



NJDRS
CDRD



Nepalese Journal of Development and
Rural Studies, Vol. 22 (1), 2025

ISSN: 2392-4403 (Print)

ISSN: 3021-9884 (Online)

A Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal, Index in NepJOL

[ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE]

Sacred Desgins in the Marketplace: Reimagining Newar Aesthetics Through Consumer Fashion Commodities

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Article History

Received: August 18, 2025

Accepted: December 12, 2025

Published: December 31, 2025

How to Cite

Shrestha, P. & Limbu, L. P. (2025). Sacred desgins in the marketplace: Reimagining newar aesthetics through consumer fashion commodities. *Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies*, 22(1), 45-53. <https://doi.org/10.3126/njdrs.v22i1.99381>

Online Access

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/njdrs.v22i1.99381>

Website: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/njdrs>

Email: info@cdird.tu.edu.np

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Abstract

Indigenous aesthetic traditions have long served as repositories of collective memory, ritual knowledge, and cultural identity, particularly among the Newar community of Nepal. The Newari sacred forms, such as Jya windows, Kumari ornaments, and the Kumari Rath wheel, are embedded in religious architecture and ceremonial practices. Recently, these designs transformed into wearable fashion commodities circulating through urban markets and digital platforms. This transformation of Newari aesthetic goods design into wearable fashion commodities extends or limits the value of sacredness, an aspect of consumer culture that remains underexplored in academic discourse. This study, “Sacred Designs in the Marketplace: Reimagining Newar Aesthetics through Wearable Fashion Commodities,” examines how the commodification of Newar sacred designs reconstructs their cultural, symbolic, and aesthetic meanings. The research applied Grounded Theory to John Dewey’s concept of aesthetics as lived experience, drawing on Indigenous frameworks and qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, visual analysis, and market observation. Findings reveal that the transformation of Newari aesthetic goods design into wearable fashion commodities extends their sacred value. It also fosters new aesthetic experiences, intergenerational cultural transmission, and greater visibility among younger generations as they try to understand its meaning. The study concludes that the transformation of sacred aesthetic goods into wearable goods in consumer markets, which negotiates aesthetic spaces and a new generation, and recommends ethically grounded design practices and contextual storytelling to sustain Indigenous aesthetic meaning.



Open Access

Keywords: Newar aesthetics, sacred objects, commodification, consumer culture, Dewey, Indigenous aesthetics

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Introduction

Aesthetic objects are never merely decorative; they are socially embedded expressions through which cultural values, historical memory, and collective identity are produced and sustained. The aesthetic forms found in architecture, ornamentation, textiles, and ritual artifacts serve as carriers of cosmological knowledge, moral order, and communal belonging, transmitted across generations through embodied practice and symbolic meaning in Indigenous societies (Clifford, 1988). Traditionally protected within ritual spaces, sacred architectures, and museum contexts, these objects derive their significance from cultural protocols and collective custodianship. However, the expanding reach of contemporary consumer capitalism has increasingly removed Indigenous aesthetics from their original contexts, recasting sacred designs as commercial commodities and raising concerns about appropriation, commodification, and the conversion of cultural meaning into economic value (Appadurai, 1986). This transformation has far-reaching social and cultural consequences, reshaping community authority over heritage, redefining identity within global markets, and prompting critical academic debates on authenticity, value, and the ethics of cultural consumption.

Within the Newar community of Nepal, sacred aesthetic forms such as carved Jya (windows), Kumari ornaments, and the Kumari Rath wheels have long been integral to ritual practice and urban architecture, serving as vehicles for religious narratives, social hierarchy, and cosmological order (Gutschow, 1997). Informed by anthropological approaches to material culture and the “social life” of objects, this study understands the making of aesthetic goods that form change in wearable goods through use, circulation, and collective interpretation (Appadurai, 1986). In recent years, these sacred aesthetic goods have been reused as jewelry and fashion commodities for local and global markets, a transformation increasingly facilitated by urban architecture and digital platforms. Viewed through theories of commodification and cultural consumption, this shift reveals how sacred meanings are renegotiated as aesthetic forms move from ritual spaces into consumer culture, raising critical questions of value (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992). Finally, this process highlights the interplay between spiritual significance and market logic, showing how cultural meanings are continually reinterpreted in contemporary contexts.

