COMPARISON OF MATA-NI-PACHEDI ELEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY WORK

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Accepted 31 May 2024 Published 22 June 2024

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10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.370

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

This ancient textile art form, known as Mata-ni-Pachedi, originates from Gujarat in India and brings with it profound cultural and spiritual importance. These fabrics, which were originally used as portable shrines, now function as visual storytelling, typically representing the goddess Durga or Kali via their imagery. Mata-ni-Pachedi is a traditional art form that draws inspiration from the storytelling traditions of the Waghari culture. It is traditionally constructed using hand-drawn images and natural dyes. This art form has developed into a contemporary practice over the course of the last several years, making use of both classic themes and current elements. Artists are increasingly extending beyond the realm of religious symbolism by incorporating social, environmental, and global issues into their work. In this case study, the change of Mata-ni-Pachedi is investigated by contrasting traditional features with modern interpretations. Particular attention is paid to topics such as motifs, symbolism, color palettes, linework, spatial arrangement, and thematic content.

Keywords: Mata-Ni-Pachedi, Traditional Art Form, Motifs, Color Palette, Hand-Drawn Techniques, Contemporary Art Spaces, Spiritual Foundation, Sacred Essence

1. INTRODUCTION

Mata-ni-Pachedi, a traditional textile art form originating from Gujarat, India, holds deep cultural and spiritual significance. Traditionally used as portable shrines in the homes or during festivals, Mata-ni-Pachedi textiles are handcrafted by the Waghari community, primarily to depict the goddess Durga or Kali, symbolizing divine power, protection, and the fight against evil forces. These textiles, painted on cotton or silk, serve not only as spiritual objects but also as visual narratives, portraying mythological stories, religious iconography, and the mythology surrounding divine beings. The production of Mata-ni-Pachedi involves meticulous hand-drawn graphics, intricate detailing, and the use of natural dyes derived from plants, minerals, and other organic sources [1]. Colors such as red, black, and white dominate the artwork, each carrying significant spiritual connotations—red symbolizing energy and divine authority, black representing protection from malevolence, and white denoting purity and divinity.

Historically, Mata-ni-Pachedi was deeply connected to religious rituals and served as a portable shrine for worship during festivals and household prayers [20]. However, with the rise of modern artistic practices and the accessibility of global influences, this ancient art form has undergone significant transformation. In contemporary times, Mata-ni-Pachedi has evolved from being a purely ritualistic object to a celebrated form of folk art. Contemporary artists have begun incorporating modern themes, materials, and techniques, blending traditional craftsmanship with new artistic sensibilities. This evolution raises several important questions: How have the motifs, colors, and themes of Mata-ni-Pachedi changed in contemporary interpretations? What elements have been retained, and which have been adapted to reflect modern social, political, and environmental concerns?

The motifs found in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi primarily focus on religious figures like Durga or Kali, surrounded by mythological beasts, flora, and other symbolic elements. In contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi, these traditional motifs have been expanded to include modern subjects such as social activists, endangered animals, and global environmental issues. Artists today use the goddess as a symbol not just of divine power but also as a figure representing protection, social justice, and environmental activism. For example, some contemporary works depict Durga surrounded by animals like tigers and lions, but also include motifs such as endangered species like the peacock or the elephant, reflecting the pressing need for environmental awareness. Similarly, flowers such as lotuses continue to appear in contemporary works, but they now symbolize more than just purity; they also serve as metaphors for ecological balance and sustainability [15].

In terms of color, traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi relied heavily on natural dyes made from plants, roots, and minerals, which produced earthy and muted tones such as reds, blacks, and whites. These colors were symbolic, each serving distinct spiritual roles in the artwork. Red, for instance, represented energy and divine authority, while black was used to convey protection and the eradication of evil. White, on the other hand, symbolized purity and divinity. In contrast, contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi often utilizes a broader and more vibrant color palette. Modern artists now incorporate synthetic dyes, which allow for richer and more diverse hues like yellows, blues, greens, and purples. These colors are used not only to capture spiritual significance but also to reflect modern-day themes—ecological harmony, social justice, and global unity.

