Designing a Holistic Brand Experience
for **revival of IKAT**

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A Thesis Submitted to
Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Design

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान हैदराबाद
Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad

Department of Design
May, 2018

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special thanks and gratitude
to my Professors Dr.Deepak John Mathew, Dr. Prasad Onkar,
Mr.Neelkantan, Mr.Delwyn Remedios for their support
and feedback which further helped me in
development of the Project.

The discussions also helped me in doing a lot of Research
and I came to know about so many new things I am really thankful
to them. Secondly i would also like to thank my parents
and friends who helped me a lot in finalising this project
within the limited time frame.

Reviving **IKAT**

Building a brand identity and experience for **IKAT** through print, digital media and experience design to position and market them alongside their present-day competitors.

Abstract

The Indian fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to the country's economy. It is also the fastest growing export business in the country. Although still at its infancy it has a great potential to make a mark on the world stage.

One of the major business accelerators for the fashion industry has been the internet and social media. As it is rightly called the era of information, the way people share, consume and perceive information has dynamically evolved within a short span of time. Talking about the retail and fashion industries, the internet has not only opened up the global market but has also served as a platform for digital advertising. Companies that adapted to these rapid changes with brilliant tweaks in their marketing/advertising strategies have used the social media as a cost effective and time efficient tool for their benefits.

Amidst all this chaotic evolution there were these sects of people who believed in conventional or rather traditional ways of developing art who were the most affected. Having stuck to their ancestral techniques of handicrafts and handlooms competing with well-established power loom industries have posed several challenges to their livelihood. Furthermore, owing to the fact that these artisans are technologically handicapped, they have had no means to market their works on social media, let alone E-commerce websites.

This thesis work is an attempt to help one such weaver group based in Telangana, a cultural state in India - that works on IKAT weaving techniques. The user group and their work was closely studied to develop the branding for IKAT products. Lastly, the brand image developed was made to fit into different advertising mediums.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. The story

The first interaction with tribal artists was with *Baiga tribes* in a village near Bhopal that worked on *Godna* tribal art. Their motifs formed a symbolism through which they communicated emotions that were mostly artistic in nature. Their works in the recent times have come to the limelight through art appreciators and collectors residing in the urban cities like Bhopal, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata. Present day visual graphic designers too have developed a profound interest in using some of the Godna typefaces for their works calling it a culturally oriented project.

It was soon evident that there are many such artforms in different corners of our country who are working on otherwise unknown art forms and crafts that most people are unaware of. This is primarily because of these artisans that choose to work in a closed community and usually don't come in touch with the outside world. These cultural or at times religious art forms are ancestrally acquired by the community folks and the knowledge has been passed down through generations for many centuries.

1.2 Overview of Handloom Industry

The Handloom sector is one of the most important industries in India. It provides employment to a large number of skilled and unskilled workers and has grown and evolved by transfer of skill from one generation to another. The sector has a number of advantages – It is not capital

intensive, needs minimal use of power, is eco-friendly and can easily adapt to market requirements.

As per 3rd Handlooms Census[1], carried out in 2009-10, more than 43 lakh people are engaged in weaving and allied activities. This has number has declined since the second handloom census conducted in 1995-96 which showed 65.5 lakh active weavers. There are 23.77 lakh looms of which 20.66 lakhs are in rural areas. There are 38.47 lakh adult weavers and allied workers in the country of which 77% are women and 23% male weavers. The approximate man days worked per weaver per annum is 234 days.

1.3 Handloom Clusters in Telangana

The state has close to ~ 120000 weavers[2] and about 10,000 GI tagged looms and is home to world famous weaves like Ikat, Gadwal, Naryanpet, Gollabama & Siddipet. The literature study about the crafts in Telangana state gave an insight about the different kinds of weaves and the process of making the fabric in various corners of the state.

In the initial phase the research started off by understanding the craft of Ikat in Pochampally village. [3]Ikat is most well-known in India, Indonesia and Japan and even has traditions existing in various countries across Latin America and parts of Europe, owing to Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in Southeast Asia from the 16th century. The intricacy of the double ikat technique requires the most skilled and experienced artisans, thus it is only produced in India, Indonesia and Japan, where the craft has existed for millennia. The word 'Ikat' is derived from the Malay-Indonesian word 'mengikat' which translates to 'to tie', but rather than applying the pattern to cloth, it's created earlier by wrapping bundles of yarn before they're dyed. This is also what gives ikat its signature blurriness as it's very tricky to line up the patterned yarns perfectly on the loom – the more precise the pattern, the greater the skill of the weaver.

1.4 Defining Scope of the Project

The Pochampally Ikat weave was thoroughly studied in order to understand the pain points of the weavers and several other issues by which the Handloom Industry is buffeted. The primary idea is to uplift the craft and provide them an identity so as to align it with the modern consumer needs. To strategize and build promotional content which represents the core values of the craft. Various ways in which the content could adopt different forms was thought of. The journey started with exploring the graphic representation of the craft ikat, by studying the core attributes of the 'ikat weave' and bringing the same essence into visuals. Which further could be extended to the print, digital and tangible media of interactions.

Chapter 2

2. Literature survey

2.1. History of Ikat

The research began with *IKAT* and its origin. Etymologically it is an Indonesian word. It is believed that *IKAT* made its way to India by Silk route and now is found in various regions [4]Ikat is most well-known in India, Indonesia and Japan and even has traditions existing in various countries across Latin America and parts of Europe, owing to Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in Southeast Asia from the 16th century. The intricacy of the double ikat technique requires the most skilled and experienced artisans, thus it is only produced in India, Indonesia and Japan, where the craft has existed for millennia.

Andhra Pradesh and, subsequently, the separated state of Telangana, are celebrated as the place of birth of Indian ikat. The most distinct ikat of Andhra Pradesh is the *Telia Rumal, which is characterized by the obscure process of oil treating the yarn.* The Nalgonda district, which is now part of Telangana state, has been the perpetual hub for ikat production. Weaving continues to occur in the *Pochampally, Puttapaka and Choutuppal* areas of the district where the skilled weavers continue to reside.

2.2. Demographics

The demographics of the Pochampally village was also studied that included primary occupation of the villagers and how they perceived this art of weaving. The weavers were interviewed regarding the different processes involved in making of *IKAT* fabric. There are daily wage workers, master weavers and some take up this craft as a part time job.

[5]Pochampally, a cluster of 80 villages, has traditional looms, whose pattern and designs are centuries-old. Today this Silk City, which is more of a cottage industry, is home to more than 10,000 weaving families in 100 villages. The fabric is marketed through the cooperative society, many other linked organizations, the master weavers and the business houses in Pochampally. Ikat is primarily made in Bhoodan Pochampally, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana State, India. They have traditional geometric patterns in Ikat style of dyeing. The intricate geometric designs find their way into sarees and dress materials.

2.3. Types

There are three styles of ikat, each categorised by how difficult they are to weave. In the simplest method, only the warp yarns are wrapped and dyed while the weft yarns are a solid colour. With this technique, the pattern becomes apparent on the loom before the weft yarns are even introduced. In the second variation, the weft yarn carries the pattern which only appears during the weaving process. The third and most advanced is double ikat, where both warp and weft yarns are resist-dyed. Indeed, this method is so difficult it's only produced in three countries: India, Japan and Indonesia.

2.3. Significant Features

The ikat weave is characterized by intricate, geometric patterns. The detailing is minute and captivating. The fabric is weaved in both cotton, silk and sico (mix of cotton and silk). Traditionally the colours used are natural and yarns are dyed with these colours. The motifs over Pochampally sarees are usually inspired by nature for example, birds, elephants, floral patterns and geometric abstract figures. The motifs are interspersed with geometric grids.

2.4. Raw Materials

The primary raw materials used are yarn (cotton, silk etc). Rubbers for resisting the dye. Dyes are generally derived from flowers and other natural products. Besides this the handloom is used to weave the fabric.