The transformation of sacred aesthetics into consumer commodities has received sustained attention in anthropology, cultural studies, and consumption research. The analysis of material culture and commodification generally advances two

contrasting interpretations. One strand argues that market adaptation can support cultural continuity by enabling sacred designs to circulate in new social contexts, thereby sustaining their relevance and visibility in contemporary life: as Appadurai notes, “commodities are not merely things; they are socially and culturally embedded objects whose circulation produces meaning”. In contrast, critical perspectives warn that commodification often separates aesthetic forms from their ritual and epistemic foundations, “flattening complex symbolic systems into surface design and weakening community authority over meaning” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1988). The studies of Newar society, in particular, emphasize that ritual objects derive their significance from “culturally regulated practices and hierarchical forms of custodianship rather than from visual form alone” (Gellner, 2020). Methodologically, much of this literature remains conceptually oriented and externally framed, offering limited insight into how such sacred-to-commercial transformations are actually experienced and negotiated by designers, consumers, and community members themselves. This gap is pronounced in South Asian contexts, where empirically grounded, community-centered analyses remain scarce. Addressing this limitation, the present study examines the aesthetic and cultural implications of transforming Newar sacred designs into wearable fashion commodities, grounding broader theoretical debates in lived experience and localized meaning-making.

Despite growing debate over the commodification of sacred aesthetics, existing studies remain largely conceptual, externally oriented, and offer limited insight into how such transformations are interpreted and negotiated by local communities, designers, and consumers themselves (Shrestha, 2012). In particular, there is a geographical and empirical gap in South Asian contexts, including Nepal, where the social, cultural, and aesthetic implications of transforming sacred Newar designs into wearable fashion commodities have not been systematically examined (Gellner, 2020). Methodologically, few studies employ community-centered, qualitative approaches that capture the perspectives of both producers and users. At the same time, theoretically, the integration of Indigenous aesthetics with contemporary frameworks of commodification remains underdeveloped (Leuthold, 1998). Addressing these gaps, the present study provides an empirically grounded, culturally sensitive analysis that demonstrates how sacred meaning is maintained, adapted, and contested in consumer contexts.

This study aims to critically examine the transformation of Newar sacred aesthetic goods into wearable fashion commodities through three interrelated objectives. First, it explores how sacred aesthetic goods are adapted and represented in contemporary fashion, highlighting both the extension of aesthetic value as ritual designs gain new visibility and functional roles in everyday life, and its limits, where symbolic depth is reduced when detached from ritual contexts. Second, the study investigates the perceptions and experiences of designers and consumers, focusing on how stakeholders negotiate the balance between maintaining cultural authenticity and appealing to consumer tastes, thereby revealing the contested valuation of sacred-inspired fashion. Third, it examines the broader social and cultural consequences of commodifying sacred aesthetics, including implications for community authority, cultural continuity, and the preservation of symbolic meaning. Together, these objectives provide a framework for understanding how sacred-to-commercial transformations simultaneously extend the reach of aesthetic goods while challenging the limits of their ritual and cultural significance within the Newar context.

The study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in cultural analysis and visual ethnography. Data collected through semi-structured consumer interviews, visual analysis of fashion items incorporating sacred aesthetic goods, and market-based observation, including photographs. This multi-method approach enables triangulation among visual, iconic, and contextual data, strengthening analytical depth and ensuring culturally grounded interpretation. The article is structured as follows: the introduction presents the research context, gap, objectives, and significance; the literature review outlines key theoretical and empirical debates; the methodology section details data collection and analysis procedures; the findings and discussion interpret empirical results in relation to theory and existing literature; and the conclusion highlights implications for cultural preservation, aesthetic valuation, and future research.

