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HISTORICAL PROFILE OF BIHAR

Bihar is one of the major states of the Indian Union. Many ancient civilisations in the world have evolved around magnificent rivers, but very few rivers in the world have moulded the culture, economy and personality of the people evolving on their banks as the great river Ganga. Cutting straight across Bihar from west to east, the bounteous Ganga had rendered the region so fertile and plentiful, that its natural prosperity nurtured a great fountainhead of political and cultural civilisations down the millennia.

Here, kingdom after kingdom rose and fell, leaving their indelible mark on history. Rival kings fought legendary battles, devastating the land and the people. Yet, by some strange alchemy, the same land also saw the birth of some of the most gentle and progressive religious teachers like Buddha, Mahavira and Guru Gobind Singh

The name 'Bihar' is derived from 'Vihara', meaning monastery. Bihar has been a great religious centre for Hindus, Jains and most importantly, the Buddhists. It was at Bodhgaya in Bihar, that the Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree, and attained enlightenment. A descendant of the same tree, still flourishes in Bodhgaya today. Nalanda, which was a world - renowned Buddhist university in the 5th century AD, is also located in Bihar. Rajgir, a pilgrimage place for Buddhists and Pawapuri, where Lord Mahavira breathed his last, are near Nalanda. .

Geographical Profile

Bihar is bound on the north by Nepal, on the east by West Bengal, on the west by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and on the south by Orissa.



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Area	173877 sq. km
State Capital	Patna
Major Cities	Jamshedpur, Bokaro Steel City, Ranchi,
Economic Profile	
Net Domestic Product	293,420 millionsRs. at (current prices 1992-93
Per Capita Income	3,280 Rs. at current prices in 1992-93
Education Profile	
Literacy rate	38.5(1991)
Principal Languages	Hindi
Demographic Profile	
Population	86,374, 000 (1991)
Females per 1000 males	911 (1991)
Ratio of urban population	13.1 (1991)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The district of Sitamarhi was carved out of Muzaffarpur district on 11th December 1972. It is situated in the northern part of Bihar. Its headquarter is located at Dumra, five kilometres south of Sitamarhi. The district headquarter was shifted here after the town of Sitamarhi was devastated in one of the worst ever earthquake in January 1934.

Sitamarhi is a sacred place in Hindu mythology. Its history goes back to Treta Yug. Sita; the wife of Lord Rama sprang to life out of an earthen pot, when Raja Janak was ploughing the field somewhere near Sitamarhi to impress upon Lord Indra for rain. It is said that Raja Janak excavated a tank at the place where Sita emerged and after her marriage set up the stone figures of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana to mark the site. This tank is known as Janaki-kund and is south of the Janaki Mandir.



GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

In course of time, the land lapsed into a jungle until about 500 years ago, when a Hindu ascetic, named Birbal Das came to know the site by divine inspiration where Sita was born. He came down from Ayodhya and cleared the jungle. He found the image set up by Raja Janak, built temple over there and commenced the worship of Janaki or Sita. The Janaki Mandir is apparently modern and is about 100 years old only. The town however contains no relics of archaeological interest.

