

Design Resource

## Traditional Applique Work - Pipli, Orissa

Traditional Pipli Applique Work

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Manasa K. H.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/traditional-applique-work-pipli-orissa>



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## Introduction

A few kilometers from Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa. One of the most popular craft of Orissa is the Pipli applique technique work that comes from the town of Pipli. Pipli is small town, situated about 40kilometers from Puri, Orissa. In the old days, Pipli craftsmen used to make canopies, banners, umbrellas and trasa (fans) for festivals held in Puri's famous temple. But as the craft's popularity spread far and wide through the pilgrims of Puri, the craftsmen started making other decorative and utility items also. The use of all these products are associated with the religious ceremonies of Lord Jagannath. So it can be concluded that this art form ascribes its origin to the Jagannath cult. Patronized by kings and nobility of Orissa, applique work at one time had reached the artistic heights of excellence.

The kings of Puri engaged craftsmen in the service of Lord Jagannath and set up village Pipli for them to live in. They were especially skilled in designing the canvas cloth that is used to cover the chariots of Lord Jaganath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. The income of this state is mainly depended on the sale of its handicrafts.

Applique is a French technique that basically cuts up various coloured fabrics which are then sewn to the surface of another foundation fabric. But essentially it has now developed into a needlework technique in which smaller pieces of fabric materials like small mirrors and other forms of embroidery are sewn onto a bigger piece of the cloth to create.

Appliqué is art, a process of cutting coloured cloth into shapes of animals, birds, flowers leaves gods, goddesses and other decorative motifs and stitching them on a piece of cloth. On one hand, the village showcases the intense involvement of the men, and especially the women, in the applique production. Machine stitching has also caught up with the artisans of this town which is a proud achievement for these workers. But the people of this town are mostly proud of their handcrafted achievements because that is the purest way of keeping their art heritage alive.

The traditional appliqué items are mainly used during processions of the deities in their various ritual outings. Items like umbrella, Tarrasa – a heart-shaped wooden piece covered by appliqué cloth and supported by a long wooden pole and Chandua – an umbrella shaped canopy are usually seen during the processions. Another popular item is a sort of frill which is used as a border to canopies and also independently as a decorative piece.

In modern pipli applique work motifs used consist of stylized representations of flora and fauna as well as a few mythical figures. Of the more common of these motifs are the elephant, parrot, peacock, ducks, creepers, trees, flowers like lotus, jasmine, half-moon, the Sun and Rahu (a mythical demon who devours the sun).

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Flat design are first cut from cloth and then superposed on the base cloth in a predetermined layout and sequence. The edges of the motifs are turned in and skillfully stitched onto the base cloth or stitched by embroidery or without turning as necessary. Craftsmen use straight stitch, blind stitch, satin stitch or buttonhole stitch for attaching the pieces of cloth.

Artisan sulochana who is 75 years old is involved in Pipli applique work from her childhood and she is currently working under Pipli applique society. There are 55 people who are working under the Pipli applique society. Embroidery work is mostly done by women and cutting works by men. These applique work are used in the flags of Jagannath temple, and during the rathjathra festival. Sometimes orders will be given by the companies to make a pipli applique work with their logo.

She works on both hand and machine. They earn more profit in machine work. Whereas the hand embroidery work are more time consuming and less profit. All the materials required for the embroidery work such as needle, threads, mirrors etc will be provided to craftsman by the organization by whom they get regular embroidery works. These pipli applique work is done on the different types of fabrics such as cotton, velvet, organdy and satin.



Retailers displaying applique work products in Pipli main street, Orissa.

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Traditional lamps hung at the store for display.



A lamp of good color combination of red and yellow.

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Embroidery patterns made to complete applique work.

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Artisan displaying the stitches made on the fabric.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used for traditional applique work:

**Needles:** A very fine slender piece of polished metal with a point at one end and a hole or eye for thread at the other, used in sewing.

**Threads:** A long, thin strand of cotton, nylon, or other fibers used in sewing or weaving.

**Cloth:** Different types of cloths are used to make a applique cloth

**Scissors:** Tool used for cutting paper, cloth etc.

**Sewing Machine:** Machine with a mechanically driven needle for sewing or stitching cloth.

**Marker:** It is used to draw the design patterns on cloth

**Mirrors:** They are used in process of embroidering of applique work.

**Metal Pieces:** They are used in process of embroidering of applique work.



Plastic rings wrapped with woolen.

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Silver circular sheets used to make the applique work more attractive.