Fig. tools shot during field visits (Yarn)

Fig. Spindles

2.5. Process

Several steps are involved in weaving a piece of the fabric. The process starts by tying together the bundle of yarns. Certain areas of the areas to be resisted are tied up to achieve the desired pattern. The yarn is left to boil for dyeing. Once the dyeing is done the rubber bundle is removed to see the pattern. The degree of complexity rises with intricate patterns and more number of colours.
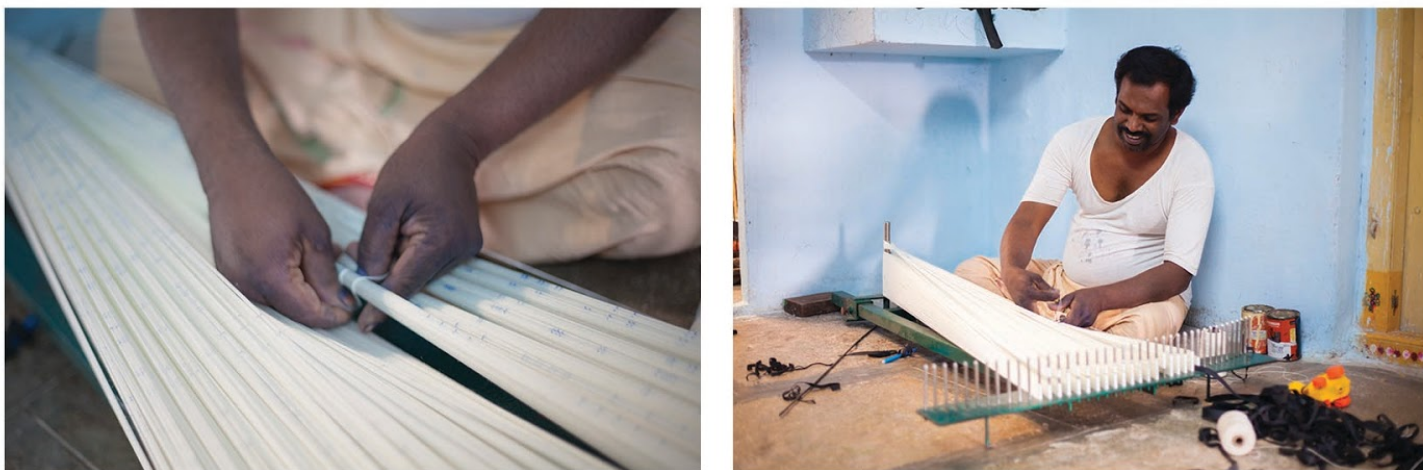

Fig. Bundling yarn with rubber to resist certain areas while dyeing

Figure. Process of Dyeing yarns

3. User research

3.1 Understanding IKAT and the weavers

Pochampally is well known for handloom and IKAT weaves. The word 'Ikat' has origins from the Malaysian word 'mengikat' which means to tie. It is a traditional tie and dye resist technique for creating pattern over textiles. It is a complicated process and weavers put in lot of efforts in making of this beautiful fabric. The unique weave is characterised by signature blurriness, feathered lines, vibrant colours with block motifs. Generally these are inspired from the nature like birds, elephant, florals and also intricate geometric patterns. These patterns see a repetitive usage on *IKAT* textiles. It is the interplay of threads and patterns

giving it a lovely human touch. The objective is promote and to sustain the craft and keep this traditional handmade craft legacy alive.

The history of *IKAT* ages back to 450 years in time that was brought to India through silk route and is known by different names in different parts of the Country. However, life of the weavers is not easy. Long hours of hard work on handlooms, patience and investment sometimes doesn't fetch them the real value of the product. Several reasons like rise of Powerloom, lack of reachability in market and share/profits made by middle men to sell their products that ultimately fetch them a very small amount to sustain. What we see as a final *IKAT* product in hand is an outcome of collaborative efforts right from dyeing of the yarn, making spindles and then comes the woven fabric out through the frame.

The younger generations don't want to pursue this profession due to challenges confronted in this business for example not fetching enough livelihood, proper value for their products, inability to sell products outside their confined zone, to place their brand globally. There is a dire need to educate people about the value of this craft. A strong Identity which tell a story about this weave.

3.2. Developing an empathy

Before starting to design a system for IKAT, knowing the financial trouble of these weavers and also verifying if there was a demand for IKAT cloths in the market were important. Both of these could be answered by the weavers themselves. Following are the set of questions asked.

3.3. The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was drafted to know more about the craft, problems encountered by the weavers, economic conditions and what do they expect in future. The interviews gave an in-depth insight about their family background, how do they perceive weaving as a profession.
Current market and loopholes. Which furthermore helped in synthesizing and bridging the gap

Background

How old were you when you first learned this traditional art?
How long have you been doing this traditional art?
Who taught you this skill?
What materials do you need to do it? Where do you get your materials from?
What tools do you use? And what process do you follow?

About their weaving

Do you use any patterns or plans in your work?
What are the different kind of products you make?
How long does it take to do a typical design for each product?
How is your work different from the work of others who do what you do?
And also does similarity in designs affect your sales?
What do you like about what you do and why do you feel it is important to continue this tradition?
What is the importance of passing on traditions?
Does the younger generation show interest in your work? Are you interested in teaching them?
What is your favourite pattern/style/item to make?
How do you judge a piece to see if it's good?

Income Levels

What is the revenue status - moved from wages to capital?

Market

How do you reach out to the market and sell your products?

Are you a Tech - friendly person? What kind of a phone do you use? What about your sons and daughters?
Do you find the need of online platform like e-commerce for marketing?
Efficiency of work?
Any interesting encounters or stories related to weaving, customers?

About Packaging

How do you package the products for your consumers?
How do you sell the products to the end consumers?
Do you want your product to be identified globally?

Figure. Interviewing weavers

3.4. Design issues analysis and Observation

An extensive research was carried out at Pochampally village. Interviewing weavers gave lot of insights about their lives and how closely it is associated with the craft, what significance does it hold for them, the legacy of the craft, the challenges they face in this era and what do they expect in future and for their upcoming generations.

The following insights on their hierarchy and social structure were gathered from the interviews with the weavers:

1) Weavers talked about marketing their products in existing scenarios and need for recognition in markets across the country.

2) Master weavers are the ones who provide their hand looms a support with raw materials to wage workers. They also are the main point of contact for many markets while outsourcing most products to stores outside.

3) Besides weavers and master weavers there exist Cooperative Societies, Pochampally Handloom Park who, NGOs as mediators who are involved in exports.

Their sales and marketing strategy was not very different from what was initially anticipated. The following are the present strategies they use:

1) They hold exhibitions for promotion of IKAT fabrics in urban cities nearby like Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

2) This is where they sell most of their products. They sell their products in fairs, handicrafts alongside other Indian handicrafts in such situations.

3) They also hold several activity planning in their community to discuss other methods of sales and marketing and demand and supply issues.

The research also helped in understanding IKAT. The observations were synthesised and organised to chart out the core attributes of IKAT.

Fig. Ramdas wants his products to be viewed in exhibitions which serves as a platform to connect, network people from all around the world. They want to see their products all over India and also international markets.

4. Problem Identification

4.1. Drawing design insights from user research

One of the most important design insights that came out of research was that Indian handicrafts need global positioning and branding to realize full potential. There is an immense need for marketing of products. The artisans are unaware of the modern platforms for marketing and the various aspects of branding, packaging and retail experiences.

The artisans spend most of their time working on the garments that they are left with no scope of interaction with the design trends of the outside world. They have stuck to the traditional and now outdated designs that would only affect their sales.

The weavers are keen to communicate the story about their craft. They want their customers to know about the value of the product, where each garment is made by interweaving a design with traditional and contemporary motifs.

The need of showcasing the products catering to the present day consumers was realised by adopting new mediums and experiences in order to communicate the craft's story.

The various aspects of branding, packaging and retail experiences where the essence about the craft could be communicated through medium of design:

I. Digital Media (Content for digital displays and social media)

II. Print Media (Packaging, tags, posters, Informative pieces)

III. Experience Design Space (Exhibitions, fairs, physical stores, Fashion shows)

4.2. Defining the problem statement

Narrowing down to the final problem area and solution to focus on for the thesis it was decided that work was to be done to re-design content for promotional activities for *IKAT*.

'In other words, the problem statement was to build a holistic brand experience for the buyers of Pochampally IKAT through print media and digital media and help the weavers compete alongside their competitors.'

4.3. The fashion industry

Talking about the fashion industry today a lot goes into marketing and branding. It consumes about 60% of the company expenditure and eventually adds to the product price for the end user.

The design trends are set by the leading designers of these companies and are displayed to the public seasonally. We see it at different platforms such as fashion shows, celebrity ambassadors' presence at Oscars and filmfare awards and other such gatherings.

For a more consumer level garment lines most designs are displayed either in the retail stores or at the E-Commerce websites and company websites like fabindia, Nicobar, Raymond, Rawmango to name a few.

4.4. Brand image and product commercialization

Every company has its own design language set that have been strictly followed for decades at stretch. The design language has eventually found its way to form the core USP of any company.