Geographical Profile

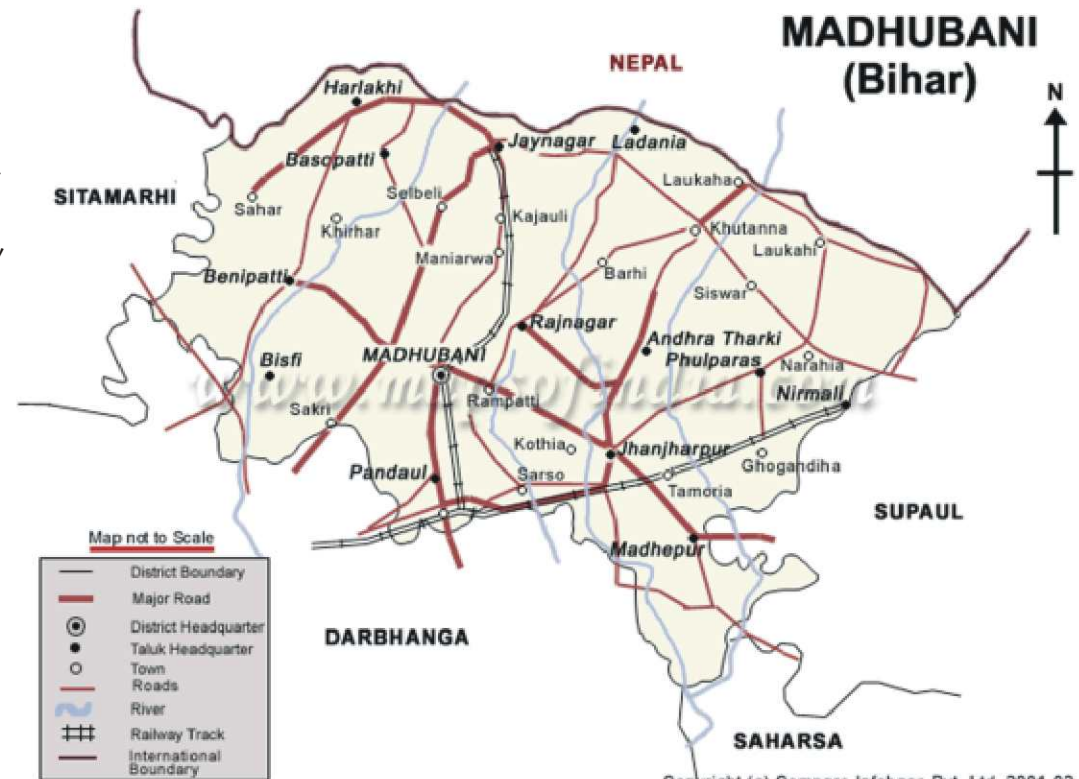
Latitude	26 ° 49 'Longitude -- 85 ° 05 '
Height	85 meter above sea level
Intrntl Border	90 kms.
Total Area:	2185.17 sq. km.
Irrigated Land:	737.33 sq. km.
Border:	North -- Nepal South -- Muzaffarpur East -- Darbhanga, Madhubani West -- East Champaran, Sheohar
Major Rivers:	Bagmati, Lakhandei
Population:	Total 20, 13,796 Rural 18, 94,203 Urban 1, 19,593
Sub Divisions:	Sitamarhi Sadar, Shivahar, Pupri.
Blocks:	Bathnaha, Parihar, Nanpur, Bazpatti, Bairgania, Belsand, Riga, Sursand, Pupri, Sonbarsa, Dumra, Runni Saidpur, Majorganj, Puranhia, Suppi, Parsauni, Bokhra, Chorout.
Agriculture:	Paddy, Wheat, Maize, Lentils.
Industry:	Sugar Factory, Rice and Oil Mills.
Rivers:	Bagmati.



GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

MADHUBANI

HQ	MADHUBANI
Area	2,501 sq. kms.
Population Total	28,32,024 Rural 27,29,260
Urban 1,02,764	
SC Population	Total 3,61,687 Rural 3,51,921
Urban 9,766	
ST Population	Total 597 Rural 541 Urban 56
Sub Divisions	Madhubani, Jaynagar, Benipatti, Jhanjharpur, Phul Paraas.
Blocks	Jainagar, Pandaul, Rahika, Bisfi, Benipatti, Basopatti, Babubarhi, Rajnagar Madhepur, Khutauna, Khajauli, Ghoghardiha, Ladania, Jhanjharpur, Madhwapur, Harlakhi, Andharatharhi, Lakhnaur, Phulparas, Laukahi.
Agriculture	Paddy.
Industry	Sugar factories, Pisciculture.
Rivers	Kamala and Bhutahi Balaan.



HISTORY-REPUTATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUE

In the traditional wall painting of Mithila (a region of north Bihar with an ancient practice of women painting the walls of the nuptial chamber). the act of drawing has always been separate from that of painting. An outline was first drawn and colours filled in subsequently; the whole tradition of painting in Mathila may therefore be described as "coloured drawings" (Jain, 1994) Applique is a craft which has waste pieces of cloth as its raw material. Articles produced by this craft were used by kings and emperors and the nobility in the past as shamiana and chandowa.

The Khatwas have used one women's drawings of the figures and the landscape. Scraps of colored cloth are then appliqued onto the bold piecing. These are known as stitched and filled drawings. The figurative and domestic imagery on Khatwas relate to Mathila and Madhubani painting in form and content. Figures were rounded, filled with pattern cloth and given movement through the interlay of two and three dimensional space. Everyday objects such as chulha (stoves), hasiya (chopping knives) and a multitude of pots and pans abound. Instructive drawings of men and women in the nuptial chamber, a vital aspect of Mathila and Madhubani painting are found in Khatwas also. Khatwas patch work craft has borrowed from the private world of religious art and have taken it to the public market place. Just as Mathila painting expanded the life of individual Bihari women Khatwa textiles permit the women from Patna and Sitamarhi leave their homes, travel around India and even represented their work abroad recently.

The British High Commission and the Ford Foundation in Delhi were first to commission this craft in late 1970's. They ordered a series of wall hanging depicting observations and reflections of the lives of the women. By tracing of the history of these early works, it appears that foreigners were dictating the designs. Insofar as they were asking for images of happy villagers, male children (when the women were concerned more about girl children), and the romantic pastorals of village life. These works and some of the current production are considered politically safe and highly decorative.



