

DRS Report

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2015

POSHAK



TRADITIONAL ATTIRE
OF
RAJASTHAN

DECLARATION

The work done as a part of the written submission under this report “POSHAK-Traditional Attire of Rajput Women” is done as Design Reserch Project for post graduate program in Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay, India under the guidance of *Prof. Nina Sabnani*.

I hereby declare all the content of this project is an original work with appropriate reference information or links provided wherever due.

Any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute.

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APPROVAL SHEET

This project titled “POSHAK-Traditional Attire of Rajput Women” is prepared and submitted by Akanksha Rathore in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of ‘Masters in Design’ in Industrial Design. It has been examined and is recommend for approval and acceptance

Guide:

Chairman:

Internal Examiner:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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My sincere regards to *Prof . Nina Sabnani* for letting me choose the area of research and showering us with all the best possible knowledge on ethnography also for getting us introduced to *Prof. Rowena Robinson* who made sure the techniques and methods of ethnography are well known and done correct to achieve the best possible in the given scenario.

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| Junagarh palace, Bikaner , (Recorded from lal garh palace museum)



RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan leaves no senses untouched. The colours, yellows, blues, greens and red are a delight to watch. The state has a distinct music to it with kartals and dholak singing the bravery of warriors and songs of Thar desert and festivities. Rajasthani cuisine made of dried vegetables and spices has a distinct flavor and fragrance. Dal bati churma, ker sangri, badi, pithode, gatte are few to be named. The land restores and tell stories of its art and culture in the kind of architecture practiced, various handcrafted items, clothing etc. Each motif is quintessential to the place and represents the uniqueness of the land in the best possible way. The major population of Rajasthan is of Rajputs Who belonged to the warrior class of people and are an image of feudalism and chivalry. The entire cultural ecstasy of the nation with all its regality and beauty boils down

in the cultural beauty of the state of Rajasthan. The dynasties that ruled over the state blessed the region by acting as the patrons of art and its various forms. Rajasthanis take pride in their culture and mark their identity with the music they listen to ,the dance form they practice (ghoomar). Rajputana had laid a strong in brick in constructing the art and architecture of the times. The long thick walled forts, huge doors, jharokha and arches are very significant of the period. The women of the state wear the traditional poshaks and talk about being privileged to be born as the decedents of the great warriors and kings who ruled and commanded for five centuries. The dresses not only symbolizes the grandeur and richness of the Rajput period but have also been a major example of the material culture of the times.

HISTORY

The first recorded Rajput kingdoms emerged in Rajasthan in the 6th century and small dynasties later ruled much of northern India. According to the Hindu Mythology, the Rajputs of Rajasthan are the descendants of the Kshatriyas or warriors of Vedic India. The Rajput ethos is martial, in spirit, and fiercely proud and independent, and emphasizes lineage and tradition. They understand themselves as belonging to one of three traditional classes. There are: Royal Rajputs(the maharanas and the eldest son who would carry the title ahead after Maharana retires), Noblemen Rajputs(the thakurs and rajas who would be granted thikanas by the maharana in return of military and administrative services), and Non aristocratic Rajputs (the youngest sons who over the period were left with very little and had to switch to farming and methods). It has been accepted that the Rajputs were divided into thirty-six races and twenty-one kingdoms. The Rajput clans gave rise to dynasties like

Sisodias of Mewar (Udaipur), **Kachwahas** of Amber (Jaipur), **Rathors** of Marwar (Jodhpur & Bikaner), **Hadas** of Jhalwawar, Kota & Bundi, **Bhatias** of Jaisalmer, **Shekhawats** of Shekhawati and **Chauhans** of Ajmer.

These clans are then further divided into numerous sub clans. Despite all the divisions marked by class and clans, Rajputs maintain that they are all related to one another, however distantly, either by descent or marriage. They openly acknowledge that the genealogies of all real Rajputs intersect somewhere or other.

Emblem for different dynasties From Top to bottom :
a |Japur
b |Bikaner
c |Udaipur
d |Jodhpur
e |Ambliara
f |Kota
g |Jaisalmer



RAJPUT WOMEN

Rajput women have always been known for their grace and conduct. From an early age Rajput girls have always been told that they must learn modesty for when they marry they will have to live in a new family, accept its customs, and obey its elders. On the contrary the tales of their bravery and courage to fight against all odds and taking to war when in need are well scripted in history. Women of the clan are known for their sacrifices as sati and are preached till date as sati mata. They keep themselves away from social gatherings where locals would participate and do not socialize in gatherings with male around. A girl in order to show the gratitude and respect to the

elders is expected to cover her head always, extend help to each one in the family. Other than the household chores she is expected to be good at art, embroidery, dance (ghoomar) though she should never overdo it and maintain the poise. Girls are introduced to the family values from an early age allowing them to participate in pooja and dhok ceremonies and conducting fasts and festivals like gangaur where the girl prays gaur and isar (lord shiva and parvati) to be blessed with a handsome groom. Festivals like gangaur, teej, rakhi, chauth are the festivals where women would gather, pray and celebrate.



CLOTHING IN EARLY ERA

From books and sources it is evident that Mughal culture had a lot of influence on Rajput culture and clothing. The dress code generally consists of a bunch of garments including

/ Choli - upper garment heavily embroidered in the front and tied with strings at the back. Also called Angia, Chola, Cholaka & Kanchli, with mujhal influences blouses with front opening came in vogue.

/ Kurti - a sleeveless blouse with deep neckline to cover the front and the back. Worn over kanchli.

/ Loose fitting skirt or lehnga.

/ Odhni: a sari like material worn with half pleats at the front and worn over shoulder covering the head. Keeping it loose enough to cover as a veil. The royals would wear clothes of thread in silver and gold making the attire more expensive and rich.

/ Men would dress aristocratic dresses that would consists of pagadi, angarkhi, churidar pyjama and a belt called the kamarband. The angarkhi (long upper garment, worn over a sleeveless close fitting vest having an asymmetrical front and is opening down its length at the centre-front and is fastened with cloth

ties at the shoulder and at the center-front waist. Other upper garments worn by royalty include the `jama` and the `shervani`. Lower garments include the `salvar`, a pair of shaped-trousers and the `churidar-pyjama`, which is a fitted pair of trousers. The dhoti is also worn, though styles differ from region to region.

/ The safa in Mens clothing plays a crucial role. It is considered as the sign of status and dignity. A king would never leave the court without safa (also pheta). Its importance can be anticipated by the fact that when in war if a king's body was nowhere to be found it would be his safa which the queen would rest in her lap and summon herself to the fire god to abide by the custom of sati.

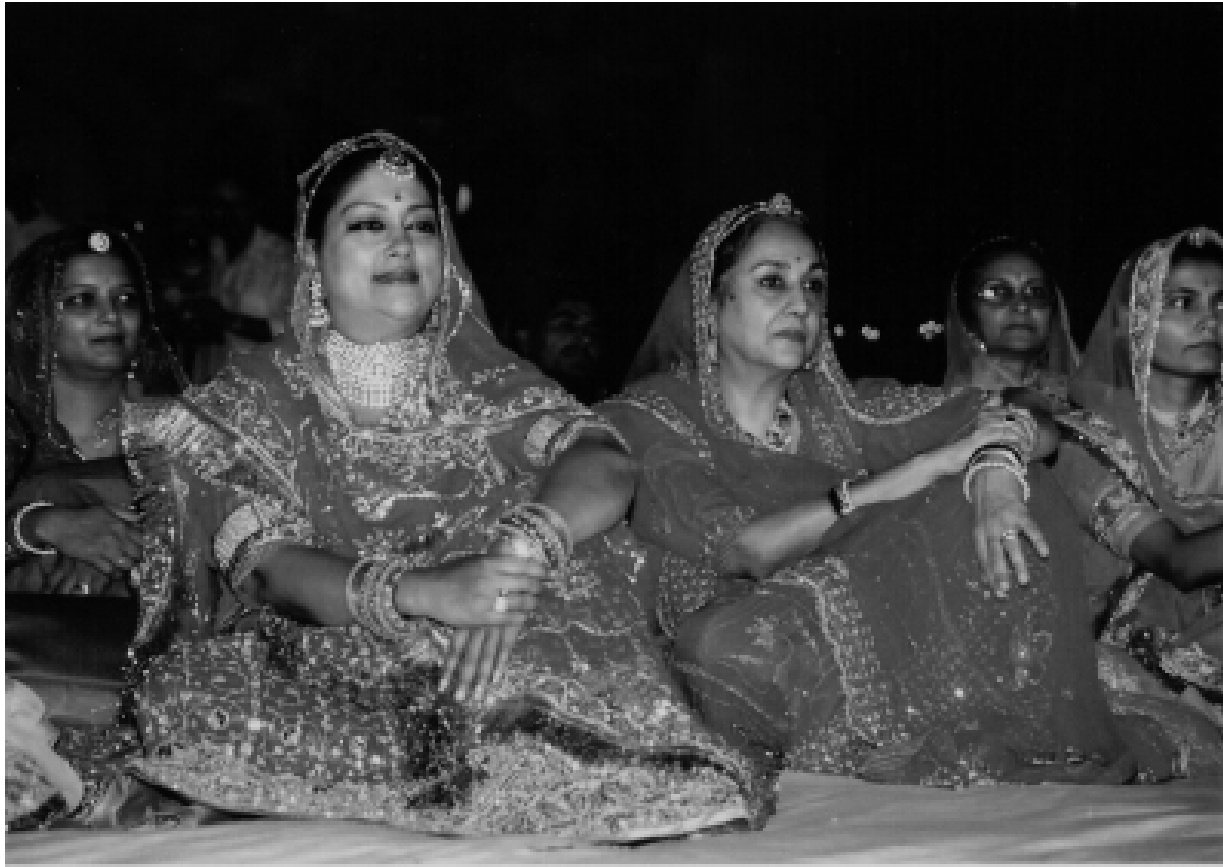
/ The art of tying safa is region specific. Like Mewar has its own style of pagdi. Gol safa is very specific to bhaties near Jodhpur. The colours and patterns are chosen for festive and ceremonies. In the medieval era, the colour saffron denoted valour and chivalry. But today, seasons bring about a variation in colour. White safa is considered a symbol of mourning.

| Bai Saheb Chand kanwar(
Recorded from lal garh
palace museum)



| Bai Saheb Laxmi Kan-
war Recorded from lal
garh palace museum)





| Vasundhara Raje
Scindia, CM of
Rajasthan (2013 to
present)



| Maharani Gayatri Devi
of Jaipur

| Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar along
with Prince Lakshyaraj along with
the family-members



TECHNIQUES AND DETAILS

Colours: Rajasthan is the place where each colour is celebrated and has a significance. On certain occasions colour codes are fixed which makes the place look like a pallet of various shades coming together and rejoicing.

