

# **A Comparative Study of Growth and Sustainability Aspect of Handicraft Industry in Kachchh and Ahmedabad Districts**

*Namrata P. Thakkar\**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Kutch and Ahmedabad districts are part of the state Gujarat. Kutch, one of the largest districts of the country is known for its diversity in culture. The same diversity is witnessed in its arts and craft. Various communities who shifted from different region to Kutch has contributed their regional arts and craft to the district. This contribution has been recognized nationally and internationally too. Another district Ahmedabad is important economic and industrial hub of the country. It is second largest producer of cotton in India, Paving the way for development of Handicraft industry in the region. Diversity is observed in culture and crafts of the district same way as it is observed in Kutch. Considering the diversity and craft in both the districts, Researcher compares and contrast selected arts and crafts of the districts with respect to their sustainability and Growth aspect. The paper collects and analyses secondary data available from official websites of the districts.*

**Keywords:** *Handicrafts; Art; Culture.*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Kachchh and Ahmedabad districts are part of the state Gujarat. Kachchh, one of the largest districts of the country is known for its diversity in culture. The same diversity is witnessed in its arts and craft. Various communities who shifted from different region to Kachchh has contributed their regional arts and craft to the district. This contribution has been recognized nationally and internationally too. Another district Ahmedabad is important economic and industrial hub of the country. It is second largest producer of cotton in India, Paving the way for development of Handicraft industry in the region. Diversity is observed in culture and crafts of the district same way as it is observed in Kachchh. Considering the diversity and craft in both the districts, Researcher compares and contrast selected arts and crafts of the districts with respect to their sustainability and Growth aspect. The paper collects and analyses secondary data available from official websites of the districts.

## **2.0 Objectives**

- To study the crafts of Kachchh and Ahmedabad District
- To compare the selected craft of Kachchh and Ahmedabad District

## **3.0 Methodology**

The present paper is based on secondary data collected from official websites of government, various research papers, magazines and articles.

## **4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The following data was collected and analysed.

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*\*Assistant Professor, Chanakya Vidhyapeeth Commerce College, Kachchh, Gujarat, India (Email namu.thakkar83@gmail.com)*

#### 4.1 Ajrakh

The word Ajrakh as per the local artisans means “Keep it today” which is also connected to azrakh- Arabic name for indigo which is found in the arid ecology of Kachchh. The history of this craft is related to local communities of Kachchh like Rabaris, Maldharis and Ahirs who wear printed cloth as turbans, lungis or stoles. Complex geometry patterns are created on cloth using red and blue colour. The feature which makes this craft different is its dying process majorly done with natural colours which are truly fast. The cloth is made in a sixteen step process which includes washing, dyeing, printing and drying which requires higher level of skill with concentration in order to keep the colours fast and even. Pomegranate seeds, gum, Harde powder, wood, kachika flour, Dhavadi flower, alizarine and indigo are some of the natural resources used by the artisans.

Because of being eco-friendly this craft is gradually gaining momentum, but with the introduction of synthetic fiber the demand of Ajrakh is challenged.

#### 4.2 Mata ni Pachedi

The word Mata ni Pachedi mean “behind the mother goddess” which comprises a temple of the goddess. The history of this craft is believed to be initiated by the nomadic Devipujak community who were restricted from entering the temple made their own shrines with the figure of mother goddess on the cloth. The major painting highlights the mother goddess in her mighty form in the centre of the cloth surrounded by deities and commoners worshipping her, depicting the stories of god and goddess majorly painted with red colour and a little of white and black colour. The cloth passes through several steps consisting soaking, sketching and painting, dyeing, washing and finally drying. Jaggery, scrap iron metal, kachuka atta, Dhavadi flower, alizarine are few natural resources used to prepare the colours for the cloth.

The craft is getting refined to suit changing times creating pachedis that are relevant in present situation.

Points	Ajrakh	Mata ni Pachedi
Similarities	The making process and use of natural colours	
Difference	Used by men and women for wearing	Used for aesthetic purpose
Place of Origin	Sindh	Ahmedabad
Practicing Communities	Khatri	Devipujak
Products	Turbans, lungis or stoles	Pachedi

#### 4.3 Wood carving of Kachchh

Wood Carving of Kachchh reflects the culture of Thar Desert including Sindh of Pakistan, Barmer and Jaisalmer of Rajasthan and the Rann of Kachchh of Gujarat. Harijan community of Ludiya and Dumaro are practising this craft. These villages are renowned for their artistic work. By using only two tools namely hammer and chisel floral and geometrical patterns are carved on the wood. The wood so used in this craft is teak wood, Malaysian wood or the local available wood. The carving on wood is done in such a manner that the raised portion reflects the geometrical and floral designs. Architectural elements like doors, jharukha, overhanging balconies, and furniture like stools, cradles, bed-posts, cot-legs and kitchenware are produced by a unique technique.