Linework and detailing in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi are characterized by bold, unbroken lines created using bamboo sticks or hand brushes. The figures are often simplified, designed to convey clarity and focus. Ornamentation is carefully placed to highlight symbolic elements such as the goddess's weapons, jewelry, and divine attributes. Contemporary artists, however, often blend traditional hand-drawn techniques with digital tools, resulting in sharper lines and more intricate detailing. Mixed media, freeform expression, and layered textures are now employed, reflecting modern artistic movements such as surrealism and expressionism. This added complexity allows contemporary works to incorporate a greater level of detail, blending traditional aesthetics with modern artistic freedom [1,15].

The spatial organization in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi follows a strict and hierarchical structure. The goddess is positioned at the center, surrounded by symmetrical patterns, beasts, and other symbolic elements arranged in a balanced and orderly fashion. This symmetrical composition reflects the sacred space and devotion that Mata-ni-Pachedi is meant to embody. Contemporary artists, however, have moved away from these rigid structures. Their compositions often break the traditional symmetry, with fragmented or abstract spaces coexisting within a single artwork. Multiple narratives may now be represented simultaneously, allowing for a more interpretative approach to the goddess's presence. This shift enables artists to create artworks that can reflect modern-day concerns and encourage diverse interpretations of spiritual and environmental narratives [20].

The themes and contexts of Mata-ni-Pachedi have also evolved significantly. Traditionally, the art form focused on religious stories, the goddess's battles against evil forces, and the preservation of dharma (righteousness). Contemporary works, however, address a range of pressing social and political issues—caste discrimination, gender roles, political corruption, and environmental degradation. Modern artists now use the goddess as a symbol of activism and protection, not just in a religious sense but also as a figure representing social justice and advocacy. Global influences, including surrealism, abstraction, and pop art, have further enriched the contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi, creating a fusion of traditional and modern artistic elements. These contemporary works often blend religious iconography with modern-day social commentary, making the art form relevant to today's global audience [4].

Mata-ni-Pachedi has undergone a remarkable transformation from a ritualistic object to a vibrant form of contemporary folk art. Traditional motifs, symbols, colors, and techniques have been reinterpreted by modern artists, blending spirituality with current socio-political and environmental concerns. Contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi now

serves as both a spiritual artifact and a medium for modern expression, reflecting the rich heritage of Gujarat while addressing global issues [2, 3]. This case study highlights the enduring spiritual roots of Mata-ni-Pachedi and demonstrates how tradition and modernity coexist in this timeless art form.

2. TRADITIONAL MATA-NI-PACHEDI: A CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

Within the area of Gujarat, Mata-ni-Pachedi has a profoundly ingrained spiritual and cultural importance. Painting on cotton or silk to make textiles that serve as portable shrines that may be utilized in homes, temples, or during different festivals is the traditional practice of this art form, which has been done by the Waghari people for a long time. In traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi artworks, the goddess, who is often shown as Durga or Kali, is the most prominent character. These goddesses are emblems of divine strength, protection, and the victory over evil [2 – 4]. These images often portray the goddess with several arms, each of which is wielding a different weapon, such as a sword, a shield, or a tridents, which is a sign of her might and her capacity to triumph over malicious forces. There are mythical animals like as lions, tigers, elephants, and other symbolic monsters that surround the goddess. These beasts represent strength, bravery, and divine protection. In addition, holy floral themes, like as lotuses, leaves, or lotuses, are usually integrated into the artwork. Each of these patterns has profound spiritual implications, and they signify purity, fertility, and spiritual enlightenment [5].

Natural dyes are the primary source of the color palette that is used in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi. This results in the creation of earthy tones that have profound spiritual meanings. Although the color red is often associated with fertility, vigor, and divine power, the color black is associated with protection, shielding from harm, and the elimination of evil. On the other hand, the color white is associated with purity, divinity, and spiritual enlightenment. When it comes to conveying the spiritual energy that is contained inside the artwork, these colors play a significant role. In addition to portrayals of the goddess, traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi also includes complex renderings of mythical stories, flora, fauna, and other symbols [6]. These depictions serve as visual storytelling that bring religious legends to life. In order to achieve symmetry, clarity, and accuracy, the patterns are painstakingly hand-drawn with bamboo brushes. This process is carried out with extraordinary care. The spiritual essence of the textile is preserved by the meticulous crafting of each stroke and detail, so making the cloth into a holy item that may be presented for worship. Not only does this handcrafted technique guarantee the genuineness of the artwork, but it also illustrates the profound emotional connection that exists between the community and the spiritual ideas that they hold.

