

Significance of motifs among the textiles in the contemporary world of Bangladesh: A Case Study

Farjana Ahmed, Ph.D

Associate Professor, Department of Graphic Design, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Due to globalization, the textile industry has developed into a vibrant patchwork of linked cultures, with patterns and motifs that transcend national borders and advance a universal language of design. This article explores how globalization has impacted the creation and exchange of textile motifs in order to emphasize their potential as a method for teaching cultural variety through design education. By analyzing historical and contemporary examples, the study illustrates how traditional motifs from many regions—such as Asian batik, African kente, and European paisley—are altered and reinterpreted in global marketplaces. The study also examines how, by serving as a bridge between tradition and modernity, these motifs present opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and education. To foster inclusivity, creativity, and cultural appreciation, the research supports the use of global textile themes in design pedagogy curriculum. A greater comprehension of the socio-cultural themes woven into designs is fostered by workshops and projects that empower students to examine, reinterpret, and combine motifs from different cultures. According to the findings, educating future designers about variety through textile motifs enables them to produce goods that embrace global innovation and honor cultural history. This method presents design as a potent instrument for promoting cross-cultural communication and conserving the vast variety of international textile customs in a world growing more interconnected by the day.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In Bangladesh, textile themes have long represented history, identity, and artistic brilliance. Folklore, religious beliefs, and historical histories are all strongly influenced by the motifs found in textiles like Jamdani, Nakshi Kantha, and indigenous weavings. But because of globalization, industrialization, and changes in consumer demands, classic motifs have changed in the modern world. This study investigates the evolution of themes in Bangladeshi textiles, their use in contemporary fashion, and the effects of mass production. This study investigates how traditional patterns are being maintained, modified, or sold to meet the needs of contemporary markets through a number of case studies, including Aarong, Kumudini, Tangail Sarees, and indigenous weavers.

Bangladesh has a textile history spanning thousands of years, dating back to the ancient Bengal muslin trade. Traditional motifs in textiles serve not only as artistic expressions but also as cultural markers that tell stories of heritage, nature, daily life, and spiritual beliefs. However, modern fashion trends, fast fashion industries, and digital manufacturing have challenged traditional handwoven motifs, leading to concerns about cultural erosion. This study investigates how motifs have transitioned from historical to contemporary textiles and how designers, artisans, and industries are balancing tradition with modernity. The case studies provide a comprehensive view of how different stakeholders are navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization.

Bangladesh is renowned for its rich textile history, with motifs playing a central role in many different types of fabric patterns. In textiles, motifs are designs or symbols that are woven, embroidered, or printed into the cloth. These symbols have profound cultural and historical connotations and are frequently connected to the customs, religious convictions, and social structures of the area. Bangladesh's dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity is reflected in the continuous evolution of textile patterns.

Bangladeshi textiles are not just ornamental; they are rich in spiritual and symbolic meanings that represent the histories, values, and beliefs of the communities that make them. Numerous symbols are inspired by nature, including the lotus, fish, bird, and tree of life, all of which are conventionally linked to fertility, wealth, and a divine connection (Begum, 2001, p. 45; Siddiq, 2017, p. 89). Because the designs are stitched or woven with deliberate storylines, these symbols are particularly common in village weavings and traditional textiles like Nakshi Kantha. In Hindu and Buddhist traditions, for example, the lotus represents enlightenment and purity. Its frequent appearance in sari and kantha designs indicates its transcultural significance (Haque, 1980; p. 25–26). Similarly, Bangladesh's agrarian and riverine identity is reflected in the fish motif, which is also a sign of fertility and wealth (Zaman, 1981, p. 37-45). Certain designs are chosen to represent blessings and protection in rural communities, where textiles are frequently used in lifecycle rituals, such as marriage, birth, and death (Sattar, 2014; p. 76, 89). Despite their migration into contemporary textile markets, these symbols' spiritual meanings retain cultural significance, subtly yet significantly influencing consumer preferences and design trends (Zohra, 2015, p. 42-50).

Using the Jamdani weaving tradition as a case study, this essay explores the meaning of motifs in modern Bangladeshi textiles. An integral component of Bangladesh's textile heritage is jamdani, a type of handwoven cloth. By looking at how traditional patterns are incorporated into modern designs while maintaining cultural value, the examination of its motifs emphasizes the effects of cultural continuity and change.

1.2 Research Objectives

Historical Background of Textile Motifs in Bangladesh

For ages, textile art has played a significant role in Bangladesh's cultural legacy. Textile themes have long been associated with governmental power, social standing, and religious rites. Textile industry, particularly in weaving and embroidery, has a long history in the Bengal region, which includes parts of India and modern-day Bangladesh. Conventional Themes and Their Significance Historically, religious and cultural symbols have had a significant influence on Bangladeshi textile themes. For example, geometric designs may represent the order of the cosmos, whereas floral themes found in early Bangladeshi textiles frequently symbolized fertility and expansion. Animals and birds were commonly woven into textiles as representations of liberty and the bond between people and the natural world. Bangladeshi textile patterns have evolved throughout the course of several dynasties, with the Mughal era introducing a more complex usage of motifs. Textiles grew increasingly complex and rich in symbolism during this period. Because of their intricacy and the symbolism woven into each design, weaving techniques like Jamdani gained immense importance.

Motifs in Contemporary Bangladeshi Textiles

Although in a more modernized setting, classical patterns still have an impact in Bangladesh today. The way motifs are used in fabric designs today has been impacted by globalization, improvements in textile technology, and shifting consumer preferences. Certain themes have changed to satisfy new aesthetic and commercial demands, while others have kept their traditional significance.

Because of their enduring ties to culture, legacy, and identity—all of which have changed over time to adapt to the modern world—motifs in Bangladeshi textiles are significant. Traditional textiles like Jamdani and Tangail have long maintained floral and symbolic designs that frequently allude to spirituality, fertility, and the natural world (Ahmed, 1990, pp. 142–145, 151),

Among rural craftsmen, especially women, Nakshi Kantha has functioned as both a practical object and a narrative art form. Stories of individual and collective life are told using themes like lotuses, fish, and mythological aspects (Begum, 2001, p. 23). Frequently originating from a combination of religious imagery and indigenous beliefs, these motifs provide textiles a multi-layered cultural significance (Haque, 1980, p. 12). Regional variations also contribute to the diversity of themes, as weaving groups in Khulna, Rangpur, and Rajshahi have different symbolic codes and artistic preferences (Sattar, 2014, p. 105). But these historic themes have been modified in recent years to fit the aesthetics of the contemporary fashion and textile industries, creating a blend of innovation and legacy (Zohra, 2015, p. 55-59). Not with standing these modifications, a lot of modern designers and craftspeople aim to preserve the symbolic richness of motifs, understanding its significance in forming cultural continuity and national identity (Siddiq, 2017, p. 22–24, 31).

Transformation of Motifs in Modern Industries

The Impact of Modernism on Textile Designs Textile themes have become more varied as a result of the introduction of new materials and dyes, mass production, and technological advancements like computerized weaving machines. In order to serve international markets, contemporary Bangladeshi textile manufacturers frequently combine traditional motifs with more contemporary patterns. Today's designers produce textiles that blend traditional themes with striking contemporary designs, keeping a connection to their cultural heritage while increasing their appeal to global buyers. The fashion industry has also adopted themes as a means of expressing national identity. For instance, a lot of fashion designers nowadays incorporate traditional Bangladeshi designs into contemporary clothing that appeals to both local and foreign consumers. Through their designs, these clothes—whether official or informal—transmit cultural meanings that foster communication between the past and present.

The way historic motifs have changed in today's textile industries shows how innovation and legacy interact dynamically. Traditionally, designs like the lotus, paisley, or Nakshi Kantha represented local flora, cultural beliefs, and collective stories. Each of these meticulously hand-embroidered or hand-woven designs has a distinct geographical and metaphorical meaning. But as industrialization and digital technology have grown, they have adapted in new ways to satisfy the needs of global markets and mass manufacturing. Computer-aided design (CAD) software, digital printing, and automated looms are being used more and more in contemporary industries to generate and replicate themes. Designers may now easily adjust size, color, and complexity thanks to increased precision and scalability made possible by this technical advancement. Because of this, classical motifs are frequently abstracted, modernized, or combined with modern aesthetics to appeal to a wide range of domestic and foreign consumers.

Furthermore, themes are now used into branding and marketing tactics as a result of their commercialization. Organizations such as Aarong and Kumudini, for instance, have transformed cultural emblems into visual identities by reimagining folk patterns for usage in fashion collections, packaging, and even corporate logos. Although this has increased traditional art's awareness, it has also spurred discussions about cultural appropriation, authenticity, and dilution.

