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Design Resource

Mata-ni-Pachedi, Ahmedabad

Temple Hangings

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Lija M. G., Srikant B. and Vijay G.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

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Introduction

Mata-ni-Pachedi is a traditional art of painting the image of goddesses on a piece of cloth found in the temple which is of a multicolored animated images of gods and goddesses, devotees, followers, flora and fauna with a narrative story. The term Mata-ni-Pachedi originated from Gujarati language, where Mata means 'goddess', ni means 'belongs to' and Pachedi means 'behind' When people of the nomadic Vaghari community of Gujarat were barred from entering temples, they made their own shrines with depictions of the Mother Goddess of different forms on to the cloth. The unique feature of this temple-hanging is the product layout of four to five pieces of Mata-ni-Pachedi erected to form a shrine for the Mother Goddess. Traditional Mata ni Pachedi is a rectangular piece of fabric used as a canopy in the place of ceiling in a nomadic shrine which houses the main mother goddess image at its center.

The rectangular fabric is divided into seven to nine columns followed by a narrative format which is made easier to interpret and impart the stories within the space created through layout work on the cloth. Maroon (red) and black were the only colors used with the surface of the cotton material as the third color. Black is majorly used as the outlines for the icons and the motifs meant to repel malevolent spirits and intensify spiritual energy. White considered being the color of purity that contacts with ancestral spirits and deities. Maroon (Red) color of blood (rakta) associated with the goddess and believed to possess the healing powers. Bhuvo or bhuva were the priest who performs the rituals, Jagorais the singers who interpreted the pachedis and Chitaras the artists who paint the shrine hangings. The Chitara community draws on the fabric and fills the images by hand. Central image and surrounding figures vary in size and position as per the artist's creative imagination.

According to the artisans, if there is more work to be completed, the entire family gets involved in the work-preparing/making the fabric, drawing and applying colour, filling, boiling, washing etc. Children in the household slowly start joining the family profession and are involved in filling the colors and in all the activities done around them. Wooden blocks are eventually replaced for sharper drawings. Hand drawn Mata ni Pachedi are done side by side but it is more labour intense and more expensive than the block printed ones. The Devipujak practice animal sacrifice before the Goddess with an offering of a new Pachedi to the Goddess.

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Outlines of the drawing is drawen with black dye.



The design are filled with colors.

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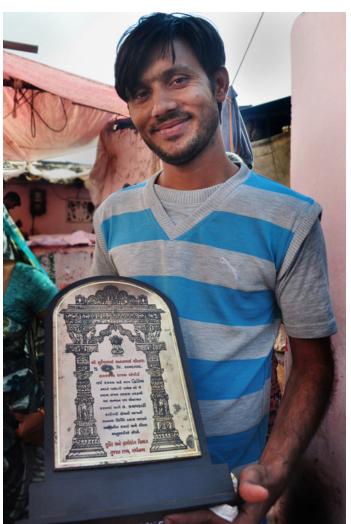
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Artisan received National Award in 2007 for his outstanding art work of Maata ni Pachedi.



Red, green, yellow and black are the foremost colors used in this craft.

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Women artisans are mostly involved in the coloring work.



For large Maata ni Pachedi work family members and relatives join together and work.



Craftsman applying black colour to the darwing with a pointed object.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Different types of raw materials are used in making Mata-ni-Pachedi work. The raw materials are purchased from local markets. The artisans use natural substances for making colour.

• Tools Used:

Bamboo Stick: Bamboo Stick is used as brush to fill the outlines of the drawing.

Dates Stick: Dates Stick is used as a brush to fill in the colors.

Blocks: Designed blocks used to give the borders on fabric.

Printing Pad: This is used to spread the colors evenly in wooden tray.

• Raw Materials:

Kachuka Atta (tamarind seed) Powder: Kachuka Atta is used for making the fabric yellow.

Alum: Alum is used as a mordant in making of red color.

Dhawdi ka Phool (Dhawda flowers, Rajasthan flower): These are used to make fabric surface whiter.

Aligarin Powder: It is used to darken the colored parts.



Scrap iron metal is dipped in the mixture of jaggery and water for 10-15 days to produce black color.

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Picture of Kachu ka atta (tamarind seed powder).



Heated mixture of jaggery, scrap iron metal and kachu ka atta for black color.



Brush made from date tree is used to paint the red colors.



Dhawda ka flower is added to the container with water for boiling process.

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A mixture of Kachu ka atta, water and alum is made for red color.



Ingredients used for the boiling process of Maata ni pachedi.



Green color fabric paint used for filling the color on the Maata ni pachedi as per the customers demand.

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Free-hand sketch of idol is drawn on the cloth.

