CHAPTER IV

METHOD AND MATERIAL OF VARIOUS TYPES OF HANDICRAFTS

4.1 Introduction

Both Santiniketan and Sriniketan offer a vast scope to the students for the study of art and craft. Both institutions accord an important place to craft of economic value. Kala Bhavan and Silpa Bhavan, the two departments have got popularity for their quality products of handicrafts. As a result, the demand of these products increase in the markets of various states in India and abroad. This becomes possible only for the sincere effort of artists like Nandalal Bose, Gouri Bhanja, Rathindranath Tagore, Protima Devi, Jamuna Sen etc. It is also due to the application of their innovative methods and techniques, products of Handicrafts are made qualitative and marketable.

4.2 Information collected about method and techniques of Santiniketan and Sriniketan handicrafts :

As in many other things, in ornamented art we find the thoughtful directives of Acharya Nandal Bose. The reflect of this is on worthy disciple and daughter Gouri Bhanja in whose hand it was further and became a strong and creative ornamental art form which even during life time of Gouri Bhanja earned frame as a peerless tradition or style of Santiniketan. The demand of Batik and leather works in the art objects of that time still continues. Gouri Bhanj was born in 1907. After ending education in the Ashram Vidyalaya at Santiniketan she got herself admitted into the department of Painting in Kala Bhavan. It may be held that her artistic personality found the opportunity of full blooming under the care of her father Nandalal Bose and at the vicinity of her maternal uncle, the famous architect Suren Kar. Above all, there was the affectionate hand of Rabindranath. As Rabindranath, through the institution of Silpa Sadan, inspired the rural art forms, so he also tried to create a favourable technical and artistic atmosphere for creation of art objects are acceptable to the educated urban society and at the same time new, indigenous and devoid of superfluity. At that time, Santiniketan took initiative a distinctive technique in weaving, leather work, furniture and domestic wares of wood, ceramics and

experiments with the Batik which is regarded as a path finder in designing in India. The history of useful and practical art remains incomplete without any references to the contribution of Gaganendranath. He and Abanindranath developed the designs of home decoration and furniture for the residence of the Tagores at Jorasanko to replace those brought from foreign lands. They gave a form to the furniture of Indian society of oriental Art, and Anushilan Kendra. According to Pulin Bihari, Gaganendranath was at the root for the fame of the particular method of manufacturing the objects of domestic decoration and furniture at Santiniketan.

Gouri Bhanja was the commander of this project. In stitching modern dresses for girls, Macrom made of different colour of jute, leather hand bags, befitting the dress, Batik saree, alwan, object of domestic decoration, wall hanging etc. works of Gouri Bhanja were found pleasing expression. In her hand Alpana became rhythmical and sensitive. Alpana came out to the open from the home-corner of Bengal with an Universal representation.

Sukhen Ganguli in his own style wrote about the relation between art and architecture. The future of students, art-materials and medium, its by-products and consumption, his thoughts and feelings about art in different ways and we get the answer to different questions. We find within this that there was deep sense of nationalism in his thoughts and feelings and creativity.

Nandalal Bose has said about this :

1) "First nature study and then decoration or ornamental work. Fish is the creature of water. The movement and shape of the fish has to be borne in mind. If the shape of the fish is changed into that of Kolka motif it cannot be called a good design."

2) "Design must follow the love of nature. Whatever is done will fully cannot be a design. Design has to be created keeping in mind the laws of nature."

A new path has been broken by reconnecting Batik and leather work with weaving. At the beginning of this Department, Gouri Bhanja, the daughter of Nandalal Bose joined as student. It was Gouri Bhanja who, according to design of her father and teacher Nandalal Bose, first tried to do Alpana design work and proved her

worth by demonstrating her expertise in Alpana. The students here learned the art of Alpana and sewing under the guidance of Gouri Bhanja. At a later date this act became an inseparable part of Kala Bhavan. A new department was opened with the active help of Carpel and Protima Devi to teach his craft, it was given the name 'Bichitra'.

In 1928, 'Bichitra Studio' was transformed to Sriniketan in the name of Silpa Bhavan. But, later on, Kala Bhavan took an active role for the advancement of the learning of designing. The very existence of Art stands on the base made by the harmonization of shape, colour and line. In those days the significance or connotation of 'design' was unknown to the 'art community'. In those days it was obligatory for all the students to learn all the aspects of art. So the student had to attend classes in designing along with all other subjects. Gouri Bhanja was at the helm of affairs in the Design Department. In 1948-49, the Prime Minister of the country Jawaharlal Nehru had requested Nandalal Bose to decorate all the pages of Indian Constitution.

The original page of the Constitution were decorated with the designs of Parchment paper under the supervision of Gouri Bhanja. In each page, design was done in a new medium using pure gold leaf. Gold leaf was purchased from the Jain Temple at Kolkata and those leaves were transformed to a liquid colour of gold leaf. This process was taught by Nandalal Bose. Gouri Bhanja taught the student and the Ashramites of that period how to decorate handicraft objects by collecting materials from nature. In cultural functions in Santiniketan 'Alpana' was done with different colours on different earthen yard coated with cow-dung. Sometimes rice, dal, kalojerera etc. were used in lieu of colour. In tree plantation function 'Alapana' was done on sand, palanquin, umbrella, the crown of Panchabhuta were decorated by the Ashramites with flowers, leaves etc. For hoisting the flag the yard was decorated with 'Alpana' in the morning of the 15th August. During the rainy season there was fear that the liquid alpana material might be washed away. So, Nandalal Bose asked to do the work of decoration with leaves of Jackfruit tree, Tagor and Jaba flowers. In Santiniketan this tradition is still followed. In the festival of colour, 'Alpana' was drawn in the mango grove with abir and flowers like Palash and Saal. In the convocation every year Gouri Bhanja drew 'Alpana' with her students. In the Mango-grove, the vast canvas made of earth mixed with cow-dung had an area ten about hundred square feet while drawing Alpana in the mango-grove yard during

convocation, Gouri Bhanja never had a lay-out in hand. The structure of the alpana sprang from the core of heart. We come to know from the writing of Pranab Kumar Roy that while drawing alpana on the cleaned yard, Gouri Bhanja drew the main lines first very lightly. The object to be drawn in fast sketched on the yard in different segments by scratching. At times, of course the first sketch was drawn by pieces of chalk. She always held the art of Alpana would loose its beauty if there were too many lines. In her own drawing suggestiveness was very significant. She did not like habit of drawing whole work first and then to do alpana. She drew with a free-hand keeping in mind the suggestiveness that emanated from the sketch. She did not like to choose more than three or four colours in drawing of alpana. Rather she distributed two or three colours in such a way that it created the impression of many colours having been used. The colours actually used got combined in such a way that it created a peculiar impression. One very significant thing is that she laid very great importance to the ground, that is, background. The cleaned yard, which was the background of the design, became a part of the whole drawing in her alpana. The yard became an inseparable part of the whole design such was her art.

Alpana that was being drawn in the famous Amrakunja according to the planning of Silpacharya Nandalal Bose was not less attractive in its aristocracy and beauty than the Kashmiri or Persian carpet. From the first years after the beginning of the Brahmavidyalaya the guests who came to Santiniketan from home or abroad were warmly welcomed under the open sky, on the ground decorated with alpana in the accompaniment of the sounds of the conch. Rabindranath himself had great respect for this traditional Indian way of welcoming the guest. Nandalal Bose was a devoted follower of this Indian tradition. The teacher of those days like Nandalal Bose and Gouri Bhanja understood that if the gates of the University were not opened up to inspire this education of artistic beauty, the consciousness about culture would not reach all the strata of the society. The realization of this reality was the source of this artistic endeavour. At that time, Gouri Bhanja was the main architect of the art of Alpana; she created a revolution in the culture world of Santiniketan. An Indian great Artist, K.G. Subramanyan expressed his feeling regarding the craft of Gouri Bhanja in article (Gouri Bhanja 1907 – 1998) In an intimate conversation with Kanai Samanta, Acharya Nandalal Bose mentions that he was often astonished by his daughter Gouri's genius for design. He says, 'Gouri is more adept than me at decoration,

design, colour, line and rhythm flow out of her effortlessly' on the strength of my intelligence and discipline I can also do something, even give her instruction; but my work is never as spontaneous as hers.' Coming from Nandalal, who was always guarded in his appreciation of the works of his next of kin, following the norms of his times, this is certainly high praise.

Gouri-di's craft skills were admired by a host of others too and this included a whole line of her devoted disciplines, who went forward to encourage the growth of craft culture in the homes and institutions of urban Bengal and at a further step the national scene. This eventually led to the rediscovery and reactivation of many of our neglected craft skills and revived their practice by both professionals and non-professionals.

Gouri-di herself was a compulsive craft person; she had an irrepressible desire to keep her hand busy. She stitched, she darned, embroidered, braided coloured yarns into ornamental tapes, wove on the loom did tatting, made mats, did attractive alpanas for each occasion, modeled clay objects, tooled leather, designed wax-resist apparels and costumes and in each case gave proof of an urbane aestheticism and remarkable fabricational expertise.

From what I have heard from others, Gouri-di had in her youth, distinguished herself in many other fields like music and dancing too. Her remarkable performance in one of Rabindranath's dance dramas, early in the day, had so impressed the viewers of that time that its memory outshone those of all subsequent achievements; those who had seen the performance declared effusively that she danced like a tongue of fire on that occasion. There were however no further occasions. She got married and her marriage clipped her wings. And later when she was saddled with the responsibilities of grooming the craft skills of Kala Bhavan she turned into a systematic pedagogue who planned step by step a sequential choreography of craft education. This over-academicised her approach. But in the work she continued to do herself detailing the visuals of the festivals and stage shows in Santiniketan, her personal contribution carried the old beauty and delicacy.

