is also called Pink city or walled city.

Sanganer is located about 16 kms from Jaipur. Jaipur airport is located in Sanganer.

Bagru is on other side, about 30 kms on Jaipur - Aimer road.

Barmer is near Jaisalmer; the border town of Rajasthan. One can reach Barmer by train or road from Jaipur, overnight.

RAJASTHAN DISTRICT MAP



4. Wooden blocks main equipment of a block printer :

Wooden blocks (chhapas) of seasoned teakwood are used for printing.

New blocks are soaked in oil for 10 -15 days to soften the grains in the timber. These blocks have different designs on the underside of the blocks. Blocks pick up printing paste when gently pressed on a cloth pad laden with printing paste. Blocks are main tool of the printers. Cloth is fixed on printing table with the help of pins or

wax. Blocks that have picked up the printing paste are then placed and gently pressed on the fabric in an orderly manner, leaving impression of printing paste on the fabric in desired lay out. For multicolour designs, sets of blocks are used, depending on the number of colours in the design. These blocks are charged with printing pastes of different colours one by one and are printed on the fabric in the manner that each block fits into the design appropriately, forming the complete design in desired colours.

BLOCK PRINTING



5. Sanganeri, Bagru and Barmer prints - Differentiation :

Typically vegetable dyes are used for Sanganeri, Bagru and Barmer prints. The printing styles of Sanganeri and Bagru prints are quite similar since both the towns are nearby and in the same district and hence culturally and socially closer. However, the two styles can not be

easily distinguished though each style has its typical characteristics.

SANGANERI PRINT



Traditional **Sanganeri prints** are always on a white or pastel colour background and are famous for its artistry and intricacy of designs. Floral cones and sprays are scattered within symmetrical borders. God figures and geometrical designs are also included. Folk designs are found quite often and the colours are subdued. Basic colours are scarlet, black and brown. But now with increasing technology and use of synthetic dyes unusual combinations of scarlet and pink, purple and orange,

turquoise and green are gaining market demand. Besides traditional prints, modern designs are also found nowadays on block printed cloth.

BAGRU PRINT

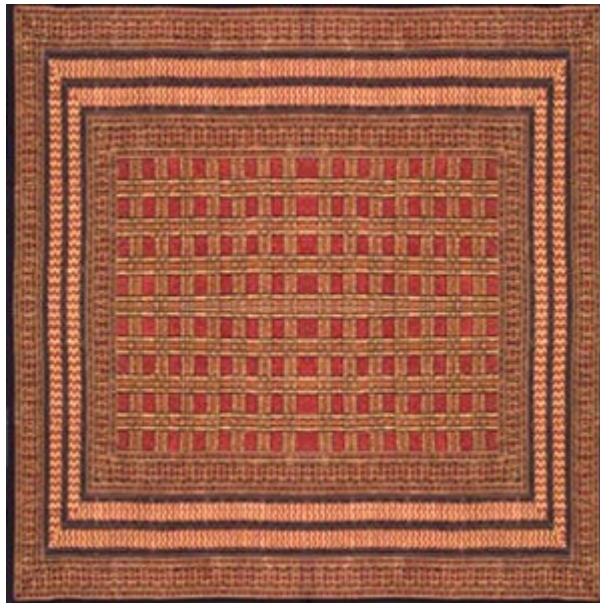


Bagru is famous for its alizarine red and iron black. Very often the ground is dyed in Indigo blue, green and black. Dabu textiles hand block printing (mud resist) is done mainly at Bagru. It is also practiced at Akola, Balotra and also in Sanganer. Chhipas of Bagru produce a variety of fabrics printed in motifs of gulab or rose, neem leaves, cauliflower, chilli (mirchi), crown (mukut), dhanian ki bel (coriander creeper) etc.

The two prints (Sanganeri and Bagru) go with each other. The zigzag motifs of Bagru alongwith floral motifs

of Sanganer are in demand in country and abroad.

