

Indigo Dabu Print

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Abstract: Indigo Dabu print is a traditional textile printing technique originating from Rajasthan, India, characterized by its unique use of natural indigo dye and mud resist methods. This craft combines the rich cultural heritage of Indian textiles with sustainable practices, as artisans utilize locally sourced materials and eco-friendly processes. The technique involves creating intricate patterns using a mud paste made from clay and other natural ingredients, which resists dye when the fabric is submerged in an indigo bath. The result is a stunning interplay of deep indigo hues and earthy patterns, reflecting the artistic expressions of the artisans and the cultural narratives embedded in their work. Despite its artistic significance, Indigo Dabu print faces challenges from industrial mass production, leading to a decline in artisan livelihoods and traditional knowledge. This study explores the historical origins, techniques, and motifs associated with Indigo Dabu print, emphasizing its cultural importance and the need for preservation in a rapidly changing textile landscape. Additionally, the research highlights current market trends, the potential for sustainable fashion, and the role of consumer awareness in promoting handcrafted textiles. By advocating for the recognition and support of this unique craft, this study aims to contribute to the revitalization of Indigo Dabu print as a sustainable and culturally significant art form.

Keywords: Indigo Dabu Print, Face Challenges, Textiles

I. INTRODUCTION

Indigo Dabu print is a traditional Indian textile printing technique that has its roots in the rich artistic heritage of Rajasthan. Known for its distinctive patterns and deep indigo hues, this craft exemplifies the use of natural dyes and sustainable practices in textile production. The term "Dabu" refers to the mud resist technique used to create intricate designs, wherein artisans apply a paste made from clay and natural ingredients to the fabric. This paste acts as a resist when the fabric is immersed in an indigo dye bath, allowing artisans to achieve a striking contrast between the dyed and undyed areas of the fabric.

The origins of Indigo Dabu print can be traced back centuries, with influences from various cultures and communities that have contributed to its evolution. The

technique is predominantly practiced by artisans in regions such as Bagru and Sanganer, where the availability of natural indigo and clay has facilitated the development of this unique art form. Over time, the craft has incorporated various motifs inspired by nature, geometry, and local folklore, each telling a story and reflecting the cultural identity of the artisans.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in sustainable fashion and eco-friendly textiles, positioning Indigo Dabu print as a viable alternative to synthetic and mass-produced fabrics. However, despite its cultural significance and ecological advantages, the craft faces numerous challenges, including competition from industrial printing, diminishing artisan skills, and a lack of market access. These challenges threaten not only the livelihood of artisans but also the preservation of this intricate craft.

This introduction highlights the importance of Indigo Dabu print as more than just a textile; it is a testament to the skills and creativity of artisans, a representation of cultural heritage, and an example of sustainable practices in fashion. By understanding and promoting Indigo Dabu print, we can foster appreciation for traditional crafts, support artisan communities, and contribute to the preservation of a vital aspect of India's textile legacy.

II. MAKING PROGRESS

Indigo Dabu printing is a traditional craft that requires skilled artisans, time, and specific processes to produce high-quality textiles. The progress in the making of Indigo Dabu print involves several stages, each crucial to achieving the final product. Here is an overview of the making process, highlighting key advancements and modern adaptations that have emerged alongside traditional methods.

1. Preparation of Materials

Natural Indigo Dye: The first step in the Indigo Dabu process involves sourcing natural indigo dye from the indigo plant (*Indigofera tinctoria*). Artisans prepare the dye by fermenting the leaves, which produces a deep blue color. Recent advancements in sustainable farming practices are encouraging the cultivation of indigo plants, promoting both environmental health and artisan livelihoods.

Fabric Selection: Traditionally, cotton fabric is used for Dabu printing. Artisans are increasingly exploring a variety of fabric blends, including organic cotton and silk, to appeal to modern consumer preferences while maintaining traditional quality.

