



TEXTILE BLOCKS

**IN THE COLLECTION OF
GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI.**

Compiled By

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Government Museum,
Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

Published By

Thiru. S.S. JAWAHAR, I.A.S.,

Principal Secretary / Commissioner,
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PREFACE

One of the ancient handicrafts of the Deccan that was becoming famous in India is the process of dye making and block printing. The process is both intricate and subtle and there are only a few places in India where this art still survives. The printing methods are classified as:

1. Block prints
2. Block printed and Hand painted &
3. Hand painted

Dye blocks are used to print textiles. It is applied on all fabrics on which a pattern is produced subsequent to the weaving of the cloth, by the application of dye stuff or pigment to the surface of the fabric. The Indian dyer expresses in his art, the Indian women's love of colour.

The direct or application process implies the use of the wooden block directly on the fabric & is commonly known as the Block printing method. The art of using pigments to ornament fabrics has an ancient origin. The discovery of a fragment of madder-dyed fabric at Mohenjo-Daro, sticking to a silver vase, would lead us to believe that the mordant process of dyeing cloth was known in India five thousand years. The Block-printing centers of South India are at Erode, Tirupur, Kumbakonam, Mangalore and Masulipatnam. The decorative motifs of the block vary from floral, faunal, geometric, rings, dots and zigzag arrangement. The Peepul leaf (*Ficus religiosa*) seems to be the common theme. Building structure, creeper, climber designs, lotus flower, and peacocks is also found in the textile blocks.

The textile block collections of Government Museum, Chennai are a century old. One hundred and twenty eight textile blocks photographs have been provided in this album to enjoy the beauty and artisan work involved in the blocks for the first time. I definitely hope that this would fulfill the needs of the textile designers and others who are interested in the field of Block designing.

I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to the Commissioner of Museums Thiru. S.S.Jawahar, I.A.S., for having permitted me to bring out this album.

Date: 24.2.2012
Place: Chennai-600 008.

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FOREWORD

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Government Museum, Chennai is well renowned for its collections since its inception in 1851. The Botany Section has a unique collection of carved wood print blocks amongst its various collections. This collection is now brought out for the first time as a Photographic album for the benefit of the visitors.

The use of wooden blocks has been in vogue since the 18th century. Block printing is ancient, and is referred to in the Mahabharata. The most famous printed textiles are the old Calicoes of Masulipatnam. Different designs are used for a multiple representations of floral and faunal motifs. The block stamps are used to print the traditional fabrics. The print blocks are carved out of wood, copper or a combination of both.

Many fragments of resist-dyed cloths have been discovered from the tombs at Fostat in Egypt, which dates back to 12th century. It is stated that probably China was the inventor of block printing.

Government Museum, Chennai has the textile block collections numbering to more than hundreds. Since the designs are very intricate and nicely executed it was decided to bring it out as a photographic album for reference to people of all walks of life.

In this regard Tmt M.N.Pushpa Curator for Botany has done an excellent work of documentation in describing these textile blocks. I congratulate her for the meticulous work in preparing the collection of textile blocks as a photographic album to be published as the Museum publication.

This album on Textile Blocks is the first of its kind and it depicts one hundred and twenty eight wood blocks of various motifs. I earnestly hope that this photographic album would serve the needs of the designers, researchers, scholars and interested visitors in the field of textiles.

S.S. Jawahar
S.S. Jawahar, I.A.S.,

Principal Secretary / Commissioner of Museums.



Tex.Bl.No.1-04
Floral design on both sides



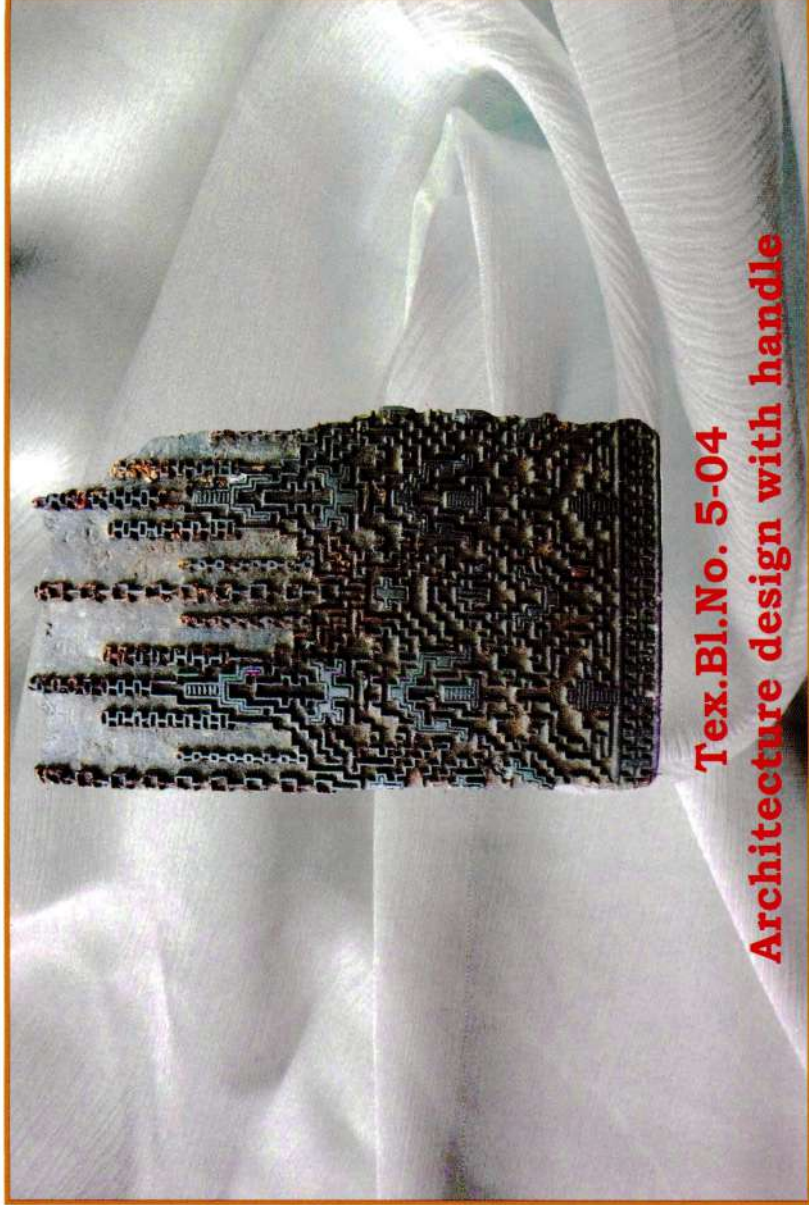
Tex.Bl.No.2-04
Flower pot design with handle



Tex.BI.No. 3-04
Running floral design with handle



Tex. Bl. No. 4-04
Floral design



Tex.B1.No. 5-04
Architecture design with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 6.04
Flower design with stem