AJARAKH PRINT



Barmer prints are known for their bold geometric patterns called "Ajarakh". Designs including square shape are most demanded and are peculiar in themselves. Barmer prints are unusual. The town being part of Thar desert produces dark shades in their designs. Prints can be easily distinguished from Sanganeri and Bagru prints. The motifs are quite different. Ingredients and process vary as compared to Sanganer and Bagru. Printing fraternity is basically dominated by khatries migrated from Pakistan.

It is a household activity where the knowledge has been passed from one generation to other.

6. How various colours are generated from vegetable ingredients :

In traditional prints of Rajasthan, yellow is derived from turmeric and buttermilk, green from banana leaves, black from iron rust, blue from indigo plants, red from sugarcane and sunflower and purple from kirmiz insects. Other possibilities are pink from manjistha, mango yellow from myrobolan flowers, greenish mustard from pomegranate rinds, rose from red onion skin, mustard from jackfruit saw dust, brown from catechu, red brown from lac, orange from saffron and jasmine, and so on and so forth. There are many possibilities depending on the herbs, plants, roots, barks, fruits, leaves temperature of process and minerals added in process water.

7. Dabu Resist :

Dabu prints are especially of Bagru but produced in Sanganer, Barmer, Akola and certain works of Balotra also. Dabu prints are also called mud resist. Rotten wheat is the source material for preparation of printing paste alongwith mud (black smooth soil). This paste is applied over the fabric and then saw dust or straw is sprinkled over it to seal the printed motif from spreading. After drying, it is dyed, mainly in indigo blue colour. When washed, the printed motif appears white on dyed background. Process is to be carried out in cold, less vigorously

or else mud printed motifs may leach out or bleed, spoiling the whole design. The edges of the mud

DABU RESIST PRINT



motif get a beautiful light and soft tonal effect due to capillary action of colour in resist area.

Dabu Resist

8. Wax resist (Batik Printing) :

For wax resist (Batik printing), the printing table is covered with sand, sprinkled with water which is then covered by a wet cloth. Special type blocks with raised surface and deep grooves are dipped in molten wax and pressed over the cloth and when the molten wax comes in contact with cool surface, it solidifies. The whole material is then dyed with colour and then dipped in hot water to remove wax. The piece presents interesting tonal effect called Battick effect. Molten wax can also be applied by special type pens, instead of blocks.

BATIK PRINTS



10. Tie and dye :

Tie and Dye is a highly skilled art to produce Laharia, Bandhani and chunari at Barmer, Sikar, Jaipur, Jodhpur and other parts of Rajasthan. The fabric is tied into small points with threads. When the fabric is dyed, the knitted points remain undyed. These undyed points alongwith a dyed portion produce an unique look. Different patterns can be produced by manipulating the points to be tied and dyed.

TIE AND DYE



BANDHANI PRODUCT

A few points that were tied once and remained undyed can be left untied in the subsequent process involving tying of other points followed by dyeing in a different colour. This gives multi colour tie and dye effect or multi colour Laharia, Bandhani or chunari.

BANDHANI PRODUCT



11. Emergence of screen printing :

Initially there used to be only hand block printing which is the traditional craft practiced by Chhipa community (both Hindu and Muslims), using small wooden blocks. Engraving of designs on these wooden blocks and putting their impression on the fabric, using various vegetable colours in an orderly manner requires a great artistic stinct and craftsmanship. Traditional way of

preparation of the fabric before printing such as size removal, bleaching, dyeing, drying, printing, washing, finishing etc consumed around 6 - 10 weeks.

With the increase in demand for traditionally printed goods in domestic and international market, it became difficult for the traditional Chhipas to cope up with the demand and then a faster method of production i.e. screen printing was introduced by Khatri community migrated from Pakistan's Mirpur (Sind) during 1947 partisan. Khatries had printing tradition in Mirpur also. Many of such khatries are settled at Sanganer, Bagru and Barmer and have started practising their old craft of screen and block printing. In Sanganer, majority of them are living in 'Khatri Nagar'. Screen printing in Sanganer had started in 1960 itself, but the major impact of it was felt from 1975 onwards.