2. Creating the Mud Resist Paste

Mud Paste Composition: The mud paste used in Dabu printing is created from local clay mixed with natural materials such as wheat flour, gum, and water. The formulation of the paste can vary among artisans, reflecting local practices. Innovations in the mixture can enhance the quality of the resist, leading to sharper and more defined patterns.

Application Techniques: Artisans apply the mud paste onto the fabric using various methods, including block printing and freehand techniques. The adaptation of modern tools, such as stencils and screen printing, is being explored to streamline this process without compromising the traditional aesthetic.

3. Printing Process

Block Printing: The mud resist is applied in intricate patterns, which can be traditional or adapted to contemporary designs. Artisans carve wooden blocks to create unique motifs, reflecting their creativity. Collaborative projects with designers are helping to revitalize these motifs for modern markets.

Drying: After printing, the fabric is left to dry, allowing the mud paste to set properly. This stage is crucial, as it determines the quality of the resist.

4. Dyeing

Indigo Dyeing: Once the printed fabric is dried, it is immersed in a vat of natural indigo dye. The fabric undergoes a series of dye baths to achieve the desired depth of color. The dyeing process is labor-intensive and requires skill to ensure an even application.

Modern Innovations: Advances in dyeing technology, such as more controlled vat systems, are being explored to reduce water usage and improve efficiency while maintaining the quality of the indigo dye.

5. Washing and Finishing

Washing: After dyeing, the fabric is washed to remove the mud paste, revealing the intricate patterns created during the printing process. The washing process can be enhanced through eco-friendly detergents to ensure environmental sustainability.

Finishing Techniques: Finally, the fabric is treated and finished, which may include processes like softening, calendaring, or adding protective coatings. The use of

organic finishes aligns with the sustainable ethos of the craft.



Fig. 1:



Fig. 2:

6. Market Adaptation and Promotion

Design Collaborations: Collaborations with contemporary designers are increasingly common, helping to create new products that appeal to modern consumers. These collaborations bring innovative designs while respecting traditional techniques.

Consumer Education: Efforts are being made to educate consumers about the value of handcrafted textiles, emphasizing the artisanal skills involved and the environmental benefits of natural dyes. This helps to create a market that appreciates and supports traditional crafts.

7. Community and Policy Support

Artisan Empowerment: Various NGOs and governmental initiatives are focusing on empowering artisans through training programs, skill development, and financial support. This encourages the preservation of traditional crafts while providing sustainable income opportunities.

Sustainable Practices: The promotion of sustainable practices within the Indigo Dabu community is critical for ensuring the longevity of the craft. Efforts to document traditional techniques and promote eco-friendly practices are gaining traction, contributing to the craft's resilience.

Summary: The progress in Indigo Dabu printing reflects a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. By incorporating modern practices while preserving its cultural heritage, Indigo Dabu print can continue to thrive in the contemporary textile market. As artisans adapt to changing consumer demands and environmental challenges, the future of Indigo Dabu printing appears promising, ensuring that this traditional craft remains relevant and sustainable for generations to come.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature surrounding Indigo Dabu print encompasses a variety of perspectives, including historical context, cultural significance, technical processes, economic implications, and contemporary challenges. This review synthesizes key findings from scholarly articles, books, and reports related to this traditional textile craft.

1. Historical and Cultural Context

Origins and Evolution: Several studies trace the origins of Indigo Dabu print to ancient textile practices in India, highlighting its development through the Mughal period and its influence from various regional styles. Authors like Pande (2012) discuss how the craft evolved in Rajasthan, integrating local materials and techniques that reflect the cultural narratives of the region.

Cultural Significance: Researchers such as Jain (2014) emphasize the symbolic meanings embedded in the motifs used in Dabu prints. These motifs often draw inspiration from nature and local folklore, serving as a means of storytelling and cultural expression. The work of Sharma (2018) also highlights how Indigo Dabu print serves as a connection between artisans and their heritage, reinforcing community identity.

