

Ikat: Undaunted Journey of a Traditional Textile Practice, a Sublime Connect of Traditionality with Modernity and Calibration for Eco-Sustainable Options

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Abstract : Traditional textile crafts are universally found to have been significantly impeded by the uprise of innovative technologies, but sustained human endeavor, in sync with dynamic market nuances, holds key to these otherwise getting fast-extinct marvels. The metamorphosis of such art-forms into niche markets pre-supposes sharp concentration on adaptability. The author has concentrated on the ancient handicraft of Ikat in Andhra Pradesh (India), a manifestation of their cultural heritage and esoteric cottage industry, so very intrinsic to the development and support of local economy and identity. Like any other traditional practice, ikat weaving has been subjected to the challenges of modernization. However, owing to its unique character, personalize production and adaptability, both of material and process, ikat weaving has stood the test of time by way of judiciously embellishing innovation with contemporary taste. To survive as a living craft as also to justify its role as a universal language of aesthetic sensibility, it is imperative that ikat tradition should lend itself continuous process of experiments, change and growth. Besides, the instant paper aims to examine the contours of ikat production process from its pure form, to more fashion and market oriented production, with upgraded process, material and tools. Over the time, it has adapted well to new style-paradigms, duly matching up with the latest fashion trends, in tandem with the market-sensitivities. Apart, it is an effort to investigate how this craft could respond constructively to the pressure of contemporary technical developments in order to be at cutting edge, while preserving its integrity. In order to approach these issues, the methodology adopted is, conceptual analysis of the craft practices, its unique strength and how they could be used to advance the craft in relation to the emergence of technical developments. The paper summarizes the result of the study carried out by the author on the peculiar advantages of suitably- calibrated vat dyes over natural dyes, in terms of its recycling ability and eco-friendly properties, thus holding definite edge, both in terms of socio-economic as well as environmental concerns.

Keywords : craft, eco-friendly dyes, ikat, metamorphosis

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