From the writings of Suchibrata Dev on the tradition of craft of Kala Bhavan and Gouri Bhanja we come to know that the awareness that was created by Kala Bhavan about folk art, handicraft etc. was without any parallel. At this time Nandalal

Bose, in line with the importance of the Indian design, made it compulsory for students the loom handicraft. Sukumari Devi, who hailed from East Bengal, first joined Kala Bhavan as student of Nandalal Bose and then as teacher. She had great talent for Alpana. Teaching of Alpana and sewing was started at her guidance. Rathindranath Tagore returned from Europe with wide knowledge of leather work and introduced it in Santiniketan. This art of leather work became famous all over the world was leather work of Santiniketan.Protima Devi saw Batik work during her tour of Java and collected Batik cloth. Batik work was introduced in Kala Bhavana with her support. At this time, Designing was also started as a department. Before independence, only Santiniketan got recognition for the contribution of Indian folk art and village folk artists. Artistic designing was started under the guidance of Rabindranath and the expert administration of Nandalal Bose and it became famous in the art of Santiniketan. Rabindranath wanted complete advancement of man towards creativity. He made the plan, together with Ashram education for imparting education on music, dance, acting and for their celebration. The planning for functions, their planning and execution were a fundamental effort of Nandalal Bose. The main aspect of seasonal festivals was Alpana and the consciousness about the relationship between man and nature. The medium of expression in this secular celebration was Alpana combined to the art of designing as introduced by Nandalal Bose.

4.3 Techniques of various types of Handicrafts :

Textiles :

In the handicraft of Santiniketan weaving occupies an important position. In the weaving centre of Sriniketan, saree, napkin, seat, blanket, carpet etc. have been produced. After sometime were started such works as colouring, calico printing, cloth analyzing etc. from Kala Bhavan of Santiniketan designs were supplied for silk cloth, carpet etc. At a later date in 1928 the weaving centre attained success in manufacturing Kota chaddar from silk-scarp.

In the initial stage, was done by Fly Shuttle Loom. In 1938, in the weaving centre three pit-looms and Chittaranjan Type – A loom were set. A new type of machine was introduced in pull work. In 1935, Monindra Chandra Sen, in-charge of weaving centre returned from Japan with the knowledge of advanced shuttle work. He brought with him ten power looms and a few preparatory machines. Weaving of cloth

with these power looms was started in 1936. In 1937, work was being done in Sriniketan weaving centre with eleven handlooms, five Swedish looms and the power looms.

In weaving craft, designs of mainly plain weave and extra weave are noticeable. Chaddar, saree, napkin, bedcover, carpet are produced. In weaving of Saree, thread of counts 20, 26, 40 and in weaving of bedcover thread of count 20 were twisted to prepare the part of the design. In the realm of design, the use of diamond design is worth noticing. The length of the napkin was five hands and there was narrow par through the whole length. In case of dhuti, the length was six hands and in it also there was narrow 'Par'. In case of saree, the length was six and half meters and the breadth forty eight inches of the total length. The saree as such was five and half meters and the blouse-piece was one meter. In case of saree reed of numbers 20 and 26 are used. In case of chaddar and bedcover reed number 36 is used for thread of $\frac{2}{17}$ count while in case of woolen chaddars reed of number 36 is used. Bedcover of Khes weaving was first started in Surul village, through it was spread through the neighbouring villages. Bedcovers of different sizes are manufactured – single bedcover are ninety iches long and fifty two inches wide, medium bedcovers ninety inches long and seventy two inches wide, double bedcovers are hundred and sixty inches long and ninety inches wide. In the design of bedcover and curtain the temple design was used which looked like notched. This design is specially used in tweel which, in textile design is called Ziz zak tweel design.

Khesh Weaving :

"The Khesh weaving process is simple. The wrap is with new yarn and the weft is with strips of thin cloth obtained by tearing old sarees length wise.

Because of the tradition of Khesh weaving in Birbhum in the last so many years, a market for old sarees has come up in Ahamadpur, where old sarees can be bought in bulk by weavers. Many weavers also have their suppliers who gather them from village, wash them and sell them ready for tearing.

Many other weaver depend on householders to give them sarees which get woven into bedcovers for a fee. The weaver needs six sarees for a single bedcover and ten for a double.

The old sarees have to be of cotton in order that they tear easily. Experiments using synthetic sarees have also been undertaken, since the propensity to wear synthetic sarees is on the rise even in villages. But the problem with synthetic sarees is that they cannot be torn by hand and have to be cut by scissors. This increases the time for this process and therefore the cost.

The tearing process, which is as labour intensive as weaving, is typically done by female members of the weaver's household. Some shortcuts have been found to make the process less tedious and time consuming. The saree is first torn into five or six parts lengthwise. One end of each part, say about five inches is then torn into strips. The person who is tearing then picks out altenate strips and hold them together in one hand, and the remaining in the other hand. He then pulls in two opposite directions giving him many strips at one go. Typically a saree yield about seventy five to eight strips once the old sarees are torn into thin strips, the weaver hangs these strips beside him for easy access and weaves with whichever he picks up randomly. And therein lies the beauty of the Khesh fabric; the design person or the weaver can only specify the colour of the warp. The colour of the weft is completely a matter of chance on when the fabric is woven can one appreciate how the colours in the old sarees have blended into the new fabric.

The weaving can ofcourse be done either intensively with old sarees or with gaps in between depending on the effect desired."

Batik :

"In 1927, Rabindranath Tagore went to Indonesia, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Siam. He was deeply impressed by the Batik craft on textiles which he saw there and wished to introduced the art in Santiniketan. Surendranath Kar, an art teacher of Santiniketan was one of his travel companions. The later mastered the technique of the art in the course of his tour. On returning he taught and popularized this unique art form. The poet's son Rathindranath Tagore and his daughter-in-law Protima Devi were also great enthusiasts in propagating this. In fact, Rathindranath experimented and successfully evolved with the technique to create Batik design on new medium 'leather'. Santiniketan is the birth cradle of leather Batik. In Santiniketan the Java technique of Batik was simplified and bought down to minimal use of tools. The designs were also novel novel and the typical Santiniketan style flourished in Batik

creations. The use of Batik rose to a place of honour in the life, festivals, costumes, stage craft and interior décors of Santiniketan. Gradually the art crept out of Santiniketan and reached all coners of Bengal and then to different parts of India mainly due to the endeavour of the student and teachers of Santiniketan.

Tools :

Santiniketan Batik used minimum tool and brought about an unprecedented simplification of technique but derived the same magnificent results.

Waxing :

Thin and flat sable-hair brush, kerosene lamp, container for heating and melting the wax, tongs.

Dyeing :

Three to four big tubs either of clay, porcelain, enamel or plastic and a pair of gloves.

Resist :

Bee's wax and Paraffin wax, to get the crack-effect on the fabric, for which Batik is most famed and gum Arabica.

Dyes :

Varied vibrant colours as well as muted and earthy colours both reigned in the Batik creation of Santiniketan.

Dyes can be two types – natural or vegetable dyes and chemical dyes. Vegetable dyes include colours that are subdued yet rich and are obtained from Catechu, mulberry and myrobalan. Chemical dyes are again of two types – acid or indigosol colours and salt colours. Salt colours have a wider variety of vibrant shades from different hues like yellow, orange, red, maroon, black, snuff. Acid colours include pink, blue, grey, green and violet Monopol soap and caustic soda are also used during the dyeing process.

Santiniketan Process :

Santiniketan Batik technique involves a drawn entirely manual, diligent and meticulous process involving four steps of drawing the design, waxing colouring and wax removing. The colouring process varies in the different types of dyes used – vegetable, salt and chemical dyes. The mostly used variety is the salt colour.

- The design is traced out on a piece of cloth.
- The colour scheme is worked out first in the mind and accordingly the design is waxed.
- The waxing is done in steps from the highest shade to the darkest shade. If the design consists of four colours like white, yellow, red and black then the white portion is first waxed and the cloth is dipped in yellow dye. Then the yellow is waxed and dipped in red and finally the red is waxed and the cloth is dipped in black.
- To prepare the wax, the bee's wax is placed in a small container over the flame of a kerosene lamp or charcoal fire. Some gum Arabica (1:5) is mixed with the wax. When the mixture melts, the wax resist is ready to use.
- The molten wax is applied to the design with the help of a thin brush.
- For the portions where only cracks are desired the wax used in Paraffin wax. Otherwise the procedure is the same. This is usually the major portion and is applied with a flat brush.
- For each colour there is a salt.
- Before dyeing, the cloth is dipped in water containing a little monopol soap.
- A solution is prepared using the Batik colour and monopol soap in warm water. Another solution is prepared using caustic soda and cold water. Both these solutions are cooled and mixed in a tub full of water. The cloth is dipped in this tub for 4 – 5 minutes and turned continuously.

- The same fabric is now taken out and dipped in a fresh solution of the water and Batik salt powder for another 3 – 4 minutes.
- The cloth is raised from the solution and dried in the shade without wrinkling, twisting or crushing.
- To obtain cracks after final waxing with Paraffin wax, the cloth is highly crumpled and pressed to form the cracks.
- To remove wax, add flakes of washing soap cake in water and boil the fabric.

Design :

Nandalal Bose along with his talented colleagues and students evolved a unique style of design that could easily be identified as the Santiniketan school of design. Traditional alpana (traditional floor decoration using rice flour) motifs borrowed from the folk traditions, classic patterns from temple ornamental designs, or from traditional pottery, jewellery, embellishment of furniture, buildings and walls all found place in Santiniketan designs. The most innovative part was the incorporation of actual flowers, plants, leaves, birds, insects, small animals that abounded in the nature of Santiniketan. This style found its place in Santiniketan Batik designs. Batik designs of Santiniketan usually comprises of a central cracked portion bordered with lucid free flowing designs.

Badhni :

In Santiniketan handicraft; Badhni work occupies an important place. The process in Badhni is – first the piece of cloth is to be bound maintaining gaps cautiously and then it is to be dyed in colour. The piece is to be bound as many times it is dyed. When the piece gets dry the thread with which it is found has to be loosened. The important items in Badhni work are bags, sarees, lady's gauzes crafts etc. Ashramites are taught Badhni work by Gouri Bhanja.

Kantha Work :

As a result of the impact of modernism, industrialization and changed social life, Kantha is not much sewed in the houses as it was done in the old ages. The craft

of Kantha demands some leisure hours. And yet, even in the face of modernism and fast changing life-style, Kantha is practiced. In conventional Kantha, the craftman creates designs out of his own mind, and the product bears the pleasure of the mind of the creator. In the Kanthas of the first phase, colours were used. Threes of various colours red, blue, yellow, violet, black were used. At a later phase threads of green magenta, light yellow, pink colours began to be used. In old days, in Kanthas, other knots were used with the main knote of run stitch and now with them, added chain stitch, Hurricane stitch, Double Hurricane stitch, cross stitch etc.

In Karusangha at Santiniketan, the work of Kantha-knotting was started under the guidance of Jamuna Sen. In the later years the impact of this was spread in the adjacent villages. In the villages Sian, Namur, Simibejwa, Lovepur and Surul in Birbhum, in Jadarpur which is only four kilometers from Sriniketan designed Nakshi Kantha are sewed, Kanthas of this region are commercial products in which some of the motifs and designs of the old-day Kanthas are noticed. As in various parts of the country so in the various villages of Birbhum Kanthas of different types of knots are seen. We may refer to the use of Kantha in the village Sansat, these are Sujni, asan, dastarkhan, Jaynamaj, chaddar, pillow cover etc. In this region a particular design called Golok dhandha is seen in Kantha. Here knote is called loop. This design begins with seven needles and ends in the middle with one needle. Various designs in 'Kantha Pad' are noticed, such as Rasagolla Pad, Belunduri, Ramdhenu Eitpede, Ghurupede, Hanspede, Ramdhenupede, Mayurpede, Lataful pede etc. In the ground of the Kantha, designs were given, some of the designs are Ringfanse, Jalfanse, Ingrejifanse, Angtifanse, Bichefanse, Geentfanse, Kadifanse etc. In the village Mahidapur, the D.M.C. prepares Angtifanse, Kadifanse, Geentfanse etc. with Dali thread on Kantha. Sometimes they put Sari pad in the orders of Kantha. They create on the ground of Kantha various design with various colours like red, blue, yellow, green with the help of Run stitching. We notice similar varieties in the Kanthas manufactured in centre region. The three-layer cloth is completely sewed in Gudirun. In the Kanthas of Birbhum a kind of twisted flowers are seen. In the Kanthas of this region other designs are also noticed. In the Kanthas, various motifs of flower-creepers leaves, Kailapata, Shushnipata, stem of Barley, Mango, botel leaf, duck, scissor, kajal lata are drawn with threads of red-blue-orange-green-colour. Some geometrical patterns are also seen in Kantha. In the two villages of Bardowan,

Berenda and Dhera, the women sew designful Kantha. Various types of Kanthas including sujni and asana are prepared here. Run stitches of variety small size are called Gudi Run. In the Muslim society Gudi Run is called Jire Run. Cloth of white or other colours are laid and designs are created on the ground of the cloth. The designs may be various flowers, creeper-leaf, hundred-petal lotus, trees and various geometrical designs.

Materials :

Nakshi that is, designed Kanthas are very popular in the whole of Bengal. Local features have given the Kanthas a wide variety. For sewing Kanthas some materials are required. The first thing is the thread taken from old sarees of women and dhuties of men. For the thickness of Kantha five to seven sarees or dhuties are required. A few cloths are laid one over other and the corners are then stuck with the thorns of Date-plum trees. The four sides of the Kantha are then stitched with Tak-knots and the thorns are removed. Then designs are created with threads on the body of the Kantha with various knots. The first raw-material of Kantha is the easily available and worn-out sarees and dhuties. The second material is the aforesaid thorn of Deta-plum or Babla trees. These thorns are used in the corner of the laid-down cloths so that cloths may not of more and got replaced. The third material is a jar. The flat-bottom jar is slightly heated and put on the cloth so that it is kept plain. This is a local form of ironing of cloth. The fourth material is a piece of charcoal or the colour collected from the juice of any tree. This is used to draw the borders and the designs on the Kantha. Then another material, thread and needle comes. Thread of white on any other colour are used to stitch the drawn designs with the needle. This thread collected from worn-out cloth is generally kept in reels or around the fingers and women in a curious way stitches the cloth with needle. In most of the Kanthas women use thread of red, black, yellow and blue colours. Of course rose and ash colours are also used. A beautiful Kantha is made by making various designs with threads of a variety of colours.

This art of Kantha-making is the typical handicrafts of the women of Bengal. Beautiful art-object is created with neglected or discarded objects. The beautiful design that is neglected with torn cloth reflects the loadable ability of rural women to create art.

Alpana :

Human beings are great lovers of beauty. The sense of beauty has been being seen in men since the Primitive times and they decorate their bodies in different ways to satisfy their thirst for beauty. Art began from this love of human being for beauty. When communities of human beings came into existence, the artistic nature in men found space for expression. This aspect is vindicated by the cave-art of the Primitive men. In India, during the days of the Indus Valley Civilization, in the town of Mahenjodaro the people built Yagna-Kunda. It has been found that around the kundas the people drew alpanas. The Buddhist Shramanes also drew various pictures and scenery with colours made from the juice of leaves of various trees. These reflect artistic quality of the people of those days.

Alpana is created out of the sense of beauty of man. In it we may discern the belief in magic of the Primitive people. The root of the word 'Alpana' is the Sanskrit word 'Atimpan'- Alpana may be divided into two parts according to the materials needed. In one part, the materials are coloured dry dust of various objects; in another, the materials are liquid. In this type the particular method is – water is added in the dust of rice so that a thick liquid is formed and then Alpana is created on the flat palin ground with one finger with a small piece of cloth dipped in that liquid. Generally, white clour is used in Alpana. But on some occasions, coloured alpanas are drawn for the sake of greater beauty of decoration. Coloured objects may be prepared in the house from various objects – Charcoal for black colour, Vermillion or dust of brick for red, the juice of leaves for green, the marigold and turmeric for yellow etc. Alpana is the sign of good fortune, and so there is the practice of drawing alpana in every function. Through the motifs of the alpana the wishes and hopes and desires of the human, particularly feminine mind are expressed; at the same time the awareness of beauty is also expressed.

Alpana occupies an important place in the handicraft of Santiniketan. If the creation of beauty by means of alpana were not there, it would be futile to discuss the objects which are necessary for this art; a new method of creation of beauty would remain unexpressed and unexplored. The art of alpana was started in Santiniketan in 1919. The influence of alpana of Noakhali in Western part of Bengal fall this form of art in Santiniketan. The current of this art form advanced in the hands of Sukumari

Devi. Gouri Bhanja learnt alpana from Sukumari Devi and at a later stage Indusudha Ghose, Jamuna Sen, Amala Bose, Chitraniva Choudhury learnt this art-form from Gouri Bhanja.

Alpana was given the pride of place in any function in Santiniketan. The alpana design was brought to the force sometimes through use of colour and sometimes flowers and leaves or paddy seeds. In Santiniketan, in every function, alpana is essential. It is seen that in Santiniketan sometimes the alpana of rural areas and again alpana like the designs of the Ajanta-Elora caves are used. A santiniketan school of alpana developed by mixing up the aforesaid two branches. Nandalal Bose made alpana a subject of study in Kala Bhavana in 1919 and thus made it a part of education. It is for this that the learning of alpana spread quite rapidly. There was no hard and fast rule about learning, for students were allowed freedom. According to Nandalal Bose the inner mind is expressed through the medium of alpana.

If there were not practice and development of the art of alpana, there would have been perhaps no marked importance of the designs in the handicraft of Batik. The design of alpana are used in the Batik art and stitch art. For the use of the alpana-design as the chief design in handicraft, Nandalal Bose, Gouri Bhanja, Sukumari Devi, Jamuna Sen etc. are indebted to various individuals. In Santiniketan, the functions in which alpana was primarily used for decoration and New-year, Birthday of Tagore, Halkarshan, Tree plantation, Paushmela, Convocation etc. In these functions, the art of alpana occupies Primary position because of the parts played by Nandalal Bose, Gouri Bhanja and Jamuna Sen. Before drawing alpana, the arenas of Chatimtala, the Temple and the Mango grove were anointed by cow-dung and kept for three-four days. After that alpanas were given on the arenas. The arena looked like a carpet after the alpana had been given.

At Santiniketan in each festival or function different objects were used for giving alpana. For instance, in New-year function at Chatimtala, Poush Parvan and Tree-plantation, the use of colour dust of various goods is worth mentioning. The use of chalk-powder, black dust made of ash, Multani earth in the early days was worth noticing. These colours were mixed with natural glue and used for alpana. But the colour is noticeably used. On the death anniversary of Rabindranath while colour is mainly used in alpana, but different colours are used on the Independence Day and

Republic Day. In rainy season, when there is possibility of colours getting washed away, the alpana-form is given with flower and leaves. In the festival of colour in the Mango groves alpana-form is given with Palash, Saal flowers and 'abir'. In Halkarshan festival which means festival organized before sowing the land, the alpana form was given with paddy seed and various types of dots. It shows alpana was given in consonance with the significance of particular event and festivals. Every alpana bears a significant meaning; in meaning and aesthetic sense alpana is always modern.

Leather Work :

Rathindranath, son of Rabindranath Tagore, introduced leather work in Santiniketan and Sriniketan in 1930. In 1930, Rathindranath had been to England for treatment in London, he became acquainted with leather work in the studio and became devoted to this craft. He learnt the craft and on return to India spread the knowledge of leather work among the ashramites in Santiniketan.

Leather Inlay Work :

We have already noted that leather work has been started in Santiniketan after Rathindranath returned from England. He brought a kind of machine to Santiniketan for spreading better handicraft. For doing Inlay work, designs were carved on the blocks of wood. Then placing better sheet on the blocks. They were pressed by Double Arm Boll Press machine so that the design got imprinted on the better sheet. Then colours were used on them. The technique of colour-contrast was greatly used. Combination of different colours were used to make the designs attractive in leather Inlay work. Another kind of leather work was combined to form something known as leather Batik.

Leather Batik :

Like the Batik handicraft of Santiniketan, its leather Batik has also spread itself widely in different states. The use of the 'alpana' design in the case of Leather Batik is worth noticing. The bold design has added beauty to this art. The difference in the techniques of Inlay process and Leather Batik created a visual difference between the two. We notice the use of thin line in Leather Inlay work. The opposite is noticed in Leather Batik. The process in Leather Batik is to some extent like cloth Batik. Only, in cloth Batik the portion designed is filled up with wax and in Leather

Batik, this work is done by the gum of Babla tree instead of wax. In the matter of the use of colour, a coloured liquid is prepared by mixing colour dust with spirit. Then this liquid colour is sprayed on leather. This colour works better if the quality of leather is good.

