Development of Motifs through the Fusion of Traditional Arts of Warli and Phulkari

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Abstract

Arts have been used to showcase the styles of the artists. Not just today, art has been a way to represent the lifestyle of the artistic tribe to the world since the early days. As the centuries have passed and as modernization has begun, these arts have lost their importance and charm. These arts are seen very little and there is very little whereabouts of the artists of these ancient arts, as Hollander (1992) documents that modernization of fashion has presented a need to revive the ancient concept of clothes being basically as interesting as the art itself. It is said that fashion is a way to express ourselves, in this research we will try to make fashion a medium to revive our age-old traditional arts. There has been prior research towards reviving the lost arts through fashion, we shall be discussing a few in this research as well. We have reviewed a few Indian arts and found two arts that are similar yet different and these are Warli and Phulkari. Warli is an ancient art of a tribe of Maharashtra, while Phulkari is the traditional art of Punjab. Warli is an art of painting whereas Phulkari is an art of embroidery. The fusion of these arts will be very interesting to see. We fused these two arts to develop 30 motif designs and out of these 30 designs, the top 15 will be selected on the basis of the data collected through a questionnaire. These top 15 designs can be used on apparel or any other form as considered suitable by the consumer and thus can be a very good way of reviving our traditional heritage.

Key Words

Fashion, Warli, Phulkari, Motifs, Fusion, Revival.

Introduction

The huge range of Indian arts reflects the cultural, climatic, and geographical variances of the country and this is its most distinctive quality Choudhary et al. (2024). There are a number of tribal and traditional arts in India, a few of which are Madhubani, Tanjore, Warli, Bhil, Rabari, Kashmiri, Gond, Kalamkari, Pattachitra, etc. The modernization of fashion has presented a need to revive the ancient concept of clothes being basically as interesting as the art itself documents Hollander (1992). Baudrillard (2005) has discussed art and mythology as aura of derision. As per the UN's report, in the last 3 decades, Indian artisans have seen a decrease of 30% which indicates a need to save our history, tradition, and culture. Along with promoting pride and belongingness, the revival of traditions also thrives to provide solutions for today's problems as mentioned by Bihari (2023). Today, many famous designers have been moving towards the goal of reviving the traditional arts of India through their collections but the cost of the collection is such that it might not be economical for a middle-class person to be able to put it in his closet. One such example is the famous Indian designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee who has brought out hand embroidery to a different level through his collections. This research was an attempt to make interesting and authentic designs for the audience to get customized on the dresses that they wear at work or at any gathering or at home, so that along with being trendy people can still give their bit towards reviving their culture. The two arts that were fused to create these motifs are Warli and Phulkari.

Warli is an ancient form of tribal art mostly created by the tribal people of Maharashtra, also, it is one of the oldest tribal art forms of India. The Warli art is based on the concept of Nature and the social life of the Warli tribe. The word 'Warli' is derived from the word 'Warala' which means piece of land as mentioned by Patil (2017). These are paintings made using geometric shapes (triangles, circles, squares) each of which is a symbolic representation of the elements of nature (Sharma, 2014). The specialty of Warli is to give a good understanding of ways of living and the conviction of individuals says Bondar (2021). Warli has seen different variations from antiquated times to date. This art has been coming to revival from the remote past and has a large approach towards the development of nature, flora, and fauna's application and execution of daily life through a fusion of ritualistic practices as documented by Bondar(2021). These Warli Paintings have not been only limited to the traditional mud walls but have now extended into the home décor industry as well mentioned by Jositha (2023).

Jositha (2023) explains that handicrafts or crafts offer a huge variety of decorative work that is either made by hand or other tools. The art that was fused with Warli is Phulkari. This art is a traditional activity that encompasses aesthetic as

well as creative works by hand or skills. With a well-stocked repertoire of motifs at their fingertips, needleworkers adorned the cloth and documented their observations. Organizations are striving today to revive the engaging and narrative potential of needle painting as well as to convert it into an income-generating.

