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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development of Motifs from Madhubani Painting – A Study in Bihar

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ABSTRACT

India is a country with rich traditions and religious culture, which are reflected in the expression of folk art. Madhubani paintings, one of the most celebrated works of art from Bihar are accomplished by generations of skilled artists. The Indian folk arts play an essential role in creating new designs. These paintings are executed in a very simple manner. These paintings were not only aesthetically appreciated but also won critical acclaim. The study was carried out in two districts, i.e., Madhubani and Darbhanga. A total of 113 respondents were selected as "sample respondents" for the present study. Relevant statistics were employed to analyze the data. According to the study, the majority of respondents are between the ages of 46 and 55, with 70.80% being female. This art emerged as a tool of women's empowerment. All the women who made it did not possess considerable level of education. Mainly there were more respondents in the general category. The study attempted to develop motifs from Madhubani paintings to construct apparel and home decor items by using screen and block printing methods. A total of fifty (50) motifs were gathered from secondary sources, and after critical analysis, 36 traditional Madhubani motifs were chosen. To achieve the desired complexity and beauty, these motifs were recreated and modified in CorelDRAWX5 software. The selected motifs were divided into four distinct categories: floral and foliage, geometrical, animal and bird, and religious motifs. Total 10 top preferred designs were prepared from selected 36 motifs.

Key words: Madhubani paintings; Motifs; Apparel; Home décor; Corel DRAW X5.

India is a nation with a strong religious and traditional culture, which is represented in the folk art that is produced there. India's skills are highly ethnic and straightforward, yet vivid and lively enough to communicate about the rich national heritage of the nation. Due to its authenticity and traditional aesthetic sensibility, Indian arts and crafts have considerable market potential outside the country (Sharma, 2015). Madhubani is a form of Mithila folk art that captures the cultural characteristics of Mithilaanchal on canvas. Madhubani is claimed to have existed since the Ramayana. Rama and Sita are said to have first met in the Madhuban Forest. Madhubani is a style of Indian painting, practiced in the Mithila region of the Indian Subcontinent. It is characterized by its unique geometrical patterns. In Madhubani painting, references to the royal court and social occasions like

weddings are frequently made using natural symbols like the Sun, and the Moon, and sacred plants like tulsi. Typically, paintings of flowers, animals, birds, and geometric patterns are used to cover empty spaces. According to them, fish are a symbol of good luck and holiness. Flora and fauna, linear curves, circles in series, short lines in series, peacocks, fish, flowers, birds, animals, and other examples of natural life can be seen in Madhubani paintings (Halder and Pandey, 2018).

The Hindu gods and goddesses are the primary subject matter of the Madhubani paintings. The women of Mithila celebrated every social and religious holiday with wall and floor decorations (Agarwal, 2015). In the beginning, Mithila women created the paintings to decorate the walls and floors of their house for every religious and social event,

but over time, it helped to raise the socioeconomic standing of women in society by providing them with chances for employment and revenue (*Kumari and Babel, 2022*). As mentioned by *Rekha (2010)* the main pattern which primarily consists of bamboo and lotus plants is surrounded by various painted objects including fish, tortoises, the sun, the moon, a bride riding in a palanquin, grass mats, and a Gauri worship scene. Like any folk art, it reflects the psyche of the community to which it belongs. This ancient art is created with fingers, twigs, brushes, nib pens, and matchsticks, in natural colours, and is distinguished by appealing patterns. This unique tradition needs to be preserved and requires a blend in developing innovative design which are of great demand in the market. This is one of the best possible routes for socio economic development of the rural lives, specially in empowering rural women.