Materials, Methods, and Procedures

This literature review examines scholarship on the aesthetics of consumption, Indigenous material culture, and the commodification of sacred objects, focusing on how these perspectives inform the study of Newar sacred designs in contemporary fashion. Existing research highlights the dual role of aesthetic objects as carriers of cultural meaning and as commodities circulating in consumer markets (Shrestha, 2012). While Western scholarship emphasizes sensory, symbolic, and emotional

engagement with products, Indigenous frameworks stress relational meaning, communal authority, and ritual significance (Leuthold 27). The review identifies a gap in empirical, community-centered studies that explore how sacred-to-commercial transformations are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated, particularly in South Asian contexts. By synthesizing these strands, the review provides a foundation for understanding the aesthetic, cultural, and social implications of commodifying Newar sacred designs.

Aesthetic experience has increasingly become central to consumer culture, as products are valued not only for utility but also for their sensory, symbolic, and emotional significance (Bloch et al., 2003). Scholarship on the aesthetics of consumption emphasizes that consumers act as “aesthetic subjects,” interpreting and engaging with visual forms, style, and design meaning in ways that reflect identity, status, and cultural affiliation (Appadurai, 1986). Studies indicate that aesthetic perception shapes purchase intention, brand attachment, and emotional engagement, and that shifts in product categories often reflect broader changes in aesthetic values, where form, narrative, and symbolism become key differentiators in competitive markets (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2011). However, much of this research focuses on luxury goods, retail environments, and Western design traditions, with limited attention to Indigenous and sacred aesthetics, leaving a critical gap in understanding how culturally embedded forms operate within consumer spaces.

Indigenous aesthetic traditions differ fundamentally from Western frameworks by emphasizing relational, contextual, and knowledge-based values. Rather than prioritizing individual taste and isolated beauty, Indigenous aesthetics are embedded in community, land, and lived experience, with objects acting as carriers of cosmological, ethical, and social knowledge (Leuthold, 1989). In the Newar context, ritual aesthetic objects and sacred designs encode hierarchical, social, and spiritual meaning, which are transmitted through practice and collective recognition (Gellner, 2020). When such objects are removed from ritual and cultural contexts, their symbolic depth is flattened into surface aesthetics, risking misinterpretation and loss of epistemic authority. At the same time, Indigenous scholarship recognizes the dynamic nature of cultural traditions, noting that aesthetic forms have historically adapted to new materials, audiences, and social conditions, suggesting that cultural continuity can coexist with transformation. Nevertheless, an in-depth interview and iconographic observation reveal that this transformation of aesthetic goods into market

consumer goods expands the hierarchical, social, and spiritual meanings within the community, as these goods make them more familiar with their culture and provide a deeper understanding because it raises curiosity in the new generation and searches for the historical and contextual meaning.

The commodification of sacred and cultural objects remains a point of opposition for the new generation. The appeal of modern goods is rising among the new generation. Interest in athletic goods is low in modern communities. Some scholars argue that market adaptation can refresh tradition by extending its relevance to contemporary life and integrating it into everyday practices, particularly among younger generations (Shrestha, 2012). Wearable ornaments incorporating sacred meaning, for example, serve as a means of cultural preservation while simultaneously generating economic value. Conversely, critical perspectives highlight that commercialization can detach sacred designs from their ritual and social frameworks, reducing complex symbolic systems to aestheticized objects and undermining community authority over meaning (Gellner, 2020). Methodologically, most studies are conceptually oriented, often relying on theoretical analysis with external observation, with few adopting community-centered, qualitative approaches that capture the lived experiences of designers, consumers, and cultural defenders. This gap highlights the need for research that empirically examines how sacred-to-commercial transformations are interpreted, negotiated, and valued by local communities, particularly in South Asian contexts.

