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### “Aipan” Creative Art of Kumaon

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#### Abstract

Aipan or Alpana is an art which has special place in all kumaoni homes. It is traditional folk art (painting form) of Uttarakhand. This art belong to kumaon region. it has great degree of social, cultural as well as religious significance. It is very popular art form of kumaon, and walls, papers and pieces of cloth are decorated by the drawing of various geometric and other figures belonging to gods, goddesses and objects of nature. The raw material used is simple ochre ( Geru ) color and rice paste. It is mostly women who paint the designs on the floors and walls of their homes using the last three fingers of the right hand. Once the Geru base is ready the artist draws the pattern free hand. Popularly drawn at place of worship, houses and main entry doors of house and in front of courtyard. Aipan are known by different names and is in popular in many parts of India with larger variations. It is called alpina in Bengal, Satiya in Gujrat, Rangoli in Maharashtra, Chowk pooran in UP, Kolam in South India, Madne in Rajasthan, Arichan in Bihar and Bhuggul in Andhra likewise Aipan in Uttarakhand

**Keywords:** Aipan, Art, Kumaon

#### Introduction

Aipan is one of the traditional folk art (painting form) of Uttarakhand. It is made by Uttarakhand; s women. It is a traditional form of Rangoli. This art is associated with a great degree of social, cultural as well as religious significance in Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand is divided into two main regions kumaon and garhwal. This art belong to kumaon region. It is very popular art form of kumaon, and walls, papers and pieces of cloth are decorated by the drawing of various geometric and other figures belonging to gods, goddesses and objects of nature. Pichhauras or dupattas are also decorated in this manner. At the time of Harela there is a tradition of making clay idols (Dikaras).

‘Aepan’ or Aipan or Alpina is an art which has special place in all kumaoni homes. The word “ Aepan” is a derivative of ‘Arpan’. A commonly used word for it is “Likhai” (writing), although it is a pattern made with the fingers. Aepan are used as ritual designs for Pujas, festivals and ceremonies connected with birth, janeu, marriage and death. Popularly drawn at place of worship, houses and main entry doors of house and in front of courtyard.

#### Raw Material

The raw material used is simple ochre (Geru ) color and rice paste. It is mostly women who paint the designs on the floors and walls of their homes using the last three fingers of the right hand. Once the Geru base is ready the artist draws the pattern free hand. Chowkies are made with mango wood and painted with special designs for each occasion. Now a days Aipan used different ways like patterns for cards, wall hanging, cushion covers, table cloths, even T-Shirts. The decorative patterns used to adorn doorways have been adapted for gift tags, bookmarks, clay items, wooden boxes, trays and coasters.

#### Classification of aipan

According to Chattopadhyay (1981) there are three styles of Aipan namely Siddhu, Davia and Loukika

- Siddhu: It is the style of Aipan which drawn on floor and chaukies.
- Davia: It is the form of patta. It has astrological motifs, manual designs and dwar pattas
- Loukika: it is the style of bar boond. These are drawn on walls.

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Later on Sah (2006), classify the Aipan in various styles. The medium selected for drawing Aipan may be different depending upon the purpose or the occasion and variety of patterns and their combination may be used at different occasions.

**Classification on the basis of places where Aipan are drawn**

The drawing of Aipan may be used at different places as given below:

- Floor Painting- Floor painting are drawn on floor. These are further divided into two categories; Aipan drawn at door steps (creepers and filler design) and Aipan drawn at place of worships (Shiv peeth, Laxmi peeth, Asan).
- Wall painting- Wall paintings are drawn on the wall. There are two traditional forms of wall painting; one for the kitchen (Nata and Laxmi Narayana) and other for the place where ritual ceremonies are performed (Patas).
- On cloth- Some Aipan designs are also drawn on cloth. For example khodia chauki in pichhora and shiv peeth in yellow colour cloth used in rituals [17].
- Wooden chaukies- These are worships seats of the deities prepared through Aipan and used on different occasion like worship, ceremonial occasion or on festivals.



**Aipan of door steps:** Doorsteps of the house are decorated with this kind of the Aipan these are beautifully designed decorative Aipan with great aesthetic value. The door steps are decorated with this type of Aipan in combination with ‘Vasudhara’ the vertical lines made by dripping the ‘biswar’ (rice floor solution made by soaking the rice and then grinding it which is used for drawing aipan)



**Vasudhara:** pooja vedika, door steps of the house, place of worship, tulsii (A structure made around the Tulsii plant) etc.

are decorated with vasudhara without vasudhara, Aipan are considered incomplete. These are made by painting the place with ‘Geru’ (filtered red color soil) and thereafter making vertical lines by dripping ‘Biswar’. The dripping of ‘biswar’ is carried out by Anamika (Ring finger)

**Swastik**



Swastik has great significance in Aipan. It is drawn in some form or other during most of the religious rituals as swastika in Hindu mythology represents all gods and goddess. Pichura which is worn by kumaoni women during festivals and marriages Swastik aipan design on Pichura.



Uttarakhand Goddess Naina Devi made by Aipan art



Wedding card designed with Aipan motif



A simple and elegant Aipan painting made on cloth



Dhuliarghya ki chowki, made at the bridal home's front yard to welcome the groom



Foot prints of goddess Laxmi with Aipan



Dewali painting made with Aipan motifs



Base created by kumaoni women in her house with traditional outfit.



Design made on the base by last three fingers by the group of family members.

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