Tex.Bl.No. 7.04
Plant with leaf and flower design



Tex.BI.No. 8.04

Entire plant with opposite leaves and flower design



Tex.Bl.No. 9-04

**Design like the cross section of seed
& flower with running creeper design**

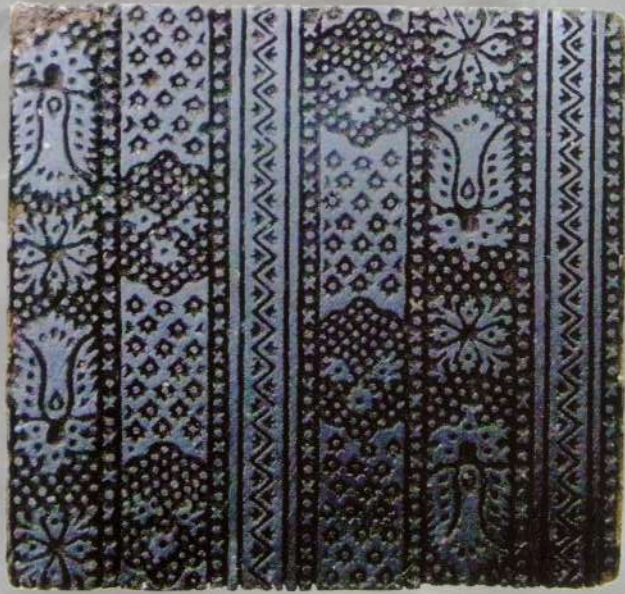


Tex.Bl.No. 10.04

Opposite leaves arranged in a curved design

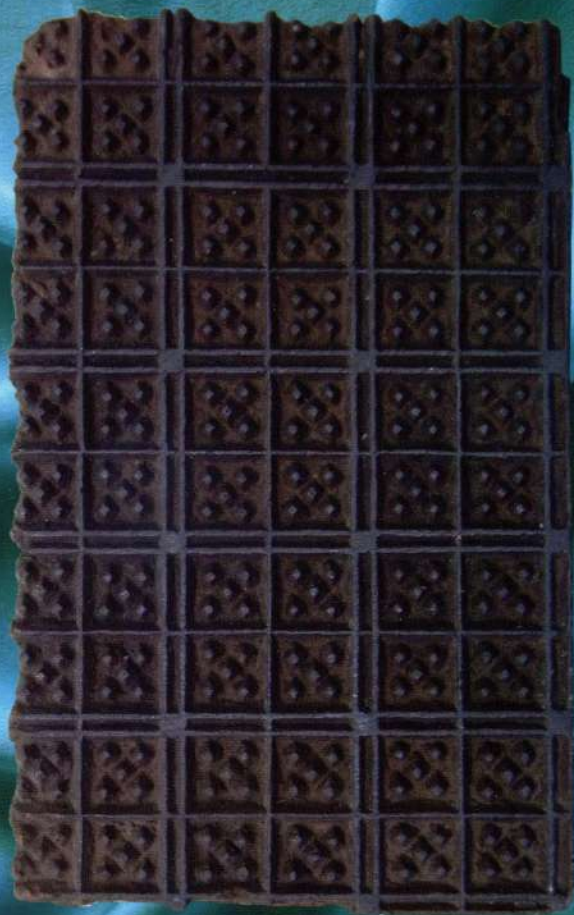


Tex.Bl.No. 11-04
Curved floral design



Tex.Bl.No. 12-04

Border design arranged in two rows



Tex. Bl. No. 13-04
Border design with handle



Tex.BI.No.14-04
Curved design with three dots



Tex.B1.No. 15-04
Two dotted designs arranged in horizontal row. Block with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 16-04
Cross design



Tex.BI.No. 17-04

Flower with stem. Block with handle



Tex.B1.No. 18-04
Individual flowers of five numbers
arranged in a zigzag manner. Block
with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 19-04
Cone shaped block with
comb design



Tex.BI.No. 20-04
Design on one side arranged
symmetrically



Tex.Bl.No. 21-04
Design like a Rose flower

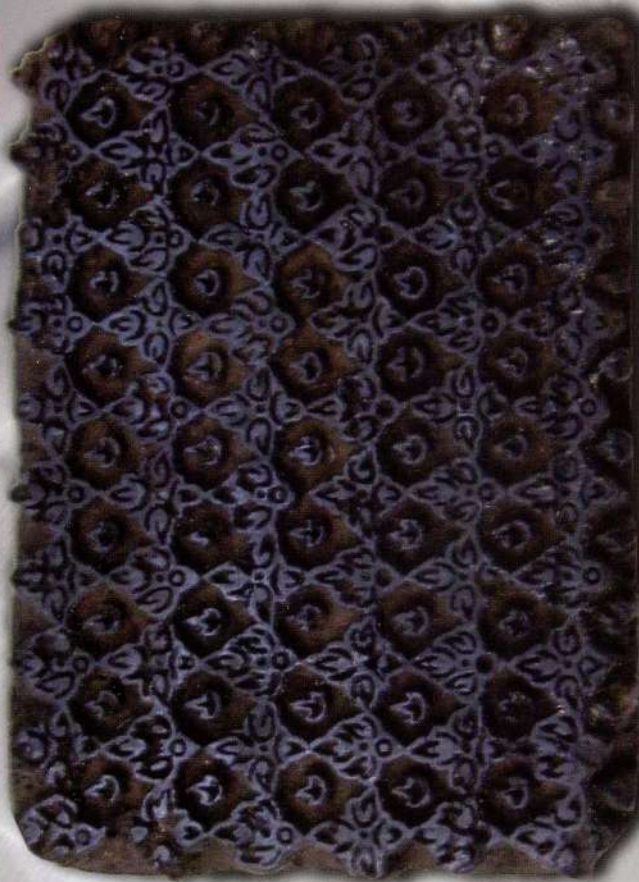


Tex Bl. No. 22-04

Conch design



Tex.BI.No. 23-04
Floral design



Tex.Bl.No. 24-04
Running floral design

Tex. Bl. No. 26-04
Flower design with
opposite leaves



Tex. Bl. No. 25-04
Floral border design
with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 27-04
Border design like four sepals





Tex.B1.No. 28-04

Flower design. Block is in the shape of cone



Tex. Bl. No. 29-04
Single border design



Tex. Bl. No. 30-04
Four plants in a row arranged individually
with flowers and curved at the end

