

FOLK SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS OF RAJASTHAN USED ON DIFFERENT PRODUCTS OF JAIPUR

Lekha Sharma

Research Scholar, Fine Arts, IIS (Deemed to be University), Jaipur

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore how folk symbols and motifs of Rajasthan are used on different products of Jaipur. The folk symbols and motifs are the cultural forms of Rajasthan, which truly reflect people's daily life conditions. Some symbols and motifs of Rajasthan include Peacock, Parrot, horse, flowers, trees etc. For instance, Elephant trunk symbolizes power, strength, energy, abundance, wealth, royalty, knowledge etc.; it is the vehicle of Indra and the Kings of Rajasthan also used as transportation and also show the power and. Now a days these folk symbols and motifs are used on different products such as blue pottery, home décor, apparels, foot wears, bags, carpets, bed sheets etc. It is important for us to know about these symbols and motifs because these are used on products by the artisans and they are trying to depict the rich culture and heritage of Rajasthan.

Key Words: Folk, Artisans, Products, Symbols, Motifs

INTRODUCTION

India is known as the land that depicts various culture and traditional vibrancy through its traditional arts and culture. India is a brilliant example of Unity in Diversity which has many different cultures, languages, ideologies, religions, classes etc. Folk Culture is reflected in tradition, historical continuity etc. It includes dance, song, folk lores, remarkable design in buildings, daily life apparels and artifacts, cuisine, art forms, manuscripts, folk literature etc. Today many folk symbols and motifs are used on various products like blue pottery, home décor, apparels, foot wears, bags, carpets, bed sheets etc. Many of these symbols and motifs depict common customs and rituals, elements of nature, birds and animals. Folk symbols and motifs are very attractive and a visual treat with vibrant colour. The importance of every folk symbol and motif used on these products should be known to us so that we know what each folk symbol and motif are trying to depict.

The purpose of symbols and motifs are to describe, to create value or to identify the message from it. The best symbols and motifs are unique, clear and refined. The ancient people used these symbols and motifs to communicate. Sumerians used many different symbols and motifs engraved on clay tablets. Hieroglyphics

was invented by Egyptians with various symbols and motifs, when Cuneiform was invented in Mesopotamia⁵. In ancient Mesopotamian Civilization of Babylon and Assyria they used symbols and motifs on pottery and coins⁴. In Minoan Civilization people used the motifs of bull and the snake and considered them sacred.



Sumerian Clay
Tablet

Egyptian Hieroglyphics

Mesopotamian
Cuneiform

Writing system of
Minoans

Ancient Greeks used owl symbol on coins , pottery and art works which symbolises wisdom and knowledge. In Indus valley civilization the seals were distinctive object and were used for the purpose trade and rituals etc. Most of the seals were of rectangular, square and circle. They used animals symbols like Bull, Elephant, Tiger, Unicorn etc⁵. There were some more civilizations in the world along with Indus Valley Civilization which used many different types of symbols and motifs for trading with each other through sea and land routes⁵. Many rulers and traders used symbols and motifs of birds, animals, trees to mark their ownership. During the Mauryan period rulers used silver and copper coins with some symbols and motifs engraved on it. The most common symbols are the elephants, the tree in railing symbol and the mountain. These signs symbols and motifs are said to be have represented the Royal insignia or the sign or symbol of the local guild that struck the coin. Some coins had Shroff (money changer) marks or symbols on them indicating that older coins were often re -issued. This was continued by other dynasties all over the world including Satvahanas, Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas, British, Spanish, Dutch etc.



Greek Coin with
Owl symbol



Greek coin with
Horse and King symbol



Humped Bull
seal (Indus Valley
Civilisation)



Indus Valley
Civilisation
Pots



Punched marked coins of Mauryan Empire



British India Coins

SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS

A symbol can be an object, shape, or character used to represent something. A symbol is something that through its nature or appearance reflects or represents another thing more profound than itself. A lotus, for instance, may symbolize culture and civilization, which itself has qualities of purity, enlightenment, self – regeneration and rebirth¹. Symbols grow in meaning and complexity over hundreds of years, changing according to their cultural context. Like the lotus, the sun, the moon, animals, birds and trees all have their individual associations as well. A symbol can change the way we look at things. The meaning of the symbol is depends on its history, its usage and purpose. For instance parrots are love birds also considered as the vehicle of Kamadev. It symbolizes courtship and sensual desires etc¹.

A motif is a symbolic image that appears repeatedly. The term ‘motif’ refers to a design or figure that consists of recurring shapes or colors some motifs are of peacock, parrot, goose, lotus, mango, elephant, floral etc. They are derived from architectures and religious philosophies, birds, flowers, fruits and even animals have stories to tell, beliefs to share. Motifs are used to design jewellery, fashion, furniture, textile or visual arts. Elephant motifs symbolize power, strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, abundance¹.