Enterprise as mentioned by Jositha (2023). Phulkari is the folk embroidery of Punjab. It is the rural traditional embroidery that is made by hand by women of Punjab as mentioned by Maskielle (1999). The word 'Phulkari' means floral work, but the designs include geometrical shapes and cover motifs along with flowers. It is believed that this art form came from Iran, where it was called 'Gulkari' which means floral work as well. However, both of these styles are different from each other. Traditionally, the art of Phulkari was done with real flowers on silk and mulmul fabrics. These fabrics were used because of their purity and durability (Gupta & Mehta, 2014).

This review holds importance as it will help to make the working people aware of the art forms of India and will help them be a part in the initiative of bringing the age-old traditions back. This study will help the people associated with these art forms be known to the working class and will bring back the traditional art forms with a twist of modernization of looks and authenticity.

Objectives

- To select the different traditional arts through motifs.
- To develop different designs by fusion of Warli and Phulkari motifs.
- To study the expert preferences for them.

Research Methods:

Twenty experts were selected randomly from four Departments, Nandlal Bose Subharti College of Fine Arts and Fashion Design, Swami Vivekananda Subharti University, Meerut. An interview schedule was framed for data collection. The interview schedule included questions regarding the socio-personal background of the experts and also their preferences for the different motifs.

A total of 30 designs were shown to the experts for the selection of the best designs. Fifteen designs were shortlisted by the experts which as a result will be presented in this research. The research was divided into four phases. In the first phase, the different art forms of India were reviewed and the two common art forms were chosen which were Warli and Phulkari.

The two arts have common geometric-shaped motifs and both these arts resemble the social life events of the respective tribes.

In the second phase, we collected primary data through the questionnaire, and secondary data on the art forms was collected from magazines and online sources. In the third phase, we fused the motifs of both these arts and we tried to keep the

authenticity along with keeping it trendy. These motifs were fused on the basis of the shapes and colors of both these arts. In the last phase, we selected the top 15 designs based on the data collected and analyzed from the results of the questionnaire shared with the expert panel from Nandlal Bose Institute of Fine Art and Fashion Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut. These designs can be placed on Indian as well as Western dresses based on the needs of the wearer.

Analysis of data

The data thus collected were coded, tabulated, and analyzed. Simple percentages and weighted mean scores were calculated to get the required information. Maximum marks were given to the most preferred design features and minimum to the least preferred one. The weighted mean score was calculated using the following formula:

$$WMS= \Sigma fx \ N$$

Where f is the frequency of the item

N is the total number of items

WMS is the weighted mean score
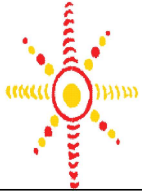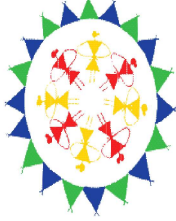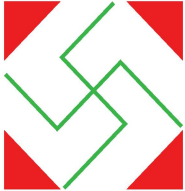
Table 1: Developed designs by fusion of Warli and Phulkari motifs

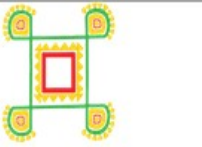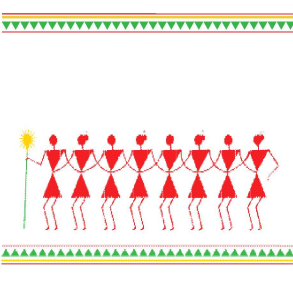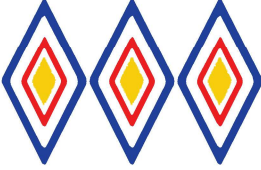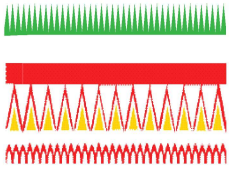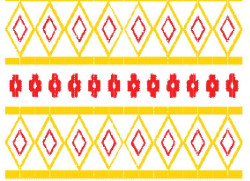| Design 1		A Warli figurine is seen holding a flag at the center of the design symbolizing Victory. The colors symbolize growth and the power and passion to win.
Design 2		This is a filled pot motif that symbolizes Abundance. The Yellow color filled in the pot denotes happiness and joy.
Design 3		Triangular shapes in Warli art depict Mountains and Trees. The colors symbolize adventure, freshness, and joy.
Design 4		This design is a clear representation of a Peacock's feather. A peacock's feather is considered auspicious and is known to be a symbol of rebirth and hope.
Design 5		Squares in Warli art denote human intervention and the rectangles in art signify peacefulness and conformity. The colors symbolize trust, calmness, clarity, and energy.
Design 6		This is a tree design that indicates the tribe's connection with Mother Earth. The tree is considered a symbol of life and longevity.
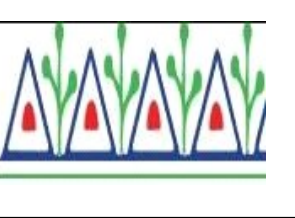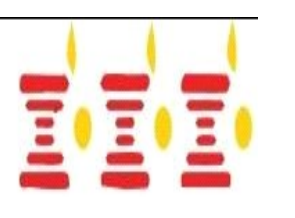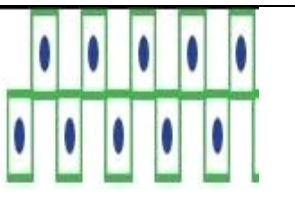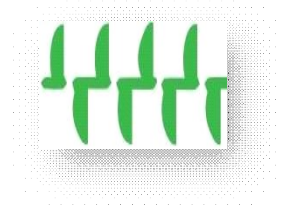
Design 7		The design above is a peacock motif. This motif symbolizes beauty, wealth and is also considered a symbol of immortality.
Design 8		This design indicates towards the beliefs and religious attributions of the tribe. This design has a Swastika at the center. A Swastika symbolizes Sun, which further signifies prosperity and good fortune.
Design 9		This design can be understood as a rangoli and represents Chowk of the house. Also, this modified design is a symbolization of the Bagh in Phulkari.
Design 10		This design shows two Warli figures dancing at the centre. It indicates happiness and celebration.
Design 11		This is a modified design that represents the blade of the hay grass cutting machine for the animal feed.
Design 12		This design clearly represents a deer. A deer is a symbol of spiritual authority and is also considered to indicate regeneration.

Results and Discussion

The questionnaire was shared with the expert panel members. The responses were

Design 13		This design is a representation of the 8 directions. The four primary directions- North, South, East and West. The four secondary directions North East, South East, North West and South West.
Design 14		This design shows Warli women standing together indicating unity.
Design 15		This is a scene for a festival or a function that is showing the people of the tribe playing instruments and dancing for a celebration.
Design 16		This is a modified Swastika design signifying prosperity. The green colour in this motif is also an indication of growth and prosperity and the red colour is also associated goddess Durga symbolizing power and strength.
Design 17		This design is again a symbol of celebration. A Warli figure is seen beating the drum for celebrating. This motif indicates joy, love and wisdom.
Design 18		This is a design related to the farming occupation of the Tribe. In this motif a Warli figure is seen acknowledging and enjoying the first harvest of the season.

Design 19		In this design, the people of the Warli tribe are seen performing the Tarpa dance. The Tarpa is an instrument just like a trumpet which is played by men turn by turn.
Design 20		The squares in Warli art indicate sacred enclosures for the mother goddess, which symbolizes fertility.
Design 21		This design is inspired by the theme of nature. The green triangles symbolize the greenery, trees, and grasses and the red triangles are a symbol of mountains.
Design 22		Again, inspired by nature, this motif has flowers. This design symbolizes energy, joy, and happiness.
Design 23		This design resembles the Drum instrument used in the functions and festivals of the tribe. Apart from this, the other instrument used is a Tarpa.The colors symbolize wealth and valor.
Design 24		This design takes its inspiration from nature. It shows plants and the triangles indicate mountains. This resembles the majestic forces of nature.

