Chapter - 8

Rangoli (muggu) in different provinces with reference to Andhra Pradesh

Plate No. 191
RANGOLI (Muggu)

Rangoli in Different Provinces

Rangoli art is an adornment or decoration that has different names in different provinces of India, for example Sona Rakshna in Uttar Pradesh, Mandu in Rajasthan, Aripaa in Bihar, Aplana in Bengal and Maharashtra, Rangavallie in Karnataka, Kollam in Tamilnadu, Muggu in Andhra Pradesh, Alikthap in Kumaon, Kolam in Kerala, and Saattiya in Gujarat not just in names, the designs also vary as per the region. In Maharashtra, Rangoli are drawn on the doors of houses so that evil forces attempting to enter are repelled. During the festival of Onum in Kerala, flowers are laid down for each of the ten days of the celebration the design growing largely and more complex every day. In Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, and Karnataka, the Kolam is drawn upon the ground or floor daily. The designs are geometric and symmetrical.
Key Elements of Rangoli

Rangoli in India does not belong to any particular province, the folk art so its elements are taken from the public are common. Rangoli’s most important element is utswadhumita. For this, auspicious symbols are selected. Thus the symbol for generations as they are made and is required to make these symbols.

Traditionally each new generation learns the art and thus a family keeps the tradition intact. Some major symbols used in Rangoli are the lotus flower, its leaves, mango, Tuevase, fish, different kinds of birds like parrots, swans, peacocks, and human figures and foliage. Often times Rangoli are made on special occasion like Diwali. Some special patterns for Diwali Rangoli are the Deep, Ganesha or Lakshmi.

The second key element is using rangoli incoming material. The same material is used which is easily found a very where. Therefore this art rich-poor is prevalent in all homes. Normally the major ingredients used to make rangoli are pise rice solution, dried powder made from the leaves color, charcoal, burned soil was, wood saw dust, etc...

Place of worship and sacrifice on the altar is the tradition of decorating rangoli with time imagination and innovative ideas in Rangoli art is incorporated. Hospitality and tourism has also had its effect and it has been commercially developed. The colors are also convenient because in places such
as hotels are being built on its traditional chalm, artistry and importance still remains.

**ANTIQUITY OF KOLAM DESIGNS**

There are many interesting and complicated designs made up of a single unending line where dots or pullis are used as a frame for drawing these designs. Today the dots are used as an integral part of the Kolam but simple designs carved on the walls of temple Gopurams do not show the dots. Such an example can be seen on the gopura walls of Acharapaskkam village about 100 kms south of Chennai. One can be certain now that the pulli is a clever device for assisting the artist to draw the design easily. The pulli pattern is used as a skeletal frame work by which village women are able to memorize the design.

The south canara district of Mysore region is studded with Jain temples and each temple has an ornamental flag-staff or dhwaja stambha. The thousand pillared Basti at Mudabidara built in the fifteenth century has many ornamental pillars in some of the pillars there are some complicated designs similar to the Kolam patterns made of unending lines. These designs do not have any dots. The unending lines are clearly depicted showing a line superimposed and going over another line at the crossings.
It is quite likely that many of the designs originate from silken or colored cord decorations fitted on wooden pillars during the Vijayanagara period which is famous for elaborate ornamentation.

Many of these patterns are abstract designs there are also conventionalized forms at common objects such as the mirror, the swing, the vase and the lotus flower. Ion a Kolam called asanapalakai the design is similar to the weave of a palm. Leaf mat used for sitting on. Some designs represent coiled serpents.

Patterns used as threshold designs are also used as tattoo designs and the angular versions are more commonly used for that purpose. The threshold versions are more rounded and are closer to the original cord decorations. The tantric designs or yantras are drawn on small copper sheets and framed and kept in houses and shops. Such designs can also be seen inscribed on stones set up by those practicing black magic. Designs derived from that work are used as Navافraa Kolam for the different days of the week. There are also elaborate Kolam designs which are used on special occasions and festivals.

One can see trail in the south Indian Muggu patterns, many designs derived from purely secular motifs, magical motifs, abstract designs and philosophic and religious motifs have mingled together.
In every village the best designs are displayed not in the temple and its environs not in the harijan colony but in the streets where the agricultural and the artisan communities live.