Method :

First of all leather is pressed hard to make it smooth and then washed carefully and dried. As said earlier the designed part is filled with the gum of Babla tree. When the design part is dried, colour mixing dust colour with spirit is sprayed on it. Gum is to be used as many times colour is used on the design. Then the leather is to be kept apart for a day and then washed with soap and dried.

Paper Making :

The manufacturing process of paper by hand was started in Silpa Sadan in 1948. Paper and board were made from hay and leaves of palm trees. This sort of paper making spread fast with the efforts of some local young people. But it could not become wide-spread like other branches of handicraft for various reasons. Now for making paper not only hay and palm leaves, but such objects of white of coloured of pieces of cloth, Pineapple leaves, skin of banana tree, grass etc. were used. The process is – rejected pieces of paper are kept in water and rottened and then the other objects as mentioned above are mixed up. The whole object is put in a tray and covered and pressed hard by a plank of wood or any other object so that excess water is drained out. When the whole object kept in the tray is dried up, paper is made. The variety of paper depends on the use of different objects for manufacturing. For manufacturing paper of this variety Titanium Dioxides, Staurch Rasin Soap, Blue alum etc. are used.

Jewellery :

Jewellery occupies an important position in the field of handicraft in Santiniketan. In the field of handicraft ornaments of flowers and leaves, of earth, of jute, of leather Batik are worth mentioning. Almost every known about the ornaments made of earth or Leather Batik in Santiniketan. These ornaments are decorated with alpana designs other than the ornaments made of earth and leather Batik some more types of ornaments are known in Santiniketan handicraft. Particularly ornaments of

flowers and leaves, Gouri Bhanja echoed Rabindranath : The flower says I am blessed on the earth.

Ornaments of flowers and leaves have a special place in Santiniketan handicraft. These ornaments enjoy a special place in some occasions. In Santiniketan, this ornament was created by Gouri Bhanja, daughter of Nandalal Bose. It is worth mentioning that in South India flowers are used as ornaments for decoration of the body and garland of flowers are used in different festivals and ceremonies. Thus the use of flowers as ornaments became wide-spread in different places of India. But in the handicraft of Santiniketan ornaments of flowers are produced according to the ideas and ideal of the place. Gouri Bhanja by virtue of her ideal and thoughts created a beautiful form of ornaments with flowers and leaves. These ornaments of flowers and leaves is used generally in plantation and some other cultural functions. The use of these ornaments has been going on in the plantation ceremony since the days of Gouri Bhanja. As material leaves of jackfruit tree, flowers of different types and particularly Tagor flower are used. The leaves of jackfruit tree are cut into different sizes and then flowers are pasted on them with glue and in this way the form of an ornament is given. Among these ornaments made of flowers and leaves the most important are sets of ornaments for ear and neck, bangles and 'Tikli' etc.

Other than the ornaments of flowers and leaves, those made of earth, ornaments of Batik jute, of different kinds of seeds and of bamboo are also produced in Santiniketan. Earth has to be first prepared for masking ornaments and then different decorative designs are given on it. In Batik, ornaments of this type are given on leather. In jute ornaments, different colourful threads of jute are used to give knots. In the making of jute ornaments in Santiniketan, the contribution of Gouri Bhanja in the initial stage is noteworthy. We notice in the handicraft of Santiniketan how ornaments may be made with seeds of trees and plants, Tamarind seed, and grass. Again, bamboo ornaments are made by engraving designs on bamboo and in this the size and quality of bamboo has to be kept in mind.

Jute Craft :

Various articles of Jute are produced by means of various types of knots. In Jute products, Jute threads of diffrernt colours are used. Among the jute product we

have ornaments, bags, and other objects for decoration of the house. Gouri Bhanja spread this handicraft in Santiniketan.

Pottery :

Pottery or handicraft object of earth started in Santiniketan in 1921. For this one machine for production of tiles was brought from Germany. But this machine could not be put to use for long but because of the paucity of finance. But pottery was not stopped because of this, pottery work was continued in Santiniketan in other ways with small finance. In pottery, only a little decorative designs are used. In these designs in pottery we may see the use of the alpana designs. Today in Santiniketan and Sriniketan the use of machine-ovens are used in Pottery handicraft.

Another handicraft side by side those already mentioned are noticed in Santiniketan. This is wood work. In this craft, objects of domestic life are produced – objects like chairs, tables, as well as various decorative goods.

4.4 Conclusion :

Artist like Rathindranath Tagore, Protima Devi, Nandalal Bose, Jamuna Sen visited various states of India and abroad and acquire many ideas regarding handicraft and tried to apply these knowledge with their own method and techniques to make the product of handicraft of their own. Now, the style of making these product to the people of the country become well known as Santiniketani style.

All the artist of Santiniketan and Sriniketan were very much sincere for the improvement of the standard of products of handicrafts in Santiniketan and Sriniketan. Moreover, they could inspire their students to make them involve in the work of handicraft sincerely. As a result students of Santiniketan and Sriniketan came to learn many innovative method and techniques for making quality products of handicraft. This could be possible only by the proper guidance of the artist to the students. Students came to know the distinctive style of embroidery, technique of weaving, method of using wheel for making pottery, techniques of using wax, bruss and colour for Batik work, techniques of collecting various leaves of trees, flowers etc. for Alpana and jewellery design etc.

Plate 4.1 : Weaving Technique

Plate 4.2 : Pit Loom

Plate 4.3 : Me and one of the Weaver Aabhadanga Birbhum

Plate 4.4 : Cotton Rolling Machine

Plate 4.5 : Weaving process of saree

Plate 4.6 : Handloom weaving

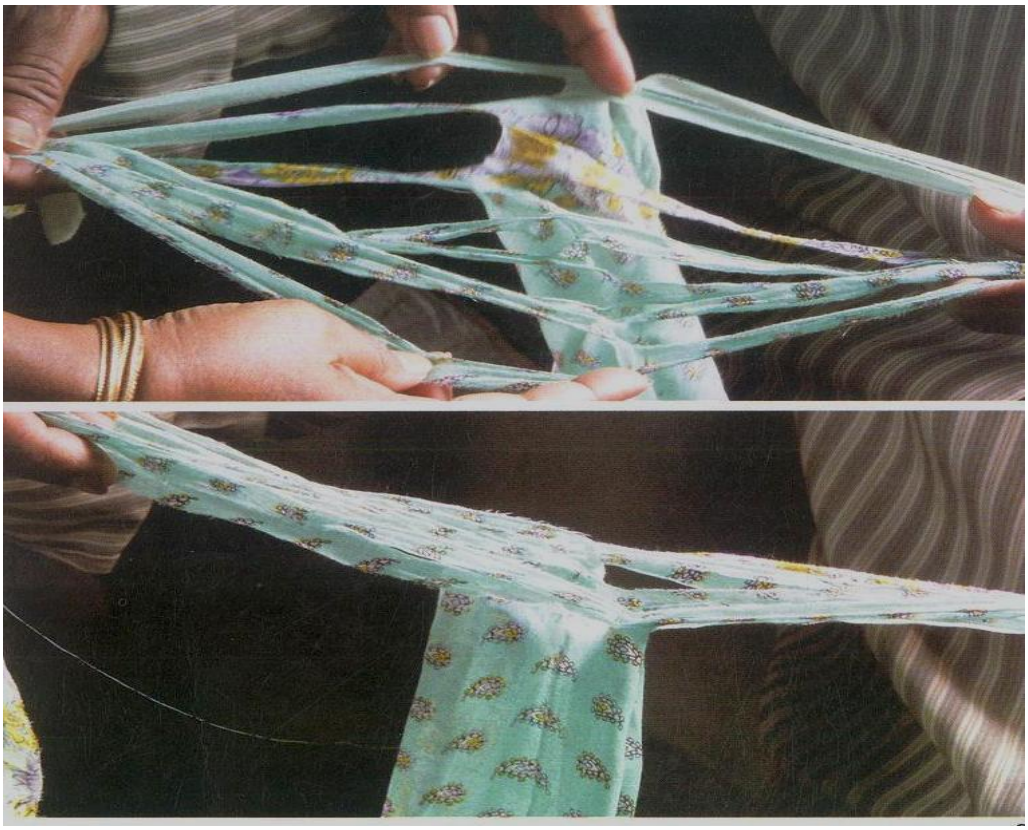


Plate 4.7 : Preparing the Khesh weaving

Plate 4.8 : Batik Technique

Plate 4.9 : Leather Batik Technique

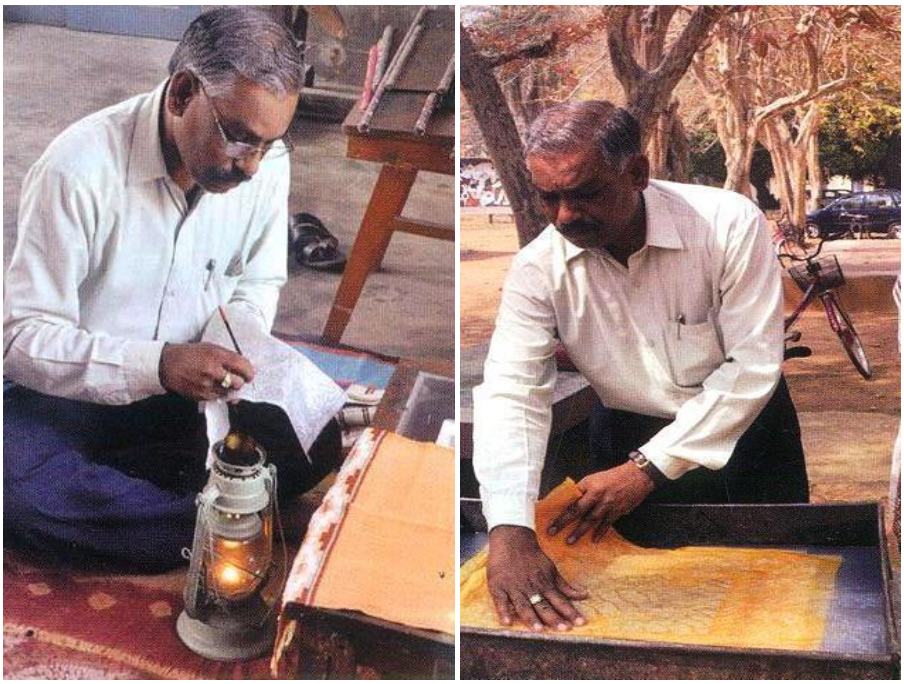


Plate 4.10 : Batik Design Technique

Plate 4.11 : Leather Batik Technique

Plate 4.12 : Leather Batik Technique

Plate 4.13 : Pottery Technique

Plate 4.14 : Pottery making

Plate 4.15 : Sriniketan Silpo Sadan clay modeling Studio

Plate 4.16 : Pottery department Silpo sadan Sriniketan

Plate 4.17 : Book Binding

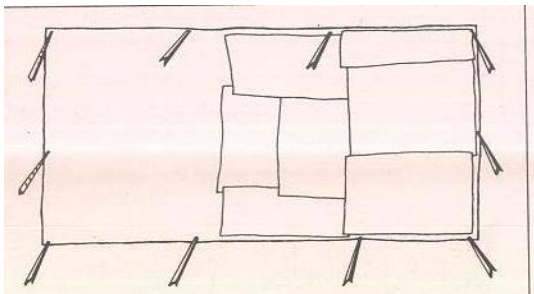
Plate 4.18 : Gouri Bhanja making an Alpana Design

