



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Arts**

**BOOK COVER DESIGN IN ODISHA DURING VARIOUS PHASES OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**KEY WORDS:** Commercial Design, Illustration, Asit Mukherjee, Eminent Artist, Odisha Artist, Orissa Artist, Applied Art, Book cover design, Styles of Design, Visual Art

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**ABSTRACT**

A Book is always recognised by its cover. Cover is a part of study of Design, which includes the aesthetics as well as the psychological part of life. Science is also involved in the designing of a subject which attracts a class of people. Books are the ultimate source of information for human being from their childhood. Even though there has been a rise in the internet media and online learning, the life of a child in the school starts from Books. Books come in all variety for catering to the needs of different kind of people. Books are read by children, youth as well as the old. Hence, there is an audience for all kind of genre of books. According to the genre of the book, the book cover designer creates the visualization, which will attract people towards the book. The study of styles of Book cover design will be a good information to the people, after which they will have a better judgment in form of design of a book cover or any other kind of design like brochure, leaflets etc. The study of evaluation of book cover design in Odisha will help the audience to know about the phases of development of book cover design and the height of achievement, which design has reached today. The future designers will get a historical brief of the style of book cover designs, which will help them as a reference to create better designs.

**1. Introduction**

Some designs are done for the sake of formality and some are done for creating attraction to others. In the publishing industry, Book cover design is very important because it helps in attracting the right genre of people to the books which contain their interested contents. For example, a cartoon in the cover of the book will attract small children and in the same way a young model in the cover of a book or magazine will attract the youth. During various phases of improvement, there has been lots of changes in the style and appearance of book cover design. The cover design gets equal attention from the publisher as its contents. Most of the writers also quote that the cover of the book decides the fate of the writer.

There are many factors which decides the style of book cover design. In the old days of Block printing technology, illustrations and paintings were not possible to be printed in multi-colors, hence mostly flat backgrounds were used. With the advancement of technology, various styles were experimented in the book cover design industry and achieved lots of success all over the world. Today, we can see book cover designs of all category due to advancement through computer graphics and many innovative styles of designs are explored.

Different styles of book cover designs states the difference and advancement of the different phases in designing. Lupton Ellen, in the book, Design is storytelling [1], states that the style and design of the body of the book cover is very important because it acts as a storytelling reference to the prospect of the book. Design, itself tells a story of the interior contents of the book.

**2. Styles of Book Cover Design**

Each and every design has its unique style. Books are recognised as per their visual identity. One can get to know about the theme of the book by looking at its appearance. Shridhar Mahapatro, in his publication, Odia Prakashan O Prasaranara [2], showcases the history of book publishing industry and the development of printing technology. The beginning of book cover design and its evolution can be seen from the bibliography of the publishers and the books they published in a chronological order. The books referred in the publication about the modification of the book industry tells the development and importance of design in its contents. Hence, designers maintain different types of styles for different categories of covers.

**2.1 Flat Background and Typographical Text**

The format which was commonly used in the olden days were a flat colored background with typographical text. The title of the book is represented through an attractive kind of typographical text which is specially created by the designer and stands unique. During the period of block printing, only few colours i.e. one or two only were used for printing. Hence, the designer has to compromise with flat colour output only for mass printing purposes like books, leaflets, brochures etc. In the book of Faber and Faber: Eighty Years of Book Cover Design [3], Joseph Connolly has displayed the development of Book Cover Design for a period of eighty consecutive years in the past. The same type of pattern is followed in the state of Odisha also. This shows the importance given to the Book Cover design by the Book publishers in the publication industry. The trend of Flat background with different color and typographical text started from the western countries which was adopted by artists of local places and used their own tradition and cultural art to portray their text in the titles of the Book.



**Fig. 1: Book: Bhanja Bhumika, 1965**

In Fig.1 of the Book Bhanja Bhumika, 1965, it can be seen that the book has a flat colored background and the title of the text and name of the writer is created by the designer in a typographical style.

