Patterns of Identity: hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles of rural Rajasthan.

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to investigate the changing social significance of the hand-block printed and resist-dyed cottons of Rajasthan. Once a vital part of the region’s everyday rural textile and dress traditions, communicating information about its wearers and demonstrating the craftsmanship of its makers, today block printed textiles are produced primarily for export and tourist markets. In the space of just a few decades the growing effects of globalisation have wrought irrevocable change upon this traditional craft. Under the pressures of new market forces, modern hand block printed textiles bear little resemblance to their traditional counterparts.

Drawing on an ethnographic perspective in general, and an ethnomethodological perspective in particular, the main objective of this thesis is to develop a deeper understanding of traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles – with particular focus on the modernisation of traditional forms of hand block printing in Rajasthan, and the various strategies and experiences which the craftspeople have undertaken to deal with the changes to the market for their products. Using the recent history of block printed cloth production in Rajasthan, as told by local artisans, it explores the manner in which such phenomena as modernisation and globalisation are embodied by shifts in production technology, design aesthetics, and market forces. In order to explore the rural roots and chart the dramatic recent modernisation of the craft this thesis identifies and documents the range of textiles traditionally made by the region’s hereditary communities of cloth printers and dyers, and investigates their role in the projection of identity, exploring the changing communicative function of these textiles, notably with the rise of synthetic fabrics, among the rural communities of Rajasthan. In doing so, this thesis investigates how the consumption of hand block printed textiles has changed over the past forty years and considers the impact of the growth of export and tourism on traditions of cloth printing in the region.

It is a socially situated study, based on extensive firsthand fieldwork with the Chhipa community of hereditary cloth printers, making use of ethnography, photography, and personal experience of textile dyeing, printing and design. By developing methodologies based on the detailed documentation of the technologies, materials and processes involved in hand block printing this thesis seeks to update and expand upon the existing literature on the craft by providing and analysing contemporary accounts of family traditions and modern developments in use by current generations of artisans. In doing so this thesis also contributes to current discourse on the preservation of craft knowledge as a form of intangible cultural heritage. The study is primarily located within the field of Indian textile and dress studies. It
contributes to contemporary ethnographies of textile crafts through the detailed analysis of print and dye technologies, and, by also considering the meanings and values of block printed cloth as clothing, adds to the literature on the social role of textiles and dress with a regionally-specific focus on the role of pattern and colour. By focussing on the communicative functions of pattern and cloth, it also enhances cross-disciplinary attentions to regional identities and intangible cultural heritage. Finally it engages with the very local processes of globalisation and the contemporary values of handcrafted cloth.
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Figure 1: Rajasthan. Extract from map of South Asia, supplement to National Geographic, May 1997. Produced by National Geographic Maps © Copyright 1997 National Geographic Society, Washington DC.
Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis is about the contemporary production and use of hand block printed textiles, a traditional form of cloth patterning which has been produced in Rajasthan, western India, for many hundreds of years. These textiles are a product of the Chhipa community of cloth printers and dyers, and once formed a significant part of the rural everyday dress traditions of the region. In recent decades, despite being considered a leitmotif of the region, the craft has undergone significant change as a result of the waves of political and economic reforms which have followed Indian Independence (1947). Today, hand block printed textiles are produced in myriad styles, patterns and colours, and as a broad range of household and clothing items often destined for international export. However, this recent history has remained fragmented, recorded largely within the day-to-day experiences of those dye and print craftsmen striving to sustain their hereditary family occupations.

Drawing on these personal accounts as a primary source, this thesis examines the ways in which these changes have specifically affected hand block printing, looking in turn at changes to local textile and dress traditions, the knock on effects of this on the market for hand printed cloth, and the resulting amendments to the design and technology of hand block printing. The situation of the craft is contextualised through discussion of the general government policies regarding textile crafts, highlighting the disparity between ‘handicraft’ and ‘industry’. In addition, and of particular importance to hand block printing today, the highly influential
commercial and non-governmental interventions to hand block printing in the Jaipur region of the state will also be considered. Industrial production, advanced technologies and mechanisation have steadily replaced traditional handmade production, which in India has meant the loss of traditional markets for craftspeople, who struggle to compete against the economic and production efficiencies of volume manufacturing. Changing perceptions of the value of hand printed cloth both within and outside local communities are shown to be the impetus for changes to the craft and its markets. The resulting changes to dye and print technologies are strategies deployed by the Chhipa community attempting to redefine itself yet simultaneously retain the management of their heritage.

This thesis presents a regionally-focused addition to the socio-cultural study of India’s textile and dress traditions, and also offers fresh insights into the local effects of globalising forces. It argues that change lies at the heart of these textiles traditions, and to understand the ways in which change has occurred one must understand the production, consumption, and distribution of hand printed textiles by foregrounding these local forms of craft knowledge. The study adds extensively not only to our knowledge of Rajasthani textiles and dress traditions, especially non-elite everyday goods, but also to wider issues in the study of Indian textiles and crafts such as the relationship between textiles and social identity, the nature of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the processes of local innovation within globalisation.

The main objective of the study is thus to develop a deeper understanding of traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles, with particular focus on illuminating the various conflicting and co-dependent mechanisms which have contributed to the transformation of the traditional craft of hand block printing into its modern incarnations. In doing so a number of more specific aims could also be fulfilled:
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1. The primary aim is to examine the interaction between tradition and modernity, using the recent history of block printed cloth production in the Jaipur region, as told by local artisans, to explore the manner in which such phenomena as modernisation and globalisation are embodied by shifts in production technology, design aesthetics, and market forces.

2. Within this, using the memories and knowledge of artisans and communities, to investigate the role of block printed and resist-dyed textiles in the projection of identity, exploring the changing communicative function of these textiles among the rural communities of Rajasthan. This updates current literature on the social role of the region’s textiles and dress, and adds to wider discourse on the communicative functions of dress with a regionally-specific focus on the role of pattern and colour.

3. Furthermore, by developing methodologies based on the detailed documentation of the technologies, materials and processes involved in hand block printing, to update and expand upon the existing literature on the craft by providing and analysing contemporary accounts of family traditions and modern developments used by current generations of artisans. In doing so this aim engages with the resurgence of interest in natural dyes, and also contributes to current discourse on the preservation of craft knowledge as a form of intangible cultural heritage.

To address this series of key aims, a qualitative study was designed which focussed on the craftsmen and their work, from the informed perspective of a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983, Malins and Gray, 1995). Guided by the practical framework of ethnomethodology, utilising the basic tenets of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and ethnographic fieldwork (Geertz, 1973), the methodology for this research emerged as a reflexive exploration of cloth, craft, clothing, and artisans. The study marries technical documentation of traditional cloth printing processes, materials, and motifs, with socio-cultural analysis of the values, meanings, and communicative functions of these textiles within local everyday textile and dress traditions. It is based on extensive firsthand fieldwork in India, and personal experience of textile dyeing and printing.
In order to explore the rural roots and chart the dramatic recent modernisation of the craft this thesis identifies and documents the range of textiles traditionally made by the region’s hereditary communities of cloth printers and dyers, analyses the manner in which these hand printed and resist-dyed textiles have contributed to the local language of dress by communicating aspects of a wearer’s identity, and explores how changes in one are reflected in the other. In doing so, this thesis investigates how the consumption of hand block printed textiles has changed over the past thirty years, notably with the rise of synthetic fabrics, and the growth of export and tourism, and considers the impact of these new market forces on traditions of cloth printing in the region.

1.1 Traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles of rural Rajasthan

Until recent decades, cotton has been the most abundantly available base-cloth, and the traditional techniques of hand block printing with mordant and resist have developed over many centuries as a highly specific form of cotton cloth decoration. The traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles of rural Rajasthan are generally characterised by the use of buti (small herb), butah (large/complex herb) and bel (stripe or vine) motifs in earthy colour combinations. Textiles fall into two distinct aesthetic styles, as illustrated below, one with darker motifs printed onto light cream or white grounds (left), the other with lighter coloured designs resisted against dark dyed grounds (right). The colour palette, originating from the use of natural dyestuffs, is based on rust reds, a graduated scale of indigo blues, ochre yellows, and a dark brownish-black. Decoration predominantly depicts flowers, herbs and leaves, though also includes geometric patterns and sometimes animal or human representations. Motifs are two-dimensional, stylised forms, commonly with a defining outline (rekh) with in-filled colours.
Design layouts are based on combined border and centre field elements, containing repeats of the sprigged buti and butah motifs in a seemingly endless variety of combinations.

![Figure 2: Textiles fall into two distinct categories. This example is a rezai bedcover printed in Sanganer (c.1970) showing black and red mordant printed designs on a cream ground. Sanganer 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.](image1)

![Figure 3: This example features mordant printed red ankhada motifs, resisted against an indigo blue ground. Printed in Bagru 2009. Photograph D. Dunning.](image2)

The technique of hand block printing consists of the application of various substances with a view to modifying the colour of the support textile (Cousin, 1986:9). Colours applied are either ‘direct’ or ‘substantive’, the former making an immediate colour change on the fibres, the latter usually requiring a mordant (an insoluble metal salt/oxide) to be pre-applied to the fibres in order to make the dye-sites available. In Rajasthan, red dyestuffs are generally ‘substantive’, and patterning can be achieved through a number of different techniques. The mordants, usually alum or iron salts, can be prepared for use either as a printable paste or as a cold bath. Whereas a mordant bath penetrates the entire cloth, printing a mordant prior to dyeing results in uptake of ‘substantive’ dyes localised within the printed design. Cloth can also be immersed in a cold ‘vat’ dye such as indigo, and patterning can be achieved in conjunction with indigo by printing a resist, such as mud or wax, prior to dyeing. In addition, cloth can be
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immersed in other hot or cold dyes such as yellow nasphal, or have cold pastes of colour smeared or wiped onto the surface, with or without the prior application of a resist.

Hand block printed and resist-dyed textile production comprises of multiple procedures which can be combined in different ways to achieve different effects. Traditional methods, which rely on natural dyestuffs and organic raw materials, involve many preparatory stages and as a result can be time consuming. In Bagru, in particular, the traditional combinations of small coloured butis resisted against dark-dyed grounds involve precisely ordered sequences of multiple mordant, resist, and dye applications over a period of weeks. The printers and dyers engaged in this sequence of production have no notes or operational manuals to refer to, they work from skill and knowledge embedded through practice and apprenticeship. Whilst block printing can be generalised in terms of the use of blocks and particular dyes or processes, each region produces a distinctive style of cloth, and each family lineage has their own recipes and idiosyncrasies.

Whilst the Chhipa community are ostensibly responsible for the production of hand block printed cloth, they call upon a number of other occupationally-specific groups during particular stages of the cloth processing sequence. These include the Rangrez community of dyers, and their Nilgar sub-community of indigo specialists; the Dhobi community of cloth washers; and of course the artisans who specialise in hand carving the wooden printing blocks. Whilst print and dye communities are bound by hereditary kinship or caste ties, the block carvers tend to follow the master-apprentice mode of work.

Attentions to the craft of hand block printing have hitherto largely focussed on its role in courtly costumes, and, with the exception of one key technical publication (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983), little has been written on the role played by these traditional textiles among farming and pastoral communities of the region. Contemporary attention is largely outside the
 academic field, and centres on the commercialised form of the craft, missing the effects this commercialisation wrought on the hereditary practices of the craftsmen. As new technologies and non-Chhipa-run printing units take over the well-promoted commercial forms of the craft its rural roots become increasingly obscured.

This became even more pertinent when, in 2004, coinciding with the start of the fieldwork for this study, all businesses in the printing colony of Sanganer, near Jaipur, were issued with a High Court order (Pal, 2003b, a, Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:92). Resulting from a Public Interest Litigation, filed a decade earlier with the intention of simply raising awareness to the plight of the town, the court order stated that due to excessive dye pollution of the surrounding environment all printing activity must be moved from the town and relocated to a new industrial site at Chitroli village (some 42km away). Yet it was argued by many that traditional textiles, if created using traditional techniques and dyed with natural dyes, should have no major impact. From my own encounters with hand block printing, from 1998 onwards, it was apparent that these problems were the cumulative effects of widespread adoption of modern raw materials and technologies, directly associated with the production of industrially competitive goods. Thus, whilst commercial interests had doubtless saved the craft from almost certain demise, these new market forces had also brought about fundamental amendments and generated tensions among the aesthetic and economic directions of the craft. It became clear that hand block printing was in danger of losing its rural roots, becoming another cog in the machinery of India’s behemoth textile industry.

During discussions with some of the practicing Chhipa craftsmen it was agreed that it would be useful to attempt to document and analyse the processes of change and the evolution of local hand printed textiles as they were happening, focussing on local individual experiences and collective values associated with the craft. This was facilitated by the Chhipa Samaj (society),
and with the active co-operation of many individual craftspeople. Fieldwork for this study took place over the course of five years, in 2004-2009, and focussed on the printing colonies of Jaipur, Sanganer, Bagru, Balotra, Barmer and Pipad, as well as a number of more isolated rural village-based family workshops. These locations are indicated on the map below, Figure 4, and briefly outlined during the course of this introductory chapter. By extending the focus to include the socially situated nature of these traditional textiles, in both its traditional and contemporary forms, this study views hand block printed textiles as an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of the region. In doing so it contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding the form which traditional crafts and cultural heritage take as they are carried forward into modern times.
1.2 Hand block printing and cultural heritage

The guiding premise of this research is that cloth, and the clothing made from it, offer a valuable lens through which to study cultures; and that those long-standing traditions of production deeply embedded within a culture can embody locally defined systems of meaning and as such reflect wider issues of change. This study seeks to view hand block printed textiles
contextually by exploring facets of production, meanings and use within Rajasthan, and by ‘learning from people’ rather than ‘studying people’ (Spradley, 1979:383). The resulting thesis seeks to interpret hand block printed textiles not just as finished objects, but in terms of material process and change (Ingold, 2007). Written from the perspective of a textile practitioner, developed within an ethnomethodological framework, this thesis is the result of ethnographic fieldwork in Rajasthan, carried out over a five year period (2004-2009) with the Chhipa community. Ethnographic fieldwork involves documenting people’s beliefs and practices from their own perspectives. Using socially situated methodologies, this thesis particularly foregrounds the practices and voices of the craftspeople in order to build a current snapshot of a traditional yet rapidly changing craft, thus filling a gap in the existing literature on the everyday textiles and dress of Rajasthan and adding to wider discourse on the globalisation of indigenous craft traditions.

Culture is the expression of a society’s aesthetic, moral and spiritual values. It transmits the heritage of the past and created the heritage of the future. Although cultures themselves are dynamic, vibrant and evolving, they are fragile in the face of political, social and economic changes. Intangible cultural heritage, that is oral traditions and such things as craft skills and performing arts which live on in the memory and daily life of rural and indigenous people, are being obliterated by changes in lifestyle brought on by the spread of globalisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation. Loss of this intangible heritage may lead to loss of identity and to the breakdown of cultural systems.

Hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles have played a central role in the formation of the visual identity of the peoples of Rajasthan, in carefully regulated dress codes that encompass colour, pattern, clothing cut or manner of cloth wrapping, and jewellery, hairstyles etc. A coherent aesthetic language is discernible across the everyday textiles and dress, and also
textiles for domestic, ceremonial or religious use. Across India distinctive styles of dress and
decoration differentiate one region from another, with the various speciality textiles of each
region delineating further specific sub-divisions of community or occupation. Theoretical
perspectives from the fields of material culture and dress scholarship guide the way, as this
thesis considers the specific communicative role played by traditional hand block printed and
resist-dyed cloth within the region’s rural visual language of identities, as well as the changing
role of textiles and dress as traditional meets modern in a series of synergies which express
modern rural Rajasthani identities.

It is not only inherited ‘old’ traditions which comprise Intangible Cultural Heritage but also the
contemporary rural and urban customs and traditions practiced by diverse cultural groups and
incorporated into contemporary expression. Communities value these everyday traditions,
which are learned by doing. They are passed along, not only over time from generation to
generation, but also shared between groups across space. The thesis therefore investigates the
shifting markets for hand block printed textiles within contemporary urban fashions,
international exports, and as a component of the burgeoning state tourist industry.

Indian crafts have come under increasing pressure to compete for a market share as the
people of Rajasthan have become increasingly economically integrated into larger global
markets. Local handmade pottery, basketry, textiles and wooden items have been forced to
compete with mass-produced imported goods made from aluminium, plastic, tin, polyester
and nylon. Factors in this competition include a combination of cost, durability and quality, as
well as notions of style and what might be perceived as fashionable or projecting the right
image. Because traditional handcrafted goods are labour intensive to produce, once a group
becomes even marginally involved in the cash economy handmade items are no longer
competitive in terms of costs. The resulting effects of the global economy is particularly
noticeable in India, manifest in the rapid and dramatic changes to local material culture, bringing with it the concern that, as people stop making their own material goods, many of the artistic traditions associated with making them will also disappear. This is neither a new trend, nor a recent concern, and the craftspeople of India have repeatedly proven their resourcefulness at adapting to new market forces, though the long term effects of current globalising processes are the cause of increasing concern.

By identifying and tracing the modern trajectories of block printed cloth through the words and practices of the craftsmen, this thesis identifies a range of initiatives to preserve and promote the craft, as both traditional craft heritage and commercialised industry. By focussing on workmanship once taken for granted but now collected by connoisseurs, and attempting to differentiate between tradition and modernity through adaptations of technology, material and process, this thesis is a unique addition to the existing literature on hand block printing, and to the wider study of Indian textiles and Indian crafts as a whole. Furthermore, with as much focus on production, process, peoples and the various uses of this specific form of cloth patterning, this thesis adds to the wider discussions of intangible cultural heritage, and debates surrounding ways of sustaining traditional crafts, artisans, and ways of life in the face of modernity’s commercialising and globalising forces. By foregrounding the artisans’ perspectives, this study also offers fresh insights into the commercialisation of a traditional handicraft, tracing the local effects of globalising forces on the craft and exploring the individual and idiosyncratic strategies deployed by craftsmen to adapt these.

The study is a regionally focussed addition to the growing body of works which seek to situate specific forms of traditional textiles and dress within contemporary Indian society – exploring both continuities and change. In this respect this thesis offers much-needed attention at a period of rapid change in the history of the craft, a period where traditional skills and
knowledge are threatened with radical revision or total loss as local dress traditions modernise and handicrafts become commercialised forms of cultural heritage.

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with setting the scene for this research – mapping first the physical and social geography of Rajasthan, and then the structure of this thesis.

1.3 Foundations of modern Rajasthan

The geographical area of the research conducted for this thesis forms part of what is now known as Rajasthan (see map, Figure 1). In terms of physical, social and linguistic environments, the region as a whole is noticeably heterogeneous. Despite a sense of unity among all Rajasthanis this is largely contextual, with the population formed from numerous different hereditary group or community identifications. In order to fully understand the relation of these group identities to the use, production, and classification of the everyday textiles and dress traditions of Rajasthan it is necessary to first review the formation of the modern state.

Whilst the geographical region has a long and well-explored history, synonymous in popular perception as a land of rajas and maharajas, forts and palaces, and communities of hardy desert folk, the political boundaries of modern Rajasthan came into being only very recently. The nineteen princely states and two chiefdoms of erstwhile Rajputana, shown on the map below (Figure 5), were merged together between 1948 and 1950, in the wake of Indian Independence (1947), with the Ajmer-Merwara tract and Abu taluka (the shaded ‘British Province’ areas on the map below) further amalgamated into this in accordance with the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.
As a result, modern Rajasthan is the second largest state in India, covering some 342,239 km². Geographically situated in the north-western part of India, the region is bound by Pakistan in the west, and the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana in the north and the northeast, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the east and southeast, and Gujarat in the south (Director of Census Operations, Rajasthan, GOI, 1981). The topography (Figure 8) is formed of plains and plateaus, with the western portion dominated by the Thar Desert, which continues into the Sindh province of Pakistan and the irrigated planes of the Indus valley.

Water quality and availability is key to human settlement, and also a deciding factor in the location of dyeing and printing activity across Rajasthan. The Aravalli hills dissect the state diagonally to the east, a range which effectively divides Rajasthan into two river systems. This
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has resulted in distinct variations to climate and soil, flora, fauna, and people across the region. To the north and west the land is mostly desert, reliant on the seasonal river Luni (literally ‘salty’ or ‘brackish’), while to the south and east it is fertile and fed by many tributaries (see map of physical features). However, with 69% of the state an arid zone, the climate is harsh. Although Rajasthan is 10.4% of the total Indian area, it has only 1% of India’s available water resources. Annual rainfall is little over 100mm, arriving during the monsoon months of July and August. The seventeenth century the Marwari writer Muhnot Nainsi recorded that the Luni seasonally overflowed its banks, depositing fresh alluvial soil on which crops were then grown (cited in Hooja, 2006:5). Temperatures during the pre-monsoon months of May and June hover between 45°c and 50°c, but can drop below freezing in the winter nights of January. Fierce dust storms are frequent. Acute shortage of water, salinity, erosion, periodic droughts, overgrazing, over-cultivation and over-consumption of the scant vegetation for fuel and timber all contribute to, and are a consequence of, the continuing desertification of the region (Robbins, 1998).

Figure 6: Landscape typical of western Rajasthan, just visible on the horizon is a small village of traditional dome-shaped jhumpa houses with thatched roofs, western Thar 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.

Figure 7: Agricultural land surrounding the printing village of Jahota, north west of Jaipur, is arid for most of the year and reliant on the scant monsoon. Jahota 2004. Photograph D. Dunning.
The semi-arid Thar region is dominated by perennial grassland, and under good rainfall the sandy soils, though highly alkaline, can be rich in productive flora (Bhalla, 1992). ‘Agropastoralism, long-fallow dryland farming, and herding dominate the region’s villages’ (Robbins, 1998:414), with the herding of cattle and camels by specialised groups like the Rabari-Raika still following traditional practices (Agrawal, 1999). Socially, rural areas of the region follow the customary division of the population into endogamous semi-professional groups, known as jati or caste. The Brahmin and Rajput village elites retain much of their traditional status, and groups with small and middle-sized land holdings make up the bulk of rural households (Robbins, 1998:414). Despite the rapid growth of the state’s urban areas, most rural groups are still dependant on the natural environment as an important resource.

In terms of organisation, the state is divided into six separate administrative zones: Mewat (Alwar region), Marwar (Jodhpur region), Mewar (Udaipur region), Dhundhar (Jaipur region),

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1 The social practice of marrying another member of the same clan, people, or other kinship group.
Hadoti (Kota region) and Shekhawati (Sikar region). Within this, census information from 2001 lists 32 districts, 241 tehsils, 222 towns, and a total of 41,353 villages. 76.62% of the state population live in the rural areas of the state (Director of Census Operations, Rajasthan GOI, 2001). The current administrative divisions of Rajasthan are illustrated in the map below (Figure 9). Literally meaning ‘Land of Kings’, Rajasthan’s territory covers the former princely states of Rajputana, although current administrative divisions created as a result of political reorganisation following Indian Independence (1947) do not coincide exactly with the territories of the former states. In many areas of the region particular cultural characteristics which developed in the geographical and political entities that constituted those erstwhile princely states have been retained, despite the recent divisions.

Figure 9: Map showing current administrative divisions of modern Rajasthan. (Map reproduced from Lodrick, 2001:ff)
1.4 Printing colonies and fieldwork locations

1.4.1 Bagru

The town of Bagru is located 35km to the west of the state capital, Jaipur. The original history of hand printing activity in the town is thought to date back over 450 years (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983). Situated on a bend in the river Sanjara, in a fertile area of intense agricultural and pastoral activity, Bagru was certainly a prime location for dyeing and printing. Mohanty recounts the oral tradition of the town’s printers, which tells that, during the sixteenth century, the erstwhile Thakur of Bagru invited Chhipa families from neighbouring Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Jhunjhunu, and Sikar districts to relocate to his principality (1983:7-8). As of the census of 2001, Bagru had a population of 22,089, and an estimated 110 block printing units (Directorate of Census Operations, Rajasthan, GOI, 2001). Members of the Chhipa community living in Bagru adjust this rather conservative figure to estimate that at least 200 Chhipa families are engaged in printing and dyeing work in Bagru today. Until the mid 1970s the Bagru printing colony was almost wholly engaged in the production of hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles for local use, characterised by the use of indigo and dabu mud resist. This is often attributed to the combination of good flowing water through the town, and the availability of kali mitti (black earth) from nearby Kaladera village - which has its own similar resist printing traditions. The water source to Bagru, the Sanjaria River, has suffered the effects of major damming activities further upstream, and what little flow remains has been diverted through a system of drainage and irrigation channels. Today the printing colony relies almost entirely on deep bore wells. Traditional textiles and motifs of Bagru are illustrated under BG in Appendix H.
1.4.2 Balotra

The town of Balotra is situated in the Barmer district of south western Rajasthan, 100km west of Jodhpur city and around 440km from the state capital of Jaipur. The town is located on the banks of the Luni, a seasonal river which provides the main drainage for an entire basin area of approximately 57000 km². With its source in the Pushkar valley of the Aravalli hills to the north, the Luni becomes increasingly saline downstream beyond Balotra, and empties into the Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat, some 800km south of its source (Goodall and Perry, 1979:226). Because monsoon floods can develop quickly the river bed has developed a broad shallow bed of fine sand, up to 3km wide in some places, ideal for cloth processing. Though seemingly isolated, Balotra was once an important location in the animal trading network, on a historical route established by central Asian traders. In the past the town hosted a significant horse trading fair (of comparable size to the renowned Pushkar camel fair); though since the Indo-Pak border was established during Partition overland trade routes to the west have become restricted. Furthermore, modern transportation has grown to be more efficient than the horse, and the Tilwara fair has become a general animal trading event. As a result, the flat semi-arid region surrounding Balotra has become home to various branches of specialised pastoral communities such as the Rabari-Raika (Agrawal, 1999).

The town is within Barmer district, which has shared borders with Sindh (Pakistan) to the west, and Gujarat to the south. The southern edge encroaches into the fertile Sirohi and Mount Abu district, home to a number of adivasi (indigenous tribal) groups including the Bhils and Girasias (Unnithan-Kumar, 2001). In addition, a number of significant temples are located within the vicinity of Balotra, including the Jain temple Nakoda, bringing pilgrims through the town at certain times of the year.
Oral tradition of the Chhipa community suggests a long history of hand block printing in Balotra, dominated by the Muslim branch of the Chhipa lineage. In the first half of the twentieth century there were said by older residents of the town to have been fifty or sixty family workshops engaged in printing and dyeing, however, most of these families relocated to Pakistan during Partition (1947). The extended Chhipa Khan family define themselves as the last family of traditional printers in the town, despite the later arrival of a few Hindu Chhipa families during the 1950s, presumably to fill the gap left by the departing Muslim Chhipas. Today the town is dominated by an industrial area on its eastern side, which houses a cluster of small enterprises engaged in screen-printing (particularly t-shirts); continuous plain dyeing of cloth with chemical colours and jigger-winch; and manufacture of polyester fabrics on industrial warp knitting machinery. According to the 2001 census data, Balotra has a population of 61,724, and supports 800 textile units (Directorate of Census Operations, Rajasthan, GOI, 2001). Though the emergence of this government-sponsored industrial area has brought employment to the failing town, boosting the local economy, the products are not sold locally, and the unfettered use of chemical technology is adversely affecting the local environment. Traditional textiles and motifs of Balotra are illustrated under BL in Appendix H.

1.4.3 Pipad

The market town of Pipad, known locally as Pipar City, is 62km to the east of Jodhpur. Prior to Partition (1947) the town supported 105 families of Muslim Chhipas. Today only the three brothers, Yasin, Farooq and Elias Shahabudin, continue to print and dye cloth in Pipad. In his *Report on Cloth Stamping and Dyeing in Beawar, 1888*, Captain C. W. Ravenshaw singles out Pipad as a place ‘where excellent dyed cloth is made... The stamping and dyeing are done at the village, and the cloths are then taken to a village 14 miles distant, where the water in which they are washed has the effect of bringing out the colours more clearly than by washing
them in the water procurable at the village of Pipar’ (1888:5). Water is a precious commodity in rural Rajasthan, and much of it is tainted with minerals which adversely affect dye mordants. Like so many other parts of Rajasthan, modern Pipad relies solely on water drawn from deep bore wells. Traditional textiles and motifs of Pipad are illustrated under PP in Appendix H.

1.4.4 Sanganer

The town of Sanganer, founded in the sixteenth century, by the Kachchhawa Rajput prince Sangaji, is situated just 16km south of the modern state capital Jaipur (established in 1727), and 27km south of Amber, the erstwhile seat of power for the princely state of Dhundhar. The town is sited on the banks of a broad bend in the Aman-i-Shah ka Nadi, a river which was once believed to be the northerly tributary to the great Saraswati River to the south. Receiving alluvial soils washed down from the nearby Aravalli foothills, the broad riverbed and floodplains around Sanganer have historically constituted important fertile farmland, supporting many specialist agricultural communities. In recent decades Sanganer has merged with Jaipur, undergone extensive industrial development, and gained the capital city’s international airport.

Sanganer holds a prominent position in the region’s textile history, and is widely reported to have been a centre for fine bleached and dyed cloth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Irwin and Hall, 1971). Sanganer is also regularly cited as the source of numerous nineteenth century courtly textiles, many embellished with hand printing and \textit{varak} gold or silver leaf (Irwin and Hall, 1971, Hatanaka, 1996). Whilst attention has tended to focus on these elitist goods, the town also supported flourishing production of printed and dyed goods for local and religious use, though this history of everyday production has remained somewhat obscured, and in latter decades has all but ceased.
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Sanganer is also the site of the Sri Digamber Jain Mandir, a temple built in the tenth century which, by the seventeenth century, had become the centre of activity for the Mula Sangh sect of the religion, and an important pilgrim destination. The temple has played a key role in the development of the town’s block printing industry, as hand printed goods became important devotional objects and pilgrim souvenirs. In addition, numerous examples of fine quality Sanganer textiles have been preserved as book wrappers in the temple libraries. Traditional textiles and motifs of Sanganer are illustrated under SG in Appendix H.

1.4.5 Jaipur

The state capital of Jaipur, founded in 1727 by Maharaja Jai Singh and currently India’s second fastest growing city, is famous for its production and trade in hand printed textiles. Because, historically, it served as a major seat of power and thus an entrepôt for local trade, traditional Jaipur textiles exhibit certain shared characteristics with many of the other regions in Rajasthan, in varying degrees. The Chhipa mohulla (printer’s quarter) of Jaipur is confined within the narrow twisted lanes of the Old City, which, during the nineteenth century, reached the physical limits of these restricted quarters. The printers in the old city quarters were within close proximity of the royal palace, the city residences of ruling elite families from across the erstwhile region of Dhundhar, and more recently the political families of the new state of Rajasthan. Furthermore, the printers of Jaipur supplied the weekly haat market, so produced textiles which might be traded to other regions of the state. As a result, the city printers undertook all styles of printing, and their products exhibited a blend of influences. According to Sri Narayan Chhipa, a resident in the mohulla since the early twentieth century, the resultant overflow of Chhipa families from within the city moved to Sanganer, where they had already been making regular visits to utilise the wide spacious sandy river banks for cloth processing. In addition, these city Chhipas adhered closely to caste rules which proscribed the
use of indigo, deemed dirty, impure and polluting by many Hindu castes. Instead their dyeing requirements were fulfilled by the Rangrez and Nilgar communities who shared the basti (city quarters). This proliferation of specialist craftsmen, along with family dynasties of skilled block carvers, and a few artisans specialising in the associated craft of gold printing and the application of varak (gold leaf), meant the Jaipur tradition developed with far more complexity that other regions of the state. Traditional textiles and motifs of Jaipur are illustrated under JP in Appendix H.

1.4.6 Barmer

The district town of Barmer lies beyond Balotra, to the far west of Rajasthan, in the Thar Desert. Just 270km from the Pakistani border, it was once an important stop on overland trading routes, though since Partition the city has become annexed. It is the administrative centre for the second largest (though sparsely populated) district in Rajasthan, and hosts high numbers of Muslim and Jain communities in addition to the majority Hindus. The region is particularly well known for communities of itinerant performers, such as the Langha and Manganiyar musicians. These two communities identify themselves through the wearing of shouldercloths embellished with locally hand block printed and resist-dyed geometric and intricate ajrakh textiles. Since social taboos proscribe the wearing and use of indigo by Hindus, ajrakh has become a visible marker of Muslims and Meghwals (a Harijan community associated with leatherwork). These textiles are traditionally printed by a local branch of the Khatri community of printers and dyers, of which Ranamal Khatri’s family is believed to have the most longstanding history in the region, and continue to print the highest quality traditional cloth for local use. Ajrakh is the most complex and lengthy of all traditional forms of hand block printing and resist-dyeing practiced in Rajasthan (see Ronald 2007b, Varadarajan 1983 for this). Traditional ajrakh is dyed using indigo, madder, mordants and resist, and oral

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tradition of the Thar Desert region asserts that the properties of indigo blue dyed cloth keep
the wearer both cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The only other major centres of
ajrakh production are Kachchh, in Gujarat, and Sindh, in Pakistan (Bilgrami, 1998). Traditional
textiles and motifs of Barmer are illustrated under BM in Appendix H.

1.4.6 Other hand block printing locations
There are innumerable other pockets of hand block printing activity throughout Rajasthan,
mostly village-based. Of these the most significant are the villages of Jahota, Jairampura and
Bada Gaon, a cluster of small hamlets around 25km from Jaipur which host a small number of
Chhipa and Rangrez families locally renowned for producing lal zameen fabrics, in red dyed
designs such as budholi and chilani, popularly worn as bridal ghagras. Kaladera near Bagru
has a number of Chhipa families who specialise in dabu work, often sub-contracting for the
larger family workshops in Bagru itself. Other important centres include Pali near Pipad; Akola
and Devgaon, near Udaipur; and Aklera and Chhipa Barod, near Kota, in the south of the state.
To the eastern side of Rajasthan are a small community of printers and dyers near the
historical fort town of Sawai Madhopur, which has recently attracted significant attention from
the NGO Dastkar. In addition, the cities of Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur all historically hosted a
thriving community of printers and dyers, though the dyeing activity has continued to a
greater extent than the printing and Kota is better known for its community of handloom
weavers. Traditional textiles and motifs of other regions of Rajasthan are illustrated under OV
in Appendix H.

1.5 Cultural identity of Rajasthan
The Chhipa community of Rajasthan have developed a repertoire of textiles, shaped by the
specific demands of their local customers, particularly in rural areas of the state. Historically
their work developed under patronage of the ruling classes, though village artisans focussed on products their local clientele. The majority of people living in Rajasthan today define themselves as Rajasthani as a regional identity, but will also refer to themselves, depending on the context, in terms of smaller social units. Innumerable caste, tribe, family, sub-region or occupation based divisions form the foundation for these social identities, many of which are geographically spread in traditional divisions or cultural sub-groupings which roughly relate to the erstwhile feudal divisions or parallel the territorial extents of past kingdoms. Furthermore, whilst urban courtly and elite society has been dominated by Rajput and Brahmin dynasties, the vast rural tracts are largely inhabited by communities with tribal or semi-nomadic roots, and strong cultural traditions.

India’s complexity as a whole is intensified by its unique caste system which, despite being legally abolished under the Indian Constitution in 1950, continues to influence daily life and is particularly noticeable in rural areas. While the idea of social or economic classes is universal, and other countries may have certain groups regarded as outcasts by virtue of their origins or occupation, none can match the thoroughness of the Indian caste system. With five major divisions, and then countless sub-divisions within each of these, aspects of the system permeate everyday life at all levels and make economic and social organisation of the country impossibly complicated. In major cities such as Delhi and Mumbai the smooth veneer of westernised society effectively conceals the importance of caste. However, more than eighty percent of the population of India lives in half a million villages, in most of which the caste system survives and flourishes. Yet even in these rural areas there are significant regional variations.

The cultural identity of modern day Rajasthani has developed into a complex mosaic, enhanced by the different occupations and ethnic affiliations of each group and sub-group of
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each sub-regional tract. At the upper levels of rural society are such prominent groups as Brahmins, roughly classified as those who traditionally performed religious duties though in modern times more loosely associated with educated upper classes; Rajputs, traditionally a warrior group now more often land owners or petty noblemen; and families of Jain traders, a religious group not permitted to perform many other occupational functions. Other significant groups are traditionally pastoralists, including the Gujar and Ahir cattle herders, and Raika Rabari semi-nomadic camel or goat breeders. With agriculture as Rajasthan’s primary rural industry the region hosts numerous farming communities, each lineage relating to particular areas of the region or speciality crops. These include Dangi, Jat, Dhakar, Kachhi, Kunbi, Lodha, Mali, Phool-Mali, Patel, Dhanak, Sondhia etc. Many of the farming or pastoral groups are considered as indigenous tribal, adivasi communities, granted special land or roaming rights.

For example Scheduled Tribes (as classified by the Government’s 1950 ‘Schedule of Tribes’) such as the Girasia, Bhil, Bishnoi, Sahariya, and Damor communities have retained exclusive rights to the gathering and selling of forest produce, and to the sustainable hunting of wild game. Such things as spoken dialect and distinctive styles of dress or appearance are maintained by most communities as a means of differentiation – within and between castes, occupations, regional branches or individual family lineages.

For the village inhabitants, Rajasthan’s landscape can also be viewed as the product of a mythico-religious understanding of the land and its people (Balzani, 2001:213). There is a rich tradition of oral transmission and performance, in both the rural and urban areas of the state, continued even today by lineages of itinerant storytellers, bards, and public performances of the epic tale of Pabu-ji, using the Pabu-ji ki phad painted scrolls. According to Tilley, a ‘centred and meaningful space involves specific sets of linkages between the physical space of the non-humanly created world, somatic states of the body, the mental space of cognition and
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representation and the space of movement, encounter and interaction between persons and between persons and the human and non-human environment’ (Tilley, 1994:10). He argues that social space is therefore ‘constituted by differential densities of human experience, attachment and involvement. It is above all contextually constituted, providing particular settings for involvement and the creation of meaning’ (Tilley, 1994:11).

The resulting sense of place links physical, historical, socio-political, economic and cultural landscapes, which become embodied in people’s activities and in the material culture of the region (Bender, 2002). Thus, in addition to more conventional studies of Rajasthan in terms of linguistic or religious variations, distinctive cultural characteristics have revealed important sub-regional and thematic groups. See for example, Neuman et al.’s (2006) mapping of the region in terms of its music and bardic traditions.

In the introduction to her major recent publication on the history of Rajasthan Rima Hooja notes the growing importance in recent years of these kinds of regional studies as a means of ‘complementing ‘mainstream’ history’. However, she also notes that, despite regional or local history now featuring on the academic syllabi of Indian Universities, there is still much to be written on Rajasthan – particularly with respect to lower socio-economic classes, and subaltern peoples’ everyday lives (Hooja, 2006:xv-xvi). As such, this thesis offers just such a complementary view, using the changing patterns of use, production and exchange of these traditional everyday handcrafted textiles as told by the communities of hereditary craftspeople who continue to produce them.
1.6 Organisation of the thesis

Following this first introductory chapter, Chapter Two engages in a review of the relevant literature, positioning this thesis within the wider field of Indian textile and dress studies, and parallel to recent attentions to Indian textile crafts of other regions. Certainly the opulence of the courtly textiles of Rajasthan are well represented within the prolific publications on India’s textile and dress. Equally well known is the role played by India’s printed textiles in the history of global trade, and in the development and mechanisation of the European textile industries. But India’s textile history has often been criticised of having been written outside of India, and many aspects of the subcontinent’s complex domestic production, particularly those textiles made by and for rural farming or peasant communities, are only now beginning to garner serious academic interest. Explanations for this within the existing literature point to changes in the status of Indian handcrafted textiles within India; notably in the wake of Independence where handmade cloth, already made a political symbol of domestic independence through Gandhi’s *swadeshi* movement, became an important resource for the foreign trade favoured by the new government. The historical and ethnographic literatures of textiles and dress in India are drawn upon to illuminate the particular properties attributed to these materials, which in turn provides a framework for understanding the local values applied to cloth. Elsewhere in western academia the likes of Weiner and Schneider have established a strong theoretical framework for the study of textiles and dress, based on the visual and communicative potency of cloth and how it functions in social contexts. They also recognise that there is an effect upon the meanings attributable to cloth by capitalism and its industrial manufacturing. By drawing on anthropologically inspired sources such as these, in line with more recent regionally-specific studies of India’s textile and dress traditions, a theoretical and methodological approach is identified which offers the potential to augment existing materials on the hand block printed textiles of Rajasthan. In the consideration of such a locally significant
form of cloth patterning, this approach goes some way towards filling the identified gap in the existing literature on regional forms of cloth production and their socially situated nature - from production to use, and through space and time.

With this overarching framework in place, then Chapter Three, Methodologies, goes on to deal first with the qualitative research philosophy, then delineates the specific methodological approach or strategy adopted for the purposes of this study, and finally details the various field-based ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis. The chosen fieldwork sites and participating craftspeople are considered, and choices of primary data collection methods including interviews, photography, and craft apprenticeship are discussed.

Chapter Four, Traditional Hand Block Printed Textiles and Dress, is the first of three substantive chapters. It begins the discussion of traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles by focussing on their role within the region’s dress traditions. Using detailed information gathered during extensive fieldwork within Rajasthan the existing knowledge on Rajasthani dress is extended to include detailed analysis of the functions, largely communicative, of cloth pattern and colour. Using a combination of photographic materials and the catalogue of hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles and motifs (listed in Appendix H of this thesis), the role of pattern in relation to such things as caste, community, occupation, gender, age, and marital status are each explored. Through the personal accounts of individuals who make and also those who wear these textiles as a part of their traditional caste dress, the chapter also explores how these traditions are changing today. This chapter builds an analysis of the changing values of traditional hand block printed textiles and dress in modern Rajasthan, in particular detailing the rise of synthetic substitutes and western-styled readymade garments. The disappearance of locally handmade textiles from regular local use in this manner threatens the distinctive textile and craft heritage of the region, and questions the sustainability of the
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hereditary occupations of the Chhipa community. In this respect it offers a deeper understanding of hand block printed textiles by associating them with patterns of use. But, in recognition that traditions are neither static nor divorced from the mechanisms of modernity, it also offers important and timely observations on the role of synthetic materials in the development of rural dress styles.

As manufactured objects, the production of textiles and dress, no matter how traditional or handmade, has always historically been a market driven activity. Chapter Five, Hand Block Printed Textile Markets, considers the knock-on effects of the rise in polyester popularity on the market for hand block printed textiles, focussing on the commercialisation of the craft. As the local community-based market has dwindled, during the latter half of the twentieth century, so newer markets have emerged in the shape of international exports and burgeoning regional tourism. This chapter explores how the forces exerted by these shifting markets have repositioned this rural form of traditional cloth patterning into the modern industry of the state, and presented the Chhipa community with a series of challenges to their hereditary occupation. Using the personal accounts of a number of Chhipas currently engaged in the marketing of their cloth, alongside materials gleaned from research within the export and tourism sectors, this chapter engages in the difficult discourse surrounding the commercialisation of traditional crafts.

Consolidating this knowledge, Chapter Six, Traditional Processes and Changing Technologies, argues that the technologies of the craft, and hence the personal experiences and knowledge of the artisans, are vital to understanding recent changes in production and consumption of hand block printed textiles. This chapter builds on the previous chapters’ discussions of the recent history of hand block printed cloth by utilising the detailed recordings of materials, dyes, and production methods catalogued during the course of the fieldwork for this thesis.
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The resurgence of interest in sustainability and natural dyes is explored in specific relation to the craft, and evaluated as a means of authenticity. In this manner the work of the craftsman, and their strategies and ingenuity to cope with shifting markets and modern clientele, can be truly appreciated. Thus the questions surrounding the nature of intangible cultural heritage are arguably answered with the hereditary nature of crafts knowledge - passed on and built upon by each successive generation of the artisan lineage.

Chapter Seven summarises and draws the thesis to a conclusion, re-joining the threads of the research, revisiting and re-evaluating the key aims and objectives of the study which sought to position this thesis as an original and timely addition to the existing body of knowledge on Indian textiles and dress, and to the wider discourse on the commercialisation of traditional crafts and sensitive yet sustainable protection of tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The core themes to this thesis involve the changing local values of hand block printed cloth, in terms of usage, market, and technology, positing it as a visible marker of identity and form of intangible cultural heritage and thus outlining the challenges that such a label poses for the continuation of the craft in the current era of globalisation. This literature review chapter is divided into four sections, each corresponding with the key themes of the thesis as a whole. Following this introductory section, the first situates hand block printed textiles of Rajasthan within the wider study of India’s textile and dress traditions, identifying the gap in the extant literature and the potential for expansion of extant understandings of the craft by this current study. Then, because this is a socially-situated study, the second section reviews important developments in the anthropological approach to textiles and dress studies, tackling current discourse on the social and cultural purposes of textiles particularly with regard to visually establishing, communicating and maintaining identities. The third section looks at what is known about markets for hand crafted cloth, focusing on government policy and statistical data on Indian handicrafts and assessing its validity in terms of this study. The fourth section refocuses on the technologies of cloth manufacture, using recent attentions to traditional textile crafts and natural dyes to argue that renewed focus on these terms by which the artisans understand their own craft are a vital means of sustaining and preserving both tangible and intangible aspects of a craft’s heritage. The chapter ends with a concluding
Section which considers the role of handcrafted cloth production in globalisation, and considers the various arguments for and against heterogeneity and homogeneity of creative cultural products as a result.

2.1.1 Definitions

Since the single overarching discourse which pervades this thesis, and indeed all attention to Indian crafts today, whether academic or practical, is how best to preserve and sustain the wide variety of artisan practices in a modernising world it is useful to open this chapter by defining and contextualising two terms, namely intangible cultural heritage and globalisation.

The concept of cultural heritage is surrounded by an ever-growing series of principles, practices and philosophies regarding its effective protection. These take the form of national policies and international conventions, initiated to protect built and material forms, which have over time broadened in scope to include cultural and geographical spaces, cultural practices, cultural knowledge and traditions.

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Chair in Heritage and Urbanism, William Logan, offers a useful working definition of cultural heritage as ‘those elements created by a society or community in the past which provide that society or community today with a sense of its own identity and worth’ inclusive of intangible aspects of cultural heritage such as ‘cultural and spiritual practices, indigenous cosmology, folklore and oral histories, artisan skills, music, song, dances and other traditions’ (Logan, 2007). However, as the growing range of publications emerging from a broad variety of disciplines illustrates, debates continue as to what exactly should be preserved within these categories, and the manner and extent to which such preservation might be carried out. On a global level, Seitel et al. identify the problems encountered with forming a solid definition of what constitutes intangible cultural heritage are caused by the dynamic and changing nature of culture itself (Seitel et al., 2001). Recognising these inherent
difficulties, but with the aim of offering a meaningful and inclusive global definition of intangible cultural heritage, the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage sums it up as:

1. The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

2. The ‘intangible cultural heritage’, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.

(UNESCO, 2003: Article 2, definitions)

Under this convention, methods to preserve, protect and safeguard intangible heritage are ‘aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalisation of the various aspects of such heritage’ (UNESCO, 2003).

However, somewhat obscured from the above definition is due attention to the fundamental question of whose values and heritage these actually are. Particularly in the Asian context, critics have argued that preservation and conservation charters such as the UNESCO convention (above) are ultimately informed by western ideals, and call for caution that such ideals must not be imposed imperiously on cultures (Taylor, 2004a:419). Thus, whilst such charters uphold global forms of best practice, they also potentially impose ‘a common stamp on culture across the world’ with policies perhaps also generating ‘a logic of global cultural
uniformity [by seeking] to impose standards of ‘good behaviour’ onto Member States and other states’ (Taylor, 2004a:419, quoted in Logan, 2007). If so then there is a very real threat that local values might become overwhelmed by such universalising practices of heritage preservation and protection, in a process of cultural globalisation.

Globalisation, in addition to its common economic meanings, is generally defined as a process in which societies and cultures become increasingly connected and interdependent, characterised by ‘ever-increasing cross-border flows of people, goods, services, ideas, information, money, knowledge and culture’ (Hawkins, 2006), and the ‘widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness’ in which space and time are increasingly compressed with regard to those flows of information, people, goods, and services (Held et al., 1999:1). However, there are contradictory views on the effects of globalising forces. Whilst proponents of globalisation theory view it as improving economic growth and quality of life, critics view globalisation as accentuating inequalities, promoting poverty, and degrading the overall quality of human life. The challenges of maintaining cultural identities within such modernising and globalising conditions continue to be widely debated across a number of academic disciplines, and centre on loss of heritage and diversity through processes of homogenisation (examples of this discussion within the social sciences include Appadurai, 1990, Featherstone, 1990, Featherstone et al., 1995, Appadurai, 2001, Maynard, 2004). Some have attributed this homogenisation process to the influx of foreign, or more specifically westernised, cultural influences, leading to popular usage of terms like ‘westernisation’, ‘MacDonaldisation’ and ‘Cocacolonisation’ (cf. Appadurai, 2001, Ritzer and Stillman, 2003). Whilst some scholars consider these influences to be a destructive force on traditional cultural practices, particularly since they often arrive via youth-targeted media, others disagree;
arguing instead for the ‘hybridisation’ or ‘localisation’ of cultural forms (Robertson, 1992, Featherstone et al., 1995).

The theory behind this hybridisation, or merging and co-mingling of local and global cultural forms, is perhaps most effectively put across by Robertson as ‘glocalisation’, a term derived from the Japanese concept of ‘glocalism’ which in turn developed from dochaku agricultural technique - meaning ‘living in one’s own land’ (Iwabuchi, 2002). Using this idea as a starting point, Robertson argues that local cultural distinctiveness is effectively strengthened by exposure to global influences (Robertson, 1992, see also Held and McGrew, 2007). This notion of hybridity is also a characteristic of transdisciplinary and globalised academic fields like cultural studies, and by adopting such a perspective many involved in cultural theory and popular culture studies have argued for the inclusion in cultural heritage definitions of popular cultural forms - such as fashions, sports, industrial design, cinema and so forth.

For UNESCO, however, these remain outside the remit of their cultural heritage definitions, regarded instead as ‘cultural industries’ which ‘combine the creation, production and commercialisation of contents which are intangible and cultural in nature. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services’. An important aspect of the cultural industries, according to UNESCO, is that they are ‘central in promoting and maintaining cultural diversity and in ensuring democratic access to culture’ (www.unesco.org/culture). At what point such ‘cultural industries’ become ‘cultural heritage’, under the terms of the UNESCO convention, is not specified. However, there has been ongoing critique of the limitations of the UNESCO definition in this respect, and in its preoccupations with classifying and documenting, most particularly its narrow view of authentic heritage, at the cost of exploring hybrid forms of culture (for perspectives on this argument see Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, Kurin, 2004, Brown, 2005).
This ‘present-centred perspective’ is noted as a recurrent theme in the recent literature on heritage by Graham and Howard, who, citing Peckham (2003) and Halbwachs (1992), argue that heritage is often used as a collective form of memory. In this way heritage can be viewed as socially constructed, shaped by current social, political and economic concerns, and is thus ‘less about tangible material artefacts or other intangible forms of the past than about the meanings placed upon them and the representations which are created from them’ (Graham and Howard, 2008:2). For them, ‘heritages are present-centred and are created, shaped and managed by, and in response to, the demands of the present. As such, they are open to constant revision and change and are also both sources and results of social conflict’ (Graham and Howard, 2008:3).

In dress scholar Hansen’s terms; ‘Rather than defining culture in the foundational sense of comprising the shreds and patches of a specifically bounded society’ it is more important to ‘view culture processually as created through agency, practice, and performance. Conventional physical space and place delimitations have given way to understandings of globalisation as a process in which the local and the global interact’ (Hansen, 2004:370). Hence, whilst the UNESCO convention is a valuable means of putting local knowledge and traditional culture on to world preservation agendas, it is only really through studies which focus on the very local, often overlooked meanings, values and transformations of such things as traditional craft practices, that it becomes possible to ‘expose the significance of the global in the local and the local in the global to enable reflexion and further analysis’ (Riello et al., 2009:xxxi). However, it would seem that the challenge with Indian textiles and dress has been to move beyond recording heritage as an inventory, and encourage progression towards taking a holistic view and systemic approach which in turn might help to finds ways to ‘sustain the whole system as a living entity’ (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2004:53).
2.2 Indian textile and dress studies

Much has been written on the textile traditions of India, not least due to the pivotal role played by Indian textiles in the history of global trade (for example Gittinger, 1982, Barnes, 1997, Crill, 2005) and domestic politics (see Bayly, 1986, Bean, 1989, Tarlo, 1996, Trivedi, 2007). However, whilst the rural and household textile traditions of neighbouring Gujarat have received increasingly thorough attention in the past two decades (notably through the works of Tarlo, 1992, 1996, Edwards, 1999, 2003, 2005a, 2007, 2009), very little has been written on the hand production of textiles for everyday use in the villages of Rajasthan, despite prolific academic interest in the courtly traditions of the state (notably Singh, 1979, Goswamy, 1993, Kumar, 1999, Barnes et al., 2002, Goswamy, 2002). Up till now, two foundational studies, based on research carried out nearly forty years ago (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983, Cousin, 1986), form the mainstay of attention to Rajasthan’s block printed cottons, which otherwise have generally only been afforded passing mention in wider anthologies of India’s textile heritage (see for example Gittinger, 1982, Hacker and Turnbull, 1982, Gillow and Barnard, 1991, Hatanaka, 1996). As a result, the dramatic changes to the craft over the past four decades remain to a large degree unrecorded, shifting traditions scantly documented, and current trends mistaken as established traditions.

Historically speaking, whilst little can be said with any certainty, in northern and western India the production of hand block printed textiles, patterned using natural dyes, mordant and resist technologies, is thought to date back more than two thousand years. However, despite scholars attributing the birth of such techniques to the Indus Valley civilisation (2500-1750 BCE), material evidence is scant and unreliable (Gittinger, 1982, Edwards, 2005a). The Indus Valley, which follows the historical course of the Indus River, runs through the Sind district of
modern Pakistan, along the westernmost edge of modern Rajasthan. Whilst no actual textiles have survived, spindles, cotton seeds, impressions of woven cloth and what appears to be a dyers workshop all suggest that textile production was certainly sophisticated at that time (Gittinger, 1982).

It is widely recognised and well reported that cloth and cloth production have historically had a significant influence on the cultural, socioeconomic and political, as well as ceremonial and religious life of the people of India. However, it is only within the records of external trade and export that accounts of India’s production of hand printed cloth really emerges. One of the earliest of these, The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, offers lists of trade goods from India, among which cotton textiles feature. This Greek trading ship, which sailed between Gujarat and Egypt in the first century CE, records ‘Indian garments of cotton... cloth of all kinds... and a considerable amount of cloth of ordinary quality’ (Schroff, 1912:41, 49, 51). Edwards (2011) and Gittinger (1982) both offer extensive insights into the flourishing textile trade from Gujarat; and Barnes’ research on the fragments of Indian printed and dyed cottons (examples pictured below) excavated from the Egyptian port of Al Fostat, the carbon dates of which range from the tenth to fifteenth centuries, adds material evidence to their argument that the work of Gujarati printers and dyers was a mainstay of maritime trade throughout the mediaeval period (Barnes, 1993, 1997). Unfortunately, considerably less in known of their production for local markets, and more importantly, whilst the Gujarati craftsmen attracted attention due to their proximity to trade ports at Cambay and Broach, there is comparatively little information available for their counterpart rural Rajasthani craftsmen working within the same historical period.
Certainly by the seventeenth century it is well reported that craftsmen in other parts of India were engaged in the production of hand printed and painted textiles to supply the growing demand for these goods in Europe at that time. Established Dutch, Portuguese and British East India Companies oversaw such manufacturing activities, which, with the exception of Cambay in Gujarat, were largely concentrated around Calcutta, Madras and the eastern Coromandel Coast (the history of this prolific activity is thoroughly researched in Irwin, 1955-67 [1997], Irwin and Schwartz, 1966, Irwin and Brett, 1970, Irwin and Hall, 1971). In contrast, what is known of Rajasthan’s textile heritage from that same era comes largely through the finery amassed by each of the regional courts, supplemented by colonial records such as the Imperial Gazetteer. Coverage of hand block printed textiles within these is scant, and focuses almost entirely on the production of fine dyed and printed cloth in Sanganer, such as those depicted below, which were produced in small quantities by master craftsmen for use by elite castes, temples and the regional courts (Singh, 1979).
From that time onwards, the Indian textile industry was ‘at the core of the social, political, and economic transformations that marked the early modernisation of Europe in the eighteenth century industrial revolution; at the heart of colonialism; and central to the consequent struggle for independence from colonial empires’ (Paulicelli and Clark, 2009:2). As a result, Indian textiles feature very strongly within global economics as much as aesthetics, perhaps most evident in the popularity of chintz, characterised by its exotic flowers and flowing foliage. This popularity has provided rich historical evidence, and primary accounts of printed cloth production and design from the external perspective of the British Raj and the Mughal Empire. However, as Edwards remarks, ‘the documentation of textiles as trade goods is extensive, although focus has been predominantly on the export market rather than indigenous consumption’ (1999:26).

Certainly the systematic collecting and recording of India’s textile manufactures by the likes of John Forbes Watson (1866, 1867), Thomas Wardle (King, 2005) and G. P. Baker (1921) have resulted in invaluable and permanent documentation of the industrial relations between east and west. However, they also serve to somewhat undermine the greatly renowned Indian design influence by showing that Indian cottons exported to Europe were tailor-made to follow
European design specifications and meet identified market demands. So, whilst such reports offer a rich historical resource and attest to the skills and adaptability of the Indian artisan, it is as economic textile historian Tirthankar Roy argues, that relying on such ‘an exclusive focus on colonialism as the driver of India’s economic history misses those continuities that arise from the economic structure of local conditions’ (Roy, 2002:110).

In a recent interview for the Deccan Herald (Kakoty, 2011), Ritu Kumar, author of *Costumes and Textiles of Royal India* (1999), expressed her concern that India’s textile and dress history has been largely recounted through foreign museums and scholarship, echoing an increasingly familiar unease that Indian textiles are more often catalogued as trade fabrics than as part of India’s domestic traditions of artisanship and cultural heritage. Closer inspection of the existing literature reveals that, aside from burgeoning industrial and economic concerns, from the late nineteenth century until around the 1980s, the study of Indian textiles and dress has been largely dominated by costume historians, collectors, art historians and museum curators. Whilst their contributions are matchless, most focus on extant courtly collections in a largely connoisseurial approach which tends to have valorised techniques and materials as forms of decorative art and master craftsmanship, often divorced from the body, everyday life, and ideological concerns. The problem with this, as Chloe Wigston Smith argues, is that ‘most clothing and textiles collections represent only elite sectors of society... [featuring] the garments that were preserved through the generations, often for affective reasons... as well as what was considered ‘collectible’ by museums’ (Wigston Smith, 2006:968).

The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed a paradigm shift in the ways in which textiles and dress collections were classified, interpreted and written about. For the most part of the twentieth century, museum objects from non-European societies had largely been classified as either aesthetic works of art, or scientific or cultural artefacts. During the 1960s
and 1970s these categories began to intersect, and since then museum curators, anthropologists, art and dress historians and collectors have increasingly merged the two. Historically focussed exhibitions, such as Gittinger’s *Master Dyers to the World* at the Textile Museum, Washington DC, supplemented detailed analysis of trade archives with ethnographic attention to current print and dye artisans in Gujarat and Rajasthan (1982). Barnes’ classification of the Fostat fragments for the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1997), and Balfour-Paul’s major global survey of indigo for the British Museum (1998) similarly made use of ethnographies of currently practicing Indian artisans. So, whilst past museum-based studies of Indian textiles and dress might have tended towards descriptive taxonomies, the growing move towards contextualisation of cloth and clothing collections through study of the artists and communities, as distinctive forms of cultural heritage, has begun to expand upon and enhance existing scholarship. As Eicher observes in her survey of anthropological contributions to dress studies, exhibitions ‘enrich viewers’ visual experience and knowledge’ but the accompanying museum publications ‘permit the idea of the exhibit to live beyond the exhibit itself’ (Eicher, 2000:7).

Perhaps more importantly, this paradigm shift has helped to refocus national and international attentions onto local forms of cultural heritage, and, under the auspices of the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad, helped produce some of the most significant publications on Indian textiles and dress written within India. Bijoy Mohanty’s publication was based on fieldwork carried out under the auspices of the Calico Museum in the mid 1970s, and constitutes the only focussed technical study to date on the block printing of Bagru. Through the eminent scholarship of dress scholar B. N. Goswamy, and his detailed object-based analyses of the historical garments in the Calico Museum collection, a definitive history of Indian clothing is now more widely available (Goswamy, 1993, 2002). Reprints of all seven volumes of the *Journal of Indian Textile*
History, edited by John Irwin in the 1950s and 1960s, are once again available through the work of the museum. Furthermore, the breathtaking (yet arguably somewhat static) gallery displays of flattened historical garments and textiles for which the museum is well known, have recently begun to be augmented by new gallery displays exploring historical modes of construction and embellishments – including regionally specific embroidery techniques and hand block printing. Taken in conjunction with their great and growing range of publications, it could be argued that Indian textile and dress history is finally returning to India. Certainly clothing and dress in India is a daily topic of conversation and preoccupation, it employs millions and preoccupies the minds of even more, and yet anthropological explorations of Indian society through the lens of textiles and dress are still surprisingly marginal (though with notable exceptions, examined below). However dress and textiles are more than just visual representations; they constitute powerful media in their own right. As the materials closest to the body, and yet most visibly representational to others, they are a part of the negotiation and projection of national, regional and personal identities, and ongoing constructions of cultural heritage. Investigating these relations further can help bring new perspectives on a range of related topics from aesthetics to gender, tradition and modernity, and aid in the investigation of textile crafts and their markets by addressing such things as the relations of production and consumption, and the communication of identities.

2.3 Anthropology of dress

Textiles and dress are not always thought of as constituting a core part of regional histories or cultural and craft heritage. Indeed, the definitive contemporary regional scholarship The Idea of Rajasthan (Schomer et al., 2001), whilst it marks an important turning point in scholarship addressing questions of regional distinctiveness and regional identity, fruitfully explores music,
dance, religious, oral, architectural and courtly traditions yet omits textiles, dress and craft. Such attention is as conspicuously absent from *South Asian Studies*, the ‘UK’s leading journal devoted to the visual and material cultures of South Asia, and the only major journal outside the subcontinent devoted entirely to this field’ ([www.basas.org.uk/journal.htm](http://www.basas.org.uk/journal.htm)). Only one article in the past six years has a textile and dress focus (Edwards, 2005b).

Notwithstanding, in the Indian context there have been some important approaches to the subject in recent decades, including explorations of the consumption and exchange of textiles and clothing, and the role played by transactions like these in the construction and maintenance of social relations. Christopher Bayly (1986) has considered the importance of cloth in India from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, arguing that the meaning of cloth was transformed by nationalists who challenged colonial domination with the creation of what Arjun Appadurai describes as a ‘language of commodity resistance’ (1986:30). Bernard Cohn has established the significance of cloth in articulating power and authority in nineteenth-century India, arguing that clothing played a central role in establishing the difference between ruler and ruled. Susan Bean (1989) has traced the development of Gandhi’s ideas about *khadi*, a cloth she terms the ‘fabric of Indian independence’, and views *khadi* as both a symbol of India’s potential economic self-sufficiency and a medium for communicating to the British the dignity of poverty and the equality of Indian civilisation. As Cohn aptly points out, ‘clothes are not just bodily coverings and adornments, nor can they be understood only as metaphors of power and authority, nor as symbols... Clothes literally are authority’ (1989:312).