Plate 4.19 : Gouri Bhanja instructed to student making a Alpana

Plate 4.20 : Student making a Alpana in Aamrokunja

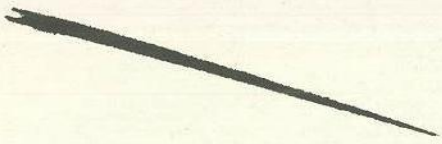
Plate 4.21 : Making a flower making Jewellery

Technique of kantha work



কাপড় ও ভাঁজ করা কাপড় খেজুর কাঁটা দিয়ে আটকানো

ঘটি



খেজুর কাঁটা

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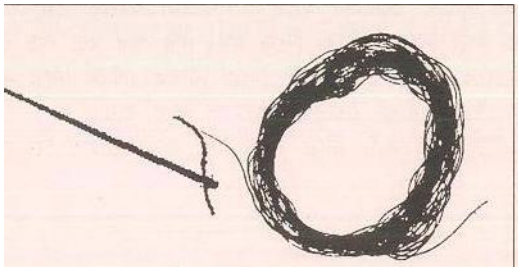
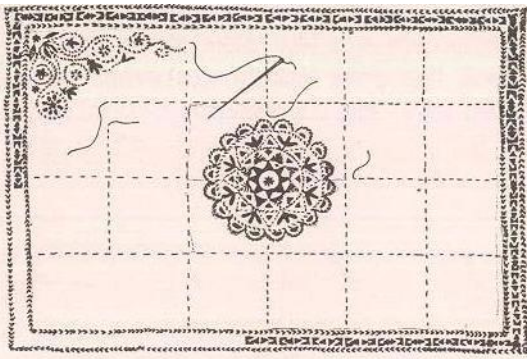
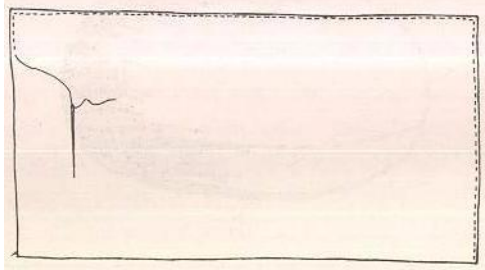


সূচ-সুতো





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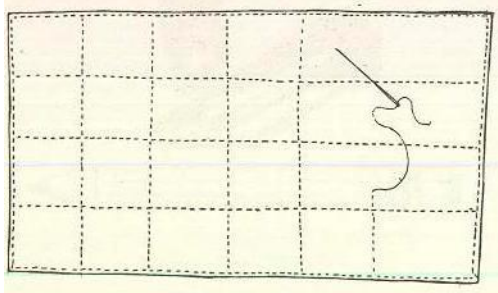
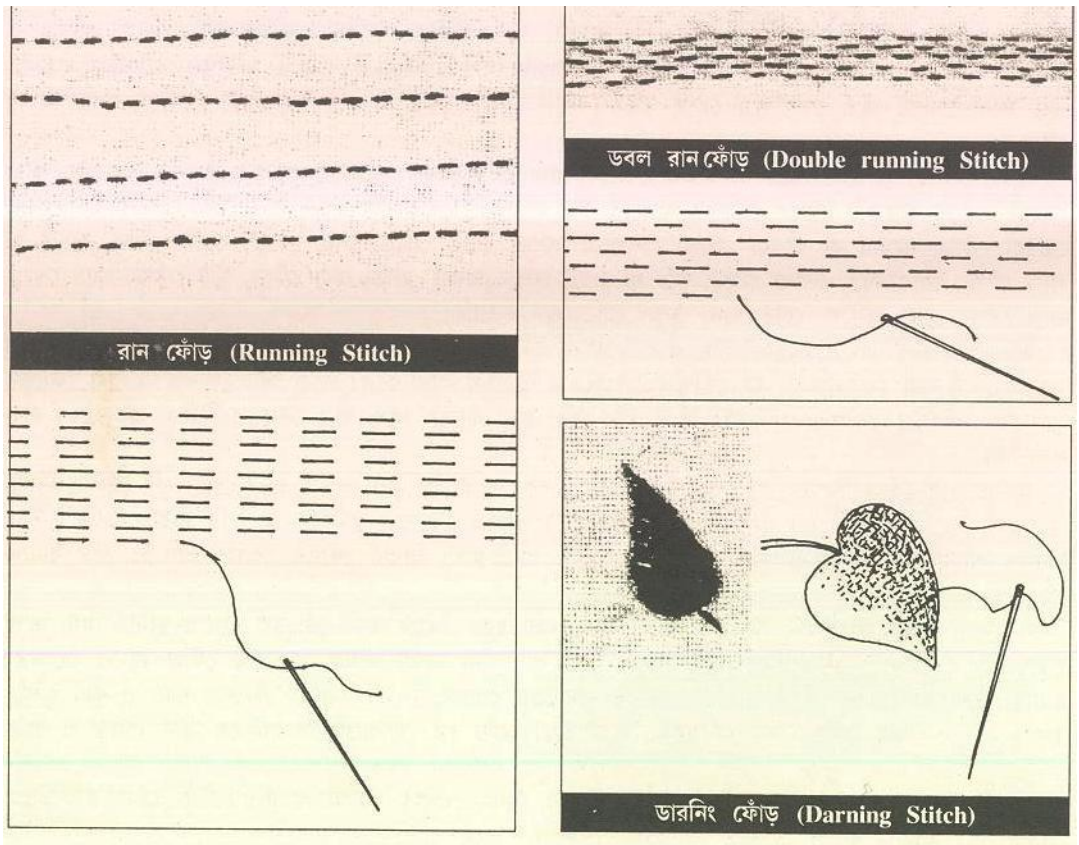
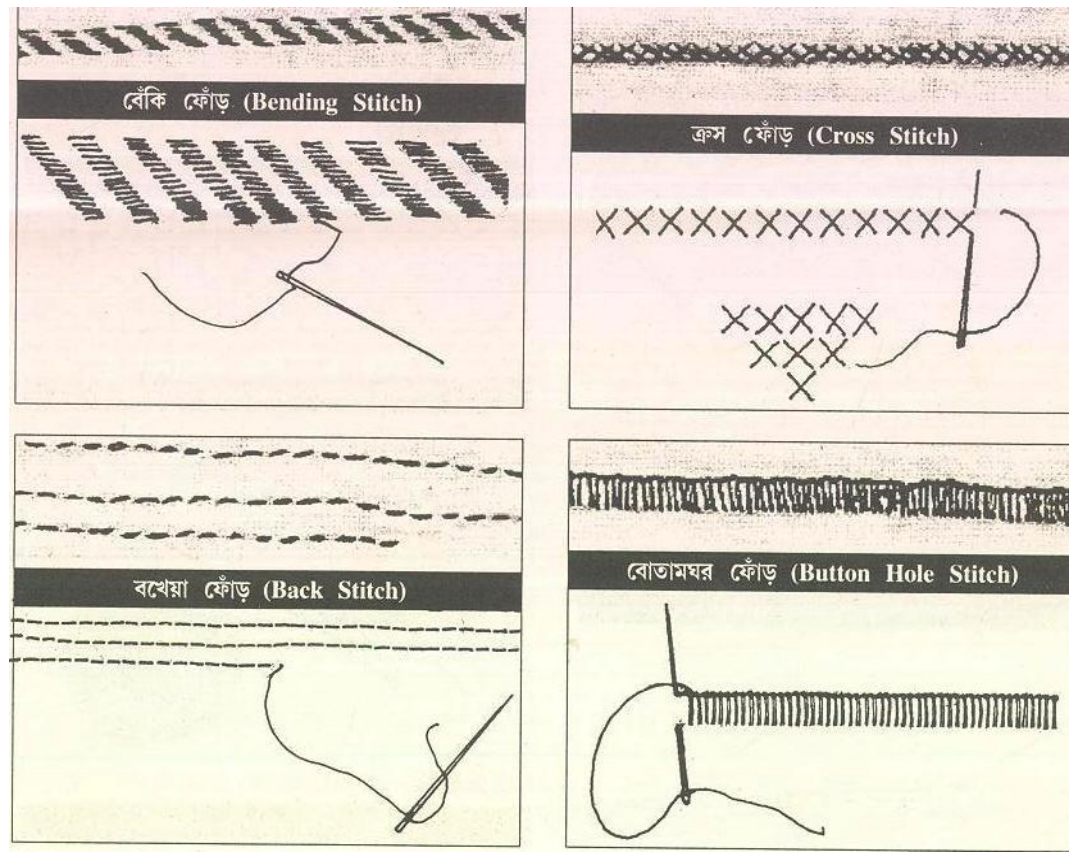
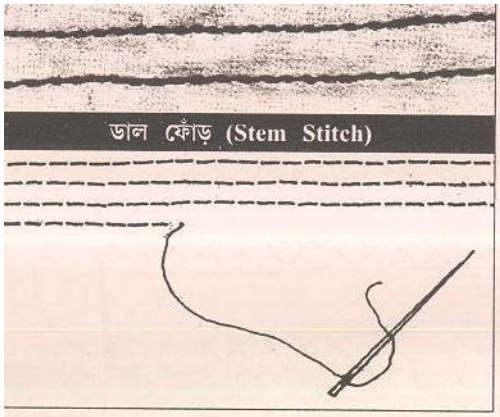


