

Design and development of murgi kasuti motifs on traditional Ilkal sarees

Abstract

The development in traditional textile is an essential, as in any other field. Indian culture and its rich heritage are reflected in traditional textiles. Each textile produced in various corners of the country boasts of rich heritage and culture that the nation prides. One among such exclusivity is the Ilkal saree produced in the Ilkal town of Bagalkot district, North Karnataka. The special feature of Ilkal saree lies in construction process of topeteni, kondi technique. The changing trends in fashion may let the traditional textiles sink into oblivion. The research primarily intends to revive the traditional Ilkal saree with woven Kasuti embroidery. An attempt is made to weave kasuti motifs in Ilkal sarees with Jacquard set up using Cotton, Modal, Bamboo and Banana yarns. The murgi motif is woven with an extra weft yarn as swivel patterns. The concept behind the study is to implement the usage of new yarns, shades to give a new look and to revive the traditional art of Ilkal handloom weaving.

Keywords: Ilkal, kasuti, topeteni, kondi technique, jacquard, handloom weaving

Introduction

India is a country known for its culture, heritage, history and natural resources. Every region in India has its own style and pattern of art. The traditional textiles of India are famous all over the world. Ilkal sarees are the traditional sarees of North Karnataka. Ilkal is one of the best-known handloom clusters in Karnataka famous for Ilkal sarees that are made using cotton, silk and art silk. The uniqueness of saree is joining body warp with pallu warp, with a series of loop, known as kondi technique. Three shuttles are used to create pattern in pallu portion, Tope Teni seragu has 3 solid portions in red color and two portions in white colour. Ilkal sarees are first produced in the 8th century and only handlooms were used to produce Ilkal sarees. At present power looms are more in number to produce Ilkal sarees. Handloom sarees has their own ethnicity and beauty. The charm of Ilkal sarees is enhanced by embellishing with kasuti embroidery. Kasuti is a traditional form of folk embroidery practiced in the state of Karnataka. Kasuti work which is very intricate sometimes involves putting up to 5,000 stitches by hand. Kasuti involves four kinds of stitches. Ganti or Gavanti means knot. It is double running stitch, done in a straight line. Murgi has a 'zig zag' nature. Neygi or Negi- means weave, it gives a woven effect. Menthil means fenugreek. It uses the typical cross stitch to fill the patterns.

According to kamat (2011) The Lambani tribes have kept their style of Kasuti art alive. Their traditional costumes glitter with small pieces of cut mirrors, coins and costume jewellery. Bennur and Gavai state that kasuti is an art form; it speaks about the people of Karnataka, their traditions, customs and professions. Its delicate rendition is an outcome of the honest, zealous and innate desire of mankind to practice the beautiful stitches on the articles of everyday use. Shubhapriya Bennur and Laxmidevi Gavai (2015) describe that,¹ Traditional embroidery with ethnic designs and motifs in brilliant colors bear a distinct hallmark of Indian textile design. This embroidery has its own regional identity and has crossed borders to be marketed in different parts of the world. There is a need to revive and modify the 'kasuti' embroidery designs to cater the consumers in international markets.

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The present study is focused on introducing woven kasuti murgi motifs to design Ilkal sarees in new colors. Efforts are made to give a new look to Ilkal sarees without disturbing the traditional concepts such as Topeteni seragu, Kondi Technique using Handloom weaving.

Aim: To design and develop Ilkal sarees with woven kasuti motif through weaving.

Objectives

- To select and implement Modal, Bamboo and Banana yarns in Ilkal sarees.
- To select the traditional murgi motif
- To transfer hand embroidery motifs to weaving
- To weave traditional kasuti murgi motifs in Ilkal sarees
- To take the acceptance from the traditional weavers specialized in Ilkal sarees.

