CHAPTER III

VARIOUS TYPES OF HANDICRAFTS IN SANTINIKETAN AND SRINIKETAN

3.1 Introduction

It is a well-known fact that through the art and crafts of Tagore family and their close associates tried to bring about a change in the taste of sophisticated Indians in the last century. Initially, it was a part of the wave of Indian nationalism and to reestablish the cultural entity of India. They were infuriated at the newly educated Indians who were more than eager to buy the imported foreign products which were in every aspect inferior to Indian goods.

Tagore understood the dilemma of the young Indians who wanted such items which will be less decorated but will be appropriately useful in particular occasions. While travelling abroad Rabindranath saw such beautiful artistic goods in Japan that are simple in form, useful for particular purposes. Yet not lacking in artistic taste. Our poet was very much impressed by the gardening, sculpture, pottery, utensils of Japan. He wanted to experiment in the educational system of Santiniketan in order to bring about fundamental changes in educational and cultural aspects and also to change the basic moral value of the Indians. He tried to initiate a process of rebirth and regeneration of Indian culture. In the social life, especially in seasonal celebration of Santiniketan, encouragement was given to practice different art forms and group creativity. Rabindranath along with Nandalal Bose established Kala Bhavan in 1919. Nandalal Bose was an experienced person in the field of Art education. He wanted to give advices and help the student of Kala Bhavan in the ideals of art. He also felt the need of merging practice of art with Socio-economic practice. He realized that art makes one's life not only beautiful but also economically prosperous.

Santiniketan Ashram is a special centre of learning where students from all over the world come to educate themselves. Tagore always wanted to develop Santiniketan and Sriniketan as centre for practicing art and crafts so that the village people can be self-sufficient.

3.2 Textile :

Textile designing occupies a very special place in Santiniketan. Its demand is ever increasing in India and abroad. Batik printing, Katha stitch and Block painting are some examples of the authentic Santiniketan school of textile designing. Santiniketan Batik and Kantha work have a very special place in the world of textile design.

3.2.1 Weaving :

This was once a flourishing industry of the region run by thousands of handloom weavers. The handloom products of Silpa – Bhavan were attractive, of high quality and also reasonable priced.

In Silpa Sadana of Sriniketan, the weaving branch produced tape, napkin, cloth, carpet, blanket etc. of various materials. For producing silk cloth and carpet, this branch of Sriniketan got design from Kala Bhavan. The produced materials from Silpa Sadan are napkin, lungi, bag, clothes to be worn, curtain, for windows and doors, dress materials, simple and decorated weaving cloth and also school dress for students. Techniques like extra weave, plain weave, Manipuri design motifs were used. Sarees were found simple but the borders were used with contrast colour. Bags were found very much decorative. The colour of bags were bright and contrast. For making attractive, different weaves were used. The red, blue, green colour were used in carpets. Opposite colours were used in carpets for making these more contrast. Towill weaving techniques were used in the contrasting border of carpet. Its design was very much simple but attractive.

3.2.2 Batik :

Tagore visited Java in September 1927 and there he found the Batik work which made him charmed and interested to bring handicraft tools for introducing this Batik work in Santiniketan. We can also recall Acharjee Nandalal Bose who took initiative in spreading the Batik work in Santiniketan. Like Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose also visited various states for collecting various samples of handicrafts. These are still found in Kala Bhavan museum. These preserved handicrafts could inspire the then Artisan.

While Rabindranath Tagore visited Java, he took with him the artisan Surendra Kar, Dhirendra Krishna Deb Barma and Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay. While Rabindranath Tagore was returning from Java, he took some tools of Batik which is called Tjantings. But the motifs of Batik in Java is quite different from Santiniketan. No doubt batik of Java could influence the handicrafts Santiniketan though the motif of Batik printing of Java remained unsued as the design of this type made in thin line where as in Santiniketan it was made like Alpona. In Santiniketan, Batik work was being done in its own style. The contribution of people who were living in hermitages of Santiniketan regarding handicrafts was incomparable. Most of the people living in hermitage of Santiniketan tried to improve handicraft through various experiments. Specially, we can recall the contribution of Karusangho in raising the standard of Handicrafts in Santiniketan. The value and importance of Batik was raised with the establishment of Karusangho in 1930. Though Karusangho was not being continued for a long time as its destruction was started in 1938. The handicrafts of Santiniketan were being spread in various countries after establishing Karusnagho. We still recall the incomparable contribution of Nandalal Bose and Pravat Mohan Bondapadhyaya towards the development of handicrafts in Santiniketan through Karusangho. At that time, all the business order of handicrafts were made via Karusangho. What we can understand by studying the then newspaper, for exampole "Prabasi" (Shraban 1337), "Ananda Bajaar Patrika" (25th March, 1930) and journal of the Indian Society of oriental art (June, 1930). Indusudha Ghose wrote a design book on stitch work which was published in 1930. We get some information about the philosophy of Nandalal Bose about designing and the culture of handicraft in Santiniketan from this design book.

Earlier it is mentioned that the Indian Batik work (Modern Resist) have been spreading for a long days in various states especially in southern part of India. This type of handicraft were exporting and importing in business form in between Java, Indonesia and India. We still find this types of Batik work in the various temples of southern part of India. Wall hangings, cadhawa etc. are used in these temples which are made with printing design. These are based on Hindu Mythology.

The cultivation of Batik handicraft started in Santiniketan after Tagore returned from Java. But its tendency was not like the design of god and goddesses of South, its tendency was like Alpona design. Santiniketan Batik handicraft started with

boldness in its design. When a simple design gets entry in Batik design, it transformed in an incomparable beauty of art. Village Alpona and the design of Ajanta and Ellora influenced the Batik design in Santiniketan and ultimately Batik design reached with incomparable beauty. At first, the Batik design followed the style of Alpona design and later it was transformed in various patterns according to the taste of different artisan. We come to know this information from the book of Hoimanti Chakraborty's "Dutch Batik".

In Santiniketan, the work of Batik design started through various workshop. These workshops were established by Pratima Tagore and Andre Carpeles in 1923. Later Shilpa Sadan followed this handicraft and ultimately it took a greater shape. In between 1930 and 1935, the leather Batik and Batik printed design were started in Kala Bhavan. We get the information from the book of Binode Bihari's "Adhunik Shilpo Shiksha". We also come to know the contribution of Rabindranath Tagore, Hirendra Mohan Ghose and other artists of Kala Bhavan for the development of Batik Handicraft in Santiniketan. By the initiation of Protima Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Hirendra Ghose, the Ashramic Gouri Bhanj, Jamuna Sen, Sisir Ghosh and the other students of Kala Bhavan brought about a tremendous success on Batik handicraft design.

We find the use of Ajanta – Ellora design and also creative design with village Alpana in Gouri Bhanj's work. We also find her fine taste in using various colours in this work. She used in her work both natural and artificial colour. The works of Jamuna Sen is found different from Gouri Bhanj. There are no monotony in his work. Jamuna Sen presented beautiful landscape in his work and at the same time he could successfully transform it into decorative design. We can recall the names of Srimati Nivedita Ghosh, Sisir Ghosh, Srimati Amala Sarkar, Pronab Roy, Nanigopal Ghosh, Krishna Mennon, Rama Sen, Sulekha Bhattacharjee, Kshama Ghosh etc. who took part continually for the successful achievement of Batik design. Srimati Nivedita Ghose tried to transform the natural element into design in his works. Sisir Ghosh was interested more in using natural elements to his work than the decorative design. Pronab Roy also used natural elements for designing. We find the spirit and rhythms both in his work.

In later time, we also find some transformation in Batik design and ultimately it reached to the naturalistic and geometric decoration. Batik design was used first for wall hanging and for interior decoration. Then Batik design was used in Dupatta, saree, uttario, blouse etc. Batik design also used in various festivals especially in Drama, Nritya Natya etc. And ultimately this handicraft generates the sense of aesthetic beauty in people. We cannot deny the fact that the Batik design was transformed to various styles according to the demand of market, but not discarding the characteristics of Santiniketan's Batik design. Leather Batik work was started in Santiniketan in 1930 when Rabindranath Tagore returned from London. Wallet, handbag, Belt, Shoes etc. are made of Lather Batik.

3.2.3 Kantha Stitch :

The role of embroidery is incomparable in Santiniketan handicrafts. This very art form was developed by the ashramites from the very beginning. The designs of 'Alpona' are woven in embroidered clothes. Besides Kantha stitch, other stitches like Button stitch, Kathihari stitch etc. can be seen in Santiniketan embroidery. These stitches are used in Sarees, shawls, Panjabis etc. In those days artists use to stitch without any preplanned designed. They innovate the design as the work used to progress. Therefore each and every design was unique. Now-a-days weaving and stitching is done on a pre-planned designed. So, the uniqueness and personal inner touch is missing in todays designs. In respect to artistic taste also today's designs are in no comparision with designs of those days. In these embroidery works different design of flowers and leaves are used. Different motif and techniques are used.

Embroidery is the oldest form of art in Indian textile designing. The practice of making designs with needle and thread has been in vogue from time immemorial. Primitive people used to decorate themselves and their homes with flowers and leaves. Initially bone-needles and later on bronze needles were in use in Egypt. European embroidery became popular during Renaissance. From embroidery developed the art of Tapestry.

In folk art forms of Bengal, "Nakshi-Kantha" is an outstanding creation. Kanth is a type of warm clothing used by the villagers in winter. Kantha stitch is essentially a women centric art form. Bengali women, with their efficient touch, drew their dreams and desires with needle and thread. 'Nakshi Kheta', 'Fulkheta', 'Rakshi

Kheta', in different parts of Bangladesh. It is known as 'Dogla' in Rangpur and 'Chyalar kheta' in Kalipbari in Jessore.

There are different kinds of Kanthas :

Sujni Kantha :

Generally a Kantha is of 5 ft to 6 ft length and is of 4 ft to 4.5 ft breadth is the highest perfection of Bengal's ornamental needle work.

Lep Kantha :

'Lep Kantha' is little bigger in size. Its length is 6.5 ft and breadth is 4.5 ft. It is used to cover body in winter. It is very thick. Different designs are stitches in it. There is a lotus motif in the centre and designs of the life trees surrounding.

Betan Kanth :

Betan Kantha is generally a square and of 3 ft. in length and breadth. There are borders in its four sides. In the middle the motif of lotus, circle, trees etc. are woven.

Kantha for Children :

This types of Kantha is used to cover the body of a child. Therefore, it is small in size, generally 3 ft. in length and breadth. Motifs of flowers, animals etc. are used here.

Pillow cover Kantha :

This is used as the cover of pillows. This is square in shape and it is small in size. This is used to cover the food plates for guests. Motifs of flowers, leaves etc. are used here.

Bartan Kantha :

This is used to cover food. This is square in shape and small in size. Motifs of flowers and leaves are used here.

Dastarkhan :

This is spread on the mat where guests sit. This is 8 ft. to 10 ft. in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in breadth.

Basthoni or Bochka Kantha :

This is square in shape. In one corner, there is a long rope or thread. Things are kept in it and tied with the rope. Generally lotus motif and different designs are used here.

Jooth Kantha :

This is used to tie up beddings. It is a long, thin Kantha. Long or square type of designs can be seen in it. Generally geometric designs are used in it.

Durjone, Batuwa, Khicha and Naksha Thali :

These are generally used as bags. It is 10 inch in length and 6 inch is breadth. Generally, geometric designs border and lotus motif at the centre are used here. Besides designs like 'Kanai Lata', 'Kumari Lata' are used here.

Arshi Lata :

This is used to keep mirrors, combs etc. this is made of 24 inches cloths. Sometimes it is of 1 ft. length and 6 inches breadth. Designs like Peacock, Kadam tree, Krishna Leela, moon and stars are used in it. Lotus motifs are also used in the centre.

Pan Pachali :

This is used to keep beetel leaves and beetel nuts. It is 15 – 16 inches in length and 8 inches in breadth. Different designs of beetel leaves, flowers are used here.

Rumal Kantha :

This is square in shape and 1 ft. in length and breadth. Here artists generally weave their names or the names of the person to whom it is given as a gift. Besides designs of butterfly, lotus, rose and different flowers are used here.

Gilaf Kantha :

This is used to keep Quran Sharif or other holy books. Here the geometric designs are mostly used. Different flowers and leaves motifs are also seen.

Joyenmach :

This is used for reading 'Namaj'. It is 4 ft. length and is of 2 ft. breadth. Designs 'Gombus' and 'Minars' are woven in it.

Assan Kantha :

This is used in the purpose of worshipping. 'Pandits' and 'Maulavis' generally use this. It is generally of 1.5 ft in length and breadth. Hindus use motifs Hindu god and goddesses like Radha Krishna, Lakshmi, Rath etc. Muslims use motifs of Mosque, flowers or geometric designs etc.