On the other hand, this design language is chiefly controlled by the type of clothes that the company uses for majority of their products. If you take fabindia as an example, then you would see that the logo and the colors are inspired by Indian ethnic wears that relates directly to their designs and products that are in turn influenced by cotton fabric printing methods and techniques. Whereas international brands are more liberal about their branding styles as their products are not usually specific and contain a variety of materials for their products.

4.5. Competitor analysis

Wills *IKKAT* collection

Competitive studies were also made by observing how high-end fashion / lifestyle stores are promoting Ikat/ Ikkat. Wills recently introduced water collection. The significant characteristics of ikat weave was identified and further explored in different forms. It was also inspiring to see the influence of indigo (colour) in their seasonal collection and how it weaves the overall story considering the key aspects of the craft.

fig. Story re-spun by Raymond, Will's Ikkat Collection (left to right)

Story Respun by Raymond is also an example of how the storytelling helps in connecting consumers to the world of handlooms. Conceptualised and developed in-house, the new TVC portrays the transformation of Khadi as the 'Fabric of the Nation', to becoming a new-age fashion ensemble, synergizing deep rooted Indian-ness and craftsmanship of Khadi. Madhu S Dutta, Head [6]Marketing, Raymond, says, "'The Story Re-Spun' is a delightful narrative, a pledge by Raymond to help rejuvenate the traditional Indian craft by collaborating with artisans and designers, to create products that are relevant and compelling for consumers of today. The ways adopted for showcasing the products helped further in development of the brand.

5. Stakeholder mapping

5.1. Stakeholders

The following is a list of major stakeholders:

A. The labor, daily-wage weavers

B. The master weavers

C. Part time weavers who are involved in various other processes related to weaving

D. The middlemen who connect them to the retail stores and customers

E. The exhibition and handicraft fair organisers, NGOs and other such organisations

F. The end consumers/customers

All these stakeholders are equally important. The other way to design and connect to all of these stakeholder needs is to work on branding and value addition to the products so that people see it as good as any product bought from the branded companies.

User - centric design approach was followed in order to tailor the optimum experience for the end consumers. Various personas were considered while designing experiences.

Producers

Master weavers
Weavers
Daily waged weavers
Household weavers
Part-time

Others: who are
related to **Handloom**

Yarn Makers
Dyers
Designers
Raw material provider
The exhibition and handicraft
fair organisers,

Intermediaries

Supply Managers
Retailers
Market
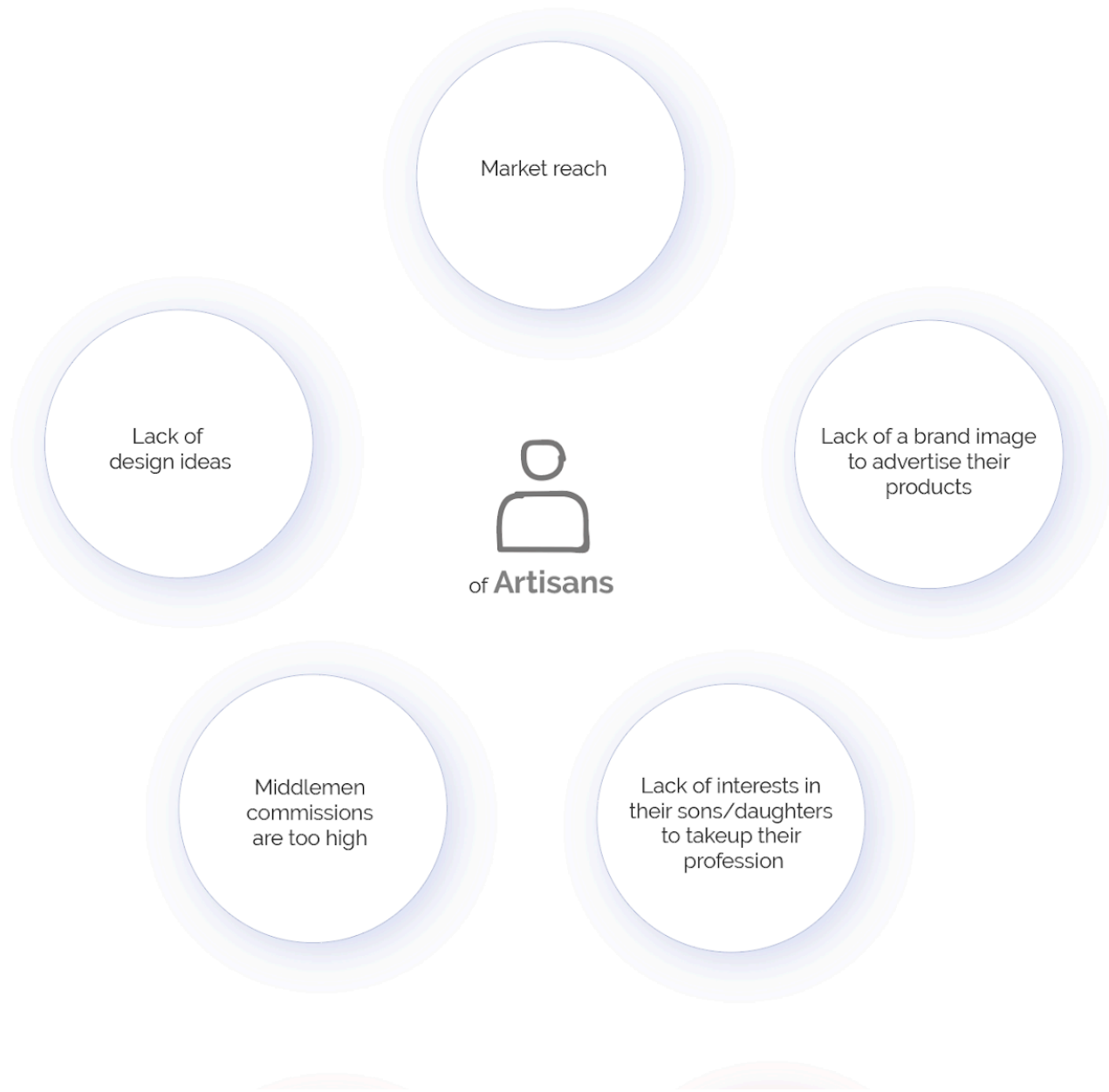E- Commerce/ Online Sellers

Administration

Government
NGOs and
other such organisations
Companies

The **end consumers/
customers**

Fig. Stakeholders

5.2. Pain Points

As discussed in the above sections to summarise it all the following are the pain points of the

weavers:

Market reach

Lack of
design ideas

of Artisans

Lack of a brand image
to advertise their
products

Middlemen
commissions
are too high

Lack of interests in
their sons/daughters
to takeup their
profession

Cost is too high
when they go for
branded products

Authenticity
of the product

Unavailability of
options and variations
in design

of **Customers**

Awareness
about the Craft

No knowledge of
the story behind the
craft that diminishes
the product values.

6. Setting the stage

6.1. Design Decisions

The further ideation was based on different design parameters and design areas. The design focus areas are as follows:

1. Patterns and motifs identification and isolation
2. The symbol of the brand
3. Product packaging and labels
4. Advertising mediums:
   digital and print media
5. Branding strategies and sales strategies
   Retail Experiences

6.2. Different aspects and strategies involved

The following areas are the most interactive places where the consumers/customers come in direct contact with the product advertisements.

1) Exhibition Area: Digital Displays
2) Interactive Installations
3) Promoting Ikkat Collection at Stores/ Malls
4) Online Promotions: Facebook Pages, Posters etc.

There were some of the Brand related touchpoints that were to be investigated:

The shape of the label, product packaging, brochure, printed posters, advertising media highly contribute to the overall experience of the primary product.

These "touchpoints" are very important (Budelmann et al., 2010, p. 194) because their tactile and visual qualities (such as type of paper, images, and colours used) and the way the brand "feels" at the point of interaction speak volumes about who the brand is (Chua & Illicic, 2007, p. 10). Building on their perceptions, preferences, dreams, values, and lifestyles. Identifying touchpoints—places in which customers interface with the product or service. Using brand identity to create sensory magnets to attract and retain customers.

6.3. Brand positioning

In order to gain consumers' attention and also adapt to the changing ways of consuming information the need for branding using new mediums was realised in order to appeal consumers. Creation of promotional content for applications such as digital Standees, Posters, backdrops, elements for various digital and social media promotions. As we know attention span of people is decreasing due to saturation of brands available around.

Contemporizing Marketing strategies and trends would appeal and be more able to connect with the modern era consumers. In order to achieve response the content has to be engaging, connecting, should give the feeling of authenticity and bring the awe factor.

