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**ABSTRACT**

Block printing is an ancient art that has been practiced in India for thousands of years. The Bagh print originated from Sind, now in Pakistan when a group of Muslim Khatri artisans migrated from Sind to Manwar and then to Bagh in present day Madhya Pradesh. Bagh is a village in Dhar district of M. P. The crafts Ismail Sulman Khatri moved to Bagh village in 1960 and began practicing and giving new dimensions to block printing, the art which was already being practiced by 80% of tribal Adivasi population.

**KEYWORD:** Bagh print, Natural colour.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Bagh, which lends its name to the Bagh prints, is a small tribal village/ town in the Kukshi tehsil of Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. Legend has it that the village of Bagh, the Bagh River, and the nearby Bagh caves (3rd & 5th century AD, with rich carvings and paintings dedicated to both Hindu as well as Buddhist deities) got their name from the baghs or tigers that inhabited the region. The village, located on the Dhar-Kukshi road, has a population of about 12,000. The Bagh River flows at a distance of about a kilometer from the Dhar-Kukshi road. From a near forgotten tribal art in a small village in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, today Bagh prints have left an imprint in the textile and art world. Originally used only on lehengas and ghagras, today the prints adorn saris, dress materials and bed covers. Umar Farukh speaks about the unique block print, its history, the processes involved and its soaring popularity. Ismail Suleiman moved to Bagh village in the 1950s and began practising and giving new dimensions to the block printing. The art was already being practised by 80 per cent of the Adivasi population. In the 1960s, due to the lure of synthetics, many artisans left the craft but stuck to vocation and began to redefine its concept, process and look. He got 200 and 300-year-old blocks based on traditional motifs inspired by the 1,500-year-old paintings found in caves in the region. These motifs include chameli or jasmine, maithir or mushroom, leheriya and jurvaria or small dots on the field. Also got blocks made which were based on the jaali work found in the Taj Mahal and local forts. He streamlined the processing of the two important colours -- red from Alzarin and black from iron filings. He also discovered new vegetable dyes such as yellow and green. But his single biggest contribution was imprinting the Bagh print on on bed sheets, saris and fabrics. In 1982 he won the National Award for a bed cover in which he used 1,400 different blocks, many of them depicting his own reinvented designs. Also, his saris were being appreciated all over India. The unique Bagh print had arrived.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Sudhakar and Gowda (2005):** revealed from the study —Ecofriendly dyeing of silk with copper pod bark extract that natural bark of copper pod tree, available abundantly as by product, can successfully be applied on silk with better colour values and fastness properties using low concentrations of mordant. The use of low percentage of mordants not only resulted in better dye up take and colour fastness also beneficial from environmental point of view in better dye up take and colour fastness.

**The Hindu, Editor (2009) wrote an article:** Bagh Print: A Friend but Foe for Naturel, it shows Bagh, which lends its name to the Bagh prints. It is a small tribal town in Dhar district of M.P. The Khatri community, who comprise the printer came here about 400 years ago from Larkana in Sind which is famous for its Ajrak prints.



Bagh's proximity to the river was an important reason for its choice as flowing river water is vital to the process of printing. He invented new vegetable dye colours. Also created new colour combinations. He started experimenting this printing on crepe and silk. He invented mustard colour which he got of pomegranate rinds. He is having 200 years old blocks in his collection. He uses to make colours out of flowers, barks, leaves, fruit skin and natural minerals.

**M. P. Midday Editor (2011):** wrote an article: Bagh print artists in Argentina for fourth Bharat Mahotsavl. At the festival, national awardee in Bagh prints Mohammad Yusuf Khatri of Madhya Pradesh gave a demonstration on Bagh prints. Through the demonstration of Bagh Kala Thappa Chhapaai, he informed Argentineans about minute details of this art. Indian ambassador in Argentina also called on Bagh print artistes during Bharat Mahotsav and encouraged them. The Bagh print artistes had also carried saree as an emblem of Indian traditional attire to the festival. Describing it as astonishing, an art lover grabbed the saree with both hands. It may be mentioned that silk scarves and other clothes were also liked very much of Argentineans at the festival. The Union Ministry of Textiles has also lauded demonstration of art by Bagh artistes. Bagh prints are trendy, cool and comfortable cloth material. An array of products are now available made from Bagh printed fabric be it ladies suits, sarees, dress material, dupatta, bed-covers, pillow covers etc, one can find all. Bagh prints have unique hand block printing, printed using vegetable dyes. The fabric used originally was cotton, but now saw tassar, crepe, and silk are being used with excellent results. Bagh layouts are dramatic with use of black and red alternately on a white background. Production process is painstaking and manual.

**Pushpa Chari, Oct. 20 (2011) published an article:** The Hindu in which he wrote about the importance of Bagh prints. Bagh prints have left an imprint in the textile and art world. Originally used only on lehengas and ghagras, today the prints adorn saris, dress materials and bed covers. Umar Farukh speaks about the unique block print, its history, the processes involved and its soaring popularity.

### 3. BAGH PRINT: THE PROCEDURE

The procedure for Bagh Printing is painstaking. Blocks are made in seasoned wood. Designs are engraved and carved. The blocks are of two types Rek and Gad. Each block takes two to five days to be made with eight hours of work put in daily. Generally the printing is done on cotton. It is first soaked in water for about twelve hours and then suckled with legs. It is then bleached and washed in "Sanchorapaani". The Harda powder obtained from a type of tree is mixed in water and the fabric is washed in it for about five minutes. It is then dried in sun. For printing, Ferrous Sulphate or slum is first mixed with water. A paste using tamarind seed powder is made. The fabric to be printed upon is spread upon a table. Blocks are carefully chosen and then printing begins. Gad is used first to create bold defining forms. Then the designs are detailed out with rek block. The next process is the washing of printed bundles in running water and then beaten against stones. It is then left to dry in the sun. Once the fabric is dried it is taken to a huge copper vessel for boiling. It contains about hundred grams of alizarin and two hundred liters of water. Dhardikphool are added to lend shine to the print and prevent froth from damaging the fabric. Bleaching is done once again after boiling to remove stains and colours that have bled. One final wash in clean water is done and the printed fabric is laid out in sun to dry.

### 4. MODERN TRENDS

Though the earlier Bagh prints were mainly used for ladies wear, however now apart from ladies wear an array of products made of Bagh prints are available in bed, pillow and table covers etc. The fabric used originally was cotton but now tassar, crepe and silk are being used. Though the technique and designs of Bagh print are age old but the prints retain its contemporary appeal. It is even made on Bamboo chik, leather and jute products with natural colours. While the designs have been changed but the colours have been same. Today the traditional Bagh print faces stiff competition from chemical dyes which are available at a lower price. One such technique is Dabu block printing technique of Rajasthan. Dabu print is made from black mud, choona and gondh.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Bagh prints are friendly, cool and comfortable cloth material. Bagh layouts are dramatic with use of black and red alternately on a white background. The production process is painstaking and manual. Bagh prints are part of a tradition which has to be preserved for the future generations to take forward.





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