

Exploring the problems of craftsmen involved in traditional block printing

■ RUPAL BABEL AND SONU MEHTA

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

RUPAL BABEL

Department of Textile and Apparel Designing, College of Home Science, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, UDAIPUR (RAJASTHAN) INDIA

■ **ABSTRACT** : The earliest recorded history revealed that man decorated the fabric surface with natural sources perhaps his clothing first, than the other items necessary for his existence. India has a rich cultural heritage and its traditional printing is a great source of inspiration for apparel decoration.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Block printing, Craftsmen, Problems

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The present study explored the various problems faced by block printing craftsmen in Udaipur city. Block printing is an ancient printing technique and numerous examples of historical block prints can be found in the historical records of Europe and Asia in the historical Indian culture and its heritage of tradition are reflected in many of the various regions of this country and Rajasthan is famous for its profile art treasure. Printing has been a long tradition in Rajasthan and this manner of decorating textiles was extensively applied to the costume of royalty. Though practiced all over Rajasthan, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer and Udaipur are the most popular centres for their elegant block prints.

This ancient tradition of ornamenting cloth in Rajasthan makes use of special engraved wooden block, one end of which possesses a design or motif engraved on it (Verma, 2003).

It is much like stamping. The design can include text or be purely visual and the block can be applied to paper or textiles (Naik and Wiston, 2006). In block printing, chemical artificial and natural dyes are widely prevalent.

The purpose of the study was to explore the various problems faced by the block printers due to which they are shifting to some other employment and leaving their ancient craft.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Locale of the study :

The study was conducted at Udaipur city of Rajasthan as Udaipur is the cultural centre of Rajasthan and traditional art of block printing is very popular in this city.

Selection of sample :

For this purpose a survey study was conducted. The survey was done on 30 craftsmen involved in block printing work. Other secondary sources of information explored were through newspaper, journals, internet, books etc.

Criterion for selecting sample :

Craftsmen were selected on the basis of experience of doing block printing work from last 15-20 years.

Development of tool :

Structured interview schedule was developed to know the existing and past trends of block printing. Questions dealing with the background information about the age, education, caste, monthly income and the problems faced by the craftsmen. This consisted of both open and close ended questions to collect the desired information.