Keeping in view of the above facts, the present study was undertaken with the specific objective of adaptation of motifs from Madhubani painting and creation of designs for apparel and home décor items.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted purposively in Madhubani and Darbhanga districts of Bihar due to the prevalence of more motifs in that particular area and engagement of people involvement in those aspects. A total of five villages namely Rahika, Simri, Jitwarpur, Ranti and Bhadurpur were selected from three blocks viz. Rahika, Rajnagar and Darbhanga sadar. By following proportionate random technique, a total of 113 respondents that consisted of local people practicing Madhubani painting, people from an NGO, and people from an institute were selected for the study. The data was collected through personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule. The quantitative data was analyzed with appropriate statistical technique like frequency, percentage, weighted mean score and standard deviation. A set of independent variables and Experience in Madhubani painting) and a dependent variable i.e. To develop the motif for apparel and home décor items were considered for the study. Initially fifty traditional Madhubani motifs were collected and after proper study 36 motifs were screened on the basis of their suitability to develop innovative designs, and were classified as floral & foliage, geometrical, birds & animals and religious motifs. Selected respondents were asked to give their

choices in a three point continuum i.e. excellent, good and poor. Weighted mean scores were calculated for all the motifs according to the preferences obtained and ranks were assigned accordingly. A total of sixteen motifs i.e. four from each category were chosen to create innovative contemporary designs for various applications. The simulation of motifs and digitizing process of selected motifs were done with the help of CorelDraw X5 software (*Sharma et. al 2014*). Finally, out of sixteen motifs, ten designs were created using one or two motifs depending on their compatibility and harmony.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident from Table 1 that above sixty percent of the respondents belonged to 46–55 year which is an active and productive age group. Majority (70.80%) of the respondents were female and most (80.53%) of them were married. They mostly reside in nuclear families (78.76%). Brahmin caste were mostly engaged in this profession (44.25%) and this finding conform to the result of *Kumari et al. (2020)* as above sixty five percent of respondents belonged to unreserved category. The level of education was not considerable as (42.48%) were matriculate and only a few (15.93%) and (6.19%) were graduate and postgraduate respectively. A total of (66.37%) were local people practicing Madhubani painting and nearly sixty-seven per cent were self-employed. The family's income for majority (66.37%) of the respondents was found to be less than Rs. 20,000 per annum and very few (1.77%) could earn above one lakh rupees annually. Majority of the respondents had quite a good number of years i.e. 15 to 20 years in Madhubani painting.

Collection and selection of motifs : Initially 50 traditional motifs of Madhubani painting that includes floral, geometrical, animal/ bird and religious motifs were collected and only thirty-six motifs were selected after thorough analysis which are depicted in Plate 1. Similar kinds of motifs were also collected in the study of *Rai and Masih (2022)*. Based on the preferences of the respondents, finally ten motifs were taken into consideration to develop innovative contemporary designs using CorelDraw X5 software.

Preferential choices for selection of motifs : The data presented in the Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 give a detailed picture about the preferences and choices of the respondents regarding all the four categories of motifs.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics (N=113)

Independent variables	No.	%	Mean	S.D
<i>Age</i>				
25-35	19	16.81	2.50	.814
36-45	22	19.47		
46-55	68	60.18		
56 and above	4	3.54		
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	33	29.20	1.71	.457
Female	80	70.80		
<i>Family type</i>				
Nuclear	89	78.76	1.36	.733
Joint	7	6.19		
Extended	17	15.04		
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married	91	80.53	1.19	.398
Unmarried	22	19.47		
<i>Caste</i>				
Brahmin	50	44.25	1.78	.788
Kayastha	38	33.63		
Dusadh	25	22.12		
<i>Educational status</i>				
Under Metric	11	9.73	2.66	1.057
Metric	48	42.48		
HS pass	29	25.66		
Graduate	18	15.93		
Post graduate	7	6.19		
<i>Type of respondent</i>				
Practicing printing	75	66.37	1.42	.664
Artist	31	27.43		
People from institute	5	4.24		
People from NGO	2	1.77		
<i>Status of respondent</i>				
Student	13	11.50	2.55	.694
Salaried	25	22.12		
Self employed	75	66.37		
<i>Family income</i>				
Less than 20,000.00	75	66.37	1.42	.679
20,000.00-50,000.00	30	26.55		
50,000.00-1,00,000.00	6	5.31		
1,00,000.00 & Above	2	1.77		
<i>Experience in painting</i>				
5-10	22	19.47	2.76	1.190
10-15	23	20.35		
15-20	35	30.97		
20-25	26	23.00		
25 and above	7	6.19		

Regarding floral motifs of Madhubani painting (Table 2), it was found that motif 2 was ranked first (WMS 2.43), followed by motif 4 (WMS 2.36, motifs 3 (WMS 2.2) and motif 6 (WMS 2.13) that ranked second, third and fourth respectively. On being asked, respondents opined that they preferred these kinds of floral motifs especially in making designs of table clothes and face masks. During Covid-19 pandemic situation, women respondents could earn a good amount by selling face masks.