**2.2 Illustration Background and Typographical Text**

The creative artists always think of making their visual presentation in a better way with limited resources. This is the talent of a creative person in all fields. Designers started to use illustrations of flat colours in the Book cover designing which made it more attractive. The same block printing method of text printing was used to print the illustration.

This added another dimension to the book cover which made

it attractive from a distance. For example, a rangoli in front of a house makes the house attractive, in the same way an illustration of an attractive design makes the book look more visually pleasing.

In the book of Goodman, Matthew, Book Cover Designs [4], several book cover designs are shown with illustration of international artists. The style of illustrations which were used by the fine art category of designers started to replicate in the book cover designs. The name of the illustrator of the book and the artist who designs the book cover also act as a medium for promoting books.

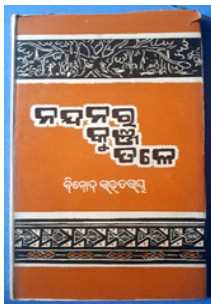


Fig.2. Book: Nandanara Kunja Tale, 1985

In Fig. 2 of the Book Nandanara Kunja Tale, 1985, it can be seen that the background of the book is flat colored. The title of the book is accompanied by the illustration design with single colour. Designing this kind of book is more laborious because the book has to go under the print as many times as the colours involved in it. This technology is also termed as Screenprinting.

**2.3 Painting Background and Typographical Text**

Printing technology started to develop and when multi-colour printing came into existence, it created a revolution in the book and magazine publishing industries. Book covers started to get designed in form of painting backgrounds done by artists. The artists who were only developing the typographical and illustration blocks in book cover design started to develop designs with backdrop of paintings which made the books more attractive.

In the beginning, this kind of offset printing was a bit costlier but the output look was very aesthetically pleasing for which the publisher invested in printing books through offset technology. This process was very faster and done through huge printing machineries which involved minimum manual interference. The output quality is also more attractive than the block printing methods.

Phil Baines, in this book of Penguin by Design: A Cover Story, 1935-2005 [5], has shown the journey of Penguin paperbacks which is a big brand in the publishing industry as on date. The designers used colors, illustrations, paintings, photographs etc. in a composition which pleases the eyes of the people. In the journey of book towards attaining a classic fame, the designs and illustrations of the books play a big role.



Fig.3. Book: Kalidas Granthabali, 2005

In Fig. 3 of the Book Kalidas Granthabali, 2005, the attraction of the book can be seen through the painting, which is multi-colored and gives the feel of an environment in hands. Paintings are mostly viewed from a distance on the walls but the demonstration of paintings in book covers can be hand held and seen so closely which attracts people towards the books through its book cover design.

**2.4 Photography Background and Typographical Text**

Going a step further, photographs began to be used in the Book cover designs. Mostly the magazines and book covers of biography and auto-biography nature require realistic photographs in their covers. The trend of using photographs in book cover designs developed as per the trend in the industry.

Marco Sonzogni, writes in the book, Re-Covered Rose: A Case Study in Book Cover Design As Intersemiotic Translation [6], about the new shapes of Book cover design which has given a new attraction to Books. This has been possible due to the advanced technology and use of photographic elements in the book cover design. In the earlier phases, only drawings, painting and illustrations were used, but in the modern era of re-discovery people are using realistic elements through photographs in their designs.

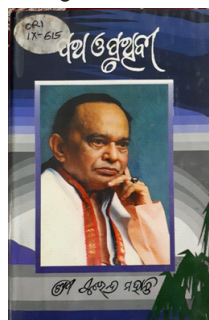


Fig. 4. Book: Patha O Prithibi

In Fig. 4 of the Book Patha O Prithibi, it can be seen that a photograph has been used in the book cover to portray the biography of a person. In olden days, a painting of the person was made and was used in the cover design, but in today's period, designers directly use the photographs as demanded by the book writer or the publisher. Sometimes, to minimize the cost of the book cover, publishers go for using direct photographs instead of creating a painting by spending more money. Technology has intervened in creative aspect of design also and makes the publisher suit to it. This is advantageous to some in form of financial benefit and not favourable to some who see that the creative talent is killed and overtaken by machineries.