Traditional block printed goods are known by their ethnic appeal and eco friendly vegetable dyes. Designs in block printed goods and lay outs are easy to customise. Affluent population in India, Europe and Japan appreciate block printed goods for their eco friendliness, tradition, art of processing and are willing to pay more for it even though designs in block and screen printed goods from Sanganer and Bagru appear alike.

Screen printing being highly productive can meet high volume requirement of big buyers. It is suitable to fulfill the bright colour and ethnic design appetite of price conscious consumers. Screen printing grew tremendously during the decade of 1990s. Now almost 80% of the demand of printed goods in Sanganer and Bagru is met from the screen printing. Screen printers have been able to piggy back on reputation of traditional block

printed goods, picking up the same designs but synthetic colours in place of vegetable colours. Run by the competition even some block printers have resorted to using chemical colours and conventional methods of processing. With most of the consumers unable to figure out the distinction between the two, it is spoiling the very image of traditional Sangneri and Bagru printed goods. The cost of screen printed goods due to its high productivity, use of synthetic dyes, chemicals and mechanised processes is almost 50% as compared to hand block printed goods and this puts screen printers to an added advantage to market their goods at a cheaper rate.

12. Product profile of Sangner, Bagru and Barmer :

Sangner, Bagru and Ajarakh prints are essentially on 100% cotton fabrics. Bagru products are mainly wall panels, bed sheets, bed spreads, table linen and furnishings. Barmer (Ajarakh) printed bed sheets, bed spreads are famous. Ajarakh prints are not used for dress material. In Sangneri prints, furnishing, bed covers, curtains, cushion covers, scarves, wall panels, napkins, table sets, bed sheets and dress material are produced. Sangneri, Bagru and Ajarakh prints have now entered the fashion world. Applique, embroidery, patch work, bead work is significant part of its product range. Home textiles, Sarongs and accessories are well designed with fashion inputs using Sangneri prints. Screen printed goods include bed sheets, furnishings, apparels, running cloth and quilt covers in bright colours and uniform patterns. In block printed designs repeats may not be as uniform as in screen. Most of the printers in Sangner,

Bagru and Barmer are engaged on job work, with only few big ones having their own production and market outlets. Traders of Sanganeri, Bagru and Barmer printed goods operate mainly from Jaipur and Delhi. Barmer printed goods also go to border town of Pakistan. Many tourists visiting these heritage centres buy these printed goods and carry homes.

13. Wherefrom the grey fabric and ingredients are sourced :

Grey cloth for printing comes from Kishangarh in Rajasthan and from Erode, Salem, Tirupur and Coimbatore in Tamilnadu. Size removal by soaking and bleaching is carried out by bleaching units in cemented tanks. A few printers have inhouse bleaching facilities. Washermen (Dhobies) carry out the washing of fabrics in washing ghats. Ingredients like herbs, leaves, fruits, pods, barks, stems, roots, other vegetable material, gums, chemicals etc are available in Jaipur and Delhi market. Indigo blue comes from South India. Small requirements of ingredients are met locally. For calendering of printed fabric, calendering units have come up. Masons get job to prepare printing tables and other construction activity. For screen making, separate activity has come up. Design sketches and tracings are produced by specialist designers who come from the State of Gujarat. They help in screen making activity also.

14. Industrial profile at Sanganer Bagru and Barmer :

Sanganer

Number of dyeing, printing and processing units in 8 sub clusters of Sanganer were 473 as per a survey conducted by District Collector Jaipur in the year 2003.

A break up of these units areawise is given below :

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Name of cluster</u>	<u>No. of units</u>
1.	Muhana Road Block	152
2.	Diggi Malpura Road B	50
3.	Shikarpura Block	46
4.	Paliwal Garden Block	21
5.	Sanganer Kasba Block	77
6.	Namdev Colony	13
7.	Jaipur Gate Block	34
8.	Khatri Nagar Block	80
	<u>Total</u>	<u>473</u>

About 25000 persons have got direct employment in the block printing, desizing, scouring, bleaching, screen printing, screen making, washing and calendering units of Sanganer. A sizeable employment is generated in ancillary activities like designing, transportation, tailoring, embroidering, block making and marketing in Sanganer. In fact economy of Sanganer depends on it's fabric printing industry.