Table 2. Preferential choices for Floral Motif

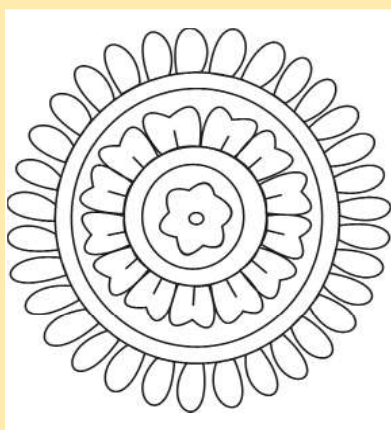
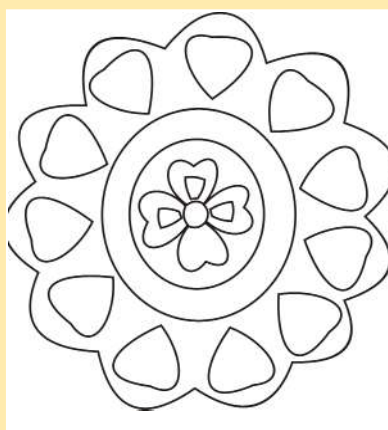
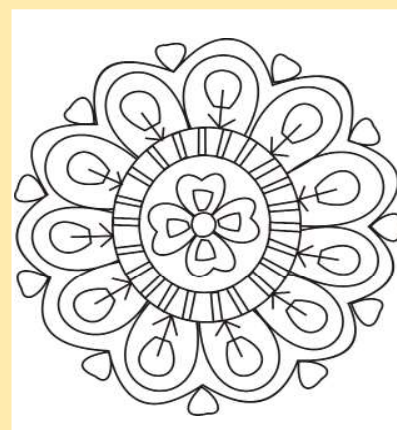
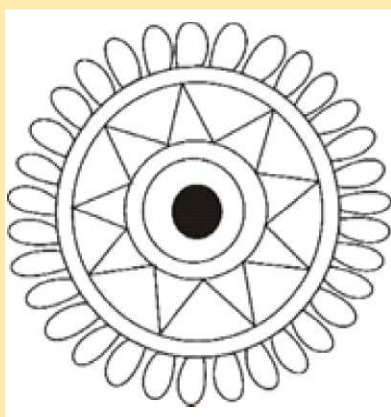
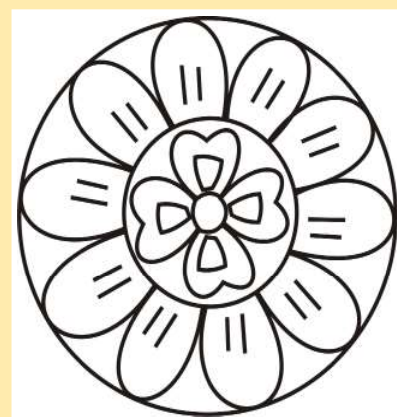
Floral Motif		
Motif No.	WMS	Rank
1	1.7	VII
2	2.43	I
3	2.2	III
4	2.36	II
5	1.83	VI
6	2.13	IV
7	1.83	VI
8	2.1	V
9	1.66	VII