7. Developing a brand image for IKAT

7.1. Motifs and patterns

The mood board was created on the basis of observation during field visits to keep the emotions of the buyer connected to the Indian villages and art forms. This was to serve as a constant reminder of the beautiful environment in which these weaving is done and the process itself.

Patterns found in the products were explored as shown in the images here. The patterns looked like pixel art since these are not printed but rather woven textiles. These are the only patterns possible through weaving. But the pixel-like blocks could itself be arranged in an aesthetic form exploring designs that are more subtle and modern.

Because most dyes used are bright and with intense hues, these patterns could be placed amongst huge chunks of white spaces (negative spaces) to bring out the contrast in a softer sense. On the other hand, there are dyes that have deep colors as well like black and dark blue that is commonly used in IKAT. These colors too could be used in place of an otherwise white negative space. Either way, it does convey the IKAT style of art as show in images that follow.

While isolating the motifs the negative spaces were ignored and only the high contrast pixels (positive spaces) were chosen for all the digital branding requirements. These, when placed on a white background was enough to convey that they are elements taken from IKAT.

Amidst the pixel like explorations for isolating the motifs individual threads came forward as an individual element because that is what goes into the loom. It was observed that these threads too have intermittent dying done on them on a base color. Thus a separate exploration was done to see if something interesting could come out of this but it all ended up like a barcode label and nothing more. This was then set aside for future explorations.

Inspiration was derived from the elements found in their photographs of the products, village, raw materials, colours, yarns, the process of making, how a form/ pattern is made right from a sketch on a graph paper to how does it look on a textile.

7.2. Developing the look and feel

The visual language of the Ikkat is borrowed primarily from the Pochampally Ikkat product itself. The geometric intricate patterns, pastel shades (inspired from their natural surroundings), diamond motifs, irregular weave, earthy essence, blurry jagged lines and significant ikat weave's elements were attempted to bring into the visual language.

Fig. Ideation

8. Brandmark

8.1. Brandmark

Exploration of the Brandmark was done around various lines considering symbolic, motifs, pattern driven, image driven, logotype and other possible traits which signifies ikat.

The main objective was to create a brandmark which reminds consumers and give the feel of ikkat and most importantly they could associate the product with it. The idea was to adopt a symbol which carried the essence of the handloom product, the story of the product, reflect the core philosophy of the community and to be able to connect with it emotionally.
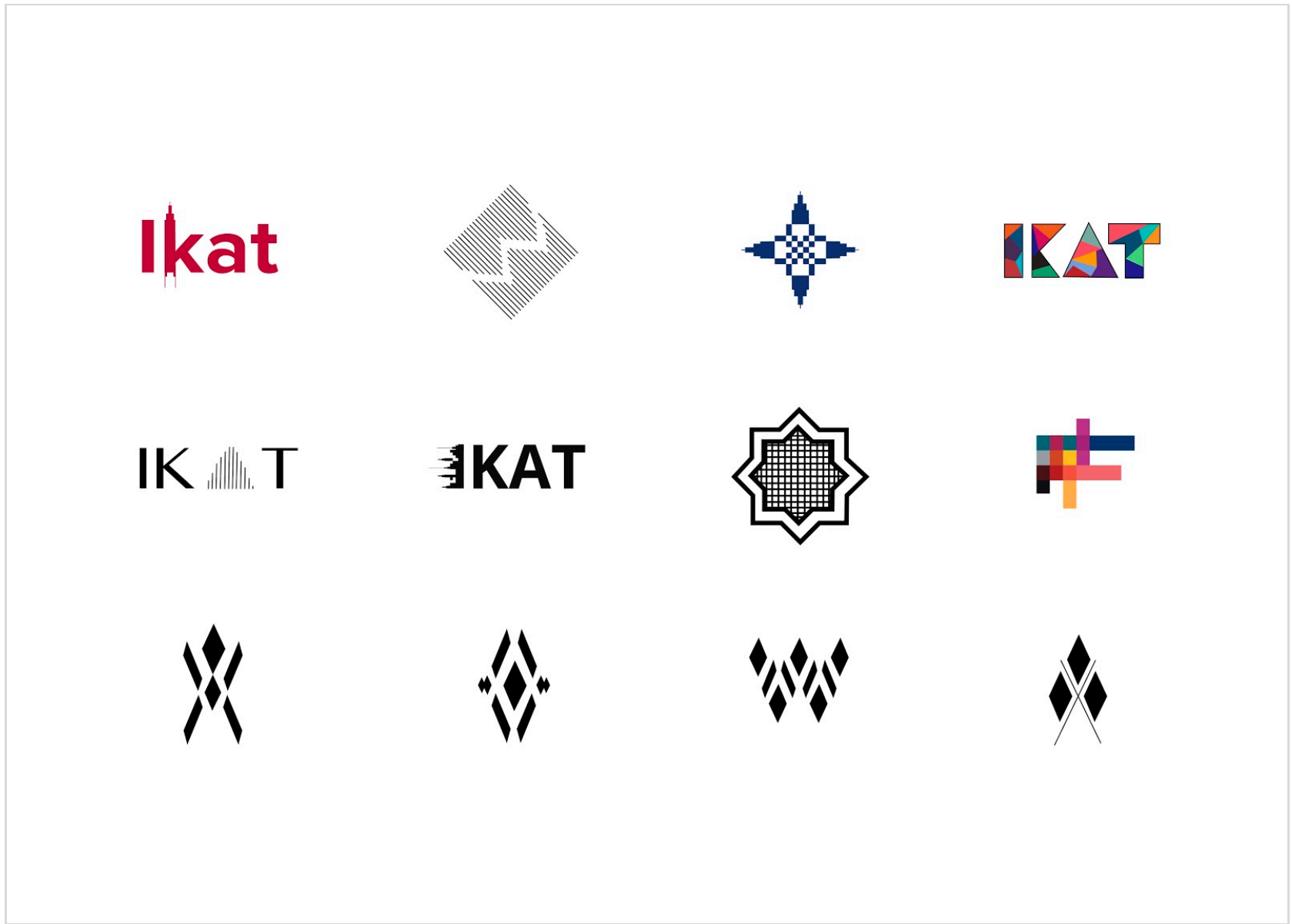
Fig. Explorations I

8.2. Emotional Connections

As discussed earlier Ikat is a symbol of status, wealth, power and prestige.

Figure: Significant Ikat features

8.3. Brand Personality

In the same way that a person can be described so can a brands personality; through demographics, lifestyle or human personality traits [7](Aaker, 1996, p. 142). Considering the Pochampally context and if the ikkat was human then on the basic of the characteristics personified it as: Blending with Society.Giving these attributes helped me realize the customer's perception and what they would feel about the brand.

1) Identity ?
2) Who needs to know?
3) How will they find out?
4) Why should they care?

Earthy **Devine**
Natural **Fluid**
Attributes of Ikat
Colourful
Rhythmic **Wavy** **Elegance**
Humble
Traditional

8.4. Aspects of the Brandmark

While selecting the typeface/font and the designing the logo the same sharpness was to be kept intact. The following images show the iterations done keeping the pixel like explorations alive.