PROOF AND EVIDENCE

Beginning as a revived craft practice-khatwa has transcended their original forms through the imaginations of the women to become a new and at times uncompromising art. These textiles are narrative visual media where one of the players is a storyteller; the woman drawing the story on the plain cloth is the story teller. The women stitching, piecing, chatting and changing that drawing into khatwa are listening to and transmitting the storyteller's narrative while adding their own interpretations to the text. Just as folksongs or legends are passed on through oral traditions, these works are passed on from hand to hand through observation and conversation. They offer unique glimpses of contemporary accomplishments of ordinary women with extraordinary visions of the world are at the heart of this works.



National Institute of Design-Outreach programme



Protection and Development of Handicrafts of India under IPR / DC(H)

RAW MATERIAL

Traditionally this craft used waste pieces of cloth as its raw material and was usually done with white cloth on bright backgrounds like red or orange. So fine was the work that, in the past, the articles produced were used by kings, emperors, and the nobility. The motifs include human figures, trees, flowers, animals, and birds. Circular cut-work is for the central motifs and quarter-circles are used for the corners. Kanats or walls of tents have tree forms with animal figures. Usually, the men used to cut the patterns and the women do the stitching.

Basic Material: Cloth, patches of coloured fabrics, thread, stencil, scissor

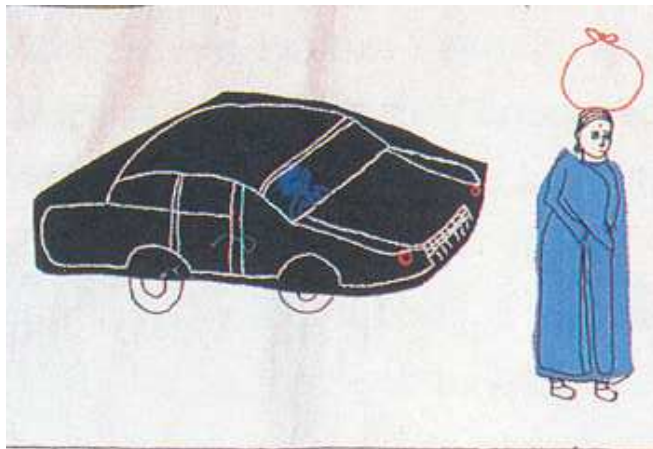
Colouring Material: Colours (red, black, white, yellow and green)

Basic Material: Pieces of coloured and patterned fabric cut in different sizes.

Basic Material: Different types of silk, brocade, needle, thread

Equipments

Needle, a pair of scissors, waste cloth



Today this Applique work is done by women only either on personal garments or for commercial purpose. The colours range from scarlet, orange, and yellow, to pale green, mauve, and white. In garments like caps and blouses, embroidery is combined with applique. Most of the raw materials today are produced on cream markeen fabric and occasionally in other colored shades of casement fabric. Coloured handloom is used for saris, kurtas, and dupattas, and sometimes tussar silk is used in making stoles and jackets. They purchase locally available raw materials including the bulk purchase of the base fabric and the coloured cloth for patch work along with stitching threads.

PRODUCT

KHATWA PRODUCTS

The applique and patchwork of Bihar is commonly found on wall hangings, Shamianas (or decorative tents and canopies that are used on festive occasions, and on religious and social ceremonies), and even on saris, dupattas, cushion covers, table cloths, curtains, bedspreads, bolster covers etc. The Khatwa design and marketing intervention has been in two fold.

Development of new products, including garments, accessories and soft furnishings will add diversity and create an understanding of the basic concepts of product development in order to give them touch of local aesthetic as well as sociological base. The Khatwa craftswomen also have used hand woven silk and naturally dyed cloth. The two principal items of this craft continue to be used today as modern utility items such as cushion covers, curtains, tea-cozies, table-cloths, curtains, blouse pieces and sari borders. The canopies are made of thick background material, usually red or orange, appliqued with geometric patterns cut from thin white cloth. The walls of the tents bear designs of flowers, birds and trees. The vibrant colors used in the applique reflect the joyous mood of the revellers. Some of the common range of goods produced can be categorized in two product classes:

Home furnishing

Apparel

Bed-spread of 60 x 90 inch

Open bed-spread of 60 x 90 inch

Cushioned covers of 12 x 12, 16 x 16 and 18 x 18 inch

Wall hangings, Dupattas, Saree, Jacket Suit



PROCESS

First outline of the design is traced or drawn directly on to the cloth. Then the coloured cloth is also outlined and cut to the desired shape and size and stitched on the base cloth. Stories and compositions are prepared by the women who also choose their own colours and themes. Applique is also used to adorn women's garments. The background color and the foreground appliqué motifs are cleverly arranged to give the design an entirely new dimension.