Design 25		The pink and yellow colours in this motif resemble nurturing and enlightenment respectively. It is a modified design inspired by the geometrical patterns used in both arts.
Design 26		This design is again from the nature's theme indicating trees and mountains. This design symbolizes endurance and strength.
Design 27		This design uses colours that are significant to the spiritual and religious context. It resembles the lightened Diyas used for worshipping the Gods and Goddesses during Poojas.
Design 28		The square in the design indicates a closure that is sacred or a piece of land. The green and blue colours indicate new beginnings and responsibleness respectively.
Design 29		Inspired by nature, this design resembles yellow flowers and greenery around it.
Design 30		This design resembles a 'bel' or a wine plant. It is inspired from nature and symbolizes growth and prosperity.

very interesting and were calculated on the basis of the total score received by the design.

Socio-economic background of respondents:

The data were taken from the respondents of Nand Lal Bose Subharti College of Fine Arts and Fashion Design affiliated with Swami Vivekananda Subharti University. Out of the 20 respondents, 70% of the respondents are female and 30% are male.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their socio-personal traits n=20

Socio-personal traits	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	6	30%
Female	14	70%
Designation of respondents		
Dean &Principal	1	5%
Associate Professor	1	5%
Assistant Professor	14	70%
Sr. Lecturer	1	5%
Lecturer	3	15%
Income bracket		
3,00,000-4,50,000 /annum	8	40%
4,50,000-7,00,000/annum	12	60%
7,20,000/annum and above	0	0
Marital Status		
Married	13	65%
Unmarried	7	45%

As per the above table, it was found that the majority of the respondents were females accounting for 70% of the respondents while the male respondents accounted for 30% of the respondents. The maximum percentage (65%) of the respondents belonged

to the age group of 30-35 years, 20% of the respondents were between the age group of 35-40 years, followed by 10% of the respondents. From the age group of 40-45 years, however, there were no respondents from between the age group of 45-50 years.

When the designation of the respondents was analyzed, it was noted that Assistant professors comprised the major chunk of the respondents at 70%, while the respondents with the designation of lecturer were found to be 15%, and the rest of the respondents including Senior lecturer, Associate Professor, and Principal& Dean comprised of 5% each amongst the respondents.

As far as the annual bracket of the respondents was concerned, it was observed that a large percentage of respondents (60%) fell under the bracket of 4,50,000 – 7,00,000 per annum followed by 40% of respondents coming from an income bracket of 3,00,000- 4,50,000 per annum.

Results of the Responses to the Questionnaire:

The respondents were asked to rate the designs in the questionnaire on a scale of 0 to 5 with the level of acceptability given:– 1- Poor, 2- Fair, 3- Good,4- Very good, 5- Excellent

Table 3: Percentages calculated for each count within the individual designs n=20

Design	Rating 1	Percentage	Rating 2	Percentage	Rating 3	Percentage	Rating 4	Percentage	Rating 5	Percentage
D1	3	15%	3	15%	5	25%	4	20%	5	25%
D2	4	20%	7	35%	7	35%	2	10%	0	0%
D3	6	30%	4	20%	4	20%	4	20%	2	10%
D4	1	5%	1	5%	2	10%	5	25%	11	55%
D5	0	0%	4	20%	6	30%	5	25%	5	25%
D6	3	15%	5	25%	6	30%	2	10%	4	20%
D7	0	0%	2	10%	3	15%	5	25%	10	50%
D8	3	15%	3	15%	5	25%	4	20%	6	30%
D9	1	5%	3	15%	6	30%	5	40%	5	25%
D10	2	10%	7	35%	2	10%	5	35%	4	20%

