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Similarities Between Indian and Uzbek Fabrics in The Study of Traditional Abrband Textiles

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Abstract: Textile production has played a crucial role in the cultural and economic development of societies worldwide. Among the diverse weaving traditions, ikat stands out as an intricate dyeing technique with a rich historical significance. The method of pre-dyeing threads before weaving creates unique, blurred patterns that reflect the artistry and craftsmanship of different cultures. The tradition of ikat weaving exists in various regions, including India and Uzbekistan, where it has evolved uniquely based on local customs and artistic preferences. While Indian textiles emphasize double ikat techniques and elaborate patterns in Patola silk, Uzbek abrband fabrics focus on vibrant color transitions and cloud-inspired motifs. Despite similarities in production techniques, the variations in design, dyeing processes, and material selection remain understudied. Although previous research has examined ikat weaving in India and Uzbekistan separately, comparative studies analyzing their similarities and differences in depth are scarce. The evolution of these textiles along the Silk Road and their cultural significance in different regions require further investigation. This study aims to explore the historical connections, design characteristics, and technical distinctions between Indian and Uzbek ikat weaving traditions. Findings indicate that while both traditions share fundamental dyeing and weaving techniques, Indian ikats focus on geometric precision and intricate double-dyeing, whereas Uzbek abrband textiles prioritize free-flowing patterns and vibrant color blending. This research highlights the unique regional adaptations of ikat, demonstrating how cultural influences shape textile design beyond technical similarities. The study contributes to the understanding of textile heritage, encouraging the preservation of traditional weaving methods while fostering cross-cultural appreciation of textile arts. Future research may further explore the economic impact of these textiles in modern global markets.

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1. Introduction

Textile production has been an integral part of human civilization, serving as both an economic and cultural expression across different regions. Among the various textile traditions, ikat stands out as a unique weaving and dyeing technique practiced for centuries. This method, which involves resist-dyeing yarns before weaving, has been a hallmark of craftsmanship in many parts of Asia, including India and Uzbekistan. While ikat textiles share similarities in production techniques across cultures, regional variations have developed due to distinct historical influences, aesthetic preferences, and material availability. The study of traditional abrband textiles from Uzbekistan and Indian ikat fabrics provides insights into the evolution of textile traditions along the Silk Road and their cultural significance [1].

While Indian ikat weaving is widely recognized for its intricate patterns, such as the Patan Patola and Orissa double ikat, Uzbek abrband textiles are distinguished by their vibrant color transitions and free-flowing cloud-like motifs. The influence of these textiles extends beyond mere artistic expression [2], encompassing social identity, economic trade, and technological innovation in textile production. Scholars have explored Indian and Uzbek ikat traditions separately, emphasizing their historical development and production processes. However, limited comparative studies exist that examine the intersections between these traditions, their cultural exchanges, and their role in shaping regional textile identities [3].

A significant knowledge gap remains in understanding the deeper connections between Indian and Uzbek ikat techniques, particularly regarding design evolution, symbolic meaning, and craft specialization [4]. Previous research has documented individual textile histories, yet a broader comparative analysis remains underdeveloped. Moreover, limited studies focus on the impact of these textiles on contemporary global fashion markets and sustainable textile practices. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing similarities and differences in weaving, dyeing techniques, and cultural representations of ikat textiles in India and Uzbekistan [5].

The study employs a qualitative comparative approach, utilizing historical analysis, visual textile examination, and literature review [6]. By exploring textile archives, historical trade routes, and modern adaptations, this research will highlight how these textile traditions have evolved while maintaining their cultural authenticity. Furthermore, the study integrates theoretical perspectives on cultural diffusion, material culture, and artisan craftsmanship to understand how textile-making techniques have been preserved and transformed across generations [7].

This research is expected to provide valuable insights into the relationship between Indian and Uzbek textile traditions, emphasizing their cultural heritage and artistic techniques. Findings will reveal how external influences, technological innovations, and trade interactions shaped these textiles, as shown in Figure 1. The results will contribute to the field of textile studies, art history, and cultural heritage preservation, offering implications for the global fashion industry and sustainable textile production. By fostering a deeper appreciation of traditional weaving techniques, this study aims to encourage the conservation of textile craftsmanship while promoting cross-cultural collaborations in contemporary textile design [8].

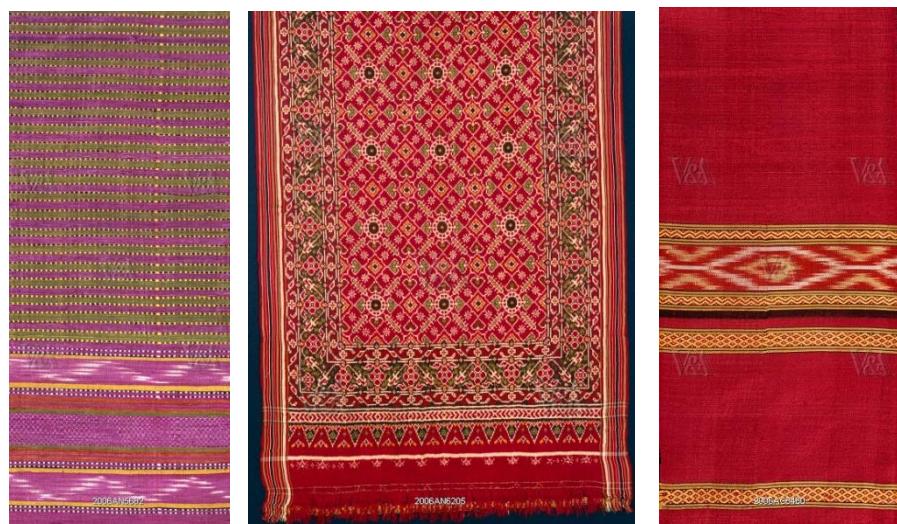


Figure 1. A) Ikat, blouse piece. Silk, Medak. Andhra Pradesh, India, 1866-67; B) Patola. Double ikat silk sari. Gujarat, India, 19th-20th century; C) Ikat, blouse piece. Silk weave. Bellary, Karnataka, India, c.1867 [9].

Since the 5th-7th centuries in India, from the mural paintings of Ajanta in the Deccan region, the use of resist or barrier techniques to protect certain parts of the thread or fabric from dye has been popular and highly valued as a method to create multicolored textiles. In India, looped and woven ikats are produced, with double ikats being crafted in the most complex form in Patan, Gujarat, and in simpler designs in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh [10].

2. Materials and Methods

Before the invention of chemical dyes and their adoption by dyers in the late 19th century, indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) was the most popular blue dye. Commonly used red dyes were derived from the bark of the young af or achu tree (*Morinda citrifolia*) and from the stems and roots of manjit (*Rubia cordifolia*).

Among tribal communities without weaving traditions, the concept of "proto-ikat" existed, which mainly involved resist-dyeing unwoven threads or fringes to create decorative color blocks. The users of this dyeing method in India are the Nagas of the northeastern region, who do not have a weaving tradition and import textiles from the neighboring region of Manipur. Therefore, they are believed to have developed independently of the ikat process.

The term "patola" first appeared in a textile inventory written for Rashtrakuta King Krishna III in 959 AD in the work *Yasastilakachampa*, which mentions that it was made of silk.

In the second half of the 19th century, the book "The Textile Manufactures of India" compiled by Dr. John Forbes Watson included a large number of ikat samples in the collection of Indian textile samples. The Scottish-born John was a correspondent on Indian products and, in 1858, became the director of the Indian Museum in London. Among his research and documentation projects, he published the famous multi-volume work "The Textile Manufactures and Costumes of the People of India [11]."

The project aimed to catalog and showcase various famous Indian fabrics for British manufacturers. Known as a traveling museum, the Watson collection consists of 18 volumes and 20 sets. Each volume contains classified samples of Indian textile products, with a total of 700 samples, see Figure 2.



Figure 2. Asiatic fabrics. A). Cotton and silk material, called "Uddrussa" in Bukhara and "Elacha" in Sind. Manufactured in Bukhara; B) Cotton and silk material, called "Ulukh", Manufactured in Bukhara; C) Silk. №1 Striped silk piece, called "Goolbuddan." №2 Silk bordered piece for a garment Manufactured in Bukhara.

The first author to isolate the ikat process was B.N. Gupte, who wrote about it in 1884 in the Journal of Indian Art and Industry. He described the technique used in wrapping and dyeing the weaving threads for Patola and compared it to the Bandhani or tie-dyeing process [12].

3. Results and Discussion

When discussing the abr dyeing technique among the cities of Central Asia, one cannot ignore the light head covering known as Bandan, famous for its Bandana style, and the "Kalg'ay" method of fabric production (which we now call batik). A designated portion of single-colored raw silk fabric is marked and tied with cotton yarn [13]. The purpose of tying is to ensure that the intended area absorbs the dye while the tied section is protected. Before applying the second color, another portion is left free, and the part not meant to take on the dye is tied again [14]. As a result, a subtle transition between the colors is achieved. The emergence of abr-patterned fabrics is based on this very principle. Before weaving the fabric, the fibers that are intended to take on the dye are left free, while those that should not absorb the dye are tied. After each color is applied, the fibers are dried, and the same process is repeated before applying the next color. As a result, the fibers are stretched tightly to produce a faithful replica of the design drawn by the pattern maker, preparing them for weaving [15].

4. Conclusion

Traditional abrband fabrics originated in China and spread to the countries of Central Asia along the Great Silk Road. Each country, based on the traditions and customs of its own nation, learned to weave fabrics and applied colored ornaments and motifs to the fabric based on its own craft laws and rules. It is easy to see how valuable and laborious the product made by hand is, because such fabrics have always been expensive and highly valued. The fact that the natural color is obtained and the fabric goes through several processes before it becomes a finished fabric increases its cost. Although the production techniques of ikat fabrics in almost all Asian nations are similar and partly the same, they differ from each other in the variety of colors, designs and motifs they have. Even if we look at the ikat fabrics in our own Uzbekistan by region, we can distinguish them differently from each other.

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