১৫. সম্পূর্ণ কাঁথা

Various types of Kantha Stitch in Bengal

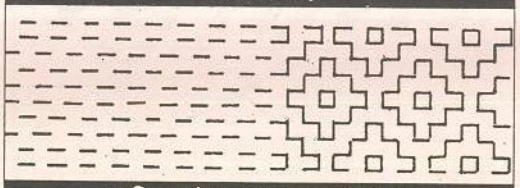




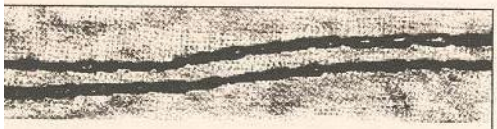


ডাল ফোঁড় (Stem Stitch)

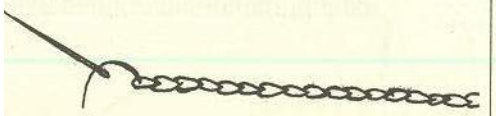
ভরাট ফোঁড়

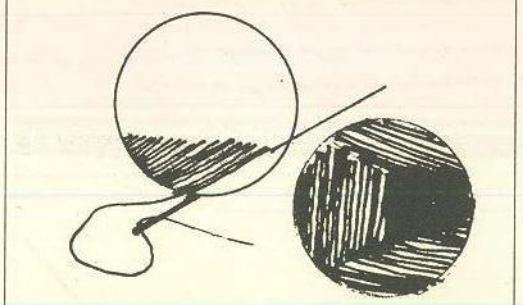


হলবিন ফোঁড় (Holbein Stitch)

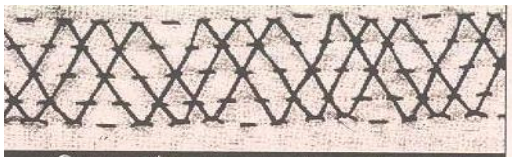


চেন ফোঁড় (Chain Stitch)

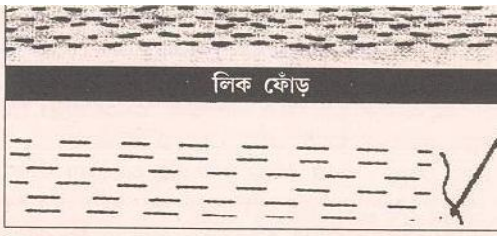




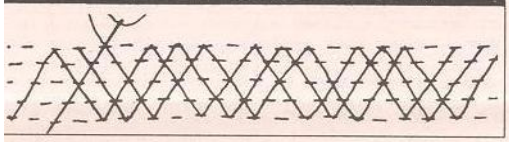
সাটিন ফোঁড় (Satin Stitch)



হেরিংবোন ফোঁড় (Herring-Bone Stitch) বা
শেডওয়ার্ক ফোঁড় (Shadework Stitch)



লিক ফোঁড়



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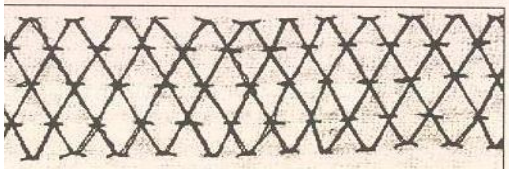
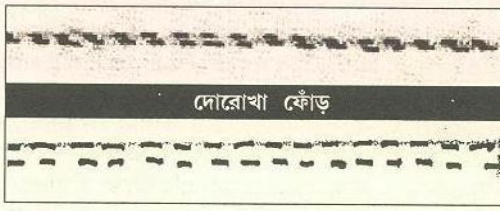
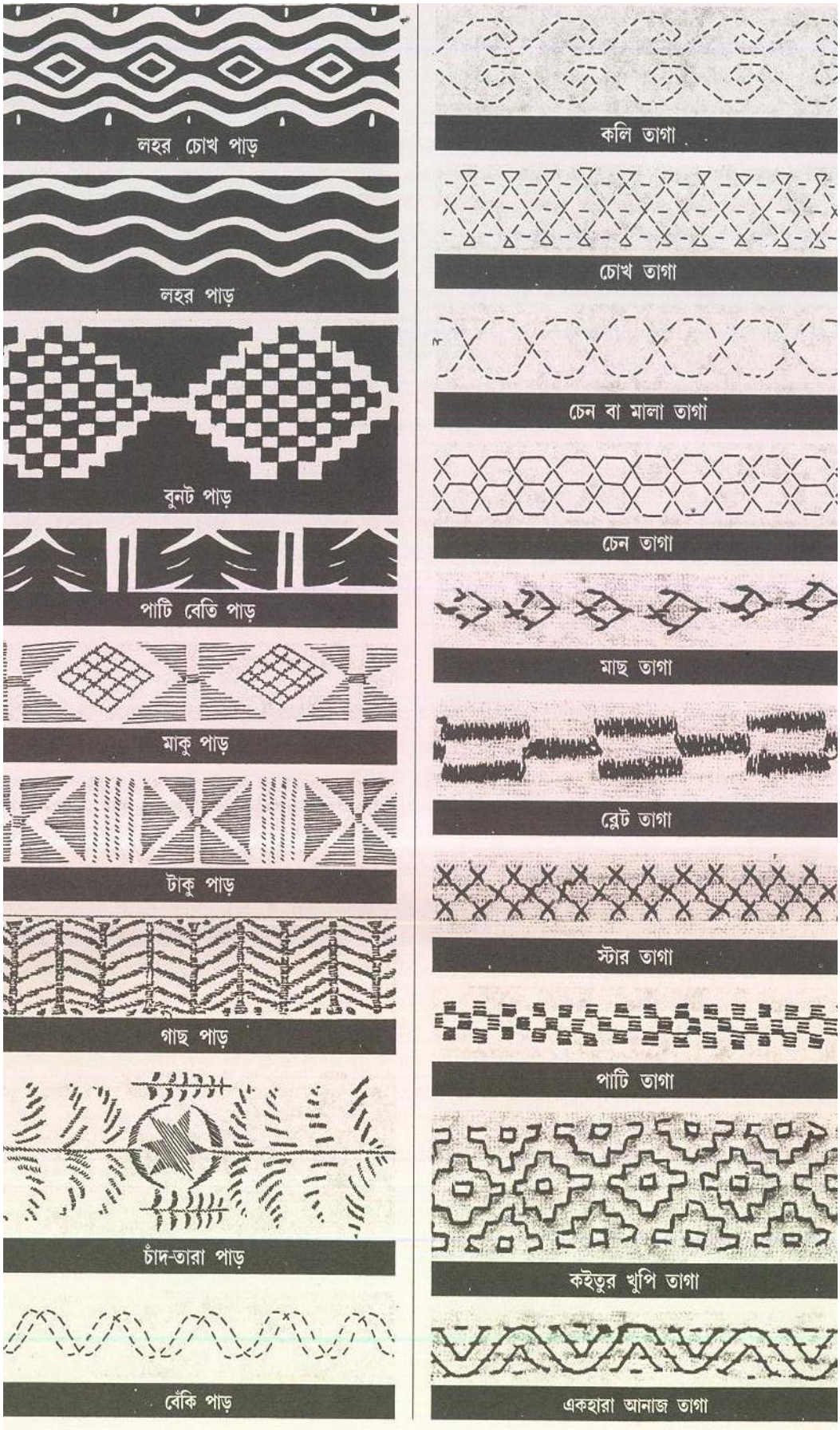


ডবল হেরিংবোন ফোঁড় (Double Herring-Bone Stitch)