Majar Kantha :

This is used to cover majars. This is of 4 – 5 ft. in length and 3 – 3.5 ft. in breadth. Any design except for figures are used here.

Dhakne Kantha :

These are used to cover chair table, box, mattress etc. This is little bigger than square. Motifs of flowers, animals are used here.

Kantha for covering Dead body :

It is a custom to use this Kantha for covering dead body of Muslim family. In this Kantha, geometric motif is given more importance. As it is used for religious matter, no any figure is drawn in this Kantha.

Rose Bedcover or Swale Kantha :

This type of bed sheet is used for covering our body like sal. Its length is five feet and breadth is two and half to three feet. Kantha stitched in the corner and in the line of bed-cover. Kalka design is found in the border lines of two sides towards the length of the sheet and in the body of the sheet, flowers and leaves motifs are designed.

Pardha Kantha :

Its length is three to three and half feet. In it, butterfly, aquatic plant and other kinds of fruits and leaves are designed.

Sarinda or Aaleoronie Kantha :

These are used to keep musical instruments. Motifs related to musical instruments are used here. Motifs of flowers and leaves are also used here.

Wall handing Kantha :

It is used to decorate rooms. These are of different sizes. Different motifs are used in it.

A Kantha handicraft reflects livelihood, culture and desires of village women of Bengal. In these Kantha handicrafts, it is found to be used some symbols. Symbols used in Kantha handicraft. The Kantha handicrafts of various regions of Bengal accepts the symbol and objectives of the culture of Hindus and Muslims. As a result, joint effort of the mental thought and experience of both community Hindu and Muslim reflects in Nakshi Kantha.

We still recall Gouri Bhanja, Jamuna Sen, Krishna Menon and Sulekha Bhattacharjee for their contribution towards the development of Kantha handicrafts in Santiniketan. They have separate identity or styles in regards stitching in stitching in Kantha handicrafts. In Alpana designing, they have their own individual expression.

3.3 Leather Work :

Rathindranath Tagore, son of Rabindranath Tagore, contributed much for the development of Leather craft in Santiniketan and Sriniketan. In 1926, Rathindranath Tagore and his wife Protima Devi visited Italy. There in Milan city, they observed the work of Leather craft and were charmed by its artistic beauty. In 1930, Rathindranath Tagore went England for the treatment of his own. There, he also started to learn the work of leather craft by joining in a studio in London. After returning from London, Rathindranath tried to spread Leather work to Ashramites in Santiniketan.

Rathindranath took initiative to start first the leather work in Shilpa Bhavan of Sriniketan in 1828. At first, he started a training centre for leather work. Rathindranath was very much skillful and creative person. By his proper guidance, many neighbouring village people (men and women) came to Sriniketan and join the work of leather craft. They were found successful in producing leather craft products like moneybag, lady's bag, belt etc. with beautiful design. Then the products of

leather craft got high demand the market of various states. Even, at that time, these products were imported to foreign countries. Both Rathindranath and Protima Devi contributed much to make these leather craft products luxurious and profitable in the market. As a result, many village people became economically self-sufficient.

3.3.1 Leather Batik :

Rathindranath Tagore contributed much in the development of Leather Batik. In this craft, the Bag, Batoa, Jewellery Box, Pen stand, Shoes etc. were produced. Decorative design of Alpana was found as motif in this craft. The colours like red, golden, yellow, blue, black, marun etc. were used in these object of Leather Batik. Generally, the combination of two or three colours were used to beatify the leather Batik work. The artist used rhythmic brush stroke to make the Batik lively.

3.3.2 Leather Inlay Work :

Leather work spread in local area very speedily. Later on, some institution were established for craft work. In this work, at first leather was fixed on the wood and then this was pressured by the double armed machine, boll press machine and brought about design and then colours were given. While colouring, the artist did spray after mixing the dust colour and spirit. As a result, the object of Batik were made usable and aesthetic. The impression on the leather is called leather inlay Batik. In this craft, sometimes Alpana was used as motif and sometimes individual artistic sense applied as motif. The objects of leather work looked like wood carving. In the inlay process of leather work productions like belt, bag, jewellery box, pencil stand etc. were found.

3.4 Paper Making :

The training for handmade paper production was started in Silpa Sadan in 1948. Then Paper was made straw and palm leaves. Later some local young people took initiative to produce paper speedily. But due to some problems, it was unable to show expected progress like other handicrafts.

3.5 Jewellery :

Santiniketan and Sriniketan occupy a special place in handcrafted jewellery work. Nandalal Bose and Gouri Bhanja along with Ashramites have added a new

dimension to this handicraft. Remarkable among this Jewellery work includes flower and leaves jewellery, terracotta, jute, leather and batik jewellery. Jewellery made of artificial seeds and left over things need also to be mentioned.

3.5.1 Flower and Leaves Jewellery :

Flower and leaves jewellery boast of an important place in Santiniketan handicraft. These are widely used in festivals and in various events. Gouri Bhanja, daughter of Nandalal Bose introduced this kind of jewellery. Earlier, the use of this Jewellery was noticed in the Ramayana and Mahabharata and in stories of various gods and goddesses. In South India, flower jewellery is used as body accessories and strings of flowers are in use in important events. Down the ages, flower jewellery are used in Indian states but in Santiniketan this jewellery has created a distinct and beautiful identity based on creative improvisation. The use of this kind of jewellery are in vogue at the time of planting of trees wherein, this jewellery 'Panchakanya' take part in nature oriented events. The very nature is the inspiration of this jewellery. Earlier, in Santiniketan flower and leaves jewellery were in use in every event but now only at the time of planting of trees. In tree-planting ceremony, jewellery are usually prepared by the students of Patha Bhavan and Kala Bhavan. The day is observed assigning the all important role to the very nature. Among this kind of jewellery, bangles made of unhasked rice, jewellery wore in heads, particularly known as tikli.

3.5.2 Jute Jewellery :

Jute Jewellery are made through different weaving and knotting. Shapes of jewellery keep on changing, depending on different knots. Contrast colours is usually used for this purpose. Jutes are dyed to bring in different colours. Combination of bleached and coloured jute coupled with knotting gives it an ornamental shape. Artificial seeds of different colours are open used in a bit to make it more attractive.

3.5.3 Leather Batik Jewellery :

Leather Batik Jewellery which are generally small in size are made using two clours. Designs boast of ornamental qualities. Colourful bids are used to make it attractive.

3.5.4 Terracotta Jewellery :

Terracotta jewellery are made using different ornamental moulds. Neck pieces are sometimes made at one go. Alternatively small motifs are assembled together to give it a complete shape. Wire and black thread are used. In a bit enhanced its brightness so that it can grace attention, different hues are made use of it.

3.5.5 Seed Jewellery :

Nature plays a dominant role in Satiniketan handicrafts. Combination of seeds of different trees in the making of such jewellery gives it an altogether different dimensions. Seeds of fruits, vegetables, pieces of trees are used to make it colourful and eye-catching.

3.5.6 Bamboo Jewellery :

Raw bamboo pieces are burnt in such a way so that it gets different hues. Designs are curved out of them by chiseling. Notable among these jewellery includes neck pieces, bangles, earrings at all.

3.6 Pottery :

In 1929, the work of clay modeling was started in Sriniketan. It is learnt that a machine for making tali was purchased from German. But due to economic constrain, this work stopped in next year. In 1936, Pratima Devi presented a set of equipment to Silpa Sadan for starting clay modeling. As a result, clay modeling work was started in Silpa Sadan again.

3.6.1 Ceramic :

Alpana design of Nandalal Bose are found in his works like cup plate and in other handicrafts. In that time, among these products of handicrafts, Dinner set, glass, Vas etc. are also noticed. Moreover, the students and teachers of Santiniketan and Sriniketan were engaged in the work of mural and sculpture at that time. Earlier, there was no developed Ceramic firing machine. Though minimum products were found but their quality was very rich. They were found very much decorative and their designs were found like Alpana. Variety of designs were used in each and every product. The mind and feelings of artists were reflected on all of Ceramic products.

We can also notice lamp stand, furnishing design etc. in their works. These were found very much decorative. The curving style of products are like old architecture.

3.6.2 Toys :

The Artists of Santiniketan and Sriniketan could express the beauty from their core of heart and reflect these on their product like toys. They could make toys by applying techniques with their hands. They used to produce toys by imitating the structure of animal, human figures etc. Again, they sometimes tried to give super realistic shape in toys. They were found very much successful in decorating the toys with line and dots.

3.7 Alpana :

Drawing designs on floors and walls using liquid paste are known as Alpana. For ages as a part of Cultural heritage, Alpana has been regarded as an auspicious item in our festival and on religious occasions. Its beauty soothes our mind and eyes. Although little is known about its period of origin, this is an ancient art form. Memories of human culture and civilization lie buried in it. In India this art form is prevalent in different states and among different communities with different names. Outside India also this art form is noticed across communities. The use of Alpana is noticeable from India to middle and South America to Europe to Africa to Australia among tribal and civil societies.

Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose with joint efforts had given shape to Visva Bharati. Grand plan of one and extraordinary sense of beauty of another had been complementary to each other. Nandalal Bose believed that if anyone in India with sensibilities wants to work in the land of rich artistic heritage, one needs to keep in mind three things – its Cultural past and heritage, the natural surrounding it and its own personality and way of looking. Having acquired the knowledge of country's cultural and artistic tradition and history and remaining conscious of its surrounding new creations need to be curbed out through diverse medium.

In early stages, the Alpanas that were drawn out here followed the ones noticed one village festivities. Later, Master Moshai drew inputs from ancient temple sculpture, idols, terracotta and combined with it motifs drawn from nature, cloud, water, fire, flower, fruits, leaves, trees, birds and animals to give Alpana a new shape.

As a result, Santiniketan experienced a new age of drawing art. Master Moshai often said that to make successful art, one need to assess the genuine rhythms of the art forms with the help of the rhythm the balance of figures, construction and Volume take shapes keeping in place its aesthetics.

Trees, Bamboos, grass all play an important role understanding the rhythm of lines drawn based on these items can be compared with showers and its dynamics. Conch shell, creepers, water, wind-circles are some of the other examples of rhythm. The dynamics of this rhythm constitute the ornamental art forms. Nature observation is very much a necessity for innovation in Alpana. One needs to see the nature deeply. Only than will its rhythm come alive to an artist. Innovation in Alpana comes only when dynamics of the inner out rhythm are woven into designs, keeping its aesthetic in place.

Rabindranath Tagore inaugurated universal festivals by using Alpana in various seasonal festivals by emphasizing the relation between man and nature. He also tried to recall the intimate relation between man and nature through observation of seasonal festivals like ‘Varsha Mongal’, ‘Hal Karshan’, ‘Tree Plantation’, ‘Spring festival’ etc. These types of seasonal festivals will lose their identity, liveliness, natural beauty and will become useless, meaningless if nature is removed from these festivals.

All the seasonal festivals were observed according the nature of particular season. Alpana was designed by artist following particular seasonal characteristics. As for example, in rainy season Kadam flower, in Spring Palash, Simul etc, in Autumn Seuli, Habiscus, lotus were used in Alpana. Moreover, other kinds of flowers and leaves which attract our eyes reflect in Alpana designing.

In initial stage, the designing of Alpana was round and square in size. Different lines, floral and national colours were also used in Alpana for giving border line. Later on these designs were accepted in various works of handicraft in Santiniketan. Nandalal Bose, Jamuna Sen and Gouri Bhanja contributed much for the development of Alpana design in Santiniketan.

The direction of Kshitimohan Sen regarding Alpana :

Kshitimohan Sen gave some direction on Alpana designing to Ashramites. According to him at the time of observation of birthday, marriage ceremony and remembrance day, Alpana could be used designing the structure of a tree. In funeral ceremony, a triangular form and lamplight shape could be used in Alpana. In auspicious occasion, the shape of fish could be designed in Alpana. In Halkarshan festival, the shape was given like plough in Alpana.

With the direction of Nandalal Bose, each and every Alpana had its own characteristics while used in various festivals. For example, in the festival of the ending day of year, while colour was used in Alpana. But in the new year day, a colourful Alpana was used in rainy season, festival like Varsha Mongal, Briksha Rupon and Halkarshan were celebrated in Santiniketan and Sriniketan. At that time, due to the rainy season, liquid colour was avoided and the mixture of lime and sand are used in Alpana. Moreover, in these festivals rice, Mug dal, Musar dal, Sesamum, crop etc. were used. In Independence Day, the leaves of Jackfruit, Hibiscus, Allamanda etc. were used in Alpana. In Autumn festival, Dramatic performance was held in Santiniketan. In this Dramatic performance, Alpana was used in the centre of the stage of the Drama.

Moreover, in Christmas Day, a festival was celebrated in Santiniketan. In this festivals, the artists design Alpana maintaining the tone of Christianity.

3.8 Wood Work :

From very initial stage, a Japanese wood carver, Kasahara started wood work in Sriniketan. At that time, the neighbouring village people joined under him to learn wood work. After the departure of Kasahara, another Japanese joined and started to give training for wood work to the students in Sriniketan. The necessary furniture for Sriniketan and Santiniketan were made in Sriniketan then. These furnitures had high demand in market at that time.

Rathindranath Tagore was an expertise in wood carving work. A great artist Lakshiswar Singha was an assistant of Rathindranath Tagore.

The important object among wood work were furnishing object, chair-table, pen-stand, lamp stand etc. In every work of Silpa Bhavan had individualistic character. At that time, the wood craver produced various materials maintaining the original characteristics of wood. Rathindranath Tagore started first the inlay work on wood. What technique still maintains in the department of Silpa Bhavan. In these wood work, finishing touch was given keeping intact the origin colour of wood. Artists of Silpa Bhavan never used any colour on wood work. In the wood work, they did finishing touch using transparent layer. In wood work they also gave the structure of god and goddesses. For example, Mahabir, Bishnu, Lakshmi etc. Moreover, they produced dish which were made of ply wood.

Some furniture which were made at that time, still are found in Sriniketan and these are found still modern.

3.9 Bamboo and Cane Work :

In 1936, the bamboo and cane work started in Sriniketan. At first, it was started with the members of two families of shoe makers of Bandagora village. Then, various kinds of goods were produced which were made of Palm-leaf, bamboo and cane. These commodities were like handmade fan, hat, basket, amt etc. The initiation taken by Sriniketan, wood work spread to the more and more villages at that time.

3.10 Lac Work :

Elem Bazar in Birbhum district was famous for Lac work. Later due to various causes this was ruined. Protima Devi took initiative to revive this Lac work. She invited some Lac worker from Elam Bazar to Sriniketan for starting Lac work again. They used to make various toys, Doll etc. in Sriniketan. These objects had high demand in Kolkata and in other big towns. Nepal Chandra Gui and Gopal Chandra Gui were engaged for Lac work for long days in Sriniketan.

3.11 Book Binding :

Book binding work was started with the students of Siksha-Satra. In 1930 there were only ten students in Siksha-Satra. In 1930, eight students out of ten students of Siksha-Satra joined in the work of book binding. In 1938, and experienced

book binder joined in Sriniketan for book-binding work. All the books of Visva Bharati were made binding by the book binder of Sriniketan.

3.12 Conclusion :

The Visva-Bharati was made into a Central University in 1951. As a result, since 1951, the productions of Silpa-Bhavan began to reduce gradually. And Silpa Bhavan came under the department of rural reconstruction and Silpa Bhavan renamed as 'Silpa-Sadan'. The main objective of Silpa Bhavan was to revive old cottage industry of villages. It was the dream of Rabindranath Tagore. His dream could achieve successfully upto 1951. Rathindranath, son of Rabindranath Tagore gave much effort for the development of handicrafts under Silpa Bhavan. And still, we find the impact of handicrafts under Silpa Bhavan is reflecting in the activities of neighbouring village people of Santiniketan and Sriniketan.

So, we need to give due weightage to the idea of Rabindranath Tagore regarding the revival of old cottage industries of villages. It was an experiment of Rabindranath Tagore. And it is our responsibilities to bring handicrafts forward. We need to inspire the poor people, village people to the activities of handicrafts with full enthusiasm so that they can earn their livelihood and make them self-sufficient.

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Basak. S, Banglar Nakshi Kantha, Ananda Publisher January 2002, Page no – 36 – 40.

Plate 3.1 : Rabindranath Tagore and Surendranath Kar with Royal couple and others, Java 1927

Plate 3.2 : Java Batik

Plate 3.3 : Batik work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.4 : Batik Design made by Roma Sen

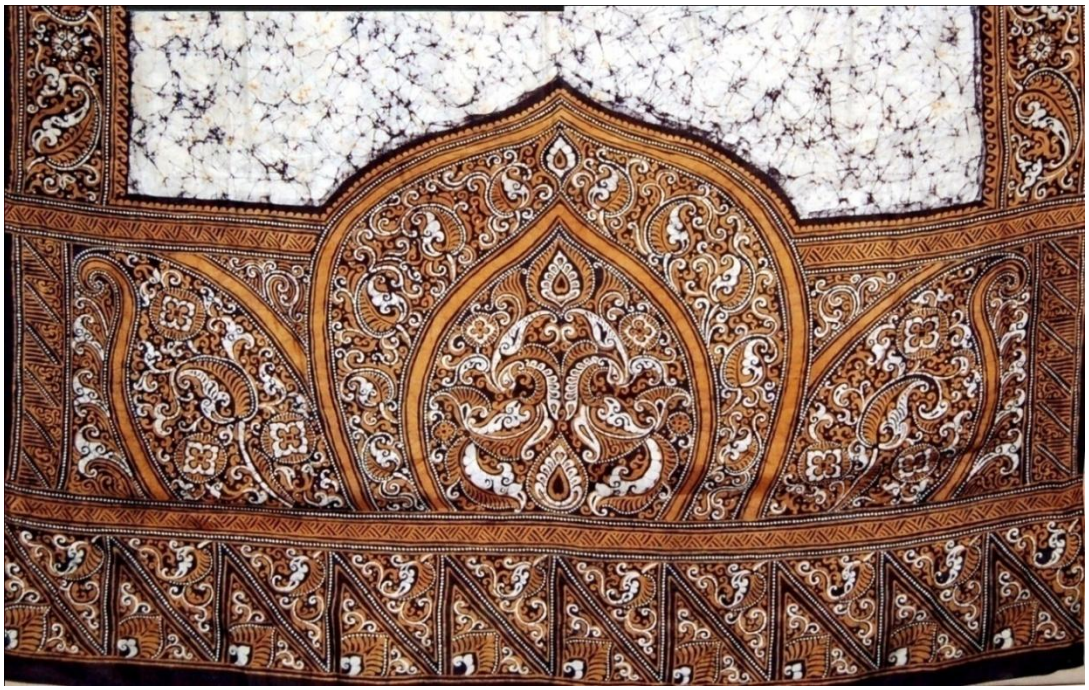


Plate 3.5 : Batik Design made by Sisir Ghosh

Plate 3.6 : Batik Design made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.7 : Batik Design made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.8 : Batik saree made by Nanigopal Ghosh

Plate 3.9 : Uttoriow design made by Karusangha Santiniketan

Plate 3.10 : Batik Scarp made by Gouri Bhanja

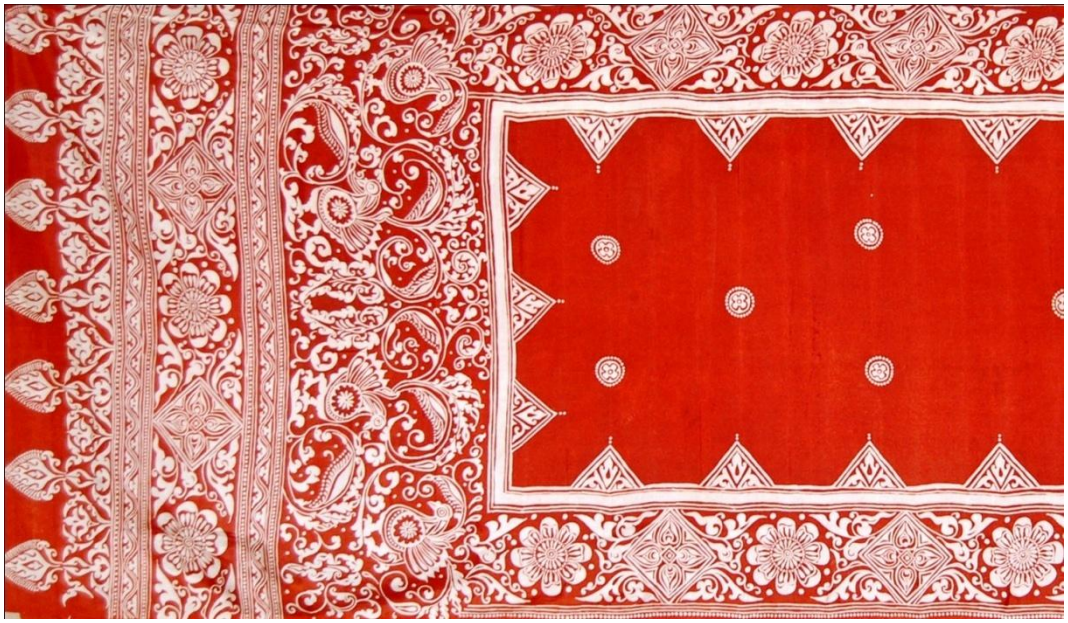


Plate 3.11 : Batik Saree made by Sulekha Bhattacharjee

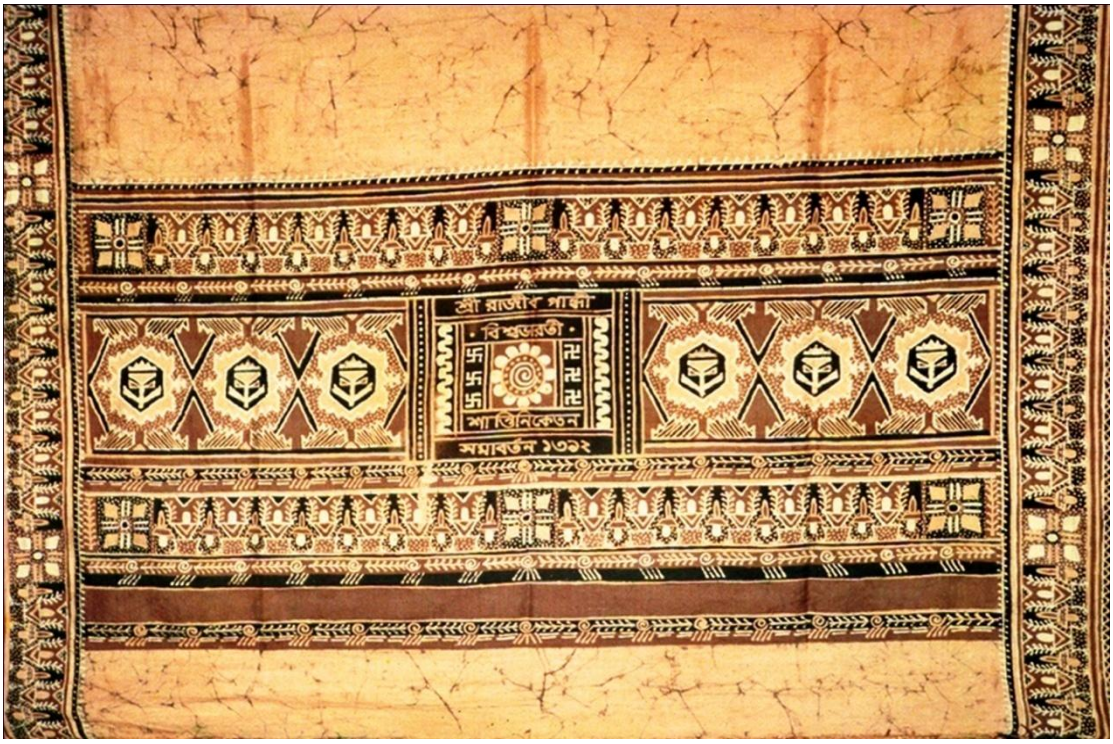


Plate 3.12 : Batik Uttoriow design made by Krishnendu Bag

Plate 3.13 : Batik Design made by Sakhi Gopal Das

Plate 3.14 : Batik Design made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.15 : Batik Design made by Jamuna sen

Plate 3.16 : Batik Design made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.17 : Batik Design made by Jamuna Sen