There were few ideations done on the thread-like or rather barcode like designs that gave a feeling of weaving in progress or just weaving itself. Customers who are aware of IKAT would immediately relate to the logo/typeface/brand to something woven in a loom. Building a character using these styles was made possible using the nature inspired patterns that the weavers already use.
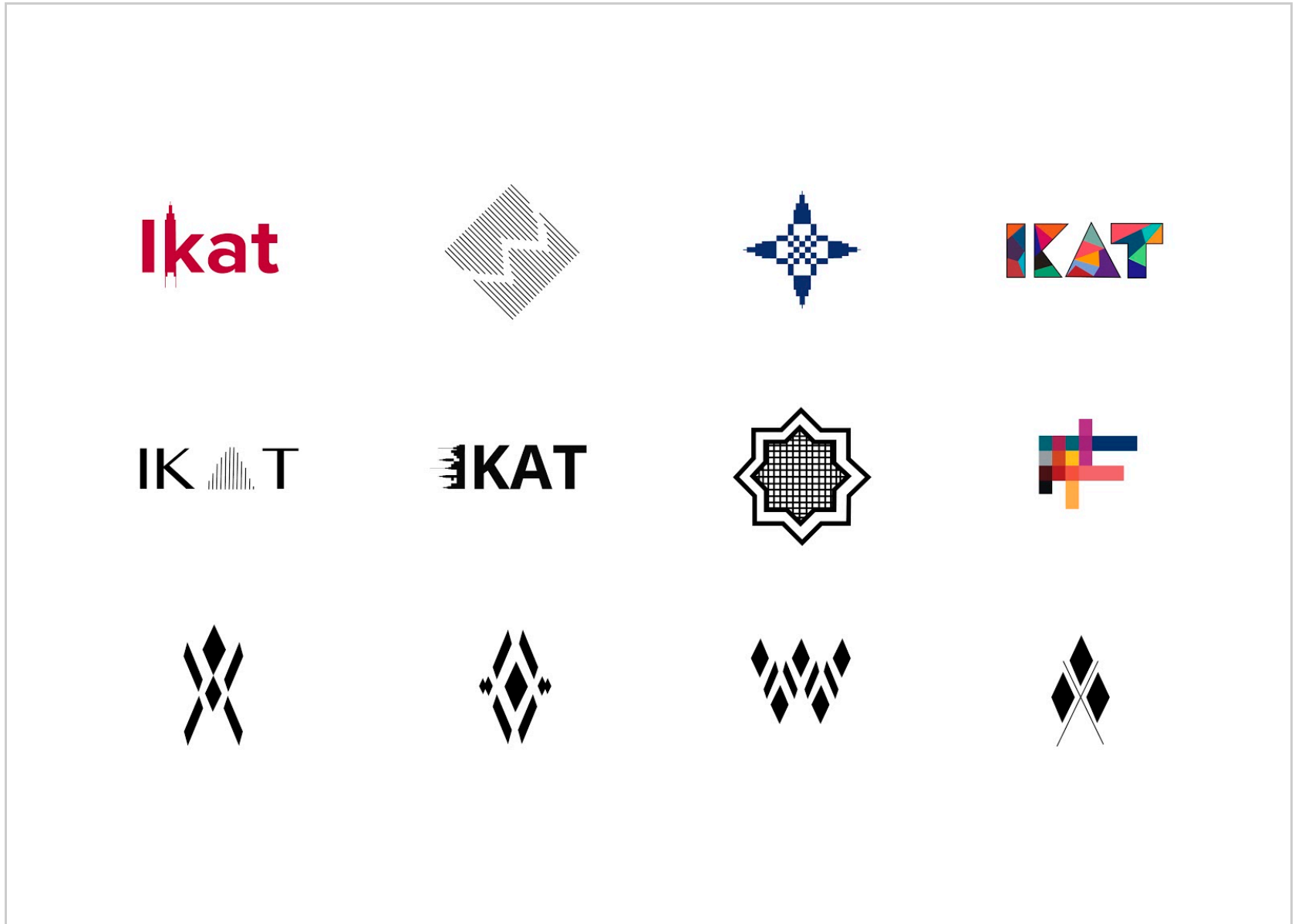
Fig. Initial Explorations

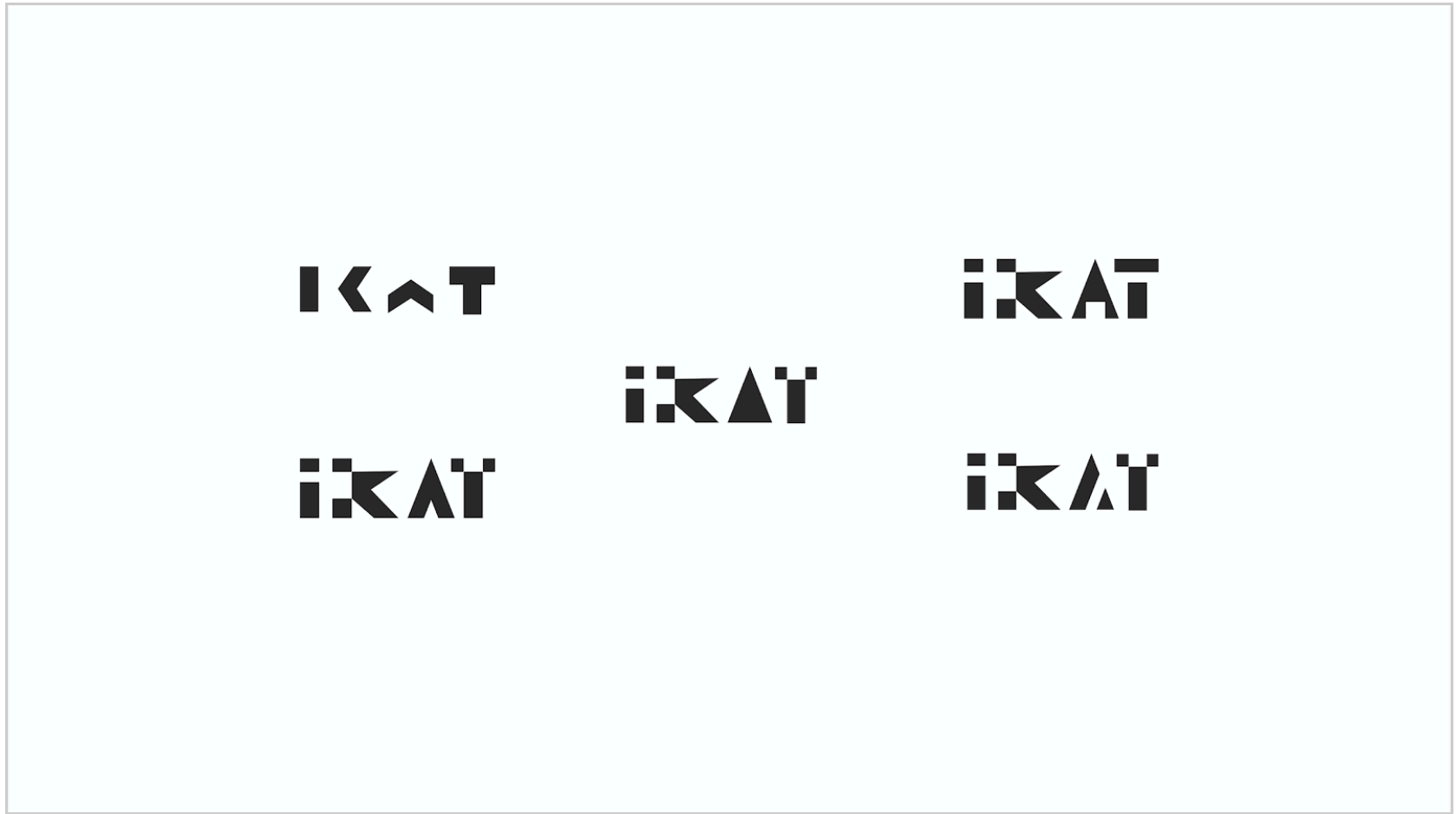Fig: Block like motifs, inspired from patterns of Double ikat
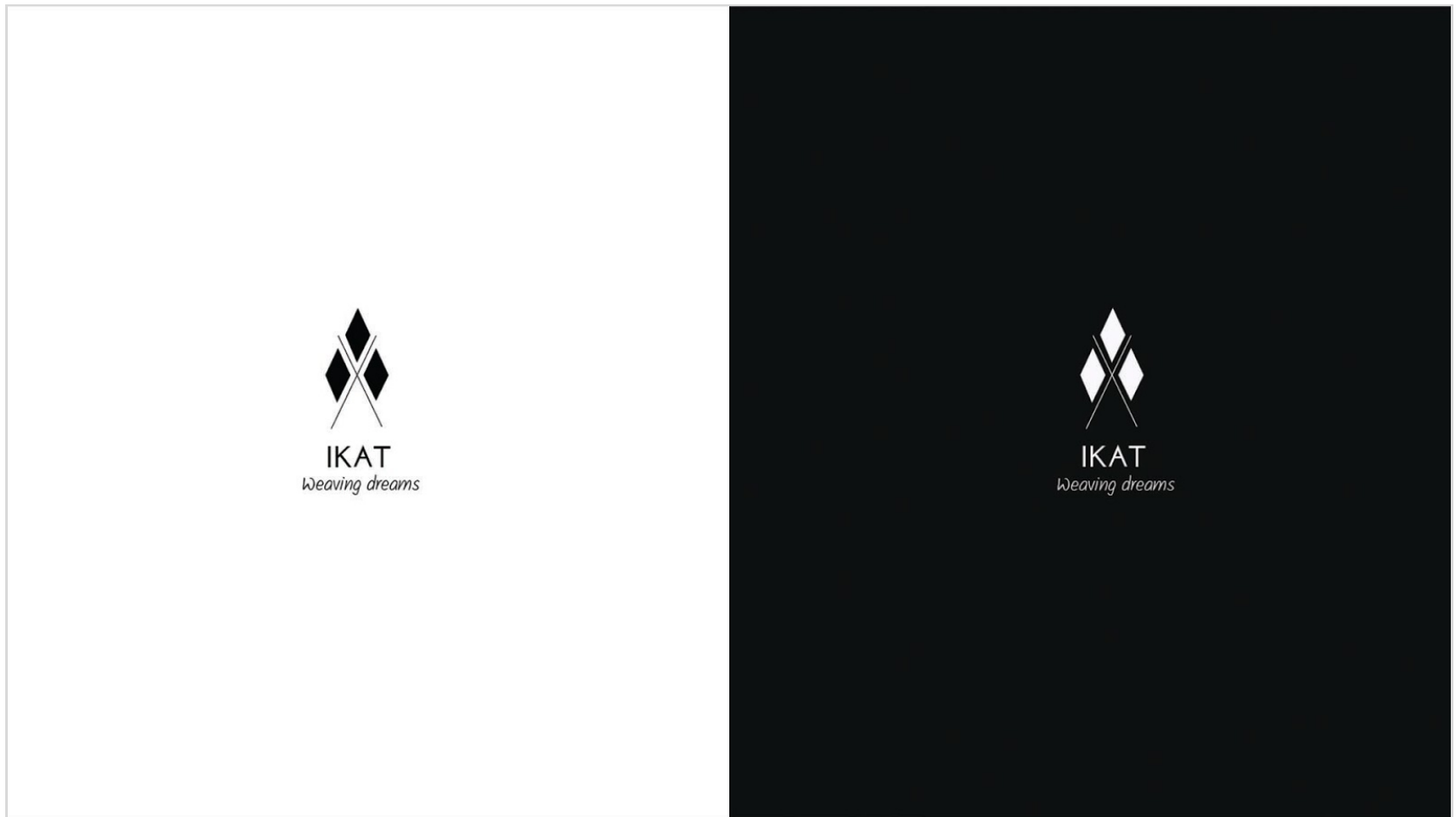
Fig: Type Explorations