There is an inextricable connection between Mata-ni-Pachedi and the exuberant celebrations that take place in Gujarat, particularly Navratri, when these textiles are shown during religious rites [7]. The artwork serves as a visual symbol of devotion and adoration for the goddess, and it plays a crucial part in the rites that are now being performed. Mata-ni-Pachedi is often displayed on walls or carried in processions during festivals. Its purpose is to serve as a focal point to which prayers and contributions may be directed. The religious significance of these textiles is reflected not only in the fact that they are used for religious purposes, but also in the care that is taken during the process of their creation. This care includes the meticulous selection of high-quality fabric, the application of natural dyes, and the utilization of precise techniques that have been handed down from generation to generation. Each individual piece of Mata-ni-Pachedi conveys the tales of devotion, veneration, and the collective cultural identity of the people of Gujarat. The artistic skill and spiritual significance that lie behind Mata-ni-Pachedi go well beyond the realm of simple ornamentation [8].

Hand-drawn patterns, vibrant colors, and meticulous attention to detail come together in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi to produce a textile that functions as a spiritual conduit, enabling people to establish a connection with the divine. The artwork in question is not just ornamental; rather, it has profound spiritual significance and functions as a medium for worship and the telling of stories. A global power that encompasses protection, strength, and generosity is represented by the goddess that is at the heart of these fabrics. The surrounding symbols, which include monsters, flora, and other natural components, each serve as metaphors for different aspects of life and spirituality. These metaphors are communicated via visual images, and they carry complex ideas. Because of its enduring workmanship and symbolic richness, traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi is a treasured component of the artistic and religious landscape of Gujarat. This is because it reflects the cultural history of Gujarat [2, 18, 19].

3. CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS: BLENDING TRADITION WITH MODERNITY

Mata-ni-Pachedi has undergone a transformation in recent years, evolving into a recognized type of folk art that has modern significance. This transformation has occurred much beyond its initial function as a holy cloth. current artists have created a one-of-a-kind fusion of the past and the present by incorporating current themes, methods, and materials into their work. These artists have been inspired by historic artworks and traditions. Not only has this union made it possible for the art form to represent spiritual commitment, but it has also made it possible for it to interact with contemporary sociopolitical and environmental problems. The growth of themes and symbols is maybe one of the most noticeable shifts that has taken place. The majority of the illustrations in traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi art were depictions of mythical characters, such as Durga or Kali, which are representations of divine strength and protection. On the other hand, modern artists are increasingly include a larger variety of topics in their work. The depiction of social activists, endangered animals, metropolitan landscapes, and images symbolizing gender equality and environmental protection have been frequent subjects in recent years. It is no longer sufficient to say that the goddess is only a symbol of divine might; rather, she is now also a manifestation of protection, advocacy, and activity in response to contemporary issues [5, 9, 10].

The color palette of modern Mata-ni-Pachedi has substantially expanded, in contrast to the traditional usage of natural dyes in the art form. While ancient textiles depended on earthy tones that were taken from natural sources, modern works use synthetic dyes, which results in a vivid palette of hues, including yellows, greens, blues, and purples, each of which has deeper and more expressive connotations. In addition to their spiritual importance, these colors today symbolize contemporary concepts like as the preservation of the environment, the promotion of peace, and the unification of the world. Both the linework and the details of current Mata-ni-Pachedi are different from the strong, uninterrupted lines that were used in the original designs. When it comes to creating complicated patterns that feature freeform expression and layered textures, artists employ a mix of digital tools and traditional processes rather often in today's contemporary art world. An increased degree of creative freedom is made possible by this intricacy, which allows for the merging of classic styles with inspirations from contemporary art trends such as surrealism and abstraction [9].