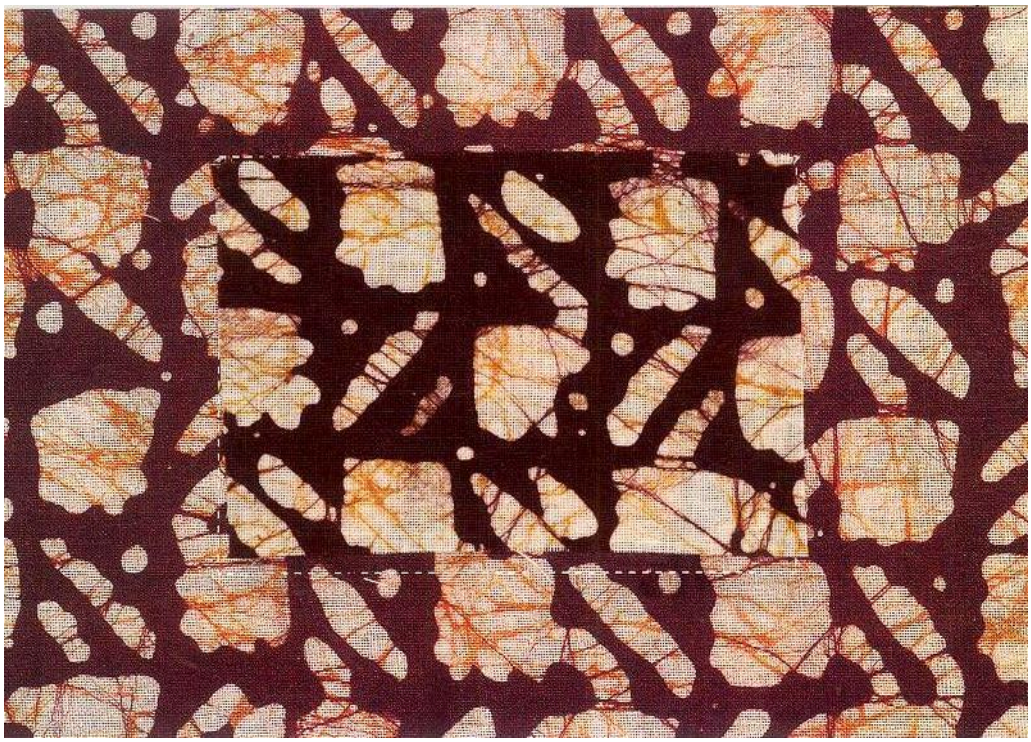


Plate 3.18 : Batik Design in Santiniketan

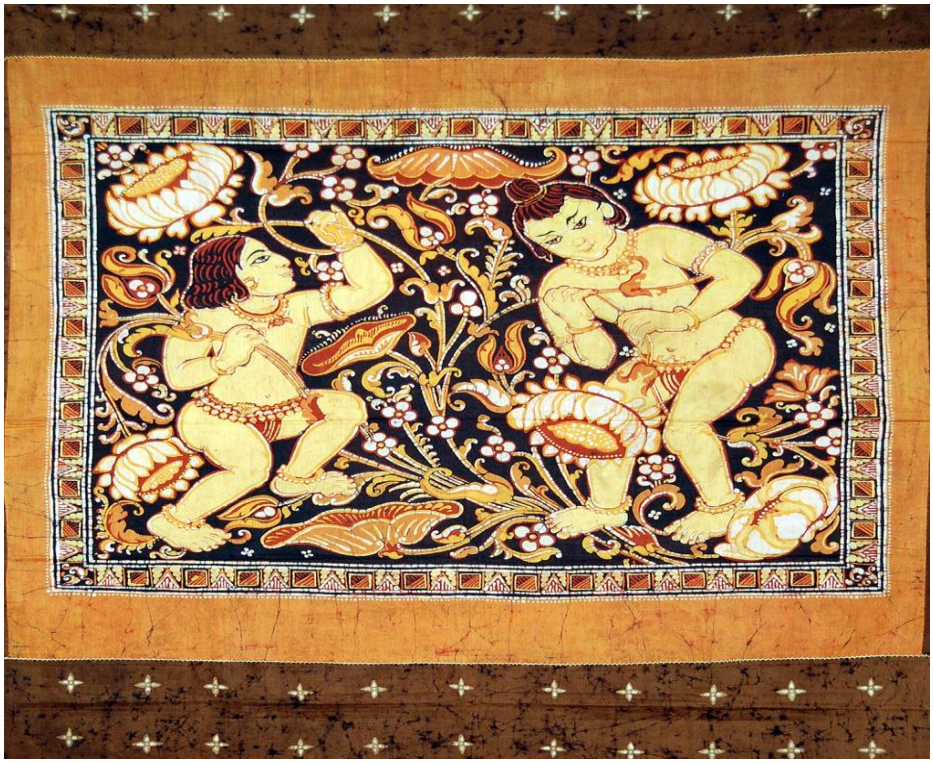


Plate 3.19 : Batik Design made by Krishna Menon

Plate 3.20 : Batik Bag

Plate 3.21 : Batik SareeDesign made by Krishnendu Bag

Plate 3.22 : Santiniketan Batik dress Design

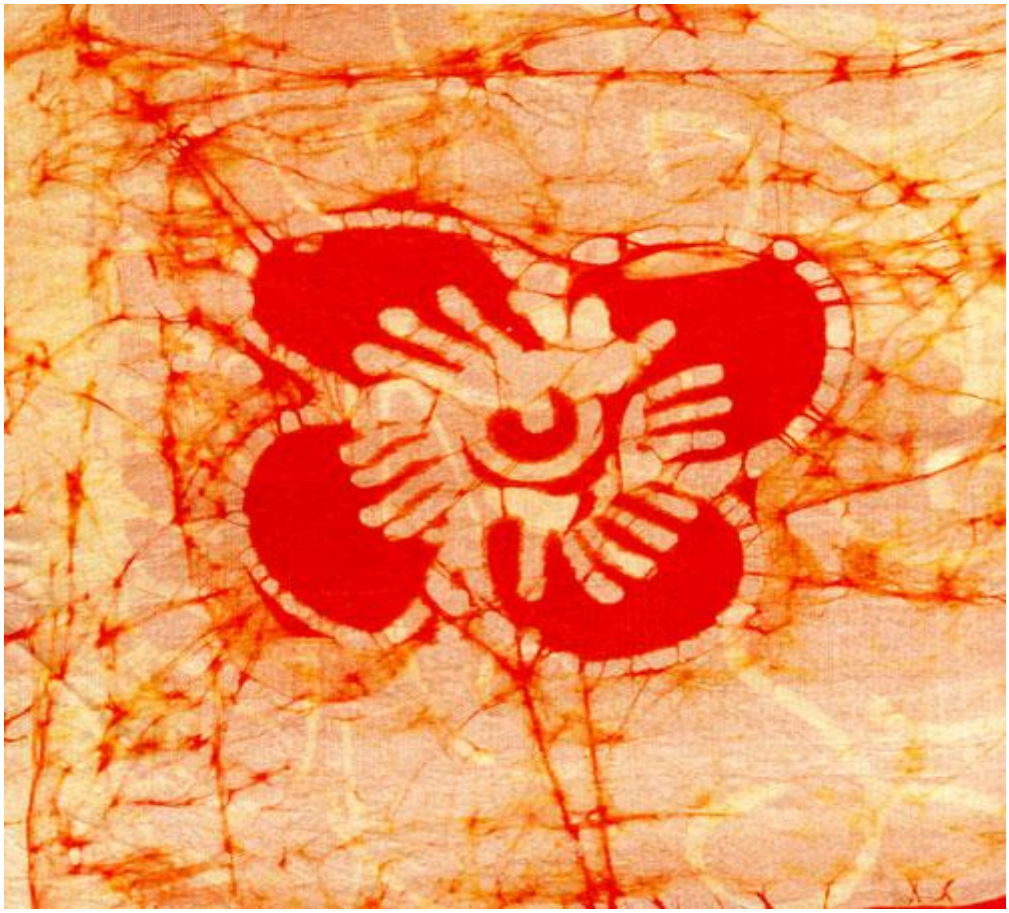


Plate 3.23 : Batik Design in Santiniketan

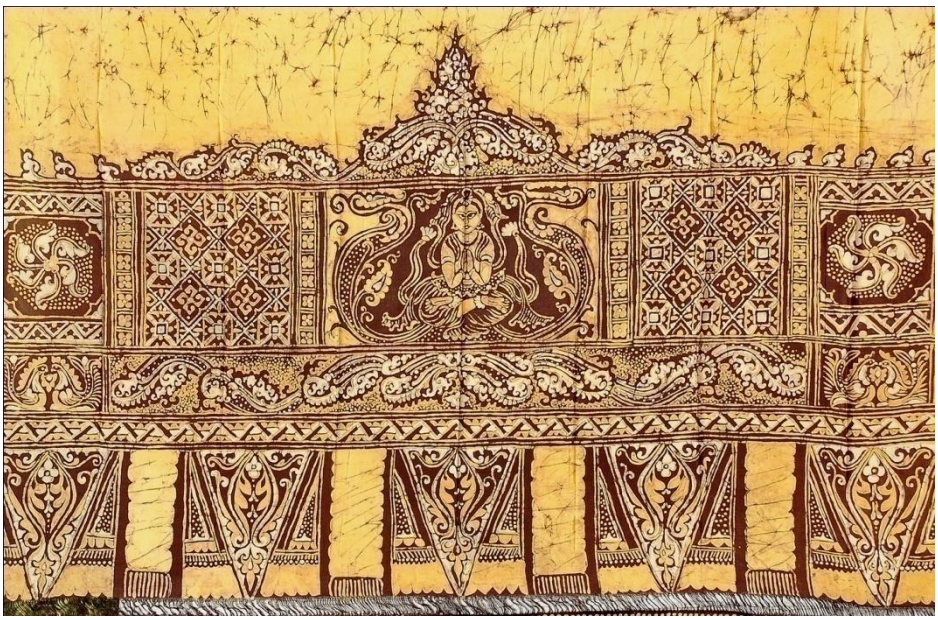


Plate 3.24 : Batik Design made by Sisir Ghosh

Plate 3.25 : Batik Design made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.26 : Batik Design made by Karushangha

Plate 3.27 : Bandhni dersign made by Gouri Bhjanja

Plate 3.28 : Bandhni design made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.29 : Traditional Khesh Weaving in Sriniketan

Plate 3.30 : Towill weaving design in Sriniketan Silpo Sadan

Plate 3.31 : Satranji (carpet) desing in Sriniketan Silpo Sadan

Plate 3.32 : Gamcha Design in Sriniketan Silpo Sadan

Plate 3.33 : Weaving Batua made by Gauri Bhanja

Plate 3.34 : Weaving Bag made by Gauri Bhanja

Plate 3.35 : Weaving bag made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.36 : Hanky

Plate 3.37 : Weaving Bag in Silpo Sadan Sriniketan

Plate 3.38 : Weaving Dress Material

Plate 3.39 : Jacket design made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.40 : Weaving wall Hanging made by Silpo Sadan Sriniketan

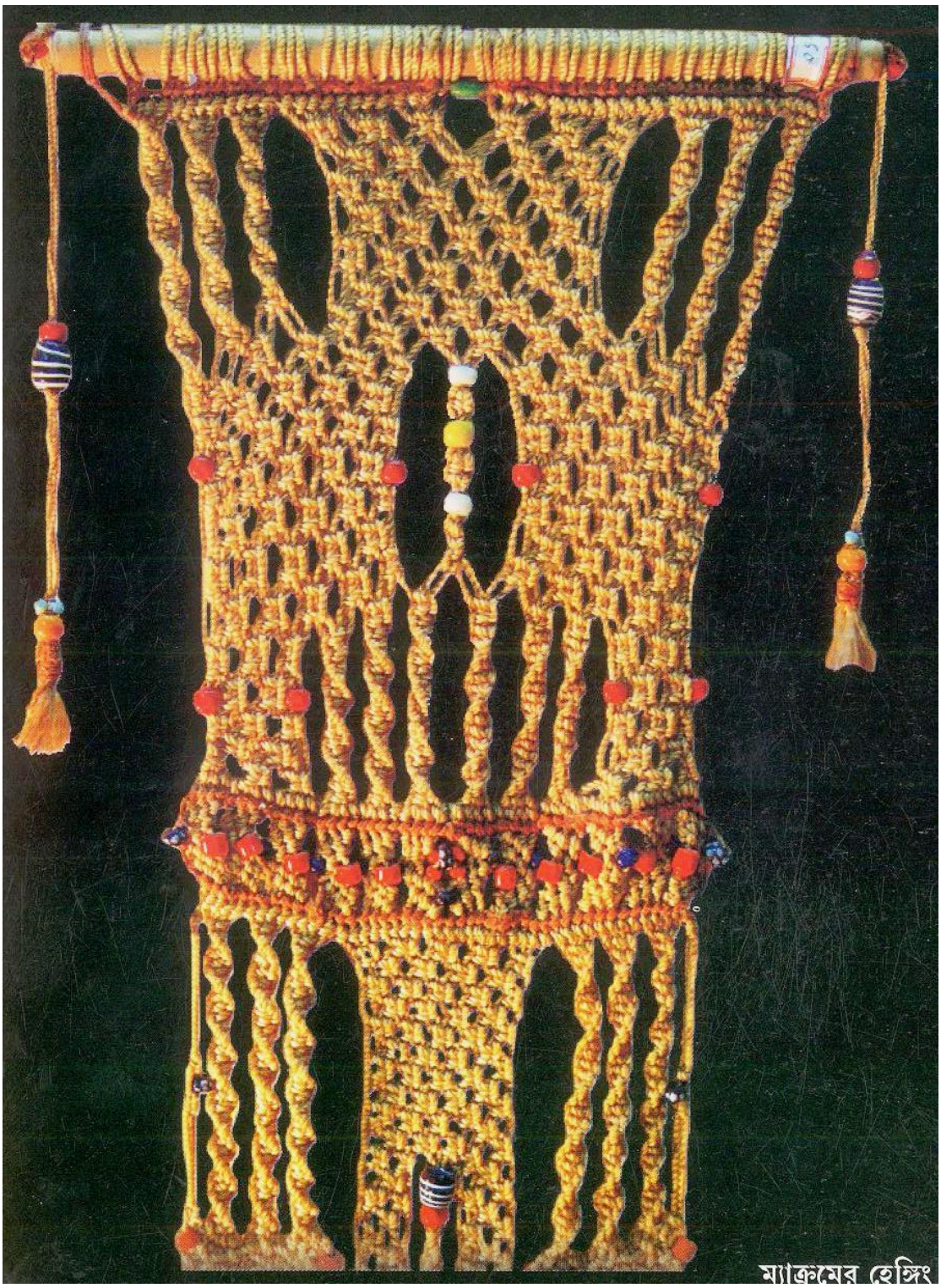


Plate 3.41 : Macrom wall hanging

Plate 3.42 : Jute belt

Plate 3.43 : Weaving work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.44 : Kantha work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.45 : Kantha Work made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.46 : Kantha work made by Gauri Bhanja