The problem is that whilst textiles and dress are pervasive, they are often not recognised until someone points them out as being part of the social fabric of a community. Markers, such as heritage, language, religion, ethnicity, nationalism, and shared interpretations of the past, can
help to construct and define such things as exclusion and inclusion in communities. Textiles and dress, as the materials closest to our bodies, are fundamental visual aspects of these markers, functioning actively in the communication of identities. Indeed, in their book entitled *Saris of India*, Chishti and Sanyal go so far as to assert that ‘the design vocabulary of the sari [is] coming through as a series of coded messages, handed down from generation to generation’ (Chishti and Sanyal, 1989). Some sixty years earlier, linguist and structural ethnographer, Petr Bogatyrëv (1937 [1971]), changed the theoretical framework for ethnographic studies of textiles and dress when he drew a close analogy between folk dress and mother tongue. Whilst O. P. Joshi uses less of an overt linguistic metaphor, his definition of Hindu women’s dress echoes this communicative function: ‘a Hindu woman’s dress may include body decorations such as tattoos, decorations made from henna, cosmetics, ornaments, and footwear... All these aspects present an integrated system of ornament regulated by place, occasion, age, and status, as well as values that reflect social hierarchy’ (Joshi, 1992:215).

Other literature offers greater insights into the symbolic role of textiles in the Indian context. Edwards’ (1999) reveals that choices of materials can be governed by the belief that different fibres have intrinsic moral, malign or benign properties, and varying levels of purity. Fibre, texture, colour and construction of cloth are considered to bear distinct individual qualities, impacting on the symbolic value of the textile. This echoes previous works by Bayly (1986) and Bean (1989), who observed that the porous nature of cloth, within certain contexts, can be perceived to act as a transactional medium, with the power to transmit ‘essences’ or to retain the ‘essence’ of the user (current or previous), particularly due to its proximity to the body (Bayly, 1986:286). However, Tarlo urges caution with such specific readings of textiles: ‘While some Indians today might argue in favour of the transformative aspect of cloth, others deny
it... [with] outsiders... often more inclined to read ‘magical’ beliefs into Indian clothes than the people who actually wear them’ (Tarlo, 1996:14).

In wider critical and theoretical writing, dress has often been described as a complex metaphor for identity. Identity is one of the most compelling and contentious concepts in the humanities and social sciences, and one which is inextricably linked to clothing and appearance since they offer a visible means of expressing who we are or are not (Freitas et al., 1997). Dress, as defined by anthropologists Eicher and Roach-Higgins, is an ‘assemblage of body modifications and supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings’ (1992:15). This definition, according to Hansen, ‘reckons both with the strategic effects entailed in the material properties of dress and their expressive abilities’ (2004:371). In a later work Eicher further expanded upon these expressive and communicative functions of dress as ‘a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time’ (Eicher, 1995:1). Clearly part of the intention in the production and wearing of cloth and clothing is to make a visual impact, one which contributes to a person’s identity and locates them within certain social and geographical spaces. As globalisation brings the world together, cultural heritage works to draw attention to that which is local, individual, and expressive. As such, any attempt to understand the cultural values and meanings of textiles and dress needs to utilise at least some of the local knowledge which surrounds their production and use.

These anthropological definitions are illustrative of a relatively recent shift of attention, in which textiles and dress have become important subjects of study in their own right. Whilst it cannot yet be entirely agreed with Taylor’s assertion that ‘assessment of the cultural meanings of textiles, clothing and body decoration’ has become ‘central within discourse today’ (2002:195), there has been significantly more academic scholarship over the past two decades. Anthropological interest in dress has gone from ‘visual evidence of the exotic, mysterious
peoples’ (Taylor, 2004b:67); through the early twentieth century period where dress became ‘an accessory in symbolic, structural, or semiotic explanations... any serious engagement with clothing itself... almost vanished’ (Hansen, 2004:370); to reach the current focuses which view dress as part of the dynamic processes of human experience (expressed most famously by Weiner and Schneider, 1989), and use textiles and dress to help investigate social practices and agency. Indeed, Davis (1992) argued that articulations of identity can often be ambivalent, and such ambivalences within and across personal and social identities provide the fuel for continual style or fashion changes. Crane (2000) defines this paradigm shift as being a move from class dress to consumer fashions; or a move away ‘from a concern with elaborate artifice’ (Breward, 2003).

In an article for the Berg journal *Fashion Theory*, design historian John Styles summed up the post-1970s conceptual shift in dress studies as largely due to ‘the rise of women’s history, the emergence of cultural studies and the shift in intellectual interest from production to consumption’ (Styles, 1998:387). Each of which, he argues, ‘have been distinct, albeit overlapping developments... each embrace key aspects of what has been termed the postmodern turn in the human sciences - a downplaying of long historical trajectories and deep causes, a focus on surface phenomena and on diversity, a concern with the personal, with the subjective and with identity’. In doing so, ‘they render important the very characteristics of dress that previously made it intellectually suspect - its ephemerality, its superficiality, its variety’ (Styles, 1998:387). Hence, socially and culturally constructed meanings have become as valuable as the empirical study of the textiles and dress themselves. As Eicher observes, ‘a thread of agreement runs through these books and articles in that dress is presented as an effective communication system about personal and sociocultural identities’ (Eicher, 2000:7). Certainly from the 1960s onwards studies of the globalised capitalist
marketplace, sometimes referred to as the ‘global village’, have shown it has increasingly offered an eclectic array of textiles and dress available for an individual to chose from when building visual identities (Kaiser, 1990, Kaiser et al., 1991). In such studies dress is no longer tied down to specific cultures, instead the interplay and ‘glocalisation’ of the modern world as local cultures absorb and assimilate globally available goods is beginning to offer interesting and valuable studies.

Thus, whilst John Forbes Watson accompanied his landmark nineteenth century taxonomies of Indian textiles and dress with such statements as ‘there is a much greater fixity of fashion in India than in Europe’ (1866:3), other more recent studies have proved otherwise. For example, Tarlo’s study (1996) has focused attention on the specific contexts in which people have chosen to change their clothing, illuminating the complex extent to which the choice of ‘what to wear’ had reached in rural Saurashtra by the late twentieth century. She concludes that clothing does not convey a stable, singular meaning and that cloth and clothing choices should, therefore, be interpreted both as signs of identification and signs of disassociation. Similarly, Edward’s extensive writings on the textiles and dress of Kachchh, a rural district of Gujarat, reveals as much about the globalisation of modern India through the assimilation of modern materials and garments as it does about the traditional textiles and dress of the region. She describes modern Gujarati dress as a diversity ‘where highly mutable fashion co-exists with a ‘fixity’ of dress, that is not solely an urban-rural divide, but is also a matter of customs of clothing, or worship, even occupation expressing a community’s core values’ (2011:45). The focus is regional and, in keeping with the main thrust of the extant literature, identity, communication, exchange, technology and consumption, in various forms, establish themes which also run through much of this current thesis.
Dress and textiles are often distinguished and treated differently, separated from each other in academic writing. Yet a large proportion of textiles become the raw material for clothing. Often dress literature has tended to ignore, neglect, or even explicitly reject the importance of textile design production technologies, and the effects of these on garment composition and meaning (see Taylor, 2002 for this argument). However, as Edwards and Tarlo have aptly illustrated, choices of pattern, colour and surface embellishment may reveal as much as the garment itself. The relationship between base cloth, embellishment, colour and visual effects on the one hand, and socio-cultural purpose on the other, whilst less common in western dress studies, is a regular theme in studies of south Asian textiles and dress. For example, a considerable body of work exists which deals with the symbolic connections between intricately decorated and socially significant cloth in Indonesia (Hoskins, 1989, Barnes, 2005, Allerton, 2007). Yet within Indian textile and dress studies, the mundane is so often overlooked, with near wholesale disregard for those everyday dress traditions of the non-elite classes. Furthermore, close attention to the materials and techniques of production has often been sidelined in favour of symbolic and semiotic analyses of pattern. Naturally there are exceptions, and, despite Edwards relegating technical details to the appendices of her invaluable study (1999), it is through these that valuable insights emerge on the wider connections between cloth pattern, fabric production and embellishment, locally specific uses for those locally produced goods, and the contextualised meanings enmeshed within their folds during such use.

2.4 Handicrafts and handcrafted textile markets

Craft production, defined variously elsewhere as simple commodity production (Marx, 1881 [1967]) and petty commodity production (Morishima and Catephores, 1975), has been
described by Wolpe (1980) as being able to exist under capitalism, who identified it as an independent industry which relies on a low pay intensive labour structure and thus argues that it has the potential to increase the wealth of a nation rich in traditions of craft production and endowed with a high volume informal or semi-skilled workforce. Whilst such ideas have since been shown to be of limited value, largely due to the specific local conditions in which such developments take place (cf. Stephen, 1996, Scrase et al., 2003, Scrase, 2009), it is nonetheless a useful means of explaining the logic and motives behind the promotion of handicrafts as industry by the Indian government.

Immediately following Independence the new government focussed on preservation of crafts through skill upgrade and artisan welfare programmes. By the late 1970s export had become the focus, promoted ostensibly as a means to ‘improve the socio economic conditions of artisans by providing employment opportunities’ (GOI, 2011:29). In 1986 the Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts was established, organising a series of handicrafts and gifts exhibitions and fairs, both in India and abroad, with the aim of promoting ‘the country’s entire range of products at a single location’ (GOI, 2011:29). In recent decades handcrafted goods have increasingly been identified as desirable commodities, and since Independence (1947) handicrafts in India have been realigned to meet the emerging markets for hand crafted goods on a global scale. So much so that India has today become one of the important suppliers of handicrafts to the world market, largely down to the considerable attention they have garnered from government and commercial quarters.

Part of the appeal of buying handcrafted goods comes from the knowledge that they are unique, handmade, and consumers can n some way ‘buy into’ the traditions from which these goods have emerged. The promotion and marketing of handicrafts often reflects this, focussing on building a background ‘story’ to authenticate the products. Indeed it could be said
that writing about Indian crafts has become as globalised and commercialised as the crafts themselves. As part of the driving force to commercialise handicrafts, a considerable amount of literature on Indian handicrafts was produced by the government of India’s Publications Division in the 1950s and 1960s, following Independence. Established ostensibly as a means of educating a wider audience on the cultural traditions of the new nation’s plethora of integrated states and regions, the underlying mission of commercial promotion cannot be ignored. Indeed, writing for the web-published Seminar journal (www.india-seminar.com) in 2003, well-known Indian textile scholar Jasleen Dhamija draws attention to the ‘pedestrian quality’ of much of the government publications.

Dhamija argues that the writings of the original ‘veterans’, such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Pupul Jayakar and Kamala Dongerkerry, was inspired by their first hand involvement in the pre-Independence khadi movement and their role in carrying the Gandhaian legacy forward into the new political agenda for social upliftment through handicrafts and village industries. By the 1960s this agenda had been gradually transformed by the Government of India into the Handloom and Handicraft Export Corporation, and traditional regional crafts had become just another element in the burgeoning range of industrially produced export goods. This gradual disconnection with the cultural heritage of crafts is clearly seen in the later Publications Division books, which Dhamija damningly describes as ‘cut, snip and paste jobs’ (2003). Particularly with reference to H. Bisham Pal’s Handicrafts of Rajasthan (1984), in which hand block printing receives due attention, Dhamija rails against the ‘dilettantes’ who have, in her opinion, ‘taken to immortalising themselves by writing on handicrafts, and [the] government departments [who] are publishing them without even proper editing’ (Dhamija, 2003). Certainly much of the swathe of commercial or open source web-based definitions of Rajasthan’s hand block printing, whilst few cite their sources, draw heavily from the aesthetic
analyses of Sanganeri textiles made by George Watt (1904) and John Irwin (Irwin and Hall, 1971). Handicrafts, in an enduring relic of colonialism, seem to have been definitively categorised with little room for growth, development or change.

Despite a good number of more recent Indian publications of a much higher quality (for example Varadarajan, 1983, Jain, 1984, Jain and Agarwal, 1989, Jaitley, 2001 to name just a few), attempts to develop an understanding of the crafts sector have often tended to be hampered by romanticised views of both crafts and artisans within the ideal rural village, and as such the voices and experiences of those craftspeople become reified within a static world of ‘tradition’, appropriated and preserved as objects of the past. In her ethnography of Lucknow embroidery, Wilkinson-Weber expresses surprise at the ‘comparative scarcity of accounts’ that take ‘a more critical approach, not only to the understanding of South Asian handicrafts as economic activity, but also to the kind of rhetoric that has arisen around them’ (2004:281). Social anthropologist Soumhya Venkatesan similarly argues that categories like ‘craft community’ and ‘traditional Indian craft’ have been generated and defined within the ‘craft world’, which is a largely elitist social sector made up of ‘development practitioners, government officials, museum staff and buyers, as well as... politicians’ (2006:83). Whilst terms such as ‘traditional Indian craft’ or ‘craft community’ are unavoidable within this thesis, their use is clearly laden with problems and conceptual baggage. Aside from Venkatesan and Wilkinson-Weber, few authors have challenged concepts such as ‘crafts community’. As a result, these invented categories have become ‘a romantic fiction bearing little relation to the ways in which craft producers conceptualise their identities and interact with each other’ (Venkatesan, 2006:64).

On the one hand promoted as traditional crafts, through the use of such romanticised language and targeted promotional publications, but on the other treated as a high volume
export commodity, the resulting pressure exerted on craftspeople to increase productivity and re-design their traditional products for the expectations of the new and often alien markets has forced rapid and radical changes to long established traditions. Certainly integration into global markets, and the associated increase in competition between artisans for a share of that market, means local crafts have undergone significant technical and aesthetic change, entering new ‘regimes of value’ (Appadurai, 1986, Myers, 2001). Yet these effects, particularly in terms of individual and community experiences, are rarely discussed. Handicrafts in general, echoing their earlier pivotal role in the nationalist political *swadeshi* movement, have continued to be widely promoted as ‘a form of ‘alternative development’ to conventional massive investment and transformation in agriculture and machine-based production’ (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999:160).

2.4.1 Handicraft statistics

Statistical evidence, from all quarters, is unequivocal that the Indian crafts sector is flourishing, largely as a result of its global success as an export commodity. In their preliminary analysis of what is generally regarded as one of the few detailed and up to date studies available on Indian handicrafts production and marketing, Liebl and Roy state that ‘in eight years, 1993-2000, the scale of handicraft and handloom exports increased from about Rs. 30 billion to Rs. 100 billion’ (2003:5366), figures reflected in the table below.

The *Census of Handicraft Artisans – Phase I* commissioned by the Office of the Development of Handicrafts Government of India, identified ten distinct craft mediums, namely: textiles (carpets, other floor coverings, other textiles); cane and bamboo; wood; metal; stone; straw; grass and leaf; leather; glass; clay and ceramics; ivory, bone, horn and shells (Ameta, 2003). This incredible diversity has caused difficulties, not least in defining the sector, yet at the same time given rise to numerous valuable and interesting studies, particularly since many of the
Craft products are simultaneously aesthetic and functional objects within domestic or ritual use. In a census carried out by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 1995-1996 in twenty-four states of India, textile crafts accounted for almost half of the crafts produced in India. Further analysis of various annual reports from the Government’s Ministry of Textiles, and Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts illustrates export growth from Rs. 10 crore in the mid 1950s to around Rs. 1000 crore at the start of the 1990s, and Rs. 9000 crore by 2000. These figures, reflected in the table below, peak with a total Indian handicrafts export figure of well over Rs. 10000 crore in 2005 (GOI, 1968, 1992, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art metal ware</td>
<td>1784.68</td>
<td>1460.74</td>
<td>2114.84</td>
<td>2642.42</td>
<td>3364.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood ware</td>
<td>517.30</td>
<td>498.37</td>
<td>687.70</td>
<td>609.07</td>
<td>721.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand printed textiles and scarves</td>
<td>909.89</td>
<td>756.78</td>
<td>856.57</td>
<td>1611.43</td>
<td>1848.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroidered crochet goods</td>
<td>3118.99</td>
<td>3005.17</td>
<td>3611.17</td>
<td>3286.05</td>
<td>4199.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawls as art ware</td>
<td>245.44</td>
<td>94.42</td>
<td>99.39</td>
<td>43.27</td>
<td>53.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zari and zari goods</td>
<td>262.07</td>
<td>264.46</td>
<td>304.27</td>
<td>210.54</td>
<td>252.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation jewellery</td>
<td>126.43</td>
<td>103.31</td>
<td>134.69</td>
<td>161.90</td>
<td>200.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. handicrafts</td>
<td>1525.36</td>
<td>1526.08</td>
<td>2035.75</td>
<td>1900.46</td>
<td>2391.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8490.16</strong></td>
<td><strong>7709.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>9844.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>10465.14</strong></td>
<td><strong>13032.70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Figures from the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, showing the increase in export of handcrafted goods from India over a five year period (reproduced from Jaitley, 2005).

This overseas focus has, some say, come at the expense of good promotion of handicrafts within India (see for example Mitra, 1969:60, Wilkinson-Weber, 1999:160). Whilst much attention has been given to statistical evidence of handicraft exports comparatively little is available to help explain domestic trends. According to Viswanath, chief executive officer of
Udyogini, an NGO working with rural women in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan: ‘Domestic sales of crafts during 2002 were estimated to be Rs. 70 billion of which hand worked textiles was approximately Rs. 20 billion (Udyogini, 2003:43-44). Domestic sales alone of crafts are estimated to be growing at an annual rate of 20%. These figures point to the potential in the crafts sector for artisans to earn a good livelihood provided they are able to operate on market principles, are profit-conscious rather than survival-oriented and have access to a variety of support services necessary to bring their products in line with market demand’ (Viswanath, 2005:5).

Liebl and Roy define handicrafts as products produced within ‘(i) manual labour with minimal or no input from machines; (ii) a substantial level of skill or expertise; (iii) a significant element of tradition; and (iv) history of survival in significant scale’ (2000:5367). Within this they list hand block printed textiles as among ‘the most highly commercialised crafts in India, among the most successful exports, and... employs hundreds of thousands of workers’ (2003:5367). Other crafts of similar status they list as tie-dyed textiles, embroidered textiles, hand-knotted carpets, engraved metalware, stone and wood carving, woollen pile carpets, and fine handloom weaving (2003:5367). Liebl and Roy’s explanation of the general status of Indian handicrafts in 2003, coinciding with the outset of the research for this thesis, is worth quoting at length, since it reflects specifically upon rural hand block printing:

Handicrafts are indeed significantly more rural and more family-based than manufacturing as a whole, though on the point of gender-bias, handicrafts are no better than manufacturing as a whole. However, the handicrafts’ rural bias and family-bias are weakening steadily. In this respect, overall manufacturing and the handicrafts behave in similar fashion. Between 1961 and 1991, both became steadily more urban, more male-dominated and more intensive users of wage-labour rather than labour supplied by the owner’s family... That said, a significant part of the products of rural India, including some of the finest crafts, does get produced at home within the family. Their survival can be linked to the survival of a traditional lifestyle for their consumers. (Liebl and Roy, 2003:5370)
Unsurprisingly then, as a result of such statistical analyses, Liebl and Roy conclude that, ‘with some exceptions, they [hand block printers] do not face a significant threat either from mechanised industry or from changes in consumer preference’ (2003:5367, emphasis mine). Yet, a whole two decades earlier, anthropological studies were warning of quite the opposite scenario for the rural block printers and dyers of Rajasthan. For example, Francoise Cousin visited Rajasthan twice between 1970 and 1974, under the auspices of the Musee de l’Homme, Paris. Returning in the 1980s she reported dramatic change in the local state of the craft during the interim decade (personal communication, 2007). Similarly, Mohanty and Mohanty’s landmark study of the Bagru craftsmen confirms the ‘intrusion of mechanical processes, synthetic dyes and chemicals’ in the late 1970s (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:3).

In terms of employment, India’s handicrafts sector comes second largest to agriculture, and roughly 76% of all craftspeople are rural (Ameta, 2003). Because a vast number of those engaged in handicraft work do so either part time, or informally within the household, figures are estimated at between 10 and 20 million craft workers (Venkatesan, 2009:34), though there are no definitive statistics for the number of hand block printers currently practicing in Rajasthan. Government census figures focus on households, and handicrafts figures on production and export volumes. Demand for handcrafted goods has increased over the past two decades, particularly as a result of the increased export opportunities created by the relaxing of trade and export restrictions in the late 1990s (http://go.worldbank.org/RJEB2JGTC0). This has initiated an influx of new semi or un-skilled labour into the crafts sector, the effects of which includes the decreasing wages and de-skilling of craftsmanship, creation of factory-like environments, and focussed attempts to standardise products. Statistical estimates of craftsman numbers become further complicated by these itinerant day-wage workers. Furthermore, whilst the institution of caste, and most especially
untouchability, was legally abolished during the formation of the democratic republic of India (although its legacy remains the source of lively political, academic, and popular debate) this has changed the way in which crafts communities are officially defined, and negatively affected the hereditary basis of crafts.

In hand block printing these effects are particularly seen in conjunction with the development of intensive printing factories owned and run by non-Chhipas, and the use of pigment colours and externally produced designs. Yet studies of the technologies of hand block printing invariably focus on tradition, and the hereditary nature of the artisan communities involved. Indeed, in a status report compiled by the UPICO (Uttar Pradesh Industrial Consultants Ltd.) on behalf of the Indian Government’s Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Rajasthan is particularly cited as a major centre for natural dye usage (UPICO, 2002). The somewhat confusing table below accompanies this statement, offering little detail about how the suspiciously round-numbered data was compiled, what constitutes a ‘unit’, or what criteria were employed to help differentiate between natural dyes and the use of synthetic dyes with traditional processes. This is a particularly important differentiation, missing from all contemporary attentions to Rajasthan’s hand block printing activity, and hence is dealt with in the course of this thesis. In fact what the table below proves with most certainty is that statistical analyses invariably tend to raise more questions than they resolve.
### Table 3.1: Statistical Analysis of Natural Dye Usage in Rajasthan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Total no. units</th>
<th>% units using natural dyes</th>
<th>No. units using nat dyes</th>
<th>Est. production (m/day)</th>
<th>Annual prodn. (in lakh m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Jaipur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jaipur</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4800</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sanganer</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bagru</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>12600</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
<td>420</td>
<td>29280</td>
<td>87.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Jodhpur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jodhpur</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7200</td>
<td>21.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Barmer</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Bikaner</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>9.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td></td>
<td>750</td>
<td>55680</td>
<td>167.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13: Statistical analysis of natural dye usage in Rajasthan as presented in the UPICO’s Technology Status Study on the Potential of Vegetable Dyes in India (2002:iv).

The disparity between quantitative analyses of handicrafts data and the realities of handicrafts production is their tendency to take a macro view, seeking to identify trends but rarely taking into account the actual situations of production or the complexities of production relations that exist within them. One of the many features which make Liebl and Roy’s study so valuable is their aim to grapple with a broad range of data and openly attempt to make sense out of statistical anomalies. In doing so they acknowledge that, as a direct result of the numerous government and private agencies currently concerned with craft producers, and the inevitable inconsistencies between their systems of categorisation and analysis, data is patchy and incomplete, and cross-comparisons nigh impossible. Whilst crafts are widely promoted as ‘community-based, tradition-driven, and purchased for cultural or utilitarian reasons by a largely domestic market’ (Jaitley, 2005), the main thrust of interest and development has largely been towards handicrafts as export goods. This is evidenced by the ease at which statistical data (misleading or otherwise) on exports can be found and yet comparative data on the domestic market for handicrafts is almost impossible to piece together. As Wilkinson-Weber observes, contemporary surveys and government reports of Indian handicrafts are invariably packed with statistical data, though few give any explanation of data collection or
Chapter Three: Methodologies

source (1999:64). Most significantly, such biased data seriously overlooks the production of handicrafts for everyday local use, or the everyday strategies created and deployed by craftspeople to manage their practices and production relations in the face of change. So whilst the recent national or regional growth in export-driven production can be explained using figures, shifts in technology and design and the changing working practices of the local printers can only be explored on a personal level, through the evidence of artisans’ perspectives and their own experiences.

2.5 Craft and textile technologies

Hence, the final area for consideration is that of the craftsman, returning this review to the study of craftsmanship and craft technologies as socially situated tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage. According to Donkin, ‘in industrialised societies craft processes are no longer necessary to produce certain objects for use. Perhaps because of this there has been a tendency for some crafts to aspire towards ‘fine art’. A greater stress on originality is accompanied by a diminished regard for both tradition and function’ (Donkin, 2001:6). Commentators such as Wilkinson-Weber and Jaitley report that with the liberalisation of India’s economy in the early 1990s, competition from abroad and new opportunities afforded by the growing export market for handicrafts have accelerated the decline in high quality craftsmanship. With the rising demand for handcrafted goods large numbers of unskilled workers have entered the sector, often under the developmental and poverty alleviation projects of NGOs, learning basic skills in order to replicate pre-designed products in high volumes specifically for export. Wilkinson-Weber’s ethnography of chikan work in Lucknow (1999), and Knorringa’s study of Agra’s leatherworking artisans (1996) both expose the very local dynamics of such threats to the survival on traditional artisans in modern India. These
recent trends have meant that, whilst entrepreneurs and businesses are benefitting, highly skilled artisans continue to be marginalised and many are losing their sources of livelihood or are forced to produce low quality goods for a mass market.

Labour historian Geert De Neve has suggested that ‘the informal sector still constitutes the least researched part of India’s economy’ and that ‘while agricultural labour (which still constitutes a large part of this work force) has received a good deal of scholarly attention over past decades, India’s industrial workshops and factories remain by and large unexplored’ (De Neve, 2005:8). Although the industrial working classes have garnered attention (Parry et al., 1999), these attentions ‘concluded at the factory gate’ (Styles, 1998:384) and the fragmented and often home-based artisanal sector is less well understood. Furthermore, whilst many studies are hampered by the aforementioned romanticised notions of the rural village craftsman, others are simply too focussed on higher issues, such as the theoretical objectives or political implications of a study, to address the mundane aspects of everyday life and work of the artisan.

2.5.1 Indian textiles and their makers

Without doubt the most important publication to focus solely on the hand block printed textiles of rural Rajasthan in great detail is Mohanty and Mohanty’s *Hand Block Printing and Dyeing of Bagru, Rajasthan* (1983), not least because it deals with the production, exchange and use of these textiles in relation to the artisan community. The main author, B. C. Mohanty, a textile technologist and alumni of Leeds University (45 years prior to my own graduation from the same department), was a research scholar at the Calico Museum from 1973-1985 and also worked at state and national levels within educational institutions and government organisations across India. While working with the All India Handloom Board, he was instrumental in promoting the establishment of Weavers Service Centres, aimed at offering
technical support to textile artisans, in several states of India. With a personal focus on the traditional textile craft manufactures of India his work foregrounds the technologies of hand block printing as practiced in Bagru, and thus represents an eye-witness ethnographic snapshot of the status of the craft in a specific place at a specific point in time.

In the preface to his translation of the Roques account of cotton printing in Ahmedabad Schwarz notes that ‘eye witness accounts of Indian cotton painters and printers at work prior to the nineteenth century are rare, and the few which have hitherto come to light among European records relate exclusively to the Madras coast...’ (Schwartz, 1957:i). The hand printing of textiles has a history in India which has been relatively well-documented between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly inspired by the industrial interest in how to make natural dyes (particularly madder reds) fast and bright. In this respect the Indian dyers were matchless throughout history until the invention of synthetic dyes in the late nineteenth century. From that point onwards, interest in the Indian dyer waned and was relegated to the anthropological cabinet of curiosities. The Roques report, written by a French trader, is believed to be the earliest record of hand block printing with mordants and natural dyes in western India (the other Madras-focussed historical reports being on the eastern coast). The level of detail provided by Roques is enough for a dedicated craftsman to use his work as a manual for reproduction of technique, as was intended when written. Yet, despite the unstinting attention to technology and materials, within this detailed record of the craft the craftsman remains invisible reduced to little more than a technician.

In the wider literature, craft technology in India has a tendency to have been described as simple, unresponsive to market demand, and hence unchanging (Sarkar, 1998). For example, in the Cambridge Economic History of India, Morris described it as static and backward (Morris, 1984), whilst Raychaudhuri argued that during the eighteenth century ‘the pattern was not
one of total stagnation, but rather of a general indifference to labour saving devices’ (Raychaudhuri and Habib, 1982:18). This unchanging character of the techniques of production has been repeatedly emphasised by others, attributing it to a variety of factors including the inhibiting influence of the caste system (Alaev, 1982:315). It is not clear whether the repetition of such ideas is down to the noted predominance of western authors, interpreting Indian technology from a western perspective, or whether it is simply that so little documentation on changes to Indian craft technologies actually exists. Either way, in much of the literature there has been a tendency to ignore the slow transformations taking place in the everyday working practices of the craftsman in favour of viewing the wider trajectory of change as a uniform process of industrialisation. In addition, most notably in recent glossy publications on Indian textiles and handicrafts, there is again the sense that authors wish to project the notion of the craftsman’s practice as an unchanging enclave of calm tradition in a modernising world – preserving a romanticised slice of tradition.

Perhaps one of the key turning points in the study of Indian textiles was Vijaya Ramaswamy. Her study *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India* (1985), based on fieldwork conducted over a decade with three weaving communities, attempted to integrate multiple perspectives and methodologies to provide an powerful perspective on the socio-economic world of weaving communities. Drawing heavily on oral and folk narratives as primary sources in the study of textile production and trade in peninsular India, Ramaswamy also argued against the sole reliance upon problematic and perhaps even ‘uninformed’ colonial records as historical sources. Much of Ramaswamy’s study relied upon the gap in traditional modes of textile history writing which ‘touch only peripherally, if at all on the lives of the weavers’ (1985:xi), highlighting the need for similar attention to other traditional crafts.
Since then a growing number of researchers have shared her concerns, and have made various attempts at challenging traditional approaches, particularly by engaging with personal narratives of craftspeople and their socioeconomic contexts, gradually filling the gaps in the literature with regionally- and craft-specific studies. By studying the artistic processes involved in the production of textiles Ramaswamy, and others since (including Mohanty (1983), Edwards (1999), and Varadarajan (Varadarajan, 1983)), manage to also reveal the livelihoods that are created and sustained as a result. Through such works it is clear that a wealth of oral tradition exists in the knowledge and experiences of the communities of artisans who continue to practice their crafts. This approach has been labelled ‘remembering of the past in the present’ (Bhabha, 1994:63) and is a valuable means of extending the study of oral traditions to include the unwritten hereditary traditions passed on as tacit craft knowledge.

As evidence of this development, rather than focussing on the object itself some of the more recent craft studies focus on the production of cultural knowledge and the meanings attributed to this knowledge within specific contexts. Two important examples of this are Brouwer’s (1995) ethnographic study of visvakarma goldsmiths in Karnataka; and Christensen’s (1995) work on a community of South Indian potters. The former set out to understand the worldview of the goldsmiths through their local knowledge and concepts. The latter focussed on the cultural significance of the various stages of the pot-making process. Christensen’s interest in the potters’ perspectives led her to explore the ‘social life of things’ (Appadurai, 1986) and the manner in which handcrafted objects are charged with agency (Gell, 1998). Appadurai’s conceptualisation of the various relations and hands through which objects pass during their life cycle, from production to disposal, has been fruitfully employed in numerous studies from a breadth of academic fields (including Edwards, 1999) and offers a valuable means of reconnecting practical methodological concerns with theoretically driven
enquiry. To illustrate this, Christensen and Brouwer, both practitioners in their own right, approached the study of Indian crafts and artisans through apprenticeship. By adapting classic participant-observation to harness the ‘local knowledge’ which they shared with the potters and smiths, in much the same manner as experimental archaeologists (cf. Mathieu, 2002, Mårtensson et al., 2007), they gained privileged access to some of the tacit aspects of artisan knowledge. Their work illustrates an important practical methodological means by which research might successfully combine conceptual and empirical elements.

2.5.2 Natural dyes and cultural heritage

Natural dye knowledge is regularly cited as one of the most valuable yet rapidly declining forms of intangible cultural heritage, globally as well as within India, and as such has gained increasing attention in recent years. The hand block printing of Rajasthan is often associated with traditional natural dye knowledge, and despite the near wholesale shift to chemical dye use, passages of text on the region’s contemporary printing activity invariably contain references to the use of indigo and madder dyes, and pass comment on the Chhipa craftsman’s understandings of local plant dyes (cf. Rutnagur, 1999, UPICO, 2002, Lal, 2007, Sarkar and Banerjee, 2007). Yet, although these craft traditions can be hundreds if not thousands of years old, perpetuated through father to son, or master to apprentice through chains of tacit knowledge and skill transfer, they are not always as robust and ingrained in local culture as some might believe. Accordingly, in recognition of the importance of placing equal focus on makers and processes as much as objects and customs, in 2001 UNESCO added the following paragraph to their definition of intangible heritage:

Peoples’ learned processes along with the knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create and the resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability; these processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of
cultural diversity and creativity of humanity (UNESCO, 2001: item 3.4.4 of the Provisional Agenda, paragraph 26).

Such was the life’s work of the late K. V. Chandramouli, co-author with B. C. Mohanty of *Natural Dyeing Processes of India* (Mohanty et al., 1987). Chandramouli believed that scientific and systematic locally-grounded research was an essential means to simultaneously further our understandings of India’s vast yet declining unwritten knowledge of natural dyeing, whilst putting the knowledge back where it belonged with the artisan communities. His concern was that with the rapid uptake of synthetic dyestuffs across India traditional craft technologies and specific forms of natural dyeing were no longer being handed down to younger generations through practice-based learning. Any recordings of these most likely languished in colonial records or academic research papers, largely inaccessible to the rural artisan. Indeed, many artisans in India speak of being approached by researchers, though few ever receive the knowledge gleaned as an outcome of those studies. Anthropologist Hanne M. de Bruin recently voiced her unease at the closed manner in which academic discourse objectifies fieldwork data, ‘separating it from the real world, analysing and formalising it, leading to conclusions that draw upon the existing theoretical grid of the Humanities’ (de Bruin, 2006:6).

Seeking validation of research findings from those who acted as the primary sources of fieldwork data, she argues, is a valuable means of bringing practice and theory closer together. De Bruin based her research on the traditional performing arts of Tamil Nadu, and, like Chandramouli, believes that making academic research findings accessible for its informants is ‘a fundamental right too often ignored’ (de Bruin, 2006:6).

In terms of natural dye research the past decade has seen renewed vigour, particularly in India. Scientific interest has been ignited by the global pressure to seek viable alternatives to petrochemicals (cf. Gulrajani and Gupta, 1992, Vankar, 2000, Gulrajani et al., 2001, Daniel et al., 2006). In commerce the move is inspired partly by growing eco-concerns, and partly by the
constant search for a culturally grounded ‘USP’ for Indian-made export goods (cf. Gahlot and Kaur, 1996, Kala, 2002, Mahanta and Tiwari, 2005, Paul, 2010). To consumers, natural dye use is increasingly seen as an alternative view, one that gave traditional societies all over the world their stability and allowed them to perfect low energy technologies suited to their particular conditions, the climate, the soil, the water and their own particular abilities. Incumbent in that perspective is that knowledge is the prerogative of the community, to be held in common for the general good. In that respect a thread of valuable new textile and dye research has emerged, characterised by many of the Indian contributions to the UNESCO 2006 international symposium on natural dyes, hosted in Hyderabad, India (UNESCO, 2006). Adding to a global research current, in which indigo (Balfour-Paul, 1998), madder (Chenciner, 2000), and the potentialities of traditional natural dye revivals (Böhmer, 2002) have been explored, the burgeoning Indian research base is seen by some as a means of staking a claim on the traditional knowledge which had once helped situate Indian dyers as world masters.

2.5.3 Cultural mapping

In 2007 the Cultural Atlas of India project was instigated, as a joint effort between UNESCO, the Indian Government Ministry of Culture, and the ICHCAP. In keeping with UNESCO’s guidelines, it focussed on inventorying intangible cultural heritage and associated elements, ‘designed to enable each state to collect, store and publicise up-to-date information as a means to enhance their image and prestige’ (Park, 2010:12). Associated with this undertaking, a number of smaller scale pilot projects and viability studies were carried out in states across India between 2004 and 2009, raising awareness of the need to document and preserve passing craft traditions associated with more traditional ways of life (for example, Panda and Gupta, 2004, IGNCA, 2007). In the third issue of the UNESCO cultural heritage preservation

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newsletter, dedicated to representations and practices of textiles, Yoshida remarks that ‘it is essential to listen to heritage bearers and communities, and to make every effort to ensure that raising awareness serves their interests and respect their wishes’ (Yoshida, 2010:3).

Whilst government documentation schemes have, in the past, focussed on generating catalogues of names, places and crafts, other more recent studies reflect the values expressed in the Eames report (Eames and Eames, 1991 [1958]). Advisors to the Indian Government, in 1958, Charles and Ray Eames produced a report which argued that the study of Indian crafts, through the establishment of dedicated educational facilities, would help to inform current and future actions in the continuous evolution of the economy and the form that it takes in shaping the uniquely Indian culture of the land. Their report shaped the way that the creative industries have contributed to the Indian economy. The resulting educational establishment, the National Institute of Design (NID), continues to be considered as India’s premiere art, craft and design college, producing some of the most valuable (yet sadly largely unpublished) wealth of student and staff studies of continuing craft traditions. In an effort to disseminate some of this untapped wealth of knowledge, NID design tutors Aditi and M. P. Ranjan’s recent edited encyclopaedic *Handmade in India* (2007) takes a refreshing view of traditional crafts as a continuum. As M. P. Ranjan argues in his blog, such crafts offer ‘an enormous resource that can be harnessed for the future development of our society, particularly as the backbone of a creative economy that is enabled by the embedded knowledge in the traditional wisdom of the sector as well as the digital technologies that help connect this ancient skill to new and future opportunities for the craftspersons across India’ (Ranjan, 2007).

However, any move towards preserving heritage involves promoting new markets for handcrafted goods, craftsmen cannot be supported without markets, and this is the area which generates the most contention in India. No matter how valuable the interventions in
terms of design and re-marketing might be, they make the task of categorising traditional forms of cultural heritage yet harder. It has been argued that in the west we have potentially overestimated the reality and the significance of artistic ‘originality’ and thus consistently tend to undervalue it in other cultures (Meuli, 1997:207). In recent years issues surrounding ownership of designs and craft techniques have gained increasing attention, with questions rising around who holds the intellectual property rights over traditional techniques (Norchi, 2000, Reichman, 2001). As the detailed case studies offered by Finger and Schuler (2004) illustrate, campaigning for intellectual property rights and geographical indication of goods often further muddies the waters of what is and isn’t classed as part of the heritage of specific regions of the country. At what point a craft becomes an industry is as much a matter of perspective as the factors which constitute quality and tradition.

2.6 Conclusion

This review is not offered as an exhaustive evaluation of past and present scholarship, but rather as an opportunity to highlight the specific themes which have been addressed within the primary research of this thesis. It is hoped that addressing such themes might broaden the scope of enquiry to include anthropological and socially-situated attentions to the symbolic and communicative values of patterned cloth in local dress traditions alongside the practical processes of producing those patterns, using natural dye, mordant and resist. Within this it is also essential to encompass the modernisation of local dress, with the adoption of synthetic materials and westernised garment styles, and the modernisation of hand printing, through adoption of synthetic dyes and modern methods. The aim of deepening understandings of the current form of the craft, through artisans perspectives, is hoped to encourage deeper awareness of the ways in which globalisation can affect local forms of cultural heritage, and...
the resulting counter-effects from within the artisan community as strategies are developed to cope with modernisation and change.

As one of the great forces behind the social and economic growth of the sub-continent, India’s textile and dress history has been extremely well-documented and a rich growing resource exists which deals with the production of textiles for trade, as well as their historical uses in Indian courtly and elite dress. However, whilst the textile industry has held a significant and often-analysed place in Indian history, less material is available which deals in detail with the everyday textiles and dress traditions of non-elite and rural communities. Since many of these peoples made practical and symbolic use of handcrafted textiles, such as those hand block printed and resist-dyed by the Chhipa community of Rajasthan, their marginal status in wider anthologies of Indian dress constitutes an area requiring further attention. As traditional values change, and contemporary materials and styles are adopted, local forms of dress are rapidly disappearing. A clutch of studies are emerging which have begun to attend to the marginalisation of non-elite handcrafted textile production and use, the importance of the artisans’ local knowledge systems, the circulation and maintenance of individual and group artisan identities, and the closeness of craft objects to their makers and users.

However, India is a vast subcontinent with a ‘panorama’ or ‘patchwork quilt’ of locally specific textiles and crafts, and despite intensification of current efforts to research and document this cultural variety much work remains to be done. In a typically candid article, Jaya Jaitley remarks, ‘the approach to the crafts and handmade textile sector by no means needs to be patronising or condescending merely in order to pay a hypocritical obeisance to the economic priorities of Mahatma Gandhi. He may have been a romantic but was certainly no fool when he spoke about the need to preserve village industries. In today’s set of priorities, productivity and viability are mandatory components that are required to be built into any development
programme’ (Jaitley, 2005). Where social scientists and humanities scholars seem to agree is that globalisation is being shaped by technological change, though they may disagree as to the extent that these technologies themselves determine the current status of traditional crafts. Since the production techniques are the means by which artisans understand their own craft, as the sum of their forebear’s knowledge passed on through successive generations, such systems of knowledge constitute important forms of intangible cultural heritage. Any regionally specific attention is valuable, but more so is that which includes documentation of the craftsman’s perspective – exploring the craft on the artisans own terms, and dealing with the effects of these changing times on craftspeople and their local clientele.

Whilst the definitions of intangible and tangible forms of cultural heritage offered by bodies such as UNESCO are inordinately useful, one of the main criticisms raised against them is that, by emphasising the wider global values of documenting cultural heritage such attention ‘prioritises the rights of consumers to be able to access global heritage over the needs of those whose habitus is transformed into heritage’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006:170). Within recent studies of Indian crafts the marginalisation of artisans is a growing concern, particularly where production has become dictated by globalising and industrialising forces. In the light of these observations questions arise about the changing role of hand block printed cloth in modern Rajasthan, and how the artisans themselves might have witnessed, reacted to, and coped with recent unprecedented change. What does globalisation mean for their practices? Such questions are particularly relevant today since the portrayal of Indian crafts as authentic and traditional is due largely to the ways in which it has been written about over the second half of the twentieth century. As commercial ventures and capitalist modes of production remain the dominant modes of responding to change and supporting the craft there needs to be greater emphasis on discursive and socially situated approaches to studying the craft. By those means
only can the gaps in the histories of the local form of this craft begin to be filled in, and strategies for sustaining its future be assessed.

Culture is produced through the negotiations and power relations involved in translocal connections or articulations. Communities globally are becoming quickly linked through travel, communications and commerce. In recent decades the volume of the global circulations of cultural goods has increased, but, as Zuberi remarks: ‘Culture travels... at unpredictable velocities to locations where it meets with some resistance, even when incorporated into the everyday practices of different subjects in particular places’ (Zuberi, 2005:106). Some have argued that cultural creativity is generated primarily from the combination of (Western) technologies and poor creators in the developing world. Whilst global exchange of such things as new materials and technologies can have a negative or damaging impact on creative environments and global cultural diversity Cowen deems the relatively wealthy Western consumer as the crucial factor in the continuing fruition of creativity (Cowen, 2002:16-17).

According to Cowen, the effects of globalisation on cultural products, on the one hand, result in diminishing quality and reduction in overall variety, leading to homogeneity as new and different cultural influences smother the old local versions which in turn often become deemed as old fashioned or passé. On the other hand, however, and particularly in response to critics (primarily Bourdieu, Gramsci, Habermas and Canclini) who deride market culture for ‘promoting hegemony, alienation and dumbing down of taste’ (quoted in Zuberi, 2005:109), there is also a positive impact of global trade and cross-cultural exchange, with their potential to bring increased exchange of ideas which can have positive effects on creative arts. Hence globalisation follows a far from simple linear formula, since it can on the one hand enrich local forms of cultural production, but on the other also threaten to stifle the local variety of goods. Because quality itself is difficult to judge – since it relies on personal taste and culturally
informed modes of judgement - reductions in quality (especially gradual ones) can go unnoticed. ‘We should be... assiduously aware of treating the local and the global as the only two levels of demonstrable relevance a simplification that does great violence to the artisans’ experience and overlooks the deep historical sedimentation and metonymic ordering of social complexity in their lives’ (Herzfeld, 2004:210), because, as Donkin reminds us: ‘crafts are not simply a particular way of making objects, but are inextricably bound up with the structures, values, history and identity of the communities in which they are practiced’ (2001:7).

Society has changed substantially and rapidly with the advent of globalisation where technology is both a catalyst for and a response to globalisation. Globalisation and technological change underpin and are driven by each other in a continual cycle. This rapidly changing, globally connected and technologically based society is the context for this study of the handcrafted hand block printed and resist-dyed textile traditions of rural Rajasthan.
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3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological concerns of the study, detailing the practicalities of researching traditional hand block printed textiles in Rajasthan and the various choices and decisions made. This research benefitted greatly from an extended period in the field, made possible by employment, which also facilitated the publication and exhibition of interim research outputs though wasn’t without its caveats, which are discussed in the second section of this chapter which deals with the research strategy. This research started from a close study of objects understood both as textiles and as dress, as well as an investigation into how these textiles were made. As a practicing textile designer, natural dyer and printer I naturally approach and view textiles as a sum of their aesthetic and technical parts, and it is this personal perspective and empirical knowledge which initiated and helped shape this study. The craft of hand block printing forms the central focus; and the Chhipa community of cloth printers and dyers the principal source of information. The content of this thesis is thus based primarily on data collected during field studies in various parts of Rajasthan.

The field research was carried out between 2004 and 2009, in Rajasthan, and focussed on the current practitioners of traditional hand block printing and resist-dyeing techniques primarily in the printing colonies of Bagru, Sanganer, Jaipur, Balotra, Pipad and Barmer, plus additional outlying individual workshops. Innumerable craftspeople and their extended families were
consulted during this period, alongside block carvers, dealers of cloth (new and old), growers and purveyors of natural dyes, keepers of historic textile and dress collections (government and private), commercial and NGO organisations involved with contemporary forms of the craft, and representatives from the Indian Government ministries of textiles, handicrafts and handlooms. Lists of all the individuals and institutions consulted are included in Appendices A and F.

The research focuses on the living traditions and contemporary processes of change within a craft which, despite having a long history, is undergoing radical amendments to meet new market forces. Clearly evidenced in the preceding literature review is that the study of textiles and dress is becoming an increasingly interdisciplinary field, combining concepts and methods including (but not limited to) object-based, historical, social, cultural, practical, and industrial perspectives in order to generate a rich and growing body of knowledge on the textiles of the world. Lou Taylor (1998, 2002) and John Styles (1998) have both discussed the importance of centreing research of textiles and dress on museum- and object-based studies, and such approaches are particularly well-represented in the existing literature on Indian textiles and dress. However, despite its textile focus, this thesis is not aimed at being a purely historical record of costume or textiles in Rajasthan – the likes of B. N. Goswamy (1993), John Irwin (1971) and Chandramani Singh (Singh, 1979) have already comprehensively covered this in their eminent scholarships. Rather it seeks to complement and extend such knowledge by situating the study of textiles within the social network of their production and use. By doing so, these textiles could be shown as part of a living craft - linking tradition to modernity in a continuum of change on a local level, and taking into account the experiences and perspectives of the craftspeople dealing directly with this process of change on a daily basis.
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As the previous chapter has highlighted, it is only in relatively recent decades that socially-situated qualitative approaches have begun to be recognised within Indian textile studies as appropriate means of extending and deepening the existing knowledge on India’s textile and dress traditions – none more so than to explore the regionally specific forms of handcrafted cloth and their local values and meanings. Whilst most if not all studies acknowledge the handcrafted nature of these textiles, and Mohanty clearly worked in close partnership with the Chhipa community to produce his seminal study, few have consciously represented the voices or perspectives of those artisan communities as a means of extending and expanding upon what is known about specific forms of cloth. Since changes in the craft are clearly apparent, and the Chhipa community themselves are eager to embrace modernity in order to sustain and progress their hereditary occupation, exploring such local dynamics offers the opportunity to add to and extend existing works.

The general idea behind this study was thus to explore those changes, privileging the words and practices of the Chhipa community. The intended outcome was to deepen existing understandings of the craft, fill gaps in what is known about the production and use of traditional forms of these textiles, and explore the ways in which the craft was changing under the influence of new market forces. Hence the approach was focussed on a holistic study of these textiles, situating the cloth within the everyday lives of local communities in order to contextualise those changes. However, such an undertaking is not without its challenges, not least because it cannot follow a predetermined ‘out-of-the-box’ research methodology or predefined set of research tools. Forming research partnerships with individuals and families within this community of indigenous textile specialists was identified from the outset of this research as being a necessary basis for any fieldwork. A month-long pilot study, in February 2004, was used to introduce this idea to a few key craftsmen, although it also highlighted the
ways in which pre-ordained ‘research methods’ can, at times, generate idealised and de-contextualised ‘reconstructions’ of social life. Whilst common research practice involves the formulation of a pre-given set of methodological procedures as grounds for selection and interpretation of data, a strategy must be in place which allows for flexible and reflexive adaptation of these methods when conducting field research, particularly in other cultures.

This chapter is organised into three parts, the first part deals with the overarching research philosophy and aims to provide an orientation to the principles which guided and informed the design, conduct, findings and interpretation of this research. The second with the research strategy, including the research methodologies adopted, the selection of participants, the value of local knowledge, the pros and cons of working in the field, and the value of the iterative cycles of data collection and analysis which an extended period in the field made possible. The third section details the research tools that have been utilised in the pursuit of those goals, including participant-observation, unstructured interviews and photography.

As Maxwell reminds us, ‘beyond such broad categories as ethnographies, qualitative interview studies, and case studies (which often overlap), qualitative research lacks any such elaborate typology into which studies can be pigeonholed’ (Maxwell, 1998:214). Instead, the design of the study needs to develop as a response to the specific line of enquiry, adapt to the particular research situation, and take into account issues of feasibility and validity, whilst maintaining sensitivity to the unique social setting in which the research is carried out. Reporting of the methodological decisions made during this study helps to render the processes of data collection and analysis transparent, sometimes referred to as an ‘audit trail’, and the rigour of these processes depends upon their adequacy and transparency. Hence this chapter is concerned with providing a detailed description of the methods, explaining both the manner in which the study was conducted and the researcher’s reasoning, to address issues of
congruence, appropriateness and adequacy which inevitably accompany the assessment of any qualitative research.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used. At its broadest level, the research undertaken for this thesis can be defined as qualitative. As a generalisation this is a term which indicates forms of research that produce descriptive, textual or narrative information - in contrast to quantitative research, which emphasises enumeration (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Central to good qualitative research is whether the research participants’ subjective meanings, actions and social contexts, as understood by them, are illuminated. Joseph Maxwell states that in order ‘to be genuinely qualitative research, a study must take account of the theories and perspectives of those studied, rather than relying entirely on established views or the researchers own perspective’ (2005). Hence, qualitative research questions aim at developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans’ lives and social worlds. In the case of this thesis, those questions address more specifically the role of hand block printed textiles in the lives of artisans and communities in Rajasthan, aimed at developing as much an understanding of individuals and groups subjective experiences as the wider social, cultural and political factors involved. These issues may be difficult to access using quantitative approaches, since those kinds of studies are ill-equipped to develop an understanding of subjective experience, meaning and inter-subjective interaction. The initial design of this study centred on research purpose, and the functions various methods could bring to the overall investigation. As such it was clear that socially situated methods such as participant observation, engaging with crafts practices, and spending extended periods of time
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talking with craftspeople about their work would offer far greater depth of insight into the research objectives than conducting statistical surveys or questionnaires.

A review of the wide-ranging critiques of the scientific method, based on the empirico-analytical paradigm rooted in a philosophical position referred to as positivism, is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Guba and Lincoln, 1994, Neuman, 1994). However, one of the major criticisms railed against the positivist paradigm is that, at the most abstract and general level; it carries the assumption of an objective reality, or truth, which exists independent of those undertaking the inquiry or the inquiry context. Adopting such a detached research perspective makes it difficult for positivist studies to describe and explain such things as persons’ experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In contrast, qualitative research is concerned with the interpretation of subjective meaning, the description of social context, and the privileging of lay knowledge. Understanding the contexts and meanings of hand block printed textiles, with an emphasis on how the craftspeople make sense of these, and how their activities have been shaped by the unique circumstances thus forms the main set of goals for this study, with the ultimate intention of generating results and theories which could be understandable and credible, not just in an academic sense, but also to the people being studied (Bolster, 1983).

3.2.1 Ethnomethodological ethnography

There are of course many different paradigms within qualitative research, each with greatly varying sets of assumptions and implications (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). One of the greatest issues encountered from the outset of this research has been developing a sound research methodology without prior knowledge of the kinds of information such locally specific knowledge like craftspeoples’ perspectives might present, particularly the perspectives of craftspeople from a different social and cultural background to my own. In addition, since it is
well recognised that it can be difficult for individuals to articulate the tacit knowledge and understandings they have of familiar activities, thus recording what they might say about these kinds of things must be accompanied by firsthand observations. This is a far from unique problem, and one which has been countered in a broad variety of ways across qualitative social research. Among the many schools, perspectives and traditions within qualitative research one which offered the greatest assistance in dealing with this is ethnomethodology, which promotes a ‘methods-in-use’ approach rather than a preordained methodology. Instead of analysing individual knowledge, as in phenomenology, ethnomethodology focuses on socially shared procedures used to establish and maintain ‘a sense of social structure’ (ten Have, 2004:16). In this manner it foregrounds much of what might otherwise be taken-for-granted knowledge and the local constitution of practical activities in everyday life. When used in conjunction with ethnography, a field method which has an emphasis on in situ observation of interactions in their natural settings, ethnomethodology has proved a useful means for bringing such social perspective to a study.

Originally developed out of the ‘strange tales of faraway places’ of early Social Anthropology and adapted for wider sociological use through the ‘naturalistic stance’ of the Chicago School and Symbolic Interactionism, ethnography’s concern is ‘to balance detailed documentation of events with insights into the meaning of those events’ (Fielding, 1994:154). Ethnography is not in any sense a single defined method but rather is a viewpoint on various analytic frameworks - thus there are, for example, Marxist, Feminist, and Postmodern ethnographies (see Schapiro 1994:418 for this discussion) - and it is here that confusion often arises with regard to just what it means to ‘do’ ethnography. While there have been a number of attempts to document the characteristics of ‘ethnomethodological ethnography’ (Dingwall, 1981) or ‘ethnomethodologically inspired ethnography’ (Silverman, 1985) in general terms, it can be
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loosely defined as one in which members’ methods for accomplishing situations in and through the use of local rationalities becomes the topic of enquiry. It seeks to present a portrait of life as seen and understood by those who live and work within the domain concerned, and in order to do so insists on the development of an ‘appreciative stance’ through the direct involvement of the researcher in the setting under investigation. As Fielding puts it, ‘never criticise a man until you have walked in his moccasins’ (1994:156).

It is often the most familiar things in life which can be the most difficult to define, as Osbourne remarks, ‘we seem to know all about them until we begin to think about them, and then our assurance vanishes and we are confused... the closer we look at it [craftsmanship] the more complicated it all becomes’ (1977:138). In recognition of such difficulties, ‘ethnomethodology has a deep interest in and respect for the practical rationality and accountability of the most commonplace of ordinary activities’ (ten Have, 2004:17). It is essentially concerned with the study of practices to understand their grounding in everyday life and local rationalities – that is, ‘the local accountability of any kind of practice’ (ten Have, 2004:17). By doing so ethnomethodology is a good means of investigating how a professional practice, such as cloth printing or dyeing, is embedded in quite ordinary competences, and also elaborate on how it is special and a part of a locally-specific version of a more generalised professional culture. This has been shown in a number of ethnomethodological studies of a range of complicated professional practices, including research laboratories (Lynch, 1985), mathematics (Livingston, 1986) and becoming an improvisational jazz pianist (Sudnow, 1978). The general idea being that conventional studies of specialised trades miss the essential ‘what’ of the trade itself by focussing too much on traditional sociological features like professionalisation, communication, status etc. In a similar manner, much can be added to what is known about the resulting textiles by paying attention to their role in commonplace activities in daily life,
such as why certain people or groups wear (or don’t wear) specific kinds of cloth or certain
colour and pattern combinations.

On a practical level, an ethnomethodologically informed analytical framework involves the
rejection of practices such as coding, organising and classifying the ethnographic record or the
application of pre-defined taxonomies. Instead this approach urges the researcher to treat
practice as a topic of enquiry through and through, rather than a resource for building
explanatory constructs (Zimmerman and Pollner, 1973). Thus, in the first instance,
ethnomethodologically informed findings should not be read as theories but as literal
descriptions of the embodied social practices in and through which members produce and
accomplish the daily activities of the setting: be that in terms of print and dye technologies, or
indeed the wearing of traditional (or modern) textiles and dress.

Garfinkel, the founder of ethnomethodology, used ‘the term ‘ethnomethodology’ to refer to
the investigation of the rational properties of indexical [local and time-bound] expressions and
other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organised artful practices of
everyday life’ (Garfinkel, 1967:11). Garfinkel also suggested that in order to be able to study
the specifics, which he termed the ‘just whatness’ or ‘just thisness’, that constitute a particular
trade an investigator should develop a rather deep competence in that trade. This has been
called the ‘unique adequacy requirement of methods’ (Garfinkel and Wieder, 1992), though in
less complex terms can be interpreted as focussing on local, situated and intelligible practices.
It is this socially situated, localised perspective of specialist craft activity which has the
potential to add invaluable extra dimensions onto existing museum- and object-based studies,
and also help to refocus attentions to this craft onto the very real experiences of its hereditary
practitioners, rather than the portrayal of the craft through export statistics.
3.2.2 Experiential knowledge

Traditionally the researchers own background and identity have been viewed as a negatively biasing influence on the design of a study. However the explicit incorporation of what Strauss (1987) calls ‘experiential data’, and Maxwell terms ‘experiential knowledge’ is gradually gaining theoretical and philosophical backing since it offers potential insights, hypotheses, and validity checks when used critically and consciously as part of the research process (Maxwell, 1998:225).

Increasingly researchers of indigenous textiles are acknowledging the value of harnessing their own practical abilities and using ‘learning through doing’ as a research method. Bolland stressed the importance of ‘doing it for yourself’ in order to truly understand textile technologies (Bolland, 1991), and Edwards (1999) and Morrell (1995, 1999) both dedicated considerable time during their fieldwork in Kachchh to mastering local embroidery techniques. This approach is by no means new, or limited to textiles – just as Brouwer (1995) and Christensen (1995) engaged with their research subjects on a practical level, the contributors to Michael Coy’s edited volume, Apprenticeship (1989), were also all anthropologists who did fieldwork while themselves apprenticed and learned the craft under study. Denzin and Lincoln remind us, ‘qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry’ (2003:13). As ethnographer Clifford observes, the untidiness of the field and our presence (and influence) in it are too often omitted from published accounts of fieldwork (1986:13-26). Researchers are part of the research endeavour rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged by themselves and by their readers as an expected part of the outcome (Mills et al., 2006).
Since the impetus for this research was founded on a personal practice-based involvement in cloth printing, dyeing and textile design, this ‘insider’ practitioner status was adapted as a methodological strength and utilised as a participatory tool within the ethnographic instrument of participant-observation (the specifics of which will be detailed in the third part of this chapter). Jaber Gubrium, sociologist and pioneer in the contemporary reconceptualisation of qualitative methods and the development of ethnographically-informed narrative, has suggested that ‘fieldwork is not just a matter of carefully observing and systematically documenting what people say and do. Fieldwork involves participating with people in understanding everyday life, not vicariously, but analytically’ (2001:74). The fieldwork conducted for this thesis involved many months of learning-through-doing in order to adapt and expand my knowledge and set of textile skills to include the time-consuming regionally- and often family-specific processes. This ‘immersion’ (Geertz, 1973) in the craft and research process allowed unprecedented access to greater levels of information from the craftspeople, revealing further facets to the textiles, designs, and their cultural significance, that would otherwise have remained obscured to observers without a deep knowledge and understanding of the craft.

3.2.3 Pilot study, Grounded Theory and reflexivity

Thus it is established above that an ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic approach was taken for the purposes of this study, which seeks to present a perspective of handcrafted textiles as seen and understood by those who live and work within the domain concerned. This objective is argued as the rationale behind the method’s insistence on the development of an ‘appreciative stance’ through the direct involvement of the researcher in the setting under investigation. However, as also mentioned, there are no hard and fast ways of ‘doing’
ethnography, and settling upon the ‘right’ way to meet research objectives can often involve a certain amount of testing and re-working, and so requires reflexivity from a researcher.

In a qualitative study ‘research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:24). The simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis, research question and theory development and modification, and assimilation of other necessary modifications to the research design are interdependent and influence each other. Adopting an inductive qualitative approach enables reiterations while in the field; and it is important to record here that the overall design of this study underwent a few significant revisions. Leading up to the pilot study of February 2004, the initial design of this study was constructed from the basic tenets of ethnographic research, and employed a combination of structured interviews, with the intention of recording the artisans’ oral history of dye recipes; and object-based analysis of extant examples of traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed cloth. The premise for this approach was to generate data about both the physical features of block printed cloth, and, since the objects themselves cannot ‘speak’, to explore the wider social and cultural meanings surrounding the production and use of these textiles through the words and actions of their makers. The pilot study was used as a way of exploring and testing these ideas and methods, and then using the findings to further develop the research design inductively. In addition to the pilot study at the start of the fieldwork, a final revisit to the study area, in 2009, was also used to help fill any gaps or details.

The primary area where problems and challenges were encountered during this pilot study concerned the planned use of formal interviews. The problems were fundamental and included endless failed attempts with setting pre-arranged times with interviewees and with both sides adhering to those times; and also more general challenges centred on reactions to the interview process and to my presence. These reactions included general disinterest, and
suspicions of the underlying motives to this study - which varied from paranoia about industrial espionage through to the potential that I might have been sent by a foreign client, or even be a government spy. Emma Tarlo, Eiluned Edwards and Anne Grodzins-Gold each recount similar reactions during their fieldwork in Gujarat and Rajasthan (Tarlo 1996; Edwards 1999; Grodzins-Gold 1989). As a result of these tensions in the field, the material gathered during those earliest interviews is vague, lacks depth, and lacks specifics pertaining to dye preparations or print processes. In short, whilst interviews seemed to be the obvious way to collect data, in this instance they generated unsatisfactory results. Thus, whilst the pilot study experience had many positive outcomes – particularly in terms of recruiting participants and refining the overall objectives of the study – it also highlighted issues with language, trust, and time, and forced a fundamental review of the overall methodological design of the fieldwork.

In response to the methodological challenges of the pilot study, the research design was revised to focus less on formal interviews and more on reflexive and intuitive methods of engaging with the artisans, including my own practical engagement in their day-to-day dye and print activities. Evaluative criteria were sought, ones which might prove ‘evocative, moral, critical, and rooted in local understandings’ of the craft (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:3). The inductive, or ‘iterative’ (Maxwell, 2005) approach that was developed for the purposes of this study is supported by Marcus (1998), who stated that ethnographic fieldwork need not follow a detailed, predetermined study design, but rather, is responsive to what is found in the field.

Utilising reflexivity within the research process is an intrinsic aspect of ethnographic research, and also is the analytical approach commonly associated with Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It proved a useful method for shaping the inductive framework of the study and for guiding the refinement of research questions. According to Creswell (2008), Grounded Theory is ‘a qualitative strategy of inquiry in which the researcher
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derives a general, abstract theory of process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of
grounding the theory in the views of participants in a study (Creswell, 2008:13 and 229). That is, it is rooted (or ‘grounded’) in the
behaviour, words and actions of those under study. ‘Grounded Theory investigates the
actualities in the real world and analyses the data with no preconceived ideas or hypothesis’
(Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Use of Grounded Theory with an ethnomethodological framework
has been shown to widen the potential of qualitative research since in combination they offer
a reflexive form of naturalistic enquiry; ‘ethnographic studies can provide the thick description
that is very useful data for Grounded Theory analysis’ (see also Lester and Hadden, 1980,
Pettigrew, 2000:261). In this manner, within this research, ethnographic research experiences,
data gathering, and the development of a theoretical perspective are interwoven.