Velvet sheets are cut to strips with the help of scissors.



Metal wire with plastic piping.



Cloth is stitched with the help of tailoring machine.

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Needle and thread is used to stitch and complete the design patterns.

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## Making Process

This exquisite craft is usually practiced on red, purple, black, yellow, green and white fabric. The craftsman first prepares the base material in the shape of square, rectangle, and circle or oval which forms the background for the pieces of art. Over the patched and stitched material embroidery design will be made using needle by different coloured threads and mirrors. The metal or mirrors are added to the cloth only after that the embroidery is stitched. The actual grace of appliqué craft lies in its intricate stitches namely, bakhia, guntha, turpa, chikan and other very delicate and esoteric embroidery techniques. Small mirrors and bright metal pieces are used to enhance its beauty. After the material is embroidered with a traditional design, the borders are then stitched.

The designing of the lampshade begins with cutting coloured cloth into different shapes and stitching them together to make an applique cloth. Mirrors are stacked onto it using simple stitching process. Many artisans even add borders and other forms of embellishment to enhance the beauty of the lampshades.

A simple stenciling of the size of the lampshade required and then cutting the shape out on a cardboard paper. The stencil outlines are then traced out neatly over the cloth. The important thing to note is the artisans' need to preserve the cloth because they believe in minimal wastage and try to rescue and recycle as much cloth and material as possible. The traced outlines are then cut onto many identical layers of cloth which then are bundled together. This makes it easy to store and use them when required.

Lampshades usually make use of a coarse and low cost material cloth onto which the appliqués are then machine stitched in simple and decorative patterns. Then the artisans make use of wooden or iron rings to mould it into the shape of the lampshade.

These lampshades are usually prepared in bulk because they are extensively used during festivals. But since they have even picked up a market in many cities, they are constantly in demand. This has meant a steady means of employment for many men and women in the town of Pipli. Amazingly, in lampshades alone, over 1000 designs and patterns are available.

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### Flow Chart



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Strips of cloth are stitched in the tailoring machine.



More strips of cloth are attached and stitched.



The ends of cloth are stitched.



The cloth is stitched layer-by-layer attaching more strips.

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Stitched strips of red and yellow fabric.

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The top part of the lamp is stitched.



The sides and enclosing part of the lamp is stitched.



Strips of fabric stitched and completed.

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Metal wire with a plastic piping is inserted inside for the steadiness of the lamp.

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A lamp stitched completely is held at display.



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## Products

Applique work forms a major part of the handicrafts of Orissa. The applique work is a piece of art that is done by cutting beautiful pattern on a piece of cloth. Patterns depicting flowers, animals, etc. are made, which are then stitched beautifully on another piece of cloth. In Pipli, one can come across rows of shops flaunting the applique work. The applique work includes bed covers, letter cases, cushion covers, wall hangings, pillow covers, bed sheets, hand bags, canopies, garden and umbrellas. The price starts from INR.100. And varies according to the size and design adapted in the applique work.



Patterns are stitched along with accessories and collected.

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Applique work stitched to create Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra.



Applique work of Lord Jagannath.



Wall hanging with peacock and floral designs.



Patch of cloth stitched to peacock form.

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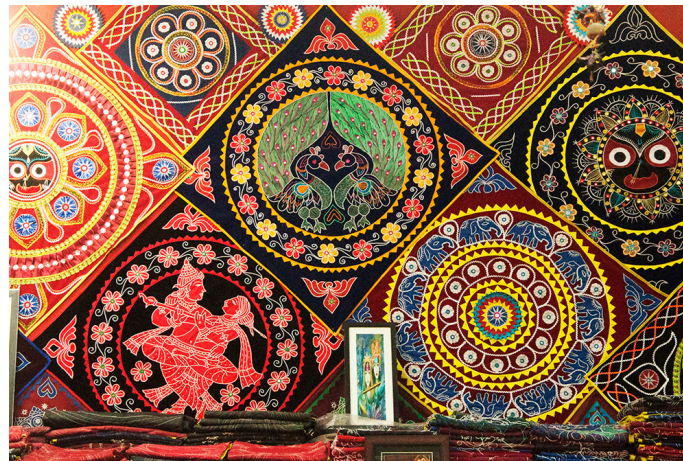
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Mythological scenes also influence applique work.



Wall hanging done in contemporary style with combination of warm colors.



A collection of wall hangings displayed.



A set of lamps hung to display at Pipli store.

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A collection of traditional applique work of Pipli, Orissa.

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## Video



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## Contact Details

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