Various types of Kantha in Bengal

Plate 3.47 : Kantha work in Kendradal Birbhum

Plate 3.48 : Boro Aason

Plate 3.49 : Sujni Kantha

Plate 3.50 : Dhakna Kantha

Plate 3.51 : Bathon Kantha

Plate 3.52 : Bochka Kantha

Plate 3.53 : Dhakna Kantha

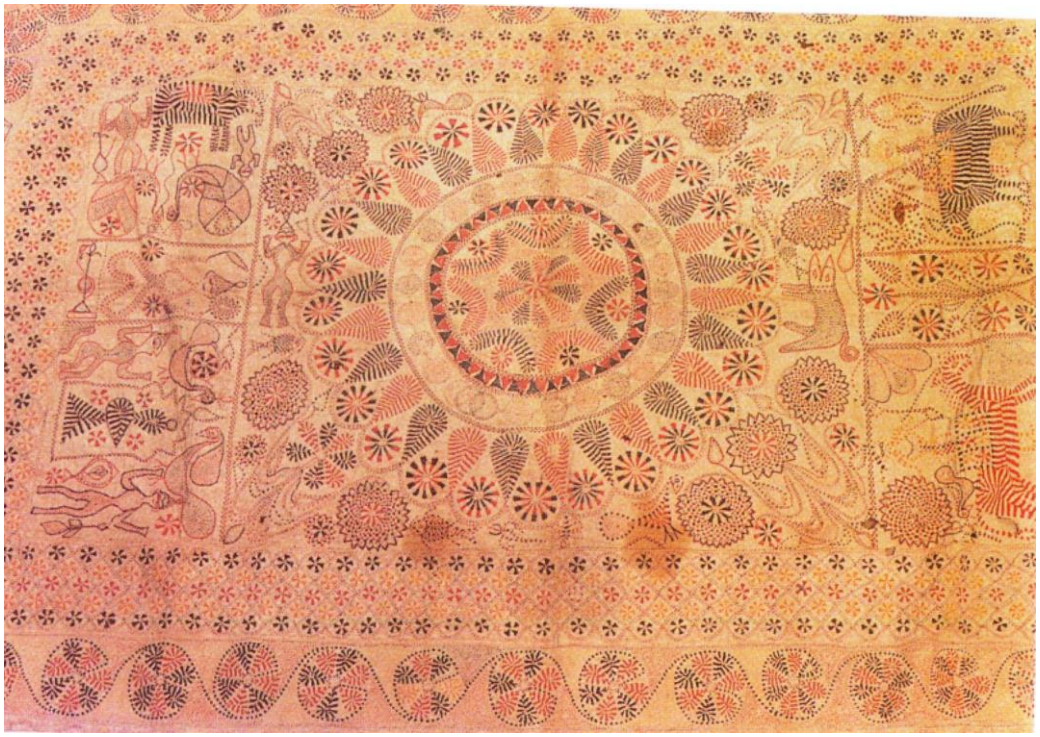


Plate 3.54 : Lap Kantha

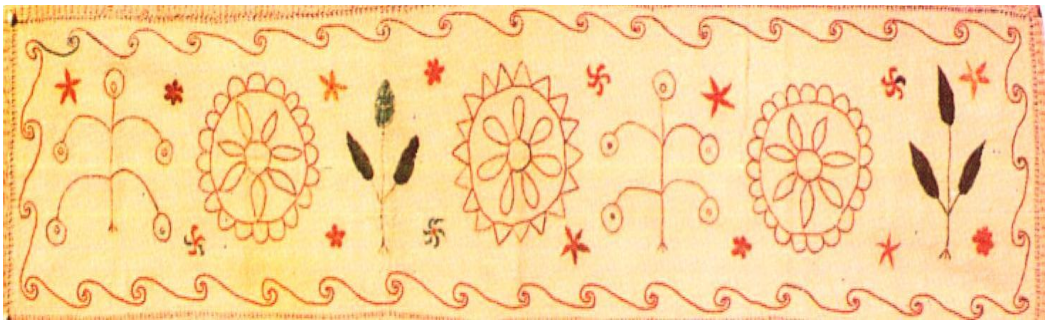


Plate 3.55 : Dharsthan

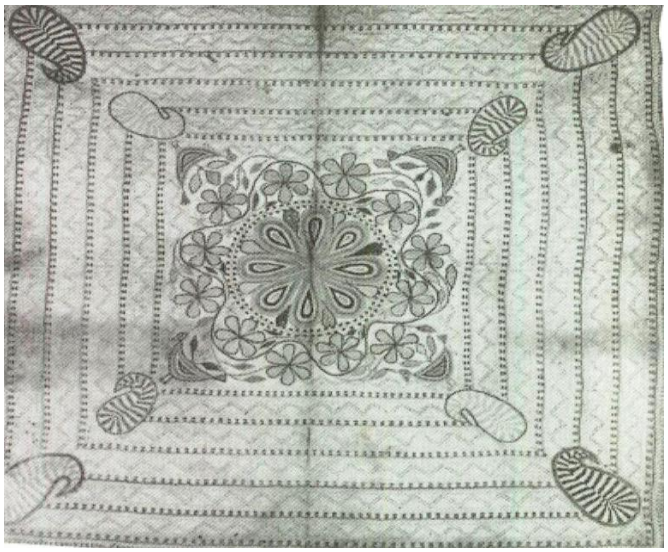


Plate 3.56 : Rumal Kantha

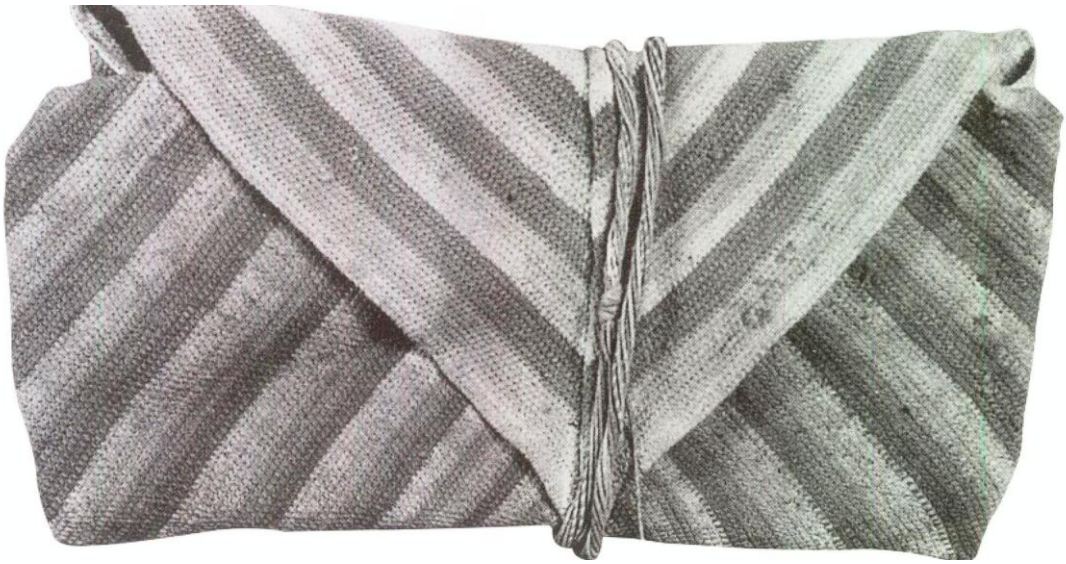


Plate 3.57 : Batua Kantha

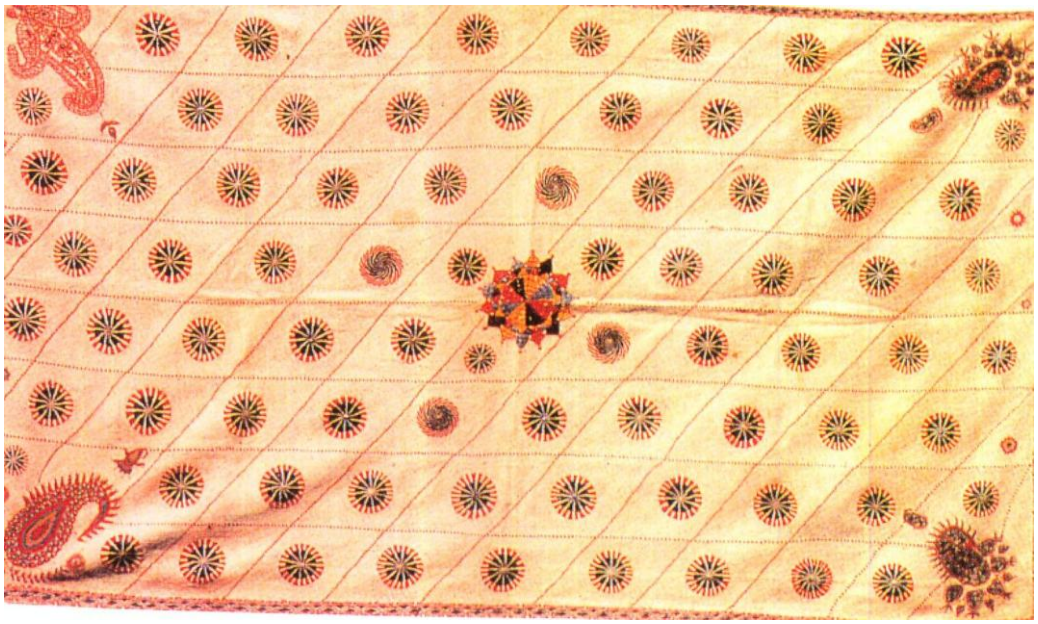


Plate 3.58 : Balisher Dhakna

Plate 3.59 : Lahari Lap

Plate 3.60 : Leather work made by Rathindranath Tagore

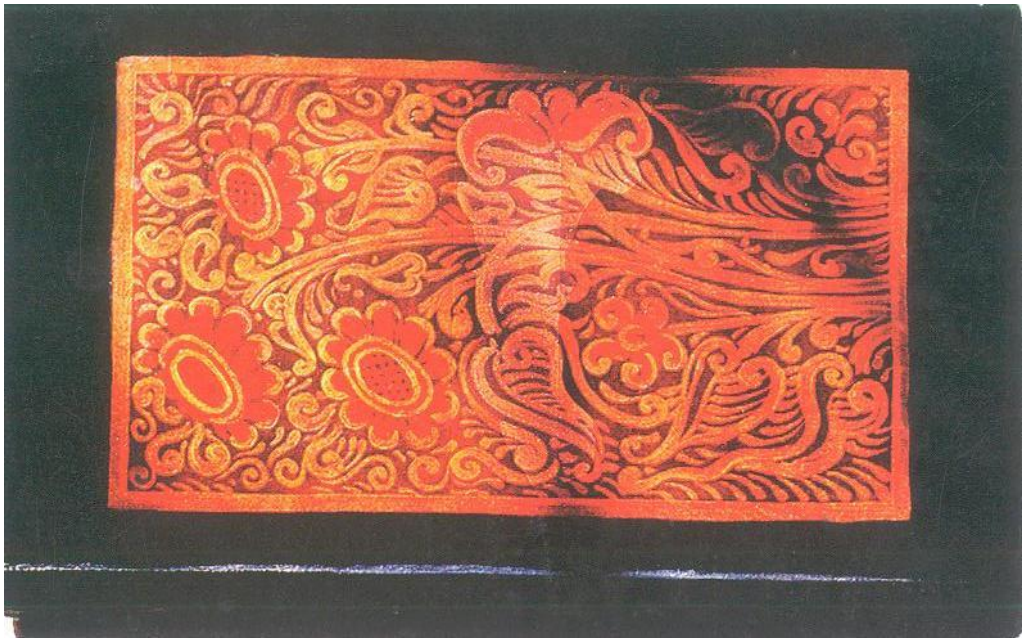


Plate 3.61 : Leather work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.62 : Leatner Batik made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.63 : Leather Inlay Work made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.64 : Leather Inlay Work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.65 : Batik work made by Rathindranath Tagore