3.2.4 Fieldwork roles and employment in the field

It is generally felt that fieldwork requires a much more intense personal involvement, and that
therefore its results are much more dependent on the personality and personal background of
the researcher than other forms of social research. In this respect many will include such
information in their writing up (cf Whyte, 1955:285-7). As the feminist critic and sociologist
Sandra Harding points out: ‘neither knowers nor the knowledge they produce are or could be
impartial, disinterested or value-neutral’ (Harding, 1991:11). This research has emerged from
my own prior experience with cloth. Whilst the fieldwork for this thesis officially commenced
with the pilot study, in February 2004, the motivations are deeply rooted in my own personal
background as a textile designer, maker, and natural dyer. Having been involved in textile
activity for as long as I can remember, some of my earliest memories are watching and helping
my mother make, mend and re-dye cloth and clothing, accompanying her to source materials,
rummaging through remnant boxes, exploring hedgerows for dye plants, experimenting with
different textile techniques, and saving and hoarding thousands of tiny off cuts of patterned
cloth to further my understandings of the huge diversity of pattern texture and colour which could be applied to or imbued within cloth. As these knowledge and skills grew, creative ideas became personal projects; and passion became formalised into a profession, with a degree and subsequent career in textile design, whilst also continuing to produce natural dyed and hand crafted textiles. Though I didn’t know it at the time, these experiences formed an important part of developing as a qualitative researcher and have influenced this research approach, since the local knowledge we seek to gain in conducting field research is influenced in part by the identities of the researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2003) stress the socially constructed nature of the relationship between researcher and what is studied – researchers are part of the endeavour, and most especially in ethnographies.

Furthermore, it is well recognised in modern academia that there is a thin, if not non-existent, division between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ research. Funding is the primary means of controlling research outputs, and thus, whilst the self-funded status of this study brought endless financial issues it did also release this research from the potential ties which external funding can sometimes impose. However, self-funding instead meant balancing employment with fieldwork which produced its own set of issues. It is necessary to briefly cover these issues here, and clear up any potential misunderstandings over the manner in which this research was separated from my paid employment whilst in the field.

Firstly, whilst previous work as a designer had brought these textiles and its craftsmen to my initial attention, this was not the role undertaken during the fieldwork for this thesis. In February of 2004, during the pilot study (hence fieldwork for this thesis had already begun), I was approached by the trustees of the newly formed Anokhi Foundation (Jaipur) to become involved with a new independent textile museum which they were in the process of planning. The Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing (AMHP) was established under the auspices of the
Anokhi Foundation, ostensibly as a charitable, non-profit institution, separate to the everyday commercial concerns of Anokhi Registhan Pvt (Gangaur Exports). The board of Trustees, headed by the owners of Anokhi - a commercial enterprise working with hand block printers, and also well-known for their philanthropic activities around Jaipur - also included representatives from local business, government and the erstwhile royal family. Being offered the role of curator allowed me to become based in India for an extended period in closer proximity to the ‘field’, and also to contribute specialist knowledge to the furtherance of the new museum. The role also allowed greater access to the AMHP museum collection (which I was responsible for expanding to represent the regions continued printing traditions), and the extensive commercial archives of Anokhi (spanning nearly forty years of their design and manufacturing involvement with the block printers of the region). Whilst much of the museum work revolved around the in-house tasks of cataloguing, storing, and displaying the existing collection alongside training staff and preparing the building itself to be opened to the public, a rolling schedule of new exhibitions was also planned in order to gradually build up a contextualised story of the region’s rich variety of hand block printed textile traditions. It was agreed with the museum Trustees from the outset that the independent fieldwork for this thesis would be given time to continue, and that, as curator, I could also exhibit and publish any relevant interim research findings through the museum (which resulted in the following publications; Ronald and Kumar K. G., 2005, Ronald, 2007a, 2007b, Skidmore and Ronald, 2010).

As a qualitative researcher, the ‘dilemma of the fieldworker’ and ‘not whether to interfere in the cultural scene, but how much to interfere’ (Pelto and Pelto, 1970:186) meant striving to maintain an awareness that my own field research should emerge only as a result of my own research plans, not those of either AMHP or Anokhi (Roberts and McGinty, 1995:113). Some
critiques of combining employment with field work include the suggestion of reduced objectivity due to the uneven involvement of the ‘insider’ perspective which it offers; and the possibility that employment may do more damage than good to the researcher’s reputation or roles within the studied community. Adopting neither the role of ‘designer’ nor ‘buyer’ meant I was not viewed as a patron but rather, by involving craftsmen in the processes of putting together visual museum gallery displays as well as taking an interest in their lives and work at more than the usual survey level, a different sort of relationship was forged. It is important to stress that throughout the fieldwork for this thesis careful and conscious efforts were made to avoid commercial overlap or misunderstandings and ambiguities about the purposes of each of the many visits to craftspeople.

Ultimately, when handled carefully, ‘employment... is simply one type, albeit a potentially powerful type, of interaction in the field which may help us gain access to local knowledge’ (Kaul, 2004:7), and therefore brings with it the same practical and ethical considerations of other types of interaction. Certainly working whilst in the field forces the researcher to become much more explicit about the point at which fieldwork differs or diverges paid work, in this case the museum responsibilities. This has helped shape the methodological framework for this study, and also raised awareness of the effects of my own presence on the research results.

However, during the initial years AMHP also relied heavily on Anokhi for funding, and it would be naive to ignore that in return the museum lent the company certain positives in the form of tax breaks and added to the philanthropic image historically associated with the family business. Since the end of both fieldwork and paid work, and my subsequent departure from Jaipur in 2008, the museum’s activities seem to have become increasingly closely connected to the current commercial activities of Anokhi, acting less as the intended quasi-independent
repository of objects and research into hand printing as a wider craft, and more as a homage to the history of Anokhi, thus verifying their commercial products as ‘authentic’ local block prints.

3.2.5 Biases and power relations

Fieldwork of any sort is an intervention. As in any field research situation, difficulties are always encountered with the initial process of gaining access to the research setting, and with ‘fitting in’ in a suitable manner whilst carrying out the study. This involves a certain degree of adaptation, and also an awareness of the underlying power relations between researcher and researched. The engagement with craftspeople from a different culture brought with it inevitable imbalances of power, particularly as a single white female in her thirties working in a traditionally male dominated culture. Gender is only one facet of a complex nexus of influencing power factors in research. Hammersley and Atkinson refer to the amalgam of such factors as age, sex, status etc as a person’s ‘social location’ (1995:227). They warn that whilst social location might be the source of knowledge it is also a potential source of bias, and since this could affect the validity and rigour of the research I needed to maintain an awareness of how my presence might affect the ways in which people reacted to my enquiries. There are some commonsense principles of conduct for any ethnographer which primarily involve recognising that, for those being studied, their commitment to what goes on there is their personal lives, and their business or job, and thus the fieldworker must put aside any personal inclinations, and must exercise respect for this.

One of the major problems with conducting ethnographic fieldwork is the reaction of participants to the idea of being observed, often referred to as the ‘Hawthorne Effect’ (Kawamura, 2010). Changes in the behaviour of a research subject due to the presence of the researcher, for example something as simple as dressing in a smarter manner than usual,
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alters the everyday routines under study. Whilst it is clearly impossible to become an ‘invisible researcher’, the effects can be minimised through regular and sustained daily presence. Fostering familiarity with the research intentions, and involving participants in the research process, is a well-recognised means of countering this effect. During the fieldwork for this thesis, photography, as will be discussed in the third section of this chapter, aided in this process of familiarisation. Thus, whilst initial visits to a new workshop or village might result in numerous photographs of excitable swarms of children, shy wives and star struck craftsmen, after just a few sessions involving participatory review and selection of images the situation rapidly calmed down and normal working practice was resumed.

Many issues such as the Hawthorne effect can be countered simply by increasing the frequency and regularity of visits, although this can also bring with it the potential of ‘over-rapport’ or ‘going native’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:110). However, in the specific case of this fieldwork, ‘going native’ was offset by the very power differentials which set me apart from the people and situations which were being studied. No matter how much of an ‘insider’ I strived to become through participation in skilled dye and print activities, by virtue of my own background I would always remain an ‘outsider’, and this important combination allowed me to observe in ways which others might not have been able to. Haraway advises that we can only claim the ‘ability to partially translate knowledges among very different - power-differentiated - communities’ (1996:187). Yet despite the power differentials inherent in my social status, age, gender, education, and cultural background being present throughout the fieldwork, using a participatory approach founded on a shared understanding of craft practice made it possible to participate in ways no other method could have allowed. Ultimately I maintained an awareness that I was only being told and shown what people wanted to tell or to show me, but this in itself is an important means of illuminating the study, since it is those
perspectives and the manner in which these craftspeople want to portray their craft and heritage which I was interested in.

The importance of power relations between the researcher and researched, the need for transparency, openness, and honesty of data collection, analysis, and presentation implied here highlight the extent to which criteria for quality interact with standards for ethics in qualitative research. Everyone consulted in the process of this research was made aware of the intended purposes of the information, and given the option to remain anonymous if they chose. Wherever possible or practical, participants were invited to sign a ‘release’ form (Appendix E) which explained in English and in Hindi where the information or photographs provided by them would be used. Whilst most were comfortable with being named there were a few instances where craftspeople felt the need to voice controversial or contradictory opinions but yet requested their names not be associated with those specific comments to avoid potential damage to their commercial relationships. Those instances have been honoured within this thesis. In addition, where family-specific hereditary dye recipes were collected and used during fieldwork written copies of those recipes have remained with the families in question, but, in respect of those family’s wishes, have not been published in detail within this thesis. Ethical considerations such as these are paramount in all research, and their consideration is involved in every aspect, from design to conclusion. Whilst interpretations may vary, the ethical principles of informed consent, for example, and the minimisation of harm, apply to all research, regardless of paradigm or perspective. Hence, approval was sought from the University’s ethics committee prior to embarking on fieldwork, and guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process (Christians, 2000, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Fine et al., 2000).
3.3 Research Strategy

In total, for this study, the research period spent in India extended over a five year period, from 2004 to 2009, and consisted of three main trips of varying lengths. The first, to conduct the pilot study in February 2004, and the last, a revisit in March 2009 to gather additional detail (Burawoy, 2003), were both roughly a month in length. In between these, the main body of the research was carried out over the course of a continuous three year and four month period in India, from November 2004 to February 2008. A chart showing this overall timeline, and a break-down of the iterative cycles or phases of activity within it, is included in Appendix G.

3.3.1 Sampling and recruitment

In order to insure information richness (Kuzel, 1992) the selection of appropriate participants for this study was based on identification of those craftspeople who it was felt could best inform the study and help develop a full description of the recent history and current practice of the craft. This sort of selection process is often described as ‘purposive’ or purposeful, when it aims to select appropriate information sources to explore meanings. In addition, as ideas began to develop from the iterative cycles of data collection and analysis, further participants were identified and individuals consulted – for example during visits to rural areas where block printed textiles are still worn as a part of everyday dress. This sort of sampling process is described as being ‘theoretical’, when the aim is the selection of people, situations or processes on theoretical grounds to explore emerging ideas and build theory as data analysis progressed (Kuzel, 1992). In both cases, data collection was ongoing throughout the course of the study, and was intimately linked with the emergent and iterative nature of the research process, as explained over the previous pages.
Initially the fieldwork involved small numbers of craftsmen, these were identified as key participants with detailed knowledge of the craft, its history, and the wider network of craftspeople (printers, dyers, block carvers) and communities involved in the production, exchange and use of hand block printed cloth in the region. Approximately ten to twelve craftspeople were selected from the two primary printing colonies of Bagru and Sanganer. Following a series of preliminary visits a few important individuals emerged from these – namely Suraj Narayan Titanwala and the Dosaya family, both in Bagru; and Radesharan Chhipa and Brij Bhallab in Sanganer. These key participants were selected purposively, and their access to the wider network facilitated the identification of further participants with additional knowledge specific to certain aspects or regional variations of the craft. This strategy is often referred to as chain referral or ‘snowball sampling’. The intention throughout the process of selecting and connecting with participants was to enhance the completeness of information gathered and the credibility of interpretations respectively (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

In other more rural areas artisans operated as sole families, so limiting choice. Some of these artisan families expressed little enthusiasm for the research; furthermore it became difficult to arrange some meetings. Others generously facilitated introductions to other branches of their family community, based in other remote regions of the state. Whilst potentially fruitful, constraints of time and money, and issues surrounding gaining special permits to enter restricted border areas, prevented further in-depth research from being conducted with the most remote of these craftspeople (though this is part of ongoing and future research plans). Through networking within the community, building on established relations, it was possible to gradually be able to meet craftspeople in each primary research area, selecting artists that informed and illuminated the guiding research questions (Patton, 1990), and who were responsive and open to requests for research collaboration. A full list of key craftspeople
consulted during this research is included in Appendix F. However, it is important to note that each named artisan has a workshop of varying size – some are supported by up to a dozen hired semi-skilled and skilled workers, often in numbers which fluctuate on a daily basis, whereas others might rely on just their extended family members for day-to-day unskilled assistance. Hence it is impractical to name each individual in this respect, though full credit is given to all who have directly contributed to the ethnographic record within this thesis.

3.3.2 Participant-Observation

The fieldwork for this thesis was built around participant-observation. The use of participant observation particularly characterises most ethnographic research (Spradley, 1980, Fetterman, 1998), and is most closely associated with the anthropological tradition (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). It is a method used to learn about the naturally occurring routines, interactions and practices of a particular group of people and their social environments in order to understand their culture. The participant-observation cycle (Spradley, 1980) was chosen since ethnography means both full immersion in the cultural context, combined with a critical detachment of the researcher, to produce ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973). In essence it involves the researcher’s participants in their social world, crucial to developing an understanding of what is being observed. This approach involves cultivating a ‘thoughtful and well-understood’ relationship between the researcher and research participants (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), recording group interaction and behaviour as objectively as possible using various qualitative inquiry tools, whilst remaining sensitive to sympathetic or antagonistic interpretations of group behaviours. ‘The important thing about the ethnographer is not that he or she brings particularly arcane skills to the collection of data, but that they bring the willingness to pay attention to people’s activities, to attend in detail to how people actually go
about their affairs, however ordinary and otherwise unremarkable these affairs might be’ (Hughes and Sharrock 2002).

One of the most difficult practical fieldwork challenges was to gain enough trust to be able to draw out the memories and knowledge which would help extend what is already known about the craft. The approach hinged on the knowledge and skills of the printers and dyers, since this was a practice we shared. Approaches such as Schön’s knowing-in-action or reflection-in-action hold that ‘our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action’ (Schön, 1983:49). Since knowledge in action is firmly entrenched in the personal culture of craftsmanship of the practitioner, this means academic research into craftsmanship (or the products of this) by a practitioner inevitably engages the researcher on a personal level. It is generally recognised that by gaining an ‘insider’ position, through direct participation in the research setting, a researcher can gain greater understanding of practice and insights into such things as technical or colloquial terms. However, the true essence of participant observation as a successful research method is to balance the growth of ‘insider’ knowledge with the maintenance of an ‘outsider’ perspective. Both aspects were inherent in my being a dye and print practitioner but from a very different cultural and social background. This enabled observation and recording of experiences, and subsequent development of a contextual understanding of the techniques and skills of the craftsmen, as well as keeping sight of a broader perspective of the craft. Whilst at times I engaged fully in practical tasks, at others I deferred to the true craftsmen and stepped back to observe.

At all times it was also vital to behave in a consistent manner as part of the setting, so as not to cause significant changes in the community itself, and be aware of any presumptions that may influence participants’ behaviour, or the emerging research findings. Whilst participatory
methods are popular there is no set formula, and the extent of a researcher’s participation varies dramatically between studies, depending on a plethora of factors (including the differentials of power in the researcher-participant relationship). However it is generally agreed that by participating to some degree, and through persistent engagement, the complexities of meanings and situations can be more adequately explored and uncovered (Reason, 1994).

Participation was not the only approach used during this fieldwork, multiple data gathering techniques were employed for this study. This strategy was chosen deliberately so as to develop a more complex understanding of the phenomena being studied, and is sometimes referred to as triangulation (Reason, 1994). It is an important means of enhancing data quality and enriching the ‘thick descriptions’ characteristic of ethnographic studies. By gathering multiple types of information (practical craft techniques; various craftspeople’s memories and perspectives; information surrounding the traditional meanings of certain prints or motifs; the differences between traditional and modern technologies or materials, opinions of designers, dealers and wearers of block printed cloth etc) in multiple ways (participation; unstructured interviews; observations; focus groups; photographs etc) different facets of situations and experiences were illuminated, helping to portray the complexity of the craft in its contemporary form and deepen understandings of the impact of recent changes within the local context.

3.3.3 Time and language management

Managing the resulting multiple responsibilities of museum and research necessitated a clear time strategy. Thus, within the main body of three years and four months of fieldwork in India, fieldwork was sub-divided into a series of specific periods of intense focussed research activity. Hence fieldwork followed elements of both a compressed ethnographic time mode and an
intermittent one, over an extended period. These bursts of activity are illustrated in the timeline, in Appendix G. Jeffery and Trowman assert that an intermittent time mode is one where the researcher extends the overall time spent in the field from three months to two years, as a means of capturing the dynamics of the context (2004:538). From a practical perspective it made organising visits, observations, meetings and introductions to new participants much more efficient.

Being based permanently in Jaipur allowed the frequency of research visits to print and dye workshops to be flexible and intermittent in nature, which in turn allowed for continued reflection, and immersion in the local culture, between visits. Field researcher Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983) repeatedly emphasises the fundamental importance of gaining local knowledge; an understanding of the locals’ point of view. Language in particular can be a barrier to deepening understandings of a culture through research. To help counter this, I enrolled in private Hindi lessons with a teacher in Jaipur, and was able to practice my emerging spoken and written Hindi skills on work colleagues. The linguistic skills of these colleagues were also called upon when needed during field visits. Since there are at least twenty known local dialects spoken in cultural blocks across Rajasthan it was crucial to make use of a translator at times. To lessen the potential problems of translation and meaning, I tried to take the same person every time, and ensured they, along with the photographer, were involved in the planning stages of the trip (Phillips, 1960). This was usually Vikram Thapa, born and brought up in Jaipur but of Sikkimese descent. Vikram has a Masters in geography from Rajasthan University, is fluent in English, Hindi and a number of local dialects, and his family have been involved in the local block printing industry since the 1950s.
3.3.4 Local knowledge

Local knowledge contributes to a researcher’s comprehension of basic rules and customs within social settings, and local knowledge can be enhanced by ‘immersing oneself’ in the group being studied; ‘the aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with specifics’ (Geertz, 1973:28). The long process of gaining this local knowledge, and my participation in print and dye activities, became an important means of entering the social life of the community (in so far as a foreign female could), allowing me to engage in understandable, task-orientated activity in the course of observation and informal discussion. To understand hand block printing, in all its forms, it was important to know not just the terminology, equipment, and techniques, but also how these came together in the hands of the artisans. As Geertz maintains, ‘In order to follow a baseball game one must understand what a bat, a hit, an inning, a left fielder, a squeeze play, a hanging curve, and a tightened infield are, and what the game in which these ‘things’ are elements is all about’ (Geertz, 1983:69).

The importance of gaining this insider local knowledge has been crucial to the observations and understandings of the craft presented in this thesis, and of the position the craft holds within the families who continue to practice it. Since this ‘insider’ perspective differed vastly from the perspective of those ‘outsiders’ who design and market modern block printed textiles, it has offered crucial insights into the impulses behind the recent dramatic changes to the craft. It also forced a rethink of an initial intention to record family recipes and publish them on ‘recipe cards’. Whilst this act might have contributed to the continuation of traditional (and rapidly dwindling) natural dye use it would also have contravened the intellectual property rights of each individual family of craftspeople, by distributing and making
public their closely guarded secrets. I felt uncomfortable taking these trade secrets to which I had been privileged and turning them into public oral histories, thereby eroding the uniqueness of the craft. This is a clear example of how I, like many other researchers, had entered into my research laden with assumptions, and as a result of these personally formulated assumptions what we know about the social world can never be entirely objective. The meaning we make of the social world differs from person to person and from culture to culture (Denscombe, 2003). ‘The purpose of Grounded Theory is not to make truth statements about reality, but, rather, to elicit fresh understandings about patterned relationships between social actors and how these relationships and interactions actively construct reality’ (Tan, 2010), and for this reason, gaining local knowledge and being critical of one’s personal bias is crucial to the research process.

Despite the inherent power differentials present throughout the fieldwork, founding a participatory approach on a shared understanding of craft practice made it possible to participate in ways no other method could have allowed. However, whilst taking this approach essentially makes the researcher/practitioner as central to the inquiry as the context in which the research is taking place (Malins and Gray, 1995:3), qualitative research which involves the researcher’s participation is not without its problems. Particularly the manner in which the researcher establishes such things as credibility, visibility, and validity of the results, given their own involvement and thus potential bias of results (Maxwell, 1992). As Brody (1992:179) states, ‘Since the naturalistic investigator is him- or herself the research ‘instrument’, naturalistic inquiry cannot avoid observer bias by using the instrument to insulate the experiment from the preconceptions of the investigator. Instead, open disclosure of preconceptions and assumptions that may have influenced data gathering and processing becomes an inherent part of the conduct of the inquiry.’ Credibility is an issue for all forms of
research, and can be thought about and achieved in many different ways. Furthermore, qualitative researchers are more likely to see bias not as something to avoid, but rather as a researcher's greatest asset.

These issues have been addressed through maintaining transparency by revealing personal motivations, and by actively engaging with the pros and cons of such an approach as part of this methodology chapter. Issues of credibility are addressed by looking at the visibility of the research data, that is, the extent to which others (including the participants) have access to the actual data of this study. Using member checking techniques, where participants had an active involvement in the production and selection of photographs and cloth samples, increased the visibility and credibility of the study within the Chhipa community. By presenting at conferences and symposia and producing interim research outputs in the form of museum gallery displays and monographs, which incorporated images and sample swatches of cloth, the research became available to a wider cross-section of readers who could judge the credibility of the original data. Similarly within this thesis it was felt vital to provide readers with enough surrounding visual materials they could draw some conclusions of their own as they assessed the text and saw how analyses have been drawn from the data.

3.4 Research Tools

To summarise then, the data for this study was collected during fieldwork conducted over a series of three visits to India; a three year continuous period of residence from November 2004 to February 2008 sandwiched between a one month pilot study in February 2004 and a further one month revisit in April 2009. As stated above, the fieldwork was characterised by a series of short yet intensive periods over the span of three years and three months, where a total of eight intensive sessions were carried out, each averaging one month in duration,
occurring at approximately three to four month intervals. In the interim periods shorter visits, lasting from just a few hours to a few days in duration, were also conducted. The purpose of these interim visits was to check the validity of the developing analytical notes and to coordinate future fieldwork, continue discussions, and attend social functions, thus maintaining familiarity with the artisan families and their craft, and also to continue to nurture local knowledge. Mindful to avoid placing too much pressure on the artisans, their workshops, or the generosity of their families, all visits were by prior arrangement. Roberts and McGinty warn that researchers who arrive, ask questions, then leave without contributing to the lives of those studied can often be perceived as exploitative (Roberts and McGinty, 1995). Be it in the form of photographs, documented or refined traditional recipes, or copies of any publications or magazine articles produced within and as a result of the fieldwork, efforts were always made to ensure the craftsmen consulted were left with outcomes of the work which they had contributed to.

Within the methodological process of participant observation, in this case built around participatory activities in the form of apprenticeship to craft activities, a series of specific methodological tools were employed to gather and record information. These were verbal methods based on the unstructured interview and focus group techniques, note books, and photographic case recording. Each is each briefly described in the following pages and the key principles, purposes, and problems discussed.

Participants were selected due to their shared social and cultural experiences. The primary source of information for this study relied largely on members of the Chhipa community, as stated above. Most of the key initial informants, particularly the Dosaya family (in Bagru), were selected not simply due to their practical knowledge but also because their printing businesses are thriving and have a number of skilled and semi-skilled employees. Since much of the
discussion took place in or around printing workshops, where other family members or employees worked within earshot, the unstructured interviews often developed into impromptu focus groups. It is well-recognised that these sorts of discussions are particularly useful at making people feel comfortable and more able to share experiences or highlight current issues of debate within the community. As a result, data collected in this fashion reflected the collective views of group members rather than an aggregation of individual interviews. Focussed discussion groups were particularly used when reviewing photographic materials gathered during a field visit. Participants needed little encouragement to engage in the process of selecting and assessing suitable images, and voicing their opinions. This helped to enrich my own understandings of group dynamics, hierarchies, and the subtleties of local culture and custom. Ideas and perspectives garnered through such interactions also fed into the iterative cycles of data collection and analysis, helping inform further rounds of participant observation and discussion.

3.4.1 Interviews and Informal discussions

The decision to use unstructured interviews and informal focussed discussions as a methodological tool for verbal interaction was governed by the interpretive epistemology of this study, and the guiding research objective to gain deeper understandings of the craft through the perspectives of its practitioners and in their own terms (Denzin, 1989). Hence, no hypothesis was made beforehand, and the purpose of the inquiry was theory development rather than theory testing. As active participants in community life and bearers of tradition, the firsthand knowledge and experiences of these craftspeople were viewed as primary sources of culture and history (Hunt, 2003).

As discussed previously, the unstructured approach to interviewing participants was employed because structured methods proved unsuccessful and inappropriate means of examining crafts
activities for the purposes of this study. However, despite appearing to proceed as a casual conversation, the unstructured approach required skill and practice. In such an approach the role of the interviewer is critical to the success of the technique, but is governed and constrained by those characteristics such as age, sex, social status, race and ethnicity, which simultaneously generate the power differentials within the research setting. Adopting a sympathetic, listener stance is therefore crucial, with more time spent reflecting and note-taking than talking. In addition, it was important to be able to assimilate the discussion and be able to respond and thus continue to direct the conversation, ‘generate rapid insights [and] formulate questions quickly and smoothly’ (Patton, 2002:343).

The types of questions posed are crucial, and, following Spradley (1979) the guiding questions used for this thesis fell into three main types: 1) Descriptive questions – where craftspeople were encouraged to offer descriptions of their actions. These generally accompanied practical cloth processing activities, and were a fruitful way to initiate a research session whilst putting participants at ease. 2) Structural questions – where participants were encouraged, in a roundabout manner, to reveal ways in which they organise their knowledge. These usually followed descriptive discussions, as a natural progression. 3) Contrast questions – where comparisons across situations were encouraged, as a means of gleaning further depth of meanings. In particular it was fruitful to pursue the perceptions of contrast between traditional and modern textiles, designs, materials and markets. This third category proved to be a successful and non-directive means of eliciting memories about past forms of the craft as practiced by respondent’s families (fathers, grandparents etc) and also encouraging discussion about what the future might hold for family, community, and craft.

However, controlling and adjusting the direction of questions and statements was challenging, particularly at the outset of the study when my language skills were less well developed.
Whilst no specific interview questions were posed, the guiding questions became a means of setting topics using pre-noted areas of interest, in the form of an aide memoire, to make sure certain key aspects were covered without overtly forcing the direction of the conversation. Allowing the conversation to flow naturally, and for craftspeople to discuss topics which they felt were important, needed to be balanced carefully with the guiding purpose of the research. As Minichiello et al. note, an unstructured interview is ‘always a controlled conversation, which is geared to the interviewers research interests’ (Minichiniello et al., 1990:93). This unstructured interview method benefited greatly from two factors, one being the extended time frame which the overall research fieldwork took, and the other being the marriage of practical participation in dye and print activities with the unstructured discussions. Because it focussed on very familiar aspects of their lives, presenting the researcher as a learner, wanting to understand their work process, this approach helped reveal contextual information about the artisans’ work-life routine. As Ann Banks writes, in First Person America; ‘The way people make sense of their lives, the web of meaning and identity they weave for themselves, has a significance and importance of its own’ and thus the stories people tell, and the cultural traditions they preserve, speak volumes about what they value and how they bring meaning to their lives (Banks, 1991, quoted in Hunt, 2003:12). Quotes from these discussion-based interviews are interspersed throughout the text of this thesis to clearly illustrate the themes described.

The majority of discussions took place during visits to print and dye workshops, or the homes of craftspeople. Permission was always taken from the participants before commencing, and the purposes of the interview explained. Where possible the participants were asked to sign a written release form (Appendix E), to which any notes were added regarding any special wishes or restrictions regarding the information they had provided. As research progressed,
rapport and trust were built, and research ideas began to emerge, a certain degree of structure was imposed on some of these exchanges in order to guide the discussion towards specific themes or topics yet maintain a flexible and conversational manner. Used in conjunction with participation in the day-to-day workshop activities, and practical dye and print processes, this was felt to be important for ensuring sensitivity to participants’ language and privileging their knowledge, plus attending to those inevitable power differentials brought about by my own identity. The evolving discussions revealed ever greater depth of information about the role of hand printed cloth in local dress traditions, and key participants from the printing community often accompanied me to other places of interest in their locale. This helped introduce the research concerns to the wider communities, and facilitated first hand encounters with communities who might otherwise have been difficult to gain access to. This process of extending the research is a feature of the iterative cycles of reflexive analysis characteristic of the Grounded Theory approach to data analysis.

3.4.2 Recording data

Information gathered during research, particularly during an extended period of fieldwork such as was carried out for the purposes of this thesis, needs to be recorded in an accessible manner which enables analysis and the gleaning of subjective meanings and social context from the data. One of the aims of the ongoing iterative cycles of analysis was to understand the meanings and values ascribed to traditional hand block printed cloth, as expressed by participants representing the makers and the wearers of these textiles. Thus data took many forms, including notes, sketches, photographs, tape recordings, cloth swatches, and so on.
During each visit, field notes were written in a series of sequentially numbered and named A5 size reporter’s notebooks and hard backed A5 size journals (as in the image above). Each meeting was dated, and the key artisan(s) present named alongside the locale. The primary function of these note books was to jot down observations, document materials and processes used, and make notes during the inevitable and often protracted informal conversations and group discussions. Visits were structured around cloth processing to give focus to the discussions, offer the opportunity to record specific detailed procedures, allow technical information to emerge through observation, and also to ensure that my presence did not interfere with the artisans’ routine workflow. Because the processing of a single printed length of cloth can sometimes take from three to eight weeks, the thread of these discussions would often be carried through a number of visits, or dropped but then picked up again months later. Sketches of designs and tools were made, recipes and procedures noted, snippets of cloth or thread stapled into the note books, and rubbings of printing blocks sometimes taken. In total, thirty two of these notebooks were filled during the course of this fieldwork.
However, observing and participating in inherently messy dye and print activities led to inevitable problems with note-taking. So, following Collier and Collier (1986), the research simultaneously relied on photography as a means of recording observational materials. Whilst colour photographs can offer a durable source for detailed future analysis they cannot, however, replicate the handle or texture of cloth. So for that purpose a number of cloth swatches have also been included within this thesis. These swatches help the reader to understand the handle, texture, scale and hue of hand printed cloth when married with ethnographic photographs.

3.4.3 Photography

From its beginnings, photography has been used as a tool for the exploration of society. Its use within anthropological field research was pioneered in 1914 by Malinowski (Young, 2004), and developed as a conscious research tool by Mead and Bates in the 1930s (Collier and Collier Jr., 1986). Risley and Crooke’s *The People of India* (1915), a landmark study of India’s diverse communities, made extensive use of photography, and no modern textile publication is now complete without a wealth of glossy photographic images.

Digital still photographs were taken on a Nikon D700, a Nikon D70, and a Panasonic FZ50. The use of a tripod and manual reflector allowed, wherever possible, to avoid use of flash. Photographic flash often has the undesirable effect of ‘washing out’ colours in an image, and camera-mounted flash heads can over-expose close shots. Since colours are crucial to this study it was important not to adversely affect their representation, so an indirect flash was used on rare occasions as an addition to the ambient lighting. Many of the photographs taken near the start of the project, particularly of textiles, seemed less representative of the true hues of the cloth and so a white balance colour checker card was used when possible, to provide a point of reference for colour and tone (Scharff, 2007). In total over 5000 digital
photographs were taken, each picture named by date, place and photographer’s name, and stored in folders marked by the date and place of that specific fieldwork session, on a combination of writeable CD/DVD disks and two 1TB LaCie external hard drives. The majority of photographs were taken on the Nikon cameras, by a professional photographer, in camera RAW format. The remainder, including those taken by myself on the Panasonic FZ50, were largely in JPEG or TIFF. Once selected, the chosen photographs were then copied from the storage folders and converted to a lower quality/file size JPEG, using Adobe Lightroom. Image manipulation, using Adobe Photoshop, was kept to a bare minimum, and was only employed where photographs appeared dull due to poor lighting conditions in the often cramped and windowless printing workshops.

The decision to use a photographer to take pictures in addition to my own was taken primarily because, during the pilot study, concentrating on dialogue, craft activities, observation, and making notes while also taking photographs gave less than satisfactory results. Hence for the main body of fieldwork, which commenced in November 2004, a professional photographer agreed to join research trips wherever possible. David Dunning is an established photographer, with commendations in the ‘people’ and ‘travel’ categories of national and international competitions. Trained as both artist-blacksmith and photographer, Dunning’s sensitivity to crafts activities and object aesthetics are clearly evidenced in his work, and he has since made a significant contribution to the Victoria and Albert Museum publication which accompanied the 2009 ‘Maharajah’ exhibition (Jackson and Jaffer, 2009). I funded his presence on research trips, and in exchange he produced detailed photographic observations of a professional quality. He was involved at every stage of the pre-trip planning and discussions. This ensured the craftspeople were as comfortable with his presence as they were with mine, and that all parties agreed on the purposes of the visit. Since these trips were generally centred on specific...
stage(s) of cloth processing, or particular people, the prior discussion of what these visits entailed helped identify key images in advance. Thus in addition to my participation in the dye and print processes, photography also became an important tangible activity which helped to anchor the research interactions.

A contract (Appendix D) was drawn up to cover the copyright and usage rights of the research images generated by David Dunning as a part of this fieldwork. It states that, whilst ultimate copyright remains with the photographer (as with any photographic works), the usage rights of these particular images is held by me, as the client. Whilst thousands of photographs were taken during the course of the fieldwork, not all were usable. Many of the selected images have also featured in the interim research outputs listed in Appendix C of this thesis, although the copyright on those images still remains with David Dunning and me. Cross-references are given where images in this thesis have appeared in my other publications.

Key craftspeople were involved in the review and selection process for photographs, and this became an important aspect of the field research process. Whilst it is popularly believed that the camera does not lie, it is impossible to generate a completely unbiased photograph. In response to this, the use of photography for the purposes of this study is grounded in the interactive context by which photographs acquire meaning - harnessing the dynamic interaction between photograph, photographer, and viewer. Hence the review and choice of the images involved the participants.

Following each fieldwork session, time was set aside for review and discussion of the images. This usually coincided with a tea break, where participants would congregate in a communal area such as a courtyard or veranda. Images were downloaded from camera to laptop, and, under the guidance of the artisans and their associated families or employees, the photographs could then be grouped into sets which related to such things as processes,
Chapter Three: Methodologies

particular styles of cloth pattern, or topics of conversation from the day. All participants were encouraged to select the most relevant images, and at times decided none of the photographs were suitable. In those instances the reasons were discussed, and strategies to improve the images and thus enrich my knowledge were developed. In this way, participants became actively involved in the research methods through an iterative process of image making. As Susan Sontag explains:

The photographer was thought to be an acute but non-interfering observer - a scribe, not a poet. But as people quickly discovered that nobody takes the same picture of the same thing, the supposition that cameras furnish an impersonal, objective image yielded to the fact that photographs are evidence not only of what's there but of what an individual sees, not just a record but an evaluation of the world. (Sontag, 1977:88)

A significant outcome of these iterative cycles of image making and reviewing was the general consensus among craftspeople that the use of sequential series of still images to animate a process was in many cases considered more expressive than a short piece of film footage. A few short sections of digital video were made, for comparative purposes. It was felt by participants that the sequences of stills rendered each important gesture as a static image. For this reason, the selected sequences have been used within this thesis to illustrate key aspects of the printing process. In this way, the photographic images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it (Sontag, 1977).

3.4.4 Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is a process of reviewing, synthesising and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied. Tesch (1990) groups the various qualitative analytical procedures into ‘content-’, ‘discovery-’, and ‘meaning-focussed’ approaches. Since the overall approach to this research involves both object-based and interpretive methods all three of these analytical procedures have contributed to the study. ‘Content-focussed’ refers to the essential use of objects and observations as primary data, in
Chapter Three: Methodologies

this case defined as the articulation of culture through material productions (Prown, 1994). ‘Meaning-focussed’ emphasises understanding the subjective meaning of experiences and situations for the participants themselves, as opposed to how these meanings might fit with researchers’ conceptions (Reason, 1994). ‘Discovery-focussed’ techniques aim to establish patterns or connections among elements of data in a process of theory building, either thematically or through the procedures of Grounded Theory. As already stated, the data gathering and analysis for this study proceeded in an iterative cycle of classifying, comparing, grouping, refining and revisiting ideas and information as they emerged. In doing so this approach attempts to place empirical study within a theoretical framework. Grounded Theory was a useful guiding approach to help build theoretical knowledge into an existing, and growing, in-depth knowledge of hand block printing and natural dye techniques, exploring the meanings, patterns and connections among data in a conceptual process which involved the researcher’s own thought, reflection and intuition as much as the accounts of participants.

The founders of Grounded Theory, Glaser and Strauss, have argued that ‘an effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and focus on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:37). Despite counter-arguments that this dangerous practice (Goulding, 2005), as researchers we often build new knowledge on existing knowledge. Howard Becker warns that the assumptions embedded in the existing literature can deform the conceptual framework of a study, and distort the results (Becker, 1986), and yet the literature review helps identify the latest research and methods in the topic area, and it serves to enhance theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the researcher’s knowledge, understanding, skills and ability to see data with analytic depth, be aware of the subtleties of meaning of data, generate concepts from data, relate these concepts, and
develop theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend, literature was used as a tool to formulate questions, develop theories, identify relevant literature, and combine secondary sources of data into analyses. Following Lempert (2007:254), literature was used extensively throughout the fieldwork, particularly during interim periods between intensive field trips. This broad reading of the literature is a deviation from the classical Grounded Theory laid out by Glaser and Strauss (1967), but one which is well established in its current use, and proved invaluable to the iterative cycles of field research.

This iterative analysis process allowed for emerging ideas and themes to be checked with participants, and the findings elaborate many aspects of the craft from the practitioners perspective - including reflections on experiences of the effects of the more widely recognised changes to the structure of the craft (e.g. commercial businesses placing larger export orders). Findings also identified important links between local, national and global change. Competing or conflicting accounts and information from differing sources including government officials, export companies and museums (sources listed in Appendices A, B, and F), have also helped enrich these insights into the changing form of the craft.

3.5 Conclusion

Given the initial impetus for the inquiry, which was to deepen and extend existing understandings of hand block printed textiles, particularly privileging the perspectives of the craftsman, this study developed within a qualitative epistemology, using ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic field research. Ethnography has a long history in social research. It is not at all uncommon to see ethnographic approaches employed in textile and clothing research, the preceding chapter illustrated how they are well-recognised within wider literature as a means of exploring the social and cultural contexts of textiles and
dress. The main virtue of ethnography lies in its ability to make visible the ‘real world’ sociality of a setting. As a mode of social research it is concerned to produce detailed descriptions of the ‘workaday’ activities of social actors within specific contexts. It is a naturalistic method relying upon material drawn from the firsthand experience of a fieldworker in some setting.

Whilst an ethnographic stance arguably entails a minimum orientation, which has to do with seeing the social world from the point of view of participants, one particular approach to this, which has strongly influenced this study, is ethnomethodologically inspired ethnography. In many ways this approach is similar to most ethnographic fieldwork with its emphasis on the in situ observation of interactions within their natural settings. Its distinction from other analytic frames within which ethnographic techniques are cast is that it focuses on the everyday and commonplace, that which might otherwise be overlooked. This slant on ethnography seemed to lend itself to bringing a social perspective to bear on the study of hand block printed textile production and use in Rajasthan.

In total, for this study, the research period spent in India extended over a five year period, from 2004 to 2009, and consisted of three main trips of varying lengths. The first, to conduct the pilot study in February 2004, and the last, a revisit in March 2009 to gather additional detail, were both roughly a month in length. In between these, the main body of the research was carried out over the course of a continuous three year and four month period in India, from November 2004 to February 2008, during which time I also worked. Although being employed whilst in the field is rarely written about, and requires strategic management, in this instance it supported the research, allowed for greater local knowledge and immersion into local culture, plus the opportunity to exhibit and publish interim outputs. As a result the field research developed with compressed bursts of activity, in a series of intensive sessions, over an extended period.
Field methods developed as a direct result of a pilot study, in 2004, in which structured interviews proved particularly unsuited to the sorts of data required by this study. Interviews are the most common type of data collection tool where first person descriptions of experience or knowledge are required by a study. Since research interviews aim to elicit participants’ views of their lives, portray their stories, and so gain access to their experiences, feelings and social worlds, they were the intended source of primary data at the outset of this study. However, during the pilot study, the practicalities of conducting structured and semi-structured interviews became apparent. The resulting approach can be classed as unstructured interviews, conducted in an everyday conversational style, in which participants were encouraged to take the lead to a greater extent, rather than being directed by predefined questions.

From the outset this study deliberately centred on the current producers of block printed cloth, their traditional products and processes, and their perspectives, rather than on tracing a history of the block printed cloth through existing archival resources, given the historical and archival bias of existing research on Indian textiles. To help develop an understanding of their perspective I immersed myself in the world of the hand printer (Mead and Morris, 1934, Blumer, 1969, Geertz, 1973). Getting to know the printers and dyers, hear their perspectives, and learn about the complex sets of processes and materials they employ during their work, hinged entirely on gaining access and developing rapport. Participant observation, the classic ethnographic field method, was employed and adapted to involve participation in dye and print processes, like an apprentice. This offered greater depth of understanding of the craft, and also served to help overcome such practical problems as the Hawthorne effect, the imbalances of power brought about by my own identity, and the building of strong rapport.
The study employed multiple methodological tools, primarily for the purpose of examining as many aspects of the hand block printing as possible. Since textiles and clothing cross many disciplinary boundaries, their study requires the application of more than one method. This research approach has adopted multiple methods, because information gathered from different sources offers greater insight into the phenomena being studied (Kawamura, 2010). Qualitative research designs encourage holistic approaches to conducting research projects.

A series of strategies for working with participants, mainly artisans, was developed to permit the comparison and convergence of perspectives, and to identify corroborating and dissenting accounts. These data collection methods enabled exploration of subjective meanings, actions and social context relevant to the research questions.

Whilst note books were essential for written information, diagrams and sketches etc, photography was also used extensively to record day to day activities. A professional photographer was used during a large majority of the field visits. Participants became involved in the selection and review processes - photographs, notes, and records of interviews were checked with participants for authenticity – reciprocating participation in image selection and technical recording. Privileging the participants’ perspectives through member checking of data further adds to the transparency and validity of this research. Quotes from interviews are interspersed throughout the text to clearly illustrate the themes described. In this manner, data analysis developed in iterative cycles of collection, analysis and reflection commonly associated with a Grounded Theory approach.

The resulting analyses are presented as textual descriptions which illuminate the subjective meanings of hand block printed textiles within the social world of their production and use in Rajasthan. The perspectives of members of the Chhipa community are visibly embedded within the chapters of this thesis, representing the craft in a descriptive and interpretive
manner. In this way the following chapters of this thesis move from descriptive accounts, through quotations and examples, to discussion of their meaning and importance so as to provide a coherent account. Reflexive reporting, as an aid to authentic representation of the craft, helps distinguish participants’ voices from that of the researcher. The aim is not to generalise about the distribution of experiences, rather it is to deepen existing understandings through a socially situated, localised perspective of specialist craft activity.
Chapter Four: Traditional Hand Block Printed Textiles and Dress

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins the discussion of traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles by first considering their role within the region's rural dress traditions, before then moving on to explore notable changes affected within those traditions over recent decades. The purposes of this are twofold. Firstly, the documentation of how block printed cloth has specifically contributed to local dress adds a much needed regional focus on everyday dress traditions to the existing literature on Indian costume. Secondly, it creates a suitable departure point for discussion of the broad variety of pattern, motif and colour combinations within traditional hand block printed textiles. Because hand printed textiles were, until recent decades, produced on commission or sold directly from craftsman to community, the pattern combinations are often categorised and named by printers according to the customers for whom those particular textiles were made. As a result, the oral and family histories of these rural craftsmen harbour a wealth of valuable information with the potential to expand existing understandings of the region's distinctive cultural heritage. As Yasin Khan, a middle-aged Chhipa from Balotra, recalls:

When we were younger, just kids, we used to play this game. We would sit in the bazaar, or the sabzi mandi [vegetable market], and try to say which community or tribe, or which place the people came from as we watched them going round. Like a
guessing game based on clothes. The main clues were in the men’s *safa* [turban] – the way he tied it and the colour or pattern, or his *dhoti* [waistcloth] – was it short or long, neatly tucked or not... and the women, they were the easiest because we could see the prints on their *ghaggra* [skirts] and *odhani* [headcloths] and we knew who our fathers and uncles made those prints for. But all sorts of clues like the length and fatness [fullness] of the *ghaggra*, the kinds of *churiya* [bangles], even the way they walked – you can tell if someone works out in the fields or stays in the house by the way she holds herself... (Yasin Chhipa Khan, 54, Balotra. Personal communication, 2006).

Dress then becomes inextricably implicated in constructions and reconstructions of identity, a visible articulation of the broad variety of communities in the region, each with distinct customs, occupations, heritage, and lifestyles. From a cultural perspective, identities have not only histories but also futures: they come from somewhere, they are complex and contradictory, and they enable the expression of heritage as well as aspirations of modernity (Ang, 2000). In the 1960s, sociologist Gregory Stone (1962) argued that identity has many advantages over the more fixed, psychological concept of personality, and that, rather than being a code word for ‘self’, identity is an announced meaning of the self, situated in and negotiated through social interactions. He argued that appearance is fundamental to identification and differentiation in everyday life.

As evidenced in the ‘identity game’, recited above, distinctive styles of clothing and appearance in Rajasthan are commonly recognised as markers of difference between particular social groups, indicating social divisions between caste and occupation. Particular combinations of pattern, colour, and style of printed cloth have, over time, become associated with distinctions of gender, region, status and age. As such, cloth pattern and colour form an important part of the communicative functions of dress and appearance. In this way, textiles and dress can be viewed as embedded in context, in the more complete framework or social construction of everyday life. This context includes the total appearance of a wearer, the relationship between a wearer and a perceiver of dress, and the setting in which the
interaction occurs. As this chapter explores, in Rajasthan dressing and adornment of the body, and also of the domestic space, are a visible means of asserting the worldly positions and maintaining symbolic or ritual protection of many families - with handmade textiles such as hand block printed cottons playing an important role in this process of self-assertion and self-protection. The significance of many of these textiles lies in the combination of the motifs and the general layout of design, which works in conjunction with the way the cloth is worn or used, by whom, and in what setting. So, whilst the individual motifs in some cases very clearly carry individual meanings, or relate closely to locally familiar objects or myths, they form just part of the whole cloth, in the same way that those objects or myths are just a part of everyday village life, organised in particular ways in order to make sense.

Stone suggests that identity is established through two processes: apposition (bringing together) and opposition (setting apart): ‘To situate the person as a social object is to bring together with other objects so situated, and, at the same time to set him apart from still other objects.’ In this way identity can be viewed as intrinsically associated with all the joining and departures of social life (Stone, 1962:223). Textiles are, of course, used on many different occasions. They play a role in different stages of the life-cycle, such as marriages and widowhood, as well as contributing to the everyday projection of visual identity for many groups in the region. As ‘one of the most consistently gendered aspects of material and visual culture’ (Burman and Turbin, 2002:1), and as an expressive means of covering and enhancing the body, clothing has multiple meanings and values which help to define an individual in time and space. Whilst rural Rajasthan is a patriarchal society, a large body of work has demonstrated conclusively that in such societies, although men are represented as dominant, women also possess and wield a considerable amount of power (see also Breward and Gilbert, 2006, Meller et al., 2007 for discussion). The materials in this chapter suggest that block
printed cloth is involved in the projection of both personal and social identities, and in doing so reflects the co-dependency between male and female roles within the structure and hierarchy of community and household. To substantiate this suggestion the following pages offer some specific examples of block printed cloth as clothing, and the meanings and values it communicates during use, firstly as part of the public announcement of status by men, and then within the more private female and domestic realm. Within each discussion of gendered dress the focus is on the role played by the colour and motif of hand block printed cloth, making use of Smith’s definition of gender to refer ‘not just to the roles of women and how those roles are constituted but to the roles of men and of the relations between men and women’ (1999:45).

Clothing therefore assumes meaning in social contexts, which fall within the context of the space and time associated with culture, and as such it is also the most visible reference for change. Hence the chapter draws to a close by considering the manner in which synthetic and industrially manufactured textiles have been incorporated into local dress, worn in addition to, alongside, and ultimately as a substitute for hand printed cloth. Social, political and economic change are all well known to be reflected in dress choices, and the particular choice of cloth is often related to a mix of identity, tradition, aesthetics, available sources, occasion, status and wealth. Firsthand accounts are used to show how the requirements of modern life are affecting the choices of base cloth made by even those who adhere to traditional styles of garment.

The aims of this chapter are thus twofold; first to examine the different types of garments which tend to be made from block printed textiles, and explore the manner in which pattern might enhance their values and meanings, arguing that the combinations of pattern and colour used for this are in no way arbitrary. Then second to explore the recent changes to local dress
traditions with the arrival of polyester materials, because these changes reflect the very local effects of technological progress on such things as crafts and cultural heritage. The materials for this chapter were gathered throughout the fieldwork for this thesis, and rely primarily on the memories and knowledge of artisans consulted. The chapter draws examples from the catalogue of designs and motifs, Appendix H. The resulting insights into the traditional expectations of local customers, and the complex relationships between occasion, identity, self-representation and dress, offer deeper understandings of hand block printed textiles by associating them with patterns of use. But, in recognition that traditions are neither static nor divorced from the mechanisms of modernity, it also offers important and timely observations on the role of synthetic materials in the development of rural dress styles, and thus reveals the impetus for changes to the craft of hand block printing itself. By exploring these sartorial changes in a local context it becomes clear what instigated changes to the craft of hand block printing.

4.2 Hand block printed dress for men

According to the Ganga Smriti, a Brahmin should wear white, Kshatriya (warrior) red, Vaishya (merchant or cultivator) yellow, and Shudra (menial) ‘dark and dirty clothes’ (Wilk, 2006:50). Whites and yellows were once the preserve of Brahmins and high castes, and the ritual purity associated with these colours influences all male clothing. In rural areas of Rajasthan typical male dress is predominantly white, and customarily consists of four elements: (1) garments for the lower body, (2) garments for the upper body, (3) headwear, and (4) an extra length of cloth thrown over the shoulder. Hand block printed cloth is usually used for headwear and as the shoulder cloth, and rarely seen made into upper and lower body garments.
4.2.1 Lower body

On the lower body, men of Rajasthan’s rural farming and pastoral communities customarily wear the white cotton *dhoti*, as seen in the photograph above, which is a waist-cloth wrapped and folded to give the appearance of trousers of varying lengths. Sometimes also called a *pancha* (meaning ‘five’), which may be a reference to the five yard long strip of cloth sometimes used, or the south Indian method of tying which involves five knots. It is also related to the Sanskrit word *dhuvati*. Clearly describing the *dhoti*, on his first visit to India in 1030 AD, Alberuni reported ‘... they wear turbans as trousers... with as much cotton as would suffice to make a number of counterpanes and saddle-rugs’ (Sachau, 1910:180). A *dhoti* is a rectangular piece of soft unstitched and unhemmed cotton cloth, usually loom-width and around five or six metres long. The traditional handloom produces cloth with a finished width of usually 36” (94cm) wide. Wider widths are possible, though harder to achieve using fine cotton thread counts. There are many ways to make a *dhoti*, each involving subtle differences...
in draping, leg length (in some styles one leg is worn shorter than the other), pleating and gathering at the waist, and thickness or quality of the cotton cloth. To a local eye, these variations can speak volumes about the wearer’s origins, social status and occupation. In general, the heavier or coarser the material and shorter the *dhoti* the more likely the wearer is to be involved in manual labour such as farming or herding.

A generalised Rajasthani method of *dhoti* wrapping is: The cloth is first folded in half and wrapped lengthwise around the waist, tied in place using a ‘rabbit ear’ knot at the front. The excess cloth, which is sometimes sufficient to make another full wrap around the body, is then secured as follows. Taking the left end, pleating it vertically, and passing it between the legs to tuck it in the waist at the back; then the right end is pleated horizontally and tucked in the waist at the front. This results in a loose and roomy pair of ‘trousers’, though which, on closer inspection, have only one completely enclosed leg. Small valuables, such as keys or coins, can be tucked securely into the folds at the waist. The three photographs below further illustrate this complex arrangement of pleating, folding and tucking.

*Figure 17: Left and Centre: rear view of two farmers attending a performance in Amber, 2005, illustrates how loose ‘ends’ of a *dhoti* are passed between the legs and tucked into the back of the waist. Right: front view of *dhoti* plus *bundi* vest, *safa* and *angochha*, Pipad 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.*
An alternative style of waist cloth is the *lunghi* - a rectangle of cloth simply worn wrapped around the waist, in the same way as a sarong. The size of cloth can be anything from a simple knee-length strip to a 1.5m x 2m sheet. In Rajasthan the *lunghi* is generally more popular among Muslim communities, worn whilst working in or around the house, and can be made from plain white cotton, block printed *ajrakh*, or a simple blue and white woven ‘madras’ style check - as worn in the left hand photograph below. Whilst some men wrap and tie the cloth around the waist, other have the material stitched into a tube which can then simply be stepped into and the excess folded and tucked at the waist. The length of the *lunghi* can then be halved as and when required, by simply hitching the hem into the waist. However, it is normally considered disrespectful to attend temple worship, speak to women or to one’s social superiors with the *dhoti* or *lunghi* folded up, and exposing the legs above the knee is generally perceived as a sign of lower social status.
The garments discussed so far fall into the category of dress which Forbes Watson defined as ‘articles which leave the loom in a state ready to be worn’ (1866:4). As illustrated in the right hand photograph, above, some men prefer to wear a simple stitched pyjama – from the Persian *pae* (lower limbs) and *jama* (covering). For most rural wearers these are constructed from a pair of basic plain white cotton cloth rectangles, joined at the top and gathered onto a drawstring waist. A variety of more complex variations also exist, mostly within the development of urban elite costume, including the famous Jodhpur breeches (cut to fit on the calves but roomy at the hips and thighs) and the *churridar* (close fitting cut on the bias so as to be worn in numerous wrinkles from the knee down). However, for men, with the exception of *ajrakh* printed *lunghi* which is never worn by Hindus (due to proscriptions against indigo), no other lower body garments are traditionally made from hand block printed cloth.
4.2.2 Upper body

Evidenced in the photographs on the preceding pages of this chapter, the universal male upper body garment in rural Rajasthan is the *kurta*. This is a long shirt or tunic, with or without collar, typically pulled on over the head and buttoned from mid-chest to neck at the front. Again, white is the most common colour, though khaki or airforce-blue *kurtas* are also widely worn, particularly with matching voluminous pyjama trousers. These *kurta-pyjama* sets are more popular in neighbouring Sindh and Gujarat, worn mainly by Muslims, or as an urban compromise between the *dhoti* and modern western-styled shirt-pants. The construction of a typical *kurta* tunic can be a flat-cut, two-piece (front and back), or gored-panel tunic which hangs just beyond the fingertips but not to the knees. It has long sleeves set into the garment with square gussets. The cut of a *kurta* is similar to a Byzantine *dalmatica*, to which it is probably historically related. However, for formal or special occasions *kurtas* can also often have a stiffened collar, cuffs and front button placket, comparable to those found on western dress shirts.

Similar to those for the lower body, men’s upper body garments are also generally white or plain coloured. However, an exception is the traditional *angarakha* - a long tunic, similar in length to the *kurta*, though which opens all the way down the front and fastens by crossing the front flaps over each other with ties at waist and shoulder. *Angarakha* are often made from hand block printed cotton in Rajasthan, and sometimes wadded or quilted with a layer of cotton fibres or kapok for added warmth. The front neckline has a characteristic scooped shape, and the tie is generally on the left shoulder for Hindus and right shoulder for Muslims. This long-sleeved, tie-front style dates back to sixteenth century Mughal court fashions but is now rarely seen as everyday clothing in modern Rajasthan. Today *angarakhas* are only usually

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3 This is particularly noticeable in historical court paintings from the region. (Rosemary Crill, personal communication 2004).
seen worn as costumes by travelling musicians and performers (see left hand photograph below), or by older men in some remote regions of the state during winter months.

Figure 20: Young acrobat from a troupe of village performers, wearing traditional *angarakha* made from block printed *ankhada* (nose ring) design cotton, Jaipur 2006. Photograph D. Dunning.

Figure 21: Munshi (accountant) from Jaipur wearing Sanganeri print *angarakha*, c.1890. Photograph courtesy Alkazi Foundation.

4.2.3 Shoulder cloth

Shoulder cloths range in dimensions from a square *rumal* handkerchief, through to a larger rectangular *angochha*. The size, material and decoration of a shoulder cloth can vary considerably because, on a practical level, it is an everyday utility cloth for everything from carrying goods or new-born animals, to a light cover when sleeping, a fly whisk, seat, sunshade, or towel. Herders and shepherds, such as the Rabari Raika and the Muslim maldhari (see photograph below), will carry a longer length *angochha* which can be tied in a loop as a lumbar support, encircling knees and lower back when sitting cross-legged on the ground. Shorter shoulder cloths are simply thrown over one shoulder, longer lengths are more often looped across the body and tied: either diagonally or around the waist like a sash (as worn by
the group of musicians below); or passed behind the neck and in front of each shoulder then knotted behind the body at the lower back (almost like the straps of a backpack).

In Rajasthan, richly coloured complex geometric designs such as the \textit{ajrakh} style of printing (shown in the photographs below, and also in Appendix H: Barmer (BM)) are worn almost exclusively by Muslim communities, and in the western reaches of the state are produced by a branch of the Khatri community of cloth dyers and printers, rather than the Chhipa community (see Varadarajan, 1983, Edwards, 2005a, Ronald, 2007b).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure22.png}
\caption{\textit{Minkudi} a traditional \textit{ajrakh} design, only worn by men, as the centerfield of waist, shoulder, or head cloth. Printed in Barmer c.2004. Photograph E. Ronald 2010.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure23.png}
\caption{Muslim maldhari herder wearing \textit{ajrakh} shoulder cloth, Jaisalmer festival, Feb 2009. Photograph E. Ronald.}
\end{figure}
White *rumals* and *angochhas*, such as those depicted above and below (and also in Appendix H: Sanganer (SG)), historically form an important staple hand block printed product of Sanganer, the printing colony renowned for the production of red and black designs printed
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onto fine bleached white ground cloth (see Irwin and Hall, 1971, Skidmore and Ronald, 2010). The typical motifs for these textiles are detailed and curvilinear representations of stylised flowers and sprigs of foliage bound with flowing border lines. The unstitched Sanganeri angochha is considered spiritually pure enough for wear by Brahmin priests, and these textiles have an important connection to the town’s Jain temple, a significant stop on the pan-Indian Jain pilgrimage route. So, in addition to their local popularity, a Sanganeri angochha often makes a valuable souvenir for the religious traveller.

Figure 28: Three Sanganeri angochhas (shoulder cloths), bottom and top left show pankhi buti in centerfield, top right shows bhil patta. Photograph D. Dunning/ AMHP archive (also in Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:33-35)

The angochhas illustrated in the photographs above are printed in this recognisably distinct style of Sanganer, on a fine mul-mul (muslin) base-cloth of pure bleached white, decorated
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with complex floral butis and butahs. The motifs have a black rekh outline, which also accents detail within the flowers and leaves. Infill colours are rare, and if present will be the selective use of red. Use of deep burgundy red is seen on some historical examples, as a double rekh outline on an otherwise bleached white ground. The use of a bleached background is unique to Sanganer, and relies on a particular process of sun bleaching called tapana (a process explained in Chapter Six of this thesis). The butis and butahs printed on these largely monochrome textiles exhibit a unique dynamic aesthetic, with curved stems supporting curling leaves and petals. Motifs can be categorised into three different size ranges: the smallest butis can be less than 1cm in height (C below); the mid range butis generally between 3-6cm (A and E below); and then a range of large ornate butahs of anything up to 20cm long (B and D below). Most butis and butahs are elongated, adding to the impression of organic growth. The smallest butis are the most static, though often arranged at alternating angles, in a variety of simple leaf, dot or wheel shapes, and always printed in a precise and densely-packed half-drop repeat. Common butis are the pankhi (fan, E below), chakri (wheel), bindi (dot), and bhil patta (leaf of the Bhil tree, A below).

Figure 29: Five examples of mordant printed designs traditionally printed for use as men’s safas and angochhas in Sanganer. Photographs D. Dunning.
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![Figure 30: Patka (sash) printed in Sanganeri style, c.1860. Courtesy Rajasthan Fabric and Arts/ Photograph D. Dunning (also in Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:37).]

Traditional black and white Sanganeri textiles are always printed as piece-goods\(^4\) such as angochha (shoulder cloth) and safā (turban cloth), in predetermined arrangements and combinations of borders butis and butahs. Hence the smallest butis, described above, feature in the main body or centrefield of the piece. A slim border which contains a twining bel vine element then runs up both longitudinal selvedge of the piece, and is applied twice at either end to create a transverse border. These transverse borders are widely spaced from each other, and from the weft edge of the base-cloth. The resulting white panels are decorated with a limited number of widely spaced medium sized butis and large butahs (see diagram below).

![Figure 31: Typical Sanganeri butah and border arrangement. Images reproduced from parats (ink strike-offs) of actual printing blocks in a private family collection, Sanganer.]

\(^4\) This made collecting specific examples of designs for this research much more difficult, and the cutting of small swatches impossible.
In the photograph below, a group of musicians each have an *angochha* hand block printed in Sanganer. On the far left the *angochha* is worn tied around the waist in the manner of a *patka* sash (as in Figure 30 above) or *cummerbandh*, on the far right the *angochha* is simply thrown over one shoulder. *Cummerbandh*, though a familiar English term, originates from the Hindi *cummer* (back) and *bandh* (tie or close) and is a general term for belt or girdle (Yule, 1903:179). The distinctive Sanganeri border and *butah* is visible on the second from the left. These musicians also wear typical *angarakha* tunics and long length *dhoti*, with *bandhani* (spotted tie-dye) *safa*. 
4.2.4 Headwear

Men’s headwear is the most visible indicator of community, status, and region, and also where colour and pattern are most likely to be worn. The traditional headwear of *safa*, *pagh*, *paghri*, *potni*, or turban is still in daily use by many Rajasthani. By far the most common form of patterning for a *safa* is *bandhani* (tie-dyed dots) or *lehariya* (tie-dyed waves), although block printed designs which mimic those styles are also relatively common. By far the most commonly seen block printed *safa* designs in use today are in the black and white ‘Sanganeri’ style, as described in the previous pages and as illustrated below. The image, below left, is a Gujar *safa* from the extensive turban collection of the Mehrangarh Museum, Jodhpur. Whilst this is a historical example, probably dating to the start of the twentieth century, it is similar to some of those in production and use today. This distinctive white headgear is worn mainly by

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5 The Mehrangarh Museum Trust has been established at Jodhpur’s Mehrangarh Fort to maintain the extensive court collection of the Rajput dynasty of Mewar. I was privileged to assist briefly with the restoration and re-display of the MMT turban gallery, and my ethnographic knowledge of the region’s male headwear was greatly enriched by the detailed historical research of the MMT curator, Karni Singh, and the exhibition’s guest curator, Simon Marks.
the Khari sub-caste of the Gujar community, a predominantly rural, pastoral and semi agriculturist community whose traditional and primary occupation is livestock rearing and selling of milk and milk products. Block printed *safā* are also popular in the Udaipur and Chittor region of south Rajasthan, where small *butis* are printed in red or burgundy onto long narrow lengths of sun-bleached white cloth which is then twisted and tied in tight rope-like arrangements.