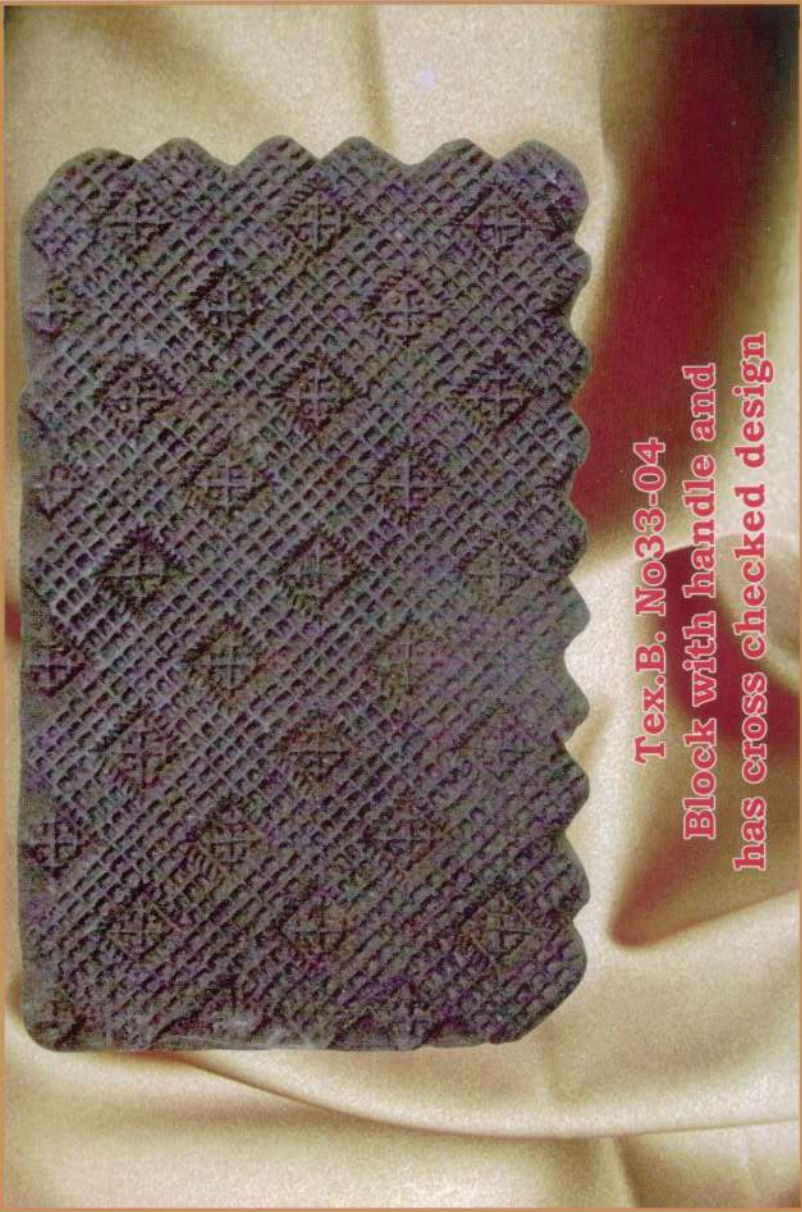


Tex.B1.No. 31-04
Floral design

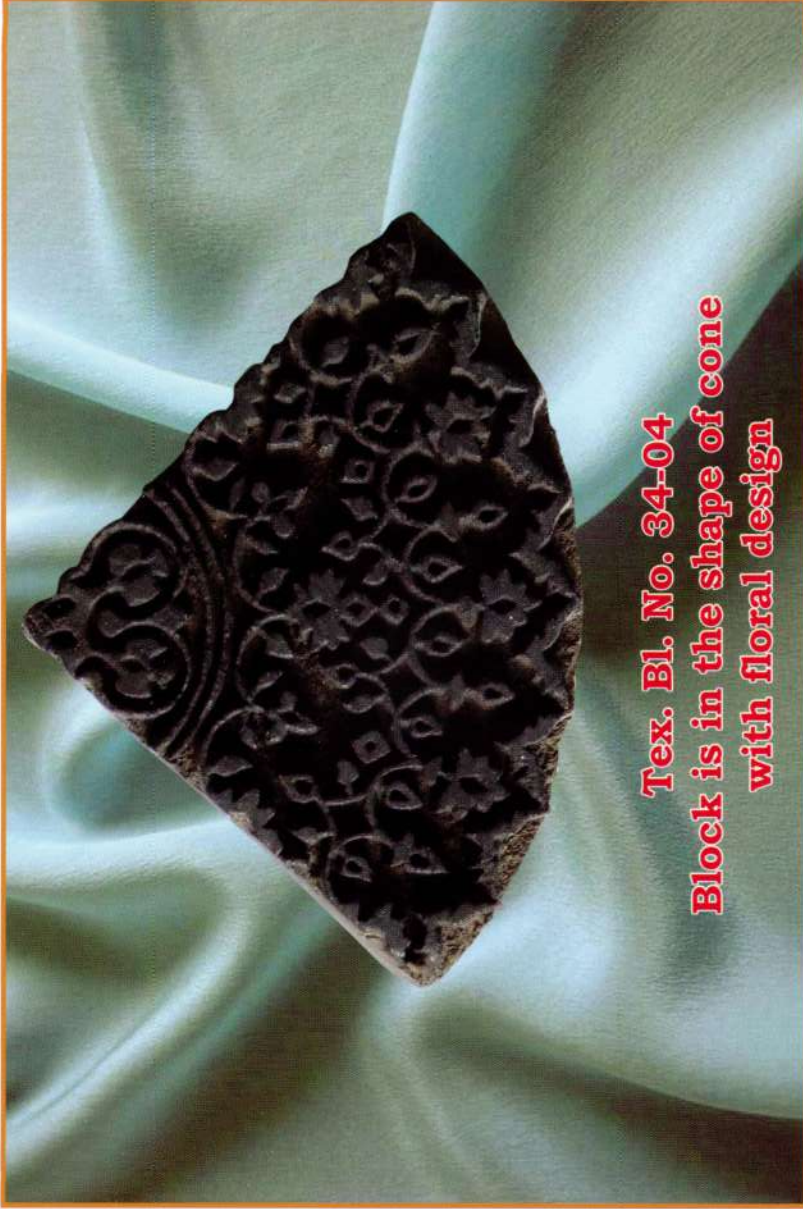


Tex. Bl. No. 32-04

Block cone shaped with Kalasam design



Tex.B. No33-04
Block with handle and
has cross checked design



Tex. Bl. No. 34-04
Block is in the shape of cone
with floral design



Tex.BI.No. 35-04
Cross section of flower design



Tex.B1.No.36-04
Architecture design. Block
with handle



Tex.B1.No. 37-04

Small and big sized mango design



Tex. Bl. No. 38-04
Running floral design



Tex. Bl. No. 39-04
Mango design



Tex.BI.No. 40-04
Embossed plant design



Tex. Bl. no. 41-04
Flower design arranged in six
symmetrical rows

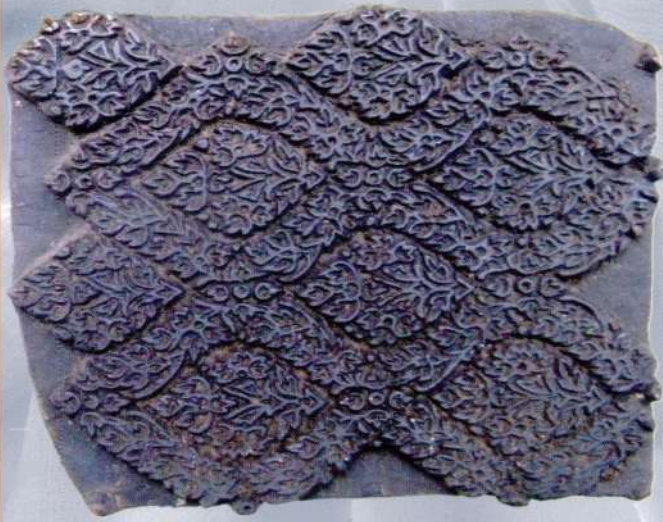


Tex.Bl.no. 42-04

**Floral designs arranged in four rows in a zigzag
manner with handle**



Tex. Bl. No. 43-04
Floral design



Tex.BI.No. 44-04

Diamond shaped floral design with handle



Tex. Bl. No. 45-04
Body and border design with handle



Tex.B1.No. 46-04

Floral design in 2-4-6, 6-4-2 pattern



Tex.BI.No. 47-04
Embossing design



Tex.Bl.No. 48-04
Embossed floral design



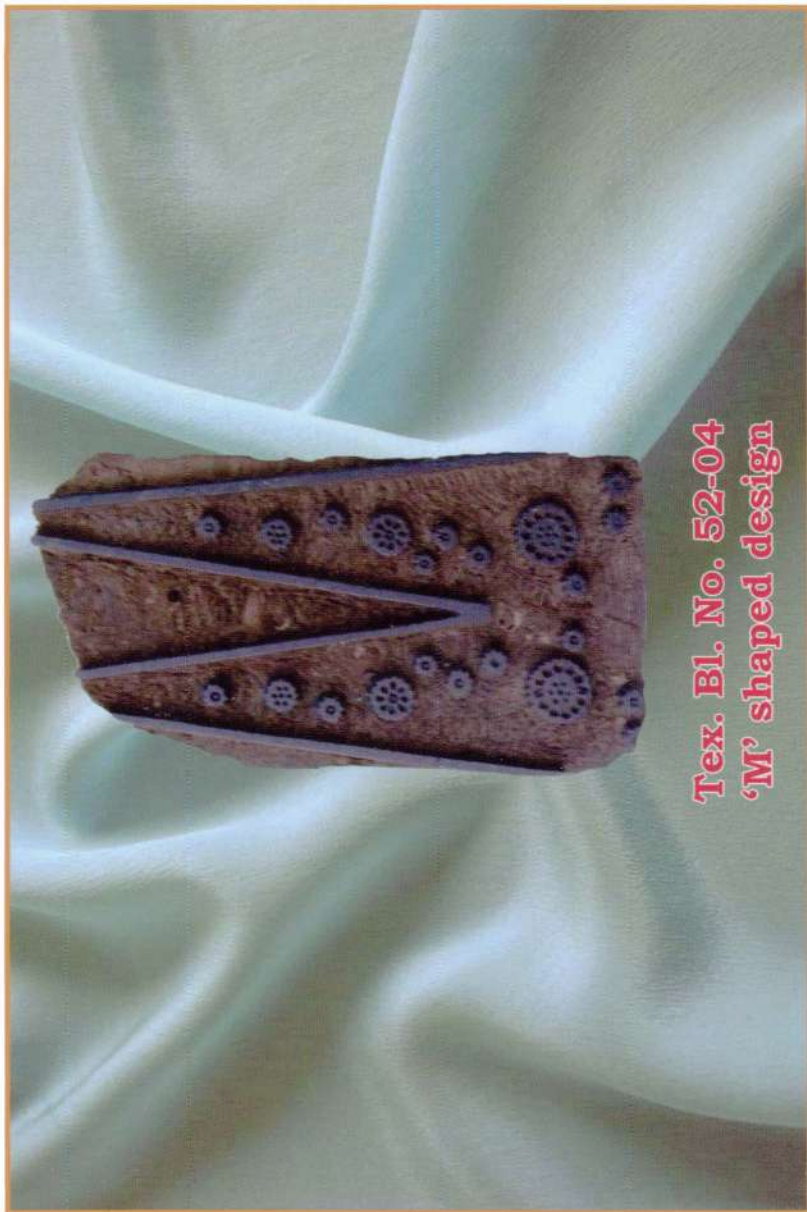
Tex. Bl. No. 49-04
Embossed flower design