Plate 3.66 : Leather Batik Bag

Plate 3.67 : Leather Inlay Batik work made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.68 : Inlay leather Batik bag

Plate 3.69 : Leather work (Leather Inlay process) made by Gauri Bhanja

Plate 3.70 : Leather Batik made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.71 : Leather work in Silpo Sadan

Plate 3.72 : Leather Bag in Santiniketan Shop

Plate 3.73 : Flower making Jewellery at Basanta Utsav in Santiniketan

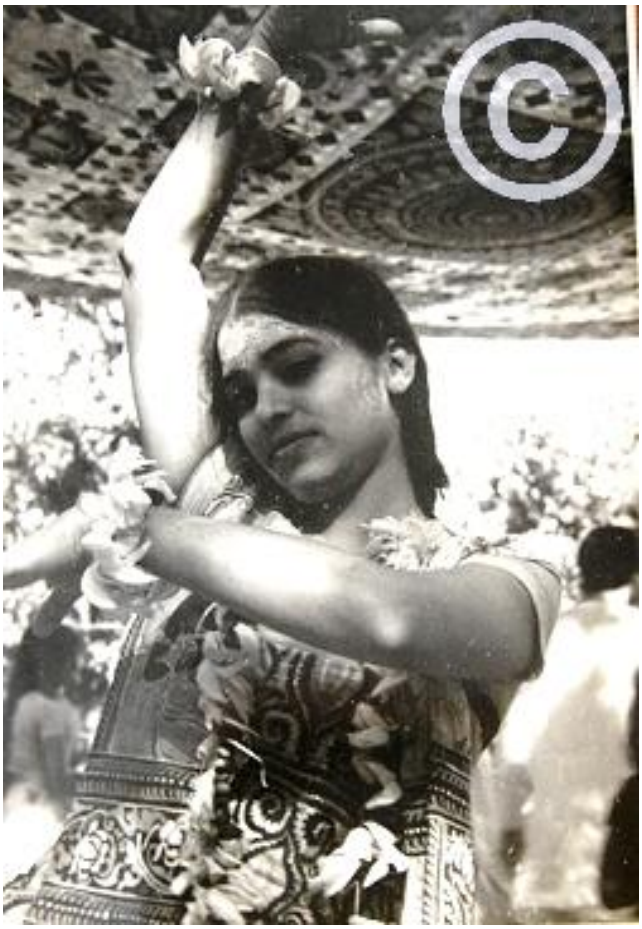


Plate 3.74 : Morning Procession at Basanta Utsav

Plate 3.5 : Panchakanna wear the flower making Jewellery for Brikho Ropan Utsav

Plate 3.76 : Flower making Jewellery made by the student of Kala Bhavana Brikho Ropan

Plate 3.77 : Panchokanna wear flower making jewellery in Santiniketan

Plate 3.78 : Jute Making jewellery made by Jamuna Sen

Plate 3.79 : Jute making Belt made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.80 : Jute making Jewellery made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.81 : Jute Jewellery made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.82 : Jute Jewellery made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.83 : Terracotta Jewellery

Plate 3.84 : Terracotta Jewellery

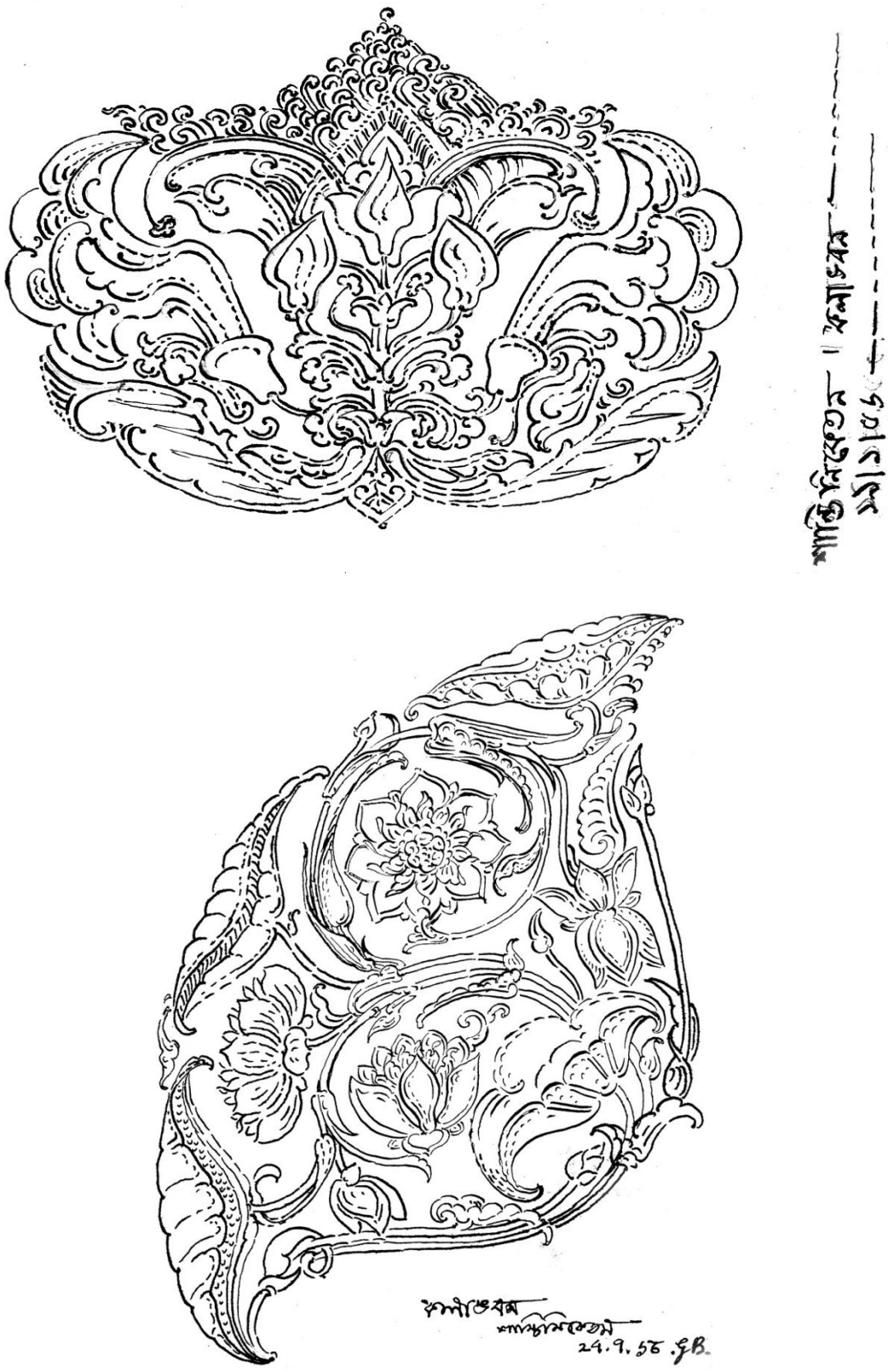


Plate 3.85 : Alpana Design made by Gouri Bhanja

Plate 3.86 : Alpana Design made by Jamuna Sen

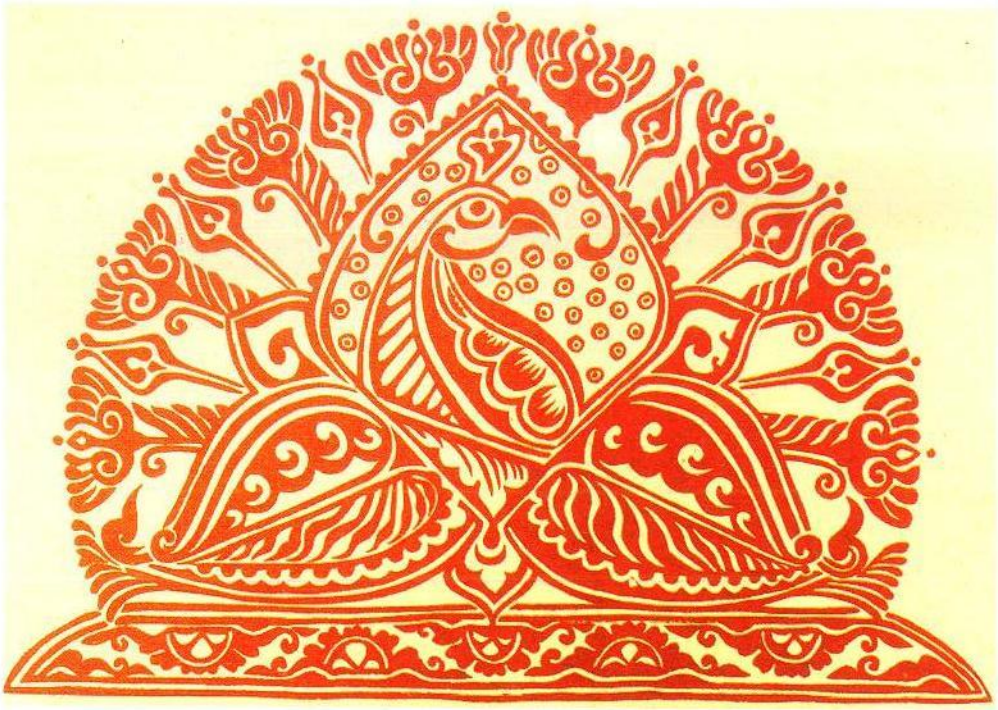


Plate 3.87 : Alpana Design made by Gouri Bhanja

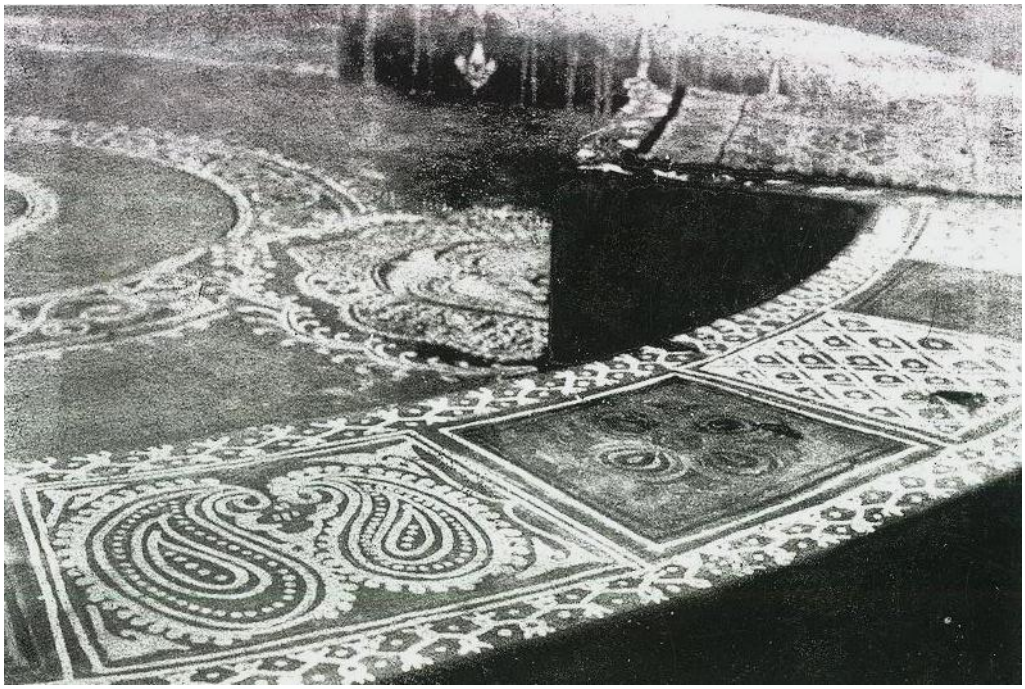
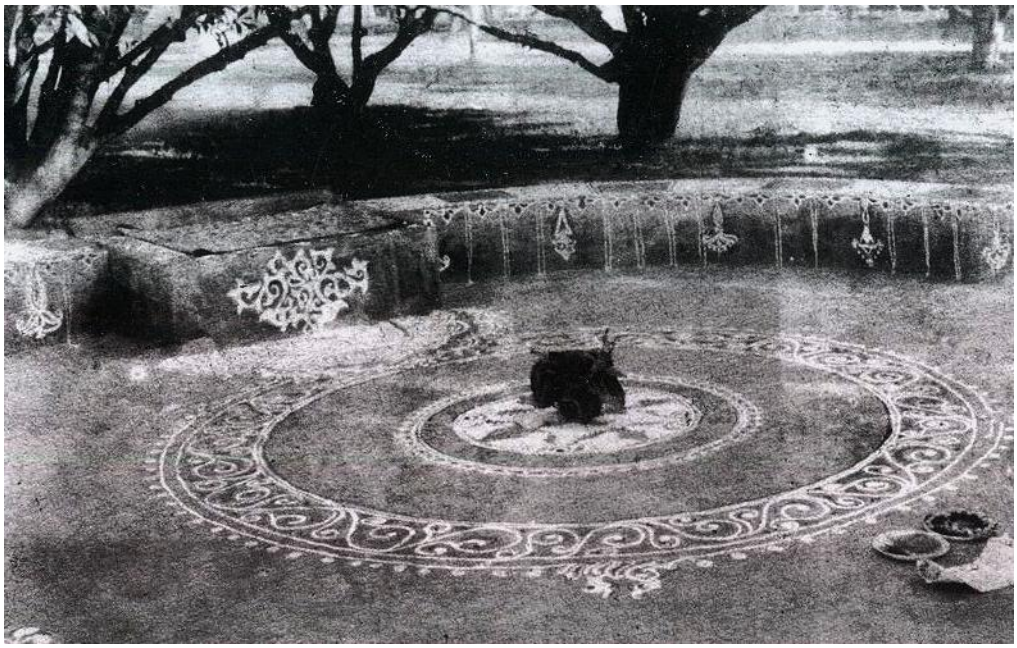