*Figure 34*: Sanganeri print *safā*. Mehrangarh Museum Trust collection. Photograph E. Ronald (with the kind permission of the Mehrangarh Museum Trust).

*Figure 35*: Village performer, western Rajasthan, wearing block printed *safā* with decorative printed *pallu* (end section) wrapped across the top. Momasar, 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.

*Figure 36*: Shorter lengths of Sanganeri style block printed cloth, worn as simple everyday *safā* in rural Rajasthan. (Left 2006; Right 2008). Photographs D. Dunning.
From a potni, a simple short coil of cloth placed on the crown of the head (see above), to an elaborate composition of twists and folds, the safa is the most expressive element of Rajasthani male dress. Lower caste labourers’ headgear often is little more than a towel-sized length of undecorated cotton cloth, as in the Sanganeri style hand block printed examples shown in the photographs above. Urban or elite caste pagh will be sleeker and more tightly bound, often with a longer tail, whilst rural safa worn by herders, farmers, and shepherds typically involve greater lengths of material, knotted and piled in a wider style to keep the sun off shoulders and neck.

In practical terms, the length of cloth, which can be up to ten metres long and one metre wide, is wrapped around the head to offer protection while riding, shade from the sun, or padding whilst carrying heavy loads on the head, depending on the method in which it is wrapped, knotted, twisted and tied. It is a common saying in Rajasthan that turban styles change ‘every twelve miles’. This is a reflection of the manner in which different castes, sub-castes, tribes, clans, and even distinct families will wear particular styles of safa. In general, a larger turban indicates a higher social status and greater wealth, due to the sheer quantity of cloth within the wrapped layers. The montage of images below, compiled from photographs taken throughout the research for this thesis (compiled for Ronald, 2007b:17), illustrates just a selection of the many and varied forms of safa worn in Rajasthan.
Multi-coloured turbans are sometimes used for weddings and festivals and are generally reserved for the respected older members of the family. The greater the number of colours in a design, and the more complex the patterning (whether bandhani tie-dye, or block print), the
more expensive the resulting *safa*. Gold might also be added to the print, and particularly during marriage ceremonies a band of brocaded ribbon, a large jewelled brooch pin, or small strings of pearls can also be added for creative effect and to make a statement regarding the wearer’s wealth and standing in the community. As well as indicating community, for some the pattern and colour of a turban can also be linked to the agricultural season. For example, cooler colours are worn in the dry hot season and warmer colours during the monsoon (Singh, 1979). Red and white *falguniya* (clustered square dot) patterns, as worn below left, are favoured during spring, while dotted patterns and bright colours usually signify the birth or marriage of a wearer’s child. Dark dull colours like dark blue or maroon signify a death in the family. In the montage, Figure 37 above, the images of men from the Maali community show red and white *bandhani safas*. The Gujar and Langha *safas* are in *lehariya* style patterning, as is the yellow *safa* in Figure 38 (below right).

4.2.5 *Safa* and status

The public announcement of status is, for men, reinforced by caste, occupation and economic wealth. The function of block printed cloth in male dress is connected to the man’s role as
husband, father and head of household, continuing the family lineage within a network of caste and kinship ties, and hierarchies of economic and social standing. The *safa* (turban) is crucial in this respect, situating the male literally and figuratively at the head of the household, in a position demanding both economic and ritual status. Selective and limited use of pattern on the *safa*, including hand block printed designs, increases his visibility. Yet, Yasin Shahabudin (hand block printer, Pipad) suggests that, since men are likely to travel further than women, the patterned *safa* is also a portable and removable aspect of the man’s caste and family identity – worn to accentuate, or removed to downplay, his caste or regional affiliations (personal communication, 2009). To Yasin’s trained eye, differences in pattern, style and colour of *safa* clearly indicate the differences between castes, and also the hierarchies and regional branches within a particular group. For example, large tight-knit kinship groups such as the Gujar (see below) have a strong internal structure with kinship and regional divisions, and vertical internal organisation for management of the affairs of the tribe.

The photograph below, reproduced from a Jaipur issue of the Hindustan Times (2006), depicts a groups of Gujars during a demonstration in Jaipur. On this occasion, the community as a whole were campaigning for better recognition and greater reserved quota of government jobs. To this end, representatives from all regional branches gathered and held protest over a number of weeks. Community pride was displayed through *safas*, a variety of which are visible in this photograph. The Khari Gujar at the front wears a Sanganeri *angochha*, similar in design to the *safa* from the Mehrangarh Museum depicted in Figure 34 above, whilst the ambassadors of other regional kin-groups wear their own respective styles of *bandhani* *safa*. 
This is just one of endless examples of how, by expressing such things as status, money, power, external relations, kinship ties, and continuation of lineage, the *safa* acts as a powerful and visible material symbol of community. When the head of a household dies whoever succeeds him is ritually invested with the family turban in a temple ceremony twelve days after the death, in which the man’s eldest son is dressed in his late father’s *safa* and recognised as his successor by family and community. This inheritance of material goods perpetuates the preference of a particular style, colour and design of *safa* within a lineage. Through this ritualtying ceremony, in the sanctified space of the temple, it is said that the ‘spirit’ of presiding deities is absorbed by the cloth, trapped between the layers of *safa* (Russell and Hiralal, 1916:367) and retained close to the wearer’s head (Cohn, 1989).

Consequently, in Rajasthan, a *safa* is considered as much more than an item of clothing - it is the most powerful symbol of a man’s dignity, status, and place in life. Accordingly, removing a *safa* becomes indicative of a loss of status, leaving the wearer bareheaded and stripped of his dignity. Similarly, under no circumstances should a *safa* touch the ground, and touching another man’s *safa* could lead to violence unless benign motives are clearly understood. Even then it is a questionable practice unless the wearer is a close friend or relative. Placing one’s *safa* at another man’s feet is an act of total submission and supplication for mercy (for
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whatever reason). In particular, a *safa* must be tied to be *pukka* or ‘just right’ according to a particular caste or family. According to Rameshwar Chhipa (Bagru, personal communication 2006), ‘a man cannot just wear a *safa*’. He emphasised that wearing the wrong type of *safa* on the wrong occasion means ridicule for the wearer, and wearing the *safa* of another caste is thoroughly unacceptable, resulting in social pressure and contempt towards the man and his family. This implies that the *safa* is thus a powerful symbol in Rajasthan, imbued with and acting as a vehicle for the spirit and substance of the caste bloodline. In theoretical terms then, for the Rajasthani male a *safa* thus becomes the locus of power, empowered with the beneficent essences of deities and ancestors, and invested with the ‘spirit’ of gift exchange (Mauss, 1923-4, Bayly, 1986:285).

![Figure 40: Group of Raika men, western Rajasthan, returning to their village for annual marriage season; each wears a different family variation of red *safa*. Note the bundle of new block printed *fadats* to the left of the picture (2000). Photograph E. Ronald.](image)

However, perhaps more important than the hand block printed textiles which are worn by men are those which they purchase to be worn by the women of their household, for it is the responsibility of the head of the household to provide for all the women under his roof. In the photograph above, a group of Rabari Raika men are seen travelling home to their village at the start of the wedding season. Each wears a distinctive *safa*, and to the left hand side of the image, behind the water pots, sits a large stack of blue and red hand block printed and resist-dyed *fadats* printed in traditional designs - destined to become *ghaggra* skirts for their
womenfolk. It is well recognised that the tension that the competition in clothing generates at weddings and festivals can cause major family and community rifts. Relatives visiting one another will inspect the new clothing acquired for the event – and draw comparisons between the various female relatives present. “Men have to be cunning in their distribution of gifts and garments”, deploying various strategies and hierarchies which generally start and end with wife and mother-in-law; “God protect the man who gives to his sister before first giving to his wife... and double tension if he gives to his wife without also giving to mother!” (Radeshyam Chhipa, personal communication, Bagru 2006).

Within the male-centred world of the Rajasthani village, gender roles are highly defined. The position of a man is determined by his caste, kinship lineage and economic strength (Veblen, 1953 [1899]). The position of a woman is said to be a reflection of the status of her husband, and is also shaped by her role as wife and mother (Walsh, 2004). According to the laws of Manu:

> Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law for their own welfare... The houses on which female relations, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse, perish completely as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek their own welfare should always honour women on holidays and festivals with ornaments and food (Buhler, (trans) 1988: Ch III, vv.5, 58, 59).

In this respect it is a matter of honour and prestige for men to be seen to provide for and clothe their womenfolk, willingly and enthusiastically. “My grandfather used to say, if a man had only sisters and daughters then he would become our regular customer – his misfortune would become our roti-subzi!” (Krishnan Kumar Chhipa, personal communication, Kaladera 2007). Roti is bread and subzi are vegetables. This is a shortened and slightly altered version of the pan-Indian reference to life’s essentials ‘roti-kopra-makhan’ (‘bread, cloth, house’) used here with similar meaning to the English phrase ‘bread and butter’. 
On a practical level, however, maintaining a large wardrobe is economically beyond most of the families of rural Rajasthan. This is because clothing is typically purchased for women at certain times of the year, usually in preparation for major life stage events such as marriage, and in conjunction with annual festivals. For many communities the two invariably coincide. For the semi-nomadic Raikas, for example, auspicious times for festivals and marriage will follow the harvest and the rainy season, when nomadic dangs have returned to the village for the annual stopover. Groups of family or community flocks usually travel together in dangs on a well-established annual route which takes advantage of seasonal grazing (see Edwards, 1999). Other farming communities also tend to celebrate at this time, assured by the grains which they have harvested, stored, and the money earned from trading any excess of these. Hence the post-monsoon celebration of Janmashtami (Krishna’s birthday) and Diwali (festival of lights)⁶ are particularly important times in the rural calendar, and both are marked by new cloth and clothing. Consequently, rural craftsmen, like Radeshyam, Rameshwar, and Krishnan Kumar and numerous others, customarily organised their annual workflow of cloth printing, dyeing, and selling around these important cloth-buying times.

4.3 Hand block printed dress for women

Separate stitched skirts and tops, not the pan-Indian sari, are characteristic apparel in Rajasthan. Rural women of pastoral and farming communities typically wear an ensemble of three important garments: a very full gathered ghaggra skirt, a fitted choli bodice, and a voluminous odhani headcloth. In contrast to the predominance of white in men’s clothing, women’s everyday dress is vibrantly coloured, and the communicative function of each element infinitely more complex. Hand block printed cloth, alongside tie-dyed bandhani, plays

⁶ Important festivals are fixed to the lunar calendar; in 2010 Janmashtami fell on 02 September, and Diwali on 05 November.
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a fundamental role in the dress traditions of women, with choice of colour and pattern influenced by a variety of factors from caste and community prescriptions of propriety and modesty, through the requirement to reflect a husband’s status by means of adornment, to the projection of personal and relational identity within a range of public and domestic settings.

![Figure 41](image1.jpg) ![Figure 42](image2.jpg)

**Figure 41:** Group of Rabari-Raika women attending a festival, c.1980. Photograph from private collection. (Ronald, 2007a:26)

**Figure 42:** Middle-aged women of the Rabari Raika community wearing hand block printed cotton ghaggra, mendh wax-resist odhani, choli and upper arm bangles. Balotra 2006. Photograph D. Dunning.

The photograph above, taken in the 1980s, depicts a group of women from south Rajasthan attending a festival, where they are selecting new sets of bangles to accompany their traditional ghaggra, odhani and choli outfits. Cloth colour, pattern, and the addition of sets of thick white sets of upper arm bangles identify them as from the semi-nomadic Rabari Raika community. The following pages explore the specific role of hand block printed cloth within these basic components of rural women’s’ dress.
4.3.1 Odhani

The most visible aspect of rural women in Rajasthan is the headcloth, or odhani (literally ‘wrap’). The odhani features in numerous rural Rajasthani folk songs, often in reference to the woman’s beauty as an enhancer of her charms. For example, Ann Grodzins Gold recorded the Song of the Seven-Coloured Wrap in which a young bride orders her groom to ride to Jaipur to return with a seven-coloured wrap, printed with peacocks, peahens, and a green border (Grodzins Gold and Raheja, 1994:52). The odhani is a large unstitched flat textile, which tucks into the waist, wraps around the hips, and is pulled up over the back, head, and at appropriate moments fully over the face, in a gesture called ghunghat. If a woman’s face is completely concealed beneath her odhani the presentation of identity through its pattern print and colour become all the more pertinent. Usually brightly coloured in distinctive tie dyed or block printed designs; this simple textile is wrapped and draped in endless ways as a means of expressing a plethora of meanings. The size of an odhani can vary considerably - from a three metre length (sometimes also known as a half-sari) which wraps once around the waist before passing over the head; to a small scrap of chiffon scarf worn as a dopatta by a young child.

Whilst working in their fields, rural women will secure their odhani in place by passing the ‘free’ corner an extra turn around their waist then tucking it into their ghaggra skirt waistband. The continual adjustment of the odhani, tweaking, pulling and sometimes keeping the edge gripped between the teeth, in order to keep the head and shoulders covered, regularly and subconsciously punctuates all female activities.

Aside from its many utility functions – as sunshade, baby-sling, child comforter and general wiper – the brightly coloured odhani is often tantamount to a woman’s ‘public’ face. The odhani epitomises female modesty, and is considered to serve a double function which both protects men from overexposure to women’s power (shakti), and at the same time protects
women from unwanted male attentions (Mines and Lamb, 2002). The complex practice of ghunghat veiling is employed to assert a number of kinship ties and hierarchies within and between communities.

In the regions studied for this research the majority of women wore either tie-dyed bandhani or modern synthetic odhani. The name given to an odhani is often derived from the base-cloth, the particular patterning applied to this, or the specific community or life-stage with which it is associated. Chira, chunnari, salu, syaluro and dhanakpuri are all examples of names each denoting a particular colour and pattern combination. Printers in remote areas of the state still have blocks for printing older styles of odhani, though most have long since forgotten the names or the specific communities for whom those designs were important. Of all the designs there are three still in regular use – the Meena ki lugdi (above right), with its red spotted flowers on black dyed heavy cotton; the red and black wax printed odhani produced
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by a specialist mendh (beeswax resist) printer in Samdari and worn by older women of many farming communities in the Barmer district (above left); and a block printed mimic of the distinctive yellow and red tie dyed chunnari odhani of the Phul-Mali community in the Bagru area (above centre). Cousin (1986) recorded a wide variety of block printed odhani styles in everyday use in Rajasthan during the 1970s, with many different configurations of border and centre-field in a range of colour combinations.

However, the odhani presents a far more complex language than the male safai, and since this is highly gendered and community-specific it is one which, as outsiders to the female domestic realm, neither I nor the male block printers could gain full access to - most especially tribal groups, well reported as notoriously territorial and unapproachable by outsiders (see for example the PhD thesis of Unnithan-Kumar, 1991). Furthermore, detailed information was limited because in modern Rajasthan, aside from the notable exceptions listed above, the vast majority of women have adopted synthetic odhanis. Rather, it is in the ghaggra skirt where traditional hand block printed textiles have played the most prominent role.

4.3.2 Ghaggra

The ghaggra is a full skirt, with gathered waist and flared hem which falls to calf length. A stitched garment, the ghaggra is constructed from flared or gored panels (kalis) of usually between twenty-six and eighty-six in number (see diagram below). Locally, the idea of an asli or ‘real/true’ ghaggra exists in every community, and each impose their own perceptions of exactly what constitutes this, usually involving specific numbers of kalis and overall quantity of cloth. A minimum of four, though sometimes upwards of twelve metres of cloth can be required to make one single skirt. A young girl’s ghaggra is typically constructed from a relatively short length of cloth, stitched into a tube and gathered on a draw-cord at the waist. The objective of the dress of young girls is to avoid attracting unwanted attention once they
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reach their teens. It is in the father’s best interest to ensure his daughters are betrothed from an early age, and married as soon as she reaches menarche, for an unmarried girl who is unchaste will bring dishonour on her father’s household and name (Fuller, 2004:21). “Ghaggra-lugdi are for wives and mothers; young girls are free to roam and play without such things” (Meenadevi, Bagru, personal communication 2005).

Figure 46: The hem of a ghaggra can reveal a wearers’ marital status: Left: widow's ghaggra, without red sinjaf border; Right: married woman's ghaggra, with red sinjaf border, Balotra district 2006. Photographs D. Dunning. (Ronald, 2007a:22, front cover).

A channel of plain cloth, the izarband, is stitched in place at the waist through which a draw cord is passed. This cord is sometimes decorated with fancy funda (tassels or beads). The raw edges at the lower hem are concealed by the addition of a broad strip of plain cloth, which adds a few inches to the length at the hem of the skirt, then turns under and reinforces the lower edge of the skirt from the reverse for around three to six inches. This sinjaf, resembling a broad bias binding, also gives weight to the skirt, enhances the drape and fall of the gathers, and holds the skirt material away from the legs to keep the wearer cool. In a social context, this red border at the hem of the skirt indicates the marital status of the wearer; no sinjaf
suggests widowhood, as illustrated in the photographs above. The basic construction of a 
ghaggra is illustrated below:

1. The block printed fadat is divided and cut into shorter equal lengths (approx 1m each).

2. Each of these shorter lengths is folded vertically in half.

3. Then a diagonal fold is made, though not quite corner-to-corner.

4. The cloth is then cut along each fold line, to create a series of right-angled panels. These form the kalis for the skirt: the narrow ends will form the waist, and the wider ends the hem.

5. The kalis are rearranged and stitched together along the long edges, reversing alternate panels to create the flared fullness of the finished skirt. This results in the printed pattern running in alternating directions on each panel. The ghaggra is finished with the addition of the wide sinjaf at the hem, and the izarband channel and drawstring waist.

A single ghaggra requires a minimum of two printed fadat lengths, each around 5 ½ metres long. These are folded and cut into kalis, simple gored panels which, when joined, align to
create a characteristic tapered waist and flared hem. Cutting the cloth in this manner means
the direction of the block printed design is reversed on alternate *kalis*. The use of these flared
*kalis* means a *ghaggra* can usually be laid out flat in a circle. Below is a block printed *ghaggra*
(c.1960), laid out flat to reveal the method of garment construction.

![Figure 48: Left: front and Right: reverse of the full ghera (circumference) of a traditional kuttoar print ghaggra. Photographs AMHP archive/D. Dunning. (Ronald, 2007a:18-19)](image)

This style of skirt, sometimes referred to as a *fetiya ghaggra* in southern Rajasthan, is
particularly popular with the Raika, Mali, Gadia Lohar and Sutar communities. In south western
Rajasthan, particularly in Barmer district, *fetiya* not only refers to the style of skirt, but also
that it is made from block printed cloth, since *fetiya* is also the local generic term for motif or
pattern. In the past a variation of this style, known as the *chatapati-ghaggra*, involved the use
of accentuated flared *kalis* in alternating colours (below left). These were worn by village
women of upper castes such as Brahman, Rajput, Bania, and Charan, though these days are
most often seen worn as costumes by dance troupes (below). In Bagru, and *asli ghaggra*
should have eighty *kalis*, whereas the one laid out flat in the photograph above, from Balotra,
has only twenty two. Typically, the *ghaggras* produced in Balotra, Barmer, and Pipad regions
have two *kalis* per metre of *fadat* which, like the scale of the printed designs, is considerably larger and coarser than those of Bagru and Jaipur.

Marriage clothing constitutes by far the brightest, most ornamented and conspicuous garments a woman will ever wear. Red is the auspicious colour of marriage, a colour considered symbolic of life forces and fertility. According to Meenadevi (personal communication, Bagru 2005), within many rural communities the number of *kalis* and fullness of a woman’s *ghaggra* is said to represent the depth of her husband’s love, and is also the physical representation of his wealth and social standing. Because of this, bridal *ghagras* tend to use significantly more material than any other, as an ostentatious display of family wealth and status. Whilst a number of *odhanis* are customarily gifted from the natal side of a bride’s family, the *ghaggra* is always the husband’s responsibility. Some thirty years ago in Balotra,
Yasin Chhipa Khan recalls his father fulfilling an order of thirty metres of hand block printed cloth destined for one single bridal ghagra. A red streak of kumkum (red paste) is smeared into the bride’s parting, and patterns of red henna are drawn onto hands and feet. Extra embellishment, such as gota patti (gold braids) on the odhani, increase the visibility of a new bride. Yet conversely it is during this early period of her life that she is expected to keep her face fully veiled (ghunghat), as below right.

![Figure 51: Hand block printed lal zameen style cloth for wedding ghagras, Pipad 2009. Photograph D. Dunning.](image1)

![Figure 52: Young woman observing ghunghat during a village festival, Momsar village 2006. Photograph D. Dunning.](image2)

According to hand block printer Suraj Narayan, and his wife Meenadevi (personal communication, Bagru 2006), in the rural districts surrounding Jaipur, Bagru and Sanganer, ghagra colour continues to act as a general marker of community. Aside from the special lal zameen prints (above) and red chilani design, produced in Jahota and worn specifically by brides, the dyed grounds of traditional hand block printed designs for ghagras are usually either dark blue, dark green, or brownish-black. Those printed with predominantly blue designs, in simple indigo-dabu style, are associated with the Jat community. Green and black arrangements are associated with the Mali community around Sanganer, with additional yellow in the design for the Phul-Malis of Kukas village, near Amer. Those printed in combinations of red and black are chiefly worn by Meenas, and reds by Rabari-Raikas.
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4.4 Auspiciousness, protection and printed cloth

The use of hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles within traditional caste dress in Rajasthan is evidently an important element of the manner in which clothing identifies group membership, and communicates aspects of the wearers religion, age, marital status, occupation, status and economic standing. However, the specific role of pattern within this communicative function of dress, and the factors which might influence choice and popularity of certain designs or motifs, are no less important.

The following pages explore the potential purposes, values and meanings ascribed to some of the patterns and motifs popularly used for textiles and dress. Patterning, embellishment and adornment are manifest throughout rural life, from the application of mandana patterns to the threshold of a home, the decoration of camels with beads and tassels, the seemingly obligatory hand painting of tractors and autorickshaws, to the ostentatious display of heavy jewellery. Such decoration is an essential part of everyday life, and acts as visible expression of underlying beliefs surrounding auspiciousness and protection. These broad themes are a
useful means of exploring regional pattern traditions, and, by drawing on existing theoretical works, help suggest some explanations as to why women make much greater use of colour, pattern, and surface embellishment than men. These ideas also help to reveal the metaphorical connections made by a specific society between experiences which are recognised and valued by them, and the visual expression of these experiences and values through such things as art and decorative pattern.

Throughout this research, traditional block printed designs and motifs were regularly said, by craftsmen and wearers alike, to represent particular local plants which are believed to be infused with protective medicinal and spiritual values. In rural Rajasthan it is well known that certain customs, beliefs and practices are intimately connected with health, sickness, therapy, and the treatment of disease, and folk medicine is notoriously infused with superstition. In recent decades the indigenous ethno-botanical knowledge and the combined medical, spiritual, or talismanic properties of plants within local systems of use has attracted a growing scholarly focus on the region (see for example Jain et al., 1991, Katewa et al., 2004). Traditional home remedies are coded in to household practices, medical systems and folk medicine fuse with protective magic in the wearing of talismanic life-promoting objects, and plants considered auspicious or inauspicious find place in folk songs, proverbs, and even the materials used to make musical instruments (Singh and Pandey, 1998). Many of the traditional block printed buti and butah motifs depict these medicinal or talismanic plants, alongside other symbolic objects deemed by some to aid in protection, particularly from the unwanted attentions of the ‘evil eye’ (najar). Review and analysis of the catalogue of print designs and motifs gathered during the course of this research helps reveal this (the catalogue is included as Appendix H of this thesis).
4.4.1 Bagru prints

The Chhipa craftsmen of Bagru list numerous traditional motifs, used to produce *fadats* of coarse dark-dyed cloth for rural women’s *ghaggra* skirts. Motifs for these indigo-*dabu* textiles are a range of small static representations of flowers, herbs, and locally familiar objects. For example: the *aam* (mango, *Mangifera indica*, parat H below) design depicts a tree widely revered in Hinduism, in which a number of important deities are believed to reside. With both medicinal and spiritual value, mango leaves are used in household *puja* (worship) and also represent fertility, particularly the *kairi* (green/young mango fruit, photograph D, below).

![Images of various motifs](image)

Figure 56: Nine examples of hand block printed and resist-dyed prints (A-E photographs of cloth, F-I parats or strike-offs taken from actual printing blocks) from the range of textiles traditionally produced for women’s *ghaggas* in Bagru. Photographs D. Dunning/ E. Ronald.

*Kairi* are a popular ingredient in local cooking, as is *dhania* (coriander, *Coriandrum sativum*, parat G, above). *Mukut*, however, is the crown or halo worn by deities. The *Chakri* (small wheel, parat I, above) is commonly a small domestic grain grindstone, though in Hinduism in
general the wheel (chakra) motif is a symbol of divine knowledge. Ankhada (photograph A, above) shows a small nose-stud, part of the jewellery worn to denote marital status in most communities. The nose stud or ring is associated with a woman’s honour, and thus removing it indicates her disgrace. This particular motif is similar to a nose ornament design which is popular across Rajasthan, depicting the sun and the hemispherical moon. Other popular motifs printed in Bagru include the bewda, which uses a pair of flowers to represent the auspicious twin pots carried stacked on a woman’s head. Nargis, a rare wild narcissus or daffodil (parat F, above); singh baaj, the lions claws (photograph E, above); khirni, the evergreen Manilkara hexandra tree; patashi and nayi patashi, sweets offered during worship; and ghundi an ornament worn by women on the forehead after marriage.

4.4.2 Pipad prints

In Pipad, to the east of Jodhpur and some 230km south of Bagru, the motifs are simple and naive in style. Many are silhouette representations of simple objects such as the mirchi (chilli),
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the *bichhu* (scorpion, photograph E below), for example. Others are flower or herb representations, again simple silhouettes, such as the *gaindi* (small marigold), *chhota phool* (small flower), *methi* (fenugreek, *Trigonella foenum-graecum*, the same as is produced in Balotra), *imli* (tamarind, *Tamarindus indica*) and *dhania* (coriander, *Coriandrum sativum*, same as is produced in Bagru – see *parat* G above).

![Figure 58: Five examples of hand block printed and resist-dyed prints from the range of textiles traditionally produced in Balotra. Photographs D. Dunning/ E. Ronald.](image)

Striped designs are prevalent in the Pipad style, some containing simple chunky *bel* vines or interspersed with *butis*, others simple solid or geometric tramlines (e.g. *elaicha* and *kandla*). The most unusual design is a geometric arrangement of diamonds known as *kappa*, worn by Rabari widows in the region. The most distinctive design printed in Pipad for local use is *sara*
(photograph C, above), a simple red dyed fabric on which small cream circles are resisted. Each circle contains seven dots, arranged like a simplified flower. This circular symbol incorporates both the *chakra* wheel (divine knowledge), and seven spots representing the rural folk-deities, the ‘seven sisters’ (Qadir, 1950). Many of the textiles produced in Pipad are similar, if not identical to those produced in Balotra, since they serve many of the same communities.

Figure 60: Rabari-Raika widow, wearing hand block printed cotton *ghagga* with *mirchi* (chilli) design, Pipad 2009. Photograph D. Dunning.

### 4.4.3 Balotra prints

To the south western corner of the state, the traditional designs printed by the Chhipa Khan family of Balotra, in Barmer district, are particularly distinctive. The motifs, resisted in rust reds, cream, and ochre yellow, against dark indigo blue and bottle-green grounds, are large in scale, typically ranging from 3-10 cm in height. The designs have a bold, unrefined feel, with flat blocks of colour, no use of shading, and in some such as the *Rabari ro fatiya* (‘Rabari...
motif’), there is no *rekh* outline used to define the *butis*. All motifs have a vertical plane of symmetry, resulting in the characteristically naive and tribal as the examples in the swatches below illustrate.

*Figure 61: Swatches of hand block printed and resist-dyed cotton cloth produced in the Chhipa Khan workshop, Balotra. Left: *goondi* (berry used for chutney); Right: *tokriya* (baskets).*

*Butis* are arranged in straight, half-drop and brick style repeats, though many of the designs are constructed using striped units. The most complex individual motif is the *gul butah* (‘rose motif’, C below), a large compound lozenge shape containing a central flower. This is also the only design which makes significant use of white, and is worn by widows of a particular Jain community in Sirohi district, to the south. The *bhalka* or *bhala* (spear head, A below) is a bold geometric design unit is formed around a central teardrop lozenge which many also refer to as the *tilak*, an auspicious marking or jewel applied to the forehead of married women, positioned over the third eye. This design is worn by women of the Gadia Lohar community (nomadic blacksmiths), strong tribal women involved in strenuous forging and metalworking activities. The simplest design is the *maliya ro fatiya* (‘Mali motif’), an arrangement of paired dots and triangles in red resisted against a dark indigo blue ground. In Hinduism the downward-pointing triangle is a symbol of female energy, *shakti*, and the centre of some
mandalas show a dot (bindi) in conjunction with a triangle. Designs take their names from local plants, objects and communities. For example; Long (‘clove’, Syzygium aromaticum) a bright yellow and red stripe of cloves, auspicious during marriages, and valued for their medicinal properties as much as culinary. Chameli (‘jasmine’, Nyctanthes arbor-tristis, E below), phooli (‘flowers’), and gainda (marigolds, Tagetes erecta) clearly relate to the auspicious blossoms and garlands used in temple worship, and all are designs customarily worn by the community responsible for cultivating them.

Figure 62: Five examples from the range of hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles traditionally produced in Balotra for use as women’s ghagras. Photographs D. Dunning.

4.4.4 Kaladera

In Kaladera, 12km away from Bagru, the Chhipa families specialise in dabu printing with the locally sources kali mitti (black earth). The design most commonly produced is koyel or cuckoo (see below). The migratory path of the Indian cuckoo heralds the arrival of the monsoon, a vital and much celebrated time in the rural calendar, and in local folktales is always a representation of good fortune. The koyel design is popular with Bhil tribal women, particularly when printed onto coarse handloomed khadi cotton (as below) since this offers protection from the thorns encountered in their hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
4.4.5 Protection and healing

Taking just one example from within this wealth of pattern, motif and meaning, the *neemboli* (‘neem berry’, Figure 62 D above), printed in Balotra and Pipad, is a striped design of twining strands bearing the fruits of the *neem* tree, *Azadirachta indica*. The *neem* tree is a protected species, revered for its spiritual and medicinal qualities, indigenous across most of South Asia, with numerous medicinal, insecticidal, anti-microbial, divine, and sacred properties. Every part of the tree is put to use; twigs, leaves, seeds, berries, oil and bark. Used extensively in *ayurveda*, *unani* and homeopathic medicine, the *neem* tree is known in Sanskrit as *Arishtha* (‘reliever of sicknesses’) and *Sarva Roga Nivarini* (‘the curer of all illnesses’) (Jain et al., 1991, Biswas et al., 2002, Ronald, 2007a). Unlike other more esoteric sources of plant-medicines, knowledge of the *neem* tree’s many uses is not restricted to specialist healers. Indeed, *neem*-based products such as anti-bacterial soaps are becoming widely available beyond India today. As a result, the physical healing properties of *neem* have become incorporated into the wider body of common beliefs in rural Rajasthan, and enmeshed in ideas about divine powers, capricious deities and malevolent spirits (Biswas et al., 2002). Furthermore, *Shitala Mata*, the
‘Cool One’, goddess of smallpox, is said to reside in the neem tree. Sufferers of smallpox and chickenpox, a scourge of rural communities which is said to be caused by the heat of Shitala’s volatile presence in the body, are treated medicinally with the leaves of the tree in conjunction with spiritual appeals to Shitala to release the patient from their suffering. Hence leaves are placed in the bed of a chickenpox sufferer and applied as tinctures and poultices as well as being hung across doorways or added to fires, to repel evil spirits. The disinfecting powers of Neem, medical and spiritual, mean it is also often carried on visits to the cremation ground, in order to remove any evil effects caused by roaming spirits or contact with the dead (Biswas et al., 2002).

This is just one example out of many which shows the manner in which pattern and adornment can help manifest ideas surrounding the intersecting roles of deities and material objects for protection and healing. The neemboli design (below left) is more than a semiotic representation of neem fruit; instead, by association with both tree and goddess, it has healing and protective properties embedded within it. The responsive textile surface serves as the carrier of belief, employs various design devices to generate attachment and admiration in the viewer combined with enough complexity to deflect evil spirits, and provides a vehicle through which the ‘essences’ (Bayly, 1986:287) of both tree and goddess can be conveyed. Because popular Hindu beliefs are founded on a subtle hierarchy of gods, spirits, animals and men, with no clear division between them, ‘essences’ can be transmitted between each with relative ease. This idea is reflected in the pan-Indian beliefs centred on Prasad (literally meaning ‘grace’) which translates simply as ‘sanctified leftovers’. This can be such things as food, water, or flowers, sanctified during worship and then eaten or worn by devotees afterwards. Once the goods have been symbolically in contact with and ‘consumed’ by the deity, they become ritually transformed into Prasad, imbued with divine powers and grace (‘essences’) which are
then absorbed or internalised when used or consumed by the devotee (Fuller, 2004:74). This is in direct opposition to consuming food or water which has been in contact with the mouth of another human, which is considered to be *jutha* or contaminated.

Figure 66: *Neemboli* (*neem* fruits) design, hand block printed and resist-dyed in Balotra. Photograph D. Dunning.

Figure 67: *Chameli* (*jasmine*) design, hand block printed and resist-dyed in Balotra. Photograph D. Dunning.

The impermanence of the materials most commonly used for *Prasad* (food, flowers, water) mean the process must be repeated regularly, ‘in the divine world, we are told, flower garlands do not fade, but in this world where men and women blink and die, they do’ (Blackburn, 2005:256). Motifs which depict forms of *Prasad*, such as *patashi*, *nayi patashi* (below left and right), or sanctified flowers like the *gainda* (marigold) and *chameli* (*jasmine*, above right), can be viewed as a way of making these transient materials more permanent, by capturing their visual representations in durable colours on cloth.
4.5 Hand block printed household textiles

In addition to dressing the body, hand block printed textiles contribute to the dressing and adornment of domestic and family spaces. The traditional Rajasthani village dwelling, a simple circular or square single-roomed thatched *bungha* or *jhumpa*, typically has little furnishing aside from wooden *charpoy* beds and steel storage trunks. Even today, despite a proliferation of the ubiquitous plastic garden chair, many families prefer to sit on the floor and bed, and use a range of large hardwearing and lavishly decorated textiles to designate family sitting and sleeping areas. Some are stitched and patched from layers of old *odhanis*, *lunghis*, *angochhas* and *dhotis*, others like the *jajams* (floorspreads), *bicchaunis* (bed sheets) and *rezais* (double sided bed quilts, with wadding sandwiched between), are all traditional products of the Chhipa workshops of Rajasthan. These large flat textiles double-up as sleeping and sitting in the house, as well as sun and wind canopies outside the building, and as portable domestic and family spaces when visiting fairs, festivals or wedding celebrations.

In Sanganer and Jaipur these household textiles are customarily printed using red and black motifs on a yellowish cream ground – the *syahi-begar* style. In Bagru, Balotra and Pipad they
are also printed using the indigo-*dabu* resist methods, which produces coloured red and yellow motifs on blue, green and dark brownish-black grounds (examples are included in the catalogue of designs, Appendix H). These darker coloured designs are harder wearing and show less dirt so are ideal for everyday use, whilst those with lighter grounds might be reserved for more auspicious occasions.

When I was a girl we all were expected to take a *jajam* with us to our new husband’s home. Before my marriage I worked on mine with my father and mother, selecting the right motifs to go around the borders and then overseeing the Lalgar to make sure the reds were dyed to just the right shade. It had to be a proper *jajam* because I was the daughter of the Chhipa community and my husband’s family needed to see that I came from a family of equal skill and status to theirs. The *jajams* and *bichhaunis* we kept for our own marriages were far better than anything we sold to other communities, because we put our hearts and our minds into them. Took pride in making them just right. (Meenadevi, personal communication Bagru 2006.).
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Typically, a traditional *jajam* is patterned with a number of concentric layers of different border designs around the perimeter of the cloth, usually alternating geometrics with *bel* vine border designs. Within that, a row of protective figures is typically added: the soldier, tiger, scorpion, and mounted warrior being the most common. Figurative representations are surprisingly rare in traditional block printed textiles, this being the only significant instance of their use. Finally, the remainder of the centerfield is filled with a geometric lattice or twining *jaal* ‘all-over’ design. The *jajam* illustrated above was printed as a ‘sampler’ to simultaneously show four centerfield options and four different protective figures within the customary arrangement of the most popular border design elements (see Appendix H: BG.023, BG.024).

In the past it was customary for a printer to have a series of these sorts of samples, in order to demonstrate to potential customers the range of blocks and styles of print or design at his disposal. These production samples also acted as an informal archive or inventory of what would usually be a large number of blocks, stored around the home or workshop.

![Figure 71: Hand block printed *bichhauni* in *syahi-begar* style c.1975. Private Chhipa home, Sanganer 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.](image1)

![Figure 72: Border detail from hand block printed *syahi-begar* style *bichhauni* c.1975, showing geometric bands and rank of protective armed *sepoy* (soldier) figures. Private Chhipa home, Sanganer, 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.](image2)
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Whilst on a practical level these textiles represent the pinnacle of the craftsman’s mastery and an opportunity to flaunt a wide selection of blocks from his repertoire, the *jajam* floorspread, with its multiple borders and complex centerfield, could be said to represent the delineation of a safe family space - surrounded by auspicious and protective motifs and patterns which perhaps act to ensure that those sitting on it are not compromised by lurking malevolent spirits. It is not uncommon for a *chaupad* game board to be printed in the very centre of a *jajam* (below), reinforcing the idea of protected space where children, notoriously vulnerable to the evil eye’s gaze (*najar*), can play safely. This idea is supported by the widespread practice in rural Rajasthan of applying a black spot of *kohl* to a child’s face, said to detract from the child’s beauty by making it imperfect, and thus deflecting the attentions of the *najar*. For exactly the same purpose, black spots are also commonly applied to camels, trucks, jeeps, refrigerators and autorickshaws.

Figure 73: *Bichhauni* bed or floor spread (c.1960-5) featuring a selection of geometric devices, figurative motifs, and a *chaupad* game board at centre, private Chhipa home in Sanganer. Photograph D. Dunning 2007.
4.6 Polyester

Of course, the manner in which dress and appearance identifies a wearer is always open to interpretation. Whilst this study of hand block printed textiles has revealed much about the underlying values and meanings ascribed to cloth and clothing traditions among rural communities, it also highlights the processes of change in an ever globalising world. Of course rural dress styles are changing at a slower pace than urban ones, but innovations in materials and embellishment are a key feature of this continual renegotiation. It is certainly no new observation that clothing styles in India exist side by side, and also co-mingle. This partial overlapping and intermingling has produced historical developments such as the use of the veil, the combining of stitched and unstitched or wrapped dress, and, in more recent decades, the merging of westernised garments with traditional local dress styles. In even the most isolated rural communities polyester and nylon fabrics are now worn alongside, or instead of, traditional cottons. In a study of cloth printing traditions it is important not to shy away from such notable change, since it directly impacts upon the future of the craft. The following few examples help explore these local processes of change.
The photograph above, taken near Balotra during the course of this research, depicts a group of four women from the Rabari Raika community. On the far left, the matriarch of the group wears a cotton *ghaggra*, block printed with the *kuttaar* motif, popular with many tribes and castes in the region. A section of printed *fadat* border design, visible near the hem, indicates the cloth was printed by the Chhipa Khan family of Balotra: “This is our father’s work. His colours were *pakka* [strong/fast] but this *ghaggra* is more or less 25 years old. I see his hand in that work” (Chhipa Yasin Khan, private communication, 2006). Her *odhani*, is loosely woven *khadi*, *mendh* printed and softened through years of use. Absence of a broad red *sinjaf* band at the skirt hem might suggest she is a widow, though this information is confused by her wearing of jewellery. Raika caste law dictates that the sets of upper arm bangles, gifted to a bride from her new husband, must be crushed and thrown onto his funeral pyre if she outlives him. On
her right her eldest son’s wife wears a similarly patterned *ghagra*, although the base-cloth is polyester, and the pattern applied by mechanised screen or roller print. The broad red *sinjaf*, and jewellery including a yellow *mangalsutra*\(^7\) necklace, indicate her husband is still alive. Her *odhani*, though similar in appearance to the cotton *khadi* version, is made from a sheer nylon fabric and decorated with a border of white machine-stitched embroidery. The girl on the far right wears a near identical ensemble, with the substitution of pink plastic bangles. The other girl, second right, is not yet married though is of marriageable age. Her *ghagra* and *choli* are made from matching pink floral nylon, clearly an uncomfortable fibre in a desert climate. Her *odhani* is sheer nylon; screen-printed to mimic a particular *chunari* (tie-dye) design, a term which refers to red and white spotted *bandhani* pattern said locally to be associated with girlhood, love, and marital happiness, and popular with local Raika girls during the months leading up to their marriage. Cloth shops across the region stock an array of these brightly coloured, tinsel bedecked synthetic head-cloths, which form the mainstay of ritual gift exchange from brothers to their married sisters. On their feet the older women wear locally made hand-stitched camel leather *mojari* shoes. The girls have chosen the equally hard-wearing yet less attractive thick rubber or plastic Bata flip-flops, a universal style throughout modern South Asia. The young boy on the right wears a school uniform of western-styled poly-cotton shirt and polyester trousers, similar to the everyday dress of many adult men in modern Rajasthan.

It is clear from the analysis of this photograph that, whilst caste dress codes continue to prevail in terms of modesty, the boundaries of these codes are being challenged and continually redefined with the incorporation of new materials such as nylon and plastic. In some cases the

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\(^7\) Comparable to a western wedding ring, the *mangalsutra* (meaning ‘something good, tied’) is placed around a woman’s neck during the marriage ceremony and worn until her husband’s death. For this particular community the *mangalsutra* takes the form of multiple strands of tiny yellow seed-beads on a black cotton thread, with a hollow silver amulet suspended at the front.
new materials offer a complete replacement for old, as with the footwear, whilst in others they are manipulated to retain the appearance of traditions, for example the substitution of white or pink plastic for ivory or bone arm bangles. Thus, with block printed cotton *khadi* at the traditional end of the scale, and chemically-dyed nylon or polyester at the modern end, materials such as poly-cotton blends and roller-printed copies of traditional block print motifs function in a middle-ground, simultaneously communicating adherence to village traditions and yet also aspirations for urban modernity.

“Cotton garments, especially those made from coarse local handloomed cotton, are heavy and not necessarily comfortable. Polyester, nylon, and terri-cott make the cloth lighter, but can be sweatier to wear” (Raksha Raika, personal communication 2007). However, shiny bright modern synthetic materials or embellishments, particularly those used by rural tribal communities, are often used in contexts in which status and wealth play a role. In the photograph below, taken in the early 1980s in a village in the Nagaur district of Rajasthan, a group of young married Raika girls illustrate how non-traditional synthetic materials can gain acceptability as caste dress mainly through application of glittering embellishments.
Until the late 1960s polyester was viewed as a luxury by the Indian government, and its import restricted. The domestic manufacture of polyester was famously led by Reliance Industries, and their contentious business methods are the subject of McDonald’s (1998) publication *The Polyester Prince: The Rise of Dhirubhai Ambani*, an exposé of political corruption subsequently banned by the Indian government. Political and technological advancements in the 1960s meant synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon flooded the markets of India. In urban areas their uptake was swift. In rural areas, such as Rajasthan, where traditional textiles are far more deeply entrenched in the spirit and substance of caste dress, the process of their intermingling has been somewhat slower and more idiosyncratic. The key to their success lies in the cunning mimicry of traditional locally significant and popular motifs and patterns, roller printed onto the cheap easy-care polyesters, of which just a few examples are depicted below.
The majority of these examples correspond to the traditional prints produced in Balotra and Pipad, although printers in Bagru cite a similar influx of polyesters during the 1970s.

Around thirty years ago the local shops started to stock these new *kopras*. At first, when I entered the shop with my father, to deliver our work, I thought there must be some new printer in town! It was this polyester cloth, but with our traditional *kattaars, gaindas, bhalkas* and other *fatiyas* [motifs] printed on. Too bright and shiny – it didn’t look correct (Chhipa Yasin Khan, personal communication, Balotra 2006).

These childhood recollections of the arrival of mass-produced imitation block print designs puts a local perspective on the effects of the aggressive industrialisation of India’s textile industry in the post-Independence period (1947). As Yasin’s example suggests, local patronage, through its traditions of expectations, is often stronger as a controller of quality yet, at the same time, it also allows for innovation within the tradition since it is not contaminated with those external notions of authenticity which might in effect fix things in an ethnographically recent past.
As local communities began to favour the new easy-care synthetic textiles which flooded the market, rural families such as Yasin’s saw local demand for their products rapidly diminish. Rural women have gradually yet almost completely substituted their hand printed cottons or the newer ersatz polyester copies. Ensuring these newer materials comply with established
caste dress, wearers mimic traditional colour and garment styles, as in the photograph below right. It is now becoming increasingly rare in modern Rajasthan to see traditional hand block printed textiles used within everyday dress, and this has had a profound effect on the craft of hand block printing.

Particular styles of dress and textiles are a means of placing an individual in a particular social sector, often stereotyped. As urban Indian fashions progress rapidly into a cosmopolitan melange of western and regional components rural visitors are beginning to stand out in greater relief, considered by many as backward, old fashioned, jungli in appearance and dress.

When Raksha Raika moved to the outskirts of Jaipur with her husband, leaving their tiny village in the parched Nagaur district, she made a conscious decision to start wearing polyester saris. Asked if she owned any traditional block printed cotton clothes, particularly the heavy cotton ghagras, she replied “yes I do, but I have no need of those things here – they remain in my village, to wear when I am with my family and am daughter-in-law again” (personal
communication 2006). Her decision to adopt visibly urban wear, and in doing so consciously conceal aspects of her identity, was a direct reaction to the disapproval and negativity experienced by many rural women when visiting large cities like Jaipur. Similarly, her husband adopted western styles trousers and plain shirt for the most part, having taken a new job and lifestyle he deemed worthy of “respect and proper dress” (Kyar Ram Raika, personal communication 2006). As this example suggests, with the increasing variety of materials and garments available for mingling and intermingling, textiles and dress are becoming an important tool in the negotiation between rural and urban identities. Thus, on the one hand, the ‘sartorial conservatism’ of rural communities has led to customs being retained, even if only for special occasions. On the other hand though, failure to wear caste dress does not merely symbolise a change of social identity, it is perceived as transforming the wearer, and modern urban dress styles also have transformative properties, capable of transcending caste boundaries through their uniformity and lack of close association with particular settings or ethnicities.

4.7 Conclusion

The distinctive general dress style of Rajasthan is well known throughout India, particularly for the dominant use of brightly patterned and dyed cloth; including block printed, tie-dyed, and hand embroidered items. Hand block printed garments are sometimes worn by men, as *safa* and *angochha*, though are more frequently and prominently worn by women, as *ghaggra* and *odhani*. Pattern for men is linked to their public announcement of status, economic strength, and kinship ties. For women, on the other hand, cloth pattern and colour is more closely tied to their position in the domestic hierarchy, and progression through significant life-stages. Patterned cloth (in any form) seems less important for men to display, although investment in
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it is an expression of status and economic wealth. The wearing of printed clothing is, however, seemingly crucial in the definition of female identity through appearance and dress.

The visual presentation of self through clothes, along with language, establishes the wearer’s identity, according to the parameters of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age. Wearing distinctive textiles associative with region and kinship ties when travelling outside the village or home is an important means by which members of rural communities make their social identities more visible than their personal identities. Yet, a wearer may attempt to reinforce, subvert, or escape from these social categories, and the everyday textiles and dress styles of rural Rajasthan are neither fixed nor unchangeable. Rather, the traditional ensembles explored in the course of this chapter are continually evolving, and modifications to details such as cloth type, surface embellishment and garment style can indicate changes to the local socio-cultural milieu. In many instances the prevailing value is derived from the way in which certain items of clothing are worn, rather than the actual material from which they are made, reflecting Bourdieu’s suggestion that the manner in which an object has been acquired often cannot be separated from its use, and in turn this use cannot be separated from the ways in which others react to the object (Bourdieu, 1984:21-22). Charsley, writing about the cultural history of British wedding cakes, points out that ‘where events are frequent and not of any great moment [such as dressing for work each day], arrangements for them may undergo a continuous and often unremarked process of innovation, by modifications and drift’ (Charsley, 1992:135). In this way, the meanings of particular textiles and patterns and the specific details about the wearer’s personal identity which they communicate have gradually changed. Thus, over time, the form of objects, their uses, and the meanings attributed to them may all evolve in different directions and at different speeds.
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Block printed cotton garments are today most commonly worn by elderly village women, and wider understandings of the connotations of specific prints are of lessening importance. Instead, block printed cloth has developed as a more generalised reference of age and locale, and become infused with connotations of an old fashioned rural or ‘bumpkin’ way of life (both Tarlo, 1996, Edwards, 1999 discuss amendments to specific forms of Gujarati dress traditions in this respect). However, for the older generation villagers, wearing such things as block printed cloth, traditional *dhoti*, and heavy *khadi odhani* is perceived as an expression of pride and a sign of commitment to their local or community integrity and autonomy. With increased age, people develop kin, occupation, and class identities that become known throughout the community and are reinforced through traditional celebrations and practices. They have achieved their identities through kinship, religious participation, public service, and occupation. Young people are less likely to be identified with or identify themselves in traditional ways, and are also most often the targets of the media and its projections of modernity. Media influence, the changing nature of the community and their place in it, all contribute to making younger generations the most identity oriented and the most involved in consuming identities. Consequently, synthetic ‘modern’ materials which offer an alternative to, and yet still retain the essence of tradition in some way, either through colour and pattern, or by garment style, or simply by the level of prescribed modesty which they offer, play a significant role in the continual renegotiation of a wearer’s identity.

Whilst there is a huge and growing theoretical resource on the communicative functions of dress few authors focus on the role of patterned textiles within this, and fewer still on the communicative function of patterned cloth and clothing in the Indian context. Playing Yasin’s ‘identity game’, albeit in an anthropologically informed manner, became an important aspect of the fieldwork for this thesis. Such observations, in rural bazaars, *sabzi mandis*, at country
bus stations, on country lanes, and outside the Sawai Man Singh general hospital in Jaipur (all places where rural communities converge) form an important part of understanding about and contextualising regional textiles and dress. These observations show that the textiles and dress of Rajasthan remain a complex and multi-faceted form of visual communication, yet also identify an increasing rarity to instances of traditional hand block printed textiles in everyday use. Hence not only is there a need to record the traditions as they are passing, but also the processes of change which they are undergoing.

Among the farming and pastoral communities of Rajasthan today, block printed cottons have given way to bright synthetic materials, and many women have given up traditional ghaggra-odhani altogether in favour of the sari. There is a rising aspiration towards upward social mobility and, unsurprisingly in a culture where dress is such a vital means of expressing status and standing, these rising aspirations are visually represented in the use of modern materials, synthetic colours, and urbanised styles. In the context of ongoing changes to textiles and dress, appearance functions ambiguously both to resist ‘older’ ideas about fixed stereotypes, and yet also to fix identity (for example, ethnicity, marital status, religion) more firmly. As the global and local penetrate one another, the ever-widening array of garment and fabric styles offers ever more strategies for articulating the ‘contradictory necessity and impossibility of identities... in the messiness of everyday life’ (Ang, 2000:11).

This chapter supports wider theoretical understandings about the role of dress, and the ways in which appearance and the components of dress are harnessed to express changing social roles. In doing so it illustrates the disappearance of hand block printed cloth from local usage, as global markets penetrate local settings. Under these conditions the region’s distinctive cultural heritage is undergoing accelerated change. The combined effects of these material substitutions, and the accompanying significant transformation in the meanings of block
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printed cottons, have produced a significant and rapid reduction in local demand. This reduced local demand, coupled with the effects of political and economic change in the region, set in motion a period of lasting change to the craft. The next part of this chapter investigates this period of change and its effects and implications for the Chhipa community.
Chapter Five: Hand Block Printed Textile Markets

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the markets for hand block printed textiles and the manner in which these have developed and changed in recent decades. Historically, the hand block printers of Rajasthan produced most of their cloth for local consumption, or for sale to local merchants. As a direct result of the changes in local clothing outlined in the previous chapter, polyester copies of traditional prints have eroded the local market for hand block printed goods, and the demand for traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles has declined locally. This decline, brought about with accelerating intensity over the second half of the twentieth century, is seen as being part and parcel of social changes, Independence, industrialisation, and the effects of globalisation, such as the increasing availability of polyester and synthetic substitutes which are popularised through increased access to media. In order to continue their craft the Chhipa community have faced the need to find new markets for their goods. This chapter explores the resonances of change wrought upon the Chhipa community by charting the shifting socio-political environment of the years following Independence, a period in which the craftsmen say they struggled to locate new markets for their traditional products. It explores how the forces exerted by these shifting markets have repositioned this rural form of traditional cloth patterning into the modern industry of the state, and presented the Chhipa community with a series of challenges to their hereditary occupation. Using the
personal accounts of a number of Chhipas currently engaged in the marketing of their cloth, alongside materials gleaned from research within the export and tourism sectors, this chapter engages in the difficult discourse surrounding the commercialisation of traditional crafts.

Much has been written about the support offered to the handicrafts sector in general by the new Indian government, following independence in 1947. The emphasis of that support, and thus also within the attendant writings about Indian handicrafts, has been geared towards the development of handicrafts as an export commodity. In fact handicrafts in general, resonating their earlier pivotal role in the nationalist political *swadeshi* movement, have continued to be widely promoted as ‘a form of ‘alternative development’ to conventional massive investment and transformation in agriculture and machine-based production’ (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999:160). Yet the persistent macro focus on the cumulative impact of capitalist market structures has meant that such an approach does not examine the very local level effects on crafts producing populations, or the manner in which the growth of these national and international markets can stimulate a variety of community-led local forms of development.

With the evaporation of the local market the Chhipa community sought new channels for their products, and, whilst always a commodity in the local sense, since Independence block printing has undergone rapid and radical change as production has re-aligned to meet the demands of emerging global markets for hand crafted goods. On the one hand promoted as a traditional craft, but on the other as a high volume export commodity, Chhipas have experienced significant changes to market, technology, and design, and intensified pressure from non-Chhipas entering the craft to control aspects of design, or offer higher volume but lower quality outputs.

In order to evaluate the impact of foreign markets on the Chhipa community and their production of hand block printed textiles, there is a need to explore the local economic
relationships and community cultural investments in sustaining their craft heritage in conjunction with charting the rise of those international connections. Specifically, the combined roles of government and private investment, and the control of resources within the community and in conjunction with those export clients reveals much about the commercialisation of the craft. In particular, the relationship between the increasing role of textile design as an interface between the craftsman and his new markets, and the effect that has on the changing ways in which the Chhipa community perceive both their craft and themselves.

The first part of this chapter briefly reviews some of the key external factors which contributed to the market shift during the latter half of the twentieth century, outlining the effects of government, tourist, and export attentions to the craft. Whilst many have commentated on this period in India’s history the attempt here is to offer the perspectives of the craftspeople, involved firsthand in the modernisation and market changes of their hereditary occupation. Local crafts have come under increasing pressure to compete for a market share as the people of Rajasthan have become increasingly economically integrated into larger global markets. Of direct influence on the trajectory of hand block printing over the past 30 to 40 years have been the tourist and export industries. This chapter considers the local impact of each in turn before going on to focus on design issues, since the radical amendments to cloth aesthetics which accompanied these market changes are key to understanding the impetus for changes to the craft. Taking a design focus serves to highlight aspects of success for the Chhipas, but also the difficulties they continue to face in terms of quality, conflicts of interest, and overall control of their craft.

The final part of the chapter reviews the opinions and actions of a new generation of Chhipas, and the ways in which they are reworking the craft to progress it into the twenty-first century.
By combining tradition and modernity from a variety of moments in their community- and family-histories, these younger craftsmen have modified their practices to ensure block printed cloth remains current and relevant. In doing so, the chapter shows the importance of local responses to global flows of materials and ideas as a means of adapting to modernisation and change whilst opposing the homogenisation which often accompanies it. The discussion shows how, during that time, hand block printed cloth has undergone significant technical and aesthetic change and entered different and new ‘regimes of value’ (Appadurai, 1986, Myers, 2001) and assumed new sets of meanings in the process of its commoditisation.

5.2 Local trading structure

We couldn’t afford much – we kept house and fed the family, yes, but we didn’t hold any stock. No, see, cloth was bought on account from the Banias... and they took some of the finished goods as part payment. They sold our prints on their cloth – maybe here in the cloth haat, maybe in some other city haat, I don’t know how far they travelled on their trade rounds... Sometimes orders would be made and we took advance payments, say for big family wedding orders, then we could afford to make just a bit more [printed cloth] and take that round the villages. I would sometimes walk miles, with this cloth all stacked on my cycle. As a boy I had gone on feriya with my father, so I knew about the right times of year to make a round to different places with particular types of cloth. Amer was always good - not too far away but plenty of customers always coming and going for the temples... (Shri Narayan Chhipa, Jaipur. Personal communication 2007).

Echoing the memories of numerous other older generation artisans, Shri Narayan Chhipa’s account, above, highlights the three main means by which hand printed cloth was once traded locally. Importantly, in addition to private commission work and wholesale agreements, rural printing families relied partially on the practice of feriya - a series of seasonal trips in which printers would tout bundles of their stock around the villages and communities within their district. There is a similar past practice among the Khatri printers of Kachchh (see Edwards, 2005a, 2007). Each family of Chhipas would negotiate the extent of their trading area with
neighbouring printing families, and, as detailed in the previous chapter, produce a range of prints targeted at the specific communities or kin-groups within these areas. The locally maintained administrative divisions in the region, pre-Independence, were important boundary-markers, as were the local elite and ruling families who allowed artisans to pay taxes in the form of their products. This is evidenced particularly through the practice of octroi stamping cloth printed in Sanganer, for example, as shown in the photographs below.

![Two examples of textiles printed in Sanganer during the late nineteenth century which both bear octroi tax stamps on the corner. Courtesy Rajasthan Fabric and Arts/ Photographs D. Dunning.](image)

However, following independence in 1947, when these feudal kingdoms merged to form the modern state of Rajasthan (officially formed on 30 March 1949), the local ruling dynasties were divested of their administrative powers. For the local artisan communities this meant the withdrawal of courtly patronage, which had supported their work for many centuries. The political and economic structure of the region was radically altered through the creation of a centralised national government. Despite Shri Narayan’s trade to the communities and temple pilgrims of Amer continuing well into the 1980s, most printers cite that the local market for hand crafted cloth became increasingly unstable for them from the early 1960s onwards. This came in conjunction with the already growing availability of cheap mill-made textiles, which increasingly dominated local trade.
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Suraj Narayan, who recalls learning the craft from his father, Govindlal Narayan during the late 1960s, recalls that within a decade of Independence, and as a direct consequence of the competition from mill-made textiles, feriya was already generating a diminishing income for their extended family in the Jaipur region of the state. At that time the main local outlets for hand printed cloth were mainly the weekly haat markets of major cities in the state. The photographs below show Suraj Narayan and Govindlal Narayan trading their work in Jaipur’s cloth haat, pictures taken during the 1980s by a travelling companion of the Japanese textile collector, Hiroko Iwatate. Like Shri Narayan and Govindlal, most Chhipa families fostered long term relations with local cloth merchants, Bania caste (wearing black hats in the right hand photograph), and taking greige cloth on credit which was subsequently cleared through return of finished printed goods. However, by the early 1980s, when these photographs were taken, this too had dwindled to unsustainable levels.

Figure 87: Left: the late Govindlal Narayan and his son Suraj Narayan trading their printed cloth at the weekly haat market; Right: Chhipas trading cloth with Bania merchants (the two men in black hats) at the weekly haat market, Jaipur c.1982. Photographs courtesy Takanori Sugino/Hiroko Iwatate. (left hand photograph also appears in Ronald and Kumar K. G., 2005:12).
5.2.1 Industrialisation

Problems were compounded by the new central Indian Government which, eager to reinvent the nation and establish its position in global economics, instigated a scheme of aggressive industrialisation focussed primarily on the development of large-scale industry and exploitation of the country’s inherent resources (minerals, steel, cotton etc). Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister from 1948-1964, supported both industrialisation and ‘the craftsmanship and artistry’ of India’s handlooms’ (quoted by Phillips and Schochet, 2004:2); a duality which produced mixed results. In the rural tracts of Rajasthan, agriculture became a major industrial focus, characterised by large-scale cash-crop farming, artificial irrigation, and heavy use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides introduced during the 1960s. The existing small-scale land-share farms, maintained using traditional farming knowledge, were squeezed out of the market. The land-ownership rights of many farming communities were bought-out by larger concerns, and thus farmers forced to relocate to seek alternative occupations - a move which many Chhipas report as further reducing the local demand for their traditional hand printed cloth, making them ever more reliant on government schemes to connect handicraft production with export.

As early as the 1950s the Indian Government began stimulating ‘small scale industry’ outside major urban areas for creating non-agricultural employment and generating a more balanced industrial development. The Indian government, at central and state levels, worked to promote traditional designs and folk arts and crafts. Support for textile crafts developed from the establishment of the All India Handicrafts Board (in 1952), the Khadi and Village Industries commission (in 1956), and in the same year the first Weavers Service Centres were established in Bombay, Varanasi and Madras. The work of these institutions was primarily to encourage handicraft preservation and revival across India, through a program focussed on product
design interventions, promotion and endorsement of handcrafted goods adapted to suit modern needs. Part of the All Indian Handicraft Board’s mission was ‘to stimulate the appreciation, support and revival of Indian handmade cloth, clothes and craft’ (Tarlo, 1996:11). As cultural policy became the mouthpiece of nationalism and identity, and the richness of Indian tradition, based on the sub-continent’s diverse multi-ethnic society and preserved by oral traditions, was identified as an area which needed to be ‘managed’ (Varadarajan and Chevallier, 2003). Handicraft revivals were promoted as a counter move to the ‘modern vulgarity’ of ‘cheap city products’ (Maskiell, 1999:375). Influenced by Gandhi’s legacy, government bias was towards handloom weaving rather than traditional printing and dyeing, and export became the main focus as the Handicraft Development Corporation, which came into existence in 1958, was transformed into the Handloom and Handicraft Export Corporation in 1962. Hand block printing, as neither a domestic handicraft nor a fully-fledged modern industry, fell in the administrative void between the three Ministries of Handicrafts, Handlooms, and Textiles, and struggled to gain a foothold in either the domestic or export markets. It is this administrative ‘quagmire’ which has perpetuated the identified lack of clarity to statistical data on the craft (Liebl and Roy, 2003:5367), and further broadened the gap between rural and urban block printing. As a result, handicrafts and handloomed textiles emerged as a significant source of foreign exchange, and, through their intensive marketing activities the government, at national and state level, were implicitly involved in the commoditisation of handicrafts.

Whilst the many Chhipa community were enrolled in the government’s various state and national events, including award schemes, exhibitions, fairs and training programmes, most speak of them with reservations. Whilst handicrafts in general were receiving ostensibly positive support many of the Chhipa community in Rajasthan felt they were missing out on
structured schemes geared towards handlooms and that what little assistance did manage to reach them was patchy, and favoured those craftsmen directly involved in the national and state handicraft awards, a scheme notoriously hard to access and which many of them believe to thus be corrupt.

Attendant in their encouragement of industrial manufacture, the government supported the growth of small and medium sized businesses. In 1969 the Rajasthan state government established the RIMDC, later to become RIICO (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation); to create and administer industrial parks at strategic positions around major cities of the state (www.riico.com). Sanganer and Bagru, small towns historically reliant on their hand printing and dyeing communities, became hosts to RIICO activity. Whilst the industry brought improvements to the local infrastructure, and printers benefitted from the better roads and public transport, it also exacerbated growing issues of overcrowding and pollution. Most significantly, the industrial area which was developed in Sanganer fostered a growing cluster of screen-printing factories. The site, on the edge of the most well-known hand block printing colony in Rajasthan, is believed by many to have been chosen because screen-printing was also officially classed as ‘hand printing’ - since no machinery was deemed to be involved. Subsidies and development loans were offered, to encourage clusters of small and medium sized businesses, which were taken up mostly by non-Chhipas. Because of their official classification as OBC (Other Backward Class) the Chhipa community often struggle to qualify for the sorts of subsidies and development loans offered to small businesses by banks. Many printers say this growing divide between traditional and non-traditional forms of hand printing gave rise to growing animosity within the overcrowded printing colony. In recent decades problems have been further exacerbated because the requirements for effluent management stipulated by RIICO have encouraged a far greater number of screen-printing
units to also appear on unregulated residential or agricultural plots elsewhere on Sanganer’s perimeters.

In many ways screen-printing has had a profound and lasting effect on local hand block printing practices, not least because it presented the block printers with serious and local market competition. In addition, with financial support and guaranteed access to urban and export markets, the purpose-built screen-printing factories were capable of high speed and high volume targeted output. Their wholesale use of chemical dyes and pigments offered a much wider palette than the local natural dyes, and, because most of these colours require little additional pre- or post-print processing, reliable results could be achieved in a fraction of the time. “They could print half a rezai with just one screen, and a whole order of rezais in less than the time it took us to heat the tamda [large copper dye pot]” recalled one elderly printer from Sanganer, “we simply could not compete on speed, volume, bright colours” (Chandbhai, personal communication 2007). Screen-printed production surplus soon flooded the local haat market, making a bright, cheap, and popular alternative to hand printed textiles, further eroding the local demand for block printed goods. Consequently, the local Chhipas became increasingly reliant on fickle and irregular trade through state and national handicraft fairs, and the burgeoning tourist industry.

Yet, paradoxically, the stiff competition from the screen-print units also provided the source for much of the recent technical innovation in hand block printing. Without this influence the printers are certain that they would have been ill-equipped to seek or meet new market demands, although it was also largely responsible for widening the rural urban division within the craft. In particular, they say that their use of chemical colours and high printing tables, discussed in the next chapter, were inspired by the equipment used by screen-printers, and their adoption allowed block printing to gain pace with less compromise to overall quality of
the printing. With screen-printing factories in such close proximity, there is near universal agreement among the block printers of Sanganer that as time has progressed they have begun to gain greater access to market contacts and design innovations than their rural cousins, although to a certain degree, and inspite of a growing air of competition within the community, this extra work was shared through the wider community kinship network.

In 1978, the Minister of Industries announced that in future the government would lay much greater emphasis on the development of ‘cottage and small industries’ in rural areas and small cities. Government and NGO policies dealing with hand block printing focussed on encouraging modernisation and technological change, further eroding the traditional aspects of the craft and the knowledge systems which had supported the transmission of craft skills between generations of artisans. Since Chhipa families lacked any effective means to protect their traditional knowledge systems and their products they saw their craft being taken-up by others, keen to exploit the potential for high volume low skilled chemical printing. Non-hereditary practitioners began to enter the field of craft production as the government and private sector efforts became increasingly geared towards output, product diversification, distribution and marketing. The resulting environment bred fierce competition among the existing craftsmen, with paranoia and the fear of espionage and copying seemingly rife:

I don’t know what has happened to our community in Sanganer these days, everyone is so busy hiding what they are doing from their neighbours for fear it might be copied, or have their customers or ideas stolen. When I was a boy we all lived side-by-side, almost on top of each other in the Chhipa basti, but now it is so much of an industry with those big print units and factories... (Nandlal Sapra Chhipa, Sanganer, personal communication 2006).

Since the development policies of the 1950s and 1960s proved only partial success on the longer term, it is important to explore other major factors in the reinvention of hand block printing. As reflected in Liebl and Roy’s analyses of handicrafts statistics, the most significant
effects on both production and aesthetics came from the printers’ growing involvements with tourism and export.

5.2.2 Tourist market

According to the Government of India Ministry of Tourism, as it entered the twenty-first century India was drawing more than 2.5 million foreign tourists annually (Nair, 2002:9) (but no corresponding figure was available to reflect the notable growth of domestic Indian tourists). One of the most recent, and still growing, aspects of modernisation is the development of mass tourism during the last few decades. In his review of twentieth century history, Hobsbawm (1998) highlights the combined effects of globalisation, the decline of European hegemony, and the expansion of the international economy in the 1950s and 1960s, as causing a profound shift in social life. As a result, the era was characterised by a massive expansion in the productive capacity and technology of post-war capitalism in the west, and these were the decades when ‘the fruits of consumer abundance began to transform individuals’ perceptions of themselves and their relationships with each other’ (Jack and Phipps, 2005). This was reflected in the growing trends among global travellers in the second half of the twentieth century, who sought novelty through a return to traditional social values. This new tribe of global travellers nurtured tastes and styles which referred back to the past, and fuelled their search for authenticity, identity, and encounters that differ from those available through mass tourism (Urry, 1995).

With quicker access to distant locations, larger disposable incomes and rising lifestyle aspirations characterising the growing numbers of travellers, tourism has produced an apparently new form of complex social system: the 'host' society. In some cases the scale of tourism and the economic dependence of these societies on income from tourism, means that tourists are now an essential part of their social system. Modern Rajasthan provides an
example of a ‘host’ society, and has accommodated a massive influx of tourists whose numbers continue to rise, and provide the second largest earnings after agriculture (Henderson and Weisgrau, 2007). Textiles and handicrafts play a significant role in the state tourist industry, and vice versa.

Despite the promise of support and development schemes, inconsistent central and state government attention to hand block printing left an opening for alternative markets to develop during the 1960s. Heritage, including all things which could be successfully marketed under the remit of tourism, formed a distinct economic focus in Rajasthan, and continues to do so today. Local crafts, whilst recognised as a part of this heritage and a visible aspect of people’s identities, were offered government support which was at best patchy. Although state policy was geared towards sensitising the urban dweller and foreign visitor to the appeal of hand crafted objects, no major distinction was made between rural and urban products, and, as Satender’s account below shows, very little attention was given to distinct variations in quality and workmanship:

We Chhipas had always been invited to attend the state organised handicraft fairs; my father took our work up to Delhi from time to time for the national fairs too. But, when the local sales went down, those sorts of once-in-a-while events couldn’t really make us a living... By then though there were more tourists going round Jaipur, and they wanted handicrafts. Dealers from those shops on Amer Road [well-known avenue of tourist emporiums in Jaipur] would come to us and ask for bedsheets and they’d take away the sorts of things we couldn’t sell here... anything really, they didn’t seem to care about quality or mistakes, and colours could be the brighter the better! (Satender Kumar Chhipa, Bagru, personal communication 2009).

In the photograph below are a series of small cloth swatches and cuttings, accumulated by a private collector from rural Chhipa families in the region during the 1970s, and now held in the AMHP collection. These swatches were gathered as part of an informal survey of printers at that time, and compiled to represent the sorts of textiles generally in production. They
reinforce the suggestion made by several writers that there may be a niche market in the production of designer textiles incorporating cultural motifs for sale to tourists (as discussed by Littrell, 1990, Healy, 1994). The motifs are Indian, although the majority are inspired by a generalised notion of Hindu iconography. The colours are garish, produced using naphthol dyes - the use of which has since been prohibited as a result of a series of bans on azo-dyed goods.

This style of printing is commonly referred to among printers as ‘Barmeri’ printing, not because it in any way relates to the printing traditions of Barmer district, but rather that it was produced in great quantities by the printers based in Barmer and was intended to meet the demands of the tourist market. The district down of Barmer, on the far south-westernmost corner of Rajasthan, is well-known for the production of ajrakh textiles by members of the Khatri community of cloth dyers and printers. Branches of the community continue to produce ajrakh in the geographical area encompassing Barmer (Rajasthan), Kachchh (Gujarat), and Sindh (Pakistan) (see Varadarajan, 1983, Bilgrami, 1998, Edwards, 2005a, Ronald, 2007b). The so-called ‘Barmeri’ textiles depicted below bear no resemblance to the refined blue and white geometries of traditional ajrakh (compare with the textiles catalogued in Appendix H: BM). Instead, the lurid clashing yellows and purples, characteristic of naphthol dyes, in conjunction with the generic Hindu or Indian iconography, are astutely observed by printers as being representative of the India that tourists were looking for during the 1970s ethnic arts boom. According to the printers of Barmer, the style was specifically developed to cater for tourist demand and preference (Ranamal Khatri, Barmer, personal communication 2006).
As sales of ‘traditional’ textiles grew with the influx of tourists to Rajasthan during the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was an expansion into the export market, particularly in the state capital Jaipur. Locally produced textiles began to be considered as ‘ethnic commodities’, that is, goods which are sold within the market and produced by ‘ethnic peoples’ (Valdivia, 2005:10). In its initial years, the market was defined by the sale of inexpensive items, typified by the ‘Barmeri’ textiles, which allowed local dealers and tourist outlets to sell their wares quickly. As the market grew, dealers and printers identified the demand for authentic and traditional objects, and, taking their lead from Jaipur’s cut-throat carpet industry, began to develop inexpensive techniques for ‘antiquing’ cheap chemical print textiles (such as the example shown below). Stonewashing, over-dyeing chemical colours with harda, and sun-fading all gave desirable finishes to otherwise gaudy and cheaply produced textiles - for example the jajams on the lowest level of the shop display, on the following page, have been over-dyed with harda (myroballan, see Chapter Six) and turmeric to impart an overall brownish...
‘aged’ tint. The constant pressure for increased production eroded their preservation of personal and family or community traditions and also affected the identities of the Chhipas as craftspeople, and contributed to a general loss of quality within the craft.

This further extenuated the chasm between mass-produced mill-made textiles, which dominated the local demand for ‘everyday’ textiles; and textile handicrafts, which were rapidly losing their social connections as they transformed into lacklustre expressions of an invented authentic heritage marketed to largely undiscerning tourists. Highlighting this situation of artisan dependence on the global economic system, scholars have recognised that the substance of ethnic and tourist arts sometimes becomes distorted or destroyed because craftspeople may alter their products in a disorganised or unplanned way in order to survive in the capitalist economy. As means of survival, ethnic and tourist arts are thus often produced only according to the taste of the consumer (Graburn, 1976, Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004).

In Jaipur today, the main tourist route from the walls of the Old City leading out to the north, up Amer Road towards the historical hill forts of Nahargarh, Jaigarh and Amer, is lined with an ever-expanding array of tourist handicraft emporiums and ‘crafts palaces’, many now three or more stories high, alongside other typical crafts of the region (such as tie-dyed textiles, and
blue pottery) all such emporia have an obligatory selection of block printed ‘tourist’ textiles (of varying qualities) fluttering on display outside, as with the emporium on Amer Road in the picture below.

Figure 90: Souvenir shop on the major tourist route of Amer Rd, Jaipur, displaying a wealth of block printed items in chemical colours. Photograph J. Narang.

5.2.3 Entrepreneurs and export

In addition to tourism, the role of foreign businesses and entrepreneurial individuals has been crucial to the changes which hand block printing has undergone during the past four decades, and was initiated largely through the influx of global travellers to the region during the 1960s. Many were stimulated by the local crafts, which they identified as highly saleable in the ‘ethnic’ clothing boutiques of the west. “Within weeks of arriving in Jaipur I had been captivated by the pleasure and privilege of working with people of a skill, integrity and simplicity I had never encountered before to make new products that others might like to buy” (Faith Singh, personal communication, 2004). Significant pioneers in the export of hand block
printed textiles from Jaipur were; John and Faith Singh, an Indian Rajput and English designer who founded their clothing company Anokhi in 1969 (Radhakrishnan, 2003); John Bissell, a buyer for the American department store Macy’s, who came to India in 1958 and by 1960 had established the global handicrafts company Fabindia (Mohanty and Roy, March 2008); and the Japanese textile collector Hiroko Iwatate, who has been buying, commissioning and exporting small quantities of high quality traditional textiles since the late 1950s (Iwatate, 1984, 2007). Each played an important early role in establishing certain precedents and ways of working with local artisan communities, and since then have been prominent promoters of the region’s block printing activities.

In his study of industrial transition in rural Gujarat during the 1980s, Streefkerk suggests that entrepreneurs occupy an important place in modernisation theory, considering them to be the ‘human element’ in economic development (1985:7). Entrepreneurs are also seen as innovators capable of supplying an important contribution to the solution of the problem of underdevelopment in countries such as India by breaking through the ‘traditional’ ways of doing things to introduce a kind of ‘rational economic behaviour aimed at making profits and finding the most productive use of capital’ (Streefkerk, 1985:8). It was almost certainly the widening participation of these entrepreneurs that set the tone for the transition from craft to industrial production, adding privately fuelled impetus to the government drive for industrialisation of the region. However, many Chhipas also argue that it was the changes in production structure brought about by these export firms which encouraged the establishment of factory-style printing units by non-Chhipas, ultimately de-skilling the craft and marginalising them from their own hereditary occupation, particularly in Sanganer.

A major contradiction in the attempt to preserve India’s rural heritage and folk traditions through salvaging traditional handicraft production has been that the financial underpinning of
the salvage process has come from the commoditisation of folk products like hand block printing. This commoditisation contradicts the symbolic value of the cloth because its authenticity is located in its supposedly non-commercial mode of production. This contradiction is one which has been carried forward from the colonial era, and perpetuates the tension between strategies for salvaging the rural essence of hand printed textiles even as they have been increasingly commoditised through marketing, display, and reformulation in the larger service of the nation.

For example, Anokhi was established ‘to preserve and revitalise traditional textile skills’ by developing a western market for clothes made using the hand-block printed textiles which were characteristic of the Jaipur region. The business was built on a decentralised model, which respected the artisans’ existing family-run workshops through a scheme of subcontracting and commissioning of work. The initial success of the approach lay in the unashamed commoditisation of the craft to create contemporary fashionable garments. The authenticity of the village craft, practiced by traditional artisans using time-honoured techniques, was used as a marketing tool for the clothing collections abroad through shrewd use of photographs of artisans accompanied by short passages of suitably worded text. Thus, as the traditional designs were incorporated into an emerging and increasingly standardised style, their success depended progressively more on the marketing of their authenticity. It is important to note that a number of other businesses were established in Jaipur at around the same time, and have similarly harnessed local block printing to successfully produce export and urban goods. However, since their establishment in 1969 Anokhi have maintained an extensive working archive which contains a sample of every garment, textile, artwork, design colourway and set of blocks ever produced by them. Thus Anokhi are referred to most often

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8 As quoted from www.anokhi.com and cited in company promotional literature.
within this chapter due to the access which was granted to this collection during the course of this research.

The relationship which developed between the artisan community and these emerging export businesses during the 1960s and 1970s produced major changes in the craft and it marks a period of distinctive and often competing forms of technology, aesthetics, and knowledge. Buying from the producers and retailing to the consumers, export companies such as Anokhi and Fabindia acted as intermediaries between local craft knowledge and foreign tastes by interpreting consumer market tastes and demands and communicating this information back to the producers. In the words of Rameshwar Dosaya: “it wasn’t like the old days, where we could see our customers and know what they wanted – with [export companies] we worked blind, we looked to them for the work” (personal communication, 2004). Recognising the fickleness of foreign fashions, export companies forged links with a number of different artisan families, from different regions of the state, exploiting the regionally-specific skills and aesthetic styles of each to develop their range of western-styled export garments. Initially, the garments were cut from existing traditional hand printed textile products, though as the trust and rapport between the printing community and the exporter/entrepreneurs matured so did the creative input into design, colour and layout. On the surface this seems the ideal symbiotic relationship. However, it could also be argued that through their impositions of design, colour, and turn-over times, the local textile traditions were further eroded. In addition, due to their semi-urban location and existing experimental repertoire of chemically coloured prints, the workshops of Sanganer received far greater attention from exporters than the scattered families of rural printers.

The next part of the chapter explores these aesthetic changes to the craft, as a result of and in response to export demands. Whilst tourism has played a strong role in driving local
production, it has been the transition into export and the development of products for foreign markets which has guided the greater part of design change.

5.3 Design issues

The ability of the Chhipa community to respond to the needs of diverse consumers has enabled them to sustain the craft through the second part of the twentieth century, however this tenacity alone couldn’t have re-worked their products to satisfy the new overseas markets and compete with professionally designed goods. Textile design, as the profession we know it today, emerged largely as a result of the industrialisation of the textile industry whereby increasingly mechanised mass production demanded reliable and regular sources of design (pattern, colour, weave etc in sellable combinations). Kotler and Rath define design as ‘the process of seeking to optimise consumer satisfaction and company profitability through the creative use of major design elements (performance, quality, durability, appearance, and cost) in connection with products, environments, information and corporate identities’ (Kotler and Rath, 1997:208). Similarly, Moxey reports that ‘creative output is generated, in line with a series of aesthetic conventions that are shaped by a climate of fluctuating market conditions and constant advances in technological innovation’ (1999:178).

In the two decades immediately following Independence (1947) the Chhipa cloth printers of Rajasthan were caught in a vicious circle. Because of the slump in sales they recall having little capital to invest in new blocks, and thus continued to produce designs from their traditional repertoire. Yet as the mill-made polyesters and nylonssaturated the local market the demand for those traditional hand printed textiles rapidly shrank. Because the printing communities had limited funds and no direct access to new markets they relied on dealers and exporters for design inputs. As one printer puts it; “In the old days we could see our customers, and by
looking we knew what they wanted us to make. When we started with export most of our
customers are in other cities, countries, worlds apart – we didn’t have all this cable TV in those
days; we couldn’t see them so how could we understand what colours or prints they wanted?”
(Mohanlal Chhipa, Sanganer, personal communication 2005).

Changes to design aesthetics happened gradually, largely under the guidance of exporters and
entrepreneurs, and more recently through professionally trained textile print designers
working under the auspices of those export businesses. In this way, the development of
contemporary print designs became closely linked to garment and product design, influenced
by the fashions of the intended markets. Certainly, according to the printers in Sanganer, from
the mid-1970s to the late 1990s, aside from a small elite urban demand for hand printed
cotton saris, these markets were almost exclusively foreign.

The following pages develop existing understandings of the recent history of the craft by
examining recent changes to cloth aesthetics, drawing from a combination of printers’
narratives and export archives to expose ongoing processes and design trends in the craft
during an era of rapid commoditisation. Selected images of textiles and garments drawn from
the extensive Anokhi company archive are used here, to help illustrate and evidence printers’
observations and recollections, in order to demonstrate the ongoing and mixed effects of
externally-led design modification in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Anokhi
archive is a unique and valuable design resource because it is a working commercial archive of
production samples to which new garments and textiles are continually added, and which is
also continually drawn from to provide technical and aesthetic detail for new collections. The
export catalogue extends from 1969 to the present day, offering unrivalled material evidence
of amendments to the design and colouring of hand block printed textiles during that time.
5.3.1 The 1960s

Initially, during the 1960s, the Chhipas continued to print their traditional products – namely the *fadats* for ghagras, angochhas, safas and household textiles such as jajams, rezais and bichhaunis. To adapt these traditional goods to meet western demand, exporters relied on cutting, stitching, and tailoring, transforming flat textiles into fashionable garments as in the three photographs below.

![Figure 91: Front view - an original production sample Anokhi blouse, c.1970, constructed from a single Sanganeri angochha. Courtesy Anokhi/ Photograph S. Kasliwal 2005.](image1)

![Figure 92: Back view - the same Anokhi blouse. The angochha borders have been removed and re-applied as decorative plackets and cuffs. Courtesy Anokhi/ Photograph S. Kasliwal 2005.](image2)

![Figure 93: Tailored quilted evening jacket from same collection, c.1970, and similarly constructed from a single angochha. Courtesy Anokhi/ Photograph S. Kasliwal 2005.](image3)

The simple square-necked blouse pictured above left and centre, and the quilted evening jacket, above right (Anokhi garments c.1970), were each constructed from a single traditional Sanganeri *angochha* with the printed borders trimmed off and then re-applied at the neck, waist and cuffs. The archive also includes simple kaftans, loose tunics, and gathered skirts, all constructed in a similar manner using existing print motifs and layouts. As Radesharan Chhipa recalls; “We didn’t really do anything differently, not at first... they [exporters] came and bought our cloth and we never saw what they were doing with it after that” (Sanganer,
personal communication, 2005). It was largely fortune and happenstance that traditional *buti*- *butah* designs from Rajasthan were identified as well-suited to the ‘hippy’ and ‘ethnic’ styles popular in 1960s and 1970s Europe and America.

Due largely to its easy proximity to Jaipur city, over the decades since the 1960s the printing colony of Sanganer has been relied on heavily as a source of export goods. Bagru developed as an export production centre by the late 1970s, though always to a much lesser degree until the construction of the new Jaipur-Ajmer highway (in the late 1990s). As stated earlier in this chapter, this bias in favour of Sanganer has affected the rate at which those printing businesses have adopted newer styles of printing, and widened the divide between rural and urban printing. As a result, the hand block printed textiles of Sanganer have exhibited the most significant aesthetic change during the latter half of the twentieth century in terms of the colours, motifs and designs.

5.3.2 The 1970s

There is other evidence that traditional products were being cut and stitched into westernised garments. Among their comprehensive survey of the block printed products of Bagru in the 1970s, Mohanty and Mohanty list the mysterious item ‘raprons’ (1983:21). “Raprons were a clever way of making ghagras without so much tailoring, exporters always want to keep their costs down” (Mohanlal Chhipa, Sanganer, personal communication 2005). The term clearly refers to the manufacture of western style ‘wrap-around’ skirts using the curved printing blocks traditionally intended for printing medallions in the centres of floor or bed spreads. The underlying economics of export production were of course not lost on the shrewd printers, who started to take note of the kinds of cloth being ordered and apply this new knowledge to their dealings with the local tourist trade.
By the early 1970s cloth, such as that used for raprons, was being printed for export on commission, and whilst the existing traditional blocks were still being used, exporters were now stipulating the specific layouts of borders or butis on the cloth.

Sometimes we would take orders to print 100 metres of running metreage, others 100 metres of just borders. Often the designer would come and sit with us, choose blocks from our shelves, and put together sample combinations of borders and butis for scarves or dress materials. Orders placed in that way are good – we all agree on sizes and blocks and colours at the start meaning there’s less room for disagreements at the end (Roop Narayan, personal communication, Sanganer 2005).

For example, lengths of cloth were printed with broad border stripes along one side and simple butis along the other, to make gathered skirts or peasant dresses such as the one pictured at centre-top of the black and white image montage below.
Other garments included feminine-fit versions of the traditional man’s *angarakha* tunic, cut from cloth which had been placement-printed with traditional design elements (top right image in the black and white montage above). To the top left of the photo-montage is an unusual halter-necked evening dress, constructed from traditional Sanganeri *rumals* (square handkerchiefs) arranged to form successive tiers from the bust down. These handkerchiefs, although a traditional layout using traditional design elements, were printed with synthetic dyestuffs in a palette of bright orange and purple shades. By the mid-1970s these gaudy re-
colourings of traditional designs formed the mainstay of production, as referenced in this 
reminiscence of the era:

The seventies were psychedelic. It was all about Woodstock, flower-power, the Beatles in *chikan kurtas* with *sitar* and the Maharishi, The Stones and Hendrix mixing military jackets with tie-dyed scarves and block printed shirts. We made long flared skirts, with hems that skimmed the floor. Fitted quilted evening jackets, tight and chic in funky bright colours, with the elegant little Nehru collar. Traditional *butis* in bright-bright chemical colours... We saw wonderful revivals of dying traditions – *chikan, kalamkari, Kachchhi embroidery, ikats*... (Faith Singh, personal communication 2004).

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*Figure 95: Series of cloth swatches from the Anokhi archive illustrating the experimental recolouring of traditional Sanganeri butis and butahs with modern synthetic dyestuffs during the 1970s. Courtesy Anokhi/Photographs E. Ronald.*
Figure 96: Montage of magazine cuttings illustrating Anokhi hand block printed garments of the 1970s. All designs are traditional, though printed in innovative layouts, using a mix of natural and chemical colours. Garments are western 'ethnic' or 'peasant' styles. Images courtesy Anokhi archive/AMHP (montage collated for gallery display at AMHP, and also appears in Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:68-69).

5.3.3 The 1980s

By the 1980s western styles were changing. The ‘hippy’ look had become absorbed into mainstream fashion, and relied increasingly on cheap mass-produced fabrics which mimicked handcrafted traditional designs. The traditional buti-butah look had become passé and, no longer associated with the younger western market, it began to assume ‘frumpy’ undertones. In order to overcome this, and produce fresh and interesting textiles, export companies looked to trained textile designers to extend the range of fabrics and designs, whilst still retaining the ‘ethnic roots, colour and fashion quirkiness’ (Dwyer and Jackson 2003). Schoeser explains how the design process for surface pattern, which originates from a different approach to that of
constructed textiles, means essentially the impact of painting, dyeing or printing coloured effects onto cloth ‘is visual rather than structural: they are a response to the medium rather than the basis of it. The nature of the colorant and the method of its delivery to selected areas of cloth are equal partners in this process’ (2003:134). Increasingly modern textile designers draw from a strong visual vocabulary of motif and imagery, characterised by cross-cultural borrowing and ethnic textile traditions of motif and repetition. The 1980s saw young British and Indian graduates from design schools in London (e.g. Central St Martin’s) and Ahmedabad’s National Institute of Design drawing from an ever-growing ‘global village’ of inspiration to create seasonal rather than annual collections which moved away from traditional combinations of motif and colour to incorporate increasingly abstract and painterly aesthetics. “We were designing contemporary textiles on a par with anywhere else in the world; it was just that they were hand block printed rather than by machine. Our job was to make hand block printing catch up with the rest of the world in terms of colour and design” (Romanie Jaitly, one of India’s first professionally trained textile designers and who also worked for Anokhi during the 1970s, personal communication 2005). Some example swatches of textiles produced at that time, drawn from the Anokhi archive, are depicted below.

Figure 97: Archive swatches of hand block printed textiles produced in the 1970s and 1980s for export, using trained British and Indian textile designers. Courtesy Anokhi/ Photographs D. Dunning (montage collated for Ronald, 2008, draft of the published version Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:76).
Chapter Five: Hand Block Printed Textile Markets

This presented significant technical challenges for the craftsmen in four main areas: Firstly, the regular seasonal replacement of designs meant greater numbers of new sets of printing blocks were required, and with vastly increased frequency. The craft of hand block printing relies on a sequence of skilled individuals. Whilst the Chhipa is ultimately in control of the production process, the block carver can also play an important part in design aesthetics. His interpretation and reproduction of each element of a motif or design is crucial to the success and quality of the finished piece. Whereas in the past the blocks for traditional designs were used until worn-out (often up to a decade), thus recouping the initial outlay, now blocks were being used for just a few months. Sceptical about the potential of these contemporary designs, many printers refused to invest in the increased carving costs, though by placing the onus of block purchase in the hands of those who commissioned the work some printers now feel they ‘handed over’ the copyright of their products (group discussions, Bagru 2006, Sanganer 2007, Chhipa Samiti 2009). Within the archives of larger commercial enterprises like Anokhi, Fabindia and Soma the printers’ own design traditions are mingled with contemporary additions, making one indiscernible from the other without specialist knowledge or guidance from a craftsman. “We so often get accused of stealing and copying designs from big companies, but it is they who have taken our traditions and put their names on it” (Jagdish Narayan Chhipa, personal group discussion, Sanganer 2009). Yet, at the same time, most craftsmen are equally aware that a large part of their hereditary occupation is historically founded on the ability to replicate and mimic others designs.

Secondly, because the design elements and colour combinations were unfamiliar, printers often found it difficult to visualise the finished cloth from just the blocks or the artwork. Whilst traditional motifs were typically based on solid outlines and colour infill, contemporary designs became increasingly abstract. With limited knowledge or experience of the practicalities of
block printing the young designer graduates often created difficult or impossible patterns; and with limited understanding of contemporary abstract design the printers struggled to print each element correctly on the cloth. In addition, block carvers attempted to interpret artworks with their own handwriting style, often ‘tidying up’ design elements which they perceived as imperfections. These frustrations, from the three conflicting perspectives on quality and design aesthetics, are neatly expressed here by two printers, a block carver, and a designer:

The printers:

Some printers think that because the lines in a design are not quite perfect, and the datta is supposed to go outside the rekh in some places they can print quickly, and be slapdash with the quality (Praladh Dosaya (printer), Bagru, personal communication 2007).

A new design can be difficult to understand – when we bring the blocks to print the first sample it can take time to decide the order they need to be printed in, and even which way round they go. Yes, we often print samples with all the different parts of the design muddled up – even though the block carver makes these marks on the handles for us, sometimes I think even he gets confused! (Chandbhai (printer), Bagru, personal communication 2009).

The block carver:

Sometimes these designers send us designs which look so messy. We try to do our best, though if we carve it exactly how they’ve drawn it then that would look like we produced the bad work, wouldn’t it. People would think we don’t know how to use our tools, and word would get out – we would lose business. (Bapu (wood block carver), Sanganer, personal communication 2007).

The designer:

So often the carver will add his own interpretation of the design we’ve sent him. Blocks will come back and he’s maybe smoothed-off the edges of the petals here, or made all the leaves symmetrical there. It gets so frustrating, though really you can’t blame him. Where we’ve purposely designed a rough edge or clumpy background, he thinks it’s perhaps a rough sketch and tried to neaten it up. (Sevanti (freelance textile designer), Jaipur, personal communication 2004).
Thirdly, through a combination of limited technical understanding on the part of the new designers and the growing palette of potentially achievable chemical colours, the number of colours within a design escalated from three or four to sometimes up to ten. Since each colour requires a separate block to be carved this increased the potential for misunderstandings, errors, and reduced quality. Finally, again arising from the non-specialist perspective of the designers, the scale of repeating design units grew to unmanageable sizes, resulting in heavy printing blocks which gave poor quality prints and caused physical strain to the printer who tried to use them. Whereas traditional blocks had been typically no more than six inches square, modern blocks, such as the example pictured below, could be three or four times that.
These issues were expressed by Deepak Narayan as follows (and similar sentiments were echoed by many of the other printers consulted):

In my grandfather’s time they would replace the blocks only when worn out and could not be mended any more. Popular designs like the aam or ankhada would need replacing more often, and it was always the edges of the fine rekh block which were damaged first. Dabu blocks were made deeper, to give them longer life – because the grit in the dabu wears them away, look. But now, nowadays the blocks are new almost every time. New design: new blocks. See, this big rose one, this was new last month. Six colours in this design — rekh [outline], gudh [background], and four datta [infill] blocks. The block is so big that printing will be finished quickly, and we can produce many more metres in a day, but the printer will be tired by the end, and will need to take extra breaks because of the weight of the blocks. (Deepak Narayan, Bagru, personal communication 2009).
Figure 100: Complex contemporary six colour floral print (c.2000) in a large furnishing repeat (25x30 cm). Courtesy Anokhi/ Photograph D. Dunning 2005.

Figure 101: Complex densely-packed contemporary floral design (c.2002) using 10 different blocks in a repeat size of 5x5 cm. Courtesy Anokhi/ Photograph D. Dunning 2005 (see Ronald and Kumar K. G., 2005:46-47 for colourwise breakdown of this design)

Figure 102: Contemporary hand block printed textiles produced by Anokhi for the twenty-first century export market. Many, such as the bottom left and centre examples, are indiscernible from screen-prints. Fabrics courtesy Anokhi/ Photographs E. Ronald 2009.
5.3.4 The 1990s and onwards

During the 1990s, however, the global demand for printed textiles diminished. “The ‘90s was a time when we realised we were starting to rely more heavily on our home furnishings ranges” recalls Pritam Singh, Director of Anokhi (personal communication 2006). Printers also recall that exporters concentrated on fabrics for furnishings rather than fashions, and many craftsmen supplemented their incomes printing cloth for the tourist market during that period. The drop in demand for print was a global phenomenon; experienced in equal measures in western textile design studios. In the west, fashion critiques of the era describe it variously as being ‘grey’, ‘beige’ or ‘minimalist’. In India the reasons were equally likely associated with an escalating preference for consumer goods which grew in direct conjunction with emerging access to magazine, cable and satellite TV, and imported fashions from abroad. These changes seem to have adversely affected the market for hand printed cloth, though by the middle of the following decade those same influences played a role in the return of domestic consumers to choosing cloth which somehow aligned them with an essentially Indian identity. Guy Julier (2000) notes that the current culture of design is dominated by the belief that consumers construct their identity primarily from the products that they buy; and Kopytoff’s suggestion that there might be a ‘de-commoditising reaction’ which is played out through crafts consumption helps to explain the rising popularity of rustic traditional handcrafted textiles among India’s urban upper middle classes in recent years.

While tourism and export have proved crucial to the continuation of the craft, in many ways replacing the court patronage of pre-Independence times, they have also induced changes in the structure and organisation of local hand block printing and attenuated the divide between craft and industry. These changes have accentuated the inequalities between smaller family-run Chhipa workshops, and larger factory-style units. The use of machinery, synthetic
dyestuffs, and hired printing hands has contributed to a growing factory mentality, particularly in Sanganer where commercialisation has resulted in the homogenisation of design, process and product. As Alain Findeli argues:

Design was summoned to absorb the shock of industrialisation, and to soften its devastating consequences upon the cultural web, in other words, to make industrialised products culturally - socially, economically, symbolically and practically - acceptable. Aesthetics was then its privileged rhetorical tool, followed by ergonomics in the mid-twentieth century, and semiotics in the late-twentieth century. But it’s almost unique field of activity has remained the material product; manufactured by mechanical, electrical and/or electronic industries (Findeli, 2001:15).

And yet, with the increased contact between printers and designers or design students, ways of experimenting are emerging which blend the creative practices of the designer with the practical knowhow of the craftsman. It is important to note that design education within India is a rapidly developing field, emerging with the inception of the National Institute of Design (NID) in 1962, established as a result of Charles and Ray Eames’ ‘Indian Design Report (1991 [1958]). According to Vyas; ‘Its unusual but clear mandate was to equip young aspirants with design knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address design problems of a newly independent nation whose lifestyle still drew substantially from ancient cultural traditions’ (2006:27). The enduring focus of this, and a growing body of other similar institutions which have developed since,9 relies on fostering aspects of traditional craft whilst developing coexistent strategies of design, modernisation, or mechanisation.

Within contemporary practice the use of historical reference is often approached through the lens of a designer where visual and factual resource collection is used to inspire the creation of motif and pattern alongside the application of printing and dye techniques onto cloth. Collaborations between designers and craftspeople are particularly encouraged, although the

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9 For a timeline of the history of India’s design education Institutions see http://www.designinindia.net/design-thoughts/writings/history/india-history-design-education1.html
oft used phrase ‘design interventions’ sits less well with some Chhipas, since they feel it perpetuates the unspoken hierarchies between ‘educated designer’ and ‘backward craftsman’. Working with India’s crafts sector is, as the prospectus for Jaipur’s Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) notes, a highly specialised task (www.iicd.ac.in). In recent years the IICD have established a number of ongoing research projects aimed at mapping the crafts of Rajasthan, and, whilst the average student is from a middle class background, the college does operate a policy to support attendance by young hereditary artisans. However this has received a generally low uptake and mixed response, due in part to the high entrance requirements and to the difficulties some of these individuals experience by stepping out of prescribed social hierarchies.¹⁰

The final part of this chapter now turns to consider these changes as only a partial commoditisation by exploring the responses of younger generation Chhipas to the changing face of the craft which they are inheriting.

5.4 New generation Chhipas

This final part of the chapter investigates current strategies for sustaining the craft of hand block printing in Rajasthan, through the experiences of just a few of the growing number of younger craftsmen, from well-established Chhipa families, inheriting and re-developing their traditional family occupations for future generations. In contrast, the work of non-governmental organisations in the region is also briefly considered, as a means of design and marketing intervention. In recent years NGOs have emerged as key agents in development discourse and practice. Among their supposed main virtues, NGOs are seen as providing

¹⁰I am grateful to a number of staff and students at both NID and IICD for discussing these points with me.
services in a more efficient and equitable manner than either the public or private sectors, though their support of the Chhipa community in Rajasthan has been patchy at best.

As hand block printing enters the twenty-first century changes to the craft are increasingly motivated from within the Chhipa community. Whilst older generations of Chhipas struggled to integrated changes into their traditional practices in the decades following Independence, the current younger generation, in the process of inheriting their family businesses, are now reappraising the craft as a whole. Despite many eschewing the craft altogether, taking government, civil or retail jobs in the city, a handful of others have taken up the challenge to continue their family craft. Keen to exploit the emerging domestic market and assert their independence from export companies these younger artisans are building their business and design skills, and developing marketing and advertising techniques alongside their traditional apprenticeship to the craft.

Scholars studying the development of markets for indigenous crafts have suggested that many indigenous crafts communities are producing for a set of intersecting markets, rather than just one standard one (see for example Jules-Rosette, 1986:12, Stephen, 1996:382). Jules-Rosette identified four markets including the village market, the ‘conventional’ urban market, the curio trade, and galleries, and identified that craftspeople develop ways to change the styles and aesthetics of their work between each. Because of these market influences, craftspeople develop an awareness of their skills, and the requirements for craftsmanship, which Jules-Rosette calls ‘ethnoaesthetic standards for evaluating their work’ (1986:28). In a renewed attempt to assert their own and community identities a small yet growing number of new generation Chhipas, building on this new self-awareness, are taking up the entrepreneurial challenge to design and market their own products. In this way they are active agents in the commercialisation of the craft, yet simultaneously working against the homogenisation which
often accompanies this (Hart, 1982). Focussing on these efforts helps to highlight the continuing importance of individual and often idiosyncratic local forms of innovation throughout the production, distribution, and consumption of block printed cloth.

I am learning the craft from my parents, in the same way that they did, but I have also attended college in Jaipur and gained a diploma in Business and Marketing. This is important these days I think; we cannot continue as village artisans forever, it [the market] simply isn’t here anymore. It is my duty to take over the family business, but to have a chance of making this work I need to think about some new ways of doing business... The [dye and print] processes might stay the same, and if I can manage it I will try to always also produce traditional designs as well as the new designs, but I have to think about where to sell them... We cannot always rely on companies like Anokhi because this year the orders simply didn’t come from them (Deepak Narayan, 25, son of Suraj Narayan Titanwala, Bagru, personal communication 2009).

Deepak Narayan, like many other printers his age, is developing an acute awareness of the ways in which he can develop his textiles in order to satisfy urban modernity yet retain the rural handcrafted essence of the cloth. Both his father, Suraj Narayan, and grandfather, Govindlal Narayan, have been formally recognised for the high quality of their traditional printed and resist-dyed textiles – indeed, Suraj Narayan’s recent achievements include a printing demonstration for Prince Charles (in 2004), and a three-day practical workshop in Japan hosted by Hiroko Iwatate (in 2007). Deepak accompanies his father to such events, as part of his induction into the family business, whilst also refining his practical print and dye knowledge and skills. In addition, under the guidance of his mother, Meenadevi, he has gained a business diploma. “In my day people from our community couldn’t afford to go to college, but my father made sure I understood as much as I could about the business side of things. I want my Deepak to have every opportunity to succeed – the craft skills are one thing, yes, but knowing what to do with the cloth when it is finished? That is an altogether different skill” (Meenadevi, Bagru, personal communication 2009).
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By maintaining his caste identity, and the idiosyncrasies of his family technologies, Deepak, as with other new generation craftsmen, fosters an understanding of the niche market into which his products might fit. It could be said that the collaboration with foreign exporters in the 1960s and 1970s, whilst at times exploitative in nature and causing serious divergence from traditional modes of production, has also aided the development of an understanding within the Chhipa community of modern market forces and modern consumer tastes.

In Pipad, the Shahabudin family of Muslim Chhipas offer a unique case in point. During the 1970s they, among numerous other rural printing families, were visited by the late John Bissell, founder of FabIndia. Over the following years regular orders were placed with the Shahabudins for resist-dyed cloth, making particular use of their well-established indigo vats and good quality dabu. Despite the remote location of Pipad, the family continued to supply FabIndia (whose main offices are located in Delhi) and also distribute around other printers and dyers in the region extra orders for other styles of printed, dyed, and even stitched textiles. In 2009 Yasin Shahabudin became a shareholder of FabIndia, upholding the company’s original mission of providing a market for goods produced by artisans (as reported in the Hindustan Times by Hoon, 2009, see below). As William Bissell, son of John and current director of Fabindia, reminds us, ‘building a business in India is an ongoing lesson in the challenges faced by entrepreneurs... [with] a body of law that is massive, complex and often contradictory... we have a responsibility to better the lives of this new generation and allow them to flourish’ (Bissell, 2010:xxvi,10).

The commoditisation process put into action by the government schemes in the 1950s, and then carried forward by the exporters since then, acted to establish the new ‘authentic’ identity of the craft, which has set the foundations on which the Chhipas can now attempt to independently build their businesses within the domestic market. This has also perhaps
equipped them with the necessary tools and diversified clientele to help ride-out the inevitable times when block printed cloth and hand crafted goods might be less popular, either abroad or at home, by balancing newly cultivated domestic sales with their established foreign/export client-base.

As a result, the modern Chhipa is now no longer necessarily a small village craftsman dealing directly with cloth merchant and local community, within the annual cycle of seasons and harvest. Instead, most have an office within their home from which they conduct business with a range of local, national and international clients. The production is still seasonal, in so far as it is limited by the climatic constraints of the monsoon, but is more heavily influenced by prevailing national and international cycles of garment manufacturing and fashion seasons rather than local agricultural ones. The weekly *haft* market has been replaced by trade fairs and selling exhibitions, and a growing number of Chhipa families are establishing small retail ‘boutiques’ of their own.
5.4.1 Mahima’s

One such enterprise is Mahima Handprints, established in 2007 by Om Prakash Dosaya, the 26 year old son of Pralad Dosaya of Bagru, as a family effort representing the investment of cousins and uncles both financially and in terms of their product specialities. The choice of name for his new venture, after his baby daughter, is, he says, an important reference to the continuation of the family and their traditional occupation. The tiny boutique sits on the second floor of Jaipur’s newly built, air conditioned, marble-floored Mall 21, nestled between a bookstore and a modern outlet for baby goods, opposite a Bata franchise shop stocked with plastic flip-flops and sandals, and adjacent to a contemporary sari emporium bursting with brightly dyed ‘art silk’ bridal saris. Well-positioned signage at the entrance to the mall entices shoppers to visit Mahima’s, using typeface embellished with traditional Bagru designs (see photographs below). The mall itself, with a ground floor dominated by a branch of the pan-Indian coffee shop chain Barista, is located across the street from the enduringly popular Raj Mandir cinema, just a few hundred yards from MacDonald’s, and Jaipur’s up-market fashion street, M. I. Road, with its Benetton, Levi, Nike and Lactose shops.

![Mahima’s signboard, located at the main entrance to Mall 21, uses typeface embellished with traditional Bagru block print motifs. Photograph E. Ronald, 2008.](image)

![Stacks of hand block printed cloth arranged inside Mahima’s, offering a wide selection of different colour and design styles. Photograph E. Ronald, 2008.](image)

![Racks of readymade garments are also available, extending the range of hand block printed products offered by Mahima’s. Photograph E. Ronald, 2008.](image)
Om Prakash and his relatives have stocked Mahima’s with a wide range of hand printed goods, some as textiles for purchase by the metre, others as ‘suit sets’ (three coordinating pieces of flat textile cut to sufficient length to be subsequently stitched into a ‘suit’ consisting of salwar loose trousers, kameez loose tunic, and matching dopatta scarf), and others still as printed saris, made-up garments and piece goods (see photographs above). Bolts of cloth are stacked onto shelves grouped by colour and design, and garments are displayed on mannequins in the small shop window. A stack of promotional flyers sit on the glass-topped counter, and, as is customary in India, customers are seated on a large cushioned platform and supplied with hot sweet tea whilst making their deliberations. Om Prakash justified the motivations and success behind the shop as follows:

If they can do it so can we. After all, who knows what Rajasthani people want to wear any better than a Rajasthani? Why should we let people like Anokhi and Soma open big stores here in our home town, selling our cloth to tourists and city folks? Why should they make the profit on our products? I think people in Jaipur would rather buy from local names like ours than from foreign big businesses; after all, even the Levi shops on M. I. Road are [franchises] run by local people... The textiles and garments we stock in Mahima’s are designed for normal smart Jaipur people who want something a bit different... and then we have something more traditional also, mainly
for the tourists. Being here in the mall we can see daily what other people are buying and wearing, and then we go back to Bagru and make new designs or use new sets of colours which we think these people might like... This is the perfect place to have a shop, and business has been good in our first year. If it continues this way then after some time we will open another shop somewhere else... Of course, we all still have our own family printing businesses, and we sell to buyers from other shops and businesses, so that way we can be sure to always keep our workshops busy (Om Prakash Dosaya, personal communication 2008).

Projects like these have stimulated a new wave of revitalised Chhipa community pride in their craft. The concerted efforts made by the Chhipas to control distribution within India, as well as the refusal by many original Chhipa families to diversify and produce screen-printed goods, are assertions of their ethnically-based claim to their own hand crafted products. The importance of asserting this identity, against other regions of India and despite the rising forces of modernisation and globalised/Americanised material goods, is clearly a struggle for economic control which springs from the construction and defence of community identity and heritage. This heritage lays claim to the handcrafted textiles which were being largely produced for foreign markets and foreign consumers.

5.4.2 Ashok Khatri

Further afield on the westernmost reaches of the state, in the remote fort town of Jaisalmer, another young printer is also building a new business. Ashok Khatri, the 25 year old nephew of Ranamal Khatri, ajrakh printer of Barmer, has a small open-fronted retail unit in the thriving main bazaar outside the fort gates. Although he is a trained printer and dyer, the poor quality and limited supply of water in the desert town means he acquires most of his stock from Ranamal’s workshop in Barmer. Jaisalmer, once an important point on the historically established overland trade routes from India across Sindh and into Baluchistan, is now annexed due to the Indo-Pak border created during partition (1947). However it remains home to a large community of Sindhi-Muslims, for whom ajrakh is an important and highly valued
part of male dress. Ashok’s small shop is well-situated to supply the needs of this community with a range of suitably traditional ajrakh products, and has become well-known in this respect. However, since taking sole control of the shop, owned by his father, he has concentrated on product diversification. “My uncle, Ranamal, supplies a trader in Ahmedabad who has helped him develop a new range of designs. They use our traditional blocks and traditional ajrakh processes of printing resists and mordants, but with different colours and as running metreage. He sends me a bit of every design he supplies to that Gujarati trader, and I have found that they sell very well. Particularly popular with the tourists - Indian as well as foreign” (Ashok Khatri, Jaisalmer, personal communication 2009).

To exploit this growing trade Ashok has teamed up with a tailor in order to offer a range of stitched garments, and a garment copying service. This is the backbone of India’s tailoring industry, and through offering this service many tailors have become masters of an impressively international range of garment styles. Learning from the types of garments they are asked to copy, and the sorts of materials chosen by the customer, Ashok manages to offer a strong and regularly updated repertoire of garments, constructed largely from his contemporary hand block printed fabrics. Off the back of this he has just established an export link to a small boutique in France. Fluent in English and French, a keen follower of popular movies and TV, and with a sharp nose for business, Ashok is setting a benchmark for the other cloth shops which crowd the tight bazaar. By covering traditional, modern, tourist and export markets he is thus harnessing all aspects of the contemporary market for hand printed cloth. But his biggest fear is that of copying, which threatens the exclusivity of his products: “No matter how much innovation I put into my products it only takes one person to get hold of them, this town is full of jealous eyes, and my work will be copied all along this bazaar. That is
what Jaisalmer is like, and I think all Rajasthan is like it too” (Ashok Khatri, Jaisalmer, personal communication 2009).

5.4.3 Mixed results

However, despite such heartening accounts of young entrepreneurship emerging within the printing communities, it hasn’t been a universally positive experience. Inheriting the family craft in the twenty-first century inevitably brings mixed levels of success. Radesharan, who comes from a long line of Chhipas in the Namdev Chowk area of Sanganer’s purani basti (old town) ceased full time printing around ten years ago.

It simply isn’t a viable way of earning a living any more. There’s too much competition and unless you have a big printing unit you can’t compete. I took a job at the government water works, in 2000. My father died and I was expected to take over the business and feed the family, but I had kids at school – they are now at college – and I want them to go far in life. I do still take in some printing work, mainly traditional safas angochhas and the likes, but it is my wife and sisters who do the printing. They fit it in around looking after the house and kids. My mother-in-law spent her life printing and
dyeing so she can watch over the work here whilst I am out at my job in the city (Radesharan Chhipa, personal communication, Sanganer 2007).

Radesharan is by no means alone with these difficulties. Mohammed Sharif, son of Yasin Chhipa Khan of Balotra, feels immense pressure to continue the family business, “leaving the craft is not an option” he states, “but the money problem is there, the marketing issues, and the design problem is also there...” (Mohammed Sharif, Balotra, personal communication 2008). His father’s local clients have been slower to take up polyesters and, until recently, this local demand in conjunction with patchy export and tourist work was sufficient to sustain their practices. Mohammed Sharif is set to inherit a family business with dwindling customers and a growing local connotation with all that is old fashioned and backward, and in response his efforts are focussed on testing the market beyond Balotra with a huge array of alternative products. Armed with around a hundred swatches of tie-dyed, chemical coloured, and simple chatta-datta resist textiles (examples of these shown below) stitched into neat bundles, he is currently spending much of his time travelling within and beyond Rajasthan to cloth dealers, traders and garment manufacturers, toting his new product range to potential buyers in a modern commercialised form of his forbears’ feriya trips.

Figure 112: Dozens of swatches of simple designs printed with dabu resist onto chemically dyed cotton cloth then indigo dyed - the portable sales samples of Mohammed Sharif Chhipa Khan, Balotra. Photographs E. Ronald.
5.4.4 NGOs

The issues with the design and marketing of rurally produced crafts have been widely recognised in India, and elicited varied responses. Government schemes have had limited success, with NGOs emerging over the past two decades as one of the main means of supporting and developing craft activities. Seen as providing services in a more efficient and equitable manner than either the public or private sectors, there is a great diversity of NGOs each with a specific context, history, and trajectory. There are numerous NGOs working in Rajasthan, many with a handicraft focus, yet their support of the Chhipa community has been under-developed. A group discussion with the Chhipa Samiti offered some reasons for this, based on the work of one of the most prominent NGOs working with textile crafts in the region, Dastkar Ranthambore.\(^\text{11}\)

The Rajasthan chapter of Dastkar, which as a whole is perhaps one of India’s most well-known craft-based non-governmental organisations, was established in 1989 to generate crafts-based incomes where craft production had all but ceased. The overall mission was to create self-reliant groups of handicraft producers, responsible for their own design, production, accounting and marketing. The intention is to break local dependence on middlemen and informal moneylenders, and work towards the removal of social prejudices (age, religion, gender etc). Additional objectives include acting as a catalyst for women’s empowerment, help reduce poverty, and improve education and health. The outcome is also a contribution to the development of urban handicrafts markets through design and product development, publicity, and widening awareness of rural crafts and craftspeople. The activities at Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore) involve block printing, patchwork, tie-dye, pottery and leatherwork, and focus on a cooperative working structure.

\(^{11}\) http://www.dastkar.org/ranthamborep.htm
Chapter Five: Hand Block Printed Textile Markets

The problem recognised by the Chhipa Samiti is that most NGOs focus on handicrafts as a form of alternative employment for otherwise unskilled rural women – and where block printing is a part of such schemes it is taught to non-Chhipa women as a rudimentary form of potato printing. Such schemes are seen by the Chhipa community as ridiculing the generations of skilled work which has gone into building their own hereditary craft knowledge. The topic generates heated debate, and contributors wished to remain anonymous, with one printer offering the following argument:

These NGOs think they can put a block into a farming woman’s hand and immediately she is a printer. They get some big shot down from Delhi with a recipe book of dyes and some Xerox copies of patterns or some badly made blocks, these women print, then the cloth goes back up to Delhi for marketing in special fancy boutiques as ‘women’s work’. I’m not denying it is a good thing to make work for people who have none, but why take our craft from our hands in the process? (Anonymous member of the Chhipa Samiti, group discussion, 2008).

The positive impacts of NGOs on crafts producers cannot be denied. However, because they are so often politically motivated, the scale of their impact and their empowerment claims can at times seem overstated. Furthermore, with limited income gains for craft producers there seems to also often be contradiction and inconsistency between the goals of the NGOs and the goals of those working for them. As Choudhary explains, ‘NGOs often malign private entrepreneurs as exploitative but the reality is much more complex, and in fact non-subsidised private entrepreneurs often provide more income to a wider population of craft producers than do the subsidised NGO’ (Choudhary, 2007). Added to which, particularly within the pressure cooker environment of Sanganer where suspicions of espionage and client ‘theft’ are rife, cooperative and collaborative projects have produced mixed results:

This sort of thing [NGO cooperative scheme] is fine in places like Ranthambore, but it would never work in Bagru or Sanganer – we are all too proud of our own family traditions to be able to share workload and income like that. There is a Calico Printers cooperative in Sanganer, it was started in the 1980s as a response to the lean times,
but not everyone is a member. There were problems because some who were less good at printing – they did the lower quality types of work - they joined, made sure they collected designs and all, and took equal shares in the profits yet contributed very little. It’s a problem. (Anonymous member of the Chhipa Samiti, group discussion, 2008).

Despite efforts of fair trade businesses and non-governmental organisations, nationally and internationally, many rural artisans have missed the opportunity for their help by virtue of their geographical location, or their socio-economic standing, or indeed simply being too proud to accept what many consider to be ‘charity aid’. In doing so they miss inputs of marketing expertise and access to established distribution networks.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the manner in which the markets for hand block printed cloth have undergone significant change since Independence in 1947. As the local rural market for hand printed textiles evaporated, practices changed to meet the demands of tourists and international export fashions, and key dimensions of cloth production and consumption have been reconstituted in the face of wider political and economic forces. By focussing this investigation on the lived experiences of the Chhipa community the local effects of these changes have been explored, particularly by charting the amendments to cloth aesthetics which have accompanied the shifts in market structure.

In association, marginalisation of the hereditary Chhipas is also apparent, as a result of the near wholesale turn to tourist and export markets, and the stiff competition posed by screen-print and factory unit style businesses. Furthermore, the role of entrepreneurs and designers is suggested to have removed control from the printers, making them part of the production process rather than craftspeople responsible for hand printing cloth. These amendments suggest a general process of de-skilling of the craft. However this is not entirely the case. This
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Chapter has also shown how, in certain instances, the Chhipa community have retained and regained control in the context of both the global and emerging local markets. By extending their knowledge to meet the demands of an emerging domestic market, younger generations of artisan families are proving themselves able to impose some conceptual control over the textiles.

The last two decades, spanning the turn of the millennium, have been a crucial time of change for India as a whole. The transformation from traditional to post-modern society has been marked by significant changes to lifestyles and expressed through shifting values ascribed to material goods from local, and increasingly global, sources. Tracing the changes to the market for block printed cloth, through an exploration of the shift from local to global product, helps to contextualise the wider socio-cultural changes wrought upon the region over the latter part of the twentieth century. The examination of the effects of this period of change in terms of hand block printing provides a specific example of the complexities which emerge when local forms of craft production become integrated into world economic systems. The evolution of contemporary hand block printing, in the post-Independence period, shows that the very emergence of a distinct field of ‘handicraft’ production is itself linked to industrialisation. Such industrialisation can not only eliminate regional markets for locally produced items such as hand printed cottons, it can simultaneously create other markets based on such things as the contrast between handmade and mechanically produced goods. In turn, this generates and perpetuates the debate surrounding perceptions of what constitutes an ‘authentic’ product, and provides the impulse for continual innovation. Part of the same transformation from locally significant products into globally recognised ‘handicrafts’ has seen the economic base of the Chhipa community change from local merchant to commercial capital. In the process, the
modes of production, the physical cloth aesthetics, and the identity of the artisan community have all been affected.

In a modernising and developing society, traditional cultural products connote the past that the society is striving to break away from. For local consumers, western branded goods and fashions become more valuable than and replace traditional ones, at least until modernisation becomes relatively normalised. While cultural goods may be displayed as heritage in museums, with dwindling local demand, production becomes aimed at the fickle tourist and export markets. From a local perspective, production and consumption of cultural goods like hand block printed cloth now relates to the combined valuation and construction of both modernity and the past, as well as conceptions of the global market. The contestation around the modernisation and commoditisation of the traditional sub-regional styles of hand block printing, and the dynamics and interdependence of players in cultural intervention in recent decades sheds light on the conflicting issues and unresolved tensions involved in preserving or progressing indigenous forms of material culture. Exploring these local strategies is particularly important to developing an understanding of intangible heritage as embodied knowledge and practice, and helping to inform wider policies for preservation and sensitive development of or collaboration with communities of traditional craftspeople within and beyond India.

In the age of global markets, the authentic object has become differentiated by the circumstances of production and exchange as well as by the initial understandings that guide the interactions and by those understandings that emerge between the producer and the object, the producer and the primary sellers, and the object and the final consumers (see Appadurai, 1986, Balkwell, 1986, Warner, 2000, Wood, 2000). The study of the creation and consumption of such cultural goods, here block printed cloth, allows for a fuller appreciation of the cultural dimensions of globalisation and consumption of cultural difference.
Certainly, while international measures to protect intangible cultural heritage can be incorporated into national government policy, and subsequently local level policy, ultimately safeguarding of practice is dependent on whether or not the next generation is motivated to sustain an interaction with the materials, processes, and knowledge that the particular craft or traditional practice calls for. The opportunity to have an experimental and creative engagement with an art form can be a positive impetus for engaging younger generations, and thus sustaining a craft. Since the subject of this thesis is as much about contemporary continuities as it is about recording past traditions, the technological strategies and innovations deployed by these printers are the focus of the final chapter.
Chapter Six: Traditional Processes and Changing Technologies

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the measures being taken by the Chhipa community to simultaneously update, and yet retain traditional aspects of, the technologies and materials associated with the production of hand block printed cloth. As the previous chapter has shown, these decisions cannot be separated from an economic imperative. This is particularly so with textile practices. Hand printed cloth has always existed in the economic and commercial realm, a marketable necessity and utilitarian item as much as a decorative one. As such, though there are many strong traditions and cultural practices developed around knowledge transmission and associated cloth symbolisms, textiles are also subject to the vagaries of personal taste, market requirements, and manufacturing improvements. Also touched upon in the previous chapter is the manner in which the Chhipa community have woven a variety of external foreign materials, chemical dye technologies, and design influences into their traditional practices, as strategies to cope with, and adjust to, these new market forces. Thus, with modernisation and an increasingly global outlook, transformations to the craft are taking place, challenging the artisans to make their traditional cultural practices remain relevant and viable to younger generations.
Global flows of people, products and ideas can be seen to cause tension within traditional cultural systems, potentially resulting in the formation of ruptures, which disconnect the present from the past. What the previous chapter indicates is that ultimately the continuation of hand block printing, as with any cultural practice, relies on constantly engaging each successive younger generation, and to do this there needs to be a supportive and creative environment to preserve the authenticity and to ensure vital durability of the craftsmen’s skills. It is clearly a fine balance between retaining authenticity and yet also remaining open to the sort of dynamism and reinvention that composes culture itself. To help understand the rationale of the craftsman, this chapter uses ethnographic accounts of the changing technologies of the craft, as a means of exploring the generation of coping mechanisms against the traumas of globalisation. Focussing primarily on the traditional resist and mordant printing and dyeing methods, as a vital record of a waning tradition in empirical terms, the visual and narrative materials help preserve these craft practices should they be required again in the future. Equally as important is the investigation of the manner in which chemical dyestuffs are being incorporated into the local practices. This interesting co-mingling of tradition and modernity helps illustrate the continued inventiveness and intuition of hereditary craftspeople, as opposed to the actions of industry trained technicians.

The procedures associated with the printing of mordants and subsequent dyeing is historically associated with the craftsmen of India, and no other culture in the world has refined the techniques to such a level. Even after the arrival of synthetic dyestuffs and mass production in other parts of the world had replaced indigenous textile dyeing and hand printing, in India examples of the craft, such as is practiced by the Chhipa community of Rajasthan, have remained. However, despite the widespread belief that these practices continue undisrupted today the reality is that with every new generation of the printing and dyeing communities
fewer and fewer are learning the practicalities of traditional techniques and, despite its growing popularity elsewhere in India, it is particularly rare to meet a young craftsman in Rajasthan who is skilled and knowledgeable about the use of natural dyestuffs. In the rush to upgrade, increase turnover, enhance productivity and industrialise hand block printing the traditional craft relying on knowledge passed down from generation to generation has been somewhat overlooked. Yet, as this chapter will show, traditional technologies and materials can also be sustainable, and are now starting to be viewed as useful to the modern world. In recent times even newer markets have emerged particularly amongst urban consumers who have ascribed craft and the handmade with ethical environmental and socio-cultural value. Hand block printers are well positioned to tap into this emerging market as consumers develop more of an understanding about the externalised environment and social costs of a product. However, as evidenced in the dye pollution prevalent in Sanganer, there is still a need to develop such an understanding amongst craftspeople to help them to break away from their dependency on the use of chemical colours, high volume productivity, industrial competition, and ultimately their unsustainable participation in the textile industry. Harnessing the valuable resource of their own family hereditary knowledge to help highlight the links between consumption and resource depletion, industry and environmental degradation, offers a useful tool in the development of sustainable and environmental means of producing, consuming, and even disposing of products.

New technologies often have a destructive impact on traditional crafts and can lead to the loss of traditional knowledge, most especially that which is transmitted by means other than the written word. This study recognises that a promising means of addressing this potential loss is to record the craft as it stands today. From the practitioner’s perspective, the materials and technologies involved in producing the handcrafted object are their primary concern, and
because of this closeness craftspeople can often miss the subtle changes which occur over an extended time scale. This chapter argues that it is these subtle changes which hold valuable information about the craft, and that contemporary practices are of equal value to traditional ones. By beginning with a focus on recollections of past techniques and materials, then moving on to look at recent technological advancements, the modernised form of the craft is thrown into relief against a backdrop of hereditary methods - contrasting traditional methods with more recent trends towards assimilating modern materials and tools into the craft. Using such observations, this chapter will look at the ways in which current generations of craftsmen maintain control over their practice and cultural heritage, and have used the technology of cloth production to respond to potentially fickle national and international markets. This is followed up by a consideration of the role of natural dye research in the revival of the craft. The chapter closes with an analysis of the various measures taking place to maintain cultural identity and cultural practices within the context of hand block printed and resist-dyed textile production, and will link this discussion to measures and approaches taking place at a regional, national and international level by government and non-government agencies and organisations. The chapter is supplemented by: Appendix H, the catalogue of hand block printed textiles; Appendix I, practical details of a natural indigo dye revival project carried out in 2006-7; Appendix J: the detailed observations of Mohanty and Mohanty (1983) summarised in table form; and Appendix K, a series of cloth swatches which illustrate each stage of the traditional mordant and resist print processes in Bagru,

Intangible heritage, which refers not to artistic products, but rather to the knowledge, values and practices which bring them into existence, is seen as being key to the process of preservation. As with culture itself, cultural practices do not exist in a vacuum. Other factors such as the media, technology, trade, economics, tourism, education, value systems, and
geographical location, have direct impact. ‘Protecting’ cultural practices through heritage policies and government activities means finding a delicate balance between regulating the impact of these external influences and allowing a natural and organic growth and response by culture. Anything else must surely become a romanticised artificial culture couched in nostalgia.

6.2 Traditional hand block printing and resist-dyeing

From 1976 to 1978 Bijoy Chandra and Jagdish Prasad Mohanty carried out detailed field observations of the dye and print procedures in use in Bagru at that time. ‘In spite of the intrusion of mechanical processes, synthetic dyes and chemicals’ they reported, ‘the art has survived’ (Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:3). Some thirty years on it is becoming clear that the craft has survived not in spite of those intrusions; rather its survival can be explicitly attributed to being because the Chhipas were creative enough to adapt modern materials into their craft practices. Thus, the focus in this chapter is on exploring those adaptations, foregrounding the printers’ perspectives on their amendments to materials and technologies in recent decades. Since Mohanty and Mohanty offer a detailed study of traditional technologies the materials offered here are necessarily brief, make use of first hand observations, are based on the information offered by currently practicing dyers and printers, and where relevant include reference to Mohanty’s mention of equivalent procedures. A summary of their observations is included in Appendix J of this thesis. This chapter is hoped to expand upon their scholarship, and offer updated clarification of current practices, particularly in the differences between traditional natural materials and techniques as opposed to the decidedly modern alternatives.
6.2.1 Block carving

1. Seasoned wood is planed smooth
2. and painted with chalk paste
3. Colours in the design are separated
4. The paper reversed, and a pin used
to trace lines on the chalked wood
5. Areas of wood are removed
6. Using a range of small tools
7. Depending upon the level of detail
8. Tools are regularly sharpened
9. Until the design is carved in relief
10. Finished rekh block
11. And printed design
Fundamental to the craft of hand block printing are the carved wooden printing blocks, and their manufacture is a craft in itself. The process of block carving is shown in the sequence of photographs above (also discussed briefly by Mohanty and Mohanty 1983:11). The wood is planed, sanded, and then polished [1] to create a perfectly smooth and level surface before any carving can begin. Design proportions must also be checked, to ensure a perfect repeat, then colours separated [3], and the design traced [4, 5]. Mistakes made at this stage cannot usually be recovered later on. Carving the design onto the block surface [6, 7, 8, and 10] removes the excess wood. Most block carvers make and maintain their own set of tiny chisels for this purpose, each with a slightly different shaped head (as below), and develop a tool kit which reflects their personal style of carving.
Chapter Six: Traditional Processes and Changing Technologies

punches or dies with a shaped profile which squash the wood fibres to leave a square, circular, leaf or heart shaped depression.

Figure 115: Set of block carving tools on display at AHMP, 2004. Photograph D. Dunning (also appears in Ronald and Kumar K. G., 2005:38).

Figure 116: Simple manual bow-drill in use by block carver at Fundanbhaya’s workshop, Sanganer 2004. Photograph E. Ronald.

Indian teak, known locally as sagwan (Tectona grandis), and Indian rosewood, local name shisham (Dalbergia sissoo) are considered good general purpose woods for block carving. For more durable blocks, particularly a detailed rekha block, the local rohida wood (Tecomella undulate) might be used. This is a rarer and more expensive wood, with a dense grain, and has the advantage of being worm-resistant. Wood is usually sourced from the forested areas of neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, where the trunks of newly felled trees are sliced into cross-sections of 10-20cm thick. These slices, once purchased by the carver, must be seasoned for at least a year in the workshop before use: “they must sit for a full cycle of weather seasons – the hot, the wet, and the dry – this makes the grain firm enough for carving, and prevents the block warping when it is used” (Fundanbhaya, Sanganer, personal communication 2007). Knots, splits, and damaged areas of wood are not suitable for carving. “Modern block carvers, especially in Sanganer, they are starting to use power tools. This is not good, the drills create
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heat and scorch the wood making the grains damaged and more difficult to carve. We should use the traditional tools to get the best results.” (Mujib Ullah Khan, personal communication 2005).

Once the full set of corresponding rekh, datta and gudh blocks are complete they are soaked in mustard oil for a period of one week. The printer will repeat this oiling at regular intervals during the useful life of a printing block, usually just prior to and immediately following an extended period of storage. Warping of the wood, due to the dramatic changes in heat and humidity in Rajasthan, is avoided by drilling a series of horizontal holes through the body of the block. During monsoon season the most costly blocks will have metal rods passed through these channels to maintain the shape of the wood. With the right care and attention a set of printing blocks can continue to be useful for many decades. “They are the most expensive thing we have to buy for our work, but without them we are worthless” (Shri Narayan Chhipa, Jaipur, personal communication 2007). Hence a good set of blocks represent a financial investment for the printer, and, on a practical level, his intention to make as much use as possible of these blocks is an important factor in the endurance of certain designs or recurring motifs in his repertoire of products, and contributes to the predominance of some sub-regional styles (see Skidmore and Ronald, 2010:52-55 for an example of this).

Crucially, within his own sphere of technical knowledge as a woodworker, the carver also needs to understand the intricacies of the printing process, and the different viscosities of the various print pastes. For example: with dabu blocks the design cannot be cut with any fine detail; and for begar datta blocks any large areas need to be cut and filled with namda (wool or felt) to ensure an even strike-off. Being capable of visualising his block in use, in the hands of the printer, means the carver can add small registration pins or devices which help the printer to line-up the repeat during work, yet become invisible in the finished design.
6.2.2 Pre-processing

After block carving the cloth is prepared for printing and dyeing in a series of two pre-processing activities: (1) hari sarana washing; (2) the pila karna process for applying harda. In addition, the mordant and resist pastes are prepared: (3) syahi and (4) begar mordant paste preparation; and also (5) dabu mud resist paste preparation is required.

(1) Washing – hari sarana

Prior to any other processing, loom-state cloth must first be thoroughly washed to remove all oils or impurities added during weaving, and also soften and ‘open’ the cotton fibres. Historically, printing and dyeing work was carried out on river banks, making use of the flowing water and broad stretches of sandy banks. Extensive damming and diversion of rivers in Rajasthan, combined with urbanisation and increasing pollution, means almost all practicing Chhipas now use a piped mains supply or deep bore wells and concrete washing tanks to meet their water requirements. These tanks are often sectioned, in order to separate clean and dirty washing procedures. The washer stands waist deep in the wash water, soaking, submerging, and the wet cloth is swung in an arc over the washer’s head repeatedly beating on a broad smooth shelf or ledge to loosen any impurities.
Most washing stages use plain water; however, in order to remove the impurities and swell the cotton fibres, the initial wash is lengthy and requires surfactants. Following being soaked in plain water for between 12 and 72 hours the cloth undergoes the hari sarana process (this is recorded as De-sizing by Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:12, plate 8). This process is also known as saaj, and the emulsified soap solution neerani, to the Khatri ajrakh printers of Kachchh, Gujarat, though the ingredients and procedure are identical (Ronald, 2007b:40-41). Traditional detergent is generated from an emulsified blend of castor oil (til), soda ash (khar) and camel or goat dung (mingni) (referred to as the telkhar emulsion by Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:9).

Whilst the historical reports of Roxburgh (Schwartz, 1959), Cordeaux (Schwartz, 1956), and Roques (Schwartz, 1969) all cite the use of cow dung (gorbar), in the western states of Rajasthan and Gujarat the use of mingni, camel or goat dung, is explicit. Mingni is the local term which refers only to dung which forms in round balls. In terms of scientific rationale, both camel and goat dung contain higher levels of sodium phosphate and urea than cow dung, which act together as humectants and fibre softeners. Cow dung is much sought after for other uses, particularly as fuel for cooking fires in arid areas where firewood is scarce. The origins of mingni use may therefore be a reaction to the imperative constrains on material availability. However, dung in general is considered impure and debases those who handle or use it. This mixture is then applied to and massaged into the cloth, which is wrapped in hessian to keep moist overnight, and then spread in the sun for the following day, the mixture re-applied in the evening, and the procedure repeated daily for up to one week. By the end of this period the mix of oil, dung and soda ash emulsifies with the dirt and oils present on the cotton fibres to generate a rich lather. Most printers and washermen today will use modern detergents or Turkey Red Oil (TRO, sulphonated castor oil) to assist in the removal of impurities from the greige cloth.
(2) Pila karna (harda)

As a pre-mordant, *harda* is applied prior to any mordant-printing work, to help develop black tones and also aid adhesion of the alum mordant (the materials and process of pila karna are referred to by Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:9,12, plate 9). *Harda* is the local name for the *myroballan* fruit, a hard tannin-rich plum of the *terminalia chebula* tree. There are three ‘grades’ of *myroballan*, each with different medicinal properties. The *harda* used for pre-mordanting of cloth is the lowest, cheapest, and most widely available grade. *Balharda* is the highest form, smaller and darker in colour than normal *harda*, and containing much higher concentrations of tannic acid. These dried fruits, also widely used in ayurvedic medicine, are ground to a fine powder before use. Chandramouli reports *harda* fruits being treated in different ways in other parts of India, including being steeped whole in boiling water overnight to extract the tannins (see Mohanty et al., 1987). The process of applying *harda* is referred to by printers as *pila karna*, ‘to do yellow’, due to the soft yellow colour the *harda* imparts on the cloth. The *pila karna* procedure was traditionally carried out in a *paundhi*, a depression formed in stone, or dug into the sandy ground and lined with thick cloth or clay (below left). An upright post with detachable wooden peg (below right) is often set into the ground beside this, to help when wringing excess liquid from the heavy cloth lengths. Modern *paundhis* are usually a purpose-built concrete depression.
Cloth is immersed in a strong solution of *harda*, trampled for ten minutes, then removed, squeezed thoroughly, and laid out to sun-dry. This procedure is usually carried out whilst cloth is still wet from *hari sarana*, and following the *harda* process the cloth is not rinsed. It is simply folded and stored - prior to printing the cloth will be beaten to remove loose *harda* powder and soften the fibres (see above centre). *Harda* can also be re-applied near the end of the completed dye and print sequence, in order to fix other dyes or as a final rinse to render the background cloth a soft cream shade, or, as mentioned in the previous chapter, to give an ‘antique’ feel to modern chemical prints. The *pila karna* process sequence is illustrated below:
Chapter Six: Traditional Processes and Changing Technologies

1. *pila karna* requires a *paundhi* of plain water
2. *harda* is blended with this water in a bucket
3. until it forms a smooth *harda* paste added to the *paundhi*
4. then removed
5. washed cloth is added
6. a few lengths at a time
7. and trampled in the *harda*
8. then set aside
9. excess *harda* squeezed and wrung out
10. spread to dry, then stored until required

Figure 121: The *pila karna* process, pre-treating the cloth with *harda*. Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning and E. Ronald.
Mordant pastes are based on the preparation of an inert binder which thickens the mordant to a printable consistency. Binder pastes are generally either: a) *gond* (tree gum), or b) *chiagatta* (tamarind seed paste). These pastes have only a few days of useful life, and so need to be prepared in large quantities at regular intervals during a working week.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>a) <em>Gond</em> – crystals of tree gum resin, often gathered locally from the babul tree, <em>Acacia arabica indica</em>, are ground to a powder and soaked in plain water overnight, then sieved by hand through a fine mesh (see below, right).</th>
<th>b) <em>Chiagatta</em> – roasted tamarind seeds (<em>Tamarindus indica</em>) are ground to a fine powder, then cooked with water over a low fire for at least an hour, or until a sticky gruel is formed (see below, left).</th>
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The mordant components of the printing pastes are *syahi* (iron acetate), and *begar* (alum). For several thousand years throughout the world alum has been an essential commodity for textile production, at first as a craft and then on an industrial scale. Traditionally the local dyers and printers would use potash alum, a hydrated double sulphate of potassium and aluminium (KAI(SO₄)·12HO). This alum is widely and easily found in deserts like Rajasthan, where it is less likely to be dispersed and dissolved by rain and watercourses. These days, however, it is just as

![Figure 122: Cooked and cooled chiagatta paste. Photograph D. Dunning 2006.](image1)

![Figure 123: Sieving the soaked gond crystals. Bagru 2006. Photograph D. Dunning.](image2)

![Figure 124: making begar paste with sieved gond, alum solution, and geru (red ochre). Bagru 2005. Photograph D. Dunning.](image3)
likely to be aluminium sulphate – manufactured in a simple yet efficient process destined for industrial scale use.

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<th>3) Syahi</th>
<th>4) Begar</th>
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<td>scrap iron horseshoes are first scorched, to remove any rust, then placed in a vessel along with gur or shera (unrefined molasses) and covered with plain water. This mixture is left loosely covered for 10 to 15 days, during which time the sugar ferments and reacts with the iron to form an iron acetate solution. When ready, the solution is drained off, mixed with chiagatta paste, and sieved before use.</td>
<td>alum crystals are broken and ground down to a fine powder which is dissolved in a little water, then added to the gond paste and sieved before use. The quantity of alum affects the resulting shade of red, and is measured by eye and taste. To achieve deeper shades of red during dyeing, a little of the syahi paste is sometimes blended into the begar mix, though anything more than 5% syahi outweighs the effects of the alum. Proportions are tested and judged by taste – large amounts of alum (giving deeper shades) are described as producing a ‘crackle’ on the tongue.</td>
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Mohanty and Mohanty discuss mordant paste preparation offering details such as the addition of moyi (a paste of scorched cowdung and oil) to begar, and multani mitti (fuller’s earth) to syahi, neither of which are practiced in Bagru today (1983:9). The constant preparation and replenishment of syahi and begar stock pastes is an ongoing task, with a series of pots maintained at various stages of fermentation to ensure there is always a sufficient ready supply of syahi (see photograph below). Because these activities often overlap with household chores, understanding these basic preparations helps reveal not only the technical aspects behind how colour and pattern are applied to cloth, but also offers an insight into how the craft is socially located, within family and caste boundaries.
(5) Dabu resist paste preparation

The use of dabu resist is unique to Rajasthan and the precise recipe and preparation can vary from one Chhipa family to the next. Mohanty and Mohanty report the historical use of three different grades of dabu, using two recipes: (1) the common bidan-dabu procedure (with varying quantities of gond), and (2) a finer quality gwardabu, produced to an entirely different recipe (see 1983:10). Whilst bidan-dabu is still in daily use by many rural Chhipa families, very few could recall the recipe for gwardabu and only two still put this knowledge into practice. Dabu quality affects clarity of the finished print, the ability to resist finer lines or details, and a better quality dabu is likely to withstand more indigo dips and shed less debris into the vat.
Figure 126: Process of making bidhan-dabu mud resist paste. Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.
(2) Gwardabu

Kali mitti (black clay-rich soil) is made in three separate mixtures [a, b, c], which can be stored in the dry form for up to a year and mixed as required. Stage 1: The first mixture [a] consists of roasted and ground gwar seeds (*Cyanopsis detragonoloba*). The second mixture [b] is kali mitti (black clay-rich earth). The third mixture [c] is made as follows: 5kg chuna (lime) is mixed with equal sized handfulls (approx. 250g) of gur (molasses) and mitha tel (oil) then spread in a thin layer on a flat surface to sun-dry. Once dry, this is ground to a powder and stored. Stage 2: When a quantity of gwardabu is required the three mixtures are combined as follows: 1 kg of kali mitti [b] is set to soak in water overnight, and then sieved to a smooth runny paste in the morning. In a separate vessel, 1kg of the roasted and ground gwar seeds [a] are boiled in water until a thick sticky paste is formed, and then set aside to cool. Stage 3: In roughly equal quantities, the powdered chuna and gur mixture [c] is blended into the soaked kali mitti [b]. Stage 4: this mud and lime mix is then combined with the cooked gwar seed paste [a]. This is blended and sieved until smooth and of the correct printing consistency. Gwardabu is far superior to bidan-dabu in terms of strength as it can withstand many more submersion in the indigo vat. It also produces much finer printed detail.

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<tr>
<td>[a] Roast + grind gwar seed</td>
<td>Cook with water</td>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>Mix all three together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b] Kali mitti</td>
<td>Soak overnight</td>
<td>Mix [b] + [c] together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[c] Cook chuna, gur + tel, Sundry + grind</td>
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6.2.3 Printing Procedures

Figure 127: Positioning the cloth onto the padded printing table, Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.

Harda-treated cloth is first smoothed onto the printing table, which has been padded with many layers of thick hessian and khadi cloth. A little print paste is poured into a tari (tray, below left), a bamboo or wire jail placed inside this tray (below right), and a layer of absorbent cotton or wool material placed on top (below left). This absorbent pad is soaked in the print paste, and the surface scraped with a small piece of card or wood at regular intervals to maintain an evenly charged ‘ink pad’ where the carved face of the block is dabbed in between each strike-off onto the cloth. Usually any areas where black is required are printed first, using syahi paste. Following this, areas where red is required will be filled-in using the begar (alum mordant) paste. Mordant pastes which contain a mixture of varying proportions of begar and syahi, for different shades of red, can also be printed. The tray is placed to the printer’s right hand side. Before each imprint of block onto cloth he dabs the printing block onto the pad, then positions it on the cloth by eye, gives the handle a firm tap, immediately returning the block to the mordant soaked cloth pad in order to recharge for the next imprint. Mohanty and Mohanty describe the printing procedure, including a variety of equipment names now no longer in regular use (1983:12).
It’s not simply a matter of bashing the block in to the colour then onto cloth, like a bank clerk stamping *chitties*. It depends on the sort of colour being printed – with *syahi* the paste is more watery, and there’s more detail, so hit the block two or three times... with *begar* I suppose it depends on the design, more detail then treat it like *syahi*, but less detail like in some of these larger areas of *datta* (infill) doesn’t need such heavy printing (Prahlad Dosaya Chhipa, Bagru, personal communication 2004).

Too much pressure on the block results in spreading of mordant paste beyond the printed lines, too little pressure risks an incomplete strike-off, and any attempt to over-print such a mistake risks misalignment resulting in a double or shadowed print. Mohanty and Mohanty also refer to these high levels of skill and expertise required from a printer when using *syahi-begar* pastes, stating that ‘the quantum and level of the printing paste and the extent to which the block is pressed against the woollen pad in the trough containing the printing paste are the expertise of the printer and are regulated by his experience in the practice of the craft’ (1983:13). Printing *syahi* and *begar* mordants is expressed in the following photographic sequence:
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However, “Dabu printing is a completely different way of printing” (Meenadevi, wife of Suraj Narayan, Bagru, personal communication 2005). Dabu mud-resist, which protects the design from the subsequent indigo treatment, is unique to Rajasthan, and characteristic of the local prints traditionally produced in Bagru, Balotra, Pipad and by outlying print families producing fadats for ghagras. Some printing families, as with Meenadevi’s natal home, specialise in dabu printing and may do this on sub-contract for other Chhipa workshops in the area. Traditionally, as in the home of Suraj Narayan Titanwala in Bagru, dabu printing is carried out on the low pathiya tables. Dabu mud paste is loaded into a large earthenware handi (open-mouthed round pot), which is rested at an angle to the right hand side of the seated printer. The printing block is lightly touched onto the surface of the liquid dabu paste, flicked to remove excess drips, and then positioned gently on the cloth, in what Mohanty and Mohanty describe as ‘quite an act of experience’ (1983:13).

With dabu printing the touch needs to be gentle, perhaps this is why women make such good dabu printers. With a heavy hand the dabu leaks and smudges the design. If the printer is rushed the whole piece will be spoiled, and it has already been coloured with syahi-begar so we cannot afford such wastage (Meenadevi, wife of Suraj Narayan, Bagru personal communication 2009).
The *dabu* printing procedure is demonstrated by Meenadevi, below:

1. cloth is patted into place
2. the block dipped in *dabu*
3. printing begins from right
4. to left across the cloth
5. following design repeat
6. until the table surface
7. has been covered, then
8. sawdust is sprinkled
9. in a thin layer
10. to protect the print
11. and soak-up
12. excess moisture
13. surplus sawdust
14. is shaken from the cloth
15. and the cloth is then
16. repositioned to
17. an unprinted section
18. then patted into place
19. the block dipped in *dabu*
20. and printing resumes

*Figure 131: Meenadevi demonstrating the *dabu* printing procedure, Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.*
6.2.4 Dye preparation and dyeing

Traditional hand block printed and resist-dyed textiles rely on three key dye colours, individually and in combination: (1) **ghan rangai** – red dyeing, (2) **nil rangai** – indigo dyeing, and (3) **nasphal potai** – yellow over-dyeing.

(1) *Ghan rangai*

The red dyes are substantive, that is, they require a mordant in order to fix to the fibre, and the application of heat aids this process. Thus, wherever *begar* has been printed a red colour will develop on the cloth during *ghan rangai*. Whether using the naturally derived *majeet* (madder, *Rubia cordifolia* L., *Rubia manjistha*, *Rubia sikkimensis*) and *al* (*Morinda citrifolia*), or a synthetic alizarin (compare the three photographs below), the dyeing process is ostensibly the same (pictured in the sequence of photographs of *ghan rangai*). Water and dyestuff are added to a large copper vessel called a *tamda*, set into a fire hearth, or *batti*, under which a small fire is lit and carefully tended throughout the dyeing process. As the water gradually heats the cloth is added, and stirred or turned in the dye regularly using two stout sticks. The dyeing process can extend over many hours depending on the shade the dyer wishes to achieve. A second person is required, to monitor the fire under the *tamda* adding extra wood, or damping the flames to cinders, to ensure the dye is maintained at the correct temperature whilst making efficient use of firewood and *gorbar* (cowdung) cakes.
Within naturally occurring red dye sources a number of different chemical colouring compounds, anthroquinones and glycosides, work together to generate the visible colour effect. The principle colour compounds are alizarin (an orange red) and purpurin (a purplish red). Varying quantities are present within different species of plant, and also according to the environment where it grew (altitude/food/minerals etc) (cf. Chenciner, 2000, Gupta et al., 2001, Cardon, 2007). Since the colouring compounds within the al and majeet natural red dye sources are temperature sensitive, it is crucial to prevent the temperature within the tamda from reaching boiling. Heating the dyebath beyond 70°c means the red compounds become irreversibly brown. The volume of water is gauged according to the quantity of cloth being processed, which is always as close to the maximum capacity of the tamda as possible to make the dyeing procedure both cost and time effective. Red dyestuffs, firewood, and a full day’s wages for sub-contracting a skilled Lalgar (sub-caste of the Rangrez community, specialist in red dyeing) represent a considerable outlay on the Chhipa’s part.

The combined effects of the harda and red dyeing procedures invariably leave white cloth tinged with a dirty shade of pink. In Sanganer, where designs rely on the contrast between
dark black and red motifs on a white un-dyed ground, the process of sun bleaching was historically used. The origins of this technique cannot be dated, but it considerably pre-dates the invention of chemical bleaches, and has contributed to the widespread desirability of Sanganeri textiles. Mohanty and Mohanty (1983:13) also record its use in Bagru, and it is this process which Irwin (1971) refers to when writing about the characteristic bleached whites of Sanganeri prints. The process, whilst time consuming, can achieve impressive results.

**Tapana** - Cloth is soaked in a weak solution of *mingni* (camel or goat dung) and water, and then spread in a smooth sandy area, in direct sunlight. Throughout the day the cloth is sprinkled with plain water, to keep it moist. The process is continued over a number of days (usually between 3 and 5) until the background has bleached white. A final wash helps clear any remaining dirt and sand. This process is also believed to strengthen the depth and fastness of *syahi* and *begar* printed areas.

Despite its seemingly widespread use in the 1970s, as recorded by Mohanty, *tapana* is no longer practiced regularly today, though a handful of Sanganeri Chhipas do use it occasionally. This is mainly because no printer or dyer in Rajasthan today makes any regular use of natural red dyestuffs. However, many had memories of its use, particularly with regard to the laborious chipping or grinding and overnight soaking of the tough *al* and *majeet* roots. Instead, those who continue to produce ‘traditional’ prints do so using synthetic alizarin. Hence Mohanty and Mohanty refer to the red dyeing process not as *ghan rangai*, but as ‘The Alizarine Process of Dyeing’ (1983:13). Unlike its natural counterparts, with synthetic alizarin it is much harder to achieve shade varieties through varying mordant strengths, methods of preliminary cloth scouring, proportions of dyestuff, duration of dyeing time, the prior fermentation of the soaked red dye matter, different additives (such as chalk or lime), and different dye vessels (aluminium, iron, copper and steel).
Figure 135: Process sequence for red-dye application, demonstrated by Suraj Narayan’s son Deepak, Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.
In addition to the red dyes stated above, one other historically important dyestuff is used particularly in Bagru, to impart a reddish-pink tint to a design and also help develop chocolate brown grounds (see Appendix K for the full sequence of printing and dyeing associated with kasumal use). For this the cloth was traditionally boiled in a solution of kasumal ka phool (Carthamus tinctorius, safflowers, see below) after the ghan rangai (red dyeing) procedure, and prior to the application of dabu resists and indigo. Kasumal is unique in that it contains two separate colouring compounds, a yellow-orange, which is released in warm water, and a vibrant pink, which is only released from the flower-heads through vigorous boiling with the cloth for at least an hour (for a discussion of the chemistry and history of safflower use globally, see Cardon, 2007:53-59). Very few printers use kasumal today, and those who do have substituted synthetic direct dyes for the kasumal flowers. In Mohanty and Mohanty’s account they record the process under ‘Other Requirements’, confirming the widespread use of the synthetic direct diazo dye, Congo Red as a substitute (1983:12). First synthesised in 1883 by Bayer, Germany, Congo Red was the first synthetic red dye to not require a mordant (Robinson, 1970). Today it is more widely used as a scientific stain or pH indicator than a textile dye, due largely to its poor colourfastness and toxicity.

Figure 136: Kasumal dyeing, Bagru 2009. Photograph E. Ronald.

Figure 137: Kasumal flowers, dried, purchased from Chunilal’s natural dye shop, Tripolia Bazaar, Jaipur 2009. Photograph E. Ronald.
“After all that boiling, in the red dye and the *kasumal*, it is difficult to match-up the *dabu* print because the cloth has shrunk a little and comes out stiff. Beating it with the *mogri* [large wooden mallet] makes it soft and stretchy again” (Meenadevi, Bagru, personal communication 2009). Mohanty and Mohanty also mention this piece of traditional equipment (1983:17) which is used to soften and loosen cotton fibres after hot dyeing and before subsequent *dabu* and indigo procedures (see below).

![Figure 138: Using the mogri to soften and loosen the fibres in kasumal-dyed cloth, Suraj Narayan, Bagru 2009. Photographs E. Ronald.](image)

(2) Nil Rangal

One of the key colours characteristic of rural Rajasthani block prints is blue. Traditionally this was derived from *nil* (indigo), extracted from the leaves of the indigenous *Indigofera tinctora* plant, and fermented using a mixture of alkaline lime and locally sourced sweet ingredients. In Rajasthan today very few natural fermentation natural indigo vats remain in use. The histories of production, use, and global trade of indigo dye have garnered much scholarly interest from many disciplines (for example Roux, 1923, Tolat, 1980, Hoskins, 1989, Balfour-Paul, 1992, Trivedi, 1994, Balfour-Paul, 1998, Böhmer, 2002, Balfour-Paul, 2010, Roy, 2011). During their research, in the late 1970s, Mohanty and Mohanty recorded the use of synthetic indigo with a natural fermentation method (1983:10). Today chemical Hydros is used, with synthetic indigo,
as a complete substitute for the natural fermentation vat. This is mainly because the process of traditional natural fermentation indigo vat preparation is lengthy and complex. However the salient points are covered here through use of annotated photographs (Appendix I offers greater detail). Crucially, the indigo dye particles themselves are not soluble in water; instead they require a strong alkali. Furthermore, once dissolved, these dye particles cannot connect to textile fibres without being ‘reduced’ (i.e. the oxygen removed from the dye solution) through a combination of strong alkali and fermentation.

Hence, the highly alkaline chuna (lime) and khar (soda ash) are added daily to a vat of plain water for up to a fortnight to raise the pH, then small quantities of soaked and ground nil will be added every few days until a maximum total of 3kg has been added. Fresh indigo vats are made only rarely, and care of the vat - to maintain fermentation, alkali strength, and dye concentration - is the daily responsibility of the Nilgar (specialist in indigo dyeing). The typical indigo vat used by the printers of Rajasthan is a math which is sunk roughly ten feet into the ground, with a narrow mouth and base but an ovoid cross-section (compare with the variety of other vat shapes and sizes recorded by Mohanty, Chandramouli and Naik (1987) in their pan-Indian survey of natural dyeing processes). The Rajasthani vats contain between 1000-1500 litres of water, and are deep enough for a number of fadats to be submerged simultaneously. A series of between two and eight maths will be dug together under a covered area, and used in succession to allow a few days for fermentation to recover after each batch of cloth has been dyed. Once the vat is set, and fermentation is maintained, the dyeing procedure simply involves scraping away the surface scum of the vat, and submerging the dry lengths of dabu-printed cloth into the dye for around five minutes, then removing and immediately spreading to dry. Because the dye in the vat is ‘reduced’ (i.e. oxygen removed) upon removal the cloth
appears bright green (as illustrated below), which quickly changes to blue on contact with the air. Deeper shades require multiple dips.

Figure 139: Well-fermented indigo vat liquid often appears yellow, as in this natural indigo vat which the Shahabudin family have sustained for many decades (left). After dyeing the cloth emerges as bright green (centre), though develops to indigo blue within minutes of exposure to air (right). Shahabudin workshop, Pipad 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.

According to Abdul Rangrez, a skilled indigo dyer who has worked with indigo vats in Bagru since he learnt the craft from his grandmother some eighty years ago, natural fermentation vats cannot be expressed in terms of recipes or quantities. Taste, touch and smell, alongside visual assessment of the surface crust or foam, are the critical evaluation methods. A good fermentation smells like freshly brewed coffee, has a slippery texture between the fingers, and a sweet yet sharp taste on the tongue. The foam will be rich, solid, and deep bronzed-blue (photograph 14 in the series below). The intuitive Nilgar needs to be able to assess each of these on a daily basis, and rectify any discrepancies by adding judged quantities of khajoor (dates), gur (molasses), chuna (lime), khar (soda ash) or nil (indigo).

The general sequence for setting a vat is illustrated below, followed by the procedure employed when dyeing cloth with indigo. After each submersion in the indigo vat the cloth is
spread to dry, with the dabu-printed face upwards to prevent smudging. Additional dabu can be applied between each successive dip, to reserve graduating shades of blue within a design.

Figure 140: Abdul Rangrez, who learnt the craft from his grandmother, demonstrates the sequence for preparation and maintenance of a natural indigo vat, Dosaya workshop, Bagru 2006-7. Photographs D. Dunning.
1. the indigo vat is loosely covered when not in use
2. dry, dabu-printed *fadats* are gently lowered into the dye
3. a stick is used to make sure the cloth is fully submerged
4. cloth remains submerged for 5-10 mins
5. keeping hold of the corner to prevent losing the cloth in the vat
6. then the lengths are carefully removed from the vat
7. and allowed to drain momentarily
8. the excess dye squeezed out
9. and then quickly spread out for the colour to develop

*Figure 141: Procedure for indigo dyeing, Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning.*
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(3) Nasphal potai

The third primary shade, yellow, is achieved using *nasphal* dye. This is a cold solution of *anar* *ka chhilka* (pomegranate rinds) and *haldi* (turmeric) which is typically smeared (*potai*) onto the cloth surface after all other dye and print processes have been completed. Mohanty and Mohanty reported that pomegranate rind was used as a replacement for the bark of the *dhawadi* tree (1983:11), although this ingredient is no longer mentioned by printers and dyers today. An alternative method of *nasphal* application is to immerse the cloth in a large *tarseia* (wide copper vessel) as shown below. *Nasphal* is made by boiling a large quantity of dried *anar* *ka chhilka* (pomegranate rinds), which are then left to steep overnight, and the orange solution strained off the following morning. To this solution a drop of oil is added, to break the surface tension, and then powdered *haldi* (turmeric) is blended in until the desired shade is achieved (shown in photograph 2 in the sequence below). More *haldi* gives a brighter canary yellow; less *haldi* gives a softer ochre shade. As an overdye, *nasphal* generates a number of other shades: over indigo it creates green, over *kasumal* it gives orange, and over red-dyed areas it results in softer red-ochre shades. as demonstrated by Suraj Narayan in the photographs below, *nasphal* *potai* is a group activity, as each corner of the *fadat* must be held out tightly whilst the dye is smeared quickly onto the surface. Once smeared, the cloth is laid in the sun “until it smells cooked” (Meenadevi, Bagru, personal communication 2009), then rinsed in alum solution, dried and aged, and then washed thoroughly before sale.
1. *anar ka chilka* are boiled and left to steep overnight

2. powdered *haldi* is added to the strained liquid with a drop of oil to make the *nasphal* dye

3. a soft rag or cloth is used

4. to apply the *nasphal* mix

5. and smear it across the cloth

6. covering the whole surface

7. then laid face-down to dry

8. and brought in when ‘cooked’

*Figure 142: nasphal potai, yellow dye process sequence demonstrated by Suraj Narayan. Bagru 2009. Photographs D. Dunning and E. Ronald.*
6.3 Modern adaptations

It is clearly evidenced from the preceding pages, and their comparison with Mohanty and Mohanty's earlier work, that the past forty years have not only seen dramatic changes to the markets for hand block printed cloth, but also, and as a direct result of the shifting design aesthetics associated with those new markets, the technologies and processes of hand block printing have undergone amendments. Over the latter part of the twentieth century the dyers and printers of Rajasthan have been investing increasingly in new tools and processes. Throughout the history of textile production in India there has always been an element of ingenuity and adaptability to shifting circumstances and needs, as well as to the shifting availability of materials in the more remote places. Techniques, designs, materials, ideas, knowledge, and craftspeople themselves, have all moved in response to the changing demands of the region. Today modern production processes, tools and materials have been taken up rapidly and have caused a near wholesale shift from the traditional form of the craft.

The following pages consider the effects which the popularity of chemical colours and updated workshop equipment have had on the work of the Chhipa community, in a consideration of the very local effects of the globalisation of the craft. The emphasis here is on the contrasts and continuities between traditional and modern styles of block printing, which also highlights the growing divide between rural and urban forms of the craft.

The differences between how we work now and how we used to work are many, though I suppose a visitor from outside might think we have always done it this way. For a start the tables never used to be like this, and obviously the colours have changed, and there are so many printers from outside the community working in Sanganer now – mostly from Farrukhabad. The whole way of working changed... I think we got out first big mez [table] in the 1960s when we started to get sari orders which needed straight lines down the edges, though at that time we still did the ghan rangai and tapai in the old way. After the flood of ’81, that was when we left those old ways and went over to pigments and acid colours. We lost so much of stock in that flood, all those bundles of cloth on the sand ready for washing, it broke us as a
community. How could we get back to that place again? So many left the craft completely, and those that stayed didn’t have the money to invest so they did job work, learnt chemical colours, waited for things to change for the better...it took a couple of years but then of course things changed when large export orders came in again. (Radesharan Chhipa, Sanganer, personal communication 2007).

As this printer’s account illustrates, in order to cope with the changing times the Chhipas have made a number of practical adaptations to their workshop tools and practices. Furthermore, hand-in-hand with the evolution of designs and larger repeat sizes, discussed in the previous chapter, and the growing emphasis from exporters for time and cost effectiveness and colour consistence, there has been an increasing reliance on chemical dyes. By the 1990s the average export order could be anything in the region of 5000 metres for a single design, in contrast to the 50 metre cloth batches processed by Chhipas only half a century earlier. These represent a divergence from established ways of working, a break from tradition, but also illustrate that the traditional craftsman is ready to accept changes in production conditions, and make innovative adjustments of his own in order to achieve a desired outcome.

### 6.3.1 Workshop equipment

The most significant physical change within the workshop has been the printing tables. Previously a small low *pathiya* table, printers cite that it was when they took up sari printing during the late 1950s/early 1960s that issues of quality arose. The continuous lengths of cloth used for a sari, worn draped around the body, drew attention to uneven borders, disconnected stripes, and disorderly repeats. These are common faults when using the small *pathiya* tables because the printer moves the cloth a number of times during printing. Tables were radically redesigned into long waist-height *mez* tables. The 20-30 loose layers of jute and *khadi* padding were now tightly stapled into place to give a smooth even surface for printing. This was particularly useful with the move away from cottons to experimental orders printed on sheer
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fabrics such as silks and chiffons, which could be pinned onto this surface for stability during printing.

In conjunction with the adoption of these larger tables, printers began to use a gaddi trolley to hold their tray of print paste at the correct height. Fitted with small wheels, the gaddi is pushed alongside the printer as he works down the length of the table (below right and centre). Since the new tables are no less than five metres in length more than one printer can now work on a single length of cloth, further reducing production time. The photograph below left shows three printers working simultaneously on one single length of cloth, each adding a different colour to the design.

![Figure 143: Group of printers working simultaneously on a printed length of cloth. Om Singh Naruka’s workshop, Sanganer, 2007. Photograph D. Dunning.](image)

![Figure 144: The wheeled gaddi keeps the tari of print paste beside the printer as he works his way along the length of the long table. Bagru, 2009. Photograph E. Ronald.](image)

![Figure 145: Example of a high mez and wheeled gaddi in use at Suraj Narayan’s workshop, where printing continues to follow traditional processes. Bagru 2009. Photograph E. Ronald.](image)

The mez and gaddi (illustrated above) are today standard equipment in the majority of printing workshops, with the pathiya is only used by rural printers such as Yasin Khan (Balotra) and for dabu printing in Bagru. Other technical developments have been less widespread, adopted to meet specific challenges. In Sanganer many larger print units have installed mechanised jigger-winches (see below right) to use when plain-dyeing large quantities of cloth with chemical
colours. This avoids uneven patches of colour, and allows for much greater quantities of cloth to be dyed in a single batch. Others have invested in spin dryers, to help reduce drying times and thus maximise on the available space. In the increasingly cramped space of Sanganer most units have constructed tall bamboo drying frames (below left), from which many long lengths of cloth can be suspended to dry.

Figure 146: Left: Bamboo drying frames; Right: mechanised jigger-winches for plain-dyeing continuous lengths of cloth in a non-Chhipa run factory unit producing both screen and block printed products. Sanganer 2007, photographs D. Dunning (also appear in the unpublished draft (Ronald, 2008) for Skidmore & Ronald, 2010).

6.3.2 Synthetic dyestuffs

According to a large proportion of the printers consulted during the course of this research, the incorporation of newer classes of chemical dyes was largely inspired by the arrival of the screen-printing units in Sanganer during the late 1970s. Observing the ease of use and variety of effects possible with chemical dyes and pigments inspired the local Chhipas to experiment.

We saw the bright colours they [the screen-printers] were making, and how quickly the colours were made on the cloth. The naphthol dyes made such bright yellows and pinks, like nothing else, and people wanted these colours. So we just went to the colour merchant’s shop and asked for the same thing. He told us how the screen-printers were using the colours, and from there we tried to make our own recipe. The naphthols and the pigments were easy, but the indigo sols, and acids, that was where we made mistakes: expensive mistakes. (Praladh Dosaya, personal communication, 2007).
Kerosene binder with pigment colours means we don’t need to use the harda or begar or rangai processes. Because the colours are there already they just print from the block to the cloth, and after drying in the sun they are fixed. As long as I mix the right colours at the start the cloth will be finished within a few days rather than the few weeks of the old ways. (Anjani Kumar Bohra, personal communication, 2008).

The arrival and easy availability of synthetic dyestuffs meant the dyeing of cloth and clothing was available to any who wished to take it up, and is thus responsible for the reduction in numbers of the Rangrez community, and other specific dyeing castes across India as a whole. Hereditary dyers worth also depended on their knowledge of natural dye sources and techniques, and regionally-specific colour-palettes, which had, until then, been reliant on the locally available dye sources. Because of their widespread and uniform availability, synthetic dyestuffs were responsible for the homogenisation of this local colour palette, and, in some places, made whole traditional knowledge systems redundant. Whilst they required an expertise of their own, which most indigenous craftsmen did not possess, most purchased and experimented with chemical dyestuffs, often in conjunction with their familiar and time-honoured mordant and resist processes. Paradoxically, this resulted in Indian cloth losing its world-famous fast colours and gaining a name for notorious bleeding and running. As the reference to the ‘Barmeri’ naphthol prints in the previous chapter illustrated quit vividly, good expert handling of synthetic dyes was rare until recent decades. However, thankfully, the past decade has seen increasingly stringent export standards, bringing independent textile technologists and consultant dye chemists to printing units in Sanganer, and with them the potential for technical training.
Unlike synthetic alizarin and synthetic indigo, most other locally available classes of chemical dyes were not taken-up as wholesale substitutes for specific natural dyes; rather, they were adopted as a means of broadening the available colour palette, and thus the range and variety of aesthetic effects at the printers’ disposal. The montage of cloth swatches, above, illustrate the manner in which chemical dyes were used during the 1970s in order to extend the colour effects possible, whilst still using traditional blocks and designs. Over the past two decades the use of particular dye classes has replaced the production of distinctive sub-regional styles as the distinguishing feature between different Chhipa family workshops. For example, in Bagru, whilst Suraj Narayan continues to specialise in traditional mordant printed and indigo-resist dyed cloth, Prahlad Dosaya is better known for his ability to combine indigo and dabu with
other dye classes such as directs and pigments. In Sanganer there are many who specialise in the use of ‘acid’ apids, as well as pigments, or white-on-white kari printing.

The diffusion of these techniques and the know-how developed in conjunction with these new materials can be largely attributed to the internal systems of governance within the Chhipa community, where branch Samiti (community council) groups meet on a regular basis to discuss both family and work related issues. The community thus plays a guild-like role, in that it disseminates technical information within the group yet restricts its access by outsiders. The systems of apprenticeship have supported the dissemination of new technologies and efficient modes of handling chemical dyes. Learning and technology have a strong connection to the community identity, and the adoption of new technology is an important part of this.

In particular, the acid dyes were difficult because the true colour only comes after all printing is complete and the cloth is given an acid rinse. Before this all the colours look dirty - browns and greens and greys. Sometimes the dirtiest colour comes true as something too bright, and at the start we made so many costly mistakes like this. Over the years I have developed a recipe book, where I note the measured amounts of each colour I mix and then staple in a chindi\(^{12}\) of the colours which they make. In this way we can make the same difficult colours again if we need to. This has been a most important thing when dealing with orders from larger companies like Anokhi. In fact, Anokhi now use my colour chindis and recipes in their design room. In recent years I have worked with a trained colour chemist and textile technologist to refine these recipes and make a system for mixing new colours. It saves time, and makes the work from my unit reliable. (Om Singh Naruka, personal communication 2007)

Other excursions into chemical processing included the less than safe use of chemical burn-out devoré techniques, and a speedy alternative to traditional resist-printing developed from chemical discharge, which offered a much wider range of vivid shades. Cloth which had been dyed or printed using direct, azo, or indigo-sol colours could be printed with a paste containing Rangolite-c, which bleached out the colour and gave often luminous effects (below).

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\(^{12}\) Colour gamut of a design, on a cloth swatch or cutting.
Despite prolific use of chemical dyestuffs in Rajasthan today, often the binding print pastes are still based on the traditional *gond* or *chiagatta* recipes, because these have known printing consistencies and are maintained as stock in the workshop. Reliant on their perfected empirical knowledge of the chemical properties of organic matter such as plant dyes and animal dung, oil and lime, the local dyers and printers simply substituted new for old within their established techniques and processes. Ironically, they often marketed the resulting dyed and printed textiles as authentic ‘natural’ or ‘vegetable’ dyed. Such terminology has become central the contemporary discourse surrounding the marketing and perceived authenticity of Indian crafts today, with an increasing number of enterprises reverting to and adapting traditional skills to create ‘eco’ products. The final part of this chapter turns now to consider the impact of these changing perceptions of the handmade, the reactions within the Chhipa community, and the potential effects on the sustainability and cultural heritage of the craft.

### 6.4 Natural dyes and sustainability

In the past few years we have seen a definite increase in buyers looking for natural dyed textiles and asking us to work on organic cottons. It has been a challenge to source the right materials, and get the right colours – hard work. But I think it is going to mean good things for the Chhipa community because it is all about our community
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and family heritage (Om Prakash Dosaya Chhipa, Bagru, personal communication 2009).

Om Prakash, along with many other craftspeople, has identified that in recent times new markets have started to emerge, particularly amongst urban consumers who have increasingly begun to ascribe hand crafted goods with ethical, environmental and socio-cultural values. The Chhipa community are well positioned to tap into this emerging market as consumers develop more of an understanding about the externalised environmental and social costs of a product. As the links between industrial production and environmental degradation, and consumption and resource depletion enter mainstream discourse traditional crafts such as hand block printing are beginning to be considered as providing insights into the ways in which ethical, sustainable and environmental principles can be manifested in and through particular materials and processes. The term ‘conscious consumption’ can be applied to describe this ethically driven consumer movement, where shopping is conducted in a critical or analytical way (Nicholls and Opal, 2005). Hence handcrafted textiles not only form an important part of the creative cultural industries, but they also increasingly contribute to the growing concerns over sustainable practice, materials and the environment. As such the printers of Rajasthan are continually facing the need for further modernisation to meet improved quality demands, and new pressures to adopt measures to minimise the pollution level of the environment.

That the concept of ‘sustainability’ in relation to hand block printed textiles is connected to environmental, cultural and economic concerns is all too well illustrated by the 2004 court ruling, outlined at the start of this thesis. This ruling, as a result of a groundwater pollution study, called for all printing and dyeing activities to cease in Sanganer and relocate to purpose built premises in Chitroli village. The issue raised awareness of the troubling effects of industrialising the craft, and also ignited a heated debate, with block printers claiming their dyes were ‘all natural’ and placing the blame on screen-printers’ high volume usage of
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kerosene pigment binders and azo dyes. Brij Ballabh, an outspoken member of the Sanganer Calico Printers Co-operative Society, took this cause to the national press, arguing: “Since their turnover and profits are high, the screen-printers can easily relocate to another place as they can bear the burden of pollution fee and relocation... The block printer’s output is just 30 to 50 metres per day, and we make about Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2500 per day. How can a micro unit like ours bear the additional burden of pollution fee, treatment and the cost of establishment at a new location? The additional burden will increase the cost of output, making this old well-established craft highly priced and non-competitive in today’s cut-throat world” (quoted in Pal, 2003a). Clearly the Chhipa community were struggling to balance new economic opportunities with environmental and sustainability issues.

From a government perspective, the gains were quantified in economic terms since the new textile park at Chitroli village was to be a state-owned RIICO operated cluster development. In addition each printing unit would also be ordered to pay up to 15% of their annual turnover as a pollution fine. Whilst the legal wrangles continued for a number of years, the more immediate effects of these accusations of pollution, and indignation at being lumped together with other industrial cloth printing and dyeing, catalysed a degree of self-reflection among the Chhipa community, and forced a reappraisal of the craft within the community as a means of answering such claims. Sadly, whilst many printers convinced themselves, and others, they were using natural dyes and traditional processes; the ugly truth is that their unfettered use of early chemical dyes such as naphthols and kerosene pigments, coupled with little or no consideration for drainage or water treatment, had indeed contributed to the overall problem.

6.4.1 Natural dyes

The 2004 court ruling came at a time when India, and in fact the world at large, was experiencing a sharp resurgence of interest in the use of natural dyes. Concentration on
renewable resources, sustainability and replacement of oil-based products have emerged as driving forces to reassess the potential of natural resources including natural colorants, spurred on by the growing consumer interest in purchasing ‘green’ and ‘eco’ products.

The sudden revival of interest in natural dyes and colorants for economic purposes, not only for textile dyeing but also for use in cosmetics, hair dye and food colourings, is evidenced in recent international congresses, such as Naturally... International Symposium/Workshop on Natural Dyes, organised by UNESCO and the Crafts Council of India in Hyderabad (India) in November 2006. This event was attended by some 700 participants from 60 countries, including traditional dyers, craftspeople, scientists, textile artists, professionals from different branches of industry, and government representatives. A handful of Chhipas from Rajasthan attended, including Yusuf and Mohammed Sharif Chhipa Khan of Balotra, Brij Ballabh of Sanganer, and Mahesh and Om Prakash Dosaya Chhipa of Bagru. Some viewed it as a selling opportunity, whilst others, like Om Prakash, who was already busy developing Mahima’s shop, cite the event as a critical moment in their understandings of their craft:

Following the Hyderabad conference I have started properly with natural dyes. I think previously we used to think of them as something a bit old fashioned, something our grandfathers used to use. We didn’t really see just exactly how much potential they had in modern markets until I saw just how many people from all over the world had come to India especially for that conference and to see the demonstrations by Indian craftsmen. We realised, us craftsmen, that those old fashioned things which our grandfathers used to use were in fact a most important USP [unique selling point] for our own businesses, and all this government talk of modernisation and increased productivity has been like wearing horse blinders [blinkers] on our eyes. (Om Prakash Dosaya Chhipa, Bagru, personal communication 2007).

This renewed interest raises a number of crucial issues. Firstly, sustainable development of the production and use of natural colorants cannot be disconnected from such problems as the responsible management of wild natural resources, and hence there is also a need for the adoption of ethical research methods respecting the rights of indigenous people regarding
natural resources. Furthermore, there is a need for focus on the use of environmentally
friendly production technologies, and the sensitive protection of indigenous knowledge. As
Dominique Cardon urged, in the plenary session of the UNESCO conference, ‘For a revival of
the use of natural dyes to be achieved, even if only on a modest scale, it will first be necessary
to demonstrate that not only the finished products, but also the substances used at all stages
in their production are non-toxic and have no adverse effects on the environment’ (reiterated
in Cardon, 2007:12).

Without immediate attention the negative impacts from production processes will impact the
long term sustainability and competitiveness of all Indian crafts. However there are a number
of projects afoot which focus on minimising the environmental risks associated with such
problems as increasing water demand, pollution, and energy consumption. On an
organisational level, a four year ‘Switch Asia’ project, aimed at promoting sustainable
consumption and production, has seen AIACA (All India Artisans’ and Craft Worker’s Welfare
Association) forming a partnership with COTEX Rajasthan and Traidcraft UK to support the
production of sustainable textiles in India. The action research project, which has gained
support from the European Union, is pioneering low cost technologies for water conservation
and treatment for re-use (Singh, 2010). As part of this, the project is aiding in the creation of
an ‘eco textile park’ in Bagru, where the necessary infrastructure for water harvesting and
conservation will be put in place. The aim is to promote best practice for such environmental
issues, and it is hoped to provide a blueprint for other potential craft parks elsewhere in the
country. Since the AIACA board members include representatives from a number of locally
important businesses already well established in the commercialisation of hand block printing
it is clearly in their best interest to promote such research, or, as one Chhipa puts it, “start to

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put right and clean up what they messed up in the first place” (anonymous member of the Chhipa Samiti, Bagru, group discussion 2009).

Currently the Chhipa community are also investigating simple and inexpensive waste water treatment procedures, including basic pH balanced ‘soak-away’ pits, community-shared water treatment units, and experimental trials which harness the dye absorption properties of *cassia* seeds. Locally available in large quantities in the wild, these seeds swell in water to form an absorbent gel-like substance. Experimental projects such as these also form a core theme for current scholarly research in India (see Sanghi et al., 2002, Suryavathi et al., 2004, Bansal and Chandel, 2008 for example). In particular, in relation to the hand block printing of Rajasthan, mordanting substances need closer scrutiny. Iron and alum have long been associated with this craft, but copper, tin and chrome are relatively recent additions to the Chhipa’s repertoire of ‘natural’ colours, incorporated into ‘vegetable dyeing’ under such names as *kassis* and *hira kassis*. In the Weavers Service Centre natural dye training manual, distributed to craftspeople through their training centre in Jaipur, the use of these additional, yet highly toxic heavy metal mordants is encouraged (Paul, 2004:3). For environmental reasons, there needs to be encouragement for use of mordant to be limited to alum and iron.

Many of the materials used in the traditional hand block printing and resist dyeing procedures outlined at the start of this chapter are waste products from other local activities. For example the scrap iron for *syahi*; *kasumal ka phul* is waste flowers from the booming safflower oil extraction industry; *anar ka chhilka* is discarded from food manufacturing; *guar* and *bidan* for *dabu* are generally those seeds spoilt and unfit for human consumption, and the sweet and alkaline elements added to the natural indigo vat are adjusted seasonally. Hence, in winter *kajoor* (dates) are in season, and those fruits spoilt by flies can be a cheap and efficient use of
local produce, whilst at other times of the year it is cheaper to use *shera*, a molasses-like by-product of refining sugar cane, again a local crop.

Additional natural dye sources are also being investigated, particularly those which support local forms of indigenous farming or tribal gathering traditions. For example *ratanjot* (*Onosma echioides*), recently under experiment in Rajasthan as a source of biodiesel since it offers a sustainable alternative to corn maize which the region is well known for but, due to its recent high demand for biofuel, has been depleted as a local food source. *Ratanjot*, which means ‘ruby red’ in Hindi, is already a permitted food colorant in India (Cardon, 2007:65), and was said to have been historically used to dye textiles in Sanganer (Brij Ballabh, personal communication 2006), although experiments show that as a colorant it is fickle in use (Noorjehan Bilgrami, personal communication, 2006). Himalayan rhubarb has also recently proven successful as a dye source, inspiring further experimentation with other prolific plant sources in the rich vegetations of India’s forested hill stations at Dehradun and ‘garden state’ of Sikkim. Whilst harvesting the foliage and forest plants of Sikkim is largely prohibited, such plants as the madder vine (*rubia sikkimensis*) are considered a weed, with vast quantities being regularly stripped from the forest and burnt to prevent it choking the trees (Usha Lachungpa, Head of Forest Research, Department of Forestry, Sikkim, personal communication 2008).

In the case of indigo and madder, they have the additional heritage value of a dye of historical importance and a small number of indigo cultivators in the southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are taking advantage of the current attention to the complete cycle of cloth production. Similarly, as the demand for cleaner, greener, ethically produced cotton fibres continues to grow, a small number of organically certified cotton growers are establishing a strong foothold in the supply chain, despite ongoing problems with national and international certification and labelling of organic and ethical products (see Cardon, 2010).
However it would be wrong to assume that all handicraft processes are innately ecological. In most cases there is a need for active support and promotion of sustainable and ecological practices, such as is happening elsewhere in India. However, as the vociferous response by the Chhipa community to NGO collaborations offered in the previous chapter illustrates, such activities have been harder to implement in Rajasthan. Such change needs to be instigated from within the community, and the pressure is on those few brave enough to do so, like Om Prakash and Mahesh Dosaya Chhipa. Certainly the key area for assistance is making natural dyes commercially viable. In this respect optimisation of the application techniques according to new environmental requirements is necessary, as is a certain degree of process standardisation to allow for costing aid in developing a palette of predictable colour results.

Appendix I offers summarised excerpts from an experimental project which was aimed at refining the successful elements of local traditional indigo recipes in order to develop a commercially viable natural indigo natural fermentation vat. The project spread over the course of a year, and resulted in a series of calculable variables from which printers and dyers could attempt to standardise their cost and time efficiency to a certain degree, potentially making natural vats a viable option for processing large orders.

Some of the younger generations of the Chhipa community feel that by making much of these traditional elements they can balance product innovation with conservation of a meaningful aspect of their shared heritage. In the process they are actively identifying, developing and promoting their own ideas about the authenticity of the cloth. This process of value-adding is referred to by Rowlands as ‘commoditisation of the past’ (2005). He links this process to a recent and rapid proliferation of global discourse on cultural rights and property which identifies expressions of local identities as a means of resisting the wider globalising processes of fragmentation or homogenisation (Pole, 2005:131).
6.4.2 Authenticating Sanganer

In a further twist to the tale, and as a direct effort to overturn the 2004 court ruling, was that the Sanganer printers took their plight a step further. In Sanganer, in April 2010, the Sanganer Rangai Chhapai (Calico Printers’) Association were awarded the status of Protected Geographical Indication\(^\text{13}\) for hand printed textiles of the town, in order to prohibit duplication of the style by screen-printers (Brij Ballabh, personal communication 2009). The Indian government states that: ‘Prior to 2003, India did not protect geographical indications of Indian origin. In order to comply with India’s obligations in the TRIPS Agreement, it enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force with effect from 15th September 2003. The present geographical indications regime in India is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and the Geographical Indication of Goods (Regulation and Protection) Rules, 2002’. This illustrates that authenticity emerges from the interplay between the local material culture and the global forces, and demonstrates the persistence of locally-specific cultures of consumption in places such as Rajasthan, where a strong regional identity prevails.

In his important consideration of the commoditisation of oriental carpets, Spooner (1986) indicates that authenticity has to do not only with the genuineness of material attributes of the object, but also with the interpretation of genuineness, the interpretation of cultural distance over space and time, negotiated in a social arena. ‘Authenticity is a conceptualisation of elusive, inadequately defined, other cultural, socially ordered genuineness’ (Spooner, 1986:225). Arguing against conventional accounts of ‘authenticity’ as an innate property of particular social groups or particular goods, this suggests instead that the meaning of goods is

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\(^{13}\) [http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/iprgeoind.html](http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/iprgeoind.html)
defined by their active appropriation in specific contexts of production and use (cf Jackson, 2004).

While traditional block printing has become undeniably modern over the last 60 years, some modern block printed textiles make selective use of traditional design elements to recreate authenticity and mystique. This authenticity rests on the technical and the artistic, as well as the reconstructions of tradition, integrity, and genuineness. Representing cultural and aesthetic distinction, these styles are moving block printed cloth up to the status of authentic objects rather than mere exotic souvenirs or fakes. Within the nexus of production, marketing and consumption, and with strict quality controls, emergent authenticity is becoming branded.

Despite their more usual association with pristine, mass-produced forms of goods, brands may rise to certify aesthetic and cultural authenticity of cultural products. However, as Kirschenblatt-Gimblett reminds us:

> All heritage interventions - like the globalising pressures they are trying to counteract - change the relationship of people to what they do. They change how people understand their culture and themselves. They change the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction. Change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard, and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and addressing the inherently processual nature of culture’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006:177)

Attaining the status of Protected Geographical Indication raises the question as to what defines the Sanganeri style today, not least because, during the course of this research only a very small handful of Chhipa families still producing traditional Sanganeri style textiles. Although counts vary, the current number of block printing workshops in Sanganer is estimated at anywhere between 100 and 350. Of these only a small proportion are Chhipa family businesses, and of those an even smaller number continue to print traditional buti/butah designs, produce angochha or rumals, or use traditional syahi-begar processes.
Thus the danger is that whilst the protected status was ostensibly imposed to preserve those few remaining products against flagrant copying in other parts of the country, it also encourages a proliferation of screen-printed and chemical coloured mimics from other workshops within the Sanganer. Arguably this imposes further competition on the smaller, traditionally structured workshops, further marginalising the original Chhipa families.

The topic was raised in a recent discussion with a group of printers and dyers in Bagru, and not long after in Pipad. A series of pertinent questions were put forward by these rural Chhipa families about what exactly constitutes a ‘traditional’ block printed textile: (1) is it simply the graphical design, or does this include the colour combinations as well, (2) does the production simply need to involve use of a carved wooden block, or (3) should it also stipulate traditional process and dye materials, and also (4) should the craftsman be from the occupational lineage associated with the craft (i.e. a Chhipa). Endless other questions arose, involving the choice of block carver, wood, the sources of dye materials, traditional forms of apprenticeship, and the subsequent marketing of the cloth – some of the leading questions which have in fact helped to shape this thesis. There is no ‘right’ answer, but engaging with these issues of intellectual property ownership, and discussing the problems by theorising and analysing their own craft practices, is a positive sign for the future of the craft.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with the technologies, materials and processes involved in hand block printing. It has argued that whilst hand block printed textiles as a product is cultural heritage, it is the technologies of hand block printing as practice and process where the Intangible Cultural Heritage lies. Thus by exploring the role of those traditional technologies
within the changing contemporary form of the craft our understandings of the modernisation and commercialisation of this rural craft can be deepened.

There are critical periods in any field, when a choice exists for the direction of growth. Re-evaluating crafts such as hand block printing requires the revaluing of traditional skills and knowledge. As the past few decades have shown, increasing market pressure results in corner cutting and loss of quality, and constricting the market for high end crafts puts craftspeople under even greater market-driven pressure. Such pressure forces the output of low cost goods using low skill materials and processes, and perpetuating such a situation leads ultimately to the loss of particular skills and traditions - some of which have huge potential value in the meeting of contemporary environmental and sustainability goals. In the case of hand block printing in Rajasthan, the adoption of chemical dyestuffs was pivotal in this respect. Whilst an important part of the continuation of the craft, without which the traditional form of the craft would surely have been lost, the damage wrought by the slapdash use of these chemicals on the technologies of the craft, the local environment, and the traditional structure of the artisan community is immeasurable, and irreversible.

Neither the artisans, nor the exporters, nor even the disparate markets which hand block printed textiles now reach, are interested in fossilising the traditional practices. However, there is a growing awareness within the Chhipa community that theirs is a heritage worth preserving as a learning resource for future generations. At the forefront of current community discourse is the issue of environmental pollution, and the development of simple strategies to overcome problems arising from decades of indiscriminate chemical dye use. Hearteningly, recent years have seen the start of a consumer-led resurgence of interest in naturally dyed and culturally symbolic craft traditions. The handmade has become an important element of wider discourse on ethical, environmental, and sustainability principles,
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providing new opportunities for printers and dyers to regenerate their family businesses using their hereditary craft knowledge. Consequently an extension of the desire for pattern has also been the re-evaluation of the handmade, validating the preservation of traditional hand printing skills within textile design. Sadly, in some families, this knowledge has already missed a generation – and many young Chhipas are without a link to older family members’ memories. Notwithstanding, through the work of entrepreneurial Chhipas like Om Prakash, in conjunction with external influences from non-governmental bodies like AIACA, it is hoped that the Chhipa community are gaining an awareness of the potential value of their own old fashioned traditional materials, processes, and technologies. By focussing on regenerating those traditions, and re-engineering aspects of them to meet current environmental guidelines, the profile of the craft can be elevated from within the community.

With the 2004 court ruling successfully overturned, the Chhipa community are now keen to assert their differences to other non-Chhipa and screen-printing businesses. In order to do this many are turning once again to their traditional family recipes for natural dye colours, including the experimental revival of natural fermentation indigo vats and non-chemical cloth treatments, and aiming their products at the growing urban market for ‘organic’ products. Sustainability issues have emerged to the forefront over the past decade, also the last few years have witnessed the formalisation and global expansion of a new interest in craft processes and objects. Such activity is timely, and coincides particularly with wider national and international attention to exploring the future potentialities of natural dyestuffs. The introduction of natural colorants into modern products is an interdisciplinary task that has to consider farming, dyestuff extraction, analysis, properties and application at the same time.