This craft need revival and up gradations of motifs as well as products to face the current market requirements.

#### 4.4 Wood carving of Ahmedabad

This craft which exists from 12<sup>th</sup> century is continued not by the locals but the migrated craftsmen from Delhi approximately two decades ago in Ahmedabad. Planks of teak wood are cut into required sized pieces with help of electrical jig-saw machine.

Points	Wood Carving of Kachchh	Wood Carving of Ahmedabad
Similarities	Art itself is same,	
Difference	Labour intensive, Teak wood named Malaysian wood is used	Machine and Labour intensive, Sagwan Teak wood is used
Place of Origin	Sindh, Rajasthan & Kachchh	Uttar Pradesh
Practicing Communities	Harijan	Craftsmen from Delhi
Products	Doors, Jharukha, Overhanging balconies, Stools, Cradles, Bed-posts, Cot-legs and Kitchenware	Temple shrines, Swings and Furniture

Curves and different shapes are also cut with careful manoeuvring through machines. From Mughal style flowers and vines to Gujarati parrots, peacocks and elephants a combination of these patterns are engraved on the wood, and the excess of wood is chipped off with chisels, which are of different size and shapes. Steel rulers, L-scales and dividers are the measuring tools. Finally a spray of varnish is sprayed to give a smooth shine. Many crafts and arts are combination of culture and religion. This craft is one such example of harmony and beautiful co-existence of same. Temple shrines, swings and furniture are the products majorly made by the craftsmen.

#### 4.5 Emdroidery

From about 16 different embroidery work practised in Kachchh, the most well-known one is Rabari embroidery with its chain stitches and generous use of mirrors. The art gets its name from the Rabari community who migrated to Kachchh from Sindh about 400 years ago. Along with cattle rearing they have engaged their selves in this art. Men work with leather and women on fabric and accessories. The unique feature of this art is that the sub-community of Rabari's can be identified through the particular embroidery work done by them. With the help of needle and thread stitching is done without any sketch or pattern drawn on the fabric. Wall hangings, toran, bed covers, bags, camel decorations and garments with designs like things seen in daily lives; flowers and bushes, peacocks and camels, women doing household chores and men tending to cattle are prepared.

#### 4.6 Aari work

The history of this art goes deep as the time of Rig-Veda. It flourished during regime of Mughal Emperor, Akbar. Aari embroidery is a much adorned craft of Gujarat which requires a lot of precision and method best known to the artisans. The art of aari embroidery, zari and zardosi has the Persian essence since the royal days. This craft not only requires understanding but also an innate technique. Firstly, a pattern is drawn in butter paper, getting it embossed on the fabric with the help of chalk. The oval like needle named aari is pierced through the cloth and tread is brought to the upper side and used to secure the previous stitch. The process is followed repeatedly until the desired pattern is created on the fabric which is silk or satin named 'Gajji. Embroidered sarees, suits, dupattas and traditional Gujarati ghagra-cholis with bootis of various shapes and sizes, motifs and designs of peacocks, flowers are made thereof. In spite of facing a whirlwind of change this craft has got its importance all over the globe.

Points	Emdroidery	Aari Work
Similarities	Both the craft have the technique of stitching and creating artistics designs on cloth.	
Difference	Mirrors are used	Gold/ silver thread is used
Place of Origin	Sindh	Lucknow
Practicing Communities	Rabari, Ahir and Muslims	Mocha
Products	Wall hangings, toran, bed covers, bags, camel decorations and garments	Sarees, suits, dupattas, ghagra-cholis

## 5.0 Conclusion

The art and craft of both districts has its own identity and distinguishing characteristics. Kachchh on one hand has a variety of skill based craft whereas Ahmedabad being a textile hub has started combining the traditional and contemporary arts and designs to meet the global demand. There is no substitute for craft of Kachchh but still this sector needs a push-up to be highlighted at the global level. If the needful is done this sector has the potential to outperform globally as well. On another hand Ahmedabad has changed its craft on timely manner on the basis of contemporary demands.

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