As gathered from the Calico Printers' Co-operative Society (established in 1944), an association of block printers at Sanganer, 75% block printing units have got 2 to 4 tables (measuring 5.5 x 1.53 metres). 25% units have 6 - 12 units. There are about 235 block printing units producing around 32 lakh metres printed goods per annum. Total job charges @ Rs.15/- per metre works out to be around

Rs.4.8 crore per annum. An unit of 2 tables needs an investment of around Rs.50000/-. 90% of the Sangneri block printed goods are exported. A block printing unit produces around 150 litres liquid effluents and hence all the block printing units put together in Sangner generate around 35000 litres effluents per day.

Screen printing tables are 100 x 6 feet and 100 x 9 feet for single and double width fabric respectively. Average sized units have 2 - 8 tables and bigger sized one, 10 - 12 tables. Screen printers use synthetic colours and processes. Only 10% of screen printed goods are exported. Average screen printing units have investment from Rs.20 to 50 lakh and large units up to Rs.1 crore. Annual value of screen printed goods at Sangner is around Rs.265 crore and job charges of Rs.80 crore per annum are earned.

Effluents generation for 1000 metres single bed sheet fabric in soaking of fabrics is about 7300 litres, bleaching (1 stage) - 4850 litres, bleaching (2 stage) - 10600 litres, Peroxide bleaching + hot dyeing - 10000 litres, cold dyeing + optical whitening - 4600 litres, Pad-batch + Tie and dye - 73000 litres and post print washing - 1970 litres as per a study carried out by NPC New Delhi in the year 2002 at Sangner. Interests of screen printers are looked after by Sangner Kapada Rangai and Chhapai Association, Sangner.

Bagru

Bagru village has got 150 traditional printing units. Screen printing units are mainly concentrated in Sanganer. Units in Bagru provide direct employment to around 1500 persons. Similarly Barmer has got only block printing units, which are mainly household type.

15. Threats :

- i) Lack of education among traditional printers, limits the scope for scientific and technical input in the trade.
- ii) Decentralised nature of industry puts it to a great disadvantage in it's planned growth and raising the issues of common interest.
- iii) Most of the units in all the three clusters are either on agricultural land or household in residential areas, which deprive them of better infrastructure facilities and Govt. incentives. Poor infrastructure leads to seasonal business with activities stopped during monsoon as major activities are carried out in open.
- iv) Polluting nature of activities in residential or city limits deprives them of registration with Govt. departments and NOC from Pollution Control boards. This debars them to take benefit of any Govt. Scheme including financial assistance from Govt. and banks. Lack of finance, limits their growth.
- v) There are poor marketing facilities. Middlemen extract handsome margin by marketing and

exporting the products, which have very good demand on account of their ethnic values.

- vi) There is scarcity of fresh and clean water for processing. No Common Effluent Treatment Plant exists in all the three clusters.
- vii) Absence of organised design development activities
- viii) No R & D in block making. Same old age technique continues.
- ix) No quality consciousness or vision for the future.
- x) Lack of training facilities.
- xi) No charm in the trade for the new generation which considers it a dirty job.

Improved infrastructure, modernised works, marketing set up, organisational network and better margins may attract them to stay in the traditional trade. The craft may also get a new face if such steps are taken.

Prepared by Ram Asrey Lal, Dy Director (Chemical Processing), under the guidance of the Textile Commissioner, Mumbai and material based on :

- i) Various websites such as jaipurorg.uk, rajasthanheritage.com, sanganeriprints.com, pinkcity.net, jaipurlinks.com/handicraft.htm, crafts.indianetzone.com etc.
- ii) Discussion with craftsmen's Associations representatives / officers and staff of Weavers Service Centre, Jaipur
- iii) Diagnostic study report of Textiles Committee, Jaipur.

- iv) May 2002 Report on approach to environmental planning for the Sangneri area prepared by NPC New Delhi.
- v) Survey by R.O. Noida.

C:\backup of lal\My Documents\Sudha\Ethnic Printing clusters.doc