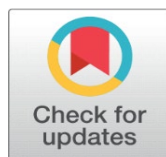
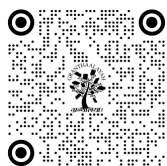


REVIVING LEGACY: HOW DHABHLA WEAVING IS MAKING A COMEBACK

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ABSTRACT

The globalization of trade has completed it easier for consumers to access a wide variety of clothing options from around the world. While this can create opportunities for handloom weavers to reach new markets, it also means they must compete with producers from other countries who may have lower production costs. However, the art of Dhabhla weaving from the arid landscapes of Kutch is an exception to the above fact as it experiences a revitalization, as artisans and enthusiasts alike seek to preserve and revive this ancient tradition weaving techniques.

Keywords: Dhabhla Weaving, Globalization, Enthusiasts

1. INTRODUCTION

Dhabhla weaving, also known as Dhabla weaving, is a traditional textile craft indigenous to the Kutch region of Gujarat, India. It is characterized by its intricate geometric patterns and vibrant colors, often woven into cotton or silk fabric. The word "Dhabhla" or "Dhabla" refers to the denotes the traditional shawl or blanket produced through this weaving technique. The method of Dhabhla weaving involves several intricate steps, often carried out by skilled artisans using hand- operated looms. The typical process such as preparation of yarn, Designing, Warping, Dyeing, setting up the loom, Weaving, Pattern formation and Finishing is followed in Dhabhla weaving. Throughout these entire processes, Dhabhla weaving requires precision, patience, and skill, often passed down through generations within artisan families. The resulting textiles are not only visually stunning but also carry

with them the rich cultural heritage of the Kutch region.



Figure 1: Dhabhla weave

The Dhabhla weaving tradition of Kutch once faced the threat of fading due to Changing Preferences of People with modernization, costly labour-intensive process. Many weavers found it difficult to sustain themselves economically due to low wages and lack of market demand for their products. Market got flooded with Synthetic Fabrics offering cheaper alternatives to handwoven textiles. This further reduced the demand for traditional handloom products like Dhabhla. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made by various NGO such as Khamir, Somaiya Kala Vidya organizations and government initiatives to revive and promote traditional crafts like Dhabhla weaving. The Dhabhla craft was given GI status in 2011 based on the work carried by NGO Khamir along with Kutch Weavers Association, formed by a group of sixteen weavers from different villages around Kachchh. Once regarded as a fading tradition, Dhabhla weaving is now gaining momentum, thanks to a renewed appreciation for handloom textiles and the efforts of dedicated artisans. The resurgence of interest in Dhabhla weaving can be attributed to several factors including Cultural Rediscovery, Demand for Authenticity, Artisan empowerment, sustainable fashion movement, Design innovation, tourism and cultural promotion, Digital promotion and E-commerce.

Cultural rediscovery encourages innovation, as weavers blend age-old methods with contemporary aesthetics, infusing their creations with a renewed sense of relevance and appeal. Ultimately, the resurgence of weaving through cultural rediscovery not only threads together the past and present but also weaves a richer, more vibrant tapestry for the future. In addition, authenticity in weaving is not merely about the tangible product; it is about honouring tradition, embracing diversity, and cherishing the intricate narratives behind every pattern & motif. It is a celebration of identity, evidence to the timeless artistry weave that connects us to our roots while weaving threads of innovation into the fabric of the future.

Artisan empowerment in weaving involves providing weavers with the necessary resources, skills, and opportunities to succeed in their craft. This empowerment encompasses fair wages, access to sustainable materials, training in traditional and contemporary techniques, and paths for showcasing and selling their products. Weavers who have been through the design and business education at Somaiya Kala Vidya (SKV) or similar institutes in Kutch have higher chances to increase cultural and social capital to influence market tastes and challenge disciplinary and social hierarchies and stereotypes. It also enhances the value of both the handloom cloth, and occupation of handloom weaving as well as enhance the capabilities of weavers to innovate within their traditional skill set and intellectualise inherent creative capacity. By fostering a supportive ecosystem, artisans can preserve cultural heritage, innovate within their craft, and achieve economic independence, ensuring the vitality and sustainability of weaving traditions for generations to come.

The sustainable fashion movement in weaving emphasizes environmentally friendly practices, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility throughout the entire production process. This includes utilizing eco-friendly materials like organic cotton or recycled fibres, implementing low-impact dyeing techniques, reducing waste through efficient design and production methods, and supporting fair labour practices.

Design Innovation in this weaving are experimenting with vibrant color palettes, sustainable materials, and novel weaving techniques, revitalizing age-old motifs and pattern into captivating designs that vibrate with global customers. This fusion of tradition and innovation not only preserves the heritage of Dhabhla weaving but also boosts it into the realm of contemporary fashion and design, showcasing its timeless appeal on a new canvas. After Covid-19, few Dhabhla weavers collaborated with students of NIFT to created new designs of Dhabhla for the market, with such collaborations came new and vibrant creations that helped the craft stay afloat even during rough times. It gave a chance to the students to learn how to make craft and for the artisans to sustain their craft and inject some new life into their designs

Cultural promotion initiatives highlight the significance of Dhabhla weaving in regional history and identity. Workshops and demonstrations engage tourists, fostering appreciation for the craft. Through tourism, Dhabhla weavers gain recognition and economic opportunities, sustaining this ancient tradition for generations to come. One such event was a major fashion event, equal in AIFW's status, is Lakme Fashion Week, held annually in Mumbai. In February 2017, SKV 'made history' when a selection of SKV graduates had their own slot based on Kutch craft, and the artisan-designers walked down the ramp alongside the models to be recognised as the 'designers' of the collections.

Digital promotion has revolutionized the traditional weaving industry, propelling it into the digital era. Through e-commerce platforms, weavers can showcase their craftsmanship to a global audience, breaking geographical barriers and connecting directly with consumers. Utilizing social media, targeted ads, and search engine optimization, weavers can effectively promote their products, reaching potential customers with ease. This digital transformation not only boosts sales but also preserves traditional weaving techniques by providing sustainable livelihoods for artisans. As e-commerce continues to evolve, the weaving industry embraces digital promotion as a powerful tool for growth and sustainability.

One of the most stimulating aspects of the revival of Dhabhla weaving is its newfound popularity among younger generations. This is currently done by number of designers by creating the awareness of the craft among the youth with the help of offline and online social platforms and e commerce platforms. As young people rediscover the beauty and significance of traditional crafts, they are bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the Weaving art form. This infusion of new energy and creativity bodes well for the future of Dhabhla weaving, ensuring that it will continue to thrive for generations to come.

In conclusion, the revival of Dhabhla weaving marks a glorious return to tradition and heritage in the textile industry. Through determined efforts to preserve and promote this ancient Weaving art form, artisans have breathed new life into a centuries-old craft. The resurgence of Dhabhla weaving not only celebrates cultural identity but also fosters economic empowerment within communities. As consumers increasingly seek authenticity and sustainability, the revival of Dhabhla weaving stands as a demonstration to the enduring appeal of handloom textiles. With continued support and innovation, this revival promises to thrive, ensuring the legacy of Dhabhla weaving perseveres for generations to come.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.