দোরোখা ফোঁড়

চাটাই কিংবা পাটি ফোঁড়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লহর পাড়
বুনট পাড়
পাটি বেতি পাড়
মাকু পাড়
টাকু পাড়
গাছ পাড়
চাঁদ-তারা পাড়
বেঁকি পাড়
কলি তাগা
চোখ তাগা
চেন বা মালা তাগা
চেন তাগা
মাছ তাগা
ব্লেট তাগা
স্টার তাগা
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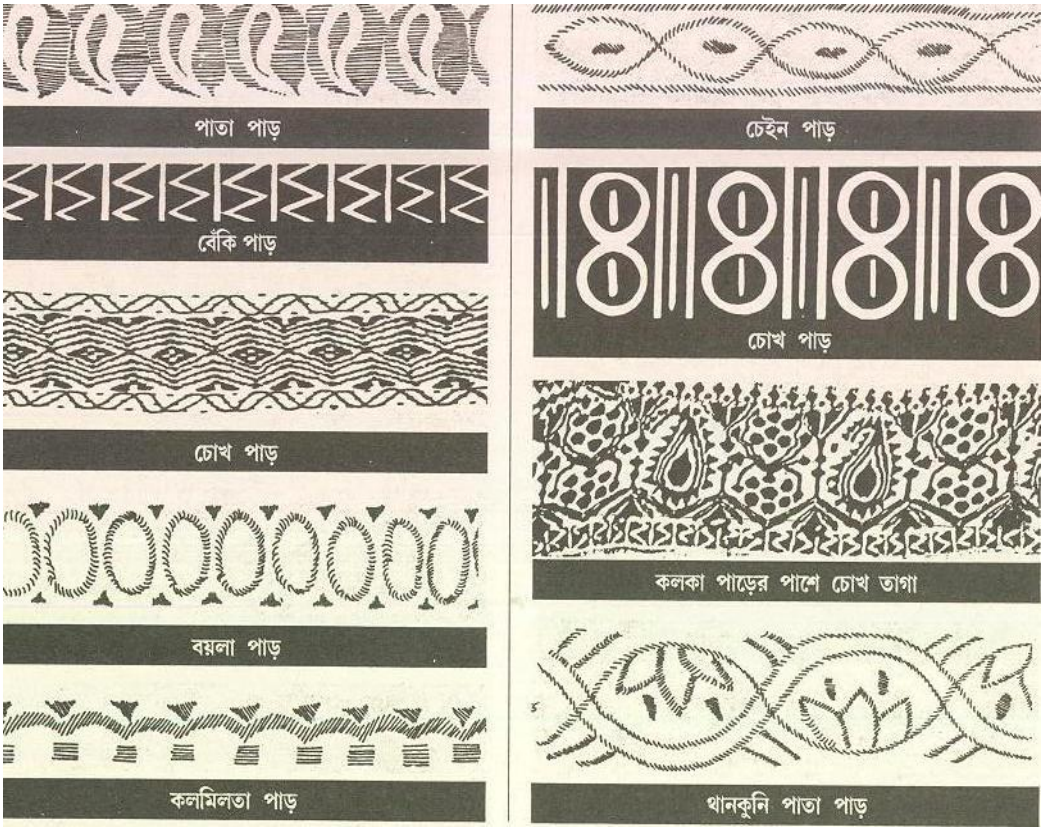
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কলমিলতা পাড়
চেইন পাড়
চোখ পাড়
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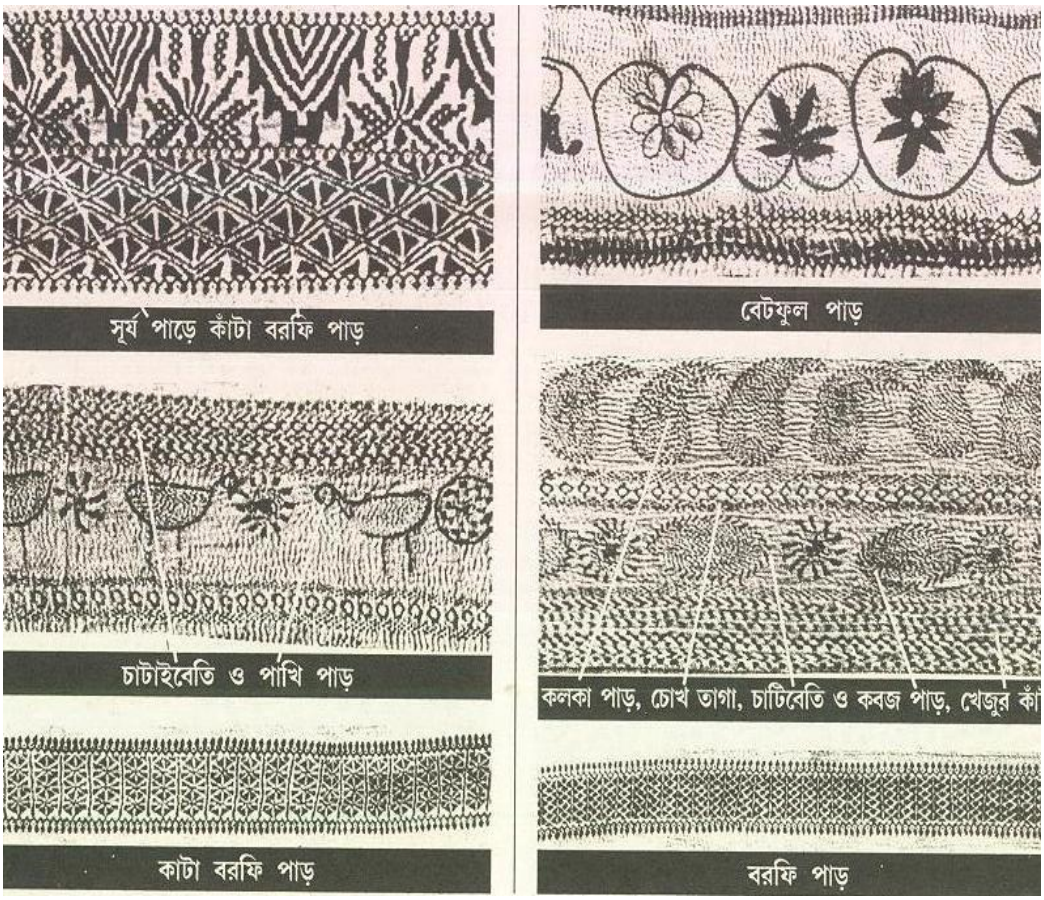
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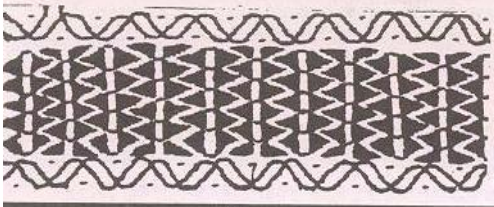
কাটা বরফি পাড়
বেটফুল পাড়
কলকা পাড়, চোখ তাগা, চাটিবেতি ও কবজ পাড়, খেজুর কাঁ
বরফি পাড়

হীরক দানা পাড়

বেঁকি পাড়

লহর পাড়



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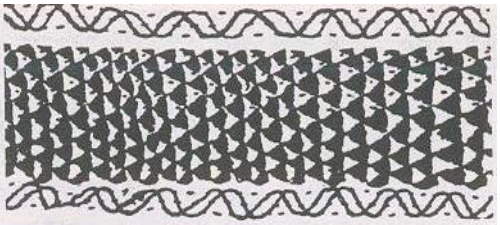

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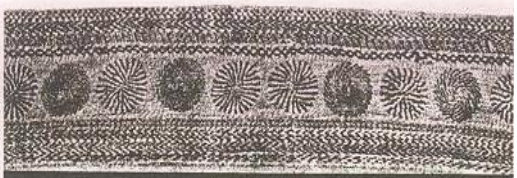

চাকফুল পাড়

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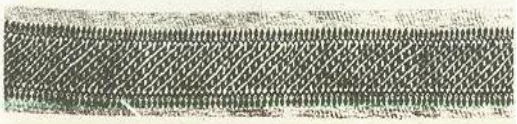

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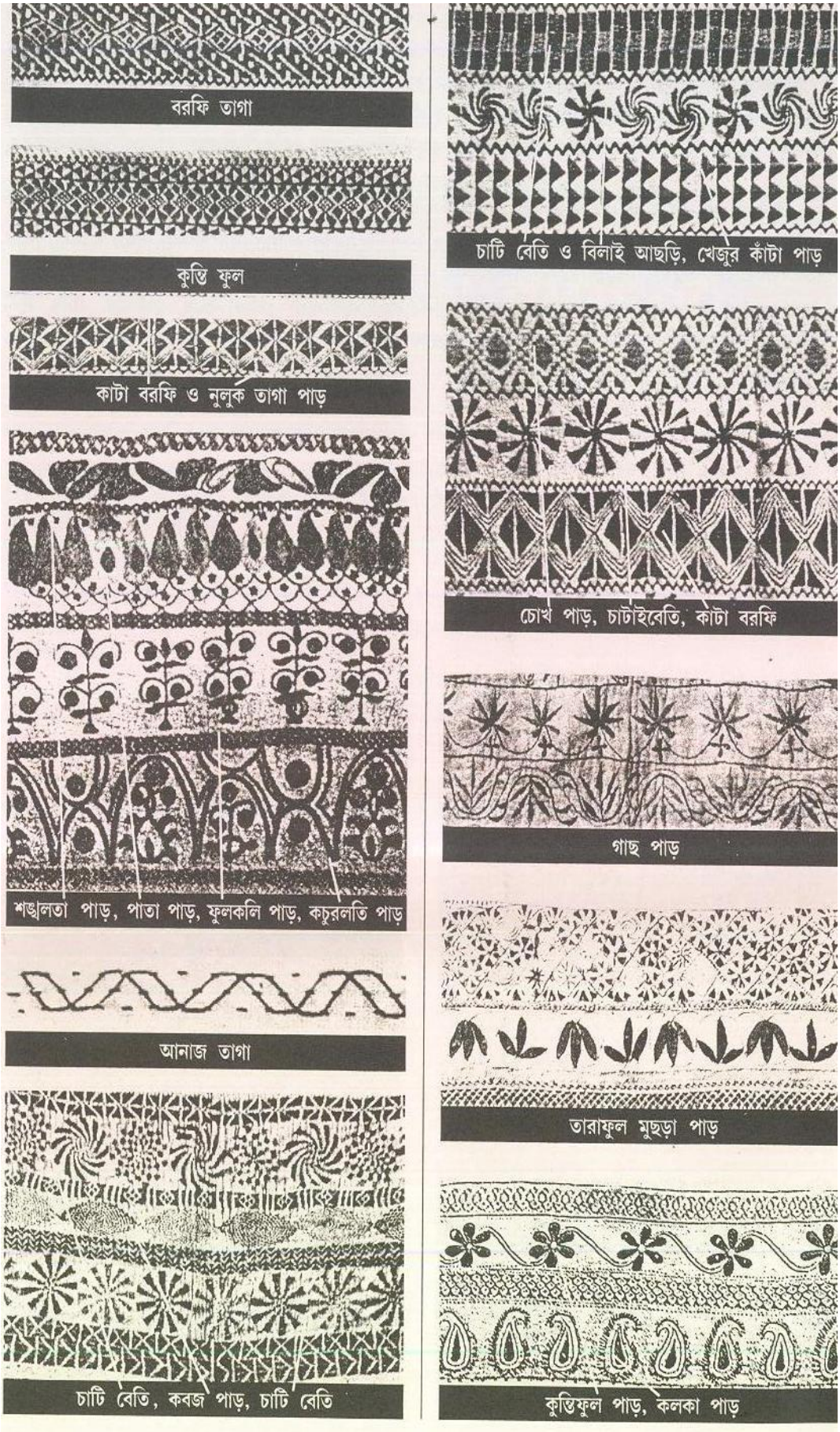
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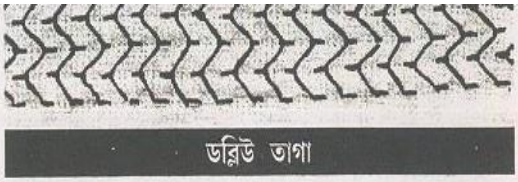
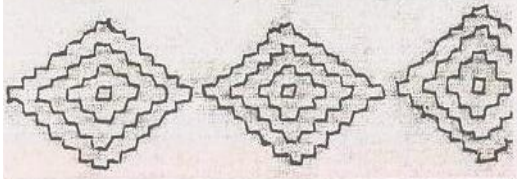
কুন্তি ফুল
কাটা বরফি ও নুলুক তাগা পাড়
শঙ্খলতা পাড়, পাতা পাড়, ফুলকলি পাড়, কচুরলতি পাড়
আনাজ তাগা
চাটি বেতি, কবজ পাড়, চাটি বেতি
চাটি বেতি ও বিলাই আছড়ি, খেজুর কাঁটা পাড়
চোখ পাড়, চাটাইবেতি, কাটা বরফি
গাছ পাড়
তারাফুল মুছড়া পাড়
কুন্তিফুল পাড়, কলকা পাড়

