



Crafting Hand-Woven Shawls through Traditional Ikat Dyeing Technique Using Architectural Motifs of Ram Pyari Mahal as Core Patterns

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: May 06, 2026

Revised: June 10, 2026

Accepted: June 19, 2026

Available Online: June 26, 2026

Keywords:

Ikat Resist Dyeing, Hand-Woven Shawls, Ram Pyari Mahal, Architectural Motifs, Textile Design, Traditional Crafts, Pakistan Textile Industry

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59075/tamsaal.v4i6.111>



ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of Pakistan's architectural heritage with traditional textile craftsmanship by developing hand-woven shawls inspired by the architectural motifs of Ram Pyari Mahal, Gujrat, using the Ikat resist-dyeing technique. The primary objective was to revive the declining Ikat weaving tradition while preserving cultural identity through innovative textile design. A practice-based research approach was adopted in which architectural elements of Ram Pyari Mahal were documented through photographic surveys and transformed into textile motifs. Selected patterns were manually sketched, digitally refined using Adobe Photoshop, and applied to warp yarns through screen-printing before weaving the shawls using the Ikat technique. Woolen yarns, pigments, binders, and mordants were used to produce six prototype shawls featuring modified architectural motifs. The finished products were exhibited at the University of Gujrat to obtain public feedback and evaluate their aesthetic and commercial acceptance. The findings demonstrate that the fusion of architectural motifs with traditional Ikat weaving successfully generated contemporary shawl designs while maintaining the authenticity of Pakistan's cultural heritage. Among the six developed prototypes, Shawl No. 6 received the highest preference from participants, indicating strong consumer appreciation for designs combining historical inspiration with modern aesthetics. The study further highlights that digital design tools can significantly reduce pattern development time without compromising artistic value. Overall, the research confirms that integrating architectural heritage into textile design offers an effective strategy for preserving traditional crafts, promoting cultural tourism, and enhancing the competitiveness of Pakistan's fashion industry. The proposed design approach provides valuable opportunities for artisans, designers, and textile manufacturers to develop innovative heritage-inspired products for both local and international markets.

Introduction

Textile manufacturing is an ancient art dating back to mankind's own history. A key part has always been played by ancient art in the evolution of human civilization. Body protection is a unique feature of man which is immortalized in verse (Wilson, 2001). The combination of knowledge and skills in the history of the culture of textiles is inherited from our forefathers and passed on from one generation to another. Due to their decorative and functional features, the ancient patterns have always been an inspiration for people (Ebert, et al., 2016).

Resist Dyed Fabric Production - *Ikat*

Ikat is considered a heritage textile technique in which the yarns are bound for resist- dyeing to form a diffused commercially acceptable patterns after weaving. By the 7th century, the scholars were uncertain regarding the origin of its first discovery, unless it led to traces; Ikat formerly emerged in the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan and India), and was used in the 4th century in the Patola, bandhani, chiticki shapes etc. This technique was introduced by muslim merchants in the 16th century via Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. A myth related to it is, that perhaps it might be advanced in numerous distinctive Asian sites independently. Later expanded into broad range of territories like Indonesia Malaysia, Asia, Africa, and Latin America and entered Europe in early 20th century.

The Ikat traditional patterns comprised snakes, dragons, birds, creatures of sea and land, and flowers (China) adorning with the most frequently applied colors i.e., red, yellow, green & white. Ikat weavers also used motifs in their designs like animals, sea animals, geometrical patterns and the architectural designs from old temples and Mughal-period buildings, along with few important government buildings in India. Ikat is used globally in various traditional textile core areas such as Japan, South Asia, and Central Asia where it is known as “Kasuri” (Murphy, 2015). In the Indonesian terminology, ikat meant by “tie” or “bind” which was actually a dyeing method imparted to make unique configurations in weaving. In the procedure, resistance is created by fastening yarns with a tight wrapping material, applied in the required pattern (Figure 1.1). The coloring procedure is done several times to yield multicolored designs.



Figure 1.1: Application of Resisting Material lengthwise yarns for Ikat method

In Indonesia, the art of ikat is nearly declining to the level of handicraft, though, artifacts of top quality are still created along with novel motives (Peter, 2018). Currently, different variations of this technique are carried out by printing or by painting patterns on the lengthwise direction rather than dyeing the wrap. In bulk manufacture, the pattern is printed onto the woven fabric, where the creative capability required for conventional method is lost (Maschke, 2016).

Fusion of Architectural Motifs in Textile Designing

Fashion and Architectural Designing contains some common features i.e., design and creation, the impactful domains of design industry as both encompass imagination, art, visualization & skill. Fashion as well as Architecture impact each other by swapping the applied motifs, styles, and patterns in designing of both apparels and buildings (El-Gammal, 2018). Traditional crafts of India have been recognized at the international level due to their fun fabrics for many years. Mughal monuments have been the finest distinctive structures in Agra, designed in the 16th and 17th centuries with the blend of Turkish, Persian, Indian, and Islamic styles maintaining high standards and elegance. Several investigations conducted to archive the humorous patterns and unique designs of the Mughal memorials into contemporary patterns of fabrics carrying the exclusiveness. An architectural pattern used in *Taj Mahal Agra* (left side) plate, and a design altered by designer using different motifs is depicted in the right-side panel of Figure-1.2. In accordance to the conclusion these designs can be used by the industry for adorning a variety of textile products



Figure 1.2: Textile Designs Crafted by Inspiring Monuments of Mughal Era (Swami & Sadaf, 2016)

Ram Pyari Mahal Gujrat Pakistan Architecture

Pakistan is rich in cultural texture of its historical buildings and monuments. Many historical cities exhibit the manifestation of a human and cultural identification as a reciprocal process in housing architecture that encompasses the value of architecture in all ages. Generally, the conventional houses are eco-friendly hence there is a need to blend traditionalism with modernism (Malik, et al., 2019). Textile and architecture designing can be an excellent source of inspiration for fashion designers. It might be amazing to use architectural elements as a muse for fashion designing. The key or intricate details can be taken as favorable inspiration ideas for the construction of an architectural building or a wardrobe as Both are multidimensional ideas encompassing the space, structure, and relation with fine arts (Paksoy, 2005).

Ram Pyari Mahal was built in 1918 for the eldest daughter of the Kapoor Khatri family of Gujrat city. She was also the wife of Sundar Das who wanted to construct a monumental Palace as a symbol of deep affection. Due to the application of white marble in the building the *Ram Pyari Mahal* is also named as “The Taj Mahal of Gujrat” (Figure 1.3).



Figure 1.3: Facade of “Ram Pyari Mahal” Punjab Pakistan

The structural design of the building is a blend of Indian and Greek architecture. The entrance of the hall is held with columns imitate the Greek columns like Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian shown in figure 1.4. Some other salient architectural elements used in the building are shown in figure 1.5



Figure 1.4: Greek order of Doric Ionic and Corinthian Columns in *Ram Pyari Mahal*

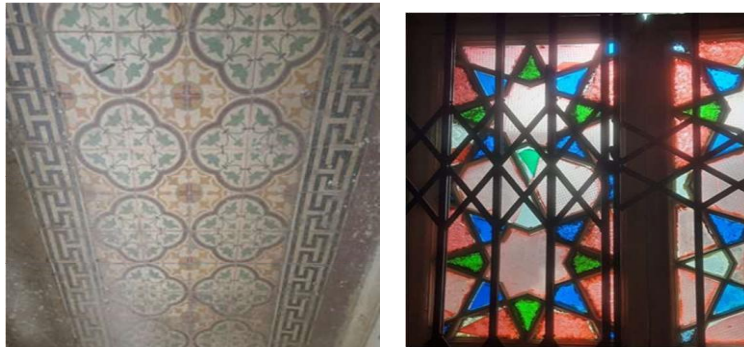


Figure 1.5: Floor Tile Work & Stained-Glass Door at *Ram Pyari Mahal*

Shawl Construction using Ikat Resist Printing in Architectural Motifs

Architectural inspiration can be utilized for innovative designing of shawls in assorted coloring and printing techniques in original scheme. By some modification in the original theme various techniques including block printing, roller printing, digital & screen printing of shawls can be done. Out of several factors of being a prevalent technique, the most compelling one is the extensive choice of colors conveniently put on any type of surface. It is a popular style of transferring the persistent and vibrant artworks on diverse surfaces (Mickelson, 2023).

The current research project focused on creating innovative shawls woven in design of motifs used in the adornment of *Ram Pyari Mahal* taken as a source of inspiration in union with Ikat printing skill. It is assumed that slight creative modification in original architectural motifs will be a handsome gain in the repository of the textile patterns, hence benefit the local and global fashion industry. Furthermore, the restoration of the tradition and culture with prevailing trends of designing and shawls manufacturing will bridge the traditional and contemporary design practices.