D11	1	5%	4	20%	6	30%	4	20%	5	25%
D12	2	10%	0	0%	2	10%	4	20%	12	60%
D13	2	10%	3	15%	7	35%	3	15%	5	25%
D14	0	0%	2	10%	1	5%	4	20%	13	65%
D15	0	0%	0	0%	3	15%	1	5%	16	80%
D16	3	15%	4	20%	6	30%	3	25%	4	20%
D17	1	5%	0	0%	2	10%	8	40%	9	45%
D18	2	10%	2	10%	9	45%	2	10%	5	25%
D19	0	0%	1	5%	1.5	8%	5	25%	12.5	62.5%
D20	3	15%	5	25%	4	20%	4	20%	4	20%
D21	4	20%	1	5%	1	5%	5	25%	9	45%
D22	0	0%	1	5%	8	40%	2	10%	9	45%
D23	1	5%	3	15%	8	40%	5	25%	3	15%
D24	0	0%	4	20%	3	15%	4	20%	9	45%
D25	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%	2.5	12.5%	15.5	77.5%
D26	1	5%	1	5%	1	5%	2	10%	15	75%
D27	0	0%	2	10%	1	5%	3	15%	14	70%
D28	0	0%	1	5%	3.5	17.5%	6	30%	9.5	47.5%
D29	0	0%	1	5%	3	15%	7	35%	9	45%
D30	0	0%	5	25%	5	25%	5	25%	5	25%

Table 4: Preferences of judges for the Designs   n=20

Designs	Frequency of rank 5	Percentage (%)
D1	5	25%
D2	0	0%
D3	2	10%
D4	11	55%
D5	5	25%
D6	4	20%
D7	10	50%
D8	6	30%
D9	5	25%
D10	4	20%
D11	5	25%
D12	12	60%
D13	5	25%
D14	13	65%
D15	16	80%
D16	4	20%
D17	9	45%
D18	5	25%
D19	12.5	62.5%
D20	4	20%
D21	9	45%
D22	9	45%
D23	3	15%
D24	9	45%
D25	15.5	77.5%
D26	15	75%
D27	14	70%
D28	9.5	47.5%
D29	9	45%
D30	5	25%

The design which has ranked first with 80% number of 5s given by the respondents

is design 15, this has been preferred by the respondents owing to its authentic combination of both the arts, the motif depicts the celebration scene of the Warli tribe fused with the vibrant red, yellow and blue colors of Phulkari, these colors depict love and harmony. Design 25 and Design 26 have a very minor difference and are ranked second (77.5%) and third (75%) respectively. Both of these designs are border designs. Design 25 has been selected by the respondents as it is a very simple design with basic geometric shapes and very rich colors like yellow and pink. Design 26 resonates with mother nature, this design depicts mountains and trees in the beautiful colors of blue, red, and green signifying abundance.

70% of the respondents have found design 27 as 'Excellent' as it resembles the diyas or candles that light up the space when you are in the dark, the colors yellow and red give a feeling of warmth to the viewer.

Design 14 and design 19 are a bit similar designs with similar colors and have little difference in the ratings as well. Both these designs depict the authentic representation of the traditional dance of the Warli tribe which is called 'Haveli or Tarpa', but with the colors of the colorful Phulkari. The motif used in Design 14 symbolizes the circle of life. Design 14 ranks 5th and design 19 ranks 6th with a percentage of 65% and 62.5% respectively. The colors used in these designs are red, yellow, blue, and green. Design 12 depicts a deer using triangular geometric shapes and has been ranked 7th with 60% of respondents giving it a rating of 5. The respondents have chosen this motif for the symbolic meaning that deer hold in these arts, which is as a messenger of God or the representatives of the beauty of nature. The colors used in this design are yellow and red, which have been seen as equally attractive.

Design 4 with a percentage of 55%ranks 8th, this motif is an auspicious motif and has been preferred by the respondents as it resembles a peacock's feather signifying divinity, beauty, and elegance. Design 7 and 28 draw inspiration from the same source and are ranked with only a slight variation of points with design 7 ranking 9th (50%) and design 28 ranking 10th (47.5%). The source of inspiration for these designs is a peacock which is a very significant motif in both the arts. The major colors used in these designs are blue and green which are the major colors in a peacock. These motifs signify confidence, good luck, and royalty. Design 7 is a motif design while design 28 is a border design. Design 17 is a depiction of a man playing the drums for a celebration or function such as a wedding which is generally a common Warli motif and has been preferred by 45% of respondents as 'Excellent' owing to the design and colors used like blue, red, and yellow.