In the case study, the lotus motif can be seen. Once a revered and mystical symbol in regional crafts, it is now commonly depicted in simple shapes for contemporary saris, purses, and interior design. The balance between innovation and cultural preservation is called into question since, despite their aesthetic appeal, these alterations frequently deprive the motif of its deeper symbolic significance. This makes the way themes are changing in contemporary businesses more than just a visual change; it's a cultural conversation that balances tradition, technology, and international capitalism.

To evaluate the impact of globalization and commercialization on traditional textile designs

Commercialization and globalization have a complex effect on traditional textile designs, posing both hazards of cultural degradation and chances for cultural transmission. Traditional textile markets have grown as a result of globalization, giving artisan groups more opportunities for

economic mobility and recognition abroad. Indigenous textiles, weaving methods, and traditional motifs have all found new markets, which has helped to elevate cultural handicraft. To satisfy the tastes of global consumers, commercialization frequently forces changes to traditional designs, which leads to the simplification of intricate patterns, the use of artificial materials, and the marginalization of genuine artisanal techniques. This approach separates traditional fabrics from their original cultural and symbolic contexts while also compromising their technical and aesthetic integrity. The monetization of cultural heritage is further exacerbated by the industrial replication of traditional designs, which frequently lacks appropriate attribution or comprehension. Various cultural preservation projects have attempted to address these issues by encouraging ethical consumption and protecting indigenous knowledge systems. These initiatives include fair trade certifications, heritage labels, and community-led conservation activities. Globalization has thereby made traditional textiles more visible, but it also necessitates critical involvement to maintain cultural authenticity and the sustainability of traditional textile methods.

Cultural Impact of Textile Motifs in Bangladesh

Beyond only being aesthetically pleasing, textile motifs are frequently used because of their profound cultural significance. Textiles are utilized to celebrate cultural history, express identity, and uphold social and religious values in Bangladesh. The designs used in the nation's textiles represent the people's shared history and collective memory. Textile motifs are still used as a cultural preservation method in modern-day Bangladesh. Many groups are attempting to revive regional craft traditions through assistance and education as designers and artisans become more conscious of their responsibility in maintaining traditional knowledge and skills. For instance, the Bangladesh National Museum and other non-governmental organizations have started projects to record and conserve historic designs, offering materials for upcoming weavers and designers. Additionally, by acting as markers of regional pride, textile motifs help support social solidarity. Regional motifs, which are frequently linked to certain regions of the nation, promote a feeling of community and belonging. Thus, themes serve as a vital component of the national fabric, tying people to each other and to their cultural history.

Obstacles

To provide evidence of how organizations, brands, and craftspeople are making sure textile themes are sustainable

The sustainability of textile themes is being actively promoted by craftspeople, companies, and organizations worldwide through the preservation of old methods and their incorporation into modern procedures. Over 3,000 artisans, including weavers and embroiderers, work with the fashion brand Sabyasachi in India to preserve and revitalize traditional crafts like Benarasi, Chikankari, and Kalamkari, thereby providing artisans with profitable models. In a similar vein, the Jaipur-based company Anokhi works to revive Rajasthani hand-block printing methods by using natural dyes and assisting rural craftspeople—especially women—through decentralized manufacturing and curriculum development. Another important factor is institutional efforts. The educational institution known as the Royal Textile Academy of Bhutan is devoted to protecting valuable textiles and Bhutanese weaving customs. The Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco in Peru collaborates with native populations to bring back traditional weaving methods, encourage the use of natural dyes, and empower weavers via fair-trade policies and educational initiatives. These cooperative initiatives ensure that traditional textile themes continue to flourish in contemporary contexts by promoting sustainable processes, ethical labor, and natural materials, in addition to protecting cultural heritage.

2. Research Methodology

Using a qualitative research methodology, this study includes

Interviews with textile designers, craftspeople, and business experts provided the primary data.

Case Studies: Examination of native handloom cooperatives, Aarong, Kumudini, and Tangail sarees.

Visual Analysis: A comparison of current and classic theme modifications. Secondary Data: Bangladeshi textile history books, periodicals, and internet archives.

3. The Cultural and Historical Significance of Bangladeshi Textile Motifs

3.1 The Symbolism of Traditional Textile Motifs natural, folk, and spiritual themes abound in Bangladeshi textiles. Among the noteworthy themes are:

An important case study for comprehending how motifs serve as both artistic expression and cultural heritage in modern-day Bangladesh is the Jamdani weaving tradition in Narayanganj, especially in the Rupganj district. Jamdani weaving is renowned for its elaborate, handwoven motifs like geometric repeats, floral vines (latapata), and mango patterns (kolka), which are recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. These motifs are frequently associated with fertility, elegance, and prosperity (Ahmed, 1990). The supplemental weft technique, which has its roots in the Mughal era, is used to meticulously weave these designs onto exquisite muslin. However, industrialization, poor artist pay, and the rise of machine-made imitations have all contributed to the challenges this tradition has encountered recently (Zohra, 2015, p. 48-55). NGOs, individual designers, and government programs that support fair trade and innovation without sacrificing history have propelled a renaissance movement in spite of these obstacles (Sattar, 2014; 22-34). While drawing on historic design ideas, contemporary jamdani now incorporates modernized elements inspired by abstract forms and urban culture. In the face of socioeconomic change, Narayanganj's fusion of the old and the modern demonstrates how regional textile motifs are resilient and adaptable (Siddiq, 2017, p. 47, 53-55). Craftspeople use extra weft threads to weave complicated motifs like geometric shapes, floral patterns, and designs inspired by nature, which is a labor-intensive procedure. These themes have cultural and symbolic significance in addition to being creative manifestations. Designers have had a regrettable tendency in recent years to "modernize" jamdanis by altering traditional patterns or, worse, by adding embroidery. Jamdani weavers' design sensibility is a flawless combination of color and balance. (Ghuznavi, 2006, p. 59)

Jamdani Motifs: The geometric (tercha), floral (butidar), and Persian-inspired designs are examples of Jamdani motifs.

Motives for Nakshi Kantha: Some of the biggest influences on the Kantha have been religion and folk belief. Superstitions and folk beliefs, for example, have impacted the selection of materials. The name "Kantha" is derived from Sanskrit and literally means "rags." (Rachel Bell and Zaman, 2004, p. 88.). paisley (fecundity), peacock (beauty), and lotus (purity). For instance, the "shankha" or conch shell, a prevalent theme in Jamdani, has religious importance and is a Hindu symbol for auspiciousness and purity. A diamond-like shape called "kanta" symbolizes strength and resiliency, while other motifs like the "patka" (band) frequently reflect the relationships of family.

Tangail Saree Motifs: Tangail Saree motifs include floral vines, abstract patterns, and temple borders.

Indigenous Textile Motifs: Indigenous textile motifs include Manipuri geometric patterns (spirituality) and Chakma wave patterns (riverine life). In addition to influencing aesthetic preferences in contemporary design, these motifs have deep-rooted meanings that help craftspeople connect with their ancestry.

4. Examples of Motif Transformation and Preservation

4.1 Example : Jamdani Weaving and Its Themes One of Bangladesh's most well-known textile trades is jamdani weaving, which makes it an ideal case study for comprehending the meaning of patterns. A rich cultural heritage is symbolized by the elaborate patterns and designs woven into Jamdani fabric, which are more than just ornamental. As mass manufacturing and sophisticated technologies take over the textile business, the loss of trained craftspeople is a significant problem for the Jamdani weaving community.

To preserve this age-old trade, however, the Bangladeshi government and other groups have offered incentives to weavers and promoted jamdani as a cultural asset. In order to increase the economic relevance of Jamdani, the government has started to market it as a high-end cloth.

4.2 Aarong: Bringing Classic Designs Back into Commercial Fashion Established by BRAC in 1978, Aarong is a prominent lifestyle brand in Bangladesh that has transformed the application of traditional themes in modern textile items.

4.3 Major Projects Preservation of Motifs: Aarong restores indigenous textile patterns, Jamdani weaving, and Nakshi Kantha embroidery by collaborating with rural artisans.

4.4 Market Expansion : By introducing traditional motifs in fusion wear (e.g., Western-style dresses with Kantha motifs), Aarong has made them relevant to younger consumers.

4.5 Sustainability Efforts : Ensures fair wages for artisans, protecting craftsmanship from decline.

4.6 Difficulties: Juggling Customs and Commercialization: For mass manufacturing, Aarong is under pressure to simplify themes, which occasionally lessens the uniqueness of handcrafted patterns. Fast fashion competition: Handcrafted textile themes are challenged by imported digitally printed materials.

4.7 Kumudini: Moral Clothing and Handwoven Tapestries Founded in 1947, Kumudini Welfare Trust is renowned for its commitment to preserving traditional motifs and handloom weaving. Notable Inputs emphasizes handmade designs for scarves, sarees, and home furnishings. teaches rural women how to weave using traditional methods. uses natural and organic dyes to preserve classic beauty.

4.8 Principal Difficulties High Costs of Production: Compared to machine-made designs, handwoven motifs are more costly since they need more time to manufacture. Limited Youth Involvement: Many young craftspeople quit weaving on handlooms because of unstable finances.

4.9 Traditional Themes in a Changing Market: Tangail Sarees Known for their elaborate borders and unique designs, Tangail sarees are native to the Tangail area. Change Through Time Tangail motifs, originally woven from cotton and silk, portrayed architecture, nature, and Mughal influences. In order to accommodate current fashion tastes, modern variations use pastel colors and lighter textiles. The need for quick production has resulted in classical themes being simplified.

5. The Economic Importance of Motifs in Bangladesh Today:

With a substantial GDP and employment contribution, Bangladesh's textile industry is an essential component of the country's economy. The textile sector in Bangladesh is one of the biggest employers in the nation, with over 4 million workers, according to the World Bank (2020). The major export industry in Bangladesh is textiles, especially clothing, and the nation is the world's second-largest supplier of ready-made clothing. In order to set Bangladeshi textiles apart on the international market, motifs are crucial. In a crowded textile market, handwoven fabrics' distinctiveness—especially those with traditional motifs—offers a competitive advantage. For instance, Jamdani's cultural significance and high monetary worth in the luxury market are both gaining recognition.

Additionally, exporting textile goods with traditional designs helps sustain local craftspeople and keeps craft traditions alive that might otherwise be lost due to mass production. By incorporating motifs into modern patterns, a specialized market for fine, handcrafted textiles has been established, elevating the nation's traditional workmanship to a level of respect and recognition outside.

5.1 Power Loom Competition: Traditional handloom Tangail sarees face competition from less expensive power-loom replicas. Problems with intellectual property: mass-market brands have imitated designs without giving artists credit.

5.2 Indigenous Cooperatives for Weaving: Maintaining Ethnic Themes A number of Bangladesh's indigenous ethnicities, including the Manipuri, Marma, and Chakma communities, have distinctive textile themes that honor their cultural history. Indigenous Motif Examples Chakma Weaving: has designs that resemble waves and represent the vitality of rivers.

5.3 Manipuri Textiles: Distinguished by geometric patterns that symbolize cosmic vitality.

5.4 Preservation Projects Government and Nonprofit Assistance: Groups such as the Bangladesh Handloom Board provide assistance to domestic textile producers.

Cultural Awareness Programs: Indigenous motifs are promoted in international markets through exhibitions and workshops.

5.5 Principal Difficulties Declining Interest: The market for traditional weaving is declining as younger generations favor contemporary apparel.

5.6 Market Access: Native American weavers find it difficult to access both domestic and foreign markets.

6. Visual Evaluation of Conventional and Modern Themes

6.1 Conventional Textile Designs: Form and Meaning Bangladeshi textiles' traditional motifs can be visually analyzed to show: The majority of the motifs in Jamdani and Nakshi Kantha sarees follow a repeating pattern and are frequently grouped symmetrically.

6.2 Fine Detailing: Because of their elevated texture, fine, handwoven Jamdani designs exhibit an almost three-dimensional look and demand accuracy.

6.3 Color Symbolism: Natural dyes are frequently used in traditional textiles; red denotes energy, blue denotes divinity, and golden denotes prosperity.

6.4 Modern Adaptations of Motifs: Considerable changes can be seen in contemporary textile products (fashion, home décor, and fusion wear).

6.5 Abstract Interpretations: To accommodate international fashion trends, designers reinterpret motifs using geometric alignments and minimalist patterns.

6.6 Mixed Media Textiles: In place of conventional weaving, motifs are applied via screen printing, computerized stitching, and laser cutting.

6.7 Traditional Western Silhouettes: Contemporary outfits, coats, and scarves increasingly incorporate Nakshi Kantha motifs.

