Research Paper Textile

Significance of Colours in Traditional Canvas Embroidery

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ABSTRACT

The designs can be created by taking into consideration various design parameters such as selection and placement of motifs, compactness of design and the most important is colour and colour combinations. Canvas embroidery articles produced by rural women were colourful. They did not follow a particular colour scheme. The colours used were in contrast and did not always tally with the significance of the motif. A variety of primary and secondary colours with their different tints and shades were randomly used but overall designs were bright and beautiful. The colour of the fabric was found to be the deciding factor for the colours of motifs irrespective or respective of natural colour of the motif. Majority of designs were in more than two colours. Some colours had traditional symbolism.

Keywords : Canvas embroidery, Colour, Design, Motif, Symbolism.

INTRODUCTION

Canvas embroidery is one of the oldest forms of embroidery. It has many variations and is a traditional feature of needlework in every culture. Canvas embroidery is known by a number of names i.e. needlepoint work, needlework tapestry, canvas needlework and canvas work or canvas embroidery. In almost all the districts of Haryana, canvas embroidery enjoys a high favour among villagers for their personal use as a bed-cover, table cloth, furniture coverings and wall panels, etc. It is locally known as *dasuti kadhai* in rural Haryana and mainly worked on *jali casement* and sometimes on *khaddar casement* with woollen or cotton threads. They also use plastic canvas for decorative articles especially wall-panels. The commonly employed stitch is cross stitch. Satin stitch is rarely used for canvas embroidery and zigzag running stitch is used for outlines of designs. The designs are always geometrical or stylized animal or floral base. These designs are never traced but copied either from other embroidered articles, books and magazines. Design is the knowledge of selection and manipulation of the basic art elements to produce a unified expression of visual statement. Nature and objects in the surroundings inspire the designer for design creation for various applications. The designs can be created by taking into consideration various design parameters such as selection and placement of motifs, compactness of design and the most important is colour and colour combinations. A study was conducted to know the colours, colour combinations and significance of colours in traditional canvas embroidery.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to study the colours, colour combinations and significance of colours in traditional canvas embroidery, 100 rural women who were practicing canvas embroidery were selected from ten villages located in different directions of Hisar. The data was collected with the help of self-structured interview schedule and through observations. The designs of canvas embroidery articles were observed for their colours, colour combinations and the information was documented with the help of photographs. The collected data were coded, tabulated and analyzed to draw the meaningful inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Canvas embroidery articles were colourful. The colours used for the background fabric and motifs were in contrast and did not always tally with the significance of the motif. The rural women did not follow a particular colour scheme. A variety of primary and secondary colours with their different tints and shades were randomly used but overall designs were bright and beautiful. If left over woollen threads were used then the colour combination was planned as per the availability of woollen threads. The colour of the fabric was found to be the deciding factor for the colours of motifs irrespective or respective of natural colour of the motif. Majority of designs were in more than two colours. A few designs were also observed in more than four colours. The elder rural women narrated that some colours had traditional symbolism. Red, its shades and tints is interpreted as a symbol of happiness and joy, yellow for glory, green for prosperity, white for peace and serenity and black for destruction. Therefore, the use of black colour was avoided for articles embroidered for dowry. However, it is now being used and no such consideration is kept in mind.

During data collection, the common colour combinations used in canvas embroidery has been recorded and presented in Table-1.

Table-1: Commonly used colour combinations in canvas embroidery

Sr. No.	Colour of the Fabric	Colour of the Motif/Threads
1.	Red	Yellow, blue, white black

Sr. No.	Colour of the Fabric	Colour of the Motif/Threads
2.	Pink	White, black, maroon, yellow, green
3.	Sea-green	Yellow, black, red
4.	Yellow	Pink, black, blue, purple, white
5.	Brown	Pink, green, black, white, red
6.	Blue	Yellow, red, black, dark blue
7.	Off-white	Red, black, black only, red only, orange, yellow
8.	White	Green, red, yellow, blue, pink

It was observed that different tints and shades of red and yellow as primary colour and green as secondary colour along with white and black were the most commonly and frequently used colours of the motifs. The fabric was generally used in the different tints and shades of pink, sea-green, off-white and brown colour as material was available in these colours only both in village and nearby city/town.

Similar observations were made by Ritambhara (2004). She studied the preferences of women for canvas embroidery articles and found that blue, pink and white casement fabric was preferred by them.

The commonly used colour combinations were remarked as the best colour combinations by the rural women for the canvas embroidery and these were also as per village trend. Moreover, when they copied the design from other canvas embroidery article, they tried to have same colours in their design, except the sequence of colours in design was changed.

CONCLUSION

A variety of primary and secondary colours with their different tints and shades were randomly used but overall designs were bright and beautiful. The colours used for the canvas embroidery were in contrast and did not always tally with the significance of the motif. The colour of the fabric was found to be the deciding factor for the colours of motifs irrespective or respective of natural colour of the motif. Majority of designs were in more than two colours. Some colours had traditional symbolism.

REFERENCES

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