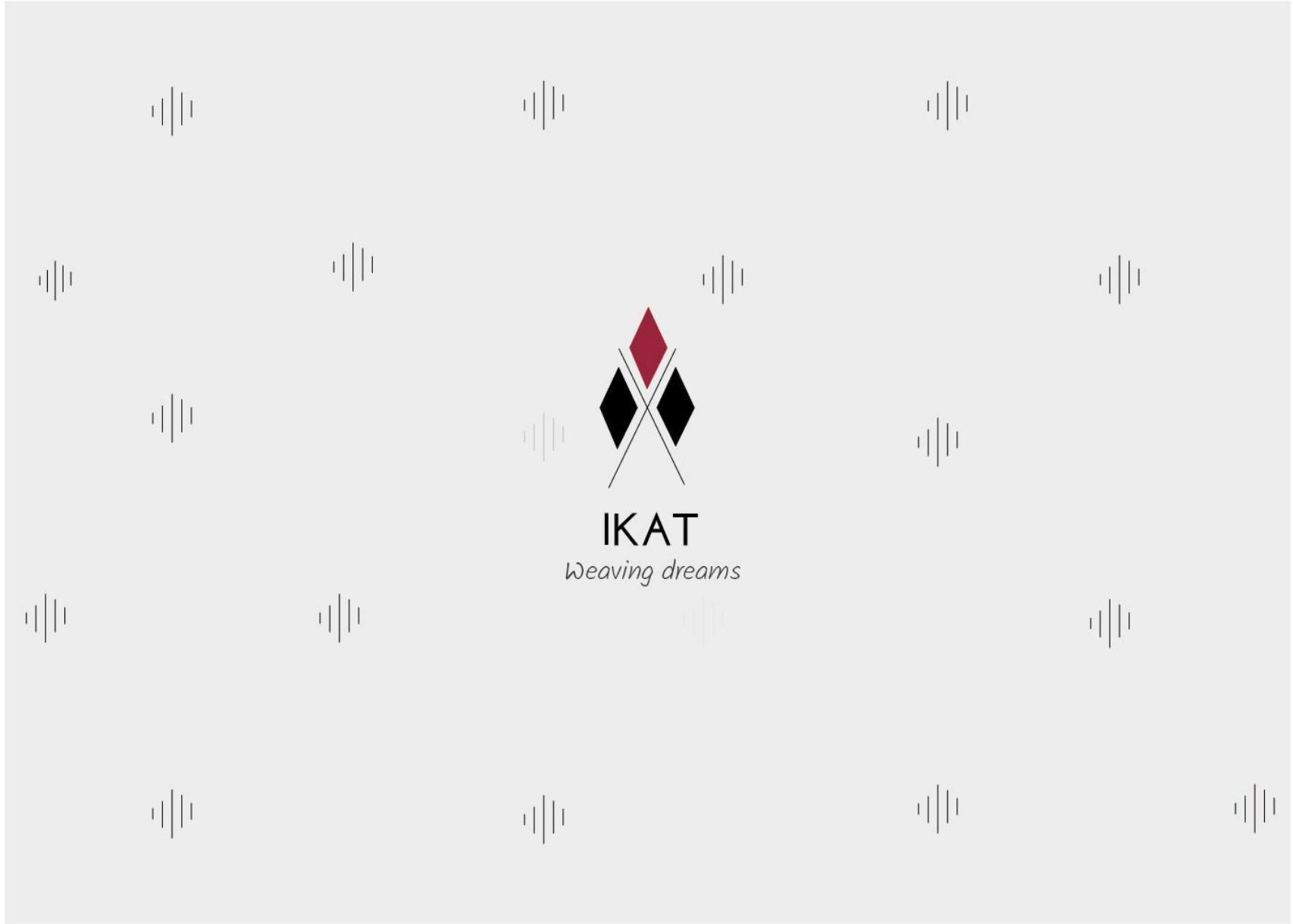Figure: Iteration 1

Fig. Inverse Application

IKAT
Weaving dreams

Fig. Other graphic elements

8.4. Final Logo

The symbol is an abstraction of the **floral patterns** which the weavers use in motifs. The blooming flower is a symbolic of earthiness, elegance and poise. Out of all the iterations this particular symbol *figure resonated most with ikat and with the values of the craft.

While selecting a symbol it was seen as an expression and reflection of Ikat. Various aspects were visualized so that fits well and becomes adaptable on different platforms. Simplicity and scalability was one of the primary concerns. As it becomes easy to recollect while identification of the brand.

Fig. Inverse Application

8.5. Font Explorations

Borrowing the traits of Ikat weave and its origin various fonts were explored. The type were explored which aligned well with the brand. Also, the message is clear and understandable. While choosing the font various characteristics like geometric, elongated and ikat's characteristics were considered.
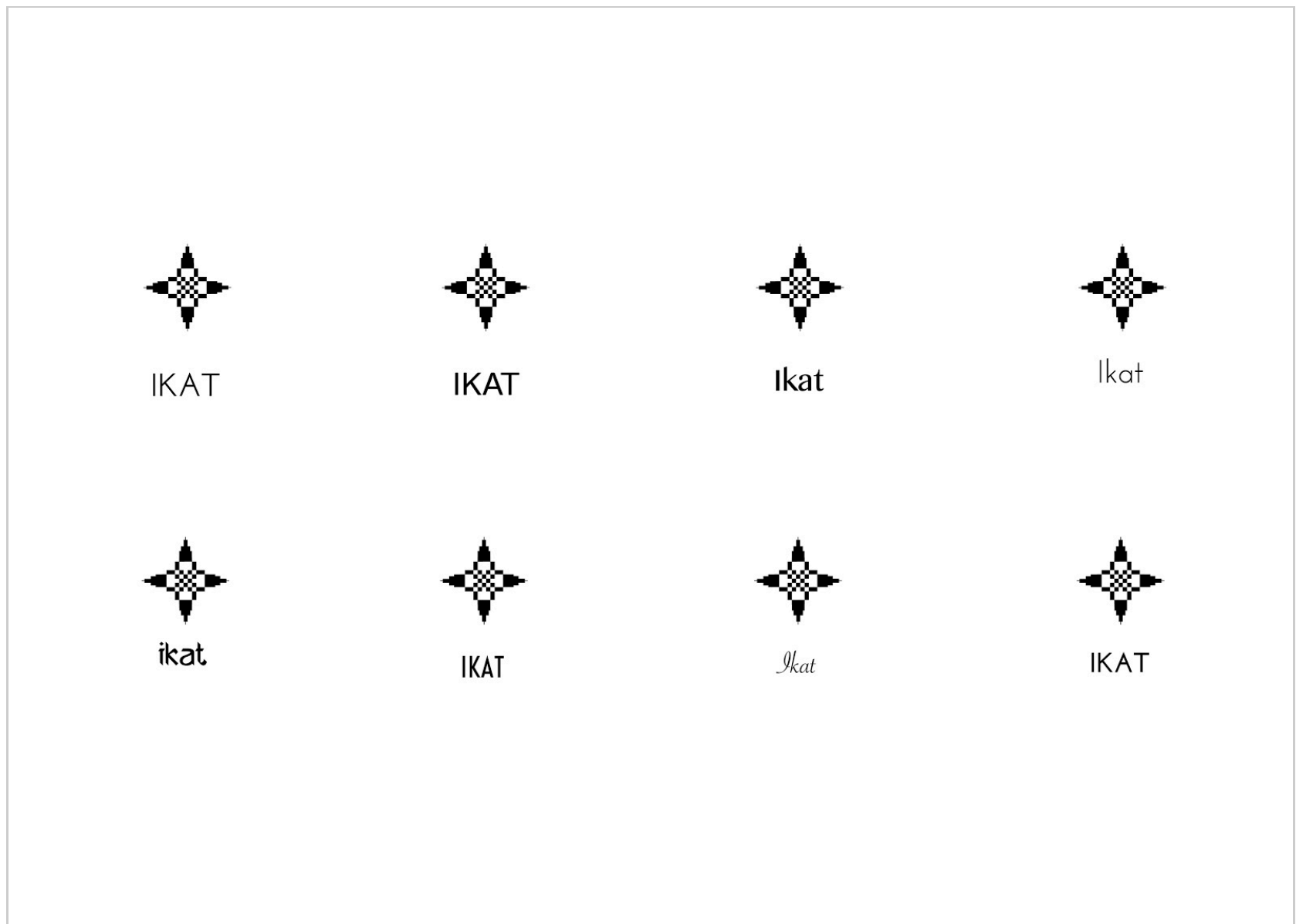

