34.2 HAND BLOCK PRINTING

Block printing in India's cottage industry specialises in small production runs on bedspreads or saris.

The technique is similar to potato or linoleum printing.

One side of the wooden block is carved with a raised pattern. The relief is wood or hammered-in metal on wood, and large areas may be filled in with felt. Technically there is no limit to the size of the design, although for practical reasons there a limit to the size of the finished design.

The block itself is seldom larger than 35 cm square.

This allows the block to be conveniently handled.

A block is made for each colour.

Mordants or a resist can also be printed in this way.

Block printing has been replaced by machine printing.

Engraved wood block

CHARACTERISTICS OF BLOCKPRINTING:

Small inaccuracies which machine-prints do not have. However the crudity of block prints is highly prized.

Darker and lighter areas are common.

Smudges or spots of excess colour may occur.

Can be detected by the presence of 'pin marks'.

These small dots guide the printer at regular intervals.