Design 22 and design 29 with a preference of 45% and 45% of the respondents as 'Excellent' are border designs with the major colour used being yellow. Both these

designs draw inspiration from Mother Nature. Both these designs have the depiction of flowers and leaves with design 22 using the colours red and yellow and design 29 using the colours green and yellow. Again, drawing their inspiration from mother nature, design 21 and Design 24 have been ranked 14th and 15th are a depiction of mountains and trees preferred by 45% and 45% of the respondents respectively. These are both border designs. The major colours used in these designs are red and green with red resembling mountains and green resembling the trees.

Since the last 5 designs out of the top 15 designs had a common 5 rating, to conclude the results the rating of 4 was also taken into account for the respective designs. Of the above preferred 15 designs, 9 designs are border designs. This concludes that 60% of designs preferred by the respondents are border designs.

Table 5: Top Selected Designs   **n=20**

S.No.	Designs	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Ranks
1	D15	16	80	I
2	D25	15.5	77.5	II
3	D26	15	75	III
4	D27	14	70	IV
5	D14	13	65	V
6	D19	12.5	62.5	VI
7	D12	12	60	VII
8	D4	11	55	VIII
9	D7	10	50	IX
10	D28	9.5	47.5	X
11	D17	9	45	XI
12	D22	9	45	XII
13	D29	9	45	XIII
14	D21	9	45	XIV
15	D24	9	45	XV

Apart from the design rankings, respondents were also asked about the revival of forgotten arts in India to understand the interests of the respondents.
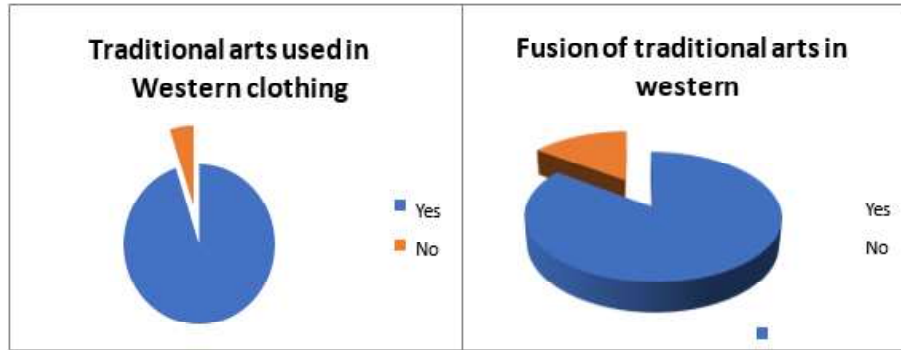
n=20

Fig. 1: Indian traditional arts can be used on Western clothing

Fig 2: Fusion of traditional arts on Western clothing helps to revive them

As seen through the responses, all the respondents believe that it is important to revive our forgotten traditional arts and a new trend can be brought through the fusion of these arts. Of the total respondents only 5% of them have an opinion that the Indian traditional art cannot be used on western clothing and 95% think that it can be used. 85% of the respondents believe that the fusion of traditional arts with Western clothing helps revive them while the remaining 15% believe the opposite. Through these responses, we can conclude that the respondents have positively favored the revival of the traditional arts and they also believe that using these designs on western clothing will also help revive them.

Conclusion

India is known to be home to the oldest of civilizations and a number of monuments that show evidences of Indian art and culture. Craft or handicraft is considered a traditional activity and is more of creating work aesthetically with one's skills and hands says Jositha (2023). Jositha (2023) also mentions that this work can be done on a lot of backdrops including textilesplant fibers, paper, etc. The fused designs created in this research are one such example and can be crafted or handcrafted on a lot of different frames. The designs show a tendency towards higher ratings, which suggests positive reception and satisfaction among the respondents. Thus, these 15 designs can be used directly by consumers or by designers to customize their daily clothes to add a touch of our culture and heritage and to give their bit in reviving the lost art of India. Also, as per the findings, the motifs preferred by the expert panel include more border designs which gives a new direction of customization of these designs on clothes. It is expected that this will be a good start for the customization of such motifs and designs in people's day-to-day life on their day-to-day wear.

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