Poshaks looks astonishingly beautiful with its wide range of colors, texture and shades. Turquoise, rose-pink, green, orange, reds and yellow are the main colours. With advent of time more colours started getting acceptance and apart from those bright colours the choices now also includes more subtle pastel colours (peach, grey, pale green, pearl etc). Though even today only bright colours are preferred for the top half of the dress (jodh) and extreme shades of dark and pale colours like violet, bottle green, pearl are kept for bottom lehnga.

The colours are called with their local names. Chandaniya (mustard), motiya (pink), rani (maroon), santariya (orange), pyajiya (mauve) are a few amongst many which are frequently and easily recognized by all.

Details: Together both the kanchli and kurti are called jodh. A jodh is mostly kept bright in colours as opposed to the lehnga (bottom skirt) that can be dark in shades of colours. The border on the lehnga and jodh is called magji. It can be in contrast to the colour of the dress or have patterns. Certain specific styles are used and known amongst ladies like rathodi magji, one where horizontal stripes in brocade is used. Another one is jodhpuri guna that has minute checks running throughout the cloth.

Odhni: Rajasthan is known for its tie and dye work. In the inner areas of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Udaipur people dye these odhni in various patterns

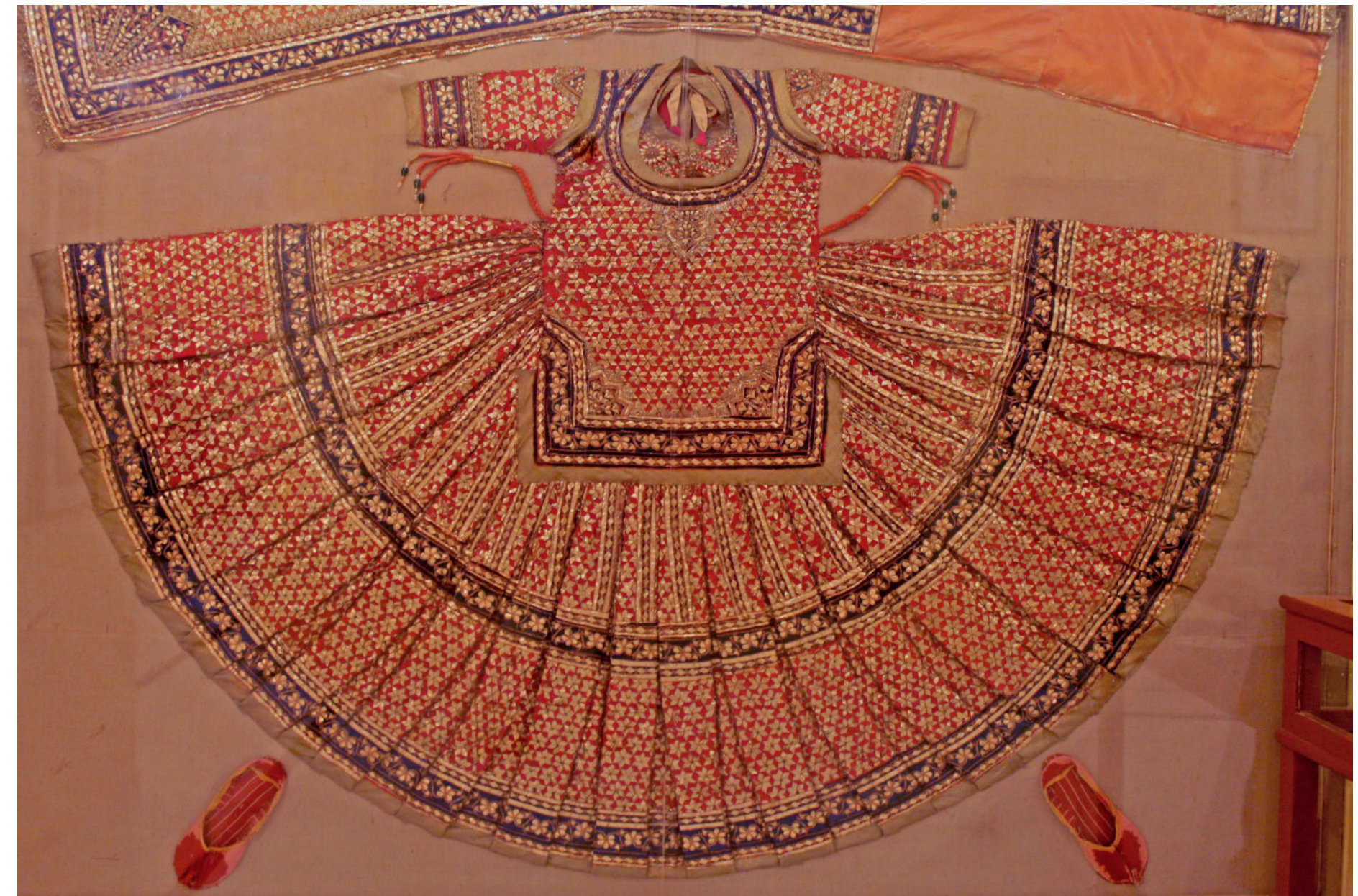
of lahariya (mothda, kachri, laadu, pachrangi). The safa or phenta worn by men are of the same patterns and colours only the length and purpose varies. Shiffon, pure georgette and cotton are the main three cloth materials choices made for odhni. In the old times cotton odhni was looked down upon and georgette odhna with heavy work was the choice made by the rich and affluent. With passage of time and being more convenient for the climatic conditions now cotton odhna are preferred for daily wear. Though for marriages and other occasions georgette and shiffon are used.