**SIMPLE MATHEMATICAL PROPERTIES**

Let us now consider a certain class of Muggu patterns with dots. We discuss only those designs in which there is one dot and only one dot in every space bounded by Muggu lines. Each design will have dots, crossings of lines, and edges which connect the crossings. Let us take those designs in which there are exactly four edges at each crossing. A large number of common Muggu designs belong to this class and such designs have some elegant mathematical properties.

The number of dots (Pullis) is always equal to the number of crossings plus one. If the number of pullis given then the number of crossings is always four even though more than one kind of Muggu can be drawn for a given number of pull is.

The number of edges is always an even number. In fact it is equal to twice the number of crossings. If the number of crossings is four, then the number of edges is eight.

Connecting the number of pullis, crossings and edged there is an interesting result. The number of pullis plus the number of crossings is equal to the number of edges plus one.
For example if there are given pullis in a Muggu, the number of crossings is four and the sum of these two is nine. Furthermore the number of edges is twice the number of crossings and it is eight. Eight plus one gives the same number nine.

**Colors of Rangoli**

Rangoli is a very popular art form in India. It is usually drawn by Indian women in front of their houses doors. Although the basic color of Rangoli is white (Known as ‘chilodi’) it is dyed different colors creating an attractive colored design.

**Creation of Rangoli**

Traditionally, Rangoli is made on a square grid in North India and on a hexagonal grid in south India while Onam Rangolies are typically circular. Materials used also is respectively different. In North India, the color is based on gypsum (drirodi ), in the South India, on rice floor and onam Rangolies are typically flower based. Due to rapid and widespread migration and mixing of people within India these styles are now freely adopted and mixed. Indians creative grid frees Rangolis, experiment with materials like using saw dust for floating Rangolis, using grains for colors etc, Rangoli is made in two ways. Dry and wet. The Rangoli made by adding points to the first write paint on the ground in a particular size are made certain point then shaking the points is a beatutiful figures take shape. After clearing the
desired shape, there are full color, free hand rangoli is Created directly on the ground. Stickers are also found in the market, which are made the drawing job easy. In addition the market has emerged as a plastic shapes but also get point beautiful shapes emerging from the ground comes. Rangoli is practice of making these items can be used. See some of which cast the floor colored powder that can be filled. There are small holes per sample. Slightly off the floor as they collide at certain locations art colors and beautiful piecec become manifest. Using plastic to make rangolio are also stencils.

I newer trend of making rangoli involves using cement colors with marble powder. This is a rather precise method but requires some precious training. Beautiful portraits can be drawn using this method.

**History of Rangoli**

Origin of Diwali Rangoli: According to chitralakshana, the earliest Indian treatise on painting, when the son of a kings high priest died, the king was most distressed Brahma, Lord of the universe decided to help the king and asked him to paint a likeness of the boy on the wall so that Brahma could breathe life into him again . This was believed to be the first Rangoli.

Another legend has it that God, in one of his crative moods, extracted the Juice of a mango and painted with it the
figure of woman so beautiful that the painting put all the maidens in heaven at shame.

The Indian kings and royal families supported this art form, which was believed that only the very skilled could attempt. The Chola rulers are notable in their propagation of art of Rangolies like Hindu and Buddhist mandalas, the reason for using powder or used as a medium for creating Rangoli is sometimes thought be a metaphor for the impermanence of life and maya.


Like in most parts of the country, every morning before sunrise, the women folk clean the entrance of their houses and/or the courtyard with water, considered the universal purifier, and the muddy floor is swept well to prepare an even surface.
Cow dung is then mixed with water and this slurry is expertly sprayed on the requisite area and spread evenly with a broom. This is done on a regular basis in rural areas, and on festive occasions in certain urban areas, where there is availability of sufficient cow dung, and space to draw the muggu. This procedure is performed as it is believed that cow dung has antiseptic properties and hence provides a literal threshold of protection for a home. The muggu is then drawn on this prepared surface. The dark colour of the cow dung slurry also provides a good contrast for the white powder of the muggu.

Muggupindi is a mixture of calcium and/or chalk powder which is used for creating these exquisite and unique muggu patterns. It’s a slightly heavy powder that falls thickly across the wet earth and stays in form while being used. As the index finger and thumb clasp a tiny bit of it and start dropping it from half an inch above the wet floor, the white powder falls gently leaving a white trail behind. There is a knack of letting this powder flow smooth and even, as one draws lines and curves of the muggu designs.

During festivals rice flour is used to create the muggu, instead of the muggupindi as it is considered as an offering to the ants, insects and sparrows that tend to feed on them.