In the age of global markets, the authentic object has become differentiated by the circumstances of production and exchange as well as by the initial understandings that guide
the interactions and by those understandings that emerge between the producer and the object, the producer and the primary sellers, and the object and the final consumers (see Appadurai, 1986, Balkwell, 1986, Warner, 2000, Wood, 2000). The study of the creation and consumption of such cultural goods, here block printed cloth, allows for a fuller appreciation of the cultural dimensions of globalisation and consumption of cultural difference. Intangible heritage, which refers not to artistic products, but rather to the knowledge, values and practices which bring them into existence, is key to the process of preservation. ‘Protecting’ cultural practices through heritage policies and government activities means finding a delicate balance between regulating the impact of external influences and facilitating a natural and organic growth and response by the craftspeople themselves. As the Chhipa Samiti meeting in Bagru concluded, “Our past is an important resource for inspiration and information, but always new ways need to be found for us to meet new challenges and changing circumstances” (group discussion, Chhipa Samiti, Bagru 2009).
Chapter Seven: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this study has been on deepening existing understandings of the hand block printed and resist dyed textiles of Rajasthan. It has uncovered some of the social world which underlies just one aspect of India’s vast traditional handicraft industry, and the conflicts and paradoxes which characterise its struggle to remain relevant today. By considering these textiles within the local dress traditions of rural communities their role in the construction and maintenance of social identity through dress and appearance is better understood. Textiles and dress, for many communities, continue to act as valuable cultural resources, communicating a wealth of detail about a wearers’ public and personal identity. However, in recent decades the choice of materials for local dress has undergone gradual and significant change, reflecting the ongoing reconfiguration of personal and community identities. Locally renowned for producing textiles patterned with a repertoire of specific designs, in a range of earthy natural dyed colours, the Chhipa community of printers and dyers have been forced to reassess and reformulate their hereditary occupation to meet new market forces. Examining how the craft has changed, in terms of aesthetics, production technology, and markets, this thesis has tried to show the complexity of hand block printed textile production, and the ways in which the traditional forms of the craft have become differentiated from modern commercialised forms.
Rajasthan is a relatively modern conglomeration of erstwhile feudal prince and chiefdoms. The merging of these independent entities, during Independence (1947), formed a single political state peopled by a broad variety of communities, each with specific social, religious and linguistic practices. This diversity was one of the factors which supported the variety of textiles printed and dyed in the Chhipa workshops. The local importance of the various pattern and colour combinations on these textiles had, according to the oral traditions of the Chhipas, developed over a number of centuries or more - though material evidence of this is scarce prior to the twentieth century. Indeed the rural hand block printed textiles of Rajasthan have received comparatively little attention prior to the late twentieth century, since they were produced for and worn by rural non-elite farming and tribal communities. In contrast, the royal courts of Rajasthan, and the opulent finely crafted and exclusive textiles and dress associated with them, have become staple items in museums around the world. Indeed, India’s textile history has been charted largely from outside India, through records and examples of the flourishing historically global trade in Indian cloth. As a result the focus has too long been on India’s craftsmen as being ‘master dyers to the world’ (Gittinger, 1982), even in the post-independence era where handicrafts and textiles have become viewed as vital export goods, with less attention to domestic production for everyday use.

7.2 Traditional hand block printed textiles and dress

Textiles and dress are well known to play a vital role in the constructions and maintenance of identities, and the gradual non-linear contextualised shifts from tradition through to modern forms of dress reveal much about how people view, represent and portray their individual and group identities in everyday life. At the start of this thesis, the hand block printed textiles of Rajasthan have been shown to contribute to this communication of identity in the dress
traditions of many of the communities, castes and tribes of the region – particularly those farming, pastoral, and semi-nomadic groups which populate the arid and inhospitable Thar Desert in the western and southern portions of the state. Whilst a number of important studies have included the dress of rural Rajasthan within wider anthologies, and some also refer in generalised terms to the relevance of colour and pattern of cloth in the garments of various communities, none have explored this in any detail. In recognition of this, Chapter Four of this thesis adds to and enhances those studies by considering the social role which traditional hand block printed textiles have played in dress traditions of the region.

The significance of hand block printed textiles and dress embraces considerations of social status, pecuniary strength, and public, family or community identity when worn by men, since in those instances it is reserved for head and shoulder cloth – in close proximity to the head as the locus of power. However, far greater in number and variety are those hand block printed textiles worn by women, particularly of farming, pastoral or tribal communities. The range and variety of motifs, and level of meanings ascribed to them, reveals far more about the wearer’s personal or domestic identity, particularly in relation to her husband. But the past thirty or forty years have seen increasing use of synthetic fabrics in place of traditional hand block printed cottons. These mill made synthetic materials, particularly those depicting locally symbolic motifs, satisfy the cultural need to retain aspects of tradition, particularly in those communities where caste dress is prescribed and any deviation might damage the honour of family or community. On a practical level they come at a lower price and weight, with greater ease of laundering, and also communicate aspirations of modernity.

With increasing ease of movement from rural to urban areas of the state, whether for work, education, or retail and healthcare needs, the links to the urban environment are opening up for rural communities. Cultural influences from outside the region, state, even beyond India
are having a growing effect on all areas of Rajasthani society. These cosmopolitan influences are affecting the attitudes, expectations, aspirations, and values of even the most rural communities of the state, changes which are manifest in the shifting preferences and choices of cloth. For the rural communities of Rajasthan hand block printed cloth is transforming from an expression of family and community membership and pride, to a marker of a generalised ‘rural’ identity with negative connotations of backwardness. Synthetic base cloths, however, and more so those in bright colours or embellished with gaudy braids, reflect these changing fashion attitudes.

7.2.1 Village cloth/urban clothes

As the reach of international capital moves into every household economy in the community and pushes forward socio-economic differentiation, the ways in which Rajasthani ethnicity is represented both internally and externally become increasingly complex. Since the late 1980s handcrafted ‘folk’ textiles, including hand embroidery and hand printed cloth, gained a foothold in the fashions of the urban elite (Tarlo, 1996) and since that time the popularity of traditional textiles in contemporary Indian fashion has grown. ‘Ethnic chic is a cultural revival even if its appreciation of India’s heritage depends on breaking many of the traditions of which that heritage is composed’ (Tarlo, 1996:315). Aspects of tradition and heritage thus become components of contemporary style, a palette of potential ways to express an authentic yet generalised Indian identity whilst avoiding any negative connotations of backwardness. At a national level block printed cloth contributes to urban Indian middle class dress styles, but at a local level it bears little relationship to the village aesthetic on which it is founded. Villagers struggle to distance themselves from their rural environment and express urban aspirations and modernity through use of polyesters and nylons, whilst urban communities use textiles marketed as traditional in order to reconnect with perceived rural roots, and express an
Indian-ness in conjunction with their urban modernity. In this battle of cultural and aesthetic values, hand block printed cloth becomes just one option in a combined pan-India clothing identity – a regional ‘idiom’ within a national generic ‘style’ (Meister, 1996).

This phenomenon arises from rapidly industrialising societies in situations where people are becoming sufficiently removed from village life to mourn its loss (Tarlo, 1996, Sun, 2001). Hand printed cloth becomes part of urban ethnic styles which in turn comes to represent an ideal or romanticised past tempered to meet contemporary aspirations of modernity. It would seem that traditional and handcrafted textiles and dress are most appreciated by those who can choose to wear them, rather than those for whom these textiles represent a form of everyday dress associated with older generations. For the rural communities of Rajasthan the idea of ‘traditional dress’ is expressed through the manner in which textiles are worn, though those textiles are not necessarily traditional. In urban areas and in the wider Indian Diaspora, it is the actual materials which have become the expression of tradition, whilst the ways in which the cloth may be cut, stitched and worn can be distinctly western or globalised in style.

So, whilst hand block printed textiles are becoming popular within the cities of Rajasthan over the past decade, it is now rare to see traditional designs such as the Bagru indigo-\textit{dabu} combinations constructed into traditional \textit{ghagras}. That rarity, alongside the struggles of the artisan communities, formed an impetus for this study, particularly since it appears in direct contrast to the ostensibly flourishing commercial status of the craft, most notably in the printing colonies of Sanganer, Jaipur, and also to a degree in Bagru. In modern urban use the traditional rural designs have instead become popular as contemporary home furnishings, to help achieve a ‘classical’ look, whilst garments such as modern \textit{kurtas}, \textit{salwar-kameez}, saris, and shirts are typically made from contemporary design and colour combinations. In this way the urbanites of Rajasthan are generating a new Rajasthani sartorial identity, which makes use
of local traditional crafts yet eschews the specifics of caste and village community, of which these designs still bear traces. This is particularly noticeable in the swapping of gender-specific colour combinations. Whereas, in traditional rural dress, the block prints for men were largely based on the bleached white styles of syahi-begar typical to Sanganer and the women’s on the indigo-dabu styles of Bagru; nowadays, in modern urban fashions, the Sanganeri combinations are popular for women’s salwar-kameez and summer blouses, and the indigo-dabu styles are a popular base-cloth for men’s short-sleeved shirts. While both groups identify the textiles with a past era, for one set it speaks of old-fashioned unappealing aspects of their village identity, and for the other it bears charm and authenticity as an expression of their roots.

It is clear that, as with many other indigenous forms of cloth production throughout the world, changes to the base-cloth of local dress styles have presented a real threat to the hand block printers of Rajasthan. So much so that today, block printed and resist-dyed cottons worn as traditional everyday dress have become an increasingly rare sight in all but the most rural areas of the state. The changing status of traditional hand block printed and resist dyed cloth reflects wider changes to the region, and this is particularly noticeable in the changing markets for these textiles.

7.3 Hand block printed textile markets

Throughout India’s textile history there has always been a strong element of adaptability, as artisans developed their production to meet shifting market demands or changing availability of raw materials. The need to sustain a livelihood is a stronger than any desire to preserve heritage, meaning old cultural practices are continually supplanted by new technologies in order to meet changing market demands. The merging of the individual feudal states of Rajasthan into the new independent India in the middle of the twentieth century brought rural
village society under the governance of a new central regime focussed on aggressive industrialisation of the nations existing manufacturing and agricultural activities. All forms of export were encouraged, and at the same time tourism flourished. Affected by the political upheavals and suffering a diminishing local market for their textiles the Chhipa community engaged with local tourist demands as well as a series of government schemes and handicraft fairs. However it was only with the arrival of independent commercial export firms into Jaipur that the craft received any sort of dedicated inputs of finance and direction.

The Chhipa community have gained much from the attentions of export companies, for example the opportunity to produce large volumes of cloth for otherwise inaccessible foreign markets, and the input of designers and colour chemists to aid their use of new chemical dyes. It is also notable that over the space of a few decades, since the late 1970s, chemical dyes and pigments have become the norm in modern hand block printing, particularly in Sanganer where stiff competition from screen-printing factories has added to the pressure on the town’s Chhipa community. By charting the recent history of the craft through the experiences of the craftspeople the complex paradox between sustaining a hereditary craft and maintaining a livelihood is revealed. Without the commercial export interventions which started in the 1960s and 1970s the craft would have surely dwindled to unsustainable levels. Their influence has been revolutionary to the craft, and has undeniably helped arm the artisan communities to meet the challenges of the post-modern and globalising India. Yet at the same time the smaller family businesses have been sidelined in favour of new purpose built factories, run by non-Chhipas who are not themselves craftsmen but instead employ wage labourers from out of state.

The role of design in this recent history of the craft has been transformative. Whilst the repertoires of traditional designs were as enduring as the wooden blocks used to print them,
modern designs for export are tied to the ever-changing fashion seasons in western and increasingly global fashions. The effect of this change has not only been felt by the printers but also the block carvers. This was once a specialist craft employing just a few skilled carvers, to whom some Chhipa families would travel for over a day in order to commission the right quality of block. Now Sanganer, the hotbed of high volume export production, is literally humming with the clatter from its innumerable tiny block carving ‘shops’, where a single skilled craftsman may employ four or five trainees (often as young as 10 or 12 years) to rattle out cheap and low quality short life blocks for immediate use. Thus whilst design is viewed by many government and private interventions as the crucial means by which traditional crafts like hand block printing can be rescued and reinvented, the interventions of designers have equally contributed to the reduction of skilled craftsmen to mere print technicians and production operatives. Despite the efforts of government and NGOs, and the implementation of policies intended to strengthen the crafts sector, craftspeople continue to feel themselves marginalised, and their work undervalued as it becomes de-skilled.

The combined values of the export and tourist markets cannot be ignored, since without these outlets for their products in the post-Independence decades the Chhipa community would have struggled. As Prahlad Dosaya Chhipa stated frankly, ‘any market is better than no market at all, and if we had relied only on the local sales my father would not have had any sort of a business to pass down to us, his three sons’ (personal communication, 2006). Yet, as with many of India’s handicrafts, so great have been the efforts to portray the authentic ‘traditional’ craft that these very real adjustments made by craftsmen in difficult times are very often passed over, in favour of a romanticised picture of hand block printing as part of a timeless village idyll. The challenge, it seems to be agreed, is to maintain and nurture a certain uniqueness to the craft, tap into the cultural heritage which has supported the production of
hand printed cloth for so many hundreds of years and develop this to meet a niche in the contemporary market. However, identifying that niche has proved challenging enough to date. It would seem that focusing exclusively on individual aspects of product design, production efficiency, labour and employment welfare, and the exploration of newer markets, whilst each are valuable in their own right, can only truly be of use to the crafts communities of India when worked together, and integrated into the current strategies being developed from within those communities.

7.4 Traditional processes and changing technologies

Whilst new markets present new opportunities for craftspeople, adapting to meet the new demands of those markets invariably forces amendments and modifications to their materials, processes and working practices. This thesis has examined the past and present practices of hand block printing and resist-dyeing, specifically through the experiences and knowledge of the artisans themselves. As such the information recognises and adds to existing understandings of the craft, expanding and updating Mohanty and Mohanty’s seminal work of the late 1970s (1983), and creates a valuable regionally specific point of reference. By socially situating the study to focus on those lived experiences of printers and dyers whose everyday lives have revolved around the craft, this thesis helps to show how the transition of hand block printed textile markets in the past five decades is directly reflected in the specific transitions of technology and materials employed by the craftsmen. According to the inherited knowledge base of the Chhipa community, the craft was not too long ago based on lengthy procedures involving printed mordants and mud resists, and coloured using natural dyes which might take a full day to infuse onto the cloth, or, in the case of natural indigo, involve skilled tending of vat fermentation in order to achieve the depth and fastness of colour. Entire communities and
family lineages had developed specialist occupations centred on single aspects of the craft, such as indigo, red dyes, or dabu resist. Over the course of just forty or fifty years these dyestuffs have been replaced by ever more efficient synthetically derived substitutes – easier to use, quicker to achieve more reliably consistent colours, and less tied to the arcane preserve of the Nilgar or Rangrez community knowledge, these substitutes achieve the traditional aesthetics with less effort.

As new waves of non-local export and tourist customers increasingly replaced their traditional village client-base, perceptions shifted of just what constitutes ‘traditional’, bringing about even greater changes to the crafts technology. Higher volume orders and pressures for increased productivity, design interventions, and a sense of detachment from the new markets caused a split in the artisans’ perceptions of block printing as a rural craft, and contemporary urban modes of production - separated in terms of customers, design and technology. They continue to view the former as their community heritage and true occupation, whereas the latter has become essential roti-subzi (‘bread-and-butter’) for survival in an increasingly capitalist market. It is only in the past decade that the two seem to be once again converging, as a result of modern interpretations of the market and the entrepreneurial efforts of a few craftsmen. Attention to this recent phase of aesthetic and technological change fills an important gap in past studies of block printing since it emphasises the dynamic and ongoing amendments to the craft which have helped keep it relevant, and yet also highlights issues of de-skilling, marginalisation, and in many respects the reduction of printers to ‘mere technicians’ in the eyes of exporters and designers (Wilkinson-Weber, 2004:293). And yet, as the examples in this thesis show, within the extensive and interconnected hand block printing communities of Rajasthan a few young craftsmen like Deepak Narayan, Om Prakash Dosaya and Ashok Khatri are working to regain control of their hereditary occupation. Their responses
confirm that community pride could be turned into a positive force for the revival of the craft from within the community, potentially helping to creatively develop direct links to the new markets for their hand printed cloth. The sense that they feel able to take control of the marketing and promotion of their products, as well as designing, is an important re-evaluation of their role, and moving on from being technicians and production operatives working to the specifications of larger export concerns seems to be a key point in this process. There’s something in that notion of empowerment that can be very nourishing to someone who has spent their working lives reliant on others. Such entrepreneurial energy from within the community helps to retain and reinforce the crafts’ rural heritage and identity while dealing with the new, capricious and demanding market environments.

The production of crafts has traditionally been group specific, hereditary, and thus subject to a complexity of observed codes of individual and group relations, specific customs, and caste or community proscriptions. As craft meets industry these hereditary and community specific aspects have been stifled by the new attitudes and expectations of the commercial world and its preoccupations with productivity, cost effectiveness, and reproducibility. Jatin Bhatt argues that ‘Handicraft is a production process and a wonderful, indigenous technology, not an outmoded tradition. The raw materials (cane, cotton, clay, wood, wool, silk, minerals) are not only indigenously available but also environmentally friendly’ (Bhatt, 2007). However, as the evidence presented in this thesis reminds us, it is wrong to assume that crafts practices are wholly environmentally friendly. Most especially in their current form, in which synthetic colours and chemical bleaching agents are used in unfettered quantities, the craft of hand block printing has much ground to cover before it can earn such a title. Whilst the instant effects of chemical dyes and pigments are better suited to the new commercial ethos than the time consuming traditional methods and materials of the past, which are today dismissed as
neither time nor cost effective, the resulting damage to natural and cultural environment is being felt. Despite the protestations of the Chhipa community against the court ruling of 2004 the blame for the environmental pollution of Sanganer cannot be wholly laid on the screen-printers of the town.

To the combined relief of the Chhipa community, after five years of uncertainty the court ruling was finally revoked in 2009, and the printers of Sanganer retained their right to continue printing from their homes and workshops in the town. Nonetheless, the situation threw a spotlight onto the messy complexities of the craft in modern times, and has generated a range of responses. If the court ruling raised enough awareness to create a radical reappraisal of the craft, one which involves craftsman, export business and customer, then its outcome is positive. The Chhipa community are certainly more aware of the potential fragility of their immediate surroundings, and also of their continued tenure in the overcrowded printing town of Sanganer. Further afield, in Bagru and beyond, the rural branches of the community speak of the event as a cautionary tale. The export investors, with a vested interest in the local printing industry, both screen and block, have finally begun to make visible efforts to support a cleanup of the craft and, in their own way, are injecting capital and facilitating the kinds of technological upgrades and setting standards of quality which might otherwise be outside the reach of the crafts communities. With the various projects, such as the COTEX local business alliance, to install water treatment units, offer technical training in dyestuffs, and exert tighter controls on quality of manufacture for export, many of these commercial concerns are now attempting to set the bar in terms of manufacturing standards.

There is no doubt that there are important and intermeshing roles to be played by the state, international agencies, and by NGOs, with particularly heartening interest in the systematic investigation of natural dyeing and its associated materials, technologies, and traditional
knowledge systems. Over the last thirty years NGOs have played a major part in the revival of natural dyeing practices elsewhere in India, with the late K. V. Chandramouli being responsible for a teaching methodology by which knowledge could be successfully transmitted to artisans in a way in which they could build on and innovate on their own. In this respect, perhaps most notably in the rural Kachchh region of Gujarat, NGOs are today filling the role as catalysts of crafts revivals in a manner which government and commercial organisations and international agencies are less able to do. However there are also severe limitations to the work of NGOs, particularly with hand block printing in Rajasthan where they meet a near impenetrable community pride among the Chhipas, many of whom clearly perceive the development work of such agencies as a blend of patronising and sanctimonious charity, mixed with stealthy industrial espionage. With such a deep-seated community pride the craftsman has to now become actively involved in the conscious efforts to ‘green up’ their production processes. Combining traditional materials and technologies with modern environmental awareness, applying the current research into sustainable processes to help revive and refine traditional dye and print technologies, seems to offer a positive avenue for development which can be controlled and progressed from within the artisan communities. Certainly the subject of sustainable and ethical production is high on current textile and dress research agendas, with a healthy mix of academic, commercial and government funded interest. Progress is rapid as a result, though just how much of the valuable outcomes will feed back to the grass roots craftsman level is as yet unknown.

### 7.5 Globalisation, intangible cultural heritage and textile crafts

The central concern of this thesis has been the modernisation of traditional forms of hand block printing in Rajasthan, and the various strategies and experiences which the craftspeople
have undertaken to deal with the changes to the market for their products. Fieldwork focussed on artisan’s perspectives has revealed that this is by no means a simple or linear process of modernisation or globalisation or indeed commercialisation. Whilst some commentators have described the processes of globalisation as having a homogenising effect on cultural variety others have argued that it is only through these homogenising processes that such culturally distinct things as hand crafted goods stand out as being unique. Focussing on the mixed views of craftsmen to the changes to materials and technologies in recent decades has helped to highlight the aspects of the craft and its development which are most valued by the craftspeople, as opposed to previous studies which have focussed variously on the crafts perceived values in terms of its potential for such things as industrial development, museum collections, or design interventions.

The transition to industrial capitalism is viewed by many as a process which brings with it profound social changes (Goody, 2009). The organisational structure of Indian society, once based on basic loyalties such as caste, kinship, and patronage, is being gradually replaced by loyalties and organisations based on similar economic positions and shared interests. Since the development policies of the 1950s and 1960s proved only partial success on the longer term, it is important to move beyond the ‘cut and paste’ replication of Imperial Gazetteer articles and Government Publishing House pamphlets, to explore other major factors which are emerging as ongoing and transformational influences in the reinvention of hand block printing. As reflected in Liebl and Roy’s analyses of handicrafts statistics, the most significant effects on both production and aesthetics came from the printers’ growing involvements with tourism and export, both important commercial indicators of globalisation. In his recent book, Creative Destruction, Tyler Cowen (2002) suggests that the globalisation of technologies, and attendant spread of wealth and power, brings gains and losses to cultural practices and diversity through
the trade in cultural goods. The impacts of these global currents have brought both gains and losses to the hand block printers of Rajasthan. Whilst on the one hand local rural cultural diversity, most visibly in styles of dress and choices of base cloth, has blends ever increasingly with the homogenised styles found across northern India, or indeed further afield, on the other hand global networks and technology have served to sustain such locally-specific crafts as hand block printing, even when the local market for these textiles had all but gone.

Too often the negative impacts of globalisation are called upon in order to draw attention to the unarguably detrimental effects of globalisation on the associated knowledge, meanings, values and symbolism associated with traditional crafts and ways of life. However, because hand block printed textiles differ from many other crafts and forms of intangible heritage in that they continue to be a potential raw material for dress, their functional role will continue to be influenced by changing fashions and prevailing choices. Treated as such, the hand block printed textiles of Sanganer and Bagru have proved their value in the international market during the past forty years or so, and by attending to the lived experiences of the Chhipa community in this thesis it is hoped that we now understand more about the complex paradoxes this global engagement has posed for them.

Nevertheless, modernisation and technological advancement is reaching a point where its aid to craftsman’s work is questionable, since it also helps others create imitations of handcrafted goods at a fraction of the cost, crippling some sectors of the crafts. For example, brocade sari weavers in Benares have suffered under the powerloom revolution, just as the hand block printers of Rajasthan experienced a sharp drop in local demand for their textiles once ersatz polyester copies flooded the rural markets in the latter part of the twentieth century. Balanced between craft and industry the hand block printing of Rajasthan, widely popularised as a leitmotif of the region, has become largely reliant on tourist and export markets to survive and
yet, as Jaya Jaitley reminds us: ‘In the area of handmade goods, both crafts and textiles, even as countries like India are learning to convert their weaknesses into strengths, in China mechanisation is efficiently organising itself to imitate the hand work of India to encroach upon the market for India’s special skills’ (2005). This is reflected in the relationship between globalisation and the preservation of cultural heritage: ‘Promoters of world heritage offer it as an antidote to the homogenising effects of economic globalisation, but world heritage is actually made possible by globalisation, both in political and economic terms, the most important of which is cultural tourism’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006:163).

Current perspectives on the relationship between globalisation and traditional cultures centre largely on two discourses. On the one hand it is argued that globalisation creates a world that is increasingly becoming homogenous in nature spreading the dominant culture across the globe - explored and rationalised through theories such as McDonaldisation or Cocacolonisation (see Ritzer and Stillman, 2003). On the other, that world cultures are becoming more and more diverse leading to heterogeneity in form and content, in which there is always the interface between the global and local leading to plurality or hybridity, often expressed as ‘glocalisation’ (see Robertson, 1995). Since local cultural values are not completely assimilated into the global, or more particularly Western and American cultures, it is in between these debates that the modernisation of rural hand block printing evolves, as rural printers chase to catch-up with their well-promoted urban cousins, yet struggle to maintain a distinct identity.

Whilst recent decades have seen developments within the definitions of tangible and intangible heritage to include the ‘transmitters’, ‘carriers’ or ‘masters’ of a tradition and the ‘habitus’ or habitat in which it thrives – thus viewing the whole system as a continuum rather than an inventory of artefacts – there is still much to be done in terms of using these
categories as more than simply protection and preservation (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 2004:53). It is also critical to sort out issues of intellectual property rights, in particular to ensure that traditional and indigenous knowledge is respected and protected, and its commercialisation is only by consent and with appropriate sharing of benefits. Recent attempts to authenticate the hand printed products of Sanganer through protected geographical indication, and schemes afoot to develop trademarks of patents for hand printed textile designs, only serve to highlight the complexities of this situation. As Deepak warns, in a recent article which deals with the difficult territory of intellectual property rights and Indian handicrafts, ‘protection should be distinguished from ‘preservation’ since the former refers to either authorising or excluding one from exercising any rights in respect of such expressions; whereas the latter refers to mobilising resources to ensure their continued survival and perpetuation’ (Deepak, 2008:199).

Since hand block printed textiles, traditionally, were not the unique creation of an individual taking a modern focus on originality and craft as works of art is unsuitable. As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett says of all folklore, ‘it exists in versions and variants rather than in a single, original, and authoritative form’ (1991:53) created and transmitted to meet the needs of the customer, be that a rural village community or an export company, or a tourist boutique on the Amer Road. It was created through custom and example, repeated apprenticeship and reconfigured through practiced craftsmanship. Hence any work to support the craftsman, and sustain their practices, has greater long term value than preservation of the textile designs or products might. However, whilst in many cases the Japanese blueprint of the ‘living national treasure’ might be a helpful means of undertaking this task, for the hand block printing of Rajasthan it is rather the communities of craftspeople which need recognition, for it is only as a whole community entity that the craft can be sustained.
Igor Kopytoff suggests that there is ‘a yearning for singularisation in complex societies’ (1986: 80). He suggests that this process should not be seen as existing in simple opposition to commoditisation, rather, the two should be seen as working in a dialectical relationship, such that the progressive strengthening of the one serves to stimulate an equal and opposite reaction, rather than to eliminate, the other. This perspective offers a possible explanation for the rise of craft consumption in societies in which commoditisation clearly continues, and a useful insight into the waves of popularity and revival which specific craft forms like hand block printing enjoy despite the availability of mass produced textiles. Seen in this light, hand block printed cloth, in any and all of its myriad contemporary forms, is highly valued because it is regarded as an oasis of personal self-expression and authenticity in what is an ever-widening desert of commoditisation and commercialisation. For many minority groups and indigenous populations intangible heritage is the vital source of an identity that is deeply rooted in history. Underlying all the accounts and perspectives offered during the course of the fieldwork for this thesis is the recognition that family and community are paramount, and the underlying concept of *apna samaj* (our society) holds the key to a successful future, building on the knowledge and skills of the past. Ultimately, rural producer links to larger commercial processes must grow out of their own secure base as part of larger communities with strong connections to urban colonies like Sanganer and the benefits of their technological advancements (and mistakes) as much as their own local environment, and to trading to provide linkages for village production processes, including those of hand block printing, block carving, and natural dyeing.

### 7.5.1 Epilogue

Today, India’s vast rapidly growing population and economy, together with an increasing demand for luxury goods, support a booming market for textiles and dress. On the domestic
front, opportunities for the hand block printers of Rajasthan are improving. Hand block printed cloth and clothing is regaining respectability in Indian society, though this time with the middle-class urban consumer keen to demonstrate a homogenised ‘Indian’ heritage in their choice of textiles and dress. The advent of ecommerce is taking India by storm, and, whilst at the outset of this research internet access in rural Rajasthan was patchy at best, a few printing businesses in Sanganer and Bagru are now entering the world of online selling with vigour. In addition, a very small yet ever-growing number of the younger generation of Chhipas are engaging with social media, creating online profiles and maintaining blogs about their work. Most are harnessing the value of a hereditary family occupation as a means of authenticating their products, and making full use of practical craft demonstrations to ensure potential customers understand the contrast of handmade textiles to industrial production. Emphasising the deeper levels of engagement between maker and product, and materials with process, as well as the personal and community histories and identities in this manner is an important strategy for the evidentially proud and close knit Chhipas (for example, Daram, 2010; and www.shilpihandicrafts.com).

Through these sorts of activities the craftsman is attempting to bridge the divide between local artisan and foreign customer, a divide which had once seemed impenetrable. Hence the very mechanisms of globalisation which had threatened to destroy the craft have been effectively turned around and harnessed by these few young artisans. Printers are beginning to understand that in the modern market for hand crafted goods, those which stand out as unique masterpieces of innovation or creativity are more likely to gain greater reward. Individual innovation and creativity are seemingly worth more than the semiotic or symbolic cultural contexts of handicrafts in the modern markets. The craft is globalising, but not as a homogenised form of fabric embellishment, instead in part as a traditional craft with
contemporary relevance. However, it must also be stressed that these are, as yet, just a small representative element of the wider Chhipa community. Whilst some are reappraising their craft, much of this community continues to struggle as marginalised craftsmen, either in rural areas with limited access to newer markets, or in urban areas such as Sanganer where high volume, low quality, non-traditional productivity remains the majority form of the craft.

Romanticising India’s textile and craft traditions is no longer a relevant or useful means of writing about or promoting them. Instead the complexities of the commercial era must also be taken into account, in a way that can benefit and not destroy livelihoods, communities, environment and cultural heritage in all its tangible and intangible forms. The future course of hand block printing in Rajasthan needs to be a collaborative process involving state agencies, academics, NGOs, commercial interests, and practitioner communities at all levels. Conflicts of interest must be resolved on the basis of the good of society rather than of individual benefit. The answers must be local and varied, and evolved in consultation with all the people involved.

The production of crafts such as hand block printed textiles has allowed rural Rajasthan to participate in capitalist markets, and contribute to the economic growth of the region. As a visible marker of regional identity these textiles are part of the visible regional identity – whether that is in the form of traditional dress, or modern crafts. However, whilst export and commerce has sustained and revived the craft, undoubtedly saving it from loss in the post-independence era, the effects on cloth aesthetics, design, technology, quality, and the marginalisation of the craftsman cannot go unremarked. Through the unexpected boom growth of the craft, and the attendant external design inputs, craftsmen have been reduced to little more than production-line workers. The danger of adopting chemical dyes was always the loss of traditional knowledge, and the families where this has occurred are those most likely to have become such production operatives for larger commercial concerns. Nonetheless,
because the craft has endured and continues to be viewed as a leitmotif of the region, this speaks volumes about the strength of the local, regional and community sense of identity.
Throughout this research, and my time in India, I have developed a growing specialist vocabulary. It is impossible to write about Indian textiles and dress without including particular foreign words. Some relate to specific items of cloth or clothing, others are unique to the raw materials and processes of hand block printing, and others still are general Hindi or Rajasthani expressions or relate to significant local objects or beliefs. Furthermore, specialist textile processing terms, whilst familiar to me, may not be so widely understood. Throughout the text I have explained these specific words within the footnotes, however I felt it useful to draw them all together into full glossary here. Hindi and Rajasthani words are written phonetically, and whilst it flaunts the conventions of Hindi grammar, for simplicity I have used the English plural ‘s’ where appropriate (for example s.ghagra; pl. ghagras).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aam</td>
<td>mango, <em>Mangifera indica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acid dyes</td>
<td>local name for indigosols and rapids – synthetic leuco-vat dyes which require an after-rinse in acid solution to develop colour and fix dye to fibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adivasi</td>
<td>(member of) indigenous tribe (generic term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ajrakh</td>
<td>hand block printed, mordant and resist-dyed cloth with geometric patterns, produced by the Khatri community in Barmer, Kachchh and Sindh - worn by Muslims, Harijans and herders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alizarin</td>
<td>coal-tar derived synthetic red azo dye, Graebe and Liebermann in 1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anar ka chhilka</td>
<td>pomegranate rind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angarakha</td>
<td>traditional long-sleeved long skirted coat with wrap-over front worn by men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angochha</td>
<td>men’s shoulder-cloth, a multi-purposed cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anguthi</td>
<td>ring (finger or hoop for nose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ankhada</td>
<td>hook or nose-ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ari</td>
<td>awl-like hooked needle, often used in chain stitch embroidery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asli</td>
<td>‘real’ or ‘true’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ayurveda</td>
<td>ancient Indian medicine system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>badam</td>
<td>almond, or term for oval-shaped motifs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balharda</td>
<td>finest, medicinal quality <em>harda</em>, <em>Terminalia chebula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bandhani</td>
<td>tie and dye, usually patterns formed from dots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bania</td>
<td>merchant, (member of) trading community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banjara</td>
<td>(member of) nomadic tribe, trad. traders and carriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basti</td>
<td>city quarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batik</td>
<td>wax resist dye technique typical to South East Asia (Bali, Indonesia etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batti</td>
<td>fire hearth, or under which a small fire is lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begar</td>
<td>mordant print paste containing alum and tree gum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bel</td>
<td>stylised creeper pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bewda</td>
<td>twin pots carried stacked on a woman’s head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhalka</td>
<td>spear, printed design for Gadia Lohar women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bharat</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhil</td>
<td>(member of) Bhil community, settled tribals mainly in the forested areas of Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhil patta</td>
<td>leaf of the Bhil tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhunga</td>
<td>single storey traditional Rajasthani village dwelling with mud walls and conical brushwood roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bichhauni</td>
<td>printed bed spreads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bichhu</td>
<td>scorpion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bidan</td>
<td>surplus wheat flour unfit for human consumption usually due to weevil damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>bidan-dabu</td>
<td>dabu resist-paste made from mud and bidan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bindi</td>
<td>dot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bishnoi</td>
<td>(member of) tribal community known for their care of environment and animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bochhan</td>
<td>style of hand printed women’s headcloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bor</td>
<td>small berry collected wild in Rajasthan; also the globe-shaped pendant worn in a married woman’s centre forehead attached to her hair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brahmin</td>
<td>(member of) highest Hindu caste, originally priests and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundi</td>
<td>short sleeved man’s vest, cut on the bias with pouch pocket in the front - typically worn as underwear in Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butah</td>
<td>larger motif, often used in border and end panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buti</td>
<td>small motif in repeat pattern, usually floral, lit. ‘herbs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cha-cha</td>
<td>husband’s oldest brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaupad</td>
<td>traditional game played with dice and counters on a cross-shaped board (similar to ludo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chakki</td>
<td>small wheel, a small domestic grain grindstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chakra</td>
<td>wheel, symbol of divine knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chamar</td>
<td>(member of) leather-working community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chameli</td>
<td>‘jasmine’, <em>Nyctanthes arbortristis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charkha</td>
<td>spinning wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chatta-datta</td>
<td>simplified style of printing which just uses a datta infill block on a plain ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chhapna</td>
<td>Hindi verb meaning ‘to print’ (Sanskrit chhapana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chhipa</td>
<td>(member of) the block printing community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chhota phool</td>
<td>small flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chiagatta</td>
<td>tamarind seed paste (<em>Tamarindus indica</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chikan(kari)</td>
<td>white-on-white embroidery, trad. Lucknow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chilani</td>
<td>predominantly bright red design, hand block printed in Jahota, traditionally worn by young brides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chindi</td>
<td>cloth swatch or cutting, partic. colour gamut strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chira</td>
<td>style of block printed headcloth for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chokdi</td>
<td>chequered pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choli</td>
<td>blouse, usually with short body and short sleeves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chuna</td>
<td>lime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chunari/ chunni</td>
<td>spotted tie and dye patterned odhani/ veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>churiya</td>
<td>bangles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crore</td>
<td>ten million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cummerbandh</td>
<td>belt or sash (from cummer (back) and bandh (tie/close))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dang</td>
<td>migratory group, Rabari community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datta</td>
<td>infill colours in a design, blocks used for printing these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desi</td>
<td>indigenous, of the local place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhania</td>
<td>coriander, <em>Coriandrum sativum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhanakpuri</td>
<td>style of hand printed women’s headcloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhobi</td>
<td>washerman, (member of) caste involved in laundry or cloth washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhobighat</td>
<td>communal laundering area sited on the banks of river and watercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhoti</td>
<td>men’s waist-cloth worn by wrapping around the waist and tucking the front lower edge into the rear of the waist, thus creating a draped trouser-like silhouette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divali</td>
<td>(deepavali) Hindu festival of lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dori</td>
<td>thread, string, cord, or chain-stitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dopatta</td>
<td>(dupatta) long wide scarf, often worn with salwar kameez.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elaicha</td>
<td>cardamon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fadat</td>
<td>length of printed cloth of correct quantity for making ghaggra skirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fetiya</td>
<td>motif (in S. Rajasthan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feriya/ pheriya</td>
<td>travelling for the purpose of selling to a series of customers, e.g. through many villages in a region, or to regular customers within the state etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaddi</td>
<td>car, carriage, vehicle, printers’ trolley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gadia lohar</td>
<td>(member of) nomadic blacksmith community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gainda</td>
<td>marigolds, <em>Tagetes erecta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaindi</td>
<td>small marigold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaon</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geru</td>
<td>ochre, red earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghaggra</td>
<td>full skirt with gathered waist, usu. Rajasthan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghaghri</td>
<td>Gujarati skirt or petticoat made from thin cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghee</td>
<td>clarified butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghera</td>
<td>circumference, fullness of skirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghundi</td>
<td>an ornament worn by women on the forehead after marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghunghat</td>
<td>veiling, gesture used in covering the face with veilcloth, local term for purdah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girasiya</td>
<td>(member of) adivasi tribal community of S. Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gond</td>
<td>tree gum, <em>Acacia arabica indica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goondi</td>
<td>berry used for chutney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gorbar</td>
<td>cowdung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gota</td>
<td>a metallic ribbon woven from a <em>badla</em> warp and weft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gota patti</td>
<td>small leaves made from gota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gudh</td>
<td>printed background, or the block used for this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gujar</td>
<td>(member of) cattle breeding community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gul</td>
<td>rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gur</td>
<td>unrefined molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwardabu</td>
<td><em>dabu</em> resist paste made from gwar seeds, <em>Cyanopsis detrugoloba</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haat</td>
<td>market, particularly of one category of products (e.g. cloth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haldi</td>
<td>turmeric, <em>Curcuma longum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handi</td>
<td>large, rounded earthenware vessel used to contain <em>dabu</em> during printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harda</td>
<td>powdered dried myroballan fruit, or the process of treating cloth with this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harijan</td>
<td>‘children of god’, lowest Hindu caste considered ‘untouchable’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hari sarana</td>
<td>washing process with soap made from <em>til</em> (oil), <em>mingni</em> (camel or goat dung) and <em>khar</em> (soda ash)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haveli</td>
<td>typical north Indian mansion house, usually constructed around an open central courtyard, name derives from the Persian expression for an enclosed space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikat</td>
<td>hand woven cloth patterned by tie-dyeing the threads prior to weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imli</td>
<td>tamarind, <em>Tamarindus indica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indigosol</td>
<td>synthetic, water-soluble leuco-ester class of vat dyes, patented in 1924 by Baeyer and Sunder – require after-rinse in acid to develop colour and fix dye to fibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>izarband</td>
<td>decorative drawstring at the waist of a lower garment, usually <em>ghaggra</em> or <em>pyjama</em>, with ornamented tasselled ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaal</td>
<td>all-over pattern in print or embroidery, also means ‘mesh’, ‘trellis’ or ‘screen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jajam</td>
<td>printed floor spread/ sun canopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jamakhana</td>
<td>storehouse for garments in the Mughal and other royal courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>janmashtami</td>
<td>Lord Krishna’s birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jati</td>
<td>caste, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jhumpa</td>
<td>traditional Rajasthani dwelling, single room circular mud-walled hut with conical brushwood roof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jigger-winch</td>
<td>modern mechanical dyeing apparatus for plain-dyeing continuous lengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jimardi</td>
<td>jewel, responsibility, design worn after first son’s marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jodhpurs</td>
<td>men’s lower body wear, bifurcated and tailored to fit tightly over the calves but be roomy on the thighs for ease of movement when riding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jungli</td>
<td><em>bumpkin</em>, literally ‘of the forest’, connotations of backwardness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jutha</td>
<td>‘spoilt’, esp. referring to food or water spoilt by touching another’s mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juti</td>
<td>slip-on hand-made leather shoe, often decorated and with a turned-up toe (see also mojari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachchhawa</td>
<td>princely lineage of Rajputs, Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kairi</td>
<td>green/young mango fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakkar</td>
<td>husband’s younger brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalamkari</td>
<td>hand painted cloth, particularly from the East coast of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kali</td>
<td>gore panel, especially in <em>ghaggra</em> skirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kameez</td>
<td>loose tunic worn by women, especially school girls and Muslims, in combination with <em>salwar</em> trousers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>kanchli</td>
<td>sleeveless bodice top worn over the choli in Western India</td>
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<tr>
<td>karigar</td>
<td>literally meaning ‘worker’, is a general term usually applied to unskilled labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasumal ka phool</td>
<td>safflower, <em>Carthamus tinctorius</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khaddar</td>
<td>common term in North India for <em>khadi</em>, hand woven cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khadi</td>
<td>hand woven cloth. Ghandi used this term to refer to hand woven cloth from hand spun yarn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khar</td>
<td>soda ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kharkhana</td>
<td>craft workshops of the royal courts (historical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kheri</td>
<td>small green unripe mango, used for chutneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khirni</td>
<td>the evergreen <em>Manilkara hexandra</em> tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kopra</td>
<td>cloth, clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kshatriya</td>
<td>warrior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karigar</td>
<td>(member of) potter community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kunkum</td>
<td>red paste applied to the hair parting of married women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurta</td>
<td>knee-length men’s tunic, also becoming popular with modern middle class Indian women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurti</td>
<td>short version of a <em>kurta</em>, often worn by women over their choli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuttaar</td>
<td>small punch dagger, printed design for Gadia Lohar women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lahariya</td>
<td>tie-dyed, fold resisted pattern of diagonal stripes, lit. ‘waves’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakh</td>
<td>one hundred thousand (or one tenth of a million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lal zameen</td>
<td>printed cloth with dyed red ground (lit. <em>Lal – red, zameen – floor</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lagar</td>
<td>sub-group of Muslim Rangrez community specialising in red dying (from <em>Lal</em> meaning ‘red’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>langha</td>
<td>(member of) community of itinerant musicians, west Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lattha</td>
<td>coarse, open-weave cotton cloth, used in multiple layers to pad-out printing table surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lehenga</td>
<td>full gathered skirt generally lighter and finer material than a ghagra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>cloves, <em>Syzygium aromaticum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lugdi</td>
<td>Marwari-origin name for <em>odhani</em> head-cloth specific to certain tribal groups around Jaipur, usu. heavy khadi cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lunghi</td>
<td>men’s waist-cloth worn like a sarong, often stitched to form a tube.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majeet/</td>
<td>Indian madder, <em>Rubia cordifolia L.</em> (also munjeet, munjistha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manjistha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makhani</td>
<td>building/ house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malhi</td>
<td>(member of) gardening community, vegetables and flowers (from <em>ma</em> flower garland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandana/</td>
<td>protective decorative pattern painted on home threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alpana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandi</td>
<td>market (wholesale fruit and vegetable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandir</td>
<td>temple (usu. Hindu/ Jain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangalsutra</td>
<td>necklace worn by married Hindu women. Means ‘something good tied’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manganiyar</td>
<td>(member of) itinerant community of musicians, west Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mashru</td>
<td>warp-faced satin with silk warp and cotton weft in bright coloured stripes, designed for wear by communities for whom animal products (i.e. silk) next to the skin was prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>math</td>
<td>indigo vat or pit, dug up to 15 feet into the ground and traditionally ovoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meena/mina</td>
<td>(member of) settled tribal community, predom. Amer district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meghwals</td>
<td>(member of) low status community known for leatherwork and embroidery, south Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mendh</td>
<td>beeswax, a style of block printing which uses molten beeswax as the resist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methi</td>
<td>fenugreek, <em>Trigonella foenum-graecum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mez</td>
<td>table, high long modern printing table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mingni</td>
<td>camel or goat dung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mirchi</td>
<td>chilli, <em>Capsicum annum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mohulla</td>
<td>city quarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mojari</td>
<td>handmade traditional leather slip-on shoe (see also juti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mordant</td>
<td>metallic salt to fix dye to fibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukut</td>
<td>crown or halo worn by deities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mul mul</td>
<td>finest handloomed cotton muslin, esp. from Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naamwali</td>
<td>devotional cloths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nadi</td>
<td>fresh stream or spring, also sometimes water tap or pump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>najar/nazar</td>
<td>the evil eye, an envious or malevolent look capable of causing harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nallah</td>
<td>storm drain, waste water outlet, or open sewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namda</td>
<td>wool or felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naphthol dye</td>
<td>an early (now banned) class of synthetic, monoazo pigments, derived from naphthalene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nargis</td>
<td>rare wild narcissus or daffodil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasphalt</td>
<td>rind of pomegranate or the orange-yellow dye solution made from this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neemboli</td>
<td>fruits of the neem tree, <em>Azadirachta indica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nil</td>
<td>indigo, literally ‘blue’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nilgar</td>
<td>(member of) specialist indigo-dyer, sub-group of the Rangrez community (derived from nil meaning ‘blue’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odhani</td>
<td>women’s head or veil-cloth worn wrapped around the body and over the head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paduka</td>
<td>(images of) footprints of deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pallav/pallu</td>
<td>decorative border at one or both ends of sari, <em>odhani</em> or <em>patka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panchayat</td>
<td>community-elected local administrative council, lit. ‘five-heads’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pankha</td>
<td>fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pankhi</td>
<td>small fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pancha</td>
<td>stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patashi</td>
<td>sweets offered during worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pathiya</td>
<td>small low traditional printing table, 120 x 60 x 25cm padded with 32 layers of lattha cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patka</td>
<td>decorative men’s sash or cummerbund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patla</td>
<td>slim, narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patti</td>
<td>border or edging stripe or strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paundhi</td>
<td>cement or clay-lined depressions used for <em>harda</em> application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phooli</td>
<td>flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phool-mali</td>
<td>(member of) sub-group of Mali community, responsible for cultivating flowers and making temple garlands (<em>phool</em> – flower, <em>mala</em> – garland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phulkari</td>
<td>hand embroidery technique from the Punjab, lit. ‘flower working’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poshak</td>
<td>ghaggra, choli and kanchli made from matching material, usually lightweight cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potni</td>
<td>(literally means ‘wiper’) male headcloth, usu. scant scrap of cloth, worn by lower castes/labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prasad</td>
<td>(literally meaning ‘grace’) translates simply as ‘sanctified leftovers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pugri/pugdi</td>
<td>men’s turban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puja</td>
<td>worship/ ritual (Hindu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purdah</td>
<td>the practice of sequestering women; the flap of fabric in an anghar which covers the chest; the pieces of fabric used to make the cups of a choli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pyjama</td>
<td>type of loose square legged trousers often worn with a kurta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qureishi</td>
<td>(member of) Muslim butcher community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabari</td>
<td>(member of) nomadic community of camel and sheep herders/breeders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raika</td>
<td>(member of) Rajasthani branch of the Rabari community, nomadic herders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rajput</td>
<td>(member of) ruling dynasties, partic. Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rangolite-c</td>
<td>chemical bleaching paste used in modern discharge printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rangrez</td>
<td>(member of) the Muslim dyer community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reja</td>
<td>coarse weave heavy hardwearing cotton cloth used for rural ghagras and jajams, usually mill-made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rekha</td>
<td>line, outline, block used to print this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rezai</td>
<td>quilt designed from two printed pieces with cotton wadding between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roghan</td>
<td>paste from boiled linseed oil, applied to cloth by hand often with metallic or mica dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rohida wood</td>
<td>local worm-resistant hardwood, <em>Tecomella undulate</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roti</td>
<td>generic term for flatbread/chapatti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumal</td>
<td>square handkerchief, usu. man’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rupee</td>
<td>unit of monetary currency in India, abb. Rs. (approx 80 rupees to 1GBP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sabji/sabzi</td>
<td>vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safi</td>
<td>length of material for winding a turban, often 9 or 10 metres, or the turban made from this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sagwan</td>
<td>Indian teak, <em>Tectona grandis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>salu</strong></td>
<td>style of hand printed women’s headcloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>salwar</strong></td>
<td>loose trousers worn by women usually with <em>kameez</em> tunic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>salwar-kameez</strong></td>
<td>suit set composed of <em>salwar</em> trousers, <em>kameez</em> tunic, and <em>dopatta</em> scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>samiti</strong></td>
<td>community council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>samaj</strong></td>
<td>understand; also society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sara</strong></td>
<td>red dot design, printed for women of the Bishnoi community, Pipad Dist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sari</strong></td>
<td>unstitched length of cloth up to 9 yards in length and 18 to 60 inches in width, with a decorated end panel worn draped in many styles by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sepoy</strong></td>
<td>(motif depicting) a soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shakti</strong></td>
<td>female energy, divine power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shera</strong></td>
<td>unrefined molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shisha</strong></td>
<td>mirror, partic. used in embroidery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shisham</strong></td>
<td>Indian rosewood, <em>Dalbergia sissoo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shudra</strong></td>
<td>menial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>singh baaj</strong></td>
<td>lion’s claw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sinjaf</strong></td>
<td>facing inside the hem of a garment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>swadeshi</strong></td>
<td>home produce, ‘of own country’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>syahi</strong></td>
<td>ink, or black printing paste containing fermented horseshoes and molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>syaluro</strong></td>
<td>style of hand printed women’s headcloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tamda</strong></td>
<td>large deep copper vessel set into <em>batti</em> hearth for hot red dyeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tarseia</strong></td>
<td>large, squat, wide-mouthed copper vessel used for dyeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tehsil</strong></td>
<td>administrative region within a state or district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tel</strong></td>
<td>oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>than</strong></td>
<td>length of cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>thakur</strong></td>
<td>feudal title adopted by landowning Rajputs in pre-Independence Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tikka</strong></td>
<td>forehead ornament; bindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>til tel</strong></td>
<td>castor oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>titli</strong></td>
<td>butterfly (or design motif representing a butterfly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tokriya</strong></td>
<td>basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>topi</strong></td>
<td>hat or cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>trifuli</strong></td>
<td>three-flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>unani</strong></td>
<td>traditional Muslim medicine system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vaishya</strong></td>
<td>merchant or cultivator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>varak</strong></td>
<td>gold or silver leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>varna</strong></td>
<td>caste, lit. ‘colour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>vastra</strong></td>
<td>clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>videshi</strong></td>
<td>not desi, thus foreign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>visvakarma</strong></td>
<td>‘architect of the gods’, also certain artisan communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>zari</strong></td>
<td>metallic gold (real or synthetic) threadwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Appendices

Appendix A: Museums and Private Collections Consulted
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Appendix K: Three Process Sequences from Bagru, with Swatch Samples
Appendix A: Museums and Private Collections Consulted

**India**
- National Handicrafts and Handlooms (Crafts) Museum, Delhi
- National Museum, Delhi (Textile and Costume Collection)
- Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- Shreyas Folk Museum, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- Mehrangarh Museum, Jodhpur, Rajasthan
- Sanskriti Museum of Everyday Life, Gurgaon, Delhi
- MSM City Palace Museum, Jaipur, Rajasthan
- Turban Museum, Jaipur, Rajasthan
- Shilpgram Centre of Rural Arts and Crafts, Udaipur, Rajasthan
- Alkazi Collection of Photography, Delhi
- Rajasthan Fabric and Arts, Jaipur, Rajasthan
- Tapi Collection, Surat, Gujarat
- Kala Raksha Vidhalaya and Museum, Kachchh, Gujarat

**UK**
- South Asian Department Indian Textile Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- India Collection, Bradford Textile Archive, W. Yorkshire.
- Whitworth Museum, Manchester
- Newberry Collection, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Fostat textiles)
- Economic Botany Collection, Kew Gardens, London
- South Asian Textile Collection, New Walk Museum, Leicester
- Snibston Discovery Centre, Coalville (Nineteenth century textiles and dress collection)
- Photographic Archive, National Archives, UK
- Media Archive, Imperial War Museum, London
- Platt Hall Museum, Manchester
- Barron and Larcher archives, Crafts Study Centre, Farnham

**Others**
- Museum of Islamic Arts, Doha, Qatar
- Islamic Arts Museum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Digital Library for the Decorative Arts and Material Culture: Image and Text Collections, University of Wisconsin, [http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/DLDecArts/](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/DLDecArts/)
- Musée Impression sur l’Estoffes, Mulhouse, France
Appendices

Appendix B: Journals, Symposia, Theses Consulted

Key journals consulted
Textile: journal of cloth and culture (Berg)
Fashion (Berg)
Textile History (Maney/Pasold)
Costume (Maney/Costume Society, UK)
Material Culture
Oral History (Oral History Society)
Journal of Indian Textile History (Calico Museum)
South Asian Studies (BSAS)
Contemporary South Asia (BSAS)
Indian Folklife (NFSC www.indianfolklore.org)

Conferences and symposia attended
Textile Society, UK, annual conference, Leicester, Nov 2010
Rasksha/Sutra, Indian Museum, Calcutta, Feb 2010
Ars Textrina, Leeds, Sept 2009
In Adoration of Krishna: Pichhwais of Srinathji from the TAPI Collection, National Museum, New Delhi, Jan 2008
Maharaja: Representation and Reality, Victoria and Albert Museum, 14 Sept 2009
Fashioning Diasporas, Victoria and Albert Museum, 15-16 May 2009
Masters of the Cloth: TAPI Collection, National Museum, New Delhi Nov 2006
UNESCO 2006 Natural Dye Symposium, Hyderabad, India, Nov 2006
Indian Trade Cloth from the Tapi Collection, British Council Auditorium, Jan 2003

Theses consulted
SOOD, A. 2002. Crafts as Sustainable Livelihood Option in Rural India. MSc, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London.
Appendix C: Publications [CD-ROM]

Books
RONALD, E. 2006. Speaking in Colour and Pattern - the block printed *ghagras* of Balotra, Rajasthan. ... *

Articles

Posters
UNESCO International Symposium/Workshop on natural Dyes, Hyderabad, India 2006
UKGrad Postgraduate Student Poster Competition, 2008 [second prize]
Appendix D: Photographic Contract
Appendix E: Sample Release Form

RELEASE FORM

Date: ______________________________

Interviewer: ______________________________

Note Book / Film / Tape number: ______________________________

Photograph Folder: ______________________________

Name of person(s) interviewed / photographed: ______________________________

Location of Interview: ______________________________

Contact Number: ______________________________

By signing the form below, you give your permission for any tapes and/or photographs made during this project to be used by the researcher for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, internet, exhibition and presentations. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.

I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions, noted below.

Name (print): ______________________________

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Researcher’s signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Restriction description:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

E. Ronald 03/02/2004
Appendix F: List of Craftspeople Consulted

Block Printers and Dyers

1. Sanganer

**Hemant and Anil Doraya**
Employ approx 8 skilled and 10 semi/un-skilled printers, dyers, tailors etc
Sakshi Textiles, Laxmi Colony, Sanganer, Jaipur – 302029

**Anjani Kumar Borha** and extended family
Employ 8 printers, 1 master block carver (with apprentice), and 1 indigo dyer
Borha ji ki Haveli, Radhaballabh Marg, Sanganer - 302029

**Roop Narayan**
Father: Babu Lal Chhipa, employ 7
C/o J.B. Hand Printers, Ganesh Colony, Sanganer

**Nand Lal Sapra**
Father: Sh Laxmi Narayan Sapra, employ 8
Namdev Chowk, Nr Badri Nath Mandir, Sanganer

**Om Prakash Chhipa**
Father: Sh Gopal Chhipa, employ 8
Ganesh Colony, Sanganer

**Ram Ratan Chhipa**
Father: Sh Mahadev Lal Chhipa, employ 10
Ganesh Colony, Sanganer

**Chandi Ram Khatri**
Father: Sh Jetha Nand Khatri, employ 13
Satish Hand Printers, Ganesh Colony, Sanganer

**Kanj Vihari Somba**
Father: Sh Ganga Sahay Chhipa, employ 6
Namdev Chowk, Sanganer

**Narayan Chhipa**
Father: Sh Jagdish Narayan Chhipa, employ 10
Babaji ki Haveli, Namdev Chowk, Sanganer

**Mohanlal Chhipa**
Father: Sh Vijay Lal Chhipa, employ 10
Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Opp. showroom, Ward No.1, Sanganer.

**Om Singh Naruka**
Employs 20-50 (casual and permanent, skilled and semi-skilled)
Tej Kutir, Opp. Kalyan Kunj, Nr Higher Secondary School, Sanganer - 302 029

**Radesharan and Sushila Chhipa**
Women of the family print part time only
Namdev Chowk, Sanganer

**Brij, Kushal, Sanjay and Trilok Ballabh Udaival**
Appendices

Employ 20-30 mix of skilled, semi and un-skilled
Shilpi Handicrafts, Near Siliberi, Sanganer, Jaipur - 302029

2. Bagru

Suraj Narayan Titanwala, Meenadevi (wife) and Deepak (son)
Employ 4 skilled and 4 unskilled casual staff
(late father: Govinlal Narain Titanwala, 3120 Bagru Walon ki Rasta, Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Purani Basti, Jaipur – 302001)
Titanwala Bhawan, Adarsh Colony, Bagru, Jaipur – 303007

The Dosaya Chhipa Family – Prahlad, Rameshwar, Ramlal, Om Prakash, Mahesh and extended family, Father’s business divided between 3 brothers, each employ 10-20 skilled and unskilled, plus share 1 skilled indigo dyer.
Dosaya Farmhouse, Nr Bus stand, Bagru, Jaipur – 303007

Ram Swaroop Kothiwal
National Award, State Award, Merit Certificate
Father Late. Shri. Kanhaiya Lal Chippa. Employs 10 craftsmen
C/o M/s Kothiwal Hand Printers, Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007

Jagdish Prasad Lakhera
Father: Shri Narain Prasad,
VPO: Bagru

Ram Kishore Chhipa
National Award. Father Shri. Ghulab Chand
R. K. Printers, Laxmi Nath Chowk, Bagru 303007

Gopal Lal Chhipa
State Award
Father: Mahadev Chhipa, employs 10
Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007

Digambar Prasad Chhipa
State Award
Father: Mahadev Chhipa, employs 12
Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007

Smt. Rajkumari Kothiwal
C/o Kishan Handicrafts, Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007
employs 5

Rajender Kumar Chhipa
Father: Sh Ram Ji Lal Chhipa, employs 10
Jogiyon Ka Mohalla, Bagru

Ram Babu Kaluka
Father: Shri Sita Ram Kaluka, employs 10
Laxmi Nath Chowk, Bagru

Laxman Lal Chhipa
Father: Sh Pyare Lal Chhipa, employs 12
Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007
Satender Kumar Chhipa  
Father: Sh Ramswaroop Chhipa, employs 15  
Chhipon Ka Mohalla, behind Laxmi Nath Mandi, Bagru

Jugal Kishore and Hari Ballabh Chhipa  
Father: Late Sh Ram Gulam Chhipa, employs 9  
Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007

Banshi Lal Chhipa  
Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru

Ram Kishore Chhipa  
Father: Sh Kanhaiya Lal Chhipa, employs 6  
Behind State Bank Of India, Bagru, 303007

Gopal Lal  
Father: Sh Bhanwar Lal Chhipa, employs 6  
Gopal Handicrafts, Jogiyon ka Mohalla, Bagru 303007

Kailash Chand Chhipa  
Father: Gopi Ram, employs 11  
Plot No.14, Adarsh Nagar, Bagru

Chhitar Mal Chhipa  
Father: Sh Narayan Ji, employs 11  
Anokha Hand Prints, Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru

Smt. Sunita Devi Jajpura  
Father: Late Sh Ram Gopal Jajpura, employs 7  
Laxmi Nath Chowk, Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru

Ramkishan Chhipa  
Chhipon ka Mohalla, Bagru

Abdul Rangrez and wife (indigo dyeing)  
Nr Bus Stand, Bagru

Ismail Neelgar (indigo dyeing)  
Nehru Bazaar, Bagru

3. Jaipur

Rashidbhai and Sons  
Shri Govind Dev Colony, Tal Kotra Road, Jaipur – 302002

Sri Narayan Chhipa  
Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Purani Basti, Jaipur – 302001

Ram Kishore Chhipa  
Father: Shri Ram, No of Craft Person: 38  
Dasanchariya Anchara Kirana Store, Radhavallabh Marg, Voharon Ka Mohalla, Jaipur

Radhavallabh Chhipa  
Father: Ghasi Lal, No of Craft Person: 21  
Nr. Mohan Mandir, Radhavallabh Marg, Nr. Tripolia Gate, Jaipur

Govind Narayan Hira Lal Thekewala  
2901 Bagru Walon ka Rasta, Jaipur
Appendices

Jagdish Narayan Chhipa
M.s Rama Handicrafts, Bharkota Bhawan, Nimri Police, Purani Basti, Jaipur

Babu Bhai Nilgar (Bagru Wala)
Father: Mohd. Ikram, No of Craft Person: 12
Gold Print and Tie and Dye S/o Chand Khan, Mahalaxmi Colony, Nr. Stadium, Jaipur

Yasin Rangez
Nala Nilgaran, Imam Chowk, Ranganj Bazaar, Jaipur

Badshah Miyan Ahmad, Badshah Miyal Shah, Shehan Shah Alam
Alam House, Shastri Nagar, Jaipur 302016

4. Balotra
Yasin, Yusuf and Iqbal Chhipa Khan, and Mohd Sharif (Yasin's son)
Nr. Jama Masjid, Balotra, Barmer District.

5. Jahota
Radha Mohan Jajoria
Father: Shankar Lal Jajoria, No of Craft Person: 40
M/s Jajoria Textiles, VPO Jahota

Bhagwan Sahay Chhipa
Father: Bhairav Lal Chhipa, No of Craft Person: 17
M/s Kala Sangh Jaheta, VPO Jahota

Purshottam Chhipa
Father: Madan Lal Chhipa, No of Craft Person: 8
VPO Jahota

6. Kaladera
Krishnan Kumar
Chaubundi, Chhipon Ka Mohalla, Village Kaladera, Dist. Jaipur – 303801

Ramji Lal Chhipa
C/o Om Shiv Hand Printers, VPO Kaladera

Ram Kishore Chhipa
Father: Sh Mali Ram Chhipa, No of Craft Person: 10
VPO Kaladera

Murari Lal Chhipa
Father: Sh Hanuman Sahay Chhipa, No of Craft Person: 6
VPO Kaladera

7. Pipad
Yasin, Farooq and Elias Shahabudin and extended family
P.O. Pipad City, Jodhpur District – 342601

8. Jairampura
Ram Swaroop Chhipa
Father/Husband name: Sh Laxmi Narayan Chhipa, No of Craft Person: 8
VPO Jairampura
9. Barmer
Ranmal Khatri (ajrakh)
State award, merit certificate
Manoj Handprints, Nr. Panchbatti Circle, Raj Colony, Barmer

Nemichand Khatri
State award
Son of Sh Ranamalji, Master of special hand block printing technique (ajrakh)
Nr. Nargasar, Barmer

10. Pali
Mohammed Yashen Chhipa
Father: Gani ji
No. 27, Balotree Bale Bhistiyon Ki Gali, Pali

Chhipa Gafur
Father: Gani Kaka
Chhipa Pohalla, Pali

11. Jaisalmer
Ashok Khatri
Shop no.12, Nr. Gopa Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Outside Fort, Jaisalmer

Block Carvers
Mujib Ullah Khan
Idgarh, Jaipur

Rashidbhai and Sons
Shri Govind Dev Colony, Tal Kotra Road, Jaipur – 302002

Maneklal Gajjar
VPO Pethapur, Nr. Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Fundanbhaya
Employs 3 skilled carvers and 4 apprentices
Nr. Siliberi, Sanganer

Block Printed Clothing Boutiques
Mahima’s Fab and Prints/ Hari Om Handprints (Om Prakash Dosaya), Mall 21, 1st and 2nd floor,
Opp. Rajmandir Cinema, Bhagwandas Road, Jaipur – 302001.