For certain occasions particular kind of dresses are worn. For Holika Dahan women of Mewar (Udaipur) dress up in faag (white dress with red border). God Bharai ceremony (baby shower) on the birth of a new born is preceded with the mother wearing peela (yellow dress with red border).

Sawan (monsoon rains) is celebrated with lahariya. The bright colours of the dress makes the season colourful and adds joy to the celebration.

For Haldi ceremony in weddings women gather wearing yellow dresses and apply turmeric paste in turns to both bride and the groom for their skin to glow on the day of marriage. The entire gathering makes the event look like a celebration of the colour yellow in its most majestic form.

| Heavy Gota Patti
embroidered Dress :
from royal court Of
Bikaner



| Rathodi Magji
Brocade cloth
material



| Variety Of Odhni



| Dhund Ceremony rituals of Baby Mohlakshika Kumari Mewar was performed along with Holika Dahan.



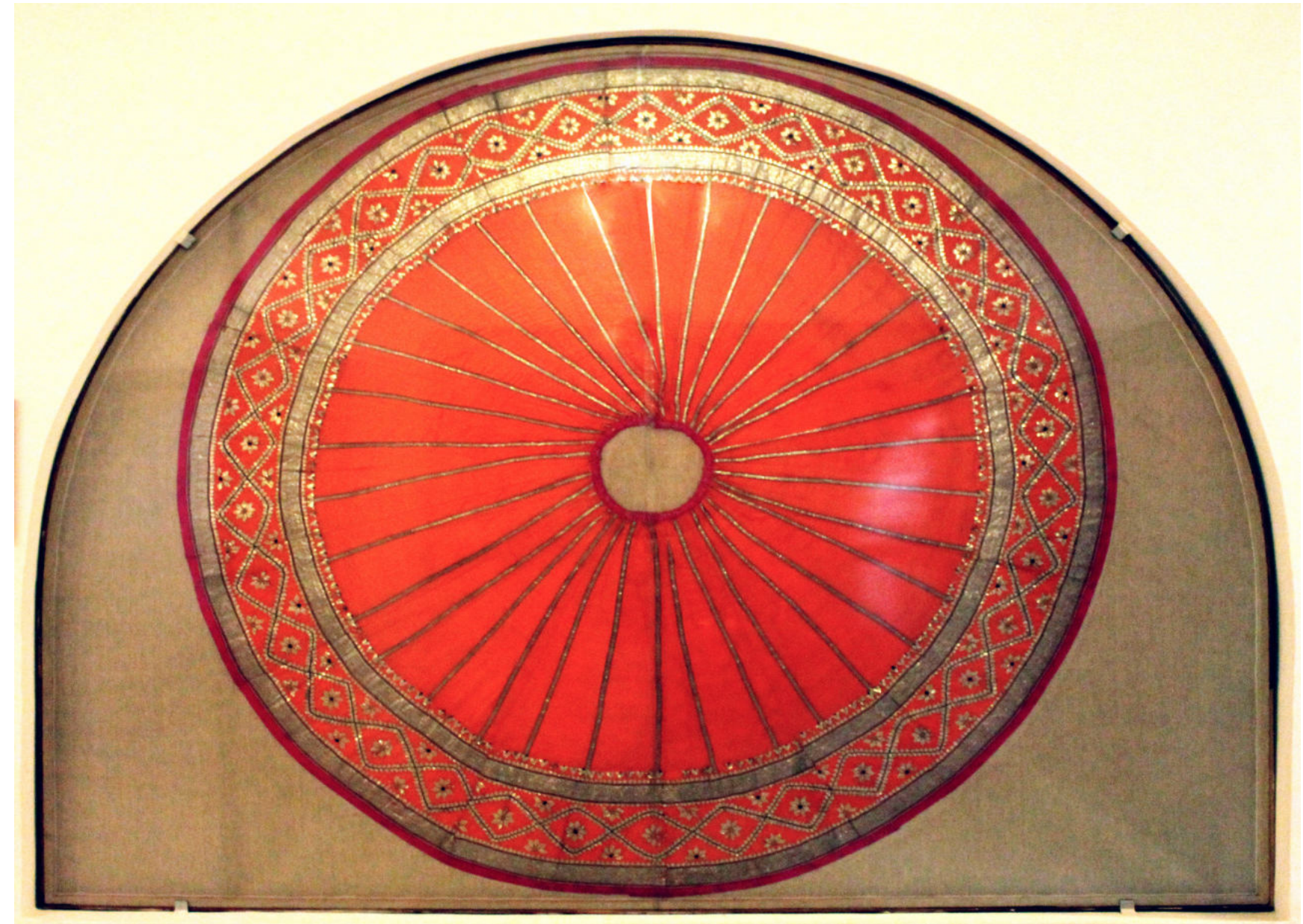
| Dress Showing Details
of kurti and kanchali with
rathodi Magji as Border