This study employs a theoretical framework that combines both Western and Indigenous views on aesthetics to explore how sacred Newar objects are transformed into wearable fashion items. By blending John Dewey's idea of aesthetic experience, which focuses on the creation of meaning through active involvement, with Indigenous concepts of relational meaning, community authority, and cultural protocols, the framework offers a culturally relevant perspective. This allows for an analysis of how aesthetic value, symbolic significance, and community influence are negotiated, while also addressing the transformative potential and possible risks that arise when sacred designs enter the commercial realm.

In his work *Art as Experience* (1934), John Dewey posits that "the value of art isn't merely found in the objects themselves but is revealed through the experiences we have with them". He challenges the traditional notion that separates art from everyday life, suggesting instead that aesthetic experiences are dynamic, evolving from our interactions, interpretations, and emotional connections within

social and cultural settings. Essentially, an object gains significance not just because of its physical form but because of how it is experienced, understood, and woven into our lives and communal practices.

When we apply Dewey's insights to Newar sacred aesthetics, we can see how the meanings of these sacred goods change as they transition from rituals and ceremonies into market settings and daily use. Instead of viewing commercialization as automatically detracting from cultural value, Dewey's approach prompts us to consider how new aesthetic experiences can emerge, be shared, and be socially negotiated. This perspective emphasizes the importance of engagement and meaning-making, showing that aesthetic transformation is part of the lived experience rather than a straightforward loss or gain of value.

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the transformation of Newar sacred goods designs into wearable fashion commodities, focusing on their aesthetic, cultural, and social implications. Primary data were collected through semistructured interviews with consumers who purchase and use Newar-inspired fashion items, exploring their perceptions, interpretations, and experiences, complemented by photographic documentation of the products to capture design patterns, materials, symbolic motifs, and presentation in consumer contexts. Secondary data were gathered from academic literature, library collections, and credible online sources to provide historical, cultural, and theoretical context. Data analysis employed a thematic approach, combining interpretive reading of interview transcripts with visual analysis of iconography to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and tensions. This methodology triangulates consumer perspectives, visual evidence, and existing literature, ensuring analytical depth and cultural sensitivity while providing an empirically grounded understanding of how sacred Newar designs acquire new meanings, aesthetic value, and social significance in contemporary consumer contexts.

Theoretical Application

This study is based mainly on the construct of the *Theory of Aesthetic Experience* (1934) by John Dewey, which asserts that what makes aesthetic objects meaningful and valuable is not what they are, but rather through the human experience, interaction, and interpretation. This viewpoint is especially relevant to the study of the new meanings sacred Newar aesthetic products acquire when they become wearable, and are experienced as fashion products by designers, consumers, and community members. Dewey's theory of aesthetics does not

mean that the process of commercialization is merely the maintenance or erosion of cultural meaning, but that aesthetic meaning is continually negotiated and produced in social engagement, cultural practices, and lived experiences. This approach is very similar to the qualitative study that aims to gain insights into how participants perceive authenticity, cultural identity, symbolic meaning, and aesthetic appreciation. It also serves as a balanced lens through which to discuss the commercialization of sacred designs and its potential to increase cultural visibility and relevance while at the same time questioning the traditional ritual meaning and community authority of these designs. Hence, Dewey's theory provides a solid conceptual foundation for analyzing the dynamic interaction among aesthetic engagement, cultural continuity, and commercialization in the current Newar context.

Results and Discussion

The findings are presented in this section and discussed through a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with artisans, consumers, and business owners, together with a visual analysis of contemporary ornaments inspired by Newar sacred aesthetic goods. The discussion takes into account two sources: John Dewey's *Theory of Aesthetic Experience* (1934) and the changes in the cultural meaning of sacred designs as they become marketable fashion products and how these transformations are effected. Dewey's philosophy of aesthetics holds that the worth of an aesthetic object is discovered through human experience, interaction, and interpretation rather than the aesthetic objects themselves. The results confirm this, as commercialization is not only a matter of the retention or erosion of cultural heritage, but also a continuous process of negotiation in which aesthetic value, cultural identity, symbolic value, and economic value are constantly reinterpreted in social practices and lived experience. The use of sacred imagery in wearable ornaments has strengthened their visibility, accessibility, and economic value, but has also raised pertinent questions about ritual authenticity, symbolic integrity, and community ownership. The study emphasizes the nature of cultural continuity and aesthetic innovation, and shows how sacred Newar themes are constantly reinterpreted as they are commercialized without losing their cultural significance.