**2.5 CGI (Computer Graphics Imagery) Background and Typographical Text**

With the availability of Computers and software's, designers are able to create a fusion of art, design and photographs to create a book cover design. Designers use computer software to prepare the layout, elements of desired design and finally compose them together to create an output.

Tim Shaker, in his book, Design a Book Cover: Create Beautiful Book Covers in 20 Minutes or Less [7] describes the process of creating attractive cover in twenty minutes. This is possible with the help of photographic software's and compositional software's used with the help of computers. The manual labour used in creating design has been transferred to computer operations which has made the design easier and attractive.

This has helped lots of budding designers to enter into this field and showcase their talent and make their future in it. The limitation of the artist of the olden days are no more a bondage to the young artist of 21st century. In this digital age, pen,

pencil, colours have been replaced by computers, pen tablets, Wacom monitors, software's etc. where the same art can be created in an easier way.



**Fig. 5. Book: Gruha Chikitsa**

In Fig. 5 of the Book *Gruha Chikitsa*, it is seen that the book cover is a complete generation of a fusion of design, text and photographs. Although this is a very small book, the book cover design has got all the elements which shows the contents of the book in an attractive way. The care of mother towards her child is shown in the book with proper alignment of textual information. This kind of representation was difficult in the olden times, but using today's technology, this kind of design can be done within hours after establishing the concept by the designer. The processing of the work is faster today, but the thinking of concept take the same time as it took for an old designer. The creative part always remains the same in all the generations.

Although, this development of computer technology in designing is not taken in positive aspect by the old designers, but the latest trend proves that the modern technologies yield better results too. It is not about competing with old technology, it is about adopting the new technology with the golden ideas of the designer.

**3. Book Publishers view on development of techniques in designing**

Book publishers are mostly concerned with the quality of the book which will enhance their sales yielding them better profits. Book publishers are mostly businessmen and the sale of the books provide them their bread and butter. Hence, book publishers always want their book to look attractive and the cost of production to be always a minimum by maintaining the highest quality possible. The development of printing technology has always helped the book publishers to fulfill their purpose.

Frederic William Goudy, in the book, *Book-cover Designs* [8], describes about various phases of designing books and the point of view of publishers towards it. As the publisher is the person who invests and takes the risk of printing a book, several book cover designs are the output of approval of the Book publishers.

Book publishers are very happy with the trend of development in printing technology. There is 3D printing also available today which is being used by designers. Creative designs are always welcomed and appreciated by the book publishers. The future of the book industry always awaits development in all category of book production.

Progressing to the twenty first century, A. Miachel Shunmate, in the book, *21st Century Book Cover Design* [9], describes about the innovative trends in book cover designing. The importance and portrayal of Book cover design in various segments of study shows the significance of book cover design in a publishing industry. New Publishers demand attractive book cover designs done by experienced designers to add value to the content of the book in a very serious way. Book cover was only regarded as a jacket which

would keep the book strong and intact for longer period, but in the twenty first century, a book cover is much more than a protective layer to a book.

**4. Conclusion**

Different styles of book cover design shows the evolution of it during various phases. As time never stops and nature is always busy in developing new things and leaving away old things, in the same way the industry of design is always moving and new technologies are innovated continuously. The technology changes mostly every year and new software's, machineries are introduced into market with advanced features.

Moody Nickianne, in his book, *Judging a Book by its Cover. Fans, Publishers, Designers, and the Marketing of Fiction* [10] covers about all the aspects of a Book cover designing to its sale in the market. The judgment of the book depends upon the cover and the fans who read the particular book. There are many marketing aspects which are involved in designing the book cover done by a commercial designer. A commercial designers looks a book from the point of view of the author, publisher, book-seller and the reader. The designer has to incorporate elements which has to fulfill all the desires of everyone involved with the book. Hence, Book cover designing is viewed today on a broader prospect. The adoption of these features all over the world including Odisha has helped in the development of the state and its artists. People of Odisha also create the same kind of designs which are competitive to the international arena of designers.

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