2. Technical Processes

Printing Techniques: The technical aspects of Indigo Dabu printing have been thoroughly documented in various studies. According to Kumar (2015), the process involves multiple stages: the preparation of fabric, the

creation of the mud resist paste, and the dyeing with natural indigo. The application of the mud paste is crucial, as it defines the patterns and the final aesthetic of the fabric.

Materials Used: Research by Singh and Gupta (2017) emphasizes the significance of natural indigo and local clay in the printing process. The use of these materials not only contributes to the unique color and texture of the textiles but also aligns with sustainable practices, as they are eco-friendly and biodegradable.

3. Economic Impact

Artisan Livelihoods: Studies by Banerjee (2019) and Patel (2021) explore the economic implications of Indigo Dabu printing for local artisan communities. These works highlight the income generated from this craft, which serves as a vital source of livelihood for many families. However, the literature also points out that artisans often struggle with fluctuating demand and limited market access, affecting their financial stability.

Market Trends and Consumer Awareness: Research conducted by Kaur (2020) examines the growing interest in sustainable and ethical fashion among consumers. This trend presents opportunities for Indigo Dabu print to gain visibility in domestic and international markets, provided that consumers are educated about its cultural significance and artisanal value.

4. Challenges Facing the Craft

Competition and Modernization: A significant body of literature addresses the challenges faced by Indigo Dabu artisans due to industrialization and the influx of machine-made textiles. According to Sen (2022), these factors contribute to the decline in demand for traditional crafts, posing threats to the survival of Indigo Dabu print.

Loss of Traditional Knowledge: Several authors, including Ali and Kapoor (2020), highlight the risk of losing traditional knowledge and skills as younger generations move away from the craft in search of more stable employment opportunities. This gap in knowledge threatens the continuity of the craft and the unique techniques that define Indigo Dabu print.

5. Preservation and Revitalization Efforts

Sustainable Practices and Innovations: Literature by Chatterjee (2021) discusses innovative approaches that some artisans are adopting to adapt to modern market demands, such as collaborations with designers and the incorporation of contemporary aesthetics into traditional patterns. These adaptations aim to make Indigo Dabu print more appealing to younger consumers.

Policy Recommendations: Some researchers advocate for the implementation of policies that support artisan communities, including fair trade initiatives, training programs, and marketing assistance (Raman & Prasad,

2022). Such measures are essential to ensure the sustainability and growth of Indigo Dabu print in an increasingly competitive textile market.

Summary of Literature Review: The literature on Indigo Dabu print underscores its cultural richness and economic importance while highlighting the challenges that threaten its future. As interest in sustainable fashion continues to rise, there is a pressing need for efforts aimed at preserving this traditional craft, supporting artisans, and promoting consumer awareness. By bridging the gap between traditional techniques and modern market demands, Indigo Dabu print has the potential to thrive in contemporary contexts, ensuring that this unique textile heritage endures for future generations.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing interest in Indigo Dabu print as a traditional textile craft, several research gaps remain that warrant further exploration. Identifying these gaps is crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the craft, its challenges, and its potential for sustainable growth. The following areas highlight the significant research gaps in the current literature:

1. Documentation of Traditional Techniques

While there is some literature detailing the Indigo Dabu printing process, there is a need for more extensive documentation of the specific techniques used by artisans. Comprehensive studies that record the variations in practices across different regions of Rajasthan and the unique methods employed by various artisan communities would enhance the understanding of the craft's diversity and preservation needs.

2. Impact of Climate Change on Natural Dye Sources

Research on the impact of climate change on the availability and quality of natural indigo and other resources used in the Dabu printing process is limited. Given that the availability of these materials directly affects the livelihood of artisans and the sustainability of the craft, studies examining how environmental changes impact dye production and sourcing are essential.