Aesthetic Transformation as Cultural Continuity

The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, supported by photographic evidence and craft-process videos, shows that artisans adapt sacred Newar aesthetic goods into wearable ornaments with the intention "to sustain Indigenous cultural

practice within everyday life rather than to detach it from its ritual origins. Items such as Kumari-inspired keyrings, Kumari Rath wheel earrings, traditional window, and Yomari form ornaments are described by participants in the interview as designs that "recall recognizable symbolic features even when reduced to small, wearable, and functional.

Figure 1. *Transformation of Jya into Consumer Goods*



Source: Field Observation, 2025

The picture of the ornament given above is a unique, handcrafted piece made by artisans using the traditional Newari window style, intended as a decorative item. When these ornaments are presented in markets, they catch the eye of potential buyers and often spark "curiosity and conversations" (Upadhyaya, 2015). These interactions invite people to ask questions, seek more information, and interpret the ornament's meaning based on their personal experiences. However, the way different groups perceive these meanings can vary significantly. For the Newari community, a shared cultural background and historical knowledge enable them to create culturally relevant and accurate interpretations, adding to the ornament's deeper significance. On the other hand, people outside the Newari community lack the same cultural insights, which can lead to misunderstandings. As a result, their conversations lack the richness and depth that come from a more profound understanding of the piece. This idea resonates with John Dewey's idea, "he argues that art should not be understood merely as a finished object but as a dynamic experiential process. For Dewey, art becomes meaningful only when it is actively encountered, felt, and interpreted by an individual" (Dewey, 1934). This viewpoint highlights that the true worth of art isn't found in the artwork itself, but in the personal and transformative feelings it inspires in us.

Visual media and images highlight how culturally important objects have begun to transition from exclusive ritual and ceremonial use to everyday consumer goods. This shift allows people to engage with these objects repeatedly and informally, “things can move in and out of the commodity state” (Appadurai, 1986). However, scholars who study material culture warn that when sacred items are removed from their original contexts, social, ritual, or narrative, their meanings can become fragmented. Kopytoff argues that commoditization involves more than economic exchange; “from a cultural perspective, the production of commodities is also a cultural and cognitive process: commodities must be not only produced materially as things, but also culturally marked as being a certain kind of thing” (Kopytoff, 1986). The commoditization of aesthetic goods involves not just the process of buying and selling, but also how it influences and shapes cultural significance.

In the Newari community, transforming sacred objects into both wearable and non-wearable items helps maintain their symbolic meanings because cultural narratives, ritual knowledge, and local experts continue to shape their interpretation. On the other hand, when people from different communities who lack the necessary contextual understanding and interpretive background consume these objects, their sacred meanings may get diluted or misunderstood. While the aesthetic appeal of these items might still be appreciated, their deeper cultural significance often remains hidden from those outside the original community.

The four in-depth interviews, conducted with two artisans and two consumers, highlight differing perspectives on Newar sacred ornaments. The artisans stressed that crafting these pieces involves not just technical skill but also a profound understanding of cultural narratives, ritual symbolism, and historical influences. One artisan remarked, “Each design is rooted in stories and traditions that have been handed down over generations; if we lose the context, we lose the significance of the ornament” (Artisan 1). On the other hand, consumers appreciated the craftsmanship and beauty of the ornaments but admitted that their grasp of the symbolic and ritual meanings was somewhat limited. One consumer noted, “I love the design and the colors, but I don’t really understand what each motif stands for or its cultural importance” (Consumer 1). These reflections suggest that while people can enjoy the beauty of the ornaments without knowing the cultural context, the true depth of their meaning is tied to the understanding present within the Newari community. This interplay echoes the ideas of Dewey and Kopytoff, who noted that

while ornaments can acquire new aesthetic value in commercial settings, their full cultural significance is rooted in the knowledge of those who share that cultural background.