6.8 Case Study: Transforming Jamdani Motifs Visually

6.9 Conventional: White muslin with Butidar designs weaved on it.

6.10 Contemporary: Floral designs printed digitally onto silk or chiffon and incorporated into fusion dresses and tunics.

6.11 Impact: The heritage value and handcrafted feel are diminished when accessibility rises.

7. Policies and Support from Institutions

7.1 UNESCO and Government Recognition UNESCO Heritage 2013's Jamdani Weaving: As a protected craft, jamdani is actively promoted by the government.

Handloom Policy: Designed to give craftspeople training and financial assistance.
IPR: To prevent overseas copying, the Bangladesh Copyright Office has begun to issue Geographical Indication (GI) tags for specific traditional textiles.

7.2 National Handloom Board Projects Artisan Training Programs: Younger generations are taught traditional weaving techniques in rural workshops.

Financial support: Small weavers can maintain handloom enterprises with low-interest loans.

7.3 Difficulties in Implementing Policies Limited Knowledge: Global fast fashion companies steal designs from craftspeople since they are not aware of IPR regulations.

7.4 Bureaucratic Delays: Because of inefficient bureaucracy, weavers do not always receive funds and perks.

Market Access Problems: Global marketing plans and improved e-commerce integration are needed for traditional textiles.

8. Another Example: Fashion Designers Stemming the Rebirth

8.1 Bibi Russell: Blending Retro Style with Modern Design Former international model Bibi Russell was a pioneer of "Fashion for Development," specializing in traditional designs on handwoven fabrics. Her company endorses ethnic weaves, Nakshi Kantha stoles, and handcrafted Jamdani sarees on international catwalks.

Impact: Bangladeshi motifs are now more well-known in European fashion markets. promoted the involvement of rural women in the textile industry.

8.2 E-commerce Sites in Bangladesh That Support Conventional Themes: Artisan-made textile products are increasingly available on online marketplaces like as Othoba.com and Daraz Bangladesh.

9. The Modern Textile Industry's Challenges with Globalization and Fast Fashion: Because digital printing is frequently used to mass-produce traditional themes, their authenticity is diminished. Lack of Artisanal Recognition: When locally produced themes are employed in luxury clothing, many weavers are not given credit. Cost and Market Competition: Because handcrafted motifs need more time to make, they are more costly than machine-made substitutes.

10. Sustainable Development and Prospects

10.1 Using technology to preserve motifs: AI and 3D printing are used to produce contemporary takes on classic motifs. Digital repositories to preserve endangered themes for posterity.

10.2 The Movement For Sustainable Fashion Demand for genuine handcrafted textiles is being driven by global consumers' shift toward ethical and eco-friendly apparel. Bangladeshi themes can be promoted globally by brands that prioritize ethical sourcing.

10.3 Government and educational assistance adding traditional themes to the curricula of fashion schools. extending laws protecting intellectual property rights and artisans.

11. Conclusion

Bangladeshi textiles provide a link between the past and the present through their motifs. Despite the obstacles posed by globalization, designers, marketers, and artisans are coming up with creative solutions to keep motifs relevant to modern fashion while preserving them. Bangladesh's rich textile legacy may prosper in the global economy by combining sustainable practices with technology improvements.

Note & Referenes

- ¹ Begum explores the cultural significance of recurring textile motifs in rural Bangladesh, emphasizing their roots in folk traditions and their transformation over time. Her work provides foundational insight into how motifs reflect identity, social structure, and spiritual beliefs in pre-industrial societies. (Begum, 2001, p.45). Razia Sultana Siddiq, investigates the integration of traditional textile motifs in cworkson temporary the adaptive reuse of heritage patterns in the of efashion, analyzing merging Bangladeshi designers. Her study highlights the tension between modern aesthetics and cultural preservation. (Siddiq, 2017, p.89).
- ² Haque elaborates that floral and geometric motifs seen in nakshi kantha and jamdani designs are derived from nature and Islamic artistic principles, illustrating a blend of indigenous and religious influences (Haque, 1980, pp. 25–26).
- ³ Niaz Zaman, The Art of Kantha Embroidery, The University Press Limited, 1999, p. 37-45. Zaman highlights how traditional kantha motifs—such as lotus, fish, and tree of life—symbolize fertility, prosperity, and spiritual protection, still influencing contemporary textile designs in Bangladesh.

