

SWOT Analysis of Mandana: Folk Art of Rajasthan

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Abstract: India, one amongst the oldest civilizations is the center of attraction for its rich art and culture. Every region in India has its very own culture, handicraft, folk art with its own special colors, motifs that symbolizes the wealthy legacy. India Folk art has captivated people everywhere the globe and has a remarkable call for in western countries. 'Mandana' is one of Rajasthan's traditional folk arts. The purpose of this article is to explore the painting heritage of Rajasthan's 'Meena' community in terms of continuity and change. This article attempts to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of this near-extinct folk art.

Keywords: Culture, Folk Art, Motifs, Mandana, Near- Extinct.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan, often known as the "Land of Kings," is one of the world's most beautiful regions, with magnificent architecture, spectacular dances, music, food, handicrafts and various art forms. Rajasthan has given home to one such kind of art called as 'Mandana Painting'.^[12] Its records dates back to Aryans and Vedic eras and it is still practiced in many rural regions today^[17] It is likewise recognized as "Meena Painting" because it is majorly practiced by Rajasthan's Schedule Tribe, the 'Meena's'.^[1] Women are the primary artists of this art, paints just about every surface in the house that requires beautification.^[9] Mandanas are also done by the Bhil and Shrimali Brahman communities, but they differ somewhat from the ones practiced by Meenas in terms of Color combination and



Figure 1: Mandana Motifs on Wall

Source: Bhagwanpura, Tonk, Rajasthan, India.

motifs.^[6] Alwar, Bharatpur, Bundi Jaipur, Sawai Madhopur and Tonk are the districts of Rajasthan where this artistic expression is still prevalent. In Nepal, such paintings are known as 'Mandala'. In Madhya Pradesh, it is restrained to flooring, however in Rajasthan, it is done on both the walls and floors. This art is often passed down through generations from mother/other elder females to daughters.^[12]

Raw Materials and Tools: Mandanas are made from materials and tools that are found in nature. To prepare the ground for Mandana, cow dung, rati (form of clay), red ochre and water is utilized.^[3] Twigs, cotton, squirrel hair, reed grass and a date/ bamboo stick are used to make paint brush for this artform.^[12] Wrapping a cotton cloth around the index figure and thumb is a commonly used method of painting. Mandana are generally depicted in red and white color. White is fabricated from chalk /lime and white clay whilst red is prepared by a mix of cow dung and yellow mud, geru/hirmich. Meena women in metropolitan areas occasionally paint with chemical colours, such as acrylic or oil paints.^[1]

Process: Mandana is performed with the subsequent sequence: *gaar lagana* (levelling the surface with mud, cow dung, clay, etc.); *leepna* (plastering two or three times with clay and preparing the floor); and *potana* (uniformly underpainting the readied mud surface).^[9] For one or two days after plastering, no painting is done to allow the area to thoroughly dry.^[1]

Motifs: In these paintings, cultural deities, Vedic yajna altars, flora, animals, and birds are considered auspicious.^[12] This art form's trademark motif is a peacock. The art form depicts Lord Ganesha, a tiger, leopard,

monkey, wolf, rabbit, sparrows, parrots, snakes, lizards, ladies at work, a camel cart, 'Shubh Manglik' (associated with good luck) and many types of vegetation. The meena artists have added various new motifs over the years, such as a tractor, bus, bullock cart, cycle, motorcycle, and so on. ^[15] Another well-known Mandana painting style is the 'Tapki Ke Mandanas' and 'Jaali' pattern. ^[12] Mandana paintings, unlike other artforms, are not narratives in the traditional sense. These are stories about a character caught in the act of being photographed. ^[9]



Figure 2: Geru & Khadi _ Raw Materials for Mandana
Source: Jamoolkheda, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, India.

Religious Significance: Mandanas are painted in homes to ward off evil, attract health & wealth, welcome Gods into the home and commemorate special occasions. On certain events such as marriage, Govardhan Puja, Holi, Diwali, Teej, and childbirth, Meena women employ a variety of Mandanas to decorate the walls and courtyards of their homes. ^[1]



Figure 3: Mandana Painted on "Chula"

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Myths: It is thought that not having Mandana in the house during auspicious occasions like as weddings is a bad omen that can lead to misfortune. ^[1] According to Jyoti Bhatt, an artist, "a son may remain *kuwara* or without a spouse, but a courtyard should never remain *kora* or without Mandana." No widow can initiate mandana, but she can finish the one started by *sobhaygavati* (woman whose husband is alive), as is the common custom observed by villagers. A mandana can't be left unfinished once it's started and shouldn't be drawn in nighttime. ^[2]

Former Studies: Mandanas were first published in the *Mardumshumari* report of Jaipur in 1901, and artist Chajuram's designs were employed for this. Ramniwas Verma's and Mahender Bhanwat's books were later released in 1950 on Mandana. Few other books and reports were also published during this period. ^[6] Dr. Madan Meena, a contemporary craftsman and analyst, has been reporting on this little-known tradition for the past ten years. According to him, one of the causes for the fall of Mandana is the increase in employment and government projects to upgrade mud dwellings. ^[15] Dr. Bhanavat's Hindi pamphlet on mandana has a page that comprises five themes that are still practiced in Rajasthan today. ^[2] According to Dr. Ashish Shringi, a Ph.D. holder in Mandana, the number of concrete buildings is increasing due to urbanization, resulting in a

major decline in mud houses. that is why this rich folk-art genre is becoming extinct. ^[22] Here are only a few of the books that reference Mandana:

1. Mandana: The Folk Designs of Rajasthan [Author: V. N Saxena & Neelima Vashishtha]
2. Nurturing Walls: Animal Art by Meena Women [Author: Dr. Madan Meena]
3. Photographs From Rural India [Author: Jyothi Bhatt]
4. Dadi Mandya Mandana [Author: Kanchan Kothari]
5. Meeting God – Elements of Hindu Devotion [Author: Stephen P. Huyler]
6. Painted Prayers: Women's Art in Village India, [Author: Stephen P. Huyler] ^[5]
7. Dhulichitra – Folk Floor Designs of India [Author: Dr. Rekha Bhatnagar]

Initiatives taken to keep this tradition alive: *Koshilaya Devi*, A 68-year-old woman from Baran, Rajasthan has been preserving Mandana on hardboard using oil paints in order to document traditional folk-art. She knows over 100 motifs, pioneered 40 new designs and gave training to a German tourist too. ^[4] *Vidya Devi*, a 71-year-old woman from Rajasthan's Bhilwara, and his son Dinesh Soni practice Mandana. She creates a Mandana painting on paperboard every day to help preserve this ancient art style, and she also teaches Mandana art online in an institute of Indore. ^[16] *Salma Shridhar*, a Bikaner-based artist, arranges exhibitions across the country in order to promote this dyeing tradition of Rajasthan. ^[7] *Lakhi Chand Jain*, a Mumbai-based artist, is resurrecting the Rajasthani Mandana under his own brand, 'Mandanagraphy,' to encourage people to reflect about inner serenity, joy, and the value of folk art in everyday life. ^[13] *Sunita*, a remarkable young artist from Rajasthan's Meena tribe, has created Mandana drawings for the children's book "*Gobble You Up!*" published by Tara Books. ^[23] She has also illustrated the books "*Rai Aur Chaunri*" and "*Babool Ka Ped.*" ^[20]

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To introduce Rajasthan's dwindling folk art.
2. To do SWOT analysis of the selected art form.
3. To suggest effective ways to keep this artform alive on larger scale.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary sources like field visits and secondary sources such as research journals, conference proceedings, doctoral/ dissertation thesis, books, newspaper articles etc. An extensive literature review was carried out to acquire detailed information about this artform including the reasons for its declination as well as attempts made to continue and preserve this artform. Primary data has been collected through field survey.

V. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

SWOT Analysis: The following is a summary of the four variables (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

1. There is a huge variety of motifs available, ranging from traditional to contemporary to modern, to fulfil the needs of customers of each age bracket and markets.
2. It is the possible source of foreign revenue because Indian art forms are in high demand abroad.
3. It can also encourage women's empowerment by employing Mandana artisans.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of awareness about current market trends due to the fact that it is still confined to home use in rural areas and small cities.
2. Lack of knowledge among artisans on how to make a living by commercializing this unique heritage.
3. As previously said, this sort of art is an oral expression that can only be learnt through emulation, hence the lack of documentation is one of the reasons it is on the edge of extinction.

Opportunities

1. Mandana motifs can be incorporated in a variety of ways to add value to existing or new handicrafts for domestic as well as international markets.
2. Motifs of Indian folk-art are becoming more popular and finding their way onto fabrics, canvas, public spaces etc., signaling that there is still a lot of possibility for growth in this business.

Threats

1. Owing to Urbanisation, Mandanas are dying due to a scarcity of mud house, which has resulted in more concrete buildings, which are incompatible with Mandana practice because mandana can only be done on clay walls.
2. The younger generation is not interested in perpetuating this art form; presently, Mandanas are usually made by elderly or middle-aged women because it is a time-consuming task.

VI. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Mandana is under jeopardy as a result of increasing industrialization and modernization. Folk paintings can be more vibrantly applied to textile goods and other products to meet the needs and demands of today's generation while also maintaining traditional assets for future generations. Apparel, bedding, crockery, curtains, furniture, gift items, handbags, home décor, pottery, postal stamps, stationary, umbrellas, upholstery etc. are the possible areas where such artforms might be applied and conserved by making them a part of our daily life. Following these additional steps outlined below will help to attain the same results:

Meena women must be counselled on how to commercialize their art form in order to demonstrate their worth as freelancers/entrepreneurs. Mandana artists should be provided opportunities to contact with artists of other traditional artforms through workshops and meet-ups in order to widen their horizons in terms of ideas, designs, colours, and other factors.

VII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to gain an in-depth understanding of Rajasthani Mandana, which must be understood and encouraged in order to preserve its splendor. Mandana's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were all discussed in the study. After reviewing the attempts done, the researcher believes that current efforts are insufficient to restore the art's former popularity. Mandana must be promoted on a large scale by combining it with other art/craft and employing effective communication means. Also, based on the findings of this study, it is possible to investigate the possibilities of adapting Mandana art as a source of employment and women empowerment. In addition, a joint effort from the government and citizenry is required. As citizens, we must be mindful of our responsibilities to our country's rich legacy. This research will provide useful information regarding the artform, its decline, revival activities, and the extent of future endeavors in this subject.

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