Table 3. Preferential choices for Geometrical Motifs

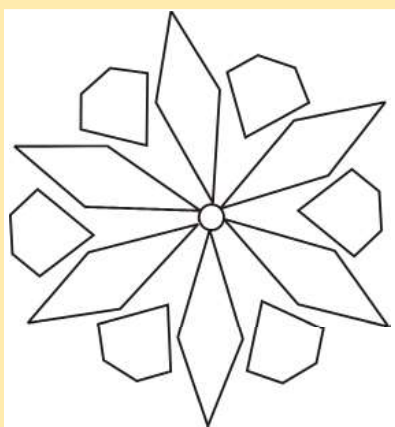
Geometrical Motifs		
Motif No.	WMS	Rank
10	1.86	VII
11	1.83	VII
12	2.23	II
13	2.06	VI
14	2.53	I
15	2.1	V
16	2.13	IV
17	2.2	III
18	1.73	VIII

In case of geometrical motifs (Table 3) motifs 14 (WMS 2.53) was ranked first that can be used mostly in curtain. This was followed by motif 12 (WMS 2.23), motif 17 (WMS 2.2) and motif 16 (WMS 2.13) that was preferred as second, third and fourth choices by the respondents and these motifs can be applied in kurtas neckline, trousers, curtain.

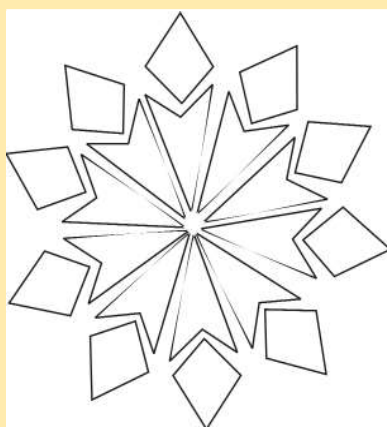
The Table 4 showed the preferences in regard to animal and birds motifs. Motif 21 had the highest weighted mean score 2.53 ranking first, followed by motif 20 (WMS 2.46) ranking second, motif number 19 (WMS 2.36) ranking third, and motif 22 (WMS 2.2) that ranked fourth and can be used in stoles, dupatas, bedsheets, pillow cover and table mat.

FLORAL MOTIFS**MOTIFS 1****MOTIFS 2****MOTIFS 3****MOTIFS 4****MOTIFS 5****MOTIFS 6****MOTIFS 7****MOTIFS 8****MOTIFS 9****Plate 1. Selected Motifs from Madhubani painting**