Fig. font explorations

8.6. Colors and their significance

The palette reflects the hues of traditional double ikat saree. It also represents the earthiness and prestige. Most of the colors we see in Ikat are obtained naturally using vegetables, fruits, shells, etc. Vibrant orange in silk, yellows, golden threads and pink could be seen complimented with blue and cooler hues. I picked a color palette inspired from the place, natural surroundings and colors used in their products. The motifs are generally inspired from nature like birds, animals (elephants, peacocks etc), florals.

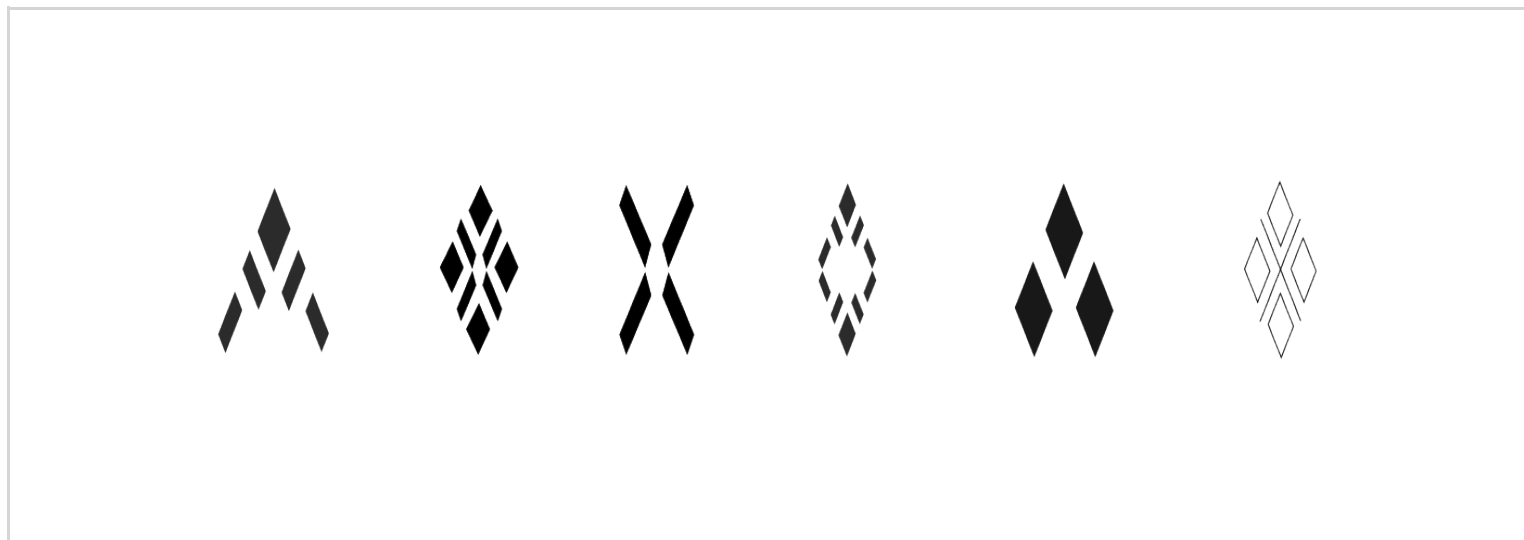## 8.6.1 Further Development of Motifs and Patterns

Fig. A pattern isolated from the IKAT product and developed for Branding:

9. Modern Commercialization

9.1. Designing for different media

Applications Explorations

Not just confined to print design, the various other media were though around like web based applications for example, UI elements, iconography, banners, social media imagery, online ads etc.

Several media onto which the visuals would come over were carefully thought in order to ensure scalability of the visual and also how a material would contribute to an entire brand experience.

10. Medium of advertisements

Meeting print media requirements

Media such as paper, digital displays, informative posters, packaging were considered in order to add to the aesthetics and message conveyed through visuals. I wanted to bring in branding as an interface between end consumers and weavers. Visuals played an important role at an intangible level whereas I also identified an opportunity to give a more personal feel to the brand by bringing material experience in tangible products like tags and those used for packaging, stationary materials like business cards, physical posters. Thus, keeping in mind the nature of the Pochampally craft a textured material was chosen which also gave a feel of earthy, tactile and more handcrafted touch to the brand as a whole.

As we not only see Pochampally just as a saree but weavers are also working on new range of product lines like contemporising products, different applications of this traditional craft. Creating a unified identity which makes them recognizable as they belong to same family was crucial.

10.1. Packaging

Packaging provides a tactile experience and hence could be utilised to bring up an additional experience to the overall product experience. The bag in which the products are contained were visualised so that it carries the essence of the product.

The essence of this traditional craft was considered and hence the branding concept revolves around the patterns and significant motifs used in Ikat. The interpretation of this craft combined with colours, typography and tone proposes Ikat as a brand that knows its buyers well and communicates the message by establishing an authentic relationship.

It was ensured that the brand carries a history provokes it's age old cultural values but also blends well with the modern society. The result expected out of the brand is the new contemporary look infused with traditional values and culture.

The motifs are placed and graphically oriented to do the much of the talking of the brand. It is not only designed to be a hang tag but also carries the story of the makers (weavers) which talks about the efforts which goes into making of the product. Acknowledging weavers gives a recognition to these weavers and this connection helps buyers establish trust in brand.
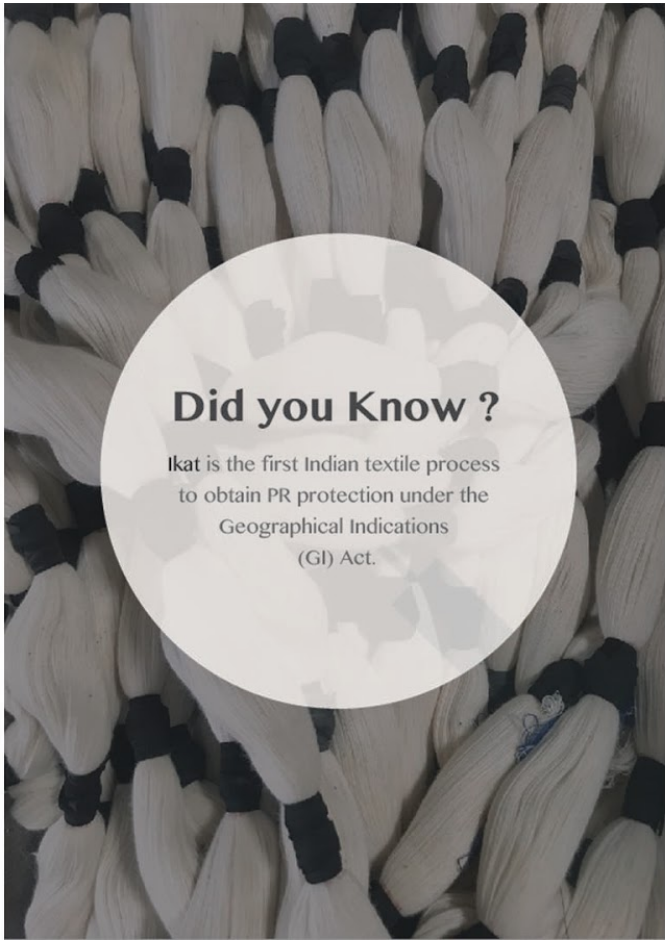
Fig. Packaging Box

Fig. Label

Fig. Posters for Exhibition

10.2. Design for Retail Experience

Designing for a delightful and shopping friendly experience makes a brand stand out and gives a buyer more meaningful and enjoyable experience while shopping. The content is not just confined to the print and digital but overall thought around the experience of the handloom in a holistic manner.