Plate 3.88 : Alpana design in Chatimtala Santiniketan



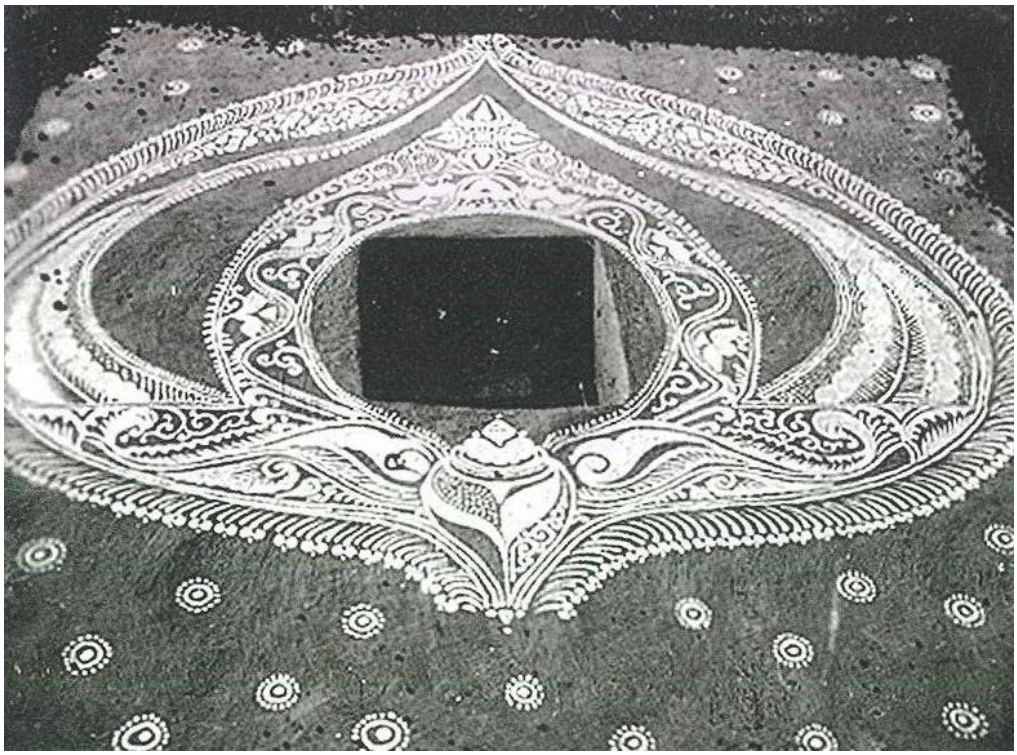
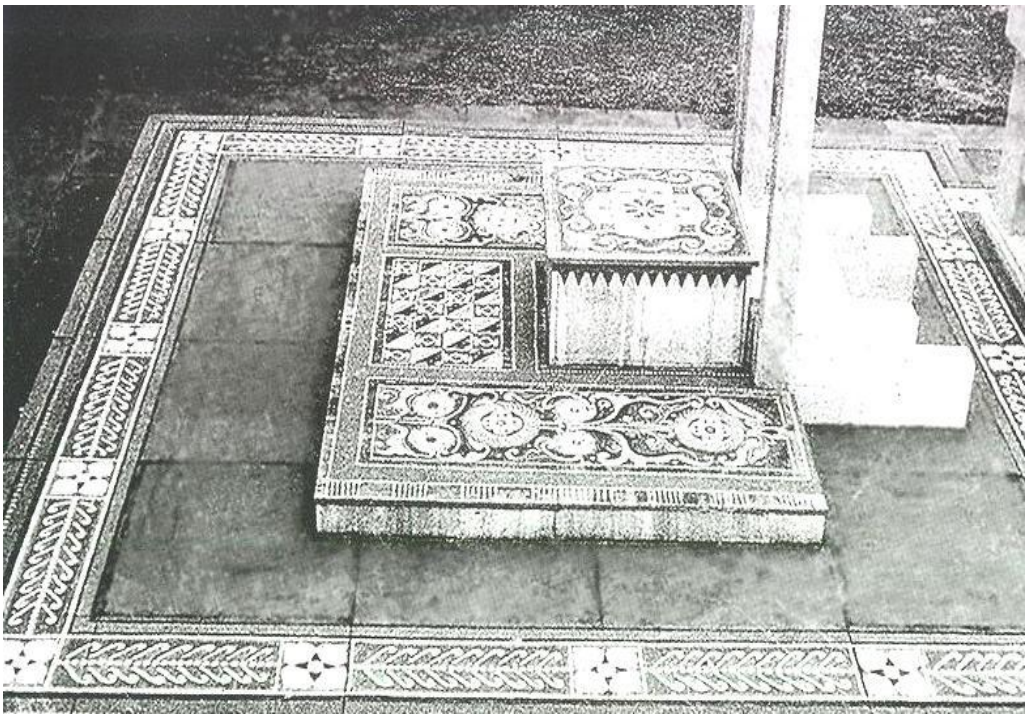


Plate 3.89 : Alpana design in Brikhoropan Utsav



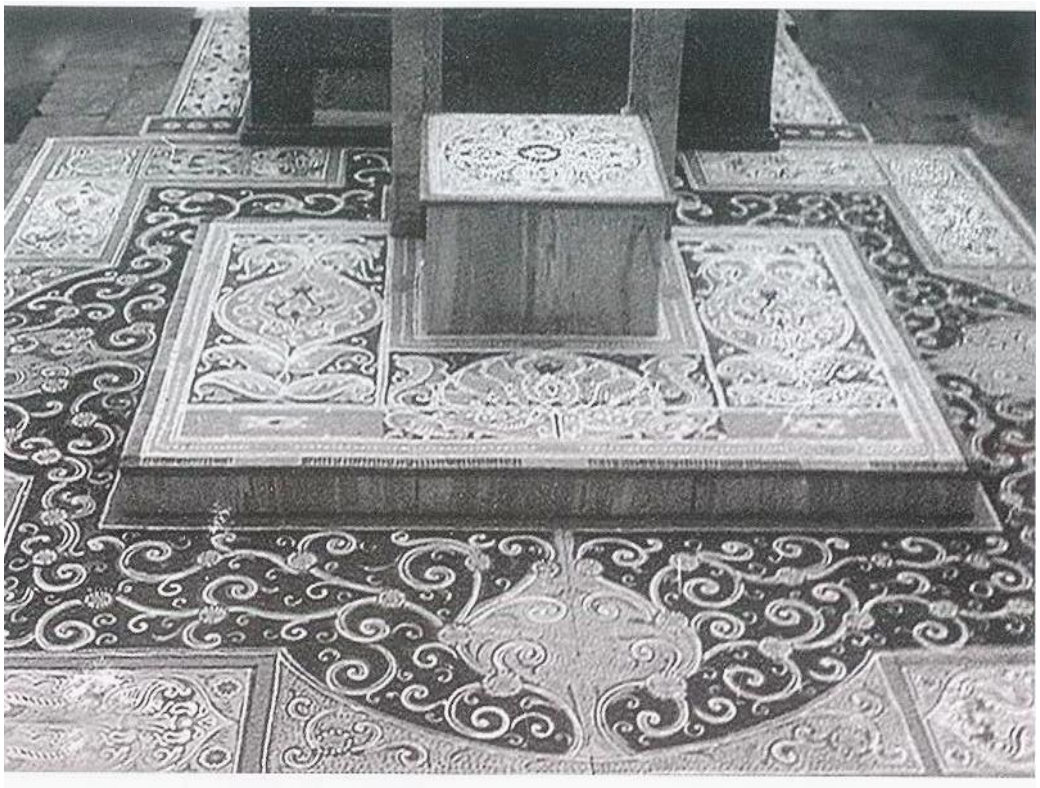


Plate 3.90 : 7th Poush (Bengali month) utsav decorate the chatimtala in Alpana design