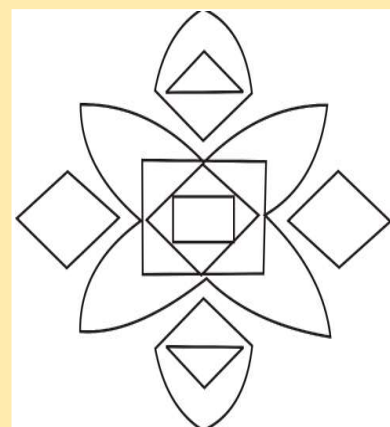
GEOMETRICAL MOTIFS



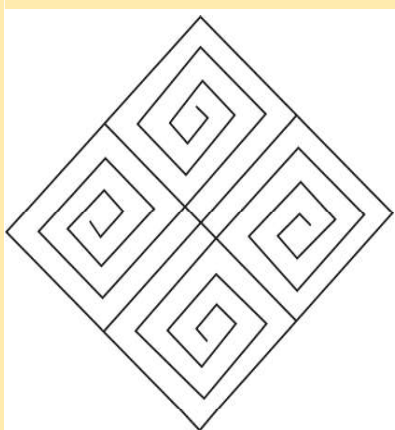
MOTIFS 10



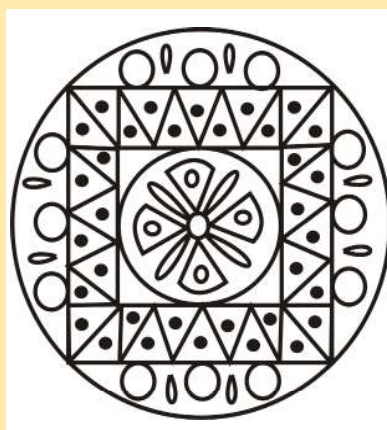
MOTIFS 11



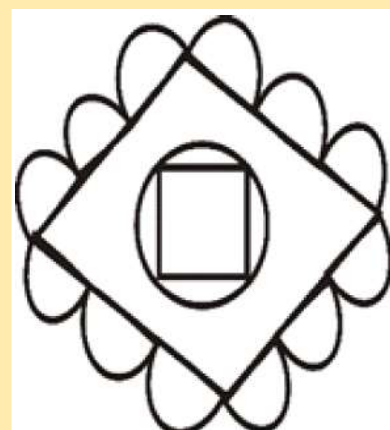
MOTIFS 12



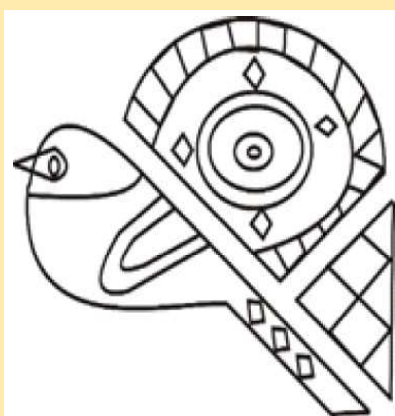
MOTIFS 13



MOTIFS 14



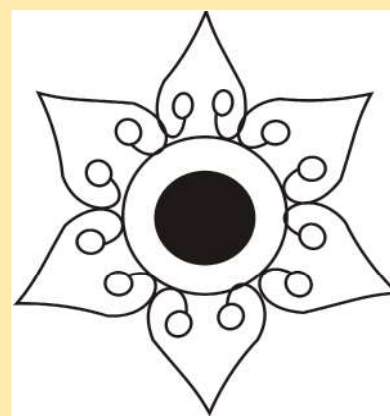
MOTIFS 15



MOTIFS 16



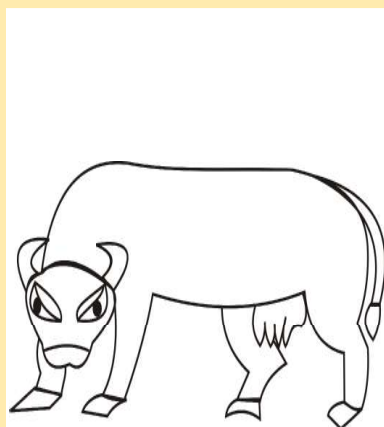
MOTIFS 17



MOTIFS 18

Plate 1. Selected Motifs from Madhubani painting

ANIMAL AND BIRDS MOTIFS



MOTIFS 19



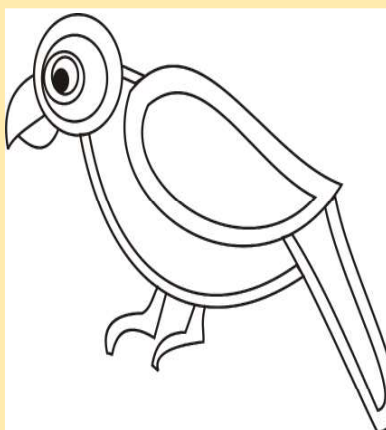
MOTIFS 20



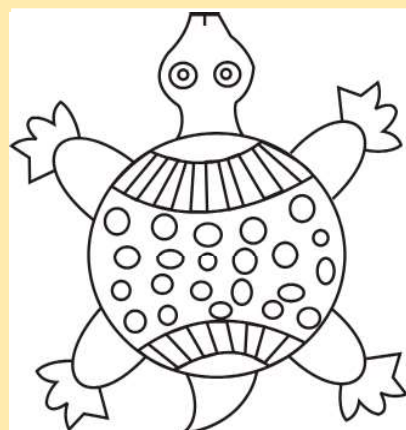
MOTIFS 21



MOTIFS 22



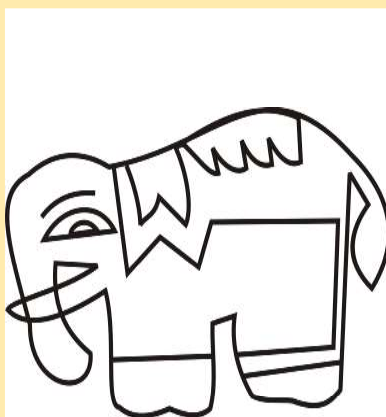
MOTIFS 23



MOTIFS 24



MOTIFS 25



MOTIFS 26



MOTIFS 27

Plate 1. Selected Motifs from Madhubani painting

RELIGIOUS MOTIFS



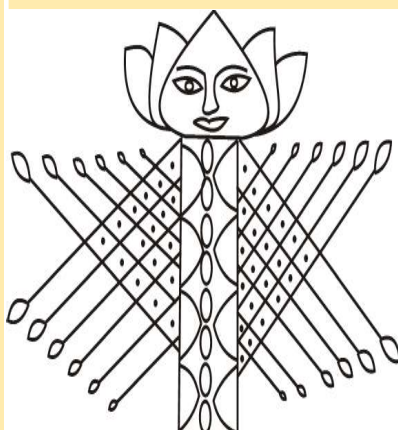
MOTIFS 28



MOTIFS 29



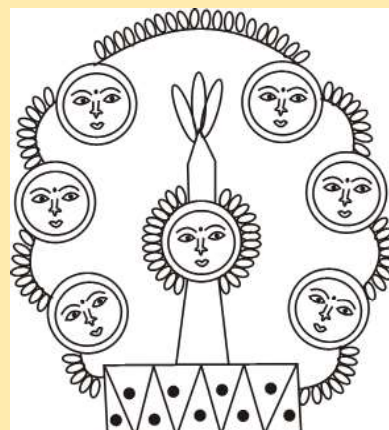
MOTIFS 30



MOTIFS 31



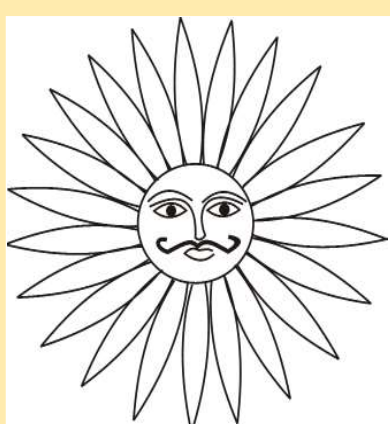
MOTIFS 32



