LESSON 7  INTRODUCTION TO TIE AND DYE PROCESS OF ORNAMENTATION OF TEXTILES

STRUCTURE

7.0 OBJECTIVES
7.1 INTRODUCTION
7.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
7.3 IMPORTANT CENTRES OF TIE AND DYE IN INDIA
7.4 DYES USED FOR DYEING
7.5 THE PROCESS OF TIE-DYEING
7.6 MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED
7.7 ASSIGNMENTS
   7.7.1 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
   7.7.2 HOME ASSIGNMENTS
7.8 SUMMING UP
7.9 POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO SELF - CHECK QUESTIONS
7.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS
7.11 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED FURTHER READING
7.12 GLOSSARY
7. **INTRODUCTION TO THE TIE AND DYE PROCESS OF ORNAMENTATION OF TEXTILES**

In the previous unit we had learnt about the elementary techniques of block printing. In this unit we are going to learn about another interesting and popular technique of ornamentation of fabric called “Tie & Dye”.

### 7.0 Objectives

After going through this lesson you will:

- Become acquainted with tie & dye and its historical background.
- Become acquainted with dyes and other material required for tie & dye.
- Gain an understanding of the process of tie & dye.

### 7.1 Introduction

Tie and Dye, like Batik (described in Lessons 10 to 12) is a resist-dyeing process for creating attractive coloured designs on fabrics. However, while in Batik, resistance to dye penetration is provided by a coated layer of wax, in the case of tie and dye, this is achieved by knotting, binding, folding or sewing certain parts of the cloth in such a way that the dye cannot penetrate into these areas when the cloth is dyed. It is a hand process by which intricate and attractive patterns can be produced, as shown in figs. 7.1 and 7.2.

![Fig. 7.1 Some pillow covers with designs created by tie and dye](image1)

![Fig. 7.2](image2)
In India, the tie dyeing method is generally a cottage industry and is known as Bandhani or Bandhej. It is often used for T-shirts, dresses, skirts, and other garments and also in furnishings like pillow covers, table cloths, bed sheets etc.

In this lesson, after presenting a brief historical perspective of this ancient art, the tools and dyes required for carrying it out will be described. This will be followed by a description of the sequential steps involved in the tie-dyeing process. In the two subsequent lessons, the technique will be described in greater detail with emphasis on practical aspects.

Tying the cloth or knotting is called bandhej or tie and dye. In this procedure the cloth is tied with a thread of thickness greater than that of the cloth. After the tied cloth is dyed and dried, the ties and knots are opened. As a result we get different colourful patterns on the cloth. The art of tie-dyeing is most popular in various regions of Gujarat, Kathiawar and Rajasthan.

7.2 Historical Perspective

The tie and dye technique of creating attractive designs on fabrics has been practised from very early times in many parts of the world. The fresco paintings in Ajanta caves in north Maharashtra in India (6th – 7th century A.D.) depict people wearing clothes with beautiful tie and dye designs. There is evidence that tie-dye technique was practised in China during the T’ang dynasty (618-906) from where it moved to Japan in the Nara period. It is impossible to say where this technique originated but India is a strong candidate on the basis of available information. The tie and dye or bandhani textiles have had a continuous history in India, as shown by their recurrence in written and visual documents at intervals over the centuries particularly from the 12th century onwards.

Jain manuscripts and paintings from western India illustrate many garments with dotted patterns which seem to be tie-dyed, several with the tribundi patterns (group of three dots) popular in Gujarat up to quite recently.

It is difficult to trace the origins of this craft to any particular area in India. According to some references it first developed in Jaipur in the form of leheriya (Fig. 7.3).

But it is widely believed that it was brought to Kutch from Sindh by Muslim Khatris who are still the largest community involved in the craft. Bandhani was introduced in Jamnagar when the city was founded 400 years ago. This city has now become one of the principal centers of bandhani, creating new patterns and experimenting with colors. A bandhani garment was considered auspicious for
the bride. One also finds the maids in the Ajanta wall paintings created almost 1500 years ago, wearing blouses of tie and dye patterns.

Tie and Dye is a village craft carried on mostly by women in villages of India. The workers are known as Bandhanaris (Fig. 7.4) who always grow the nails of their thumbs or fore fingers for tying the knots on cloth.

Designs can be tied in different ways. They are set in stylized floral pattern or motifs of lotus flowers, dancing women and elephants or smart geometrical patterns (Fig. 7.5).

Self-check Questions

Fill in the blanks

1. Tying the cloth or knotting is called ________ or ______ and ______. In this procedure the cloth is ______ with a thread of thickness ________ than that of the cloth.

2. The fresco paintings in ________ caves in north ____________ in India (6th – 7th century A.D.) depict people wearing clothes with ____________ tie and dye designs.
7.3 Important Centers of Tie and Dye in India

Coarse Bandhani work is carried out in Madhya Pradesh. The centres for fine work, as well as for much of the simpler work are in Kutch and Saurashtra. Bhuj is a town with great many Bandhani workers. In the port of Mandavi, some of the finest Bandhani in India is tied. The art of Tie-Dye is practised at many places, which have good river water available like Porbander, Ahemdabad, Morvi, Rajkot, Bikaner. Rajasthan and Gujarat are known for their Bandhani productions, which is very fine and prolific.

The finest Bandhani works of Rajasthan come from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Plai, Udaipur and Nathdwara. Rajasthan is well known for leheriya pattern, literally meaning waves. One such pattern was shown in fig. 7.3. A well-known pattern consists of harmoniously arranged diagonal stripes, which were originally dyed in the auspicious colors of yellow and red. Pochampalli is also one of the three main traditional yarn-dyeing canters in the country. The process of making Bandhani varies in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Even the patterns, designs and craftsmanship vary in these regions.

The craftsmen from Rajasthan are easily recognized because they grow a nail on their little finger to facilitate the lifting of cloth for tying or wear a small metal ring with a point. The Gujarati craftsmen prefer to work without these aids. They believe that the flow is much better when one works with one's bare hands, as it assures no damage to the cloth. The dyeing and printing of textiles has become a highly developed craft in Gujarat.

Self-check Questions

Fill in the blanks

3. The finest Bandhani works of Rajasthan come from __________, __________, __________, __________, ______ and __________.

4. The process of making Bandhani varies in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Even the __________, __________ and __________ vary in these regions.

7.4 Dyes Used for Dyeing

The dyes used in good old days were vegetable dyes like madder, saffron, weld, Persian berries and Indigo. The wide range of dyes was originally from the ancestry of Morinda Cardifobia, in combination with a double sulphate of Aluminium and Potash for the fast (pakka) Red, Kasum from the petals of sunflower, Carthamus Tintorius for Kutch Red, hatuber of Curcuma Domestica with chhach for yellow and Gali Indigo from
the leaves of Indigo Fera Tintria for blue. Today modern synthetic dyes are better suited to our fabrics. The patterns and designs created with these dyes on the present day fabrics have visual excitement and tactile appeal. The dyes of all types of Bandhani work used today are almost always artificial. Dyeing always starts with lighter shades and the darkest shades are always at the end. After each successive dyeing, the cloth is untied and dried.

7.5 The Process of Tie-Dyeing

The main steps involved in tie-and-dye are as follows:

i) Wash the fabric, dry it and then iron it.
ii) Prepare the cloth for tie-dyeing by knotting, binding, folding, sewing, etc. or a combination of these, always keeping one side (say right side) on the outside of the bundle.
iii) Prepare dye and test for colour.
iv) Wet sample, if necessary and place it in the dye bath for the required length of time.
v) Remove the fabric from the dye bath and squeeze out surplus dye.
vi) Rinse the dyed fabric in water and keep on rinsing till the water is clear.
vii) Squeeze out surplus water and hang up to dry.
viii) When a second or third colour is to be dyed, tie up the sample again or add more binding where the previous colour is to be preserved. Repeat the dyeing process for each subsequent colour. After the final dyeing and rinsing, the fabric should be dried quickly.
ix) Untie the sample.
x) Rinse again, if necessary and partially dry.
xi) Iron the fabric while still damp.
xii) Collect and tie together any lengths of threads which can be used again.

Keep coarse and fine binding threads separately.

Self-check Questions

Fill in the blanks

5. The dyes of all types of Bandhani work used today are almost always __________. Dyeing always starts with __________ shades and the __________ shades are always at the end.
6. When a second or third _________ is to be dyed, _____ up the sample again or add more _________ where the previous colour is to be _________________.

7.6 Materials and Equipment Required

The materials and equipment required for tie-and-dye work as listed below are very simple and inexpensive:

1. Fabric or Garment
2. Basins - 3
3. Bowls - 2 - 3
4. Stove or Sigri - 1
5. Large wooden spoon or long wooden stick - 1
6. Teaspoon - 1-2
7. A small pair of scissors
8. White thread Reel - 1
9. Common Salt
10. Colour Dyes
11. Degchi (Aluminium) - 1
12. Knitting needle/pointed pencil/ hair pin - 1 each

7.7 Assignments

7.7.1 Class assignments

i) Write a brief note on what you understand by “Bandhani” or the process of Tie and Dye.

ii) What types of dyes were originally used and which dyes are used today?

iii) On the map of India locate the different centers where Tie and Dye is practised. What are the basic requirements for tying and dyeing any garment?

7.7.2 Home assignment

i) Collect as many pictures as you can of different products of Tie and Dye.
7.8 Summing Up

In this first lesson on Tie-and-Dye, after a brief introduction to the subject, the history of this unique craft is traced and the important locations in India where this craft is practised are described. The dyes used are then very briefly considered followed by a listing of the sequential steps involved in tie-dyeing. Finally the materials and equipment required for tie-dyeing are listed.

7.9 Possible Answers to Self-check questions

Fill in the blanks

1. Tying the cloth or knotting is called bandhej or tie and dye. In this procedure the cloth is tied with a thread of thickness greater than that of the cloth.

2. The fresco paintings in Ajanta caves in north Maharashtra in India (6th – 7th century A.D.) depict people wearing clothes with beautiful tie and dye designs.

3. The finest Bandhani works of Rajasthan come from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Plai, Udaipur and Nathdwara.

4. The process of making Bandhani varies in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Even the patterns, designs and craftsmanship vary in these regions.

5. The dyes of all types of Bandhani work used today are almost always artificial. Dyeing always starts with lighter shades and the darkest shades are always at the end.

6. When a second or third colour is to be dyed, tie up the sample again or add more binding where the previous colour is to be preserved.

7.10 Terminal Questions

1. Why is the tie-and-dye process known as a resist dyeing process?

2. What is the difference between the craftspersons of Gujarat and Rajasthan?

3. What are the various steps involved in the tie-dyeing process?

4. List the materials and equipment required for the tie-and-dye process.
7.11 References and Suggested Further Reading


7.12 Glossary

1. Acquainted Made known, Familiar
2. Penetrating To find or force way through
3. Perspective View
4. Depict To show in pictorial form
5. Recurrence Happen again
6. Manuscripts Hand written documents
7. Prolific Very productive
8. Canters Gap, horse’s gait between a trot and a gallop
9. Tactile appeal Attractive demonstration