Materials and methods

Process followed for the development of Ilkal saree

Selection of raw material: Cotton yarn of 1kg is used for body warp and boarder warp and pallu warp. Modal is used for weft body, weft pallu and pallu temple pattern-650gms, banana yarn is used for motif as extra weft yarn -200gms. The above listed quantity is used for one saree. Similarly same quantity of yarn is used for the saree but modal is replaced by bamboo yarn. So totally two sarees are developed one with cotton*modal and another with cotton*bamboo in two different colors. *Banana yarns are used for extra weft to weave the murgi motif for both the sarees.*

- Selection of dyes:** vat dyes are selected since they have good color fastness property
- Selection of color:** Crème (scoured yarn), vat dyes: Blue-P.n-19-3864, Pink-P.n-17-1937.

- C. Motif selection:** A floral geometric murgi motif is selected for weaving (Figure 1).
- D. Boarder:** Gomi Pattern with floral motif in the center (Figure 2).
- E. Digitizing the kasuti murgi motif:** The motif to be woven is first conceptualized and drawn on a graph using SOFTWARE JASC PAINT SHOP PRO 9. The motif is made of a particular size to suit the jacquard needle capacity of 120hooks. The graph acts like a guide to understand the placement of warp and weft yarns to get the desired pattern
- F. Punch card preparation, lacing:** The graph helps in preparing the punch cards to obtain the design. Holes are punched in the jacquard cards using conventional card cutting machine. The punch cards are serially placed and tied with a cord. The first card and last card are joined and secured together by a knot that helps in repeating the design
- G. Jacquard set up:** Handloom with jacquard 120 needle capacity is set to weave kasuti murgi motifs in Ilkal sarees. 120hooks jacquard is mounted on a wooden square box on top of the loom. The laced jacquard cards are fixed on top of the loom in connection with needles. The jacquard needles are connected to a warp threads wherever the design is required. 104 needles are utilized to form the design. A complex series of threads are arranged in such a manner that lifting of a particular set of

Table 1 Basic geometric details of the fabric

| Sl. no | Fabrics | Fabric count | | Yarn count | | Fabric length (Yards) | Fabric width (Inches) | Fabric weight (GSM) | Fabric thickness (mm) |
|--------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Warp (Ends/inches) | Weft (Picks/inches) | Warp | Weft | | | | |
| 1 | Cotton*Modal | 80 | 62 | 2/120 | 60 | 6 | 52 | 55 | 0.19 |
| 2 | Cotton*Bamboo | 80 | 72 | 2/120 | 60 | 6 | 52 | 77 | 0.2 |

Preparation for weaving

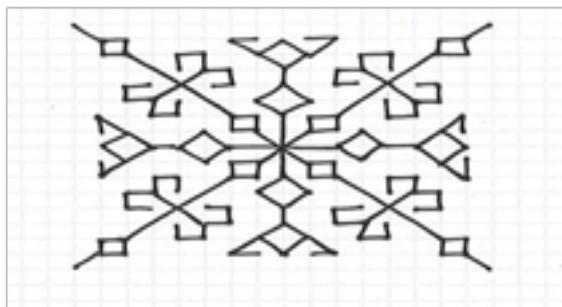
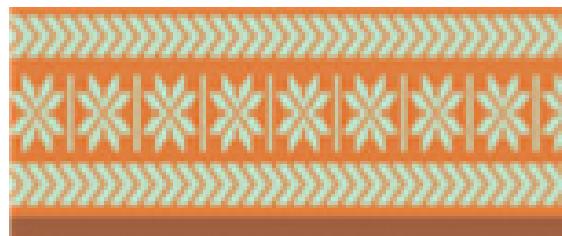
Pirn winding

Pirn winding is done for modal, bamboo and banana. Modal that forms weft for first saree, bamboo that forms the weft for a second saree. And banana is used as extra weft to weave a murgi kasuti motif on both the sarees. There is a wheel and a metallic shaft, which are connected with each other with the help of rope for transferring motion. The hank is mounted on the wheel and the pirn is mounted on the shaft. The yarn from the hank is transferred on to the pirn by rotating the wheel and bobbin.