Tex. Bl. No. 50-04
Square block with circle and flower design



Tex. Bl. No. 51-04
Floral design



Tex. Bl. No. 52-04
'M' shaped design



Tex.Bl.No. 53-04
Rectangular block with eight flowers
arranged in seven rows



Tex Bl. No. 54-04
Border design with floral
and two striped design



Tex. Bl. No. 55-04
Mango shaped border design



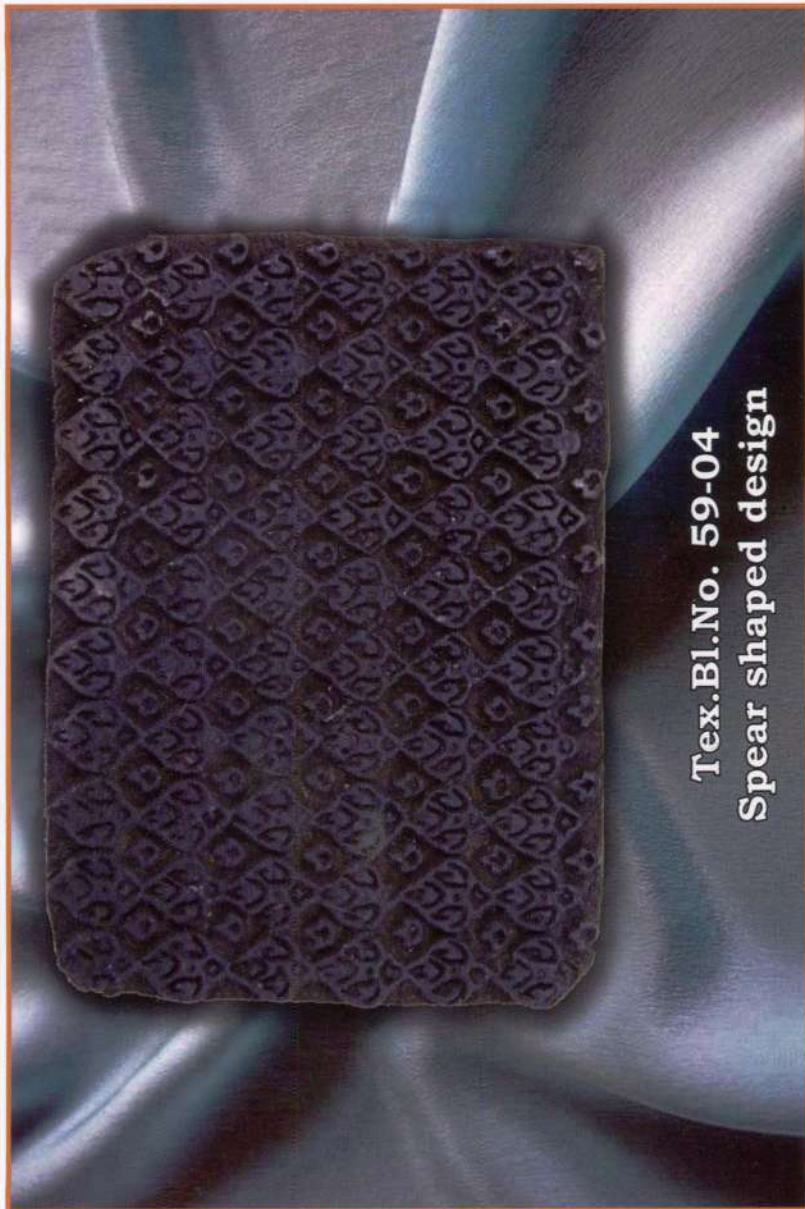
Tex. Bl. No. 56-04
Embossed flower design