Commodification and Symbolic Ambivalence

At the same time, the next participant in the interview points to an “uncertain relationship between commercialization and sacred value,” in which increased market circulation enhances visibility and economic sustainability for artisans while also raising concerns about symbolic dilution. The other two interviewees emphasized that repeated reproduction and widespread consumption may “weaken the perceived uniqueness and ritual depth of sacred symbols,” particularly when these objects are encountered outside their ceremonial contexts. Participants further noted that many consumers, especially non-community users, engage with such items primarily as “cute, aesthetic,” and souvenir objects, often without recognizing their deeper cultural and spiritual significance. This tension echoes Appadurai’s concept of the “social life of things” (Appadurai, 1986), which explains how objects acquire shifting meanings as they circulate across social, cultural, and economic settings. However, artisans did not view this process as inevitable cultural erosion; instead, they described commodification as “conditional and context-dependent” Ahtone (2019), arguing that sacred value is not inherently diminished through transformation but becomes vulnerable when “detached from contextual knowledge and narrative understanding. Visual evidence from the ornaments reinforces this duality, as the designs “preserve iconic forms while simultaneously functioning as lifestyle accessories,” demonstrating how sacred aesthetics operate across overlapping devotional and commercial registers.

Figure 2. *Use of Aesthetic Goods for Commercial Purpose*



Source: Field Observation, 2025

Figure 2 shows how aesthetic items, like the decorative keychain attached to a handbag, are adapted for commercial use. In the Newari community, this shift not only extends the lifespan of objects but also deepens their cultural significance. The shared knowledge, local stories, and interpretative practices within the community play a crucial role in maintaining the object's symbolic value. However, when these items are sold outside the community, their sacred and cultural meanings are often misunderstood, leading to a loss of their deeper significance for those unfamiliar with their traditional background. Therefore, while commercialization can increase an object's value, it also limits a broader audience's understanding of its full cultural and symbolic importance.

The in-depth interviews with both artisans and consumers reveal that Newar sacred objects, despite their adapted for commercial purposes, retain their cultural importance within the community. Artisans emphasized their commitment to preserving the stories and meanings behind each design, even when these objects are turned into everyday items: "We strive to keep the narratives and significance of each design intact, even if it becomes something people use regularly" (Artisan 2). On the other hand, consumers appreciated the visual appeal of these items but often admitted they did not know the deeper cultural layers: "I love carrying it because it's beautiful and unique, but I'm not aware of the deeper meaning behind the design" (Consumer 1). These reflections indicate that while commercialization draws more attention to these objects, their full symbolic significance still relies on the community's interpretive knowledge. This discussion also reveals that the transformation of aesthetic good to another form extends both life and meaning in the Newari community. However, it expands life, not the sacred value in other communities.

Ethical Negotiation Between Creativity and Cultural Responsibility

A key theme that emerged from the interviews was the deliberate ethical negotiation artists engage in to balance personal creativity with cultural responsibility. Many participants explained that they actively worked to "preserve essential iconographic features," choosing not to alter sacred elements in ways that might misrepresent and diminish their cultural meanings. Instead of exaggerating form and meaning for commercial aspects, artists presented designs that were "respectful, recognizable, and rooted in tradition," even when simplified and stylized for broader audiences. Some creators went further by adding "explanatory captions" at the point of sale, while others shared cultural context through verbal

narratives and encouraged "self-directed learning" via digital platforms. Several artisans also reflected on their own positionality, emphasizing that, as members of the Newar and other Nepali communities, their work was an extension of ancestral practice rather than an act of external appropriation.

Figure 3. *Artisans Reflected on Their Own Positionality*



Source: Field Observation, 2025

Figure 3 depicts a kiring crafted by artisans with the Kumari statue as its focal point. This piece, intended primarily as an aesthetic object embedded in Newari culture, is available for purchase in both physical stores and online marketplaces. By converting a culturally meaningful symbol into a fashionable accessory, the kiring illustrates how traditional designs can be reinterpreted for modern commercial markets while still maintaining ties to their cultural heritage.

Interviews conducted with both artisan and consumer highlight the cultural and aesthetic importance of the Kumari kiring illustrated in Figure 3. The artisans emphasized that the inclusion of the Kumari figure requires a thoughtful consideration of its sacred and historical significance: "Incorporating the Kumari statue is not solely for decoration; it embodies sacred and historical meaning that must be honored, even in everyday creations" (Artisan 1). On the other hand, consumers expressed admiration for the Kiring's craftsmanship and distinctiveness, yet many were unaware of its deeper cultural implications: "I appreciate the Kiring's design and uniqueness, but I don't fully grasp the meaning behind the Kumari" (Interview, 2). These observations reveal that while commercialization facilitates broader accessibility and aesthetic appeal, the Kiring's true cultural significance is deeply rooted in the insights and interpretations of the artisans.

Limitation or Expansion of Value

Overall, the thematic analysis indicates that the transformation of sacred aesthetic goods into wearable ornaments does not simply diminish cultural value but expands and redistributes it across multiple dimensions of social meaning. Rather than eroding ritual exclusivity, this process gives rise to “new forms of value” through increased visibility, strengthened emotional attachment, enhanced economic viability, and expanded intercultural exchange (Jones & Leech, 2015). The visual imagery of ornaments included in this study visually reinforces this dual process, illustrating that sacred meaning retains its symbolic presence even as it adapts to contemporary aesthetic frameworks (Patel, 2024). The shift of sacred aesthetic goods into modern ornament designs showcases the lively relationship between tradition and contemporary style, highlighting how cultural meaning remains alive even in new artistic forms.

From this perspective, cultural value is not lost through commodification; instead, it is transformed, shifting from a model anchored in singular sacred authority to a plural, negotiated form shaped by designers, consumers, and cultural context (Kopytoff, 1986). This reframing challenges the assumption that transformation inherently entails cultural degradation. Instead, the findings suggest that the critical issue lies not in transformation itself but in the presence of ethical mediation, contextual awareness, and cultural accountability throughout the commodification process (Grimm et al., 2024). When these conditions are foregrounded, ornament forms do not function as cultural dilutions but as dynamic sites of meaning that reflect ongoing dialogues between tradition and contemporaneity.

Conclusion

This study focused on the process of change in the sacred aesthetic production of Newar into a ready-to-wear fashion commodity and explored its aesthetic, cultural, and social implications. The discoveries show that the process of commodification is not only a loss or preservation of culture but also a negotiation between parties or reinterpretations of ritual and symbolic values that give sacred designs new aesthetic, economic, and social values. The findings from both semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis reveal that designers, consumers, and community members are actively negotiating the relationship between cultural authenticity, and modern consumers' demands, as evidenced by their pride in Newar heritage and their concerns about the progressive removal of sacred designs from their traditional cultural context. Based on John Dewey's Theory of Aesthetic Experience (1934),

the study demonstrates that the value of sacred aesthetic goods is not only a product of their own, but is also continually created by human experiences, social interactions, and cultural interpretations. This theoretical model can be used to understand how the commercialization of culture can produce new ways of engaging and making visible, while also disturbing traditional meanings, community authority, and epistemic integrity. While sacred designs are adopted into fashion to promote culture, create economic opportunities, and raise intergenerational awareness, the adaptation and simplifications of traditional forms for commercial purposes can deconstruct the symbolic depth and ritual significance of the designs. This study enhances the burgeoning scholarship on material culture, Indigenous aesthetics, and cultural commodification, by showing how aesthetic value, cultural continuity, and market transformation are interconstituted by lived experience and social practice. The results are informative for designers, artisans, cultural institutions, and policy makers who can navigate the creative innovation and preservation of Newar cultural heritage in a globalized consumer market.

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