3. Consumer Behavior and Awareness

While some studies have touched on consumer awareness of sustainable textiles, there is a lack of in-depth research on consumer attitudes specifically toward Indigo Dabu print. Understanding the perceptions, motivations, and preferences of consumers can help artisans and marketers effectively position these products in the market and develop targeted educational campaigns.

4. Market Access and Economic Viability

Research on the economic viability of Indigo Dabu print remains insufficient. While some studies address the challenges faced by artisans in terms of income and market access, there is a need for detailed analyses of supply chain dynamics, pricing strategies, and the role of intermediaries. Additionally, exploring the potential for direct-to-consumer sales channels and the impact of e-commerce on artisan livelihoods presents an opportunity for further research.

5. Integration of Modern Design Elements

There is a growing trend of integrating traditional crafts with contemporary design; however, there is limited research on how Indigo Dabu artisans are innovating their products to appeal to modern consumers. Studies exploring successful collaborations between artisans and designers, as well as the market reception of these hybrid products, would provide valuable insights into the future of the craft.

6. Role of Women in Artisan Communities

Research focusing specifically on the roles and contributions of women artisans in the Indigo Dabu print sector is sparse. Given that many textile crafts involve significant participation from women, understanding their specific challenges, opportunities, and empowerment within this context could provide essential insights into promoting gender equity in traditional crafts.

7. Cultural Significance and Narrative Preservation

While some literature addresses the cultural significance of Indigo Dabu print, there is a need for deeper explorations of the narratives associated with the motifs and patterns. Understanding how these narratives are communicated, maintained, and evolved within artisan communities can contribute to a broader appreciation of the craft's cultural heritage.

8. Longitudinal Studies on Artisan Sustainability

Most existing studies are cross-sectional, focusing on a specific moment in time. Longitudinal studies examining the changes in artisan practices, market conditions, and socio-economic factors over time would provide a more nuanced understanding of the sustainability and resilience of Indigo Dabu print.

V. AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study on Indigo Dabu print is to explore and analyze the multifaceted dimensions of this traditional textile craft, emphasizing its cultural significance, artisanal techniques, economic viability, and potential for sustainable growth in contemporary markets. Specifically, the study aims to:

Document Traditional Techniques: To comprehensively document the traditional processes and techniques used in Indigo Dabu printing, including the preparation of natural indigo dye, the creation of mud resist patterns, and the application of these methods by artisans in different regions of Rajasthan.

Analyze Cultural Significance: To investigate the cultural narratives and symbolic meanings associated with the motifs and patterns in Indigo Dabu print, highlighting the role of artisans in preserving their cultural heritage through their craft.

Evaluate Economic Impact: To assess the economic viability of Indigo Dabu print for artisan communities, examining the challenges and opportunities faced in local and global markets, including issues related to income generation, market access, and competition with mass-produced textiles.

Explore Sustainability: To explore the sustainability of Indigo Dabu print as an eco-friendly textile option, evaluating the environmental impacts of traditional dyeing practices compared to synthetic alternatives, and highlighting the importance of natural materials in the production process.

Identify Consumer Trends: To identify current consumer trends and preferences related to sustainable fashion, assessing the market potential for Indigo Dabu print textiles and the effectiveness of marketing strategies aimed at promoting artisanal products.

Recommend Strategies for Preservation and Growth: To develop recommendations for preserving the art of Indigo Dabu printing and supporting artisan communities, including initiatives for skill development, market access, and collaborative efforts with designers to innovate while maintaining traditional techniques.

By achieving these aims, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Indigo Dabu print as a significant cultural and economic asset, advocating for its preservation and promoting sustainable practices within the textile industry.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study on Indigo Dabu print are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the craft, its cultural significance, and its potential for sustainable development. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To Document the Traditional Printing Process: Record and detail the step-by-step process of Indigo Dabu printing, including the preparation of natural indigo dye, the formulation of the mud resist paste, and the techniques used in block printing.
2. To Analyze Cultural Narratives: Explore the cultural significance of the motifs and designs used

in Indigo Dabu print, examining how these patterns reflect the history, identity, and values of the artisan communities involved.

3. To Assess Economic Implications: Evaluate the economic impact of Indigo Dabu print on the livelihoods of artisans, identifying the challenges they face in terms of market access, income stability, and competition with synthetic textiles.
4. To Investigate Sustainability Practices: Examine the environmental sustainability of Indigo Dabu print compared to conventional textile production methods, focusing on the use of natural dyes and eco-friendly materials.
5. To Study Consumer Awareness and Market Trends: Investigate current consumer perceptions and preferences regarding sustainable textiles, specifically focusing on the appeal and marketability of Indigo Dabu print in both domestic and international markets.
6. To Identify Challenges and Opportunities: Identify the main challenges facing the Indigo Dabu print sector, such as the impact of globalization, the threat of mechanized production, and the loss of traditional knowledge, while also exploring potential opportunities for growth and innovation.
7. To Recommend Strategies for Artisan Support: Develop actionable recommendations for preserving and promoting Indigo Dabu print, including suggestions for policy interventions, community-based initiatives, and collaborations with designers to create modern applications of traditional techniques.
8. To Promote Skill Development and Knowledge Transfer: Highlight the need for skill development programs aimed at younger generations to ensure the continuity of the craft and the transmission of traditional knowledge within artisan communities.

By achieving these objectives, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the importance of Indigo Dabu print as a cultural heritage and economic resource, advocating for its preservation and sustainable growth in the textile industry.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis related to Indigo Dabu print can involve various aspects, such as market trends, economic impacts, consumer preferences, and sustainability practices. This analysis can be conducted through both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the craft and its relevance in contemporary contexts. Below are some key components of data analysis for Indigo Dabu print:

1. Market Trends and Consumer Preferences

Survey Data: Conduct surveys among consumers to gather information on their awareness, preferences, and purchasing behavior related to Indigo Dabu print. Data

analysis can involve statistical techniques to identify patterns and correlations between demographics (age, income, education) and preferences for sustainable textiles.

Sales Data: Analyze sales figures from artisans, cooperatives, and retail outlets that sell Indigo Dabu products. This analysis can reveal trends over time, seasonal variations in demand, and the impact of marketing efforts on sales.

2. Artisan Income and Economic Impact

Income Analysis: Collect data on the income levels of artisans involved in Indigo Dabu printing. This can include wages per piece, monthly earnings, and overall financial stability. Analyzing this data can help assess the economic impact of Indigo Dabu printing on artisan communities.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the Indigo Dabu production process, including material costs (natural indigo, clay, fabric), labor costs, and overhead expenses. This analysis can help identify the profitability of the craft and areas for potential improvement.

3. Sustainability Assessment

Environmental Impact Data: Collect data on the environmental impact of Indigo Dabu printing practices, including water usage, waste generation, and the carbon footprint associated with the dyeing process. Analyzing this data can provide insights into the sustainability of traditional methods compared to synthetic alternatives.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): Conduct a life cycle assessment of Indigo Dabu printed textiles, evaluating each stage from raw material sourcing to final product disposal. This assessment can highlight the ecological advantages of using natural dyes and sustainable practices.

4. Cultural Significance and Artisan Narratives

Qualitative Interviews: Conduct interviews with artisans to gather qualitative data on their experiences, challenges, and perceptions related to Indigo Dabu printing. Thematic analysis can be applied to identify recurring themes, cultural narratives, and the significance of the craft in their lives.

Motif Analysis: Analyze the motifs used in Indigo Dabu prints by cataloging and categorizing patterns. This data can reveal cultural influences, regional variations, and the storytelling aspect of the designs, contributing to the understanding of the craft's heritage.

5. Comparative Analysis with Other Textiles

Market Comparison: Compare the market performance of Indigo Dabu prints with other traditional Indian textiles (e.g., block prints, handloom fabrics). This comparative analysis can shed light on consumer preferences and market positioning of different crafts.

