

Innovative Approach in the Use of Traditional Aangi of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

Traditional choli of Haryana, locally known as aangi, is rare to be seen in today's time. This upper garment was worn by women before the adoption of kurta. It was tied at back with two pairs of strings and worn by teaming with daaman. It was usually stitched by using ten to twelve pieces of fabric. Aangis were usually multicolored as these were made from various leftover fabric pieces available at home. That is why they sometimes lacked any symmetry of colour. These different pieces were joined together by finishing the seams with maggi, rick-rack, gotta or embroidery to give it a unified look. A lot of time was spent in preparation and decoration of this attire. Aangi was a highly intricate garment depicting the talent of women in this craft. The present study was conducted to assess the market potential of this traditional choli of Haryana in this modern era. For this purpose an aangi blouse was constructed by the researcher in which constructional features of the traditional aangi were incorporated. Cotton blend fabrics of yellow, red and blue colours were used as base material while herring bone stitch and mirrors were used for embellishment as per experts' suggestions. The aangi blouse was assessed for marketability by 200 respondents including Indian as well as foreign visitors and stall owners/exporters in the International Trade Fair, Delhi. Acceptability of aangi blouse was found to be excellent on all parameters i.e., traditional value (WMS 3.89), aesthetic appeal (WMS 3.75), workmanship (WMS 3.69), colour combination (WMS 3.67), utility (WMS 3.64) uniqueness (WMS 3.57) and fabric (WMS 3.41). On an average acceptability was found to be excellent. This aangi blouse can be teamed with a transparent saree for creating a unique style statement. Some respondents suggested to modify aangi as top or to use original form of aangi under transparent top.

KEYWORDS: Traditional, Choli, Aangi, Haryana, Aangi blouse

INTRODUCTION

India currently has 28 states and each state has its own unique culture. Costumes of India vary from region to region depending on different ethnicity, geography, climate, and cultural influences. Different styles of clothes worn by people in different regions are known to be their traditional dressing. They sew, embroider or decorate them in special designs to make them look

distinct, charming and unique in their own way, representing the places they belong to. (1).

India's rich heritage of ornamentation of fabrics dates back to the epic ages. The splendour and versatility of Indian hand printed, hand painted and hand-embroidered fabrics glitter in every part of the world even today (2).

Haryana is one small state. Haryanvi people are known for their simple living. The life of Haryanvi women have always been hard and busy. They have always been too busy taking care of their home, children, animals, and fields as well. Despite a busy schedule they used to find time for hand work like embroidery. Although it has not been given due recognition but Haryanvi women were very artistic and creative. Their artistic tastes and skills are reflected in their traditional garments. The resources available to them were limited which heightened their creativity. They had mastered the art of creating garments using every single left over piece at their homes. The perfect example of such garments is 'aangi' – the traditional choli of Haryana. Aangis rare to be seen in today's time. This upper garment was worn by women before the adoption of kurta. This garment was a true example of creating best out of waste.

But with industrialization and the invasion of western culture, the clothing styles of people have changed due to which aangi is not worn by modern Haryanvi women. Such a wonderful piece of traditional art work is now diminishing. It deserves to be preserved. In order to revive this dying art, the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To explore and modify the traditional aangi for contemporary use for marketing.
2. To assess the market potential of modified aangi blouse.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Thirty rural women above 50 years of age, 30 Clothing and Textile experts and 200 visitors at International Trade Fair, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi were the participants in the study at different stages.

Tools

Interview Schedule: The information was gathered using two interview schedules at different stages of the study. The interview schedules were used to gather following specific information:

Interview schedule 1- Preliminary information from rural women about traditional aangi with reference to fabric, colour, embellishment techniques and cultural importance.

Interview schedule 2- Information related to the preferences and suggestions of experts regarding colour-combinations, fabrics and embellishment for modification.

Questionnaire and Visitor's Book: These two tools were developed with the help of a business management expert for assessing market potential of modified aangi blouse. The seven product features were aesthetic appeal, utility, workmanship, uniqueness, color-combination, fabric and traditional value. The product features were assessed using four quantum scale.