In modern Mata-ni-Pachedi, the spatial structure stands in stark contrast to the concentrated compositions that are characteristic of previous works. A holy and well-ordered hierarchy is reflected in traditional designs by placing the goddess at the center of the composition and surrounding her with additional components that are organized in a symmetrical pattern. Contemporary painters, on the other hand, deviate from this framework by often splintering or dismantling the figure of the goddess [14]. There are several storylines that live inside a single piece of artwork, which results in compositions that are layered and interpretive, allowing for a variety of interpretations. In a similar vein, the thematic substance has increased significantly outside the realm of mythical tales. In traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi, the emphasis was on the goddess's legendary role in the fight against evil. However, contemporary works address a broad range of important social and political concerns, such as discrimination based on caste, political corruption, gender inequity, and environmental destruction. This change is a reflection of the interaction that contemporary artists have with the present world reality, which involves merging classic themes with contemporary creative manifestations [11-13].

To add insult to injury, current Mata-ni-Pachedi has been molded by influences from all around the world. Surrealism, abstraction, and pop art are examples of Western art movements that have served as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists, inspiring them to explore with new styles, color palettes, and approaches to composition. The traditional art form has been substantially enhanced as a result of this cross-cultural contact, which has resulted in the creation of a composite of methods and aesthetics that spans the gap between the past and the contemporary. current Mata-ni-Pachedi is no longer limited to religious storytelling; rather, it has evolved into a potent vehicle for social criticism and creative investigation. It reflects the changing cultural environment of India while simultaneously embracing current global influences.

4. COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ELEMENTS

To get a comprehensive comprehension of the development of Mata-ni-Pachedi, it is essential to examine and contrast the fundamental components of both traditional and modern practices. In traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi, the emphasis was placed on mythical characters and colors that had symbolic meaning. However, modern painters have

widened the scope of the motifs to incorporate social, political, and environmental concerns. This contrast demonstrates how contemporary artists have reinvented classic themes while still maintaining the spiritual underpinnings of the art form. They have done this by combining traditional creative approaches with contemporary artistic expressions [9, 13].

4.1. MOTIFS AND SYMBOLISM

In traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi, the center figure is often the goddess, most commonly Durga or Kali. She is surrounded by pictures of legendary creatures, plants, and animals, all of which represent divine power, protection, and purity via their respective symbols. These designs are painstakingly hand-painted with natural dyes, and they express a profound spiritual essence that establishes a connection between the artwork and religious devotion [16, 17, 21]. A further emphasis is placed on the spiritual importance of the color palette, which is comprised of earthy tones like as red, black, and white. Each hue has distinct connotations, with red signifying fertility and vitality, black designating protection, and white representing purity. On the other hand, contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi has developed to embrace current topics in addition to traditional elements. Ancient symbolism is combined with modern sociopolitical and environmental issues in the works of contemporary artists, who today employ a wider variety of topics, such as endangered animals, social activists, and metropolitan environments. Figure 1 shows the motifs of goddess and Tortoise.

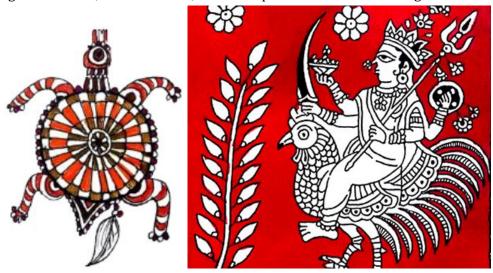


Figure 1 Motifs

The goddess is shown as a guardian and advocate, engaged with topics such as gender equality, climate change, and social justice. She is no longer described as only a symbol of divine might. Using synthetic dyes, modern works have enlarged their color pallet to include brilliant hues like as yellow, green, blue, and purple. These colors were formerly only available in certain colors. Messages that go beyond the spiritual realm are being sent via these hues, including those of ecological sustainability, peace, and harmony. In addition, contemporary painters often use digital tools in addition to conventional approaches. They create complicated patterns that have layered textures and freeform expression, therefore combining current creative tendencies such as surrealism and abstraction with classic forms. There has also been a change in the spatial structure of works; conventional works adhere to a centered and symmetrical composition, whilst modern artists experiment with fragmented and layered images that allow for many narratives to coexist. Matani-Pachedi has undergone a transition that demonstrates how contemporary artists have reworked historic themes in order to address current social, political, and environmental concerns. As a result, the art form has become more relevant to the audience of today, which is the global public.