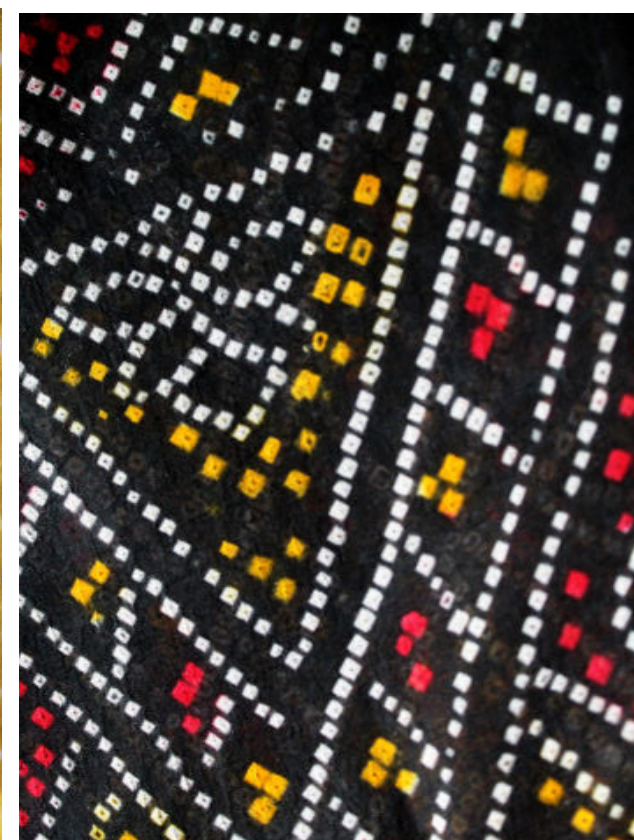
|Gotappati work Embro-
dered Lehnaga Dress



Heavy Gota Patti Border work
,as displayed in Junagarh Fort
,Bikaner



| Heavy Zari work
embroidered Dress :
from royal court Of
Bikaner



WORK AND EMBROIDERY

The motifs used on the dresses are mostly drawn from nature. Patterns these are diverse and see no of the sun, stars, flowers, paisley, buds, ferns, feathers, peacocks are commonly seen. The patterns, art and effort on the dress marks its value. In earlier times the dresses would be heavily embroidered with gold and silver threads making it precious and costly (paver work). Different regions have workers specialized in specific embroidery like danka work (metal plates) of udaipur, gota patti work of Jaipur, zardozi or marodi work, zari work (originally from benaras brocade). Apart from these heavily embroidered dresses are some light embroidery of thread, resham work, banarasi, tara work which women prefer on day to day basis. With the advent of dyes and technology now hand painted and also printed dresses are available. These would make elaborate and realistic prints possible on the cloth and so the motifs and the colours used in these are diverse and see no bounds.

Gota: odhni is always covered with silver lining (gota) all across its borders. It is an essential element in poshak of a married Rajput woman. A huge variety of gota in both colour and styles can be observed sometimes it is used as a work in the lehnga and dress itself (gota patti poshak, lappha poshak) otherwise it is essentially used as a border in odhna. These again have different names like toop, kiran, lappha, bankdo, charkha gota.

Widows and dressing: widows in rajasthan wear clothes with either lesser prints or a single colour dress usually in maroon, pale blue. most importantly the guna and borders are never of some other colour or material. The entire idea is to keep the dress simple and not stand out.

realistic prints possible on

bankada work



Gota Patti twisted Leaves
running all along Lehnga
border



zari work



Zardozi work



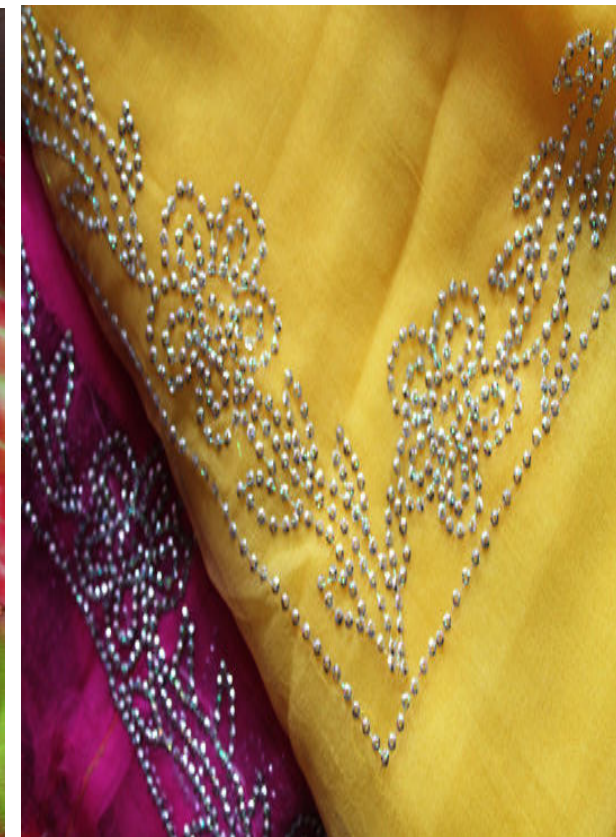
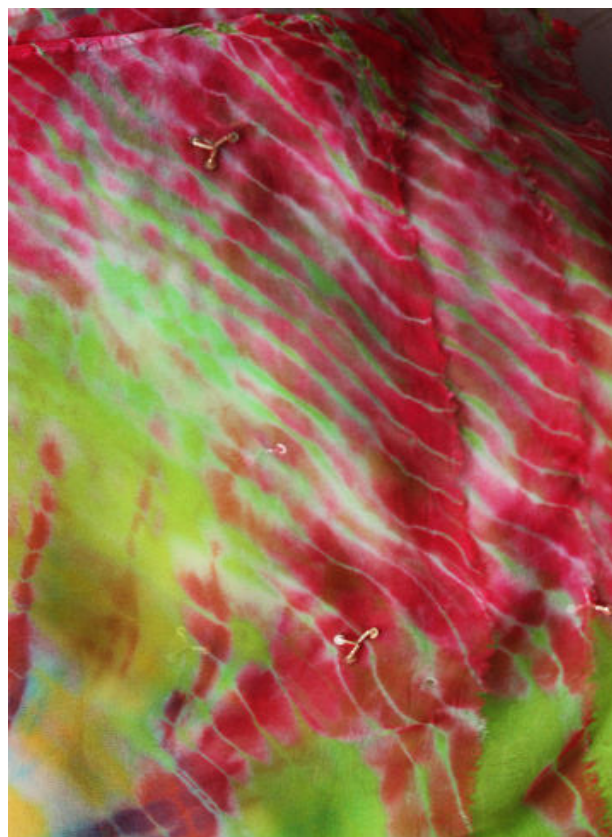
Zardozi ,Tara work



Tara Resham work



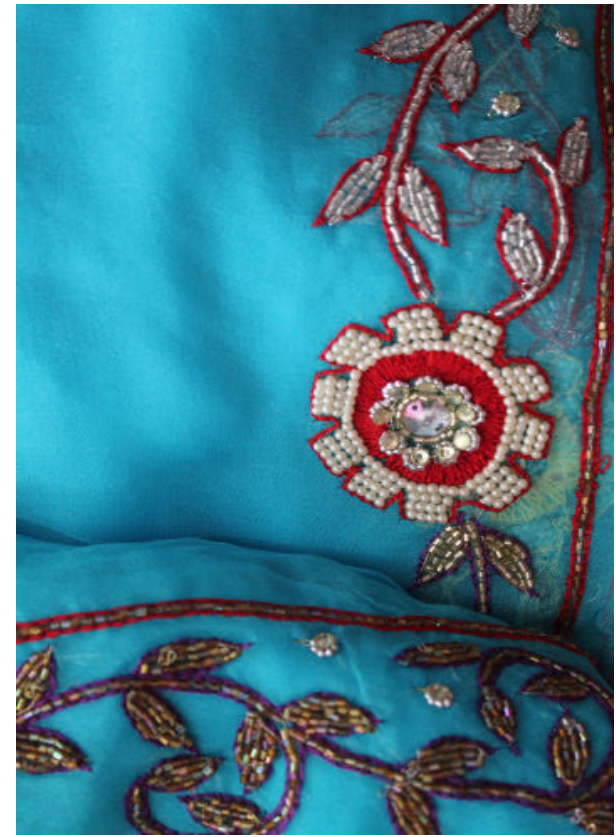
Mukesh work



banarasi work



Moti work



Tara work



Gota Patti Work,



Laffa work



Gota patti work



gota parri paisely
design work



Gota Zari Work On
Georgette



Reham and stone
work on Georgette



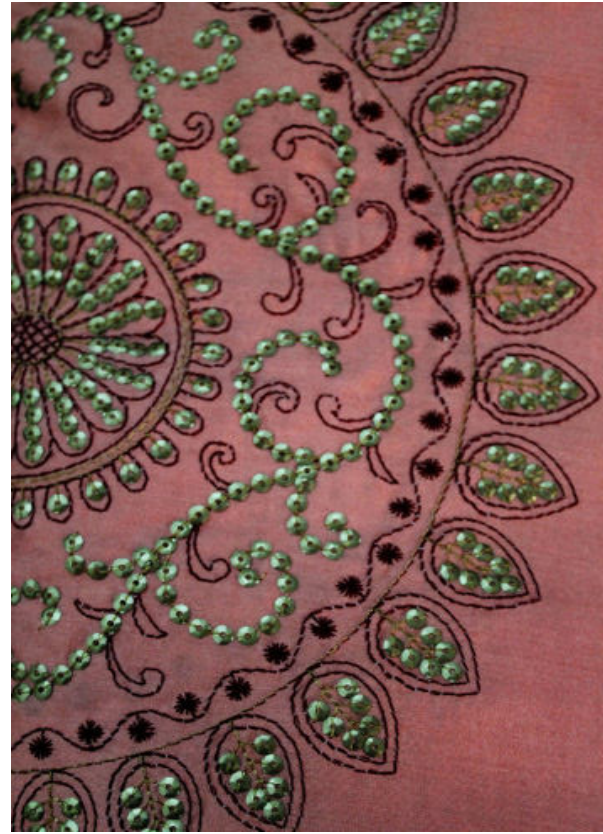
laffa, Goat Fool work



Brocade cloth material



Tara work



KNOWING IT FROM THE PEOPLE

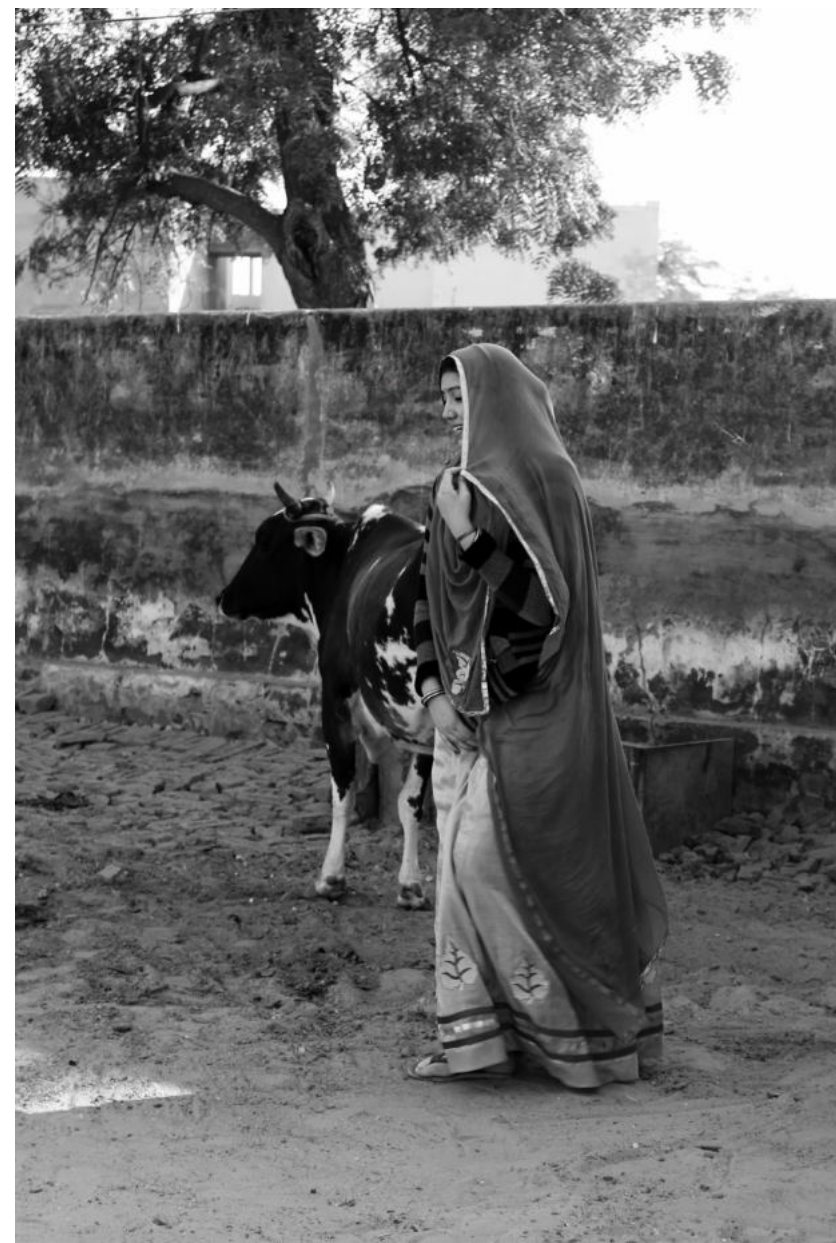
Being one amongst the Rajput community was both good and bad in certain ways as it worked as an instant ice breaker between me and the ladies but also at times they would miss out or skip on some facts considering I would already know and need no mention. To strike a conversation I sometimes chose to keep my introduction as a design student from Mumbai, this projected me as a complete outsider and helped me get a third person's view point. Also it made people think and revisit each aspect of the tradition and help with the documentation of facts.

THE FIRST STEP

The project started at home. Belonging to the community I have well observed the contrast in the ways of conduct in my maternal and paternal side of family majorly because of my father belonging to a village near Bikaner(Raj.) and my mother coming from a town near Hanumangarh(Raj). Though the customs and rituals are followed with same rigidity in both areas still hanumangarh being a town is a little more liberal when it comes to education, marriageable age and dressing of an unmarried girl. It started with a discussion at home between my Nanisa (maternal grandmother) and Maa they would discuss about how things have changed in present days. About the strict purdah system they have observed in their growing years and how women were kept in closed environments where they would have to make sure of not being heard outside while talking or laughing among friends