Rating Weightage

Excellent	4
Very Good	3
Good	2
Poor	1

Statistical Analysis

The articles were finally rated on the basis of their WMS as per the following scale-

WMS Rating

3.26-4.00	Excellent
2.56-3.25	Very Good
1.76-2.50	Good
1.00-1.75	Poor

Procedure

Elderly rural women of Haryana were contacted personally using snowball technique. The purpose of the study was explained to them. Preliminary information about this traditional garment with reference to fabric, colour, embellishment techniques and cultural importance was gathered by interviewing these women. Traditional aangis were collected from villages of Haryana for reference. Expert views were obtained regarding modifying aangi into possible contemporary clothing use. Suggestions of experts regarding colour combination, fabric and embellishment for modification in aangi were also recorded. The final aangi blouse was prepared on the basis of experts' suggestions. The article with the suggested modifications was prepared by the researcher herself. Substantial time and efforts were devoted in learning the process of making the aangi by close observation of the original specimens. Finally, the

traditional *aangi* was reinvented as *anaangi* blouse of modern look to enhance its suitability for modern market.

The prepared *aangi* blouse was displayed in the International Trade Fair, Delhi. The *aangi* blouse was got assessed by Indian and foreign visitors as well as exporters and stall owners. The assessment was done for acceptability in terms of aesthetic appeal, utility, workmanship, uniqueness, color combination, fabric and traditional value in domestic as well as foreign market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aangi (Backless *choli*)

It was a backless blouse or *choli* locally known as *aangi* tied at back with two pairs of strings and worn by teaming with *daaman*. It had usually ten to twelve pieces of fabric. Breast cup was made by joining two to three on grain pieces. The breast pieces were either three square pieces or one square and one rectangular piece joined with hands to convert into a single piece. For heavy busted gathers or pleats were also used at the lower part of the cup. Invariably a very deep 'V' neckline visible in *aangi* was finished using two straight bands joined in the centre. It is important to mention that no special cutting was done for sleeves to make armhole but a straight piece was joined with a gasket (under arm piece) to give it sufficient ease. Sometimes two extra triangular shoulder pieces were also used. *Aangis* were usually multicolored, made by using all fabric pieces available at home, even sometimes without any symmetry/combination. Though different pieces were joined together but were made to look part of a single garment by finishing the seams with *magji*, rick-rack, *gotta* or embroidery. After stitching all the pieces together in a garment form the inner side was sometimes finished with lining using hemming or running stitch. There were two pair of *dori* (strings) for tying at back of neck and at waist. These strings hold the garment in shape which could be tightened as per requirement. *Dori* could be of thick cotton yarn or of fabric strip made into cord or piping. *Dori* ends were decorated with fabric pieces (*funde*). A hanging rectangular vertical piece attached at centre, covered the naval button. Naval piece's edges were turned and finished with blanket stitch. *Gotth* (piping) was used on neckline, sleeve hems and waist. It is clearly indicated that *aangi* was a highly intricate garment depicting the talent of women in this craft

and women used to spend lots of time in preparation and decorating this attire.

Decoration of *Aangi*:

- a) **Applique work**- Applique work was generally done on breast pieces and sleeves, using white fabric on dark background. Motifs used were 6-8 petal flowers and rows of leaves.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1(a) and (b) Decoration of Aangi with applique work

- b) **Mirror work** – Mirrors were applied generally at neckline, sleeves and at the centre of the floral appliqué.



Figure 2 Decoration of Aangi with appliqué work

- c) **Gotta work** – Silver colour *gotta* was applied at neckline and breast, either straight or in zigzag form which was known as *bankra*. *Pemak* was generally applied at sleeves. *Gotta* flowers were also seen on each breast.



(a)



(b)

Figure 3 (a) and (b) Decoration of Aangi with gotta work

- d) **Embroidery** – Herring bone and feather stitches were worked on neckline and breast pieces with six strands of yellow colour cotton thread to hide seamlines. Some really fine work *aangis* were almost filled with *phulkari* using long darning stitch, herringbone, two parallel rows (simultaneously made) of pseudo back stitch, chain stitch and triangle stitch.



Figure 4 Decoration of Aangi with embroidery

- e) **Magji** – *Magji* of various colours was used to decorate the *aangi*. Simultaneously 2, 3 or 5 colours were used e.g. coca-cola, maroon, white, blue and yellow or red, white and blue. *Magzi* work was done at breast pieces, neck and sleeves.

Traditionally *reja* of blue and maroon colour was commonly used but white check and striped *reja* was also seen. After arrival of mill fabric, printed fabric and plain voile fabric was also used. The *aangis* made up of voile fabric were very vibrant with yellow, red and orange colours. But these were generally used only for tying *Teel* (dresses) to be sent in dowry and not for covering upper body (as *kurtas* came into existence).

Modifying Traditional Aangi

Table 1 shows suggestions of the experts regarding the possible contemporary applications of *aangi*. Using *aangi* as *saree* blouse was suggested by maximum number of experts (72.73%). It was suggested that *aangi* in its original form could be used as blouse with a transparent/chiffon *saree*. While few others suggested to modify *aangi* as top

(36.36%) or to use original form of *aangi* under transparent top (22.73%).

Table 1 Possible contemporary applications of aangi(N=22)

Contemporary applications	F	%
Saree blouse	16	72.73
Blouse under transparent top	5	22.73
Top	8	36.36

Multiple responses

It is apparent from Table 2 that cotton blend fabric (83.33%) of medium thickness (83.33%) was recommended for *aangi* which is available for blouses in market, which should not be transparent to serve the purpose (modesty). Most of the respondents recommended traditional bright colours (73.33% & 60.0% respectively) to give more traditional look to blouse.

Table 2: Preferences of experts regarding fabric and colour for aangi(N=30)

Fabric	Frequency	Percentage
Fabric thickness		
Thick	5	16.66
Med	25	83.33
Thin	--	--
Fabric type		
Cotton	5	16.66
Blend	25	83.33
Synthetic	--	--
Fabric Colour		
Traditional	22	73.33
Any colour	8	26.66
Bright	18	60.0
Dull	--	--

Multiple responses

It is evident from table 3 that embroidery was suggested by most of experts (66.66%) followed by mirror work (56.66%), applique work (33.33%), beads (13.33%) and sequins (16.66%). Beads and *gotta* work was also suggested by 13.33 % experts.

Table 3 Preferences of experts regarding embellishment for *aangi* (N=30)

Embellishment	F	%
Embroidery	20	66.66
Mirrors	17	56.66
Beads	4	13.33
Sequins	5	16.66
Lace	--	--
Appliqué	10	33.33
Rings		
Gotta	4	13.33
Stones	1	3.33

Multiple responses



Figure 5 Aangi blouse

Figure 5 shows the new *aangi* blouse. The *aangi* blouse was prepared using constructional features of the traditional *aangi*. Cotton blend fabrics of yellow, red and blue colours were used as base material while herring bone stitch and mirrors were used for embellishment. This *aangi* can be teamed with a transparent *saree* for creating a unique style statement.

General information of the respondents contacted for final assessment of the products for social and market acceptability is shown in Table 4. The table makes it clear that male respondents (55%) were slightly higher in number as some females (45%) were hesitant in responding. Maximum number (50.5%) of respondents were from Delhi, followed by Haryana (20%), Punjab (20%) and abroad (16%). Remaining 11.5 per cent included visitors from, Nagaland, U.P, Rajasthan, Bombay and Chandigarh as well as the Foreigners and an NRI.

Table 4 General information of the respondents (N=200)

Aspects		F	%
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
Place	Nagaland	1	0.5
	Haryana	40	20.0
	Chandigarh	1	0.5
	Punjab	4	20.0
	Uttar Pradesh	14	7.0
	Rajasthan	5	2.5
	Delhi	101	50.5
	Bombay	1	0.5
	NRI	1	0.5
	Foreigners	32	16.0

As is evident from the data in table 5 acceptability of *aangi* was adjudged excellent on all parameters i.e., traditional value (WMS 3.89), aesthetic appeal (WMS 3.75), workmanship (WMS 3.69), colour combination (WMS 3.67), utility (WMS 3.64) uniqueness (WMS 3.57) and fabric (WMS 3.41). On an average acceptability was found to be excellent with WMS 3.66.

Table 5 Acceptability level of *Aangi*

(N=200)

Features	Excellent	V. Good	Good	WMS
Aesthetic appeal	151	49	--	3.75
Utility	143	43	14	3.64
Workmanship	138	62	--	3.69
Uniqueness	122	70	8	3.57

Colour combination	137	59	4	3.67
Fabric	92	98	10	3.41
Traditional value	179	21	--	3.89

WMS-Weighted Mean Score

1-1.75 (Poor), 1.76-2.50 (Good), 2.51-3.25 (V. good), 3.26-4.00 (Excellent)

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the present study that traditional *aangi* of Haryana has the potential of revival if appropriate and sufficient efforts are made. The article if produced in modified form to suit the taste and needs of contemporary wearers, will be accepted readily by the modern market. *Aangi* blouse is proven to be accepted. Entrepreneurs in the field of handicrafts and garments can reinvent *aangi* in various new designs with traditional touch to earn profits.

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