পট তাগা

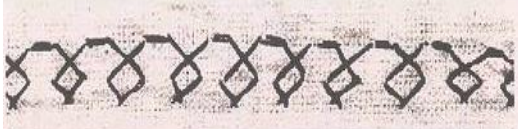


ডব্লিউ তাগা

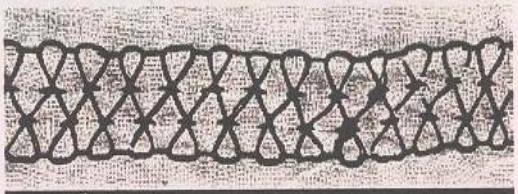


গ্রুপ তাগা নকশা

আই ভি তাগা



নলক তাগা

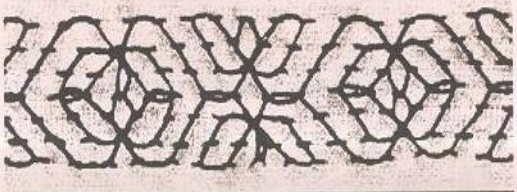


মোড়া তাগা

দুই শির তাগা

ত্রিভুজ তাগা

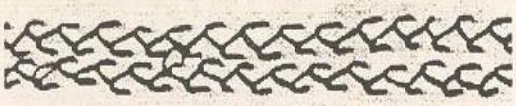
জোড়া মালা তাগা



জোড়া শাপলা

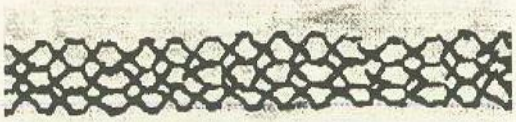
শপ তাগা

বিদেশি চোখ

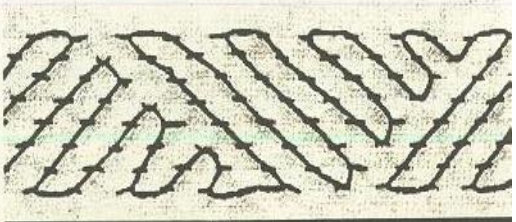


জিঞ্জির বা ধানের শিষ তাগা

জোড়া চোখ

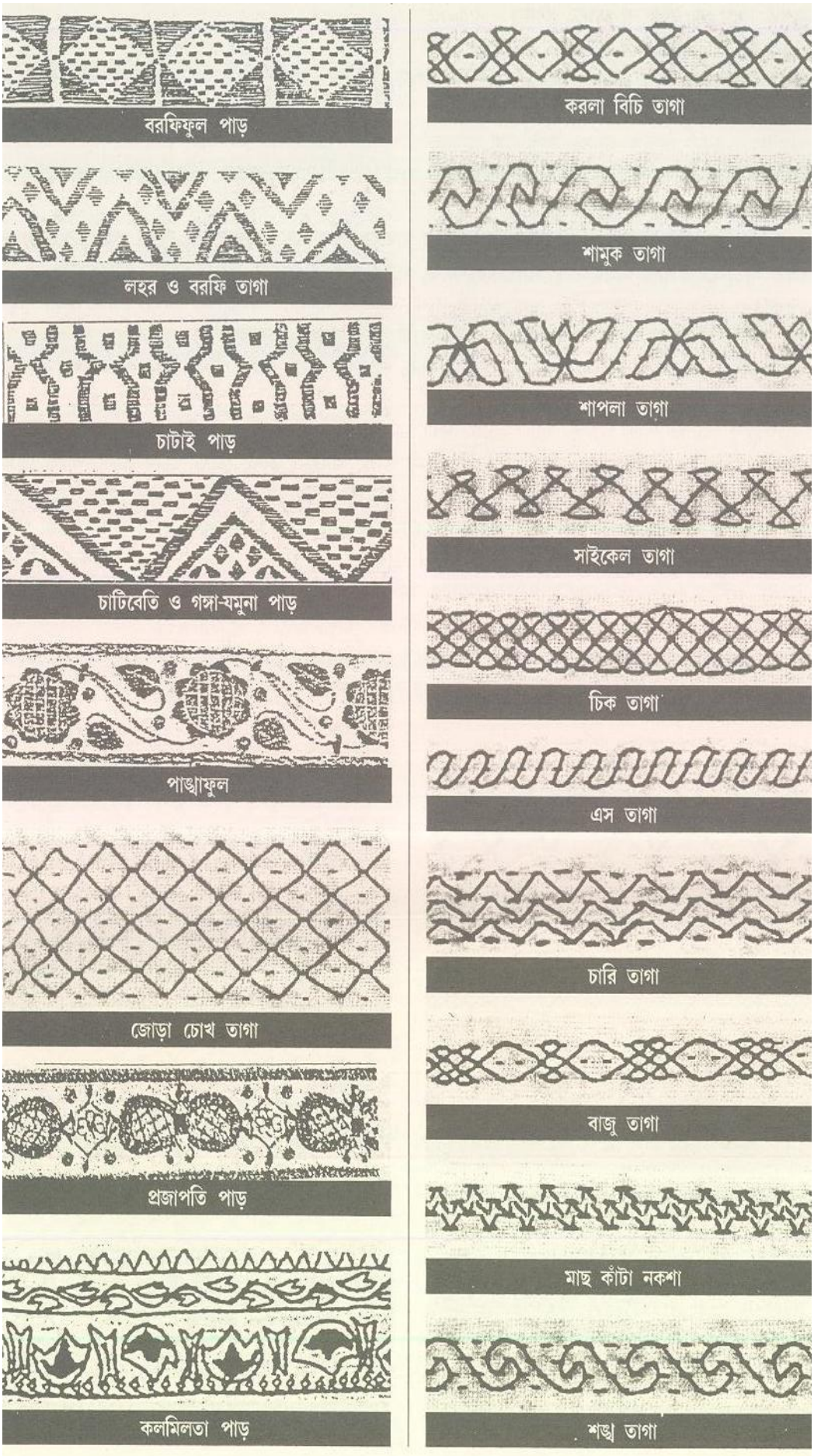


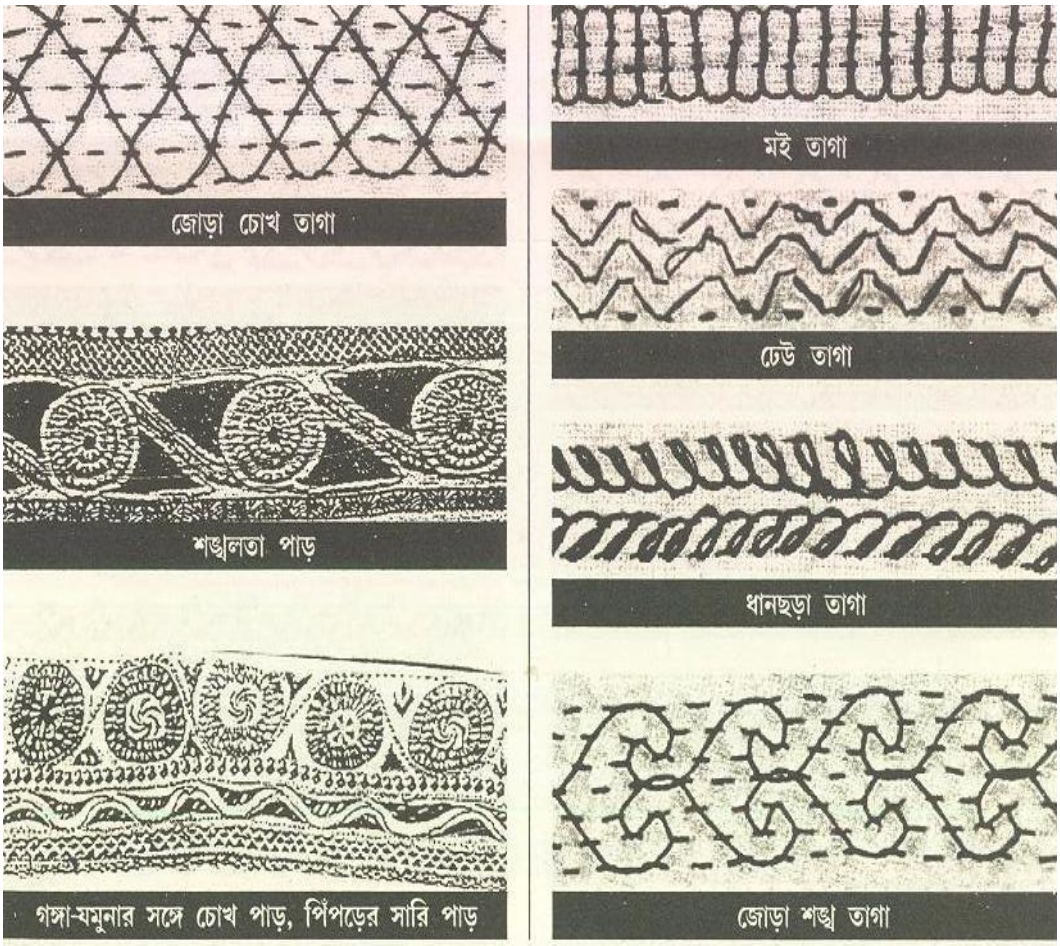
ঝিনঝিন নকশা



পাঁচ আঙুলে

শির পাতা নকশা


বরফিফুল পাড়
লহর ও বরফি তাগা
চাটাই পাড়
চাটিবেতি ও গঙ্গা-যমুনা পাড়
পাঙ্খাফুল
জোড়া চোখ তাগা
প্রজাপতি পাড়
কলমিলতা পাড়
করলা বিচি তাগা
শামুক তাগা
শাপলা তাগা
সাইকেল তাগা
চিক তাগা
এস তাগা
চারি তাগা
বাজু তাগা
মাছ কাঁটা নকশা
শঙ্খ তাগা



জোড়া চোখ তাগা

মই তাগা

ঢেউ তাগা

শঙ্খলতা পাড়

ধানছড়া তাগা

গঙ্গা-যমুনার সঙ্গে চোখ পাড়, পিঁপড়ের সারি পাড়

জোড়া শঙ্খ তাগা