Typography and Storytelling

Visual Storytelling Through Typography

A Study of Marathi Book Covers and Genre-Specific Design

Vaishnavi Vijay Patil, MIT Institute of Design, vaish.04patil@gmail.com
Monali Balwant Chopkar, MIT Institute of Design, monalichopkar.work@gmail.com
Dr. Rajendra Thakre, MIT Institute of Design, rajendrathakre@mitid.edu.in

Abstract: Marathi, one of India's oldest languages, has a rich literary tradition in the culturally engaging visual aesthetic of its book covers. This study examines typography on 100 Marathi book covers across four genres: humour, history/historical fiction, mystery/horror, and travelogue. While Marathi literature spans diverse genres, research on how title typography reflects a book's content and emotional tone remains limited. This investigation explores how typography, imagery and overall style in this regional context communicate cultural and aesthetic storytelling elements. Typography on book covers serves as a critical visual cue, setting readers' expectations and conveying a book's theme and tone. By analyzing typographic choices such as typeface, weight, colour, and spacing, this study reveals how these elements enhance narrative essence across genres. It examines how typography contributes to the historical depth of historical fiction, the suspenseful atmosphere of mystery and horror, the immersive quality of travelogues, and the playful energy of humorous works. The research underscores typography's role in shaping perceptions and deepening readers' connections to Marathi literary works. Also, this research addresses the way Marathi typography has evolved alongside contemporary design trends while preserving its cultural identity. Keeping historical influences and current transformations in view, it identifies how typography influences readers' involvement and literary experience. The conclusions help build a broader picture of regional book design bridging tradition and modernity in Marathi literature.

1. Introduction

'लाभले आम्हास भाग्य बोलतो मराठी, जाहलो खरेच धन्य ऐकतो मराठी'

The Marathi Abhimaan-geet (अभिमान-गीत) composed by Suresh Bhat conveys a deep sense of pride and connection to the linguistic and cultural identity of Maharashtra. The lyrics express an appreciation for the Marathi language, reinforcing its significance in the lives of its speakers. Evolved from a Maharashtrian dialect of Prakrit, Marathi is one of the oldest languages in India and has now been declared a classical language by the Indian Central Government. (PIB.GOV 2024) Marathi has a rich literary heritage along with cultural and historical significance which continues to evolve with modern influences. Marathi literature has been formed by the contributions of many saints, poets, writers and other creative minds, who have enriched readers with knowledge, cultural narratives, and diverse storytelling traditions.

One of the most common narrative traditions throughout the years has been literary narrative, specifically in the form of books. Although Marathi literature's narrative content has been thoroughly studied, little is known about how these stories are visually told through book cover design. The visual depiction of books on their covers is as culturally significant and rooted in narrative as the books themselves. Visual storytellers influence how readers engage with the book through various design elements.

Typography is one of the most important elements that affect visual storytelling which attempts to create a seamless and immersive experience. Effective typography can also help establish the mood for the reader and introduce the genre of the book. A visually appealing design using elements like typography, colours and imagery in an effective layout can attract readers and spark curiosity in their minds. This paper discusses the different elements involved in book cover design, their meaning, and interpretation. It gives insight into how effectively visual storytelling on book covers speaks to readers and how it alters readers'

experience of interacting with the book. The paper also attempts to explore how reading is enhanced by visual narrative and how evolving design trends impact Marathi book typography.

1. Literature Review

Typography is more than just a medium for presenting language; it is an active semiotic resource that shapes meaning in multimodal texts. Its design choices influence not only readability but also the emotional and social connotations of a message. (Serafini & Clausen, 2012).

By analyzing how cultural contexts influence design and visual elements, this research underscores the importance of interpretation in meaning-making. It explores how cultural symbols and practices shape the way audiences engage with and understand multimodal texts. (Kehret-Ward, 1988).