MOTIFS 33



MOTIFS 34



MOTIFS 35



MOTIFS 36

Plate 1. Selected Motifs from Madhubani painting

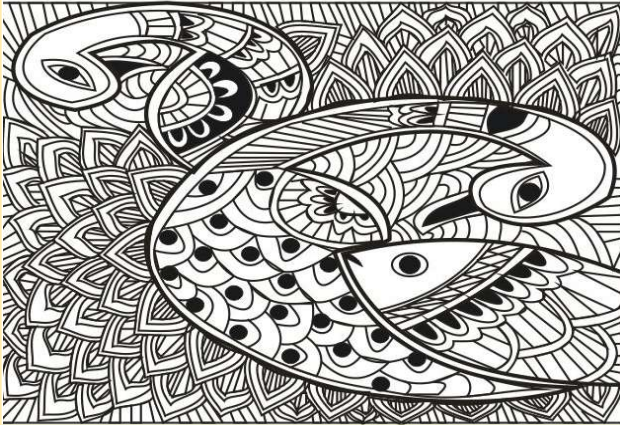


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

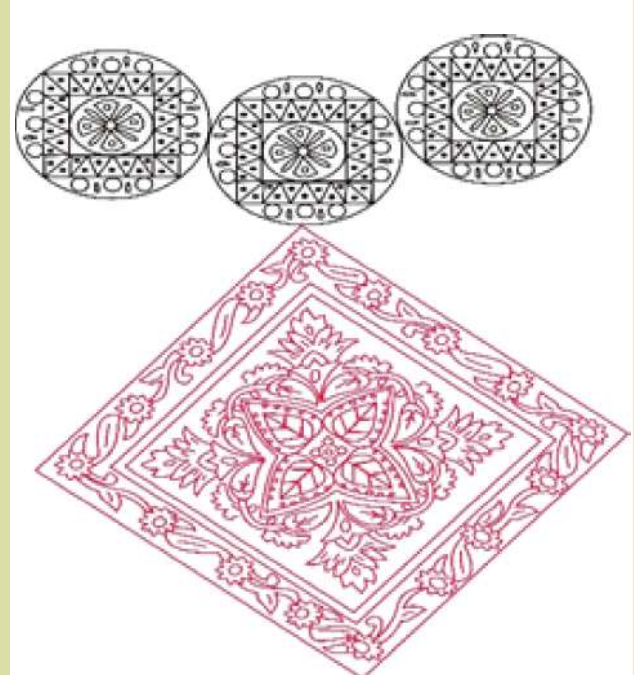


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

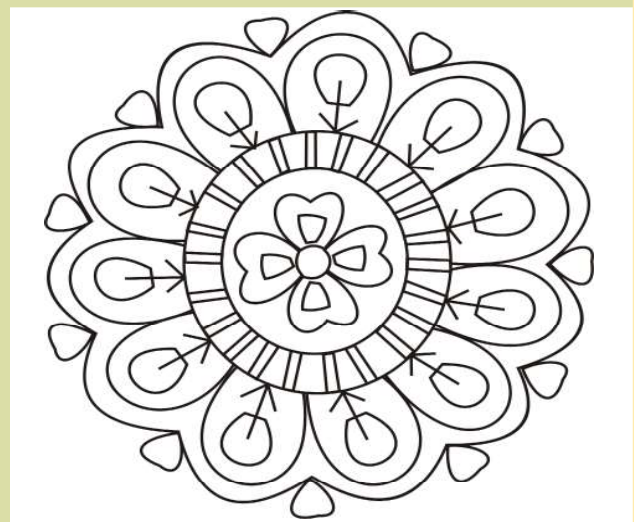


Fig. 6



Fig. 10

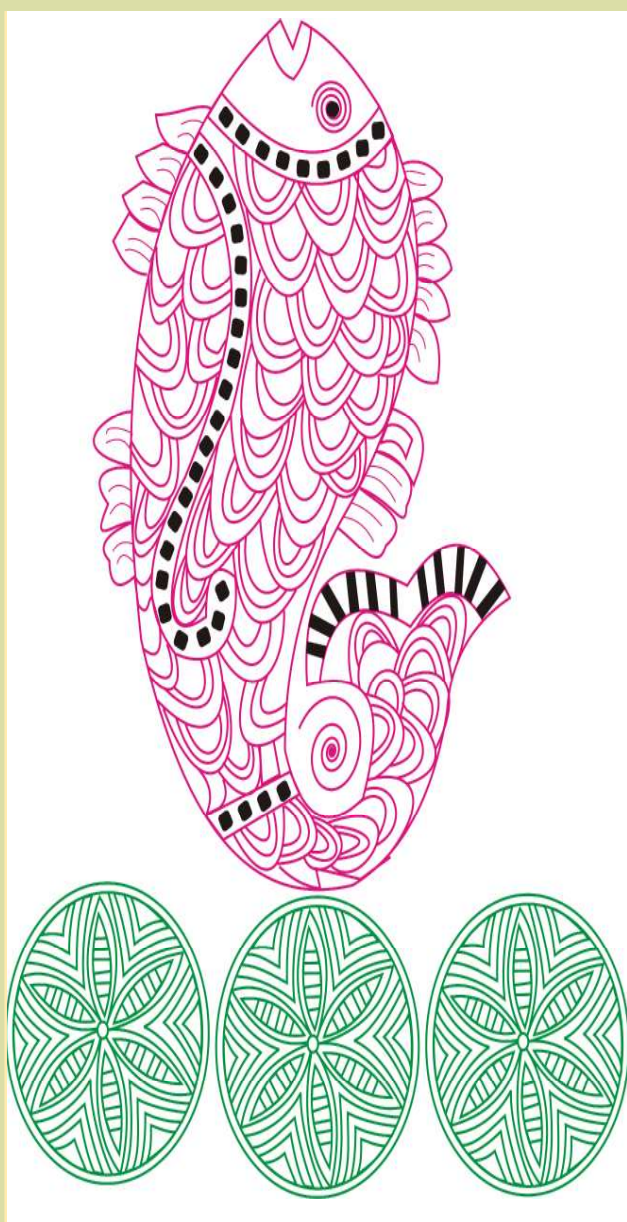


Fig. 8



Fig. 7

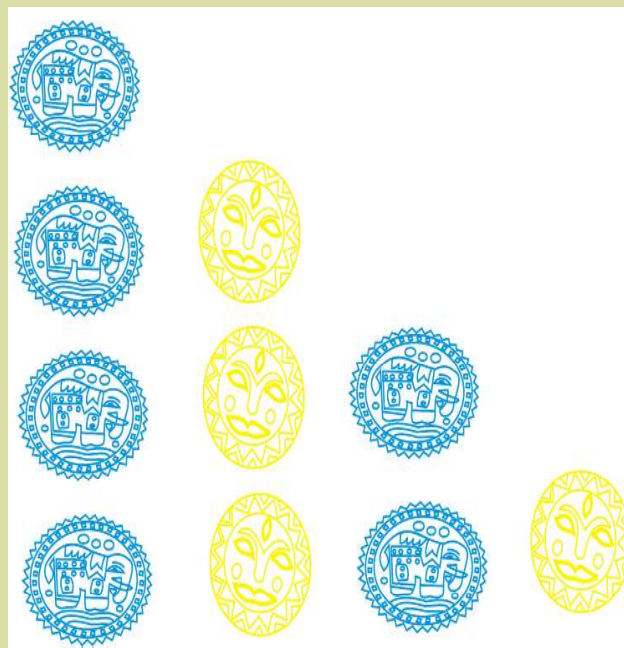


Fig. 9

Plate 2. Developed designs

Table 4. Preferential choices for Animal and Birds Motifs

Animal and Birds Motifs		
Motif No.	WMS	Rank
19	2.36	III
20	2.46	II
21	2.53	I
22	2.20	IV
23	1.76	VIII
24	1.90	VI
25	1.83	VII
26	2.10	V
27	1.66	IX

Table 5. Preferential choices for Religious Motifs

Religious Motifs		
Motif No.	WMS	Rank
28	2.33	II
29	2.46	I
30	2.16	III
31	2.1	IV
32	1.83	VII
33	1.96	V
34	1.9	VI
35	1.76	VIII
36	1.66	IX