Parrot symbol



Lotus motif



Lotus symbol



Elephant motif

FOLK SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS USED ON PRODUCTS



Rajasthani pagdi



T-Shirt



Home Décor



Clock Designs



Key Holder



Cushion Cover

Folk Dress of Men in Rajasthan is kurta, dhotis, angarkha and pagdi or safa (kind of turban headgear). Pagdi of Rajasthan are very colorful with variety of designs, the way of wearing it, style and of course the outlook. Mewar has a tradition of pagdi whereas Marwar has the tradition of safa. Folk safa and pagdi is the symbol of honour and respect. Rajasthani pagdi also showcases the social status of a man. The way a man wears a pagdi it symbolizes the status and honour of a particular man. Rajasthani pagdi is the part of the royal culture and is popular all over the world². The Rajasthani pagdi symbolizes prestige and pride of the men³. It's a folk tradition in Rajput families to wear the pagdi on various special occasions or festivals. It is a belief that by wearing this pagdi a man can safeguard their knowledge and energy. In Rajasthan it's a saying that covering the bare head is essential for both men and women before they go in front of their elders that's why Rajasthani men wear pagdi. Today this Rajasthani Pagdi is used on various products like cushions, home décor, clocks, T-shirts, key holders etc.



Folk Dance Kalbeliya



Bedsheet



T-Shirt



Mobile Cover



Home Décor



Cushion Cover

Rajasthani Folk dance includes Ghoomar dance from Jodhpur Marwar and Kalbeliya dance from Jaisalmer. These dances were performed on various auspicious occasions like festivals and fairs. The word Kalbeliya is derived from two words 'Kal' means snakes and 'Beliya' means friends and the word together means Snake friend². Kalbeliya is one most pleasurable dance form which symbolizes happiness, celebration, joy, love, enthusiasm etc. It is performed to celebrate the happy moments in our life. In this dance form female wears embroidered mirror worked skirt known as Lehanga with a silver thread work choli and chunris with heavy jewelleryes³. In Contemporary society this folk dance form is used on various products like cushions, mobile covers, home décor, T-Shirts, bed sheets etc.



Rajasthani Folk Music



Clock



Home Décor

Rajasthani folk music is intensely popular and is admired all over the world. Folk music of Rajasthan represents messages from inner self, good times, emotions, joy etc. Rajasthani folk music attracts the listeners by its melodies. Famous Folk music of Rajasthan includes Maand, Panihari and Pabuji ki Phad are best². The Folk music is ballads that relate love stories and heroic deeds, devotional or religious songs by using musical instruments like sarangi, dholak, Kamayacha, tiny damrus, shehnai, been etc. There were specific ragas at specific times of the day and special songs were sung on special occasions like births, weddings etc³. Folk music and dance keeps our culture alive, by teaching and sharing it to our younger generations. Folk stories are narrated in a unique and captivating way. Folk music of Rajasthan is originated from daily life activities, emotions etc. Now many designers use these as a symbol on various products like clocks, home décor etc.



Elephant decoration in Rajasthani festival of Jaipur



Blue Pottery with Elephant Symbol



Wooden Table Design



Storage Box



Bangle Design



Cushion Cover



Saree design



Elephant Button

In Rajasthani Rajput culture elephant plays a very significant role as a symbol of royal strength, wealth, good luck, destroyer of obstacles as it clears all obstacles in jungles same way it destroys the obstacles and clears the path to wealth, prosperity and health¹. Elephants are massive animals and were also considered as the mode of transportation for the kings and are still used as the symbol of Rajput Royalty and Strength. Elephant festival is one of the major festivals in Rajasthan which is held in Jaipur every year². Today this is used on various products like furniture, buttons, apparels, jewellery, blue pottery, cushions etc.



Camel decoration in Bikaner festival Rajasthan



Brooch Design



Bangle Design



Button Design



Camel Toy with lac work



Key Holder



Key Chain



T-Shirt Design



Clock



Bed Sheet Design



Curtain Design

Camel is the state animal of Rajasthan and is the part of folk cultural identity and life of the desert state. Camel is also known as the ship of the desert. Pushkar Camel fair and Bikaner camel fair is very famous all over the world³. The use camels symbol and motif on many products symbolizes strength, toughness, patient, determined, survival, stamina, self-sufficiency¹ as it survives without water and food in the great desert area. Camel plays an important role in Rajasthan's economy and heritage till date². Earlier Raika caste managed camel breeding for the Kings of Rajasthan. For tourist attractions also there are several places in Rajasthan like Jaisalmer, Pushkar, Bikaner, Jodhpur etc. where we can enjoy Camel Safari. These symbols are used by many creative minds and designers on products like clocks, keychains, curtains, keyholders, T-Shirts, bed sheets etc.

Interviews taken of Consumers : When consumers wear the apparels of the folk symbols and motifs , by using décor items etc. they feel connected to their folk culture. By seeing such a great use of these folk symbols and motifs make them feel proud about their rich culture .

OBJECTIVES

- To understand etymology and the logic of symbols and motifs of Rajasthan .
- To analyse the products related to various art and culture of Rajasthan.
- To define the role of symbols and motifs in folk culture promotions .
- To explore and understand the use of symbols and motifs of Rajasthan on various products .

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research paper is based on primary and secondary sources of documentation.

Primary data collection -

- Open – ended interviews and interaction with the authorities concerning the use of particular symbols and motifs.

Secondary data collection -

- Various books and magazines to collect the existing data related to the subject. Information from E-books and E-journal of relevant subject.
- Reference from authentic historical books based on history of art and culture of Rajasthan.
- National and international websites, e books and e journals with concerned information.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study it is found that folk cultures are the backbones of the society that mold and shape our contemporary world . Folk Culture is a combination of traditions , beliefs , food, clothing, jewellery, handicrafts etc. With our fast growing technology and ever changing society,it is very important for us to keep our folk culture alive. By using these symbols and motifs on various products the

producers are trying to preserve this folk culture for the coming generation. The development of these folk symbols and motifs provide employment to a vast segment of crafts person.

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