Understanding the consumers behaviours and psyche in Indian context. What would appeal to them, how would they react to the experience was challenging. The idea was to come up with an experience and design strategies in shopping experience.

10.2.1. Interactive Installation

"Fabric Speaks" which lets the user interact with the fabric in a much more engaging and acoustic way. The idea behind the installation is as the viewers come in the vicinity they would interact with it and touch the fabric. The moment a person touches the cloth it triggers a sound. The 8 different clothes hung in the installation trigger different sounds.

Look and Feel

The aesthetics (warm color palette) and composition/orientation were carefully crafted. Material like wood was selected to hang the hangers, which gave an earthy and natural feel and since it also aligns with the handloom characteristics.

Working

To achieve the final result, the 12-pin Bare conductive touch board was used. It was connected with the (conductive) aluminum hanger using wires. The hanger was further wrapped with aluminum foil to increase the area where actual cloth would come over. This would let the

current to pass over a larger area. Later the fabric was put over the hanger. The aluminum foil was spread underneath the fabric carefully. The aluminium foil acts as a capacitance and the moment the user is at a threshold proximity the difference is mapped and sound is triggered. The moment the fabric senses the touch it triggers the sound and on interacting with different fabrics it triggers different sounds which are fed into the pins of the touch board.
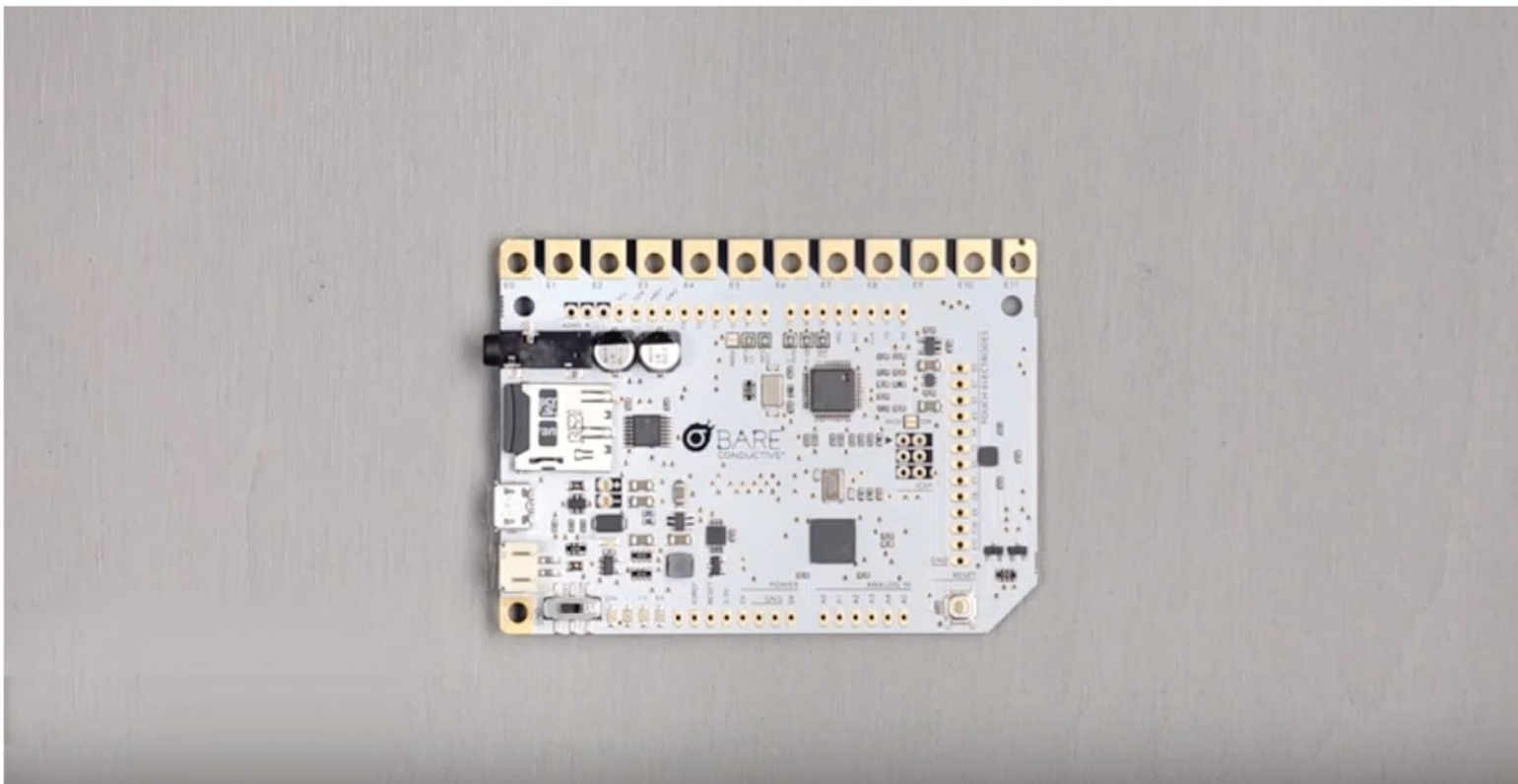

Fig. 12-pin Bare conductive touch board

Fig. Making surface interactive

Fig. Foil extended over the fabric

Fig. Setting up Ikat fabrics I

Fig. Setting up Ikat fabrics II

Fig. Testing the installation with small set of users

Sound

The music piece was carefully chosen to sync with the look and feel of the fabric. Different kinds of musical instruments were explored. For example Sitar, Guitar, Harp, Sarod and primarily vibrational string instruments. Thereafter, Sitar was the most connecting of all. As it is also a plucked stringed instrument used in Hindustani classical music. The music has a striking resemblance to the vibrations of Sitar which also resonates with wavy and rhythmic Ikat patterns.

Fig. Sitar

10.2.2. Use Cases of the Installation

The installation could be imagined in various use cases, where it would serve as interactive piece of installation to attract consumers and dig deeper to know more about the story of the craft, serving as an ice breaker. As people would remember it as an experience. In present day scenario, malls where the handloom fabric is sold provides great opportunity to utilise the installation. We generally observe small entities which binds the story of the collection and it adds a touch of demographics of the fabric, it's natural environment, the primary raw materials used in its making. Examples in fig. above

Handloom Exhibitions

Exhibition areas are one of the spots where people would enjoy just not the handloom fabrics and products but also experience the various aspects of the fabric in different ways.

Fabric Speaks

Fabric Speaks is an
interactive installation which let's you
feel the fabric acoustically. Experience
the fabric with sound and let yourself be
immersed in the beauty of the
Ikat craft.

How to Interact

Gently touch the fabric to play
different melodies.` The music has a striking
resemblance to the vibrations of Sitar
which also resonates with wavy and
rhythmic Ikat patterns.

Fig. Poster describing the Installation

11. Conclusion

11.1. Holistic Experience

On designing an overall experience for ikat, along with brand creation and strategies there is an immense need and opportunities for the entire system to be evolved holistically so as to uplift these crafts. Right from traditional media to new media.

11.2. Scope for future developments

The elements have been carefully chosen thinking about the probable applications and across different applications to bring up the same in tangible media (like product packaging, physical brochures, leaflets, tags etc.) as well as intangible assets. Which creates a value for their products. Thus ultimately making a valuable experience for the end consumers who will invest in the products and which would eventually help the weavers to keep this craft alive, sustain and adapt with the modern needs.

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Supervisor's Certificate

This is to certify that the work entitled "**Designing a Holistic Brand Experience for revival of IKAT**" is a bonafide of thesis work by **Rudrani Santape** under my supervision for his/her M.Des degree.

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This thesis entitled **"Designing a Holistic Brand Experience for revival of IKAT "** by Rudrani Santape is approved for the degree of Master of Design from IIT Hyderabad.

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