Lastly, in regard to religious motifs (Table 5) the data showed that motif 29 (WMS 2.46) got as first choice. This was followed by motif 28 (WMS 2.33) ranked second. Third and fourth preferences were received by motif 30 (WMS 2.16) and motif 31 (WMS 2.1). These motifs were found to be useful as sari design. Moreover, handkerchiefs and gamosha designs can be taken from these motifs.

Designs developed : For the design development of Kurti, trouser, bedsheet, mask, stoles, and tablecloths, the sixteen selected motifs were integrated methodically using CorelDRAW X5 software. A total of ten designs were developed using selected motifs and presented in plate-2. The present findings lead to the conclusion that CorelDRAW software can be used to modify traditional Madhubani motifs for producing unique designs with a variety of applications. Additionally, this endeavor contributes to the preservation of Bihar state's traditional art.

CONCLUSION

Traditionally, Madhubani paintings were done with natural colours. Adapting and improving the designs means modifying them such that they will be easier to produce or easier to maintain. With

the changing world of fashion, the field of textile demands unique, different, and fresh designs that give us the opportunity to use adapted traditional motifs. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents found women are involving more than male, self-employed and 15-20 years' experience in Madhubani paintings. The motifs taken from Madhubani paintings were highly accepted for the development of products. Through the use of CorelDraw X5 software, a variety of designs may be produced by using tools that stimulate creativity and facilitate the process. A research schedule was prepared for the selection of designs from the developed designs. This can be taken up as an enterprise, and products can be developed and marketed to different parts of the country. It will also help in preserving and popularizing the traditional motifs of Madhubani painting.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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