or sisters as it would mark them as ill behaved. Married women would always be expected of humility and would always wear a veil to not make eye contact with elders at home they would always sit a level below than where her in-laws are seated. On her wedding day the girl is presented with a poshak that would come from her in-laws along with Aad (neckpiece) and Rakhdi (headgear). The wedding dress is usually of red but for some it is strictly orange. The dress along with a chundri is the symbols of suhag and would be worn on occasions of chauth and teej hereafter. Some would keep the dress intact and pass on to generations (usually silver and gold work ones) while others would cut out the motifs and use them as embellishments in newly made poshaks for it to last longer.







CELEBRATION

At an engagement ceremony of one of my cousins I got lucky to have found all the people gathered under one roof. I questioned a bunch of ladies from different clans (Bhati, Shekhawat, Rathore, Chauhan) about their view and experiences.

The discussion started on about how earlier the girls and the mothers would stitch and decorate their own poshaks and on marrying would take it all along with them to their in-laws place. A unmarried girl would never wear kurti and kanchli but a single top and lehnga with odhna worn like a dupatta around the neck or on the shoulders. On marrying when the girl returns back to her home she would switch to salwar kameez or would wear the poshak but now carrying the dupatta differently marking her different from the daughter-in-laws of the place. They would talk about nurturing a child with restrictions imposed teaching them to

be humble, being efficient with household chores so as to make it easy for the girl to adjust in the new family. Though with the increase in number of nuclear families and people moving out of their hometowns education is now becoming priority and people are getting liberal on customs practiced. While the elders had enough to say about the history and how regal the attire is, the young ones at the function knew little. Though they love the attire and miss no chance wearing it and participating in ghoomar at weddings. They also mentioned of not wanting to restrict themselves only to poshaks and would want to wear sarees and other western clothing too. The conversation ended with both the generations discussing the elegant and poised way of conduct by Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur setting goals to achieve for the women folks. HANDS DOWN.

TRADERS

To know about how trends have changed I chose to meet an owner of a rajputi poshak sowroom who with much interest got me introduced to a few of her customers. And opened the whole lot of poshak and other decorative for me to study and photograph. On asking her about the poshak being worn as dress by other communities like Jats, Charan and Rajpurohits and about differences of any sorts she mentioned and pointed out the details of the dress like the length of the sleeves and kurti the pleats in the lehnga and other such minute differences distinguishing them from the tradition way of wearing poshaks. Though Jats have their Pomcha and khara ghaghra as dress and Bishnoi women wear blouse and a skirt with odhna resting on head a few of them have started wearing poshaks in daily wear for it is comfortable and easy to work in.

A huge change in the material

of the dress is observed from early period where the dresses were made only in cotton, garden, brocade and georgette. In the middle era velvet being a new material and its for rich look was in vogue following many other varieties of dresses in shiffon, lycra, cotton, chicken and net. Net was never used in poshaks until lately. There is a marked difference in the motifs and kind of embroidery demanded by the customers, for now a days getting a dress made from far off distances is much easy. Unlike earlier times where this was possible only for the rich and other women would get done their dresses from local karigars. She took a dig at the style and rapid changes in trends showing one of the custom made dress that had kahmiri embroidery on a black cloth stitched onto a dress. Considering the fact that black was never the colour rajputs wore.



MAKERS

In the heart of Bikaner lives many muslim families who for generations have been indulged in colouring (Tie and dye and Block printing) and giving patterns to the daily wear poshaks. The entire family comes together and get printed these dresses which they either sell at their retail shops or are passed on further to add stones and work or for embroidery. It is interesting to see in place where people fight over communal disputes here the two most rigid communities serve each other. The most sacred thread used in puja samagri (Roli) by Rajputs or hindus broadly are dyed by Muslims here.

Bikaner,Bada Bazar
Screen Print work
area



TIE AND DIE



closely tied knots
For pattern creation



Metal Frames for
marking Pattern on cloth



Dyeing Process: knotted
cloth dipped in boiling
hot coloured water



BLOCK PRINT

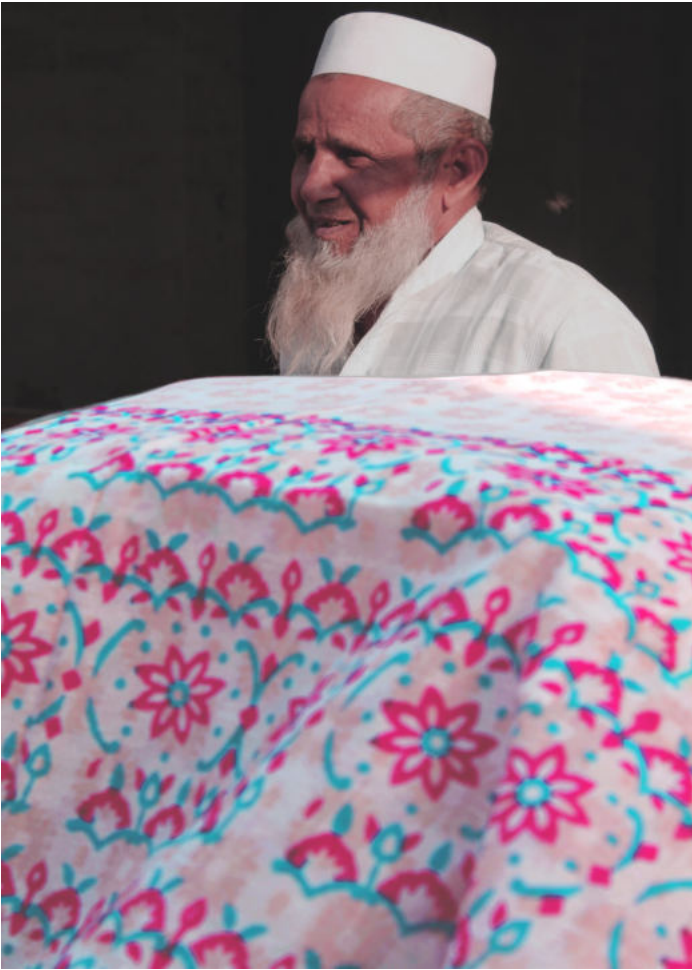


Wooden Blocks with engraved patterns for block printing



Block printed Material

Wooden Blocks with engraved patterns for block printing



Printed cloth Left To dry in sun.



SCREEN PRINT



Floral Patterned Screen
Printed cloth



Bleached White cloth



Screen Printing Small
scale Factory unit



Metal Screen Used to Spread colour and run through
plain cloth ,getting desired print.

MELODY SUNG

A conversation with an elderly lady who got delighted at the idea of putting down on paper the grandeur of the dress and its significance introduced me to many songs and tales that talk about the colours, patterns and the excitement and respect Rajput women has always had for their attire. A few I would like to mention here would be:

✱

Inee lehariye ra, No so rupya rokada sa
Mhane lyaydyo ni badila dhola lehariyo sa
Mahane lyaydyo ni baii sa ra beera lehariyo sa

✱

Faagan ayo faagan ayo faganyo rangade rasiya

✱

Aagre ro ghaghro ,madhopar ri cheent

Baisa ra beera jaipur jyajo sa
aata to lyaijo Tara ri chunari



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