One characteristic of muggu is that it is drawn by commoners. On festive occasions it is drawn in every home. No formal training is required to acquire this art. The art of muggu
creation is typically transferred from generation to generation and from friend to friend.

**Significance of muggu during festivals**

**Sankranthi:** Every month the Sun moves from one zodiac constellation to another and the day on which the Sun changes the constellation is called Sankranti. Makara Sankranti (usually falls on January 14), the Sun’s movement into Capricorn (Makara) constellation is considered very important, and as it is the beginning of a six-month period of the auspicious time of Sun’s northern course called Uttarayana Punya Kaalamu. Bhogi is the day preceding Sankranti and Kanumu is the day after Sankranti which are also celebrated on the same scale as Sankranthi.

The one month preceding Makara Sankranti is known as Dhanurmaasam. With the advent of the Telugu Dhanurmaasam, the thresholds of every house in Andhra Pradesh - towns and villages are adorned with white and coloured geometrical patterns of muggu. During the entire Dharnurmaasam girls decorate the mungili or vaakili (the entrance to the house) with huge muggulu (designs with sand of lime stone or rice flour, turmeric and kumkuma) with Gobbemmalu (globes made of cow dung and decorated with flowers, turmeric and kumkuma, and incense) in the center,
and worship Gobbemma (Goddess) while singing and dancing around the muggu (design).

The common belief is that this month is said to be devoted to spiritual thinking. Since cleanliness is considered next to godliness, it is believed that God enters only those households that are clean. It has therefore become a custom to clean the front yard of one’s home and lay a decorative muggu as if inviting God to take the first step into the house and bless the dwelling and the dwellers.

During the harvest season of Sankranti, muggu is a whole month exercise for the women of the house as they put in the extra effort to draw different beautiful patterns in front of their homes, at sunrise. This month prescribes white rice flour to be used instead of the chalk powder for muggu. To this white flour is added a dash of colour in the form of red kumkum and yellow turmeric (pasupu). It is believed that the white colour denotes purity and peace; red represents devotion and love and yellow stands for prosperity.

Some of the popular designs drawn during Sankranthi are the ratham muggulu. The designs are in the form of lines and take the shape of a chariot (ratham). In some homes the size of the ratham / chariot muggu occupies the entire front yard on the first and second Sankranthi days (Bhogi and Sankranti).
The chariot represents the Sun God - giver of light and energy to the earth and its inhabitants. Also, this represents the journey of the sun is from south to north (the onset of Uttarayanam) according to our geography. Since the festival celebrates the harvesting, all the symbols and figures in the muggu indicate and represent the same like the sun, the crescent moon, the sugarcane branch, coiled serpent and a pot with mango leaves placed in a specific pattern at the mouth of the pot, called the kalasham (a symbol of wealth and health) around the four corners of chariot muggu.

On important festival days such as Deepavali, Navaratri, Ganesh Puja, Varalakshmi Vratam day, or Ugadi, the muggu drawn has occasion specific designs and more effort is put in by the women of the household in creating them like in creating Sankranthi muggulu.

The patterns of muggu are very complicated and huge during festival months. The temples too are decorated with these patterns and are considered as painted prayers. The temples usually have complex patterns that cover thousands of square feet and several women together create these, thus bringing in the spirit of teamwork and speed.

**Types of Muggu**

The muggu consists of geometrical patterns or dots, which are joined by lines or curves that have a mathematical
calculation. By this one understands and infers that ancient Indian women had artistic traits combined with a sense of arithmetic, which they showed in the drawing patterns of the muggu.

**Types of Muggu are**

1. **Chukkala Muggulu (Dot Designs):**

   Dots are arranged in a specific sequence, in a matrix form equidistant from each other and these dots are joined either by lines or curves to create different muggu designs.

   Sometimes after the creation of the basic muggu in white muggu pindi (white rangoli powder), various coloured rangoli powders are used to fill in the pattern to create a decorative look for special occasions.

2. **Chukkalu leni Muggulu (Designs without dots):**

   These designs are made without dots. They are similar to free hand drawings of lines and curves, but use specific elements to make different muggu patterns.
3. **Tippudu Muggulu (Curved Designs):**

A basic matrix of dots, equidistant from each other is created first. Then twisted chains are created around the dots in an expert fashion to create exquisite, symmetrical muggu patterns.

Simple versions of any of the above types are created daily in households. A creative combination of all these types is used during festive occasions.

**Net References:**

www.dsource.in/rangoli

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