



BLOCK PRINTING – CONCLUDING PART

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Kalamkari Prints

Kalamkari, another technique of block-printing on fabric is from Andhra Pradesh. The origin of the word Kalamkari is from kalam or pen and kari or work. The Kalamkari is a mix of painting and hand-printing. This craft is believed to have originated in the old city of Golconda after which it spread along the eastern coast up to Tamil Nadu.

Kalamkari generally uses earthy colors like indigo, mustard, rust, black and green. Natural dyes used to paint colors in Kalamkari art is extracted for natural sources with no use of chemicals and artificial matter. Like craftsmen extract black color by blending jaggery, water and iron fillings which they use for outlining the sketches. While mustard or yellow is derived by boiling pomegranate peels, red hues are created from bark of madder or alginin. Blue is obtained from indigo and green is derived by mixing yellow and blue together. Mordants like alum are used to fix the colors onto the cloth. Wax is used as the resist agent when combinations of colors are used to embellish different parts of the design. The wax-resist is hand-printed on to the fabric with a kalam or pen made of an iron loop attached to a bamboo stick. This step is done before the application of indigo. After the wax is removed by boiling, other colors are applied. The detailed coloring is done with a brush. Running water is used for washing and the process takes several days, weeks, or months depending on the length of the cotton cloth. The blocks used are made by specialist artisans.

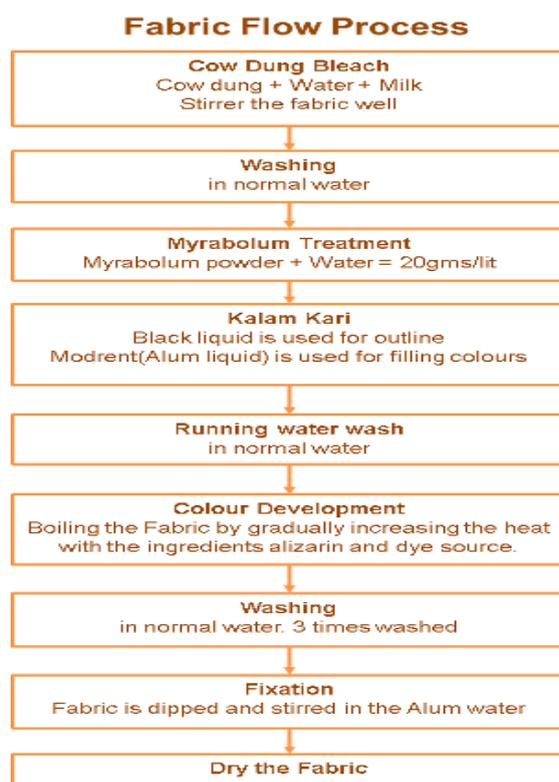


Fig 1.1 Kalamkari printing process in traditional way

Summary

Hand block printing, as a technique, has become a part of every industry. Block printed materials are being used from table napkins to range of apparels.

The innovations that have been introduced in the industry are not only different designs; there are different technologies as well. When screen printing was introduced in the printing industry, it overshadowed the hand block printing. Now the things are changing and people understand the differences between block and screen print and both industries flourish in co-existence.

Hand printing fits well into India as well as Western way. From salwar suits to trendy tops, block prints can be found in a wide range of apparels. The global wear-ability of this fabric gives sophisticated appeal. Moreover, the easy maintenance of block print draws consumers from across the globe. Basics like washing them on the reverse, ironing them regularly and keeping them free of stains can easily add value to the life of the block printed fabrics.

The future of block printing looks quite impressive, however further innovation is required.

Wishing you a great week ahead!

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