Tex.Bl.No. 57-04
Hamsa - Swan design



Tex. Bl. No. 58-04
Creeper design



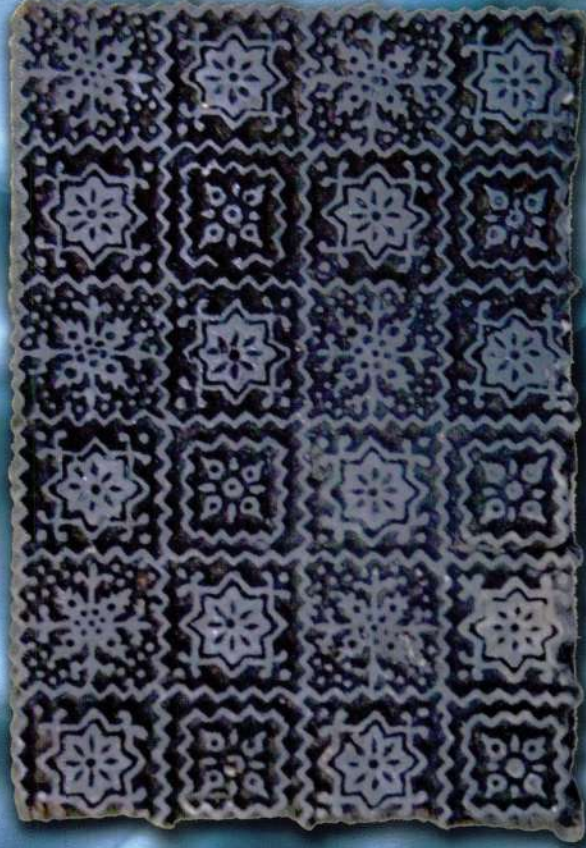
Tex.BI.No. 59-04
Spear shaped design



Tex.Bl.No. 60-04
Sun design

Tex. Bl. No. 61-04
Conch shaped design

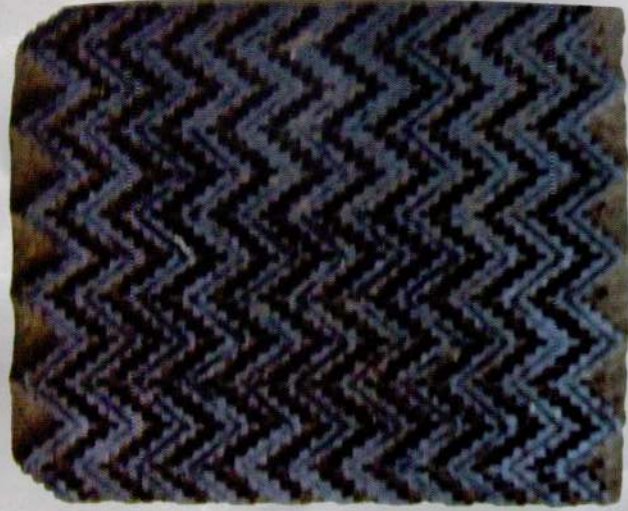




Tex.BI.No. 62-04
Floral designs arranged in
six squares of six rows

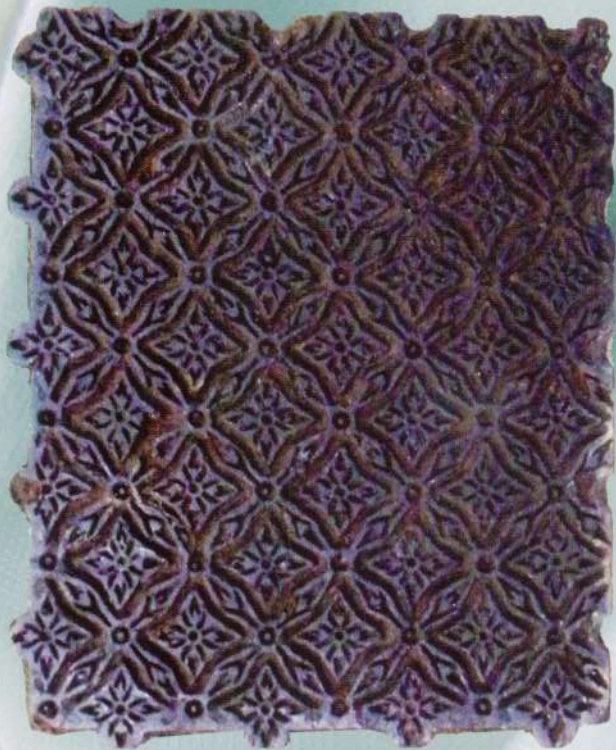


Tex.B1.No. 63-04
Entire plant with flowers



Tex.Bl.No. 64-04

Arrow design arranged in eleven rows



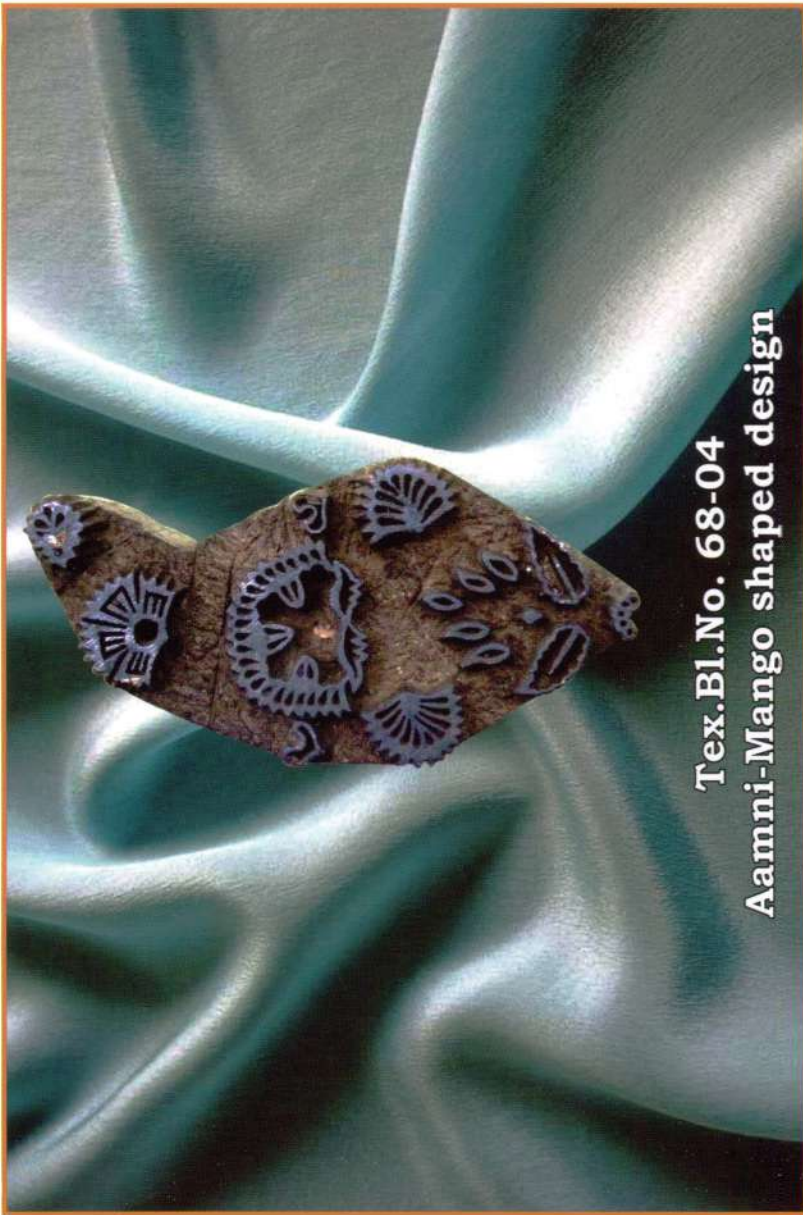
Tex. Bl. No. 65-04
Floral design arranged in circle.



Tex. Bl. No. 66-04
Border design with handle



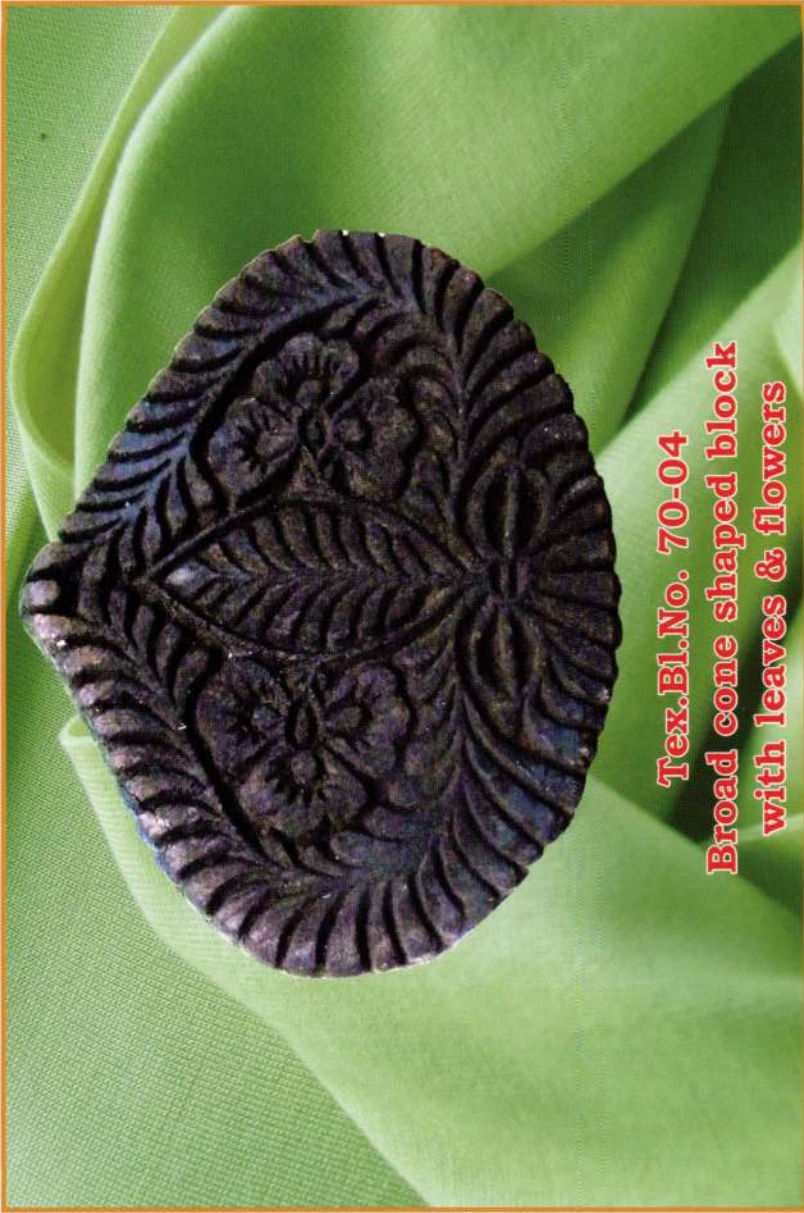
Tex.B1.No. 67-04
Seven plants arranged in six rows.
Block with handle



Tex.B1.No. 68-04
Aamni-Mango shaped design



Tex.Bl.No. 69-04
'S' shaped design.



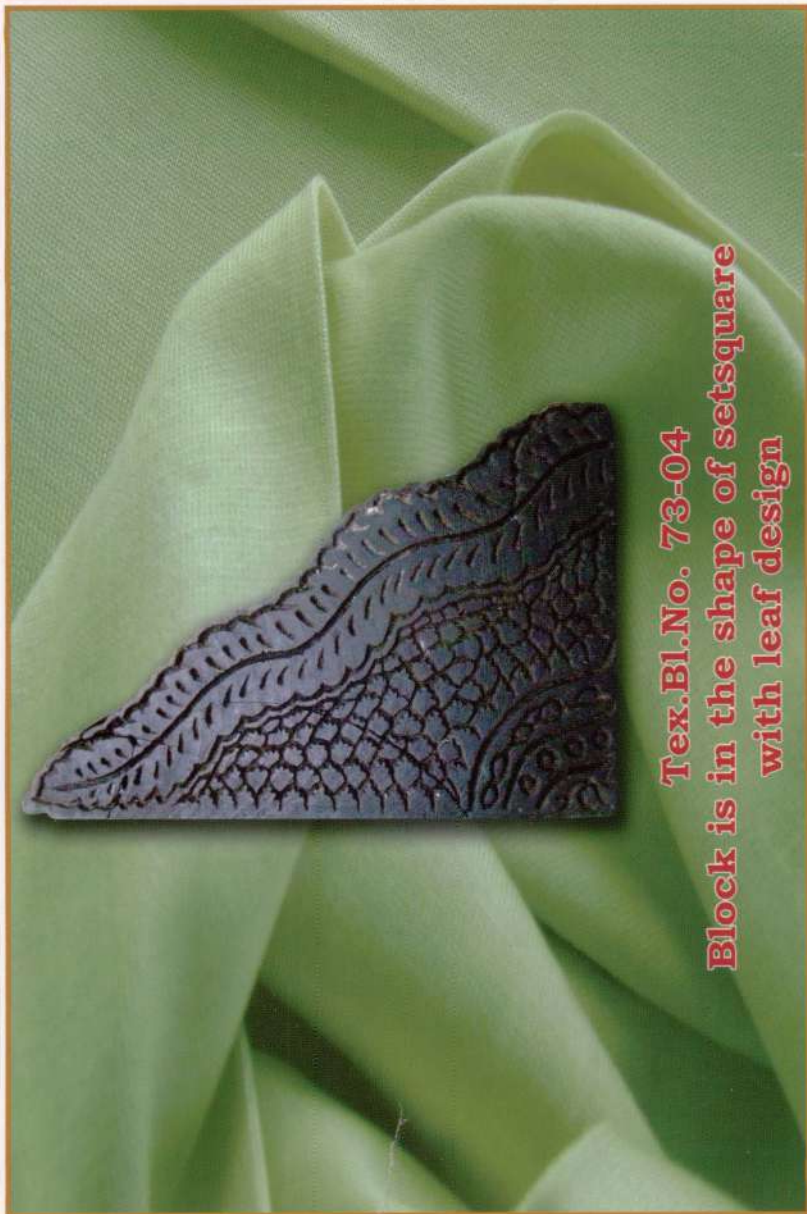
Tex.Bl.No. 70-04
Broad cone shaped block
with leaves & flowers



Tex.Bl.No. 71-04
Square block with four running
creeper design bent inwards



Tex.Bl.No. 72-04
Bhutta- Rectangular block with
flowers of various shapes
sparsely arranged



Tex.BI.No. 73-04
Block is in the shape of setsquare
with leaf design



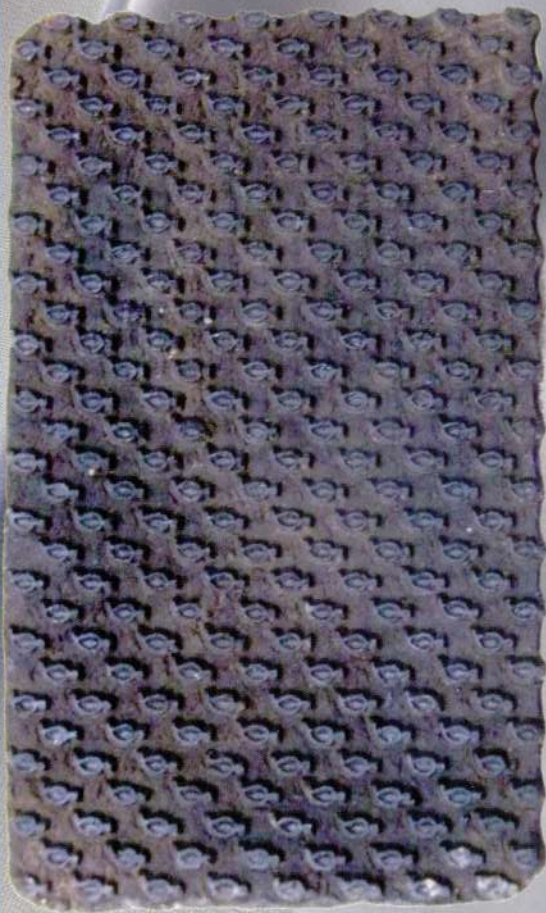
Tex. Bl. No. 74-04
Swan Motif



Tex.BI.No. 75-04
Two Aamni- Mango design
Block with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 76-04
Fan shaped floral design



Tex.B1.No. 77-04
Design with fifteen small mangoes
arranged asymmetrically in nine rows.
Block with handle



Tex.B1.No. 78-04
Cone shaped design with handle



Tex. Bl. No. 79-04
Creeper design



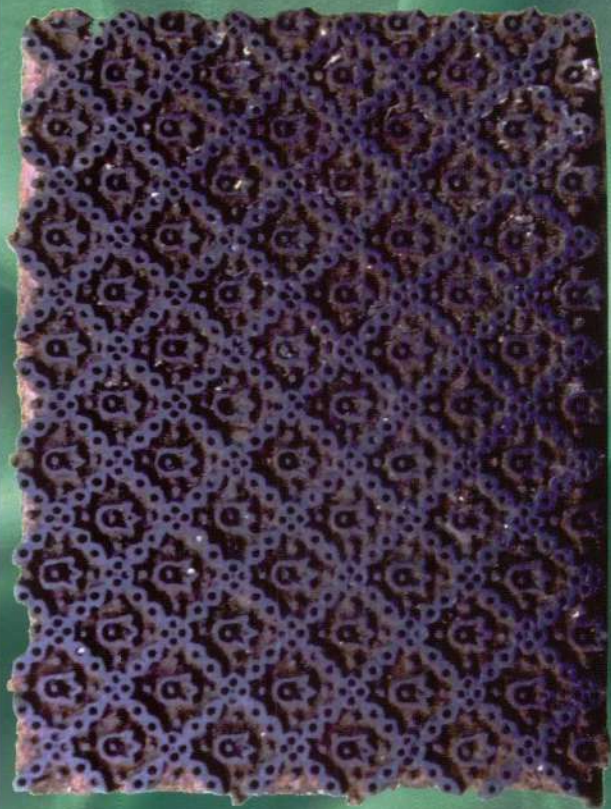
Tex. Bl. No. 80-04
Simple flower design



Tex. Bl. No. 81-04
Block oval in shape with two
different shaped leaf structure.



Tex.BI.No.82-04
Creeper design in profuse manner



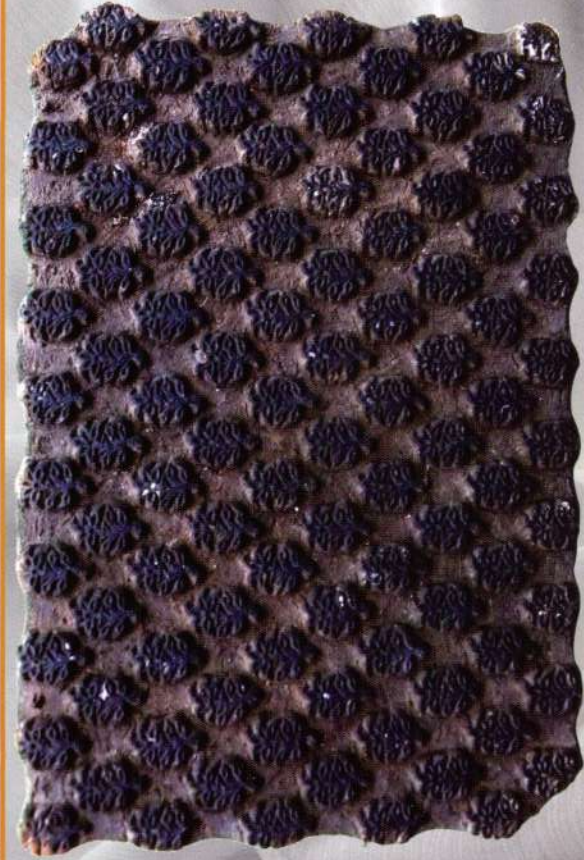
Tex.B1.No. 83-04
Geometrical design with flowers
in the middle



Tex.B1.No. 84-04
Flower design.



Tex.Bl.No. 85-04
Embossed plant design



Tex.B1.No. 86-04

**Ten small flowers arranged alternately
in ten rows. Block with handle**



Tex. Bl. No. 87-04
Block in the shape of a boat
with floral design on the top



Tex. Bl. No. 88-04
Small plant designed border

Tex. Bl. no. 89-04
Geometrical design with dotted
structure. Used as border design



Tex. Bl. No. 90-04
Creeper designed border



Tex. Bl.No- 91-04
Small block with Floral design





Tex. Bl. No. 92-04
Border design



Tex. Bl. No. 93-04
Three Straight lines on the block
Used as border design



Tex. Bl. No. 94-04
Border design with straight lines



Tex. Bl. No. 95-04
Border design with handle



Tex. Bl. No. 96-04
Border design with handle

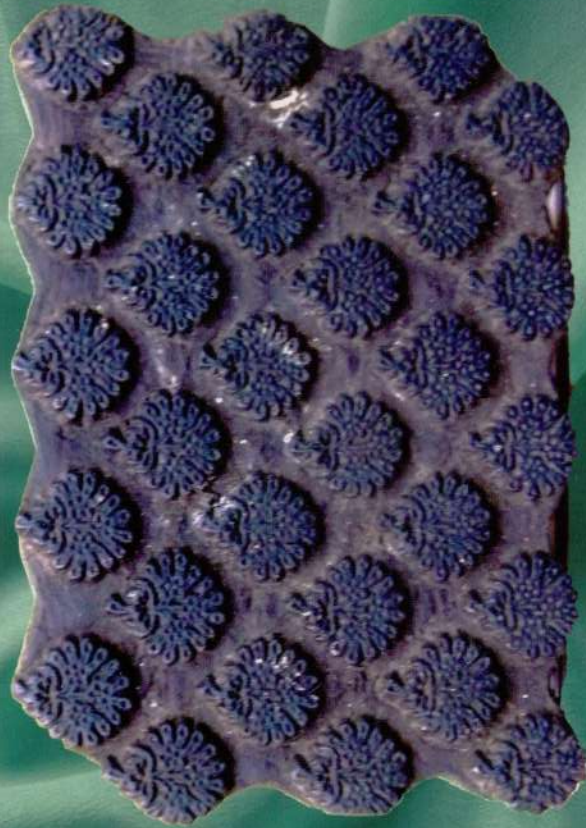


Tex.BI.No. 97-04
Embossed floral design



Tex.Bl.No.98-04

Floral & cross section of seed design



Tex.B1.No. 99- 04
Custard apple like design. Five numbers
arranged alternately in six rows



Tex.Bl.No. 100-04

Rectangular block with dots and leaf in
alternate arrangement



Tex. Bl. No. 101-04
Two leaves arranged alternately
Appears to be like a jewel design

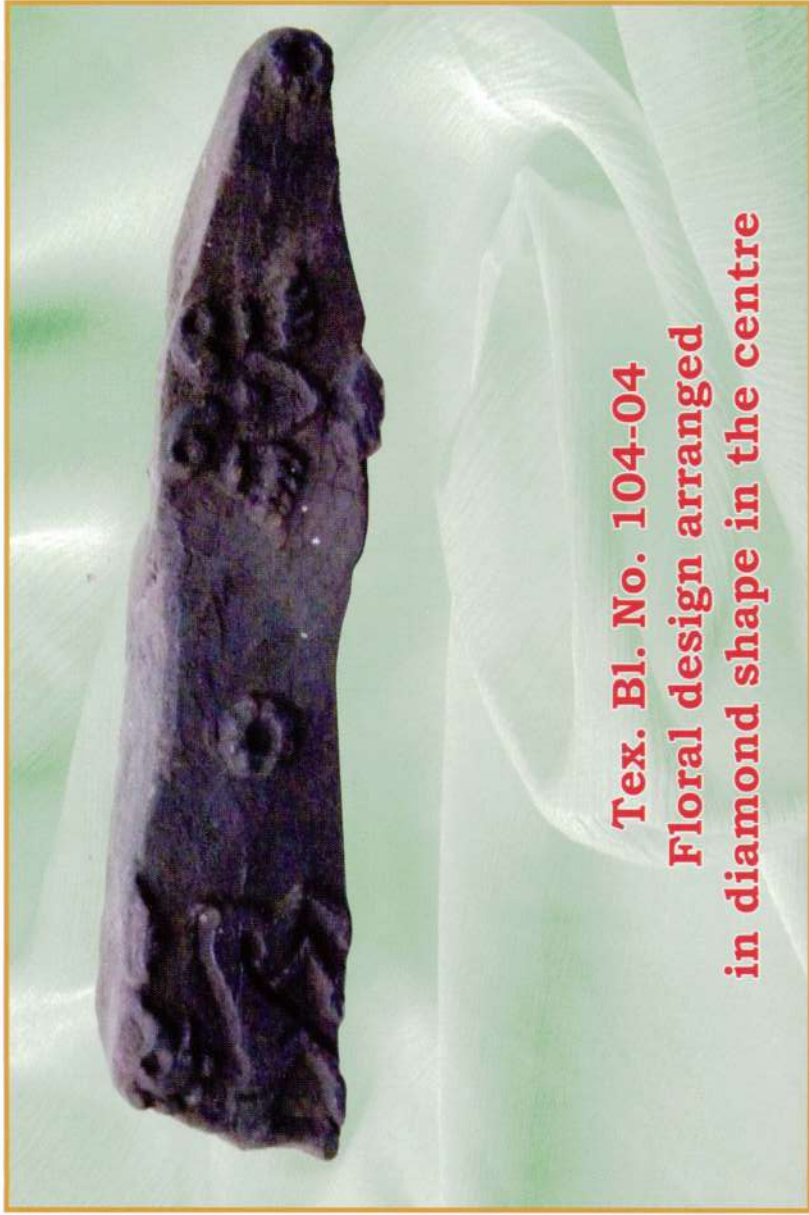


Tex.Bl.No. 102-04

Square block. The design appears like the cross section of seed design with six locules along with floral design