A master chart of the applique designs, called awalkhana, is prepared on the cloth before the work is executed. This design also helps new artisans to learn this traditional art form. They offer a unique glimpse of contemporary accomplishments of ordinary women with extraordinary visions of the world.

Generally two types of applique work are done by women in Bihar: the first type is prepared by them for their personal use and the second for commercial purposes. The latter is an interesting legacy of olden times when a variety of kanatas walled enclosure, samianas canopies and tents, with different types of brocades and patch-work were prepared. The samianas made with applique work designs even today continue this age old tradition. The designs and motifs generally prepared on the kanatas the side wall of the samianas are freer. These are cut out of a piece of the desired cloth and stitched on to the basic material with the help of a few rough stitches. Then the edges are turned quickly and motifs stitched on to the background in a beautiful cloth in a general manner. The background cloth is generally dark red or deep orange and the motifs are prepared in white with some portions in blue. The design of the samiana also is cut out of one piece of material which is usually the size of

the background material. They carefully prepare and join both the pieces and then nip and turn the cutout portions which are finally stitched with the original cloth. The men cut out the patterns to be stitched to samianas and kanatas and the women workers in the villages do the entire stitching. Applique is also done by women on their own garments. Here stylised motifs are cut and stitched on to a fabric so that the pattern emerges in two colours. Energy and passion seem to find expression through vibrant scarlets, oranges, yellows, and provide the key to the mood and the tempo.



UNIQUENESS

Old symbols, images, myths and legends now reappear in the works of these craftswomen, in new roles, often acting as pictorial or poetic metaphors resulting in amazing artistic transformations. The resources harnessed in this search for new visual forms and vocabulary include the artists observations of nature and contemporary life around them including impressions gathered from the theatrical performances, cinema, textbook illustrations and calendars. These are not transplanted but, translated into own pictorial idiom make their works at once products of their own contemporary existence. As knowledge of Khatwa work grows, more people are becoming interested in these pieces as form of pictorial commentary on contemporary popular culture. The women of the village encounter many new things in their life experiences. Today access to radio, movies and television gives the women many topics to discuss, including literacy, politics, women as role models and the hectic pace of rural or urban life. The physical environment, whether rural or urban, profoundly affects the quality of their lives, so frequently a source of inspiration. As the women have success with their work, and it becomes more central to their lives. The women draw and stitch images about these subjects through their own interpretations of the world. Traditionally, the stitching in Khawa cloth was a practical way of connecting three or four layers of cloth together. The simple utilitarian straight stitches along with patch clothes soon began to take on personal meaning as it evolved into images from the women's lives. The balance between what stitches do-patch, repair, connect and hold layers together and what the stitches can become narrative elements is a key to understanding the artistic expression of the women in Bihar. It all comes down to communication.



VISUAL IDENTITY



ARTISAN PROFILE

Name & Addresses of the Crafts persons from local DC(H) office:

Ahilya Devi At/PO Ranti, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Ami Devi At/Po Rajnagar, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Bandana Devi Vill/PO Rashidpur, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Chamila Devi At/PO Rampatti, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Chanda Saran At: /PO Laxmisagar, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Gayatri Misra Kankar Bagh, Patna, Bihar

Indu Sinha At/PO:Kashipur, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Kanchan Choudhary Choudhary Tola, Near Pathar Masjid, Patna, Bihar

Kaushalya Devi Vishwakarma Road No.10, Near Quarter No.11, Gurdamibad, Patna, Bihar Kiran Devi At/Po Goshala Mohalla,

Ward NO.25, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Kumud Sinha At/PO:Kashipur, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Lajwati Devi Gardiibagh, Road No.10, Patna, Bihar

Laxmi Devi AT/PO Rajnagarganj, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Malti Devi At/PO Bhachi, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Manju Devi At: Satlakha, PO:Rohika, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Neelam Devi J.N.College Gate, Ward No.2, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Ram Kala Devi AT/PO Sapta, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Ram Kali Devi AT:Urwan, PO : Patori, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Rekha Devi AT/Po : Dashara, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Savitri Devi AT/Po : Mohanpur Road, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Shavama Devi At/PO Surtganj, Ward No.2, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Shushila Devi AT/PO Salempur, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Sova Srivastavy At: /PO Laxmisagar, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Sudha Devi At: PO Sarisabpadi, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Sunita Devi M/s.Sunita Shilp Kala Kendra, AT:Shahpur, PO:Patori, Distt: Samastipur, Bihar

Uma Devi V & PO Mangaruni, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar

Vandana Debi At/Po-Rasidpur, Via Kaluahi, Distt: Madhubani, Bihar