Warping and weaving

The technique of Ilkal requires the preparation of warp separately for each saree, Hence preparation of warp is done only for one saree. Ball warping and Mandola technique is used since beaming is not required for Ilkal sarees. Warp threads for body is prepared separately using cotton yarns that are cream in color. Similarly pallu warp is prepared separately with cotton threads that are blue in color. Border portion of warp is prepared with similar color threads that are used in pallu warp with cotton threads. The pallu threads and body threads are joined in loops with a kondi technique. First the pallu of the saree is woven. The topeteni seragu is formed using three shuttles. After the pallu is woven the series of loops are cut and stretched at the back of the loom for further weaving process. The kasuti murgi motifs are woven on the body of the sarees using an extra set of weft yarn as swivel patterns to give an embellished look. Once the saree is woven

threads results in the lifting of a particular set of warp yarns which results in the formation of draft and peg plan required for a single repeat (Table 1).

**Figure 1** A floral geometric murgi motif is selected for weaving.**Figure 2** Gomi Pattern with floral motif in the center.

for a required length it is cut and taken away from the loom. The warping is prepared for the next saree in different color combination following the similar process of weaving.

Assessment of developed sarees: Acceptance is taken from 30 handloom clusters that are specialized in weaving Ilkal sarees using questionnaire. The sarees are shown to the traditional weavers from different places such as Ilkal, Gadag, Betgeri, weavers service center (Bangalore) (Figure 3).²⁻⁶

**Figure 3** Shows the sarees designed with kasuti murgi motif and topeteni seragu with kondi technique.

Results and discussion

The data collected through the questionnaire for research study is tabulated and analyzed. From the tabulated data frequencies, percentages are calculated to know the opinion and acceptance level of designed sarees. The results are discussed below based on different factors.

Table 2 showed that 70% of the weavers considered weaving kasuti motif in Ilkal sarees is an excellent idea and 30% of the weavers optioned it's a good concept.

Table 2 Opinion about the concept of weaving kasuti motifs in Ilkal sarees

| Rating | Excellent | Good | Poor |
|-------------|-----------|------|------|
| Frequency | 21 | 9 | 0 |
| Percentage% | 70 | 30 | 0 |

The data in the Table 3 showed that 80% of the weavers agreed for the usage of new yarns and 30% weavers hold on to usage of cotton, silk and art silk.

Table 3 Acceptance of implementing new yarns in Ilkal sarees

| Acceptance | Yes | No |
|-------------|-----|----|
| Frequency | 24 | 6 |
| Percentage% | 80 | 20 |

Table 4 showed that 90% of the weavers felt that the designed saree texture is better than Ilkal sarees and 10% of the viewers felt that it is similar to Ilkal sarees.

Table 4 Texture of designed sarees in comparison with traditional Ilkal sarees

| Texture | Better than Ilkal sarees | | Similar to Ilkal sarees | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Frequency | 27 | | 3 | |
| Percentage% | 90 | | 10 | |

Table 5 showed that ranking for saree 1 is better than saree 2 in terms of color, texture, luster and overall appearance. Data stated that, modal yarn gives good luster and texture than Bamboo. Weavers preferred cream and blue combination than cream and pink.

Table 5 Rating of designed sarees based on various factors

| Cotton*Modal | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|----|---------|----|--------|----|--------------------|----|
| Saree 1 | Color | | Texture | | Lustre | | Overall appearance | |
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Excellent | 25 | 83 | 26 | 86 | 28 | 93 | 26 | 86 |
| Good | 5 | 16 | 4 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cotton*Bamboo | | | | | | | | |
| Saree 2 | Color | | Texture | | Lustre | | Overall appearance | |
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Excellent | 20 | 66 | 21 | 70 | 20 | 73 | 24 | 80 |
| Good | 10 | 34 | 9 | 30 | 8 | 27 | 6 | 20 |
| Poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |