Sanjhi Folk Art of Mewar: An Exploratory Study

Sudha Babel¹, Latika Sanchiher²

¹Professor, Head & Research Fellow, Dept of Textiles & Apparel Designing, College of Home Science, MPUAT. Udaipur

Abstract: The making of Sanjhi is closely linked with cow-dung. In fact in Indian folk-art tradition, a separate category of art form can be delineated, where the main material used for drawing is cow-dung and clay. The present study was carried out on sixty respondents making Sanjhi at Nathdawara and Devghard of Mewar region. To achieve the objective of the study sixty respondents were selected thirty each from region. Structured interview schedule was used for data collection. It was observed from the present investigation that the tradition of Sanjhi making is prevalent in Brahmins families of the region. Adolescent girls and young women in the age group of 15-30 years were found to be widely involved in this art. Regarding family structure and education, most of the respondents were graduate and lived in joint families. Majority of the respondents were found to be associated with this craft from more than 10 years. All the respondents reported that Sanjhi making is their family tradition. They paint their home specially at the time of pithri-paksha (the fortnight of the ancestors) occasions. The time spent on a particular design is dependent upon the intricacy and details of the designs. Majority of the respondents also knew about the significance of different motifs and scenes used in Sanjhi and respondents opined that Sanjhi art have enough potential to be establish as enterprise in Apparel sector.

Keywords: Sanjhi Motifs, techniques of making Sanjhi

1. Introduction

Sanjhi is a traditional art form, prevalent in many parts of India, especially in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab. Sanjhi tradition is also prevalent in Maharashtra and Goa. The festival of Sanjhi is celebrated by young girls in honour of a goddess named Sanjhi or Sanjhyaa. This festival coincides with the annual worship of ancestral spirits during the Hindu month of Ashvin (September), that lasts a fortnight, beginning with the first day of the dark-half of the Ashvin month and concluding on the sixteenth day i.e. the new moon day of the same month. During this fortnight, known as pithri-paksha (the fortnight of the ancestors), young girls in Rajasthan emboss various motifs inside a parallelogram with four gateways, on front walls of their houses. These motifs are embossed in cow-dung everyday and are scraped off the next day. In their place new motifs are drawn. This process is repeated everyday till the end of pithri Paksha fortnight, when the process of drawing a full blown Sanjhi know as kila kot (literally-fortified dwelling) begins.

The Young unmarried girls and Brahmins use to do pooja of this Sandhya Devi to get all their desires fulfilled. The Sanjhi is also done for this to get the Lord Shri Krishna as a husband by Shree Gopikas of Vraj. Vrajalanas did the pooja of this devi during this period for 14 days and as a result, got Shree Vrajraj Shree Krishna in Maharaas. This is called as "Sanjhi" or "Sandhya". During this period, the gopikas used to create beautiful pictures on the ground/walls depicting the places, leelas, characters etc of Vraja and other places. After that, they use to do the pooja of these pictures and thus the pooja of Sanjhi. They did the pooja with the objective of getting Shree Krishna as her husband. Everyday new motifs are added to the ones drawn on the previous day and finally the pictograph depicting the story of Sanjha is completed on the 14th day. On the new moon day, i.e. the last day of pithri-paksha, kila kot is also scraped off the wall and this along with the earlier scrapings is immersed in the river, accompanied by ritual worship amidst dancing and singing. The aim of present study is to collect motifs used in Sanjhi art of Nathdawara and Devghard made by the Brahmins families for documentation and digitized for textile end uses.

2. Methodology

The present study was conducted in the Nathdawara and Devghard district of Mewar region of Rajasthan. Sixty respondents from Nathdawara and Devghard were selected randomly to know about different Sanjhi motifs for documentation and digitized for textile end uses. Structured interview schedule was used for data collection. Suitable statistical technique was used for analysis of data.

3. Results and Discussion

It is discussed under two heads general information and specific information along with motifs used and technique of making Sanjhi. Profile of Sanjhi making respondents is as follows:

1) Age: The data collected on age of respondents revealed that majority of the respondents (70%) belonged to the 15-20 year age group. However 30 per cent respondents belonged to 20-30 years age group.

2) Sanjhi artisans: It was observed that the tradition of Sanjhi making was more prevalent (80%) among girls and only a few women (20%) practiced this folk art.

3) Family Type: The data pertaining to distribution of respondents according to family type revealed that majority of the respondents making Sanjhi lived in joint families (70%) while a very few (30%) lived in nuclear family.

4) Education: The data pertaining to education revealed that all the respondents were educated. Majority of the respondents (40%) were educated up to senior secondary level followed by 30% of respondents who were graduated. Twenty per cent of the respondents were secondary pass whereas the rest of 10% were post graduated.

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Sculpted figures of some other ingredients were used to give outline and colour to the raw materials being used for making Sanjhi. The main raw material used was cow dung. In addition, red ochre, tin foil, various kinds of flowers and leaves of the plantains and cuts into various shapes, bamboo sticks and any other material were used to make Sanjhi art. Occasionally, Sanjhi was made from dry fruits but it is not very common.

Specific information related to Sanjhi art

Associated with Sanjhi making: Respondents were asked from when they were making folk Sanjhi. It was reported that 60 percent were making Sanjhi from more than ten years and rest 35 percent were making it from last 5-10 years.

Different motifs used in Sanjhi: It was reported that all the respondents used figurative motif and geometrical motifs in Sanjhi and in geometrical motifs, dots were used by nearly all of the respondents. One third of the respondents (33.33%) used holy symbols.

Places painted with Sanjhi: Sanjhi were generally drawn by majority of the respondents (80%) on the door steps followed by 60 per cent of the respondents who draw Sanjhi on walls of their home whereas, about 50 per cent of the respondents also decorated both door steps and walls with Sanjhi motifs.

Design source: For majority of the respondents (40%) old stories and songs served as a base for developing new designs while 60 per cent of respondents used own imagination for design development. Majority of the respondents relied on their own imagination for design development.

Raw material used: As per the information about the raw material being used for making Sanjhi includes: fresh and green cow-dung of a young cow, flowers and leaves of various kinds, corn cobs, bright and colourful paper strips, tin foil, cowrie/shells, bamboo sticks and any other object that may come in handy. Red ochre, kumkum and kharia are some other ingredients used to give outline and colour to the sculpted figures of Sanjhi.

Table 1: General information of the Sanjhi artisans, N = 60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sanjhi artisans</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family Type</td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior secondary</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post graduation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Specific Information related to Sanjhi making, N=60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Associated with Sanjhi making</td>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Type of Motifs used</td>
<td>Geometrical motifs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Holy symbol</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Celestial symbol</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Figurative</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Places painted*</td>
<td>Door steps (dheli)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Door steps&amp; Walls</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific kinds of flowers are used in Sanjhi and besides being a decorative medium they may have symbolic importance. Gul-tevari, Genda lal, Chhameli, Baramasa or Sada suhagan flowers are used in region. (Table 2). Flowers of pink, white, pinkish-brown colours have a special place in Sanjhi. Big black seeds of Achcha hagar are used in making eyes of the figures.

Type of Sanjhi prepared: The four types of Sanjhi are made in the region. Sanjhi pictures were created by flowers, natural colours, leaves of bananas and in water. Making of water Sanjhis is very difficult only few respondents know this art of making water Sanjhis (10%). Making of water Sanjhi is more prevalent in Udipur as reported by respondents. Majority of respondents made Sanjhi with Gheru and cow dung with floral and coloured foil paper decoration. It was also found that sometimes respondents also make Sanjhi with dry fruits but it is not very common.

Frequency of making Sanjhi: Cent percent of the respondents made Sanjhi during festival times like pitripaksha (the fortnight of the ancestors).

Motifs used in Sanjhis: All the respondents reported that at Srinath ji temple of Nathdwara, the sanjis are made from leaves of the plantains and cut into various shapes and
placed in the Kamal chok after the sandya arti. The themes are usually the Krishna leelas. There are set designs created on each days of the Sanjhis. Folk Sanjhis prepared by the respondents on walls of the houses are different and a list of motifs that are usually made on the full moon day by the respondents (Nathadwara and Devghard) are documented below:

- Aam ka Jhad
- Aankad-Baankad,
- Aanvala ka Jhad,
- Aath Rahen,
- Athkali Phool,
- Baaman-Baamni
- Badshah ki Fauz,
- Bandarval,
- Bani-thani,
- Bara-Dati
- Bari,
- Beejani,
- Belan-Chaklota,
- Bilouna,
- Biranbeti,
- Chamarake,
- Chankar,
- Charnote
- Chaklota,
- Chakri-Bhanvair,
- Chumach,
- Chand,
- Chand-Suraj,
- Charbhar,
- Charkha,
- Charu-Charavi,
- Chaupad,
- Chauraya,
- Chechaurni-Cheeharno
- Chchabb,
- Chchakkali Phool,
- Chheetiyen.
- Choonkdi,
- Daala Jhad,
- Daan-Peti,
- Dari Bati,
- Danka.