1.1 Research Gap

Although research on the Marathi language and intellectual traditions has been conducted (Deshpande, 2023), it has not examined how Marathi literature visually projects its identity. The study does not look at its visual identity but concentrates on linguistic history. However, studies like (Gudinavičius & Šuminas, 2017) look at how colour affects readers' decisions. There is currently no information available on how Marathi book covers' Devanagari typography, imagery, and general style convey meaning. By examining how typography, imagery, and general design contribute to the visual identity of Marathi book covers across genres, this paper seeks to close these gaps.

1.2 Hypothesis

This study explores the impact of expressive typography in Marathi book cover design which helps readers recognize genres and understand the book's mood before reading it. Some genres like mystery and humour rely more on expressive typography than other genres, affecting the perception of the book cover.

1.3 Objectives

This research aims to examine how typography on Marathi book covers influences genre perception and reader engagement.

- To study this by identifying the common typographic traits across genres in book cover design, specifically in Marathi.
- To analyze the role of expressive typography in visually conveying the mood and theme of each genre.

2. Methodology

This study explores a mixed-method strategy founded on the ROSES protocol. The significance of a systematic review procedure, utilizing the ROSES protocol to guarantee quality and precision in the selection of book covers. (Hu and Noor, 2024). The first stage entails outlining the research subject, articulating the issue, and rationalizing the need for the review. The second phase describes the goals of the research. The third phase emphasizes pinpointing sources for the literature review, including sole works released in journals, ideally within quartiles Q1 and Q2. (López-Rabadán, 2022).

A qualitative case study method is employed to explore the significance of typography in the design of Marathi book covers.

The collection includes book covers from four distinct genres—Humour, Mystery/Horror, History/Historical Fiction, and Travelogues—showcasing works by notable authors in Marathi literature, published between the 1960s and 2010. The study's research data is obtained from five primary sources: an examination of 100 book covers, and interviews with readers, visual designers, authors, and publishers. Expert insights from interviews with industry professionals complemented the systematic analysis of Marathi book covers. Subhash Pawar, designer and writer specializing in applied art, journalism, and design, presented a unique perspective on design alternatives that are of relevance to a book's topic. Rajashri Deshmukh, Production Department Head at Mehta Publishing House, discussed her experience with the publishing process and the importance of cover design in engaging readers. Supriya Jogdeo, an experienced visual designer, provided insight into changing design trends and how traditional and contemporary techniques have an influence on book cover design.

The research also examines imagery, general visual appeal, and classification of book cover designs. Parameters were set to evaluate book covers according to typography, covering aspects like style, readability, and hierarchy. These parameters were formulated through research. It included typeface style (e.g., traditional, modern, decorative, hand-drawn, minimal, ornamental), legibility (clear, moderate, complex, decorative-legible, decorative-

difficult), and typography hierarchy (balanced, overwhelming, subtle, author-dominant, title-dominant), as well as colour palette choices (bright, muted, earthy, contrasting, monochrome, genre-specific), imagery integration (seamless, cluttered, overlapping, independent, minimal, decorative), cultural resonance (traditional, fusion, global), genre reflection (playful, adventurous, mysterious, serious/dignified), and overall style (vibrant, minimal, classic, experimental, bold) to gain a holistic understanding of the design elements contributing to the effectiveness of Marathi book covers. A survey of 50 Marathi readers was also done. The participants mainly included people from Pune and nearby regions.

3. Discussion

Book covers play a critical role in visual storytelling and communicating the genre of the book. The following analysis is based on the data set of 100 books, consisting of four genres. It focuses on title typography, imagery and overall style of the book covers. An overview of these case studies is explained below.
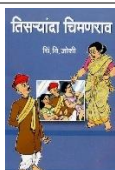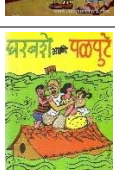
The interviews conducted with Subhash Pawar, Rajashri Deshmukh, and Supriya Jogdeo provided valuable professional insