



# Mata Ni Pachedi: A Stylistic And Cultural Analysis Of A Sacred Textile Tradition

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**Abstract :** Mata Ni Pachedi is a traditional textile art form practiced by the Vaghari community of Gujarat, India. The term means “behind the Mother Goddess,” as these painted cloths are used as backdrops in religious worship. Historically, marginalized communities who were denied entry into temples created these textiles as portable shrines, making them significant symbols of faith, identity, and resistance. This paper examines the stylistic features, cultural significance, and production techniques of Mata Ni Pachedi. The compositions typically feature a central goddess figure such as Durga or Kali, surrounded by narrative elements arranged symmetrically. The use of natural dyes and handcrafted processes highlights its sustainable nature. In contemporary times, this art form has expanded beyond ritual use into fashion and design, raising questions about preservation and adaptation. The study emphasizes the importance of maintaining its cultural authenticity while exploring its relevance in modern design practices.

**Keywords :** Mata Ni Pachedi, sacred textiles, Gujarat, natural dyes, sustainability, Indian folk art, block printing

## I. Introduction

India’s textile traditions are deeply connected to cultural and religious practices. Mata Ni Pachedi is a unique example of a sacred textile that serves both artistic and spiritual purposes. Traditionally used as a backdrop for goddess worship, it emerged as a response to social exclusion when certain communities were not allowed to enter temples.

This textile form reflects devotion, storytelling, and identity. Over time, it has evolved from a purely ritual object to a recognized art form. This paper aims to analyse its stylistic features, cultural importance, and contemporary relevance. The study further explores how this traditional art form aligns with sustainable practices through the use of natural dyes and handmade techniques. It also examines the challenges of preserving authenticity in the context of commercialization and modern design adaptation. These aspects highlight its relevance not only as a cultural artifact but also within contemporary textile and fashion studies.



Fig 1

## II. Literature Review

Previous studies on Indian textiles highlight the importance of ritual cloths in expressing cultural identity. Research on traditional crafts of Gujarat emphasizes the role of artisan communities like the Vaghari in preserving sacred art forms.

Scholars have also explored the use of natural dyes and sustainable practices in Indian textiles, positioning them as alternatives to industrial production. Studies on folk art suggest that such traditions act as visual narratives, preserving myths and religious beliefs.

However, limited research focuses specifically on Mata Ni Pachedi in the context of modern design adaptation, indicating a gap that this study attempts to address.

## III. Methodology

This study is based on qualitative research methods, including:

- Secondary data collection from books, journals, and online academic sources
- Visual analysis of Mata Ni Pachedi designs and compositions
- Study of documented artisan practices and traditional techniques

The research focuses on analysing stylistic elements, materials, and cultural meanings associated with the textile.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 1. Stylistic Features

The compositions are structured with a central deity, usually a form of the Mother Goddess such as Durga or Kali. Surrounding elements include devotees, animals, and mythological scenes arranged symmetrically. Bold outlines and expressive forms create a strong visual impact.

### 2. Materials and Techniques

The textile is created on cotton fabric using natural dyes. Red, black, and white are the primary colours, symbolizing power, strength, and purity. The process involves washing, block printing or hand painting, dyeing, and sun drying. This method is time-consuming and requires skilled craftsmanship.

### 3. Cultural Significance

Mata Ni Pachedi functions as a portable shrine, allowing communities to practice worship independently. It represents faith, devotion, and cultural identity, while also preserving mythological narratives through visual storytelling.

#### 4. Sustainability and Contemporary Relevance

The use of natural dyes and handmade techniques makes this art form environmentally sustainable. In recent years, it has gained recognition in fashion and interior design. However, commercialization poses challenges such as loss of authenticity and cultural meaning. Responsible adaptation is necessary to preserve its heritage.

#### V. Conclusion

Mata Ni Pachedi is a significant example of how textile art can function as both a cultural and spiritual medium. It reflects the creativity and resilience of the Vaghari community while maintaining strong religious connections.

In the modern context, it offers valuable insights into sustainable design and ethical production. Preserving this tradition requires a balance between innovation and authenticity. By promoting and studying such art forms, we can ensure their continued relevance and cultural significance.

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