- Daman-kalam
- Dhanusha,
- Dheeni,
- Dokra Dokri,
- Gadula,
- Ganesh,
- Gehun ki Umi,
- Gevar,
- Giriraj,
- Goocharni,
- Gordan
- Gubbara,
- Haathi,
- Hatyara,
- Janua,
- Jhalaar,
- Kalash,
- Kangsi,
- Kel,
- Khajoor
- Khajur,
- Kothali,
- Kunvaralal,
- Kunvar,
- Majira,
- Mangal kalaash
- Meran,
- Mor,
- Nagar Jod,
- Naj Kootna,
- Nau Dokra,
- Nau Kothali,
- Neemdi
- Nisarni,
- Nuth,
- Pacheta,
- Pachete,
- Pandu,
- Pandav,
- Pankhi, Paamna,
- Panware
- Parmesar,
- Patang,
- Pattra-Done,
- Paya Bajot,
- Peepali,
- Penkda, Paan,
- Phool,
- Pomcha
- Premi Bor,
- Rammaam,
- Saagar,
- Saanjha Savar,
- Satt Rishi,
- Saatiya,
- Sanjhi-Sanjhya,
- Sitara,
- suraj,
- Taakdi,
- Taakdi-Tola
- Taal-Talyya,
- Taare,
- Tamancha,
- Tara Mandal,
- Tari Pharriyen
- Teen Maky,
- Tairaka,
- Tikare,
- Teer,
- Teerath-Dham,
- Tibari Badla
- Tota,
- Vandarwa

Technique and Process of making Sanjh folk art: The process and technique of making Sanjh is both simple and elaborate. On full moon day, a motif called Poonam Patala, symbolizing the stool or seat in a square form is drawn. Sanjh, is invited to take her seat on this patala. Prayers are offered and songs welcoming her to take the seat are sung. The first step involved in making Sanjh is called gohali. It consists of plastering a specific area of the wall with clay and cow-dung mixture and sculpting a square boundary with a triangle at the top in relief with cow-dung.

The process of making designs inside this square involves use of thumb and first three fingers. Lines that evolve into concrete designs and figures are drawn by pressing cow-dung on the surface of the wall with the help of the thumb and the fingers. Once the design is complete, flower petals and paper strips are pressed against these figures while the dung is still wet. Some motifs may be embossed directly by placing balls of dung on the wall and pressing it and moulding them into specific designs.
Designs of Sanjhis on wall
The designs of the previous day are scraped off the next day and the surface is plastered with a fresh coat of cow-dung. Motifs are drawn in harmony with the tithi i.e. the exact day of the waning lunar fortnight. They either communicate numerically with the date or the object that is embossed shares in common its first letter with that of the date. The gohali is done using geru and green arsenic (harhmachi). This gohali is left untouched for three or four days after which another coat is applied over it. Gohali can be a square, rectangle, triangle or polygon in shape. The next step in the making of Sanjhi is the actual embossing of motifs inside the gohali enclosure. The depiction from theras onwards is called ‘kot’. Kot refers to thick circular boundary wall running along town and cities to secure them against attack from enemies.

On the sixteenth day of pitri-paksha called pitri-moksha amavasya, (the new moon day when pitris are believed to be released from the cycle of birth and death) the Sanjhi-kot is completely scraped of the wall and this along with the scrapings of the earlier days are ritually immersed in the river water. Girls carry their scrapings in a bamboo basket on their heads and singing songs go on together to the nearby water source. After immersion they share the prasada. They also sing and dance together.

Sanjhi motives used in article: Vast majority (96.7%) of the respondents were unaware that Sanjhi could be used as a motif in designing different articles.

Potential of Sanjhi art as enterprise in Apparel sector: Majority (60%) of the respondents viewed that Sanjhi art have enough potential to be established as enterprise in apparel sector whereas 40 per cent of the respondents were not in agreement with this view.

4. Conclusion
It can be concluded that Sanjhi is the traditional art work and is prevalent in among all the Hindu families respondents were found to be associated with this craft from ten years. Adolescent girls and young women in the age group of 15-30 years were found to be widely involved in Sanjhi art. Regarding family structure and education, most of the artisans graduate and living in joint family. Sanjhi are drawn during pitri-paksha (the fortnight of the ancestors),. The four types of Sanjhi are made in pushthimarg. These pictures were created by Flowers, natural colors, leaves of bananas and on water. The time spent on a particular design is depending upon the intricacy and details of the designs. Majority of the respondents were known of the also known to the significance of different motives of Sanjhi and widely used geometric motives like Spiral, Dots, Pentagononal, Squares and Rectangle. Respondents also use holy symbols like, Asthadal Kamal, Swastika, Deepak, Om, Mangal kalash and scenes of Raasa leela lord Krishna are depicted in Sanjhi at Shrinathji temple of Nathdwar. Traditional Geru and Khadiya were still used by majority of the respondents for Sanjhi making. Majority (60%) of the respondents viewed that Sanjhi art have enough potential to be established as enterprise in apparel sector.

Table 4: Sanjhi art have potential to be establish as a microenterprise, N=60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanjhi motives used in other articles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanjhi art have potential to be establish as a microenterprise in apparel sector</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sanjhi art have enough potential to be established as enterprise in apparel sector whereas 40 per cent of the respondents were not in agreement with this view.

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References