Methodology

The description of different stages of the experimental plan has been followed as:

Survey and Collection of Data

The primary data have been gathered as a photographic visual of the architectural features of *Ram Pyari Mahal*.

Formation of Theme Board

A repository comprising the selected architectural elements of the palace have been formatted to developed to novel designs applied on shawls (Figure-2.1).



Figure 2.1: Theme Board of Architectural Motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal*

Developing patterns

In this step the hand sketches of motifs were prepared with pencil for conversion into novel designs through Adobe Photoshop Illustrator.

Warp Printing through screens

The lab scale screens were prepared following important steps i.e., exposing design for printing of shawls. The warp yarns priorly imprinted through screens exposed in various motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal* and woven into shawls. Before printing the yarns are given finishing treatment to improve the appearance and overall texture of the woven shawls.

Weaving of Shawls

In the final stage shawls were woven in to a complete artifact of beautiful patterns using Ikat technique.

Raw Materials Sourcing

The raw material contained woolen yarn, pigments (screen printing colors) and required auxiliaries like G3 binder, Alka, Alum mordents. Mostly the material is available in the local market, while pigments and binders have been obtained from BASF Chemical Company, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Display

The shawls were displayed in the University of Gujarat's Exhibition, Allama Iqbal Hall in order to gather responses.

Results

The objective of the recent project was to produce woven shawls by reviving ikat textile printing technique by putting the attractive motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal*. At initial stage various architectural motifs of the palace were thoroughly examined and photographed. Later on, these motifs were converted into beautiful patterns using adobe photoshop software. At final stage shawls were woven by ikat technique in which patterns were applied initially on warp yarns through screens. The combination of ikat method of weaving method and architectural salient motif on shawls can enhance national identity of our designers in the global fashion industry.

Documentation

After a comprehensive investigation of the basic structure of the “Ram Pyari Mahal” research board followed by theme board (Figure-3.1) was prepared from selected photographic images of motifs. Different patterns were set through adobe photoshop software and imprinted on shawls applying Ikat technique.



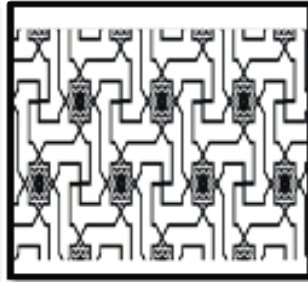
Figure 3.1: Research Board containing Architectural Features

Patterns developed for shawl manufacturing inspired by the Architectural Motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal*

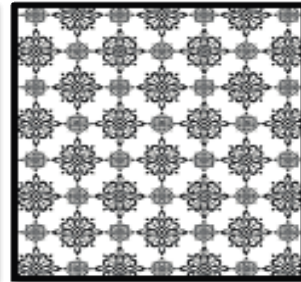
The designs have been developed through Adobe Photoshop software keeping in view the basic theme of architecture motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal*, Gujrat, Pakistan Eighteen modified patterns (coded from P1-P18) are represented as following:



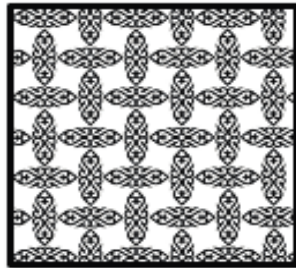
P-1



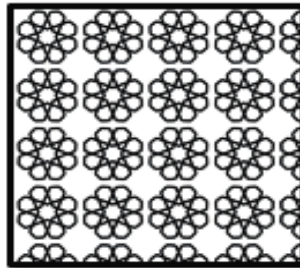
P-2



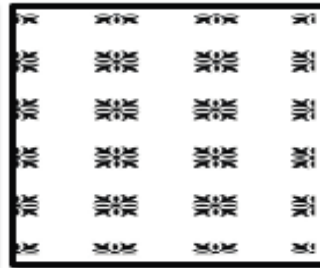
P-3



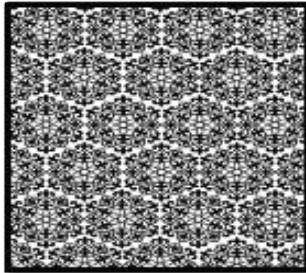
P-4



P-5



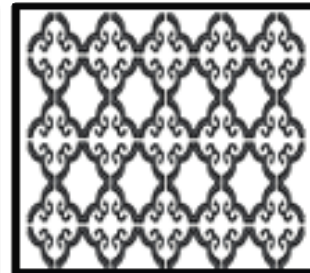
P-6



P-7



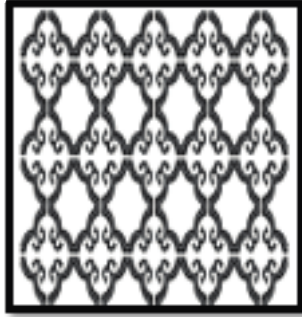
P-8



P-9



P-10



P-11



P-12



P-13



P-14



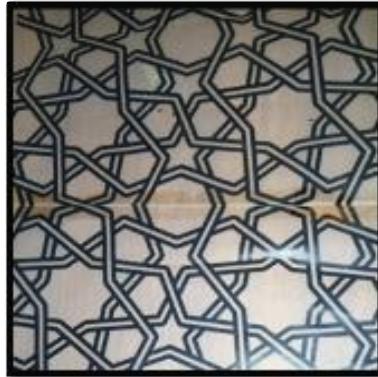
P-15



P-16



P-17



P-18



P-19

Weaving & Designing of shawls through Ikat Technique

After a series of designing stages-from motif development to shawl construction on looms the steps are represented here in diagrams.

Shawl development from Motif No. 1

The first motif design contained the ceiling pattern of one of the rooms of building which was attractively decorated with geometrical shapes. The design was free hand drawn (Figure 3.1) then transformed into digital shawl pattern using adobe photoshop & woven into fabric using screen printed warp yarns (Figure 3.2). In this shawl (Exhibit 1), maroon and skin color were selected to enhance its geometrical shapes



Figure 3.2: Original Design & Pencil Sketch for Ceiling of *Ram Pyari Mahal*

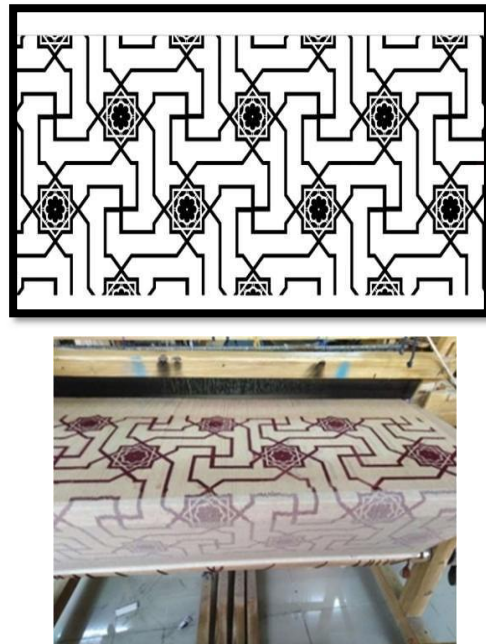


Figure 3: Design variation of ceiling & screen-printed warp yarns



Exhibit 1: Woven shawl designed from motif 1

Shawl production from Motif No. 2

The particular motif taken for this shawl was the cemented railing balusters design of the main entrance. The complete process of pattern making till finished product is shown in figures 3.3 while shawl displayed in Exhibit 2.



Figure 3.4: Original concrete balusters design & and its variation



Exhibit 2 :Woven shawl designed from motif 2

This shawl features a floral design taken from floor tiles of a room, suitable for male and females apparel because of its stylish & trendy color scheme. (Figure 3.5 & 3.6) representing the order of shawl manufacture steps (from pattern to final product).

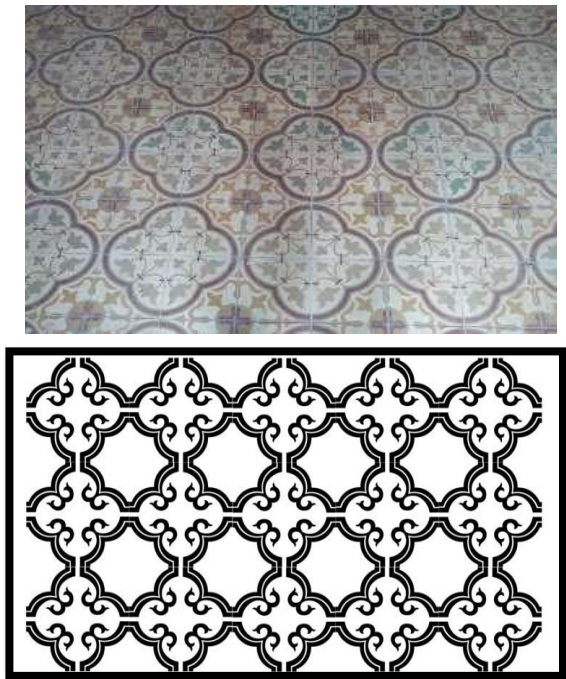


Figure 3.5: Floor tiles pattern & its variation



Figure 3.6: Screen Printing warp way



Exhibit 3: Woven shawl designed from motif 3

Shawl manufactured from Motif No 5

Figure 3.7 shows design taken by inspiration from a door on upstairs while some lines included to make it complete. This shawl is good fit for both young boys and girls because of its beautiful color scheme on screen printed border with similar weft yarns.



Figure 3.7: Original Design of Upstairs Door & its variation



Figure 3.8: Screen Printing on Warp



Exhibit 4: Woven shawl designed from motif 5

Shawl making from Motif No.6

Another pattern for shawl was created by captivating inspiration from a combination of two decorative motifs on the ceiling and floor tiles (Figure 3.9). The shawl design target the mature-age women in monochromatic color scheme repeated over entire fabric with orange color that augmented its beautiful appearance (Figure 3.10).



Figure 3.9: Original Designs on the Floor Tiles and Ceiling



Figure 3.10: Design variation from ceiling and floor tiles & screen-printing warp way



Exhibit 5: Woven shawl designed from motif 6

Shawl making from Motif No.6

The motifs created for the prototype was a blend of carved wooden panel and tiles patterns in the form of scrolls and geometrical lines respectively (Figure 3.12). On border of the shawl a beautiful pattern in brown and beige color will gain the attention of customers.



Figure 3.11: Designs from Wooden Door and Floor Tiles



Figure 3.12: Design Variation of Floor/door & its printing on warp yarns



Exhibit 6: Woven shawl designed from motif 6

Ranking of shawls

Table 3.1: Ranking of Screen-printed woven shawls

Specimen		Grading of Shawls				
Shawl No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frequency	11	5	7	9	14	30
Rank	4	8	6	5	3	1

Source: Participants' ranking in exhibition

To take the feedback from the customers including students and relevant personals, all the specimens were exhibited at Allama Iqbal Hall, University of Gujrat. All the shawls have been ranked on the basis of the opinion, liking or disliking, gathered from the participants and displayed here in Table-3.1. Shawl No. 6 was liked by maximum no of participants hence, ranked on top, while Shawl No. 5 was ranked at 2nd position. The approximate market price of individual product was also estimated for attaining the commercial acceptance of customers.

The shawl-making industry of Pakistan has great importance at global level. The handcrafted and machine-made shawls both for women and men are available in the market based on conventional patterns which are in great global demand. In the current study designing off shawls have been focused with the revival of historical motifs of *Ram Pyari Mahal* as well as obsolete *Ikat* dyeing technique in contemporary style. *Ikat* is an exceptional system of producing colorful fabrics through tie and dye technique of threads before weaving. According to the Steele (2005), *Ikat* is a specific technique to make pattern in textiles in which the threads are resist dyed before fabric construction on loom. In the current study the shawl weaving is done by a printing the warp yarns initially and inserting weft yarns in second step. This modification of resist dyeing

method was highly appreciated by designers and fashion-oriented products. This approach which involved traditional architectural designs as inspiration and adaption to creating innovative and fashionable apparel items will be a valuable inclusion to the portfolio of latest fashion designs.

Conclusions

The cultural heritage of Pakistan offers a rich collection of architects for fashion designers to enhance the up-to-date designing methods. The current study is concluded as following.

- The application of architectural themes of *Ram Pyari Mahal* can be beautifully converted into novel textile designs shawl which can gain attention of customers.
- Shawl manufacturing is a high labor process, required significant skill of the weaver but the designing section can be covered if the time is minimized by using adobe photo-shop illustrator for pattern designing.
- The fusion of architectural elements of historical building & laboratory scale flat screen printing through resist method are preferred by majority of the female customers.

It is expected that novel portfolio of designs from architecture will be more compatible with contemporary trends that will help to preserve the cultural heritage of Gujrat, Pakistan at global level.

Recommendations

Contemporary marketing and promotional strategies should be opted for growing the demand for revival of attractive Ikat products with improved design quality of shawls.

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