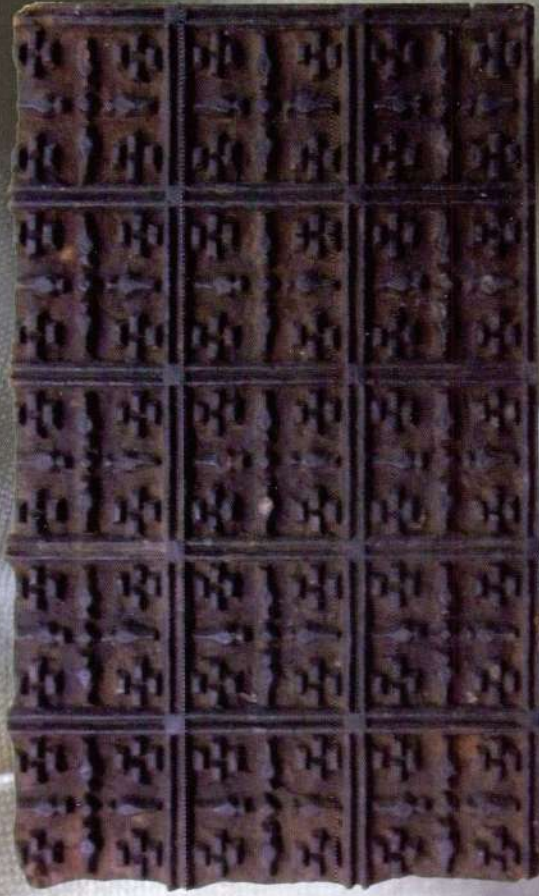
Tex.Bl.No. 103-04
**Various flowers arranged amidst
the dotted structure**



Tex. Bl. No. 104-04
Floral design arranged
in diamond shape in the centre



Tex.Bl.No. 105-04
Big Amni-mango designed flowers
in the middle with
floral designs at the corners



Tex.Bl.No. 106-04
Checked border with flower vase and
floral design on both sides.
Block with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 107-04

**Pineapple design arranged in a zigzag
manner. Block with handle**



Tex. Bl. No. 108-04
Floral border design



Tex.Bl.No. 109-04
Floral design arranged in 6-6 rows
in a zigzag manner



Tex Bl. No. 110-04
Running creeper design
used for border design



Tex.Bl.No. 111-04
6 - 4 rows of mango design. Block
with handle



Tex.Bl.No. 112-04
Engraved floral pattern as squares



Tex. Bl. No. 113-04
Mango border design with
strips of floral design on either side



Tex. Bl. No. 114-04
Spindle shaped floral design in
the centre surrounded by
running design



Tex.Bl.No. 115-04
Nandhi design.



Tex.Bl.No. 116-04
Spindle shaped floral design



Tex.Bl.No. 117-04
Floral design in a square block



Tex Bl. No. 118-04

Plain border designed like a crawling snake



Tex Bl. No. 119-04

**'W' shaped border design arranged one
below the other Block with handle.**



Tex. Bl. No. 120-04
Border design having running floral pattern.



Tex. Bl. No. 121-04
Flower design used as border design



Tex. B1.No. 122-04
Block with handle. Design like
a cross section of a fruit.



Tex. Bl. No. 123-04
Running creeper design. Block with handle.



Tex. Bl. No. 124-04
Floral design used as body and pallu design.



Tex. Bl. No. 125-04
Small strip of design followed by flower design.
Block with handle.



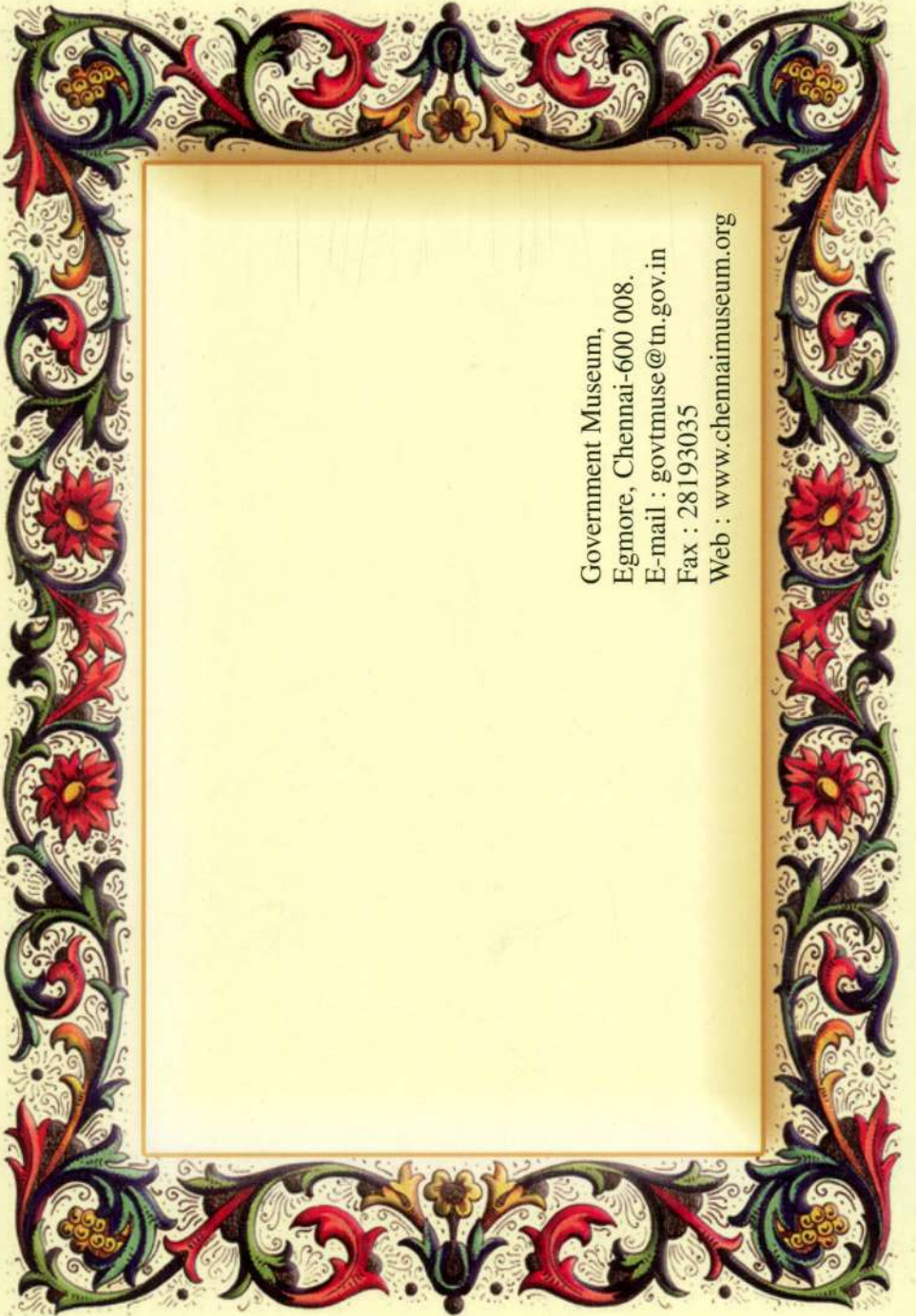
Tex. Bl. No. 126-04
Triangular block with floral design



Tex.B1.No. 127-04
Ovule shaped pattern. 'X' type design
reaching the four corners



Tex. Bl. No. 128-04
Border design with strip pattern
on either side

An ornate, colorful border surrounds the central text area. It features intricate scrollwork in dark green and black, interspersed with vibrant red and yellow flowers. Small clusters of golden berries are also visible within the design.

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