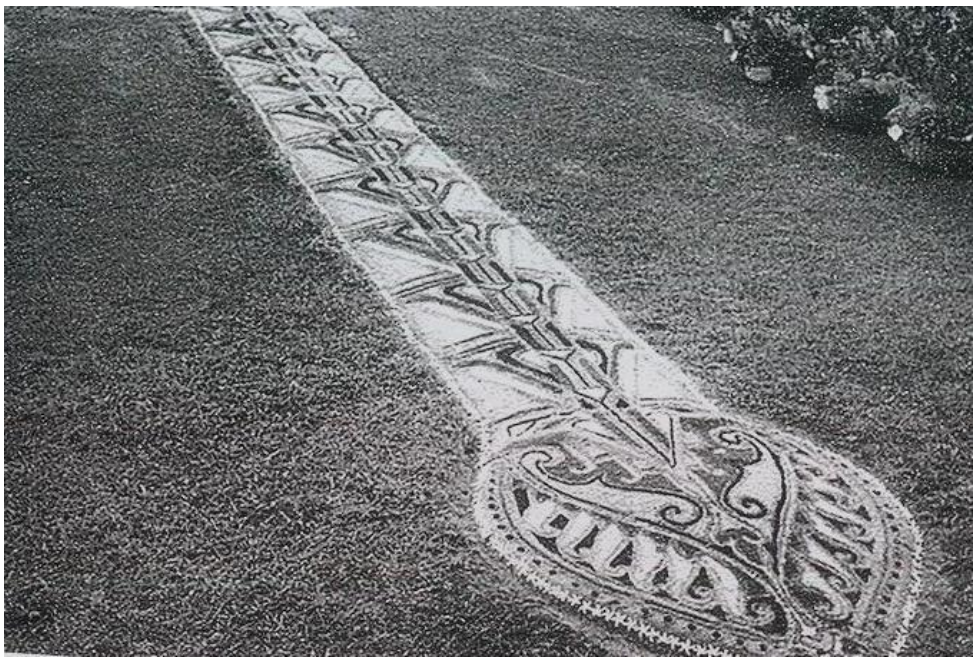


Plate 3.91 : Alpana design in Halakarshan Utsav

Plate 3.92 : Alpana Design

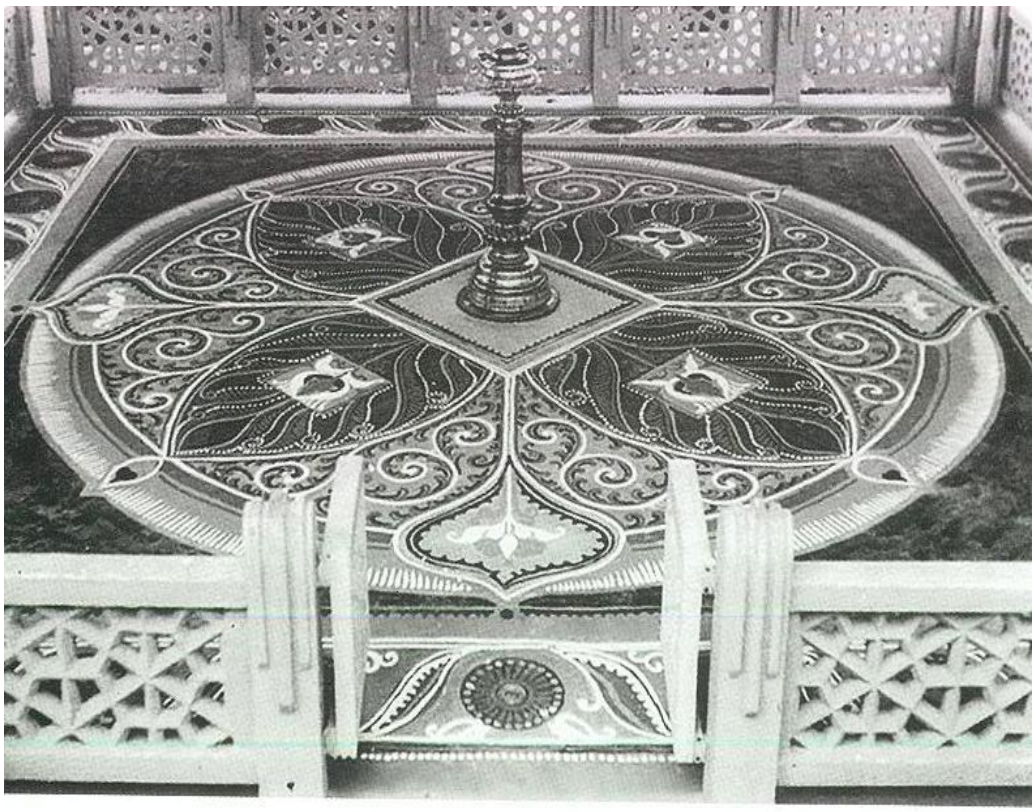


Plate 3.93 : Alpana Design in Brahmamandir (Glass temple) Santiniketan

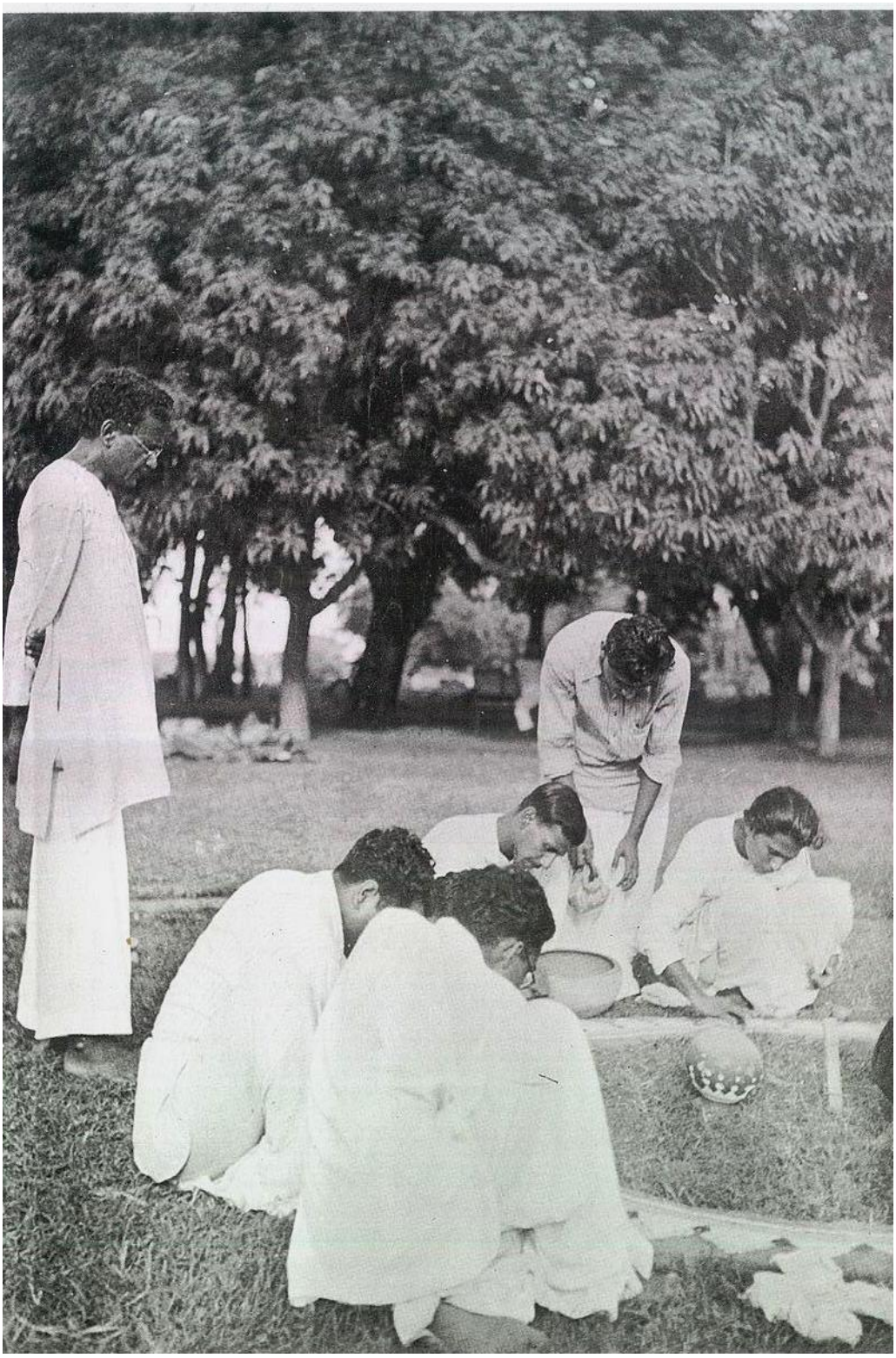


Plate 3.94 : Nandalal Bose instructed the student making an Alpana Design

Plate 3.95 : Alpana Design on Christmas day at Brahmamandir Santiniketan

Plate 3.96 : Flower making Alpana Design at Independent day in Santiniketan

Plate 3.97 : Alpona design

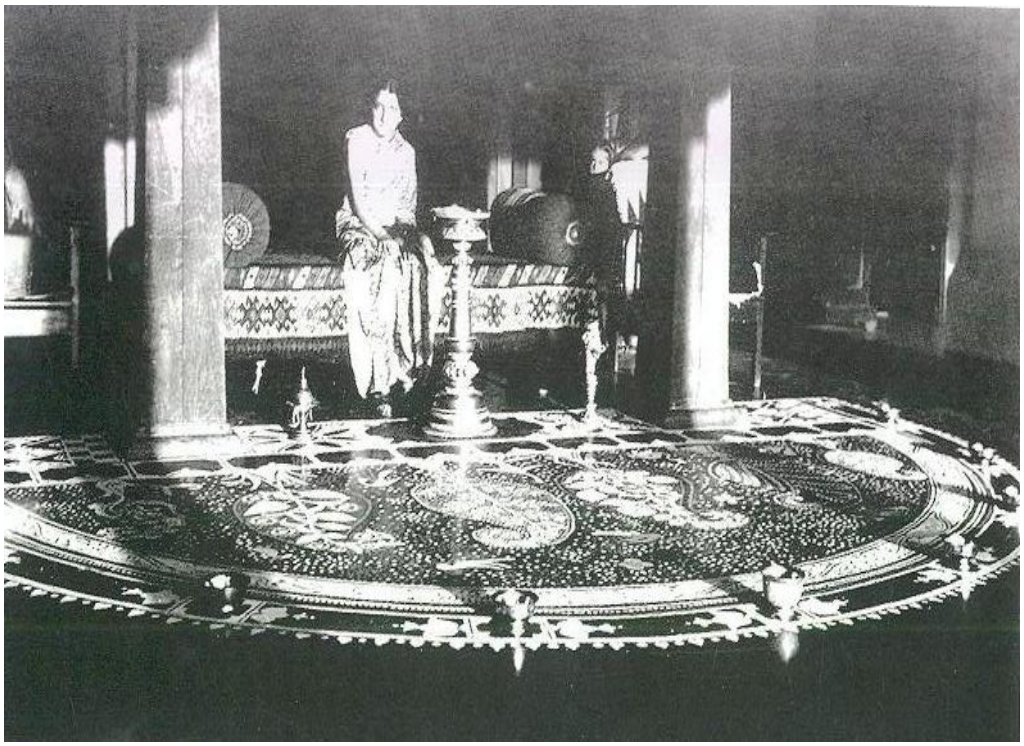


Plate 3.98 : Alpona design

Plate 3.99 : Alpona design on marriage ceremony

Plate 3.100 : Alpona design

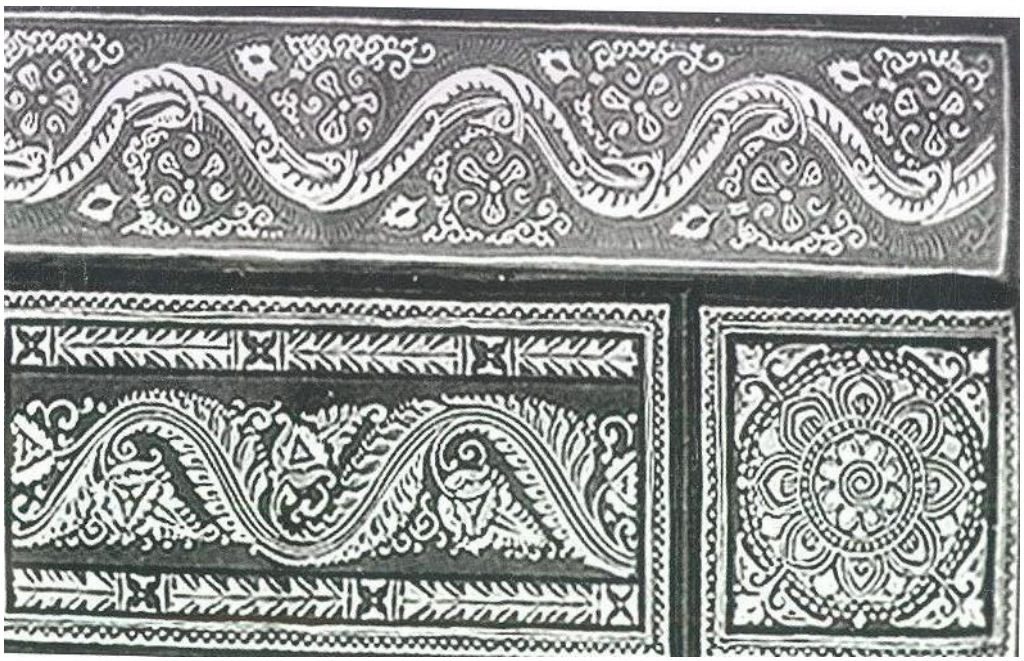


Plate 3.101 : Alpona design

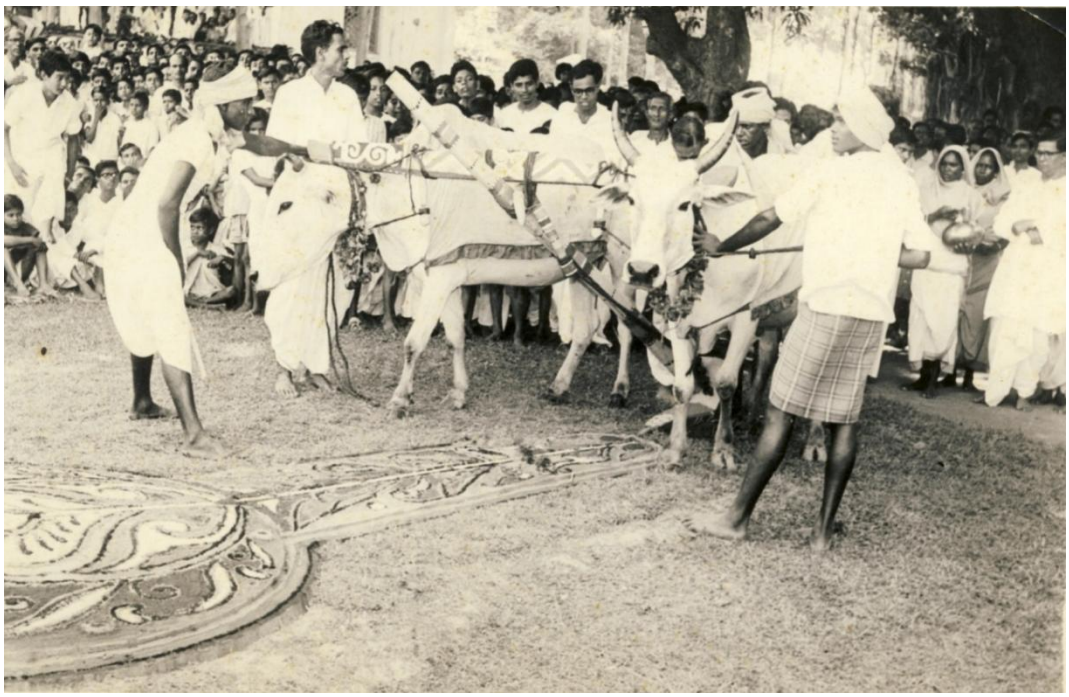


Plate 3.102 : Halakarshan Utsav making Alpana

Plate 3.103 : Decorative Pottery in Sriniketan and Santiniketan

Plate 3.104 : Sriniketan and Santiniketan Decorative Pottery

Plate 3.105 : Sriniketan and Santiniketan Decorative Pottery

Plate 3.106 : Wood work in Silpo Sadan Sriniketan

Plate 3.107 : Various Wood work in Silpo Sadan Sriniketan

Plate 3.108 : Wooden Useful object in Sriniketan Silpo Sadan