- ⁴ Traditional weavers due to industrialization and declining patronage, calling for policy support and cultural preservation efforts. In discussing contemporary reinterpretations of heritage motifs, Sattar references the work of designers who blend traditional designs with modern fashion sensibilities, thereby ensuring relevance in global markets. (Sattar, 2014; 76, 89).
- ⁵ Motifs in Bangladeshi textiles are deeply rooted in the country's cultural, religious, and natural heritage. They serve not only decorative purposes but also convey stories, beliefs, and identities. (Zohra, 2015, p. 42-50).
- ⁶ Ahmed underscores that motifs in traditional textiles serve not only decorative purposes but also function as markers of ethnic, religious, and even caste identity — a feature still evident in rural Bangladesh. *Role of Women in Motif Transmission* The book highlights the role of women in transmitting motif knowledge across generations, particularly in kantha work, where stories, dreams, and family events were stitched into fabric. (Ahmed, 1990, pp. 142–145, 151)
- ⁷ Afroza Begum explains that Nakshi Katha motifs often draw inspiration from daily life, mythology, and rural flora and fauna—elements that remain highly influential in contemporary textile design as artisans reinterpret these symbols in modern contexts. (Afroza Begum, 2001, p. 23)
- ⁸ Enamul Haque notes that traditional Bangladeshi handicrafts, including textiles, are deeply embedded in rural life, serving both utilitarian and symbolic purposes. This underscores how motifs in textiles are not merely decorative but are reflections of social and cultural values (Haque, 1980, p. 12).
- ⁹ Sattar documents regional variations in motifs and weaving techniques, highlighting distinctions between Tangail, Sirajganj, and Rangpur weaving styles. (Sattar, 2014;105).
- ¹⁰ *Contemporary Adaptations* Modern Bangladeshi designers are reinterpreting traditional motifs to align with contemporary aesthetics. This fusion maintains cultural heritage while appealing to global markets. (Zohra, 2015, p. 55-59).
- ¹¹ Razia Siddiq discusses how traditional motifs, such as the kalka (paisley) and shankha (conch), have retained cultural resonance through centuries in rural weaving traditions, particularly in Jamdani and Nakshi Kantha practices. Motifs like the padma (lotus) and meena (fish) are deeply rooted in regional symbolism, representing purity and fertility respectively. These designs often convey layered meanings embedded within both Hindu and Muslim cultural narratives. (Siddiq, 2017, p. 22–24, 31)
- ¹² *Socio-Cultural Reflections in Motifs.* Textile motifs often mirror the socio-cultural dynamics of their time. For instance, Kantha embroideries have depicted scenes from daily life, religious narratives, and significant historical events, serving as a canvas for women's voices and experiences in Bengal. (Zohra, 2015, p. 48-55).
- ¹³ The historical evolution of weaving communities in Bangladesh, particularly focusing on Jamdani and Muslin production, highlighting how these crafts date back to the Mughal era and symbolized elite status. The use of floral and geometric motifs in traditional handloom saris, such as Jamdani, is analyzed by Sattar as a reflection of both Persian and indigenous artistic influences. (Sattar, 2014; 22-34).
- ¹⁴ Siddiq highlights that the revival of traditional motifs in contemporary textile practices is not just aesthetic but also political—designers are reclaiming indigenous identity in resistance to global homogenization. In her field analysis, Siddiq emphasizes how artisans reinterpret ancestral patterns to accommodate modern tastes, blending historical accuracy with market adaptability. She cites the Dhakai Jamdani as a prime example where motif evolution continues without severing cultural ties. (Siddiq, 2017, p. 47, 53–55)
- ¹⁵ Sayyada R. Ghuznavi, *Textile Traditions of Bangladesh, Jamdani: The Legend and the Legacy*, 2006, p. 59. Ghuznavi emphasizes the role of motifs as carriers of memory and identity, noting that the use of floral and geometric patterns in contemporary handloom saris continues a long-standing aesthetic tradition.
- ¹⁶ Rachel Bell & Niaz Zaman (eds.), *The Textile Tradition of Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, 2004, p. 88. This work discusses how regional variations in motifs reflect socio-cultural values, with contemporary designers increasingly reviving these traditional elements in modern fashion and home décor.

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- ¹¹ Zaman, Niaz, 1981, *The art of Kantha Embroidery*, University Press Limited, Bangladesh.
- ¹² Zohra, Rahman, 2015, *Design Motifs in Contemporary Bangladeshi Textile Industry*, BUET Press, Dhaka.