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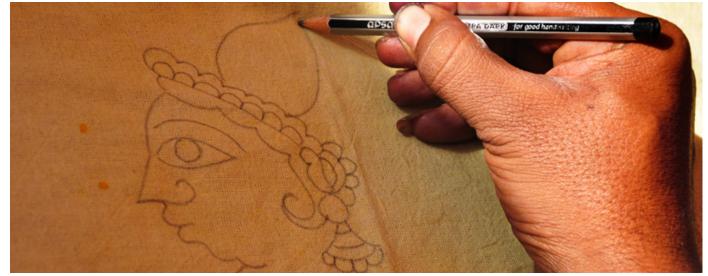
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Making Process

The grey fabric is unsuitable for dyeing or printing process in the beginning and for this reason the cloth is soaked in water for 24 hours to remove the sizes (starch). Fabric is then soaked in the paste of harda powder (tamarind seed powder) and water for about 10-15 minutes and dried in sun. The sketching of the required pattern of any one of the form of Mata (Goddess) is drawn at the center and surrounded by other images usually derived from the puranic myths. Outlines of the drawings are manually painted using bamboo stick/brush with black color, which is prepared by heating a mixture of jaggery, scrap iron metal (iron sulphate) and kachuka atta (tamarind seed powder), the gaps are filled with red color made by heating the mixture of the water, tamarind seed powder and alum. The fabric looks yellow with black colored figures on it and then dried under direct sunlight.

The fabric is boiled with alizarin which is a yellow powder made from the root of the madder plant, traditionally used as a mordant that reacts with alum to bring out the red color. Dhawda ka phool (Dhawda flowers, Rajasthan flower locally called) is added once it reaches the boiling point and checked in intervals to maintain the white areas of the cloth where it is not painted. The craftsmen wash the cloth at the banks of river Sabarmati in Ahmedabad so that excess color flows away and doesn't stain on the fabric, then the fabric is spread on the banks for sun bleaching and drying, where no foot of man or animal is allowed to be placed on this sacred cloth. Work stops completely during the rainy season as the damp wet weather is not feasible for printing. One person can make about 25-30 Mata ni pachedi's in a month.



KA selected form of Maata (Mother- Goddess) is drawn at the center of each Pachedi on the harda cloth.

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Mixture of jaggery, scrap iron metal and kachu ka atta (tamarind seed powder) is heated for black color.



Outlines of black color are painted on the drawing with a pointed object.



Bamboo stick is used to fill in the drawing with black color.

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Craftsmen draw and fill the colors.



After painting black color the cloth is dried.



For red color Kachu ka atta (tamarind seed powder) is mixed well with water.



To the mixture of kachu ka atta and water alum and yellow color powder is added and heated.

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Design is filled with color applied by the brush made date tree.

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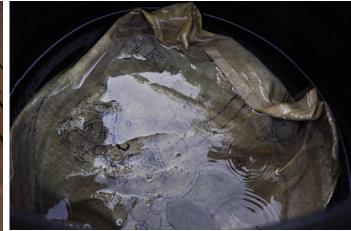
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The yellow color changes to red when boiled in dhwada ka phool solution.



Before boiling the painted cloth is dipped in water for 10-15 mins.



After dipping the cloth in water it is not squeezed.

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Cloth is dried in sunlight before the boiling process.



Dhawda ka flower is added to the container with water for boiling process.



Aligarin powder is placed in a small cloth and dipped, rubbed with hand to the solution for boiling.



Fabric is immersed and removed several times in sequence in the solution to check changing of the color.

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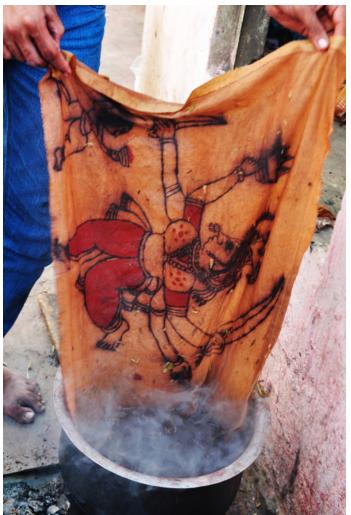
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Dhawda ka phool (flower) is added to the solution and boiled till the uncolored portions turns whiter.



After boiling fabric is washed in normal water.

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Fabric is dried in direct sunlight.



Artisan fills green and other colors to the Maata ni pachedi as per the customer demand.



Women artisans also play their part in the making of Maata ni pachedi.

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Products

Ahmedabad is one of the major centers for traditional and contemporary textile designs in India. Mata Ni Pachedi is a traditional hand painting craft practiced from ancient times. The temple hangings in Ahmedabad are known as Mata Ni Pachedi (called locally) which means Mother of Goddess.

The traditional products of Mata Ni Pachedi are made using three main colors maroon (red) black and white. The fabrics are designed by making Goddess (Mata) in the center and surrounded by animals, birds, human figure motifs etc. The products are mainly used in nomadic temples and offerings are made to fulfill the worshipper's wishes.

The skilled artisans prepare the Mata Ni Pachedi as per the customer's demand of varying sizes such as from half meter to 5meters. The products are mainly used for performing rituals. But these days the fabrics are mainly sold as a work of art more than worship cloths. New designs/styles are created now i.e. cushion covers and wall hangings.



Maata ni Pachedi with Kali form of Maata (Goddess).

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Lakshmi form of Maata is depicted at the center of this Maata ni Pachedi.



Durga Maata sitting on a lion is depicted in this Maata ni Pachedi.



Another form of Maata sitting on the goat is depicted on this hanging.

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Now a days Maata ni pachedi's are filled with fabric paint of green, yellow and orange color as per the customer's preferences.

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Contact Details

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