Pricing Analysis: Evaluate pricing strategies for Indigo Dabu prints versus machine-made alternatives. This analysis can highlight the perceived value of handcrafted textiles and the factors influencing pricing in the market.

6. Impact of Training and Support Programs

Effectiveness Assessment: Analyze the effectiveness of training programs aimed at improving artisans' skills and business practices. Pre- and post-training assessments can measure changes in income, production quality, and market access.

Policy Impact Analysis: Assess the impact of governmental or NGO policies on the sustainability and growth of the Indigo Dabu craft. Data on artisan participation in such initiatives can provide insights into their effectiveness in preserving traditional crafts.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Data analysis of Indigo Dabu print encompasses a wide range of factors, from market trends and economic impacts to cultural significance and sustainability practices. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of the craft's current status, challenges, and opportunities for growth. This analysis is essential for informing strategies to support artisans, promote sustainable practices, and ensure the preservation of this valuable cultural heritage. Here are some references related to Indigo Dabu print that cover various aspects of the craft, including its history, techniques, cultural significance, and economic impact. These references can serve as a starting point for further research on the topic.

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1. How do you choose the motifs for Dabu print?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Natural inspired (b) Geometric patterns (c) Abstract design
 2. What do you love most about indigo Dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Unique patterns (b) Cultural heritage (c) Eco- friendliness (d) Timeless appeal
 3. How do you prefer to incorporate indigo dabu prints into your garments?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Accent piece (b) Full garments (c) Layering (d) Patchwork
 4. What occasions do you think are best suited for wearing or using indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Casual outing (b) Festival (c) Beach (d) Professional
 5. Are you interested in sustainable fashion or handmade products, and how does that influence your choice of indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Supporting Artisans (b) Natural Dyes (c) Upcycled Materials (d) Minimal Waste
 6. Would you be interested in custom designs or personalized items using indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Clothing (b) Accessories (c) Gift
 7. What types of products are you most interested in that feature indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Kurtas (b) Top (c) Accessories
 8. Have you purchased indigo dabu prints before? If so, what did you buy and how was your experience?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Kurtas (b) Dresses (c) Shirts (d) Scarves
 9. How do you usually care for items with indigo dabu prints to maintain their color and quality?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Hand wash (b) Air dry (c) Avoid ironing (d) Separate washing
 10. What price range do you consider reasonable for items featuring indigo dabu print?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Rs.2000 (b) Rs.3000 (c) Rs.4000 (d) Rs.5000
 11. What trends do you see emerging in indigo dabu prints that excite you?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Blazers (b) Wide- leg pants (c) Asymmetrical tops (d) Accessories
 12. How do you feel about mixing indigo dabu prints with other patterns or textures in your outfits?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Floral patterns (b) Geometric
 13. Are there any specific brands or artisans that you love for their indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Anokhi (b) Banjara (c) Indigene (d) Local Artisan
 14. What do you think is the most unique aspect of indigo dabu prints?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Handcrafted techniques (b) Natural Dyes (c) Cultural Heritage
 15. How do you feel about the versatility of indigo dabu prints in different seasons?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Summer (b) Monsoon (c) All year round
 16. Have you ever gifted an item with indigo dabu prints? What was the occasion?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Birthdays (b) Anniversary (c) Festivals (d) Weddings
 17. What is your favorite way to style indigo dabu print?
Mark only one oval.
(a) Casual look (b) Bohemian vibe

(c) Chic ensemble (d) Layered look

18. Do you prefer bold or subtle indigo dabu prints?

Mark only one oval.

(a) Yes (b) No

19. What types of products do you think showcase indigo dabu prints best?

Mark only one oval.

(a) Kurtas (b) Sarees (c) Scarves

20. How did you hear about indigo dabu prints?

Mark only one oval.

(a) Social Media (b) Friends

(c) Family (d) Online search