4.2. COLOR PALETTE

Mata-ni-Pachedi was a traditional art form that predominantly used natural dyes, including red, black, and white, each of which had distinct spiritual connotations. The colour red is associated with life, divine power, and energy, while the colour black is associated with protection and the eradication of evil. White, on the other hand, is associated with

purity, divinity, and spiritual enlightenment. On the other hand, contemporary painters have expanded the color palette by using synthetic dyes, which has resulted in the introduction of several brilliant colors such as yellow, green, blue, and purple. These contemporary hues transcend beyond the realm of spiritual symbolism, representing current concerns such as social harmony, ecological sustainability, and global connection. Through the use of these extended colors, modern Mata-ni-Pachedi not only maintains the traditional craftsmanship of the past but also adapts to address contemporary social, political, and environmental problems, so making the art form more relevant to the audience of today, which is distributed all over the world.



Figure 2 Color Palette in Mata-ni-Pachedi

4.3. LINEWORK AND DETAILING

Mata-ni-Pachedi, in its traditional form, is characterized by the use of bamboo sticks or hand brushes to create lines that are strong and uninterrupted, and the use of basic forms that assure clarity. The spiritual core of the art is preserved via the use of these designs, which are centered on symbolic components and are produced by hand with great care. On the other hand, modern painters have embraced digital technologies, which have enabled them to create more complex details and lines that are more distinct. Utilizing this method makes it possible to create works of art that combine conventional methods with contemporary inspirations, such as expressionism and surrealist art. Through the use of mixed media, freeform expression, and layered textures, contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi creates works that connect with both historical origins and current creative inquiry. This is accomplished by combining the richness of history with contemporary artistic freedom [9, 13].



Figure 3 Line and Detailing in Mata ni Pachedi

4.4. SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Mata-ni-Pachedi artworks are characterized by their central composition, which places the goddess in the center of the composition and arranges the components that surround her in a symmetrical pattern. This structure draws attention to the sanctity and harmony that are included into the design. On the other hand, modern compositions have a tendency to move away from strict patterns and instead use fragmented or abstract components that coexist. This arrangement makes it possible for several storylines to be represented inside a single piece of artwork. This change enables a wider degree of creative flexibility and interpretation, allowing for the successful combination of classic themes with contemporary artistic expressions [21].



Figure 3 Line and Detailing in Mata ni Pachedi

4.5. THEMES AND CONTEXTS

In traditional Mata-ni-Pachedi, the primary emphasis is placed on religious tales, which describe the goddess's involvement in divine conflicts and legendary legends. These themes have their origins firmly planted in the symbolism and dedication to spirituality [4, 5, 7]. On the other hand, modern Mata-ni-Pachedi has developed to include social and political commentary, addressing topics such as inequality based on caste, governmental corruption, gender roles, and environmental degradation. Combining ancient themes with contemporary problems on a worldwide scale, these contemporary works are a reflection of the artists' active involvement with the difficulties that society faces in the present day. Through the incorporation of these topics, contemporary Mata-ni-Pachedi functions not only as a spiritual relic but also as a tool of social criticism, so making the art form relevant to audiences living in the modern day.



Figure 4 Modern Elements in Mata ni Pachedi

5. CONCLUSION

In the years since its traditional beginnings, Mata-ni-Pachedi has developed into a dynamic type of contemporary folk art that successfully combines elements of cultural heritage with current creative expression. The scope of this

ancient cloth has been enlarged by contemporary artists via the incorporation of new motifs, methods, and ideas that interact with contemporary social, political, and environmental problems. It is possible for Mata-ni-Pachedi to preserve its spiritual core while simultaneously adjusting to the realities of the modern world thanks to the combination of tradition and modernity. As a consequence of this, it continues to function both as a religious relic and as a dynamic form of folk art, representing the rich cultural past of Gujarat while also addressing the difficulties that contemporary society faces. The purpose of this case study is to investigate the continued development of Mata-ni-Pachedi, focusing on the ways in which ancient practices and modern influences coexist within this ageless cultural art form.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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