RANGOTRI (Vikram Joshi), 11,12 Shri Kushal Nagar, (Near Railway Over-Bridge), Mansarover
Sanganer Road, Sanganer, Jaipur-302020 INDIA

Chaubundi, (Radhunath Prasad Nama), shop no.8A, Handloom Haveli, Panch Batti, Jaipur

Chhipa Prints n Crafts, C-79, Gali No.1, Gurunanakpura, Raja Park, Jaipur 302004

Anokhi, 2nd Floor, KK Square, C-11 Prithviraj Road, Jaipur 302001 (see www.anokhi.com for
other stores)

Fabindia, C-69 Sarojini Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur (see www.fabindia.com for other stores)
Appendices

Cottons, Kachnaar Crafts Pvt. Ltd., Hari Bhawan, Main Achrol House, Jacob Road, Civil Lines, Jaipur – 302006
Tulsi Textiles, Nr Chandpole Bazaar, Jaipur
SOMA, 5 Jacob Rd, Civil Lines, Jaipur
Ratan Textiles, Ajmer Road, Jaipur
Satayam, Laxman Dwara, City Palace, Jaipur
Dori, 330 Haasanpura, C. Kamla Nehru Nagar, N.B.C. Road, Jaipur

Indigo Cultivation
Manekam Ambalagan, KMA Exports, 54/8 Gandhi Nagar, Tindivanam – 604001, Tamil Nadu, India
Polu Pitchi Reddy, Vallur, Cuddapah District, Andhra Pradesh
Mohanraj Selvaraj, Seltrasellers, Tindivanam – 604001, Tamil Nadu, India.

Natural Dye Suppliers
Hind Natural Dyes, 43, Godhon Ka Rasta, Kishan Pole Bazar Jaipur
Chunnilal, Tripolia Bazar, Jaipur

Others
Kasturi Gupta Menon, Hon President, The Crafts Council of India, Chennai, India.
Noorjehan Bilgrami, Designer, Businesswoman, and Pakistani Ajrakh specialist, Karachi, Pakistan.
Noormohammed Haji-Abdul Rahim (Gamthiwala)  
Nr. Badshah’s Hajira Gate, Manekchowk, Ahmedabad-1
Faith and John Singh (Anokhi founders, independent crafts and heritage professionals)
Rachel and Pritam Singh (current generation of Anokhi directors) (www.anokhi.com)  
Anokhi Farm, Todi Ramzanipura jagatpura, Jaipur 302017
Mrs. Brigitte Singh, Narad ka Bagh, Amer, Jaipur.
Romanie Jaitley, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
Aditi Ranjan, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
Dr Ismail Mohammed Khatri and extended family  
Ajrakhpur and Damdkha, Kachchh, Gujarat
Subhash Sharma, Rajasthan Fabrics and arts, Laxman Dwara, City Palace, Jaipur
The Bissell Family, founders of Fabindia (www.fabindia.com), philanthropic supporters of crafts and heritage, New Delhi.
Madhuka Khera, Bharat Carpet Manufacturing, Panipat, Haryana.
Animesh sen Gupta, former curator of the Calico Museum of Textiles, Sarabhai Foundation, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
Brij Bhasin, former chairman of Gurjar - Gujarat State Handicrafts, Jaipur.
Francoise Cousin, Musee de l’Homme, Paris, France.
Hiroko Iwatate (traditional hand block printed textile collector), Tokyo, Japan.
Appendices

Praful and Shilpa Shah, The Tapi Collection, Surat, Gujarat.

Dastkar Ranthambore [http://www.dastkar.org/ranthamborep.htm], Dastkari Kendra, M-4,
Post Sherpur-Khiczipur, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

Shrimata Uzramma, founder of Dastkar Andhra, 95A Park Lane, behind Siddamshetty
Complex, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Usha Lachungpa Senior Research Officer, Dept. of Forest, Environment and Woodland
Management, Government of Sikkim, Deoral, Gangtok, Sikkim.
Appendix G: Fieldwork Timeline

Data was collected during fieldwork conducted over a series of three visits to India; a three year continuous period of residence from November 2004 to February 2008 sandwiched between a one month pilot study in February 2004 and a further one month revisit in April 2009. Fieldwork was characterised by a series of eight intensive periods during the continuous tenure in India, each averaging one to two months in duration, occurring at approximately three to four month intervals. In the interim periods shorter visits, lasting from just a few hours to a few days in duration, were also conducted along with analysis, writing-up and preparation for the next phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Relocate to Jaipur, India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>AMHP launch</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Daily visits to printers in Bagru, Sanganer, also focus on other printing families within driving distance of Jaipur inc. Jahota, Kaladera, Jairampura etc.</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Balotra research – with Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>Balotra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Collating and writing up Balotra research, preparing gallery &amp; Balotra book, developing next round of field work.</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Barmer ajarakh research with Khatri printers</td>
<td>Barmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Kachchh – ajarakh research with Khatri printers</td>
<td>Kachchh, Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu – Indigo harvest/extraction</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu &amp; Andhra Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Hyderabad – UNESCO natural dye conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Jodhpur – assist with turban gallery/ visit printers</td>
<td>Jodhpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Focus on Sanganer research – daily visits to Sanganer printers/ local dealers/ museums etc</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Collate research, gallery, write book, identify gaps in fieldwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>[holiday]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Sikkim – madder cultivation/ traditional use</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Jaisalmer printers</td>
<td>Jaipur/ Jodhpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Relocate back to UK</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Daily visits to Bagru printers, plus 3 weeks in Pipad, regular visits to Sanganer, Jaipur, brief revisit to Kachchh.</td>
<td>Jaipur/ Bagru/ Pipad/ Bhuj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix H: Catalogue of Traditional Hand Block Printed Textile Designs and Motifs

Bagru (BG)
Balotra (BL)
Pipad (PP)
Sanganer (SG)
Jaipur (JP)
Barmer (BM)
Other Villages (OV)
Bagru

The Chhipa craftsmen of Bagru list numerous traditional motifs, mainly used to produce *fadats* of coarse dark-dyed cloth for rural women’s *ghaggra* skirts. Motifs for these indigo-*dabu* textiles are a range of small static representations of flowers, herbs, and locally familiar objects. Household textiles printed in the *syahi-begar* style (black and red on a cream ground), such as *jajam* and *bichhauni* are also mentioned by the Chhipa community (and Mohanty 1983) as an important historical product of the town.

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**BG.001**

**NAME:** double-sided print  
**PLACE:** Bagru  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 1-1.5 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 4  
**INFO:** double-sided cloth trad. for *odhanis*. *Syahi – begar* mordant print with *dabu* resist and indigo dye carried out simultaneously on both sides. *Kairi* (green mango) on one side, *Patashi* (temple offering) on other.

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**BG.002**

**NAME:** Budholi  
**PLACE:** Bagru  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 1 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 2  
**INFO:** *Begar* printed motifs, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo and *nasphal* dyed.
BG.003
NAME: *Patta* (leaf)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, red dyed, and then *dabu* printed and indigo dyed, *nasphal* overdye.

BG.004
NAME: *Dhania* (coriander)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, red dyed, then *dabu* resist and indigo dye.

BG.005
NAME: *Bewda* (twin pots)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, red dyed, and then *dabu* printed and indigo dyed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BG.006</td>
<td>Bewda (twin pots)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td>Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
<td>3 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>begar</em> printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo dyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG.007</td>
<td>Chakri (wheel/grinding stone)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td>Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
<td>1 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>begar</em> printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo dyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG.008</td>
<td>Patla Parcha (slim stripe)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td>Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
<td>2 cm width</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>begar</em> printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo dyed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BG.009
NAME: *Patla Parcha* (slim stripe)  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm width  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Begar* printed motifs, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo and *nasphal* dyed.

BG.010
NAME: *Aam* (mango)  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Begar* printed motifs, red dyed, and then *dabu* printed and indigo dyed.

BG.011
NAME: *Khirni*  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3  
INFO: *Begar* printed motifs, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo, more *dabu* printed and *nasphal* dyed.
BG.012
NAME: Nargis (daffodil)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 1.3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, red dyed, and then dabu printed and indigo dyed, naspal overdye.

BG.013
NAME: Singh Baaj (lion’s claw)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, red dyed, and then dabu printed and indigo dyed.

BG.014
NAME: Ankhada (nosering)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 1.3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, red dyed, and then dabu printed and indigo dyed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BG.015</strong></th>
<th><strong>BG.016</strong></th>
<th><strong>BG.017</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong> <em>Mota Parcha</em> (fat stripe)</td>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong> <em>Mota Parcha</em> (fat stripe)</td>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong> <em>Panadi Bel</em> (vine stripe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLACE:</strong> Bagru</td>
<td><strong>PLACE:</strong> Bagru</td>
<td><strong>PLACE:</strong> Bagru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRAFTSMAN:</strong> Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
<td><strong>CRAFTSMAN:</strong> Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
<td><strong>CRAFTSMAN:</strong> Suraj Narayan Titanwala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOTIF SIZE:</strong> 2.5 cm wide</td>
<td><strong>MOTIF SIZE:</strong> 2.5 cm wide</td>
<td><strong>MOTIF SIZE:</strong> 1.2 cm wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO. BLOCKS/COLS:</strong> 2</td>
<td><strong>NO. BLOCKS/COLS:</strong> 2</td>
<td><strong>NO. BLOCKS/COLS:</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFO:</strong> <em>begar</em> printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo dyed, <em>nasphal</em> overdye.</td>
<td><strong>INFO:</strong> <em>begar</em> printed motifs, red and <em>kasumal</em> dyed, <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo and <em>nasphal</em> dyed.</td>
<td><strong>INFO:</strong> <em>syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> printed striped motifs, <em>kasumal</em> and red dyed, then <em>dabu</em> printed and indigo dyed, <em>nasphal</em> overdye.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BG.018
NAME: Kairi (green mango)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: 0.7 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar printed motifs, dabu printed then indigo dyed, then nosphal overdye.

BG.019
NAME: Bichauni (bed sheet)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: asstd.
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Bichhauni bed spread printed with a selection of traditional Bagru motifs, organised into tessellating triangles and borders in the centerfield.

BG.020
NAME: Bichauni (bed sheet)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala
MOTIF SIZE: asstd.
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Bichhauni bed spread printed with a selection of traditional Bagru motifs, organised into tessellating triangles and borders in the centerfield.
| BG.021 | NAME: *Meena ki Lugdi* (Meena headcloth)  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Shri Chhipa, Datwas Hala  
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *syahi* printed *gudhI* with *begar* and red dyed motifs.  
Headcloth worn by older women of the Meena community. |
| --- | --- |

| BG.022 | NAME: *Daad* (tooth)  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan Titanwala  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, red dyed, and then *dabu* printed and indigo dyed, *nasphal* overdye. |
| --- | --- |

| BG.023 | NAME: *Jajam* [side A]  
PLACE: Bagru  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan and Meenadevi Titanwala  
MOTIF SIZE:  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Syahi* and *begar* printed, red dyed, *harda*-washed ground.  
Selection of motifs and borders to illustrate traditional layout for *jajam* (floorspread). |
| --- | --- |
### BG.024
**NAME:** Jajam [side B]  
**PLACE:** Bagru  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Suraj Narayan and Meenadevi Titanwala  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 2  
**INFO:** Syahi and begar printed, red dyed, harda-washed ground.

Selection of motifs and borders to illustrate traditional layout for jajam (floorspread).

### BG.025
**NAME:** Nargis (daffodil)  
**PLACE:** Bagru  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Ram Kishan Chhipa  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 1.5 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 5  
**INFO:** Begar printed motifs, red and kasumal dyed, dabu printed and indigo, more dabu printed and nasphal dyed.

### BG.026
**NAME:** Bewda (twin pots)  
**PLACE:** Bagru  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Ram Kishan Chhipa  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 3.4 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 5  
**INFO:** Begar printed motifs, red and kasumal dyed, dabu printed and indigo, more dabu printed and nasphal dyed.
BG.027
NAME: Singh Baaj (lion’s claw)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Ram Kishan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Begar printed motifs, red and kasumal dyed, dabu printed and indigo, more dabu printed and nasphal dyed.

BG.028
NAME: Aam (mango)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Ramswaroop Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 5
INFO: Begar printed motifs, red and kasumal dyed, dabu printed and indigo, more dabu printed and nasphal dyed.

BG.029
NAME: Nayi patashi (new temple sweetie/offering)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Ramswaroop Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar printed design, dabu resisted and indigo dyed then over-dyed with nasphal.
BG.030
NAME: *Patta* (leaf)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Govindlal Narayan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: *Begar* printed motifs, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo, more *dabu* printed and *nasphal* dyed.

BG.031
NAME: *kharbhujia* (watermelon)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Govindlal Narayan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *syahi-begar* printed, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted and indigo dyed, then *nasphal* overdyed.

BG.032
NAME: *nayi patashi* (new temple sweetie/offering)
PLACE: Bagru
CRAFTSMAN: Govindlal Narayan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: *Begar* printed motifs, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo, more *dabu* printed and *nasphal* dyed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BG.033</td>
<td>Goondi (berry used for chutney)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 cm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wooden printing block for the <strong>gundi</strong> berry design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG.034</td>
<td>Patashi (sacred temple offering)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 cm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parat (strike off from printing block) of a design typically printed in modernt and resist dyed techniques to produce dark coloured <strong>fadats</strong> for <strong>ghagras</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG.027</td>
<td>Singh Baaj (lion’s claw)</td>
<td>Bagru</td>
<td>Om Prakash Dosaya Chhipa</td>
<td>1.5 cm</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Begar printed motifs with darker begar-syah mix outlines, red dyed, dabu printed and indigo dyed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Balotra

To the south western corner of the state, the traditional designs printed by the Chhipa Khan family of Balotra, in Barmer district, are particularly distinctive. The motifs, resisted in rust reds, cream, and ochre yellow, against dark indigo blue and bottle-green grounds, are large in scale, typically ranging from 3-10 cm in height. The designs, mainly produced for ghaggra skirts, have a bold, unrefined feel, with flat blocks of colour, no use of shading, and in some such as the Rabari ro fatiya (‘Rabari motif’), there is no rekh outline used to define the butis. The Chhipa Khan family of Balotra, the only remaining family of traditional printers, have supplied the local communities for many generations and thus are knowledgeable about the social meanings of many of these prints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.001</th>
<th>NAME: Maali ro fatiya (Mali motif)</th>
<th>PLACE: Balotra</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</th>
<th>INFO: begar printed and red dyed motifs, dabu resisted and indigo dyed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME: Maali ro fatiya (Mali motif)</td>
<td>PLACE: Balotra</td>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm</td>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</td>
<td>INFO: begar printed and red dyed motifs, dabu resisted and indigo dyed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Worn as ghagras by Mali widows, Balotra dist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.002</th>
<th>NAME: Trifuli (three flowers)</th>
<th>PLACE: Balotra</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</th>
<th>INFO: begar printed motif, dabu resisted and indigo dyed, with harda overdyed ground.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME: Trifuli (three flowers)</td>
<td>PLACE: Balotra</td>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm</td>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</td>
<td>INFO: begar printed motif, dabu resisted and indigo dyed, with harda overdyed ground.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Worn as ghagras by young pre-marriage/betrothed girls of Marwar dist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BL.003
**NAME:** Mato ro fatiya (sand motif)  
**PLACE:** Balotra  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Chhipa Khan family  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 5 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 2  
**INFO:** *begar* mordant printed motifs, red dyed, and then *dabu* resisted on indigo ground. *Harada* overdye.  
Worn as *ghagras* by Bhaat women and pre-construction workers, Balotra dist.

### BL.004
**NAME:** Tokriya (baskets)  
**PLACE:** Balotra  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Chhipa Khan family  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 6.5 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 2  
**INFO:** *begar* mordant printed motifs, red dyed, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground, *harada* overdye.  
Worn as *ghagras* by Rabari widows, Balotra dist.

### BL.005
**NAME:** Chameli (jasmine)  
**PLACE:** Balotra  
**CRAFTSMAN:** Chhipa Khan family  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 2.3 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 2  
**INFO:** *begar* mordant printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground, *harada* overdye.  
Worn as *ghagras* by Mali widows, Balotra dist.
| BL.006 | NAME: Gul Butah (rose motif)  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 11 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3  
INFO: begar mordant printed motif, red dyed, dabu resisted against indigo ground, washed and white areas re-dabu printed before harda overdye.  
Worn as ghagras by Jain widows of Abu Road area of Sirohi dist. |
|----|---|
| BL.007 | NAME: Phooli (flowers)  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 4.5 cm wide bands  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: begar mordant printed design, red dyed, then dabu resisted on indigo ground, haldi-nasphal overdye.  
Worn as ghagras by married Mali women, Balotra dist. |
| BL.008 | NAME: Nodana  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 5.5 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: Begar mordant printed motifs, red dyed, then resisted against indigo ground, harda overdye.  
Worn as ghagras by Choudhary and Jat women, Balotra dist. |
Appendices

BL.009
NAME: Mobiyara Fatiya (depicts cotton bols)
PLACE: Balotra
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan Family
MOTIF SIZE: 4.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar mordant printed motifs, red dyed, and then dabu resisted against indigo ground, harda overdye.
Worn as ghaggas by Mobiyara (Meghwal – handloom weavers) widows, Balotra dist.

BL.010
NAME: Long/Laung (clove)
PLACE: Balotra
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family
MOTIF SIZE: 6.5 cm wide repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar mordant printed design, red dyed, and then dabu resisted against indigo ground, haldi-nasphal overdye.
Worn as ghaggas by many of the married women, Balotra dist.

BL.011
NAME: Kuttaar (dagger)
PLACE: Balotra
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family
MOTIF SIZE: 3.5 cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Begar printed design, red dyed, dabu resisted against indigo ground, washed and white areas re-resisted before haldi-nasphal overdye.
Worn as ghaggas by many of the tribal and village women all across Rajasthan (usually not widows).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
<th>Worn as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabari ro Fatiya (Rabari motif)</td>
<td>Balotra</td>
<td>Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>5 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Half of the motifs are <em>begar</em> printed &amp; red dyed, then all are <em>dabu</em> resisted on indigo ground, <em>harda</em> overdye.</td>
<td><em>ghagras</em> by Rabari widows, Balotra dist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neemboli (neem fruits)</td>
<td>Balotra</td>
<td>Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>6.5 cm wide repeat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordant printed design, red dyed, <em>dabu</em> resisted on indigo ground, <em>harda</em> overdye.</td>
<td><em>ghagras</em> by Mali widows, Balotra dist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boriya (bor fruits/ bor forehead ornament)</td>
<td>Balotra</td>
<td>Chhipa Khan family</td>
<td>7 cm wide repeat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordant printed design, red dyed, resisted against indigo ground, <em>harda</em> overdye.</td>
<td><em>ghagras</em> by Kumhar (potter) and Chaudhury (landowner) women (not widows), Balotra dist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL.015</td>
<td>NAME: Gainda (marigolds) PLACE: Balotra CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family MOTIF SIZE: 4.5 cm NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 INFO: <em>Begar</em> mordant printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> resisted against indigo ground, <em>haldi-nasphal</em> overdye. Worn as <em>ghagras</em> by middle-aged married Mali women, Balotra dist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL.016</td>
<td>NAME: Goonda (local berry used for chutney) PLACE: Balotra CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family MOTIF SIZE: 5.5 cm wide stripes NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3 INFO: <em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordant printed motifs, red dyed, <em>dabu</em> resist on indigo ground, re-resisted before <em>nasphal</em> overdye. Worn as <em>ghagras</em> by married Chaudury women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL.017</td>
<td>NAME: Bhalka (spear) PLACE: Balotra CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family MOTIF SIZE: 13 cm NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3 INFO: <em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> printed motifs, <em>dabu</em> resisted on indigo ground, <em>nasphal</em> overdye. Worn as <em>ghagras</em> by Gadia Lohar (nomadic blacksmith) women, Balotra dist.</td>
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<td>Worn as <em>ghagras</em> by women of many tribes and communities in Balotra dist.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.019</th>
<th>NAME: Methi (fenugreek)</th>
<th>PLACE: Balotra</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm stripe width</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4</th>
<th>INFO: <em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> printed design stripes, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> resisted indigo ground, re-resisted and overdyed with <em>harda</em>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Worn as <em>ghagras</em> by widows of many tribes local to Balotra dist.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.020</th>
<th>NAME: Odhani (headcloth)</th>
<th>PLACE: Samdari village, Nr. Balotra</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN:</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE: 15 cm deep border, 5 cm motifs</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</th>
<th>INFO: <em>mendh</em> (wax) resist printed design, alum mordanted ground, <em>syahi</em> printed black areas, red dyed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Worn by older women and widows of many tribes, esp. Rabari, Balotra dist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL.021</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| NAME: Jajam (floor cloth)  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 274x116 total size  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:  
INFO: concentric arrangement of borders featuring *gul butah*, *neemboli*, *boriya*, *Syahi*, red dye, *dabu* and indigo dyed. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| NAME: Bichhauni (bed sheet)  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 274x116 cm total size  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BL.023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| NAME: Jajam (floor cloth)  
PLACE: Balotra  
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa khan family  
MOTIF SIZE: 274x116 cm total size  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:  
INFO: concentric arrangement of borders with centerfield featuring *kuttaar*, *Rabari* and *gul buta* ghaggra motifs. *Syahi*, *begar*, red dye, *dabu* and indigo with *nasphal* overdye. |
BL.024
NAME: Jajam (floor cloth)
PLACE: Balotra
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Khan family
MOTIF SIZE: 275x115 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:
INFO: concentric arrangement of borders featuring *tokriya*, *gul butah*, *neemboli* and *phooli* motifs.
*Sahii*, *begar*, *dabu* and dark indigo.
Pipad

In Pipad, to the east of Jodhpur and some 230km south of Bagru, the motifs are simple and naive in style. Many are silhouette representations of simple objects such as the mirchi (chilli), the bichhu, others are flower or herb representations. One family of printers remain in Pipad, the Muslim Shahabudin family. Having supplied the local communities for many generations they have good knowledge of the specific designs and their socio-cultural meanings.

PP.001
NAME: Sara
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: begar mordanted ground, red-dyed.

Printed as fadats for ghagras worn by Bishnoi women of Pipad dist.

PP.002
NAME: Sara border
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 8 cm deep
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: syahi rekh and begar mordant edge bands.

Printed as fadats for ghagras worn by Bishnoi women of Pipad dist.
Appendices

PP.003
NAME: *Kumhar petia* (potters motif)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: mordant and red dyed ground, printed resist and indigo.

*fadats* for *ghaggras* worn by Kumhar (potter) widows of Pipad dist.

---

PP.004
NAME: *Kaap* (green)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: diamond motif – 13 cm rpt, border 3 cm deep
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed red dyed design, *dabu* resisted and indigo dyed with further *dabu* and *nasphal* overdye.

Printed as *fadats* for *ghaggras* worn by Raika widows of Pipad dist.

---

PP.005
NAME: *Bichhu* (scorpion)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm motifs on 3cm resist stries, with 1.5cm border
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* mordant and red dyed bichhu motifs, *dabu* resisted and indigo dyed, with subsequent striped *dabu* resist and *nasphal* overdye (to give blue-green striped ground).

Worn as *ghaggras* by Raika widows of Pipad dist.
PP.006
NAME: *Kaap* (blue)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: diamond motif – 13 cm rpt, border 3 cm deep
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed red dyed design, *dabu* resisted and indigo dyed.

Printed as *fadats* for *ghaggras* worn by Raika widows in Pipad dist.

PP.007
NAME: *Kuttaar*
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: broad stripes in *begar* mordant and red dye, with *dabu* resist, indigo, and *nasphal*.

Printed as *fadats* for the *ghaggras* of married Raika Devasi women in Pipad dist.

PP.008
NAME: *Vaishnav Saad*
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 6.5 cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: dark maroon *begar* printed stripes, *dabu* resisted and overdyed first with indigo then *nasphal*.

Worn by Vaishnav women as *ghaggras*
**PP.009**

NAME: Pipad  
PLACE: Pipad  
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm dots  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: square dots in *begar* mordant, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted as round dots on an indigo ground.

**PP.010**

NAME: Pipad  
PLACE: Pipad  
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family  
MOTIF SIZE: 11 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motif, red dyed, then *dabu* resist with indigo and *nasphal* ground.

**PP.011**

NAME: Saad  
PLACE: Pipad  
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family  
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* motif red dyed, then *dabu* resist and indigo dyed ground  
Worn as ghaggra by Saad Vaishnav married women  
[similar to the *dhania/coriander* motif of Bagru]
PP.012
NAME: *Farad*
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* mordant printed crosses, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted as circles on an indigo ground.
Worn as ghagras by Meghwal or Bhaibi married women (also used to be worn by Oswal Jain women) in Pipad dist.

PP.013
NAME: *Elaichi* (cardamom)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: dark *begar* on *kasumal* ground, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted stripes and indigo dyed.
Worn as ghagras by married Choudhary women, Pipad dist.

PP.014
NAME: *Gaindi* (small marigold)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 4.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *begar* printed motif, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted against indigo and *naspal* ground.
Worn as ghagras by married Mali women, Pipad dist.
PP.015
NAME: Rebari Jaal
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: approx. 3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: begar printed and red dyed dots, dabu resisted trellis, indigo dyed then washed an overdyed with nasphal to give green, orange and yellow.

Worn by newly married Rabari girls as ghagras, Pipad dist.

PP.016
NAME: Maithi/methi (fenugreek)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 7 cm wide bands
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar printed stripes, with dabu and indigo resist.

Worn by married middle-aged Patel women, Pipad dist.

PP.017
NAME: Bhalka (spear)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 13 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Syahi and begar mordant printed motif, red dyed, then dabu resist and indigo dye, remove dabu for final nasphal overdye.

Worn by young married Baat and Banjara women, Pipad dist.
**PP.018**
NAME: Sirvi/ Mirchi (chilli)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar and red dyed motifs, dabu resisted and indigo dyed.

**PP.019**
NAME: Nandana/Nodana
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 6 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: begar printed and red dyed motifs, dabu resisted on indigo ground, washed and overdyed in harda/haldi mix.

Worn as ghagras, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.

**PP.020**
NAME: Harsindi
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 6 cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar printed stripes, red dyed; dabu resisted and indigo dyed, then washed and overdyed in Haldi-nasphal.

Worn as ghagras by young married Mali woman, Pipad dist.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP.021</td>
<td>NAME: <em>Bhai</em> (brother)</td>
<td>PLACE: Pipad</td>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family</td>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 6 cm</td>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3</td>
<td>INFO: <em>begar</em> printed motifs, red dyed, and then <em>dabu</em> resisted on indigo ground, washed and overdyed in <em>harda</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP.022</td>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td>PLACE: Pipad</td>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family</td>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 19 cm repeat</td>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3</td>
<td>INFO: <em>syahi</em> outline and <em>begar</em> infills, red dyed, and then overdyed with <em>harda</em> for cream ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP.023</td>
<td>NAME: <em>rezai</em> (quilt) – 2 parts</td>
<td>PLACE: Pipad</td>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family</td>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 2 x (106x76 cm)</td>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2</td>
<td>INFO: <em>syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordants printed on khadi, red dyed (madder). Features central <em>jaal</em> (trellis) design and <em>tota</em> (parrot) in border. Poss. c.1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PP.024
NAME: *Jali* (grid/trellis)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 3.3 cm repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground.

Worn as *ghagras*, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.

PP.025
NAME: *Chota phool* (small flower)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 2.8 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground.

Worn as *ghagras*, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.

PP.025
NAME: *Gaindi* (small marigold)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground, washed and overdyed in *nasphal* mix.

Worn as *ghagras*, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.
PP.026
NAME: *Nimboli* (neem fruits)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 6.5 cm wide repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground, washed and overdyed in *nasphal* mix.

Worn as ghagras, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.

PP.027
NAME: *Tilak*
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *syahi* printed motifs, *dabu* resisted and overdye with *hira kassis* (ferrous sulphate).

Worn as ghagras, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.

PP.028
NAME: *Babul* (babul tree)
PLACE: Pipad
CRAFTSMAN: Shahabudin family
MOTIF SIZE: 9.3 cm high motifs
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *begar* printed and red dyed motifs, *dabu* resisted on indigo ground, washed and overdyed in *nasphal* mix.

Worn as ghagras, popular with tribal women in Pipad dist.
Sanganer

The town of Sanganer, founded in the sixteenth century, by the Kachchhawa Rajput prince Sangaji, is situated just 16km south of the modern state capital Jaipur (established in 1727), and 27km south of Amber, the erstwhile seat of power for the princely state of Dhundhar. Sanganer holds a prominent position in the region’s textile history, and is widely reported to have been a centre for fine bleached and dyed cloth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Irwin & Hall, 1971). Rumals and angochhas, such as those depicted above and below, historically form an important staple hand block printed product of Sanganer, the printing colony renowned for the production of red and black designs printed onto fine sun-bleached white ground cloth. Household textiles such as rezai and bichhaunis were also once a staple product of the local Chhipas, though this work has long since been superseded by screen-printers.

SG.001
NAME: Pankhi (fan)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radha Mohan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 cols, 6 blocks
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed, and tapana sun bleached.
Safa (head cloth) c.1975 centerfield motif is pankhi (fan).

SG.002
NAME: Anguthi (ring)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radha Mohan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 3 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 cols, 6 blocks
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed, and tapana sun bleached.
Safa (head cloth) with Anguthi (finger ring) design.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG.003</th>
<th>NAME: Bhil Patta (leaf of Bhil tree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLACE: Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: Radha Mohan Chhipa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 cols, 6 blocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO: <em>syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordant printed, red dyed, and <em>tapana</em> sun bleached.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Safa</em> (head cloth) with bhil patta (bhil leaf) design.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG.004</th>
<th>NAME: Pankhi (fan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLACE: Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTSMAN: unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 cols, 6 blocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO: <em>syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> mordant printed, red dyed, and <em>tapana</em> sun bleached.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Safa</em> (headcloth) purchased from Jaipur bazaar in 2004.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG.005</th>
<th>NAME: iris butah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLACE: Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTSMAN:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIF SIZE: 9.3 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO: <em>syahi</em> back mordant printed motifs used on the end borders of traditional Sanganeri <em>safa</em> and <em>angochha</em>. (this cloth is chemically bleached).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SG.006
NAME: Aam butah
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 9.6 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed, and tapana sun bleached.
Large butah motif traditionally applied to end borders of Sanganeri safas and angochhas.

SG.007
NAME: Phooli (flowers)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed, and tapana sun bleached.
Phooli (flowers) design in main field, and typical border used on traditional Sanganeri angochhas and safas.

SG.008
NAME: Bindi (dots)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radha Mohan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 0.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed, and tapana sun bleached.
Bindi (dots) centerfield design, with typical traditional border and butah arrangements for safas and angochhas of Sanganer.
### SG.009
**NAME:** Rumal (handkerchief)  
**PLACE:** Sanganer  
**CRAFTSMAN:** (courtesy Anokhi)  
**MOTIF SIZE:** 3.5 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 4 cols  
**INFO:** Handkerchief printed with traditional Danganeri motifs using chemical colours. Produced in Sanganer for Anokhi in the 1970s.

![Rumal (handkerchief)](image)

### SG.010
**NAME:** rezai detail  
**PLACE:** Sanganer  
**CRAFTSMAN:**  
**MOTIF SIZE:** buti 3 cm, butah 6.2 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 3 cols  
**INFO:** Two shades of begar and syahi mordants, red dyed, then harda overdye to give cream ground.  
Part of a rezai (quilt) using traditional angochha blocks.

![rezai detail](image)

### SG.011
**NAME:** rezai detail  
**PLACE:** Sanganer  
**CRAFTSMAN:**  
**MOTIF SIZE:** buti 3 cm, butah 6.2 cm  
**NO. BLOCKS/COLS:** 3 cols  
**INFO:** Two shades of begar and syahi mordants, red dyed, then harda overdye to give cream ground.  
Part of a rezai (quilt) using traditional angochha blocks, including tara buti centerfield.

![rezai detail](image)
SG.012
NAME: swatch/fragment
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Syahi and begar printed motifs, on *harda* wash cream ground.

SG.013
NAME: swatch/fragment
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Syahi and begar printed motifs, with chemical dye yellow infill and blue ground colour.

SG.014
NAME: *rezai* centerfield
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: Jaal/ trellis centerfield for a *rezai* (quilt).
Appendices

**SG.015**
NAME: Bicchauni detail
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Traditional centerfield and border for *bicchauni*, printed using *begar* mordant, red dye, and chemical colours for the infills.

**SG.016**
NAME: safa
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2 cols
INFO: Plain white *safa* (headcloth) printed with *phool* and *aeiocha butahs* in *syahi* and *begar*, chemically bleached. *Safa*, purchased from Sanganer bazaar, 2004.

**SG.017**
NAME: Aeiocha ki butah
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *Syahi* and *begar* printed design, red dyed, chemically bleached. *Safa*, purchased from Sanganer bazaar 2004.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SG.018</td>
<td><em>Phool ki butah</em> (flower motif)</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> printed design, red dyed, chemically bleached. <em>Safa</em>, purchased from Sanganer bazaar 2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG.019</td>
<td><em>Keri phool butah</em> (mango flower motif)</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td>Sakshi textiles</td>
<td>5 cm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Traditional motif printed in synthetic pigment red onto chemically bleached white cotton cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG.020</td>
<td><em>Safa jaal, supari butah</em></td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 cm (butah)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Syahi</em> and <em>begar</em> printed <em>angochha</em> with trellis centerfield and <em>supari</em> border, chemically bleached, purchased from Sanganer bazaar 2008.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SG.021 | NAME: *Supari ki butah* (supari/betel nut motif in border)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE: 6 cm (butah)  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Syahi* and *begar* printed *angochha* with trellis centerfield and supari border, chemically bleached, purchased from Sanganer bazaar 2008. |
|---|---|
| SG.022 | NAME: *Mughal ki buti* (Mughal motif)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa  
MOTIF SIZE: 3 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1965). Motif traditionally used for printing *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
| SG.023 | NAME: *Chhota panja* (small sprig)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa  
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1940-50). Motif traditionally used for printing *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
SG.024
NAME: Phool buti (flower motif)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: parat (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.194-50). Motif traditionally used for printing safar and angochha in Sanganeri style.

SG.025
NAME: Badam phool (almond flower)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: parat (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1965). Motif traditionally used for printing safar and angochha in Sanganeri style.

SG.026
NAME:
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1
INFO: parat (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1975). Motif traditionally used for printing safar and angochha in Sanganeri style.
| SG.027 | NAME: Turhi ki buti  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE:  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
| --- | --- |
| SG.028 | NAME: Nimsher (narcissus)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN: Radesharan Chhipa  
MOTIF SIZE: 4.2 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1965). Motif traditionally used for printing *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
| SG.029 | NAME: chaupad bichhauni  
(*bed/floor spread with chaupad game*)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE:  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:  
INFO: *syahi* and *begar* printed with *harda* wash ground, c.1960-5. Chaupad game board in centre, surrounded by *jaal* trellis, *sepyo* soldiers, tigers and borders. |
SG.030
NAME: sepoj (soldier), chaupad (game board), and sher (tiger) motifs
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN: Mohanlal Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 3-4 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: syahi and begar printed motif details from centre of the chaupad bichhauni (above).

SG.031
NAME: chamki jaal (bright/jolly trellis)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: each square approx. 7 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: centerfield jaal trellis for household textiles (jajam, bichhauni, rezai) in syahi-begar with harda cream ground.

SG.032
NAME: Rezai (quilt) with bichhu jaal centre (below)
PLACE: Sanganer
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: centerfield 7 cm repeat, border 11 cm deep.
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Rezai printed with syahi-begar and harda wash ground. c.1950-60.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SG.033</strong> bichhu jaal</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>syahi-begar</em> printed <em>rezai</em> with cream harda wash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SG.034</strong> bada kamal</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td></td>
<td>approx 8 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Syahi-begar</em> printed centerfield jaal trellis design for household textiles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SG.035</strong> Chuhari ki buti</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td>Radesharan Chhipa</td>
<td>2.5 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>syahi-begar</em> printed design where red and black overprint each other to give shadowed effect. Swatch fragment poss. dated c.1940s-50s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SG.036 | NAME: *Iris ki buti* (iris motif)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE: 5cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from a pair of older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing borders on *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
|---|---|
| SG.037 | NAME: *Aam butah* (mango motif)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE: 5.6cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing borders on *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
| SG.038 | NAME: *Bel* (vine border)  
PLACE: Sanganer  
CRAFTSMAN:  
MOTIF SIZE:  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1  
INFO: *parat* (block impression) taken from an older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing borders up the longer sides of *safa* and *angochha* in Sanganeri style. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SG.039</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td>Taj butah (crown/royal motif)</td>
<td>6cm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parat (block impression) taken from a pair of older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing borders on <em>safa</em> and <em>angochha</em> in Sanganeri style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG.040</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td>Anguthi (finger ring)</td>
<td>1.2cm and 3cm respectively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parat (block impression) taken from a pair of older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing <em>safa</em> and <em>angochha</em> in Sanganeri style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG.041</td>
<td>Sanganer</td>
<td>Phooli (flower)</td>
<td>5.2cm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>parat (block impression) taken from a pair of older printing block (c.1960). Motif traditionally used for printing borders on <em>safa</em> and <em>angochha</em> in Sanganeri style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jaipur

The state capital of Jaipur, founded in 1727 by Maharaja Jai Singh and currently India’s second fastest growing city, is famous for its production and trade in hand printed textiles. Because, historically, it served as a major seat of power and thus an entrepôt for local trade, traditional Jaipur textiles exhibit certain shared characteristics with many of the other regions in Rajasthan, in varying degrees. The Chhipa mohulla (printer’s quarter) of Jaipur is confined within the narrow twisted lanes of the Old City, which, during the nineteenth century, reached the physical limits of these restricted quarters. The printers of Jaipur supplied the elite families and also the weekly haat market, so produced textiles which might be traded to other regions of the state. As a result, the city printers undertook all styles of printing, and their products exhibited a blend of influences.

**JP.001**
NAME: Kachnar
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLs: 2
INFO: Begar printed design, red and kasumal dyed, dabu resisted motifs, indigo and nasphal overdye.

**JP.002**
NAME: Kachnar
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLs: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed, nasphal overdye.
**JP.003**

NAME: Kachnar  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 4 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, *dabu* resist and indigo dyed ground.

**JP.004**

NAME: Kei  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Begar* printed design, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* resisted motifs, indigo and *nasphal* overdye.

**JP.005**

NAME: Kei  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
JP.006
NAME: Kel
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed ground.

JP.007
NAME: buti (herb)
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:
INFO: Begar printed design, red and kasumal dyed, dabu resisted motifs, indigo and nasphal overdye.

JP.008
NAME: buti (herb)
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:
INFO: begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed, nasphal overdye.
Appendices

**JP.009**
NAME: buti (herb)
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:
INFO: begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed ground.

**JP.010**
NAME: Chinwara
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar printed design, red and kasumal dyed, dabu resisted motifs, indigo and nasphal overdye.

**JP.011**
NAME: Chinwara
PLACE: Jaipur
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed, nasphal overdye.
**JP.012**
NAME: Chinwara  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 2.5 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed ground.

**JP.013**
NAME: Channi  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *Begar* printed design, red and *kasumal* dyed, *dabu* resisted motifs, indigo and *nasphal* overdye.

**JP.014**
NAME: Channi  
PLACE: Jaipur  
CRAFTSMAN: Suraj Narayan  
MOTIF SIZE: 1 cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed, *nasphal* overdye.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JP.015</strong></td>
<td>Channi</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>1 cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>begar printed motifs, dabu resist and indigo dyed ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JP.016</strong></td>
<td>Titli (butterfly)</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>1 cm</td>
<td></td>
<td>parat (block impression) of a design traditionally printed in Jaipur using the syahi-begar and dabu resist with indigo method to produce dark coloured fadats of cloth worn as ghaggra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JP.017</strong></td>
<td>Gul butah (cabbage rose motif)</td>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>approx 18cm total motif height</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Syahi and begar printed design constructed from a set of blocks which form a complex bunch of flowers (dates to early twentieth century).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barmer

The district town of Barmer lies beyond Balotra, to the far west of Rajasthan, in the Thar Desert. Just 270km from the Pakistani border, it was once an important stop on overland trading routes, though since Partition the city has become annexed. The administrative centre for the second largest district in Rajasthan, it hosts high numbers of Muslim and Jain communities in addition to the majority Hindus. The region is particularly well known for communities of itinerant performers, such as the Langha and Manganiyar musicians. These two communities identify themselves through wearing shouldercloths embellished with locally hand block printed and resist-dyed geometric and intricate ajrakh textiles. These are traditionally printed by a local branch of the Khatri community of printers and dyers, of which Ranamal Khatri’s family is believed to have the most longstanding history in the region, and continue to print the highest quality traditional cloth for local use. Ajrakh is the most complex and lengthy of all traditional forms of hand block printing and resist-dyeing practiced in Rajasthan (see Ronald 2007b, Varadarajan 1983 for this).

BM.001
NAME: Chokdi (squares/check)
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: centerfield 4cm; borders 2cm, 5.5cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 5
INFO: Traditional ajrakh shouldercloth, hand block printed with lime resist, mordant, mud resist, dyed with alizarin and synthetic indigo.

BM.002
NAME: Lunghi
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: borders 2cm, 5.5cm, 12.3cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 5
INFO: Traditional ajrakh lunghi (waistcloth), hand block printed with lime resist, mordant, mud resist, dyed with alizarin and synthetic indigo.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BM.003</th>
<th>NAME: <em>Dabul</em> (jewel box)</th>
<th>PLACE: Barmer</th>
<th>CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri</th>
<th>MOTIF SIZE: 6.5 cm</th>
<th>NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4</th>
<th>INFO: Traditional <em>ajrakh</em> design, reworked as running meterage for the modern market by dyeing the areas which should traditionally be red with a pale <em>harda</em> cream/yellow. Lime and mud resists with shades of synthetic indigo.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
BM.006
NAME: Anjeer (figs)
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE:
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Traditional *ajrakh* design in running meterage for the contemporary market. Lime and mud resists, mordants, synthetic alizarin and indigo dyes.

BM.007
NAME: contemporary swatches
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE:
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:
INFO: Set of swatches of traditional *ajrakh* designs, in a range of colourways aimed at the contemporary market for running meterage. Lime resist, alum and syahi mordants, synthetic alizarin dye.

BM.008
NAME: Malir
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: motifs 5.5cm, trellis 4.2cm, border 4.7cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
BM.009
NAME: Dopatta
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: 4.7cm border, 4cm and 2.6cm stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Contemporary dopatta (scarf/stole) printed with traditional borders and motifs. Syahi black, dabu mud resist, synthetic indigo overdye.

BM.010
NAME: Dopatta
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: 4.7cm border, 4cm and 2.6cm stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Contemporary dopatta (scarf/stole) printed with traditional borders and motifs. Syahi black, mordant and alizarin red dye, dabu mud resist and indigo.

BM.011
NAME: Dopatta
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: 4.3cm border, 2.5cm motifs
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Contemporary dopatta (scarf/stole) printed with traditional borders and motifs. Syahi black, lime resist, mordant and synthetic alizarin dye.
BM.012
NAME: Minkudi
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: centerfield 14cm repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Traditional ajrakh shouldercloth, hand block printed with lime resist, mordant, mud resist, dyed with alizarin and synthetic indigo.

BM.013
NAME: Dabuli (jewel box)
PLACE: Barmer
CRAFTSMAN: Ranamal Khatri
MOTIF SIZE: centerfield 14cm repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 4
INFO: Traditional ajrakh shouldercloth, hand block printed with lime resist, mordant, mud resist, dyed with alizarin and synthetic indigo.
### Other Villages

There are innumerable other pockets of hand block printing activity throughout Rajasthan, mostly village-based. Of these the most significant are the villages of Jahota, Jairampura and Bada Gaon, a cluster of small hamlets around 25km from Jaipur which host a small number of Chhipa and Rangrez families locally renowned for producing *lal zameen* fabrics, in red dyed designs such as *budholi* and *chilani*, popularly worn as bridal *ghagras*. Kaladera near Bagru has a number of Chhipa families who specialise in *dabu* work, often sub-contracting for the larger family workshops in Bagru itself. Other important centres include Pali near Pipad; Akola and Devgaon, near Udaipur; and Aklera and Chhipa Barod, near Kota, in the south of the state. To the eastern side of Rajasthan are a small community of printers and dyers near the historical fort town of Sawai Madhopur, which has recently attracted significant attention from the NGO Dastkar. In addition, the cities of Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur all historically hosted a thriving community of printers and dyers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OV.001</th>
<th>SUPARI BUTAH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td><em>Supari butah</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE:</td>
<td>Kaladera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTSMAN:</td>
<td>Ramji Lal Chhipa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIF SIZE:</td>
<td>5.5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO:</td>
<td><em>Begar</em> mordant and red dye, then <em>dabu</em> mud resist with indigo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OV.002</th>
<th>SUPARI BUTAH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td><em>Supari butah</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE:</td>
<td>Kaladera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAFTSMAN:</td>
<td>Ramji Lal Chhipa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIF SIZE:</td>
<td>5.5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. BLOCKS/COLS:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFO:</td>
<td><em>Begar</em> mordant and red dye, then <em>dabu</em> mud resist with dark indigo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supari butah</td>
<td>Kaladera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pankhi ki buti</td>
<td>Jairampura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lal Zameen Budholi</td>
<td>Jahota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budholi</td>
<td>Jahota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machhli</td>
<td>Devgaon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nargis</td>
<td>Pali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| OV.009 | NAME: Ankhada (nosering) 
PLACE: Pali 
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Gafur 
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5 
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1 
INFO: Pigment printed design (using the *dabu* block from the traditional set) |
|---|---|
| OV.010 | NAME: Patta (leaf) 
PLACE: Pali 
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Gafur 
MOTIF SIZE: 1.7cm 
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1 
INFO: Pigment printed design (using the *gudh* background block from the traditional set) |
| OV.011 | NAME: Patashi (temple offering) 
PLACE: Pali 
CRAFTSMAN: Chhipa Gafur 
MOTIF SIZE: 1.5cm 
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 1 
INFO: Pigment printed design (using the *gudh* background block from the traditional set) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Motif Size</th>
<th>No. Blocks/Cols</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhilwalli (one for Bhils)</td>
<td>Pali</td>
<td>Mohammed Yashen Chhipa</td>
<td>6.5cm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wax (mendh) printed motif, naphthol red dyed ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiv Parcha (Shiva’s stripe)</td>
<td>Bada Gaon</td>
<td></td>
<td>6cm forks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pigment printed using the dabu block from the traditional set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koyal (cuckoo)</td>
<td>Kaladera</td>
<td></td>
<td>9-10cm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Begar printed and red dyed motifs, then dabu resist printed and indigo dyed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OV.015
NAME: Kachnar/ panch kalian
(local tree)
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 5cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *Begar* printed and red dyed motifs, then *dabu* resist printed and indigo dyed.

OV.016
NAME:
PLACE: Pali
CRAFTSMAN: Mohammed Yashen Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 8.4cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: *mendh* wax printed motif, indigo dyed, then further *mendh* applied, and deeper indigo dyed.

OV.017
NAME:
PLACE: Aklera?
CRAFTSMAN:
MOTIF SIZE: 8cm diam
flowerheads
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: *Syahi* printed black flowerheads, *dabu* ud resisted white areas and *fitkari* mordant rinsed before washing and red dyeing. green leaves applied last, using pasted mix of probably *haldi* or *anar ka chhilka*. 
| OV.018 | NAME: Seat  
PLACE: Jahota  
CRAFTSMAN: Bagwan Sahay Chhipa  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.3cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2  
INFO: *begar* printed motifs, red dyed, then *dabu* resisted dots and indigo dyed. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| OV.019 | NAME: Patasi (temple offering)  
PLACE: Kaladera  
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.8cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3  
INFO: *syahi* and *begar* printed, red dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo dyed. |
| ![Image](image3.jpg) | ![Image](image4.jpg) |
| OV.020 | NAME: Ankhada  
PLACE: Kaladera  
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar  
MOTIF SIZE: 1.8cm  
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3  
INFO: *syahi* and *begar* printed, red dyed, *dabu* printed and indigo dyed. |
| ![Image](image5.jpg) | ![Image](image6.jpg) |
OV.021
NAME: Bel (vine)
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 6cm deep
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar printed, red dyed, dabu printed and indigo dyed.
Border usually applied to printed rezais or bichhaunis.

OV.022
NAME: Bel (vine)
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 2.2cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar printed, red dyed, dabu printed and indigo dyed.
Border usually applied to printed rezais or bichhaunis.

OV.023
NAME: Bel (vine)
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 2.2cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: Syahi and begar mordant printed, red dyed.
Appendices

OV.024
NAME: Belpatra
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 2cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi and begar mordant printed and red (alizarin) dyed small striped design.

OV.025
NAME: Belpatra
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 2cm wide stripes
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: synthetic ‘acid’ printed example of the mordant printed sample in OV.024.

OV.026
NAME: phool butah
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 6.3cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS:3
INFO: Traditional motif printed using chemical ‘acid’ printing (c.1975) to mimic the fine courtly textiles produced in Sanganer during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
OV.027
NAME: Kandeer
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 6cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 3
INFO: syahi, begar, and red dyed, then overprinted with pasted chemical yellow dye (c.1975).

OV.028
NAME: chaubundi (‘square-dot’)
PLACE: Kaladera
CRAFTSMAN: Krishnan Kumar
MOTIF SIZE: 1.2cm
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar printed and red dyed motifs (left), printed with dabu resist and indigo dyed (right).

OV.029
NAME: Makkhi bel (corn stripe)
PLACE: Jairampura
CRAFTSMAN: Madanlal Chhipa
MOTIF SIZE: 4.3cm wide repeat
NO. BLOCKS/COLS: 2
INFO: Begar printed and red dyed motifs, kasumal dyed ground printed with dabu resist and indigo dyed.
Appendices

Appendix I: Experimental Natural Indigo Vat Development, 2006-7

Use of natural fermentation vats and natural indigo has all but ceased in Rajasthan today. However, during the course of this research many of the older generations of printers and dyers could recall the use of such vats. Various reasons were offered for their discontinued use, though most usual was the combination of cost, time, skill and material availability which such vats required in order to be maintained. Without specific demand for natural indigo dyed goods most craftsmen felt it was more efficient use of their time and money to rely on the easier, cheaper and more consistent synthetic indigo and hydros vats. However, with the spirit of putting something back into the community, a project was started which aimed to a) record traditional recipes, or the memories of those; b) test these recipes and from them c) develop through practical experimentation a natural indigo natural fermentation vat which remained true to the regional traditional recipes yet could produce reliable, quantifiable results. In this way printers and dyers could offer their clients the option of natural or synthetic indigo, with the incumbent costs and timeframes laid out in quantifiable terms.

The majority of the recipes gathered from historical sources or partial memories of older craftsmen suffered from vagaries and gaps in the precise measurements of ingredients or procedures. Thus it was decided that only with practical experimentation, based on personal practical experience with natural indigo vats, could the information available become quantifiable. A series of eight traditional local recipes were tested, of which the successful elements of recipes 1 – 8 were isolated then combined to give birth to recipes 9 – 12. From this development the recipe and procedure was fine-tuned through sample dyeing of various weights/types of cloth until a final recipe was identified and the exact material inputs, quantities and most importantly costings could be calculated. Each recipe was scaled down proportionately to fit into a 4 to 5 litre stainless steel or glass vessel. Following the specific instructions for each vat recipe the vats were set over a number of days or even weeks. Whether specified or not each vat was checked twice a day (am and pm), and the resulting observations logged in a lab book. Temperature was similar to the prevalent outside temperatures due to the location of the vats. Additional to the simple pH and temperature testing (using electronic pH metre and analogue thermometer), touch, sight, taste and smell were all employed to judge the vat condition and its requirements. The following factors were checked twice every day: 1) temperature, 2) pH, 3) appearance of the vat, 4) smell of the vat, 5) taste of the vat. Natural indigo vat success was also found to be directly linked to the type and quality of dabu mud resist used on the cloth – with modern rough quality bidan dabu more likely to suffocate the fermentation that traditional guar dabu. Hence this was also included in the costing and efficiency experiments. Once successful in all aspects, particularly reliability and costings, the 4 to 5 litre recipe was scaled up in size to fill a traditional 1400 litre vat. The full-size vat was set by Abdul Rangrez in Bagru, and a series of orders of various fabric weights and types processed through it. The costing model proved adequate and the quality of the dyed cloth was a success. Sadly, due to the difference in cost per metre being a few rupees higher for the natural indigo dyed cloth as compared to synthetic indigo dyed cloth many of
the export clients rejected the option. This lack of encouragement proved disheartening for
the particular craftsmen involved in what had been almost a full year of experimental work.
However the recorded recipes, sources and costs of materials, and costing model remains with
them for future use. Though greatly abbreviated, extracts from the project report are included
on the following pages.

Refined Traditional Yet Commercially Viable Natural Indigo Vat Recipe For 1400l Vat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Fill vat with plain water. Leave space at the top to be able to add the indigo mixture and boiled date mixture. Add: 1.16Kg Lime 2.67Kg Carbonate of Soda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Add: 1.16Kg Lime 2.67Kg Carbonate of Soda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Add: 1.16Kg Lime 2.67Kg Carbonate of Soda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**So TOTAL QUANTITIES over the first 3 days are:**
3.5Kg Lime
8Kg Carbonate of Soda

**In the evening of the 3rd day grind and soak 5Kg Indigo.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>In the morning grind the indigo and add to the vat and stir well. In the morning soak another 5Kg Indigo. In the evening grind the second lot of indigo and add to the vat and stir well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>In a pot: 2Kg Lime 4 Kg Dates with enough water to cover. Boil for about 10-20 minutes, until the liquid is a dark yellowy brown. Add this mixture to the vat while it is still hot. Alternatively 100L of old natural fermentation vat’s sediment can be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Vat should be ready – have colour of ripe mango juice, brassy reddish firm cap of foam on top, and smell like ‘Nescoffee’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remedies For if Vat is not ready:**
If it has White foam add - 4Kg Carbonate of Soda.
If is too limey/feels soapy add - 4Kg Dates.
If oily/greasy looking - add handful of Dates.
Continue fermentation and checking/stirring daily for a further 2 or 3 days until vat is ready.

**Recharge:**
After every 150-200 metres, or a full day working the vat recharge in the evening with ½ the amount of ingredients used to set the vat.
1. lime
2. soda ash (carbonate of soda)
3. indigo
**Comparative Costing per Metre of synthetic versus natural Indigo Vats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthetic Indigo 60s Fabric</th>
<th>Natural Fermentation Indigo 60s Fabric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Labour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul (Head Indigo worker)</td>
<td>Rs. 200/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers (spreading etc.)</td>
<td>Rs. 125/day x 3 = Rs. 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs. 575/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Labour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul (Head Indigo worker)</td>
<td>Rs. 200/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers (spreading etc.)</td>
<td>Rs. 125/day x 3 = Rs. 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Worker as apprentice</td>
<td>for grinding Indigo Rs. 125/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs. 700/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Material Costs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 6.215/M/dip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Bidan Dabu Printing Costs</td>
<td>For Normal Rough Dabu a Dabu printer gets paid Rs. 5-6/M per print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guar Dabu (Fine)</td>
<td>For Guar Fine Dabu a Dabu printer gets paid Rs. 8-9/M per print</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Natural Vat Material Costs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>material</th>
<th>cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Indigo</td>
<td>Rs. 1100/Kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime (alkali)</td>
<td>Rs. 3/Kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates (fermenting/ reducing agent)</td>
<td>Rs. 35/Kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gur (fermenting/ reducing agent)</td>
<td>Rs. 22/Kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbonate of Soda (washing soda/ soda ash)</td>
<td>Rs. 22/Kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the known fact that indigo achieves darker shades of blue through successive and repeated re-dipping of scoured 60x60 powerloom cotton cloth (122cm wide) into the vat a graduating scale of material cost can be calculated dependent upon the desired shade of blue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shade</th>
<th>no. of dips</th>
<th>cost/m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light Indigo</td>
<td>1 dip</td>
<td>Rs. 7.449 /m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Indigo</td>
<td>2 dips</td>
<td>Rs. 14.898/m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Indigo</td>
<td>3 dips</td>
<td>Rs. 22.347/m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Indigo</td>
<td>4 dips</td>
<td>Rs. 29.796/m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix J: Mohanty and Mohanty's Print and Dye Processes, Bagru

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Process</th>
<th>Translated name</th>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>General Procedure</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hari sarana</td>
<td>Scouring</td>
<td>Trad: dung, castor oil and soda ash. Mod: TRO14 or enzyme desliter.</td>
<td>Trad: emulsion applied to cloth over a number of days. Mod: cloth soaked in tank of solution over number of days.</td>
<td>Chhipa or Dhobi (Usu. unskilled labour of)</td>
<td>Pre-process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pila/ harda karna</td>
<td>Tannin treatment</td>
<td>Powdered myrobalan fruits (harda)</td>
<td>Cloth immersed in strong solution of harda for 15 mins then dried (no rinse)</td>
<td>Chhipa or Dhobi</td>
<td>Pre-process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Syahi chhapai</td>
<td>Black printing</td>
<td>Scrap iron (horseshoes), molasses (jaggery/shera), thickener</td>
<td>Horseshoes and molasses allowed to ferment for 15 days, liquid drawn off and mixed with thicker, printed on to harda-treated cloth</td>
<td>Chhipa</td>
<td>Print process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Begar chhapai</td>
<td>Mordant printing</td>
<td>Mixture printed on to harda-treated cloth</td>
<td>Chhipa</td>
<td>Print process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dabu datai</td>
<td>Resist printing</td>
<td>Generally clay (kali mitti), water, thickeners (recipes for dabu vary according to use and family)</td>
<td>Resist paste mixed from ingredients, printed on to cloth, sprinkled with sawdust/chaff to seal</td>
<td>Chhipa (usually specialist family)</td>
<td>Print process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sukhai</td>
<td>Ageing</td>
<td>Time and dry heat</td>
<td>Cloth is dried thoroughly and stored out of sunlight 10-15 days</td>
<td>Chhipa or Rangrez</td>
<td>Dye process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ghan rangai</td>
<td>Red dyeing</td>
<td>Red dyestuff (trad. madder, mod. alizarin), water</td>
<td>Torando dye pot set over fire, filled with water and dyestuff, heated slowly, cloth dyed for 1-6 hrs</td>
<td>Chhipa or Rangrez</td>
<td>Dye process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nil rangai</td>
<td>Indigo dyeing</td>
<td>Indigo (trad.natural, mod. synthetic), water, lime and reducing agent (trad. fermentation, mod. hydros)</td>
<td>Vat is set with ingredients and runs constantly, cloth immersed for 5 mins, removed and aired. Vat ingredients replenished after every session of use.</td>
<td>Nigiar/Rangrez</td>
<td>Dye process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Holdi naspal potai</td>
<td>Yellow overdy</td>
<td>Boiled extract of dried pomegranate rinds, turmeric root solution</td>
<td>Ingredients boiled to extract colour, solution cooled and stored. Trad: smeared on to cloth using rags. Mod: painted, brushed, dipped, sprayed on to cloth.</td>
<td>Chhipa or Rangrez</td>
<td>Dye process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Fitkari rangai</td>
<td>Post mordanting</td>
<td>Alum (fitkari), water</td>
<td>Alum and water solution. Cloth is immersed for minimum of 10 mins then dried (no rinse).</td>
<td>Chhipa or Rangrez</td>
<td>Post-process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Khulai/dhulai</td>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Cloth is soaked and beaten in plain water</td>
<td>Dhobi (or unskilled labour employed by Chhipa)</td>
<td>Post-process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tapai</td>
<td>Sun bleaching</td>
<td>Water, sunlight, small amount of dung/oil scouring mix.</td>
<td>Printed cloth spread on sand, sprinkled with water to keep moist all day, repeated for 3-4 days</td>
<td>Chhipa</td>
<td>Post-process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Compiled from the detailed observations of Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:9-13)

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14 TRO is Turkey Red Oil, a preparation of sulphonated castor oil.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Ground Colour</th>
<th>Colour in Design Motifs</th>
<th>Pre-printing Process</th>
<th>After Treatment</th>
<th>Special Finish (if any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Syahi begar</td>
<td>Creamish yellow/white</td>
<td>Black, red, or black and red</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine(^{15}) dyeing</td>
<td>Pila karna or tapana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Asmani</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Red, black, white, blue</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, resist printing, (^{16}) indigo dyeing, aluming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jardidar</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Red, black, green, white</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, resist printing, indigo dyeing, aluming, yellow printing(^{17})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jamardi or Menki</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black, reddish black</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, Congo-red(^{14}) dyeing, resist printing, first (naspal) treatment, indigo dyeing, second (naspal) treatment, aluming, Congo-red dyeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pilimen</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Red, yellow</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, Congo-red dyeing, first resist printing, (naspal) treatment, indigo dyeing, aluming, second resist printing, potna, aluming</td>
<td>aluming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dakbel or Lalbel</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Black, reddish black</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, Congo-red dyeing, (hara gulabi) treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dollik</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Red and black</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing</td>
<td>Tapana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Chalanki</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing</td>
<td>Starching, calendoring ((kundi))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hariadana or Hari</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Chocolate, red, white</td>
<td>De-sizing, harda</td>
<td>Alizarine dyeing, resist printing, indigo dyeing, potna, aluming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Reproduced directly from Mohanty and Mohanty, 1983:14)

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\(^{15}\) Mohanty refers throughout his text to 'alizarine' as the source of red dye, meaning 'alizarin' a synthetic azo dye which acts in a similar manner to natural red dyes from madder plants. The colour from both synthetic alizarin and natural madder requires the presence of a mordant to adhere to the cotton fibres. Synthetic alizarin was adopted widely in India in the early twentieth century as it required no alteration to the existing dye technology.

\(^{16}\) Resist printing here refers to application of \(dabu\) mud resist using wood block.

\(^{17}\) The 'yellow printing' mentioned here is the application of \(taraful\), a local name for synthetic lemon yellow (Auromine extra), used in replacement of \(kesoll\) ka phool extracted from \(Schleichera trijuga\), a local tree known as \(kusumb\). Ref: Roxburgh, W. (1832) \(Flora Indica\) Vol.2, p 277, no. 680.

\(^{18}\) Direct dye 'Congo red' is widely used in place of the traditional \(kasumal\) dye, a number of sources have been given for \(kasumal\) including \(patang\) wood (\(caesalpinia sappan-linn\)) and safflower (\(carthamus tinctorius\)).
Appendix K: Three Process Sequences from Bagru with Swatch Samples
Three Traditional Variations of Hand Block Printed and Resist-Dyed Cloth, Bagru, Rajasthan

1. **Indigo-Dabu**
   - *Ankhada* (nursing)

2. **Nasphal**
   - *Singh Baaj* (lemon's claw)

3. **Kasumal-Block**
   - *Goondi* (chestnut berry)