

PATOLAS

Weaving an exquisite Patola saree is a painstaking process for the artisan, says *Sudhamahi*

Reghunathan

As the wedding ceremonies are in full swing, the bride is escorted in. All those gathered gasp when they see the beautiful sari she is wearing. Though it is a traditional one, each time a bride appeared in the sari, it evoked appreciation.

This sari is called Nari Kunjar. A patan patola design, which within squares presents a tree symbolic of the fertility of husband's land as well as her family. A parrot which indicates that her husband's house is going to be paradise for parrots frequent only beautiful places and an elephant to symbolise the status and power of the man she is marrying.

Aashavalli is, in fact, the name of a sari derived from a particular border which portrayed the creeper that never dried up, symbolic of how a woman's house is going to be. Uncovering such beautiful aspects of weaving Bela Shangavi, a Bombay-based designer set up her company of Aavartan saris. Recently she brought them on an exhibition to Delhi.

The exhibition held at the Pride of India Gallery, had many examples of traditional weaves. "Actually I was visiting the Smithsonian museum when I saw an Aashavalli sari. My family being one who produce machinery for weaving. I knew



this type of sari can never be made with a machine. So I came to India to hunt for the weavers. And what a long hunt it was... not even successful! So I embarked on patolas in the meanwhile."

Bringing about a revival in some kind of patolas, Bela says, "Very rarely can you see double patolas these days. These saris are double patolas." The saris seem heavier and very intricately worked. Nari Kunjar is one design among them. Each sari takes about 2-2 1/2 years to get done. Bela has also man-

aged, after eight years of research to introduce curves in the otherwise geometric designs of patolas.

Coming back to Aashavalli saris, Bela found two weavers walking into her office one day with examples of just what she was hunting for! They wanted machinery with which they could make more such saris. She told them there was no such machinery as yet and promised instead to help them make their production as capital intensive as possible as also helping them meet the expenses of weaving.

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between the two cultures. But I can't help it". It is more a necessity than defiance, she adds.

Friendship between two co-travellers blossom very rarely. Usually it happens to be a fruit of adversity like the breakdown of vehicle or unexpected rain, which brings people together. "Has any girl fallen in love with a guy who had given her lift?"

Impossible, one would say in chorus. But the cliché "Fact is stranger than fiction" still holds true. The recent marriage of a girl from Lady Shriram College to a man from whom she had once taken lift, reinforces this hackneyed expression. Now they are cruising together in the journey of their lives.

THOSE who commit themselves to giving lift everyday get weary about the business after sometime. This happens usually among buddies or colleagues. Harish Kothari who works for a private concern in Connaught Place says, "Commitment becomes a problem because you are expected to report every time you leave the workplace."

But not everybody, who has got a vehicle, grumble every time they see somebody waving at them. Manoj Sharma, A Delhi University student, says that he was willing to help a girl in distress ever since his father bought him a car.

FORGET THE HANDICAP

As you enter the computer room of the National Association of Blind, you can sense the lively atmosphere existing there. Nothing seems to be different there until you notice the wheel chair in front of one of the computers. Then you are aware of a sound which is coming from somewhere near one of the computers. You can't make out what this voice is saying.

A closer look reveals that this strange talking is done by a speech synthesiser, which has been attached to the computer. You then begin to realise that the people who are working on these computers have a slight different way of working. It is because they have a physical disability. Disability does not stop them from working or any other activity. They only do the same differently. Whether you take the lift or climb the stairs, the goal is to get to the next floor. How does it matter how you get there? The important thing is that ultimately you are there. So why do we make such a hue and cry over a person having to go about on a wheel chair or having to use a white cane to get around?

Today, many disabled people are highly qualified. Few of them, get jobs and hardly any get the jobs they are qualified for. Why does this have to happen? Sometimes there is a valid excuse for not giving the job to the disabled candidate. This reason

A disabled employee will be more sincere and hard working, argues Preeti Singh, herself visually handicapped and a successful executive

can be, the office in question is not accessible by wheel chair. With a little foresight and effort this obstacle can be removed in most of the cases.

Well, as far as I can see there should be no other reason for turning down the application for a job which has come from a disabled person. If he or she has the required qualifications and shows the willingness to work, I don't see why this disabled person should not get the opportunity to prove his/her capability. In 99 out of a hundred cases, your disabled employee will be sincere and hard working, giving you more than your expectations.

I would like to explain why

your disabled employee will not disappoint you. First of all this person has learned to work much harder than his able-bodied counterpart. As to achieve the same amount of qualifications he has had to put in much more effort. So by the time he has managed to get all that qualifications together, working hard has become his second nature. He also has to prove to the world and to himself that he can perform his duties and earn his livelihood. He does not seek charity but wants the opportunity to work.

Today there are some persons with disabilities, who are working successfully in their respective fields.

Anuradha Mohit is heading a fast growing voluntary organisation, the NAB. Her vision impairment does not hamper her efficiency in any way. Nor does the wheel chair of Mr Sarabjit Arjun Singh come in the way of his demanding professional pressures at the Railway Board. I too am heading the marketing operations of Granny's, a non-durable consumer company. In most cases the achievements of a disabled person are attributed to someone who has taken pity on her/him and not because that person worked for and deserved them.

So next when you are looking through applications of hopeful job-seekers, don't set aside the one which says "I have a physical disability."