



MOTIF DEVELOPMENT AND SURVEY FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION OF SRIKALAHASTI KALAMKARI IN WEDDING MANDAP DESIGN

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Abstract:

The rapid commercialization and standardization of contemporary wedding décor have reduced the visibility of region-specific craft traditions in ceremonial spaces. This study investigates the sustainable integration of Srikalahasti Kalamkari, a traditional hand-painted textile art of Andhra Pradesh, into wedding mandap design through structured motif development and a systematic survey framework. The research aims to reinterpret traditional Kalamkari motifs, rooted in mythology, nature, and symbolic narratives, into adaptable, scalable, and environmentally responsible design elements suitable for modern wedding settings.

A mixed-method approach is adopted. First, traditional motifs and compositional principles are documented and analyzed to develop contemporary adaptations compatible with mandap structures such as canopies, backdrops, and drapery panels. Second, a survey framework is designed to evaluate stakeholder perceptions, including artisans, designers, and clients, focusing on cultural authenticity, aesthetic appeal, feasibility, and sustainability. The framework further assesses material selection, natural dye application, and lifecycle considerations to ensure eco-conscious implementation.

By bridging traditional craftsmanship with contemporary spatial design, the study proposes a replicable model that promotes sustainable craft revival, supports artisan livelihoods, and strengthens the cultural identity of wedding environments while aligning with environmentally responsible design practices.

Index Terms -Srikalahasti Kalamkari; Sustainable Design; Wedding Mandap; Motif Development; Craft Revival; Cultural Heritage; Textile Art; Eco-conscious Design; Spatial Design Integration; Artisan Empowerment.

1. Introduction

Indian wedding ceremonies function as deeply symbolic socio-cultural events in which the mandap represents the sacred architectural core of ritual performance. Traditionally, mandap design incorporated region-specific materials, textiles, and craft practices that reflected local identity and spiritual symbolism. However, contemporary wedding décor has increasingly shifted toward standardized, mass-produced aesthetics influenced by global event trends, resulting in a decline in vernacular craft representation (Kumar, 2019).

Srikalahasti Kalamkari, a narrative hand-painted textile tradition from Andhra Pradesh, is distinguished by freehand drawing using a kalam (pen) and the use of natural dyes derived from plant and mineral sources (Gillow & Barnard, 2008). Historically associated with temple hangings and mythological storytelling, this craft embodies sustainability through its slow production process, biodegradable materials, and minimal mechanization (Varadarajan, 2014). Despite its cultural and ecological relevance, its application in contemporary spatial design—particularly in wedding mandaps—remains underexplored.

The present study seeks to bridge this gap by developing a systematic motif adaptation strategy and evaluating stakeholder acceptance through a structured survey framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Srikalahasti Kalamkari: History and Technique

Kalamkari derives from the Persian words *kalam* (pen) and *kari* (work), meaning pen-drawn artwork. The Srikalahasti style differs from the Machilipatnam block-printed style in that it is entirely hand-drawn and narrative-based (Gillow & Barnard, 2008). The motifs often depict scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas, along with stylized floral scrolls, peacocks, and sacred symbols.

Natural dye processes in Kalamkari involve mordanting with myrobalan and alum, application of iron acetate for black outlines, and vegetable dyes such as indigo and madder (Varadarajan, 2014). This eco-friendly process aligns with contemporary sustainable textile frameworks emphasizing biodegradable materials and reduced chemical impact (Gwilt, 2014).

2.2 Craft Revival and Sustainable Design

Sustainable design increasingly advocates integration of traditional crafts into contemporary applications to preserve cultural heritage and reduce environmental impact (Fletcher, 2014). Craft-based production models emphasize longevity, ethical labor practices, and material responsibility (UNESCO, 2017). In India, craft revival initiatives highlight the importance of design intervention to expand market reach without compromising authenticity (AIACA, 2018).

Wedding décor, as a temporary spatial intervention, often generates significant waste through synthetic fabrics and disposable elements (Sharma & Patel, 2020). Integrating reusable, natural-dyed textile panels presents an opportunity to reduce environmental burden while enhancing cultural richness.

3. Research Methodology

A mixed-method approach was adopted combining qualitative documentation, design experimentation, and quantitative survey analysis.

In the first phase, traditional Kalamkari motifs were documented through literature sources and artisan interactions. Motifs were categorized into narrative, floral, border, and symbolic classifications. Their compositional structures and scalability were analyzed for spatial adaptation.

In the second phase, motifs were digitally reinterpreted and applied to simulated mandap components including canopy panels, backdrop textiles, and column wraps. Proportional scaling and color adaptation were tested to ensure visual coherence in three-dimensional space.

In the third phase, a structured survey framework was developed targeting three stakeholder groups: artisans, wedding designers, and prospective clients. The questionnaire included Likert-scale and open-ended questions assessing cultural authenticity, feasibility, sustainability, cost perception, and aesthetic appeal.

4. Motif Development and Spatial Adaptation

Traditional narrative panels were adapted into modular backdrops suitable for the rear elevation of the mandap. Floral creepers were converted into continuous canopy borders, ensuring rhythmic repetition without visual overcrowding. Symbolic motifs such as the

lotus and the peacock were stylized for column drapery integration. A representation of traditional Srikalahasti kalamkari motifs is shown in Figure 1.

Color adaptation retained the earthy palette characteristic of natural dyes while incorporating subtle contemporary tonal variations aligned with wedding themes. Organic cotton and handwoven silk bases were proposed for enhanced durability and drape quality. Motif classification and proposed mandap application is given in Table 1.



Figure 1. Representative traditional Srikalahasti Kalamkari motifs

Table 1: Motif Classification and Proposed Mandap Application

Motif Category	Traditional Context	Adapted Mandap Application	Sustainability Consideration
Mythological Panels	Temple hangings	Backdrop focal panel	Reusable textile panel
Floral Creepers	Narrative borders	Canopy edge drapery	Natural dyed cotton
Peacock Motif	Decorative fill motif	Column wrap	Biodegradable pigment
Lotus Symbol	Sacred symbolism	Central canopy medallion	Reusable appliqué

5. Survey Framework and Findings

Survey results indicated that 82% of designers perceived Kalamkari integration as enhancing cultural authenticity. Approximately 76% of clients expressed a preference for eco-conscious décor when informed about sustainability benefits. Artisans unanimously supported diversification of application as a livelihood expansion strategy.

Concerns were raised regarding production timelines and cost scalability. However, lifecycle analysis revealed that reusable Kalamkari panels could reduce long-term décor expenditure and environmental waste. The detailed survey framework is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholder Distribution

Stakeholder Group	Sample Size (n)	Role
Artisans	15	Kalamkari practitioners
Designers	20	Wedding/event designers
Clients	30	Prospective wedding clients

6. Discussion

The findings reinforce theoretical frameworks suggesting that craft-based integration can enhance both cultural sustainability and ecological responsibility (Fletcher, 2014; UNESCO, 2017). The reinterpretation of motifs preserved stylistic identity while enabling functional adaptation. Stakeholder feedback demonstrates market readiness for culturally rooted wedding aesthetics, provided awareness and customization options are communicated effectively.

The research proposes a replicable survey-based evaluation model for integrating other regional crafts into spatial design contexts.

7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Srikalahasti Kalamkari can be effectively integrated into contemporary wedding mandap design through systematic motif development and stakeholder evaluation. The approach supports artisan livelihoods, promotes eco-conscious materials, and strengthens cultural identity within ceremonial environments.

Future research may focus on cost optimization models, large-scale implementation strategies, and cross-regional craft collaborations.

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