

Stitching Together: A Study on the Significance of Quilting

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Abstract: Quilting is one of the glorious tradition of recycling and reusing. Sustainable quilting is not something new to our world, it has been a day to day practice, way of livelihood for time immemorial. Quilting is not just a craft, it is a sustainable way of creating new from old textiles or fabrics etc. It is an amazing way to reduce the waste and give a new life to those fabrics which are not in use. The kaudi quilts are being exported to European and many other countries. It is a versatile craft that merges art with practicality, consisting of stitching together multiple layers of fabric to create decorative and functional pieces. India's quilting heritage is represented by Bengal's Kantha, Rajasthan's gudri, Jharkhand's ledra, Uttar Pradesh's razai, Karnataka's Kowdi and Goa's Indo Portuguese quilts among others. This paper examines the process of quilting, the importance of quilting and its health benefits for the individuals. It highlights the role of quilting in preserving cultural traditions. There is a growing demand for handmade products in India, which has led to an increase in the popularity of quilting. Social media platforms have made it easier for quilters to connect, share ideas and showcase their work.

Index Terms: Quilting, Sustainability, Tradition, Women Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

The history of quilting dates back to as early as 340 BCE. Quilting is the process of stitching layers of fabric and padding together. Indian quilting is mainly done in the villages of Rajasthan, Gujarat and West Bengal. Skilled artisans in these places have been passing on their quilting skills from one generation to another. Quilting is the process of joining a minimum of three layers of fabric together either through stitching manually using a needle and thread or mechanically with a sewing machine or specialized longarm quilting system. Glass marker pencil, wooden frame templates, needles, threads, unstitched cloth, polyester cotton and pins are the tools and raw materials required for quilt making. A patchwork quilting tradition practiced by women in northern Karnataka for household use. Kaudi is made by reusing old cloth, typically a mix of printed

and plain cloth pieces. The composition of the patchwork and other aesthetic decisions are left entirely to the artisans. These quilts are sometimes gifted to a bride on her wedding day by her mother. The cloth used in kaudi quilts is sourced from old clothing and to a lesser extent from the waste cloth discarded by tailors, Such waste scraps are washed repeatedly to remove excess dye and to make them as soft as old worn cloth.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To know the importance of quilts
- 2 To study the process of Quilt making
3. To analyze the health benefits of quilting

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary sources. The researcher collected information from the various websites, research articles, newspapers, books, journals, blogs and magazines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Burt Emily et.al.(2011) The study explains that creative craft hobbies like quilting can be a meaningful vehicle for enhancing wellbeing.

Dr. Basappa Y Bangari (2017) Observed in the study that quilt production has been decreasing day by day due to lack of skilled women folk in villages. There is a demand for quilts both in urban and rural sectors. Most of the urban educated women are not ready to purchase quilts prepared with old cloths, women folk have to develop their skills to prepare modern quilts using new cloths.

Sujata et al.(2018) Mentioned in the study that value addition to quilt (kaudi) promotes and receives the traditional art of recycling to provide gainful employment to the tribal women and preserve cultural heritage of India.

Dr. Swati Pande Nalawade (2024) The study reveals that quilting is not just a craft it is a sustainable way

of creating new from old textiles or fabrics. Old sarees like Paithani or Narayan peth or Puneri cotton are quite often used for creating these quilts in several parts of Maharashtra and other states in India. It is a way of livelihood for many women. Women become self reliant and economically independent irrespective of the degrees they have achieved. It is proving to be one of the important earning practices in rural and semirural areas.

ANA LYSIS & DISCUSSION

Quilting is a multifaceted craft that transcends its functional purpose, holding emotional, social, cultural, economic and environmental significance. Through its rich history, diverse techniques and universal appeal, quilting has become an integral part of human experience. As a tool for self expression, community building and cultural preservation, quilting continues to inspire and empower individuals and communities worldwide.

ADVNTAGES OF QUILTS

Comfort and Style: A quilt adds comfort to your bed couch or armchair. Quilts of various colors, styles and patterns can match any taste and preference.

1 Versatility: Quilts are versatile and can be used in many ways such as picnic blankets, wall hangings etc.

2 Affordable and Durable: Quilts are an affordable and durable option. They will provide comfort and style for years.

3 Perfect for air conditioned rooms: Quilts are an excellent option for air conditioned rooms as they are light and easy to move around and easy to adjust to changing temperature.

4 Used as floor mattress: Quilts can be used as temporary floor mattresses.

5 Cost effective luxury Quilts: Quilts offer a luxuries feel at a cost effective price.

6 Breathability for year round comfort: Quilts keep you comfortable across different seasons.

Process of Quilt (Kaudi) Making

The process of making Kaudi includes the following steps

1. Selection of the Fabric: Selection of fabric is crucial in quilt making. The material should be

durable and easy to maintain. The cotton is the best fabric for everyone because it is safe and allergen free. The fabric should be soft and breathable. Depending on patterns fabric is selected for quilting.

2. Cutting of the Fabric: Cutting of fabric with the help of scissors is necessary to make quilts. The objective of cutting fabric is to separate the parts of fabric and replicas of pattern pieces for the marker plan and prepare the pattern pieces for proper sewing.

3. Sewing the Patches Together: It is the process of joining strips, squares, triangles, hexagons or other patches by either hand or machine stitching into square blocks or other units.

4. Basting the Layers: Basting is a process of sewing lose and long stitches in a grid layout through the surface of the quilt to join the layers of the quilt together. It is a technique used in sewing and quilting to temporarily hold layers of fabric together in order to keep the layers from shifting.

5. Layers of Quilts: A quilt is made up of three layers- the top which is the design layer, the wadding and the backing. These three layers are held together by the decorative quilting stitches.

6 Quilting: Quilting is the process of joining a minimum of three layers of fabric together either through stitching manually using a needle and thread or mechanically with a sewing machine or specialized longarm quilting system.

7 Binding: It frames the edges of a quilt. Binding consists of a strip of fabric, usually double folds that is wrapped and sewn around the raw edges of quilt. It is usually attached to the quilt by machine.

Importance of Quilting

1 Preserving Cultural Heritage; Quilting serves as a powerful vessel for preserving cultural heritage and identity. Across diverse communities and civilizations quilting has played a central role in transmitting stories, traditions and values from one generation to the next.

- 2 Creating Employment: Quilting creates employment opportunities for rural women and enables them to become economically independent.
- 3 Promoting Sustainability: Quilting is a sustainable practice that creates new items from old materials and reduces waste. Quilters use old clothing to create new quilts
- 4 Supporting Artisans: Quilting provides artisans with a means of earning a living, enabling them to support themselves and their families.
- 5 Being Creative: Quilting allows individuals to express their creativity through the selection of colors, patterns and fabrics.
- 6 Being a source of Wellbeing: Quilting can have a profound impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. Quilting can be a calming and meditative activity which reduces stress and anxiety

The Benefits of Sewing and Quilting on Health

Sewing and quilting have been popular hobbies for generations and offer numerous health benefits for individuals.

1. Quilting Relieves Stress and Anxiety

Quilting can be a meditative activity which can help to reduce stress and anxiety. Studies have shown that sewing and quilting hobbies can reduce Cortisol levels in the body. Cortisol is one of the hormones in the body that is attributed to stress.

2 Boosts Mood and Self –Esteem

The sense of accomplishment and creativity that comes with completing a quilt with your hard work can boost mood and self esteem.

3. Quilting Enhances Fine Motor Skills.

The process of cutting, piecing and sewing small fabric pieces requires precision and control which can help enhance fine motor skills. These skills can improve the strength of the hands and fingers especially for elderly people

4. Quilting and Sewing Helps to Improve Cognitive Function

Quilting is an activity which combines creativity, problem solving and continuous learning. Quilting involves remembering patterns, color combinations

and techniques which can improve your ability to think critically

5. Quilting Provides Social Interaction

Quilting can be a social activity that fosters friendship, communication and a sense of accomplishment. Quilters can form friendships with others who share their interest in quilting.

6. Improves Sleep

Quilting can improve the quality of sleep by promoting a sense of calm and relaxation before bedtime.

CONCLUSION

Quilting can be a powerful tool for economic empowerment of people in rural parts of India. Quilting is more than a craft, it's a language, a culture and a symbol of hope. It has connected people worldwide. Quilting has helped to preserve cultural traditions, stories and histories. It is essential to preserve and promote the art of quilting, ensuring its continued relevance and impact on individuals and communities worldwide. Quilting offers various health benefits for individuals. Quilts remain a symbol of love, care and connection. Quilts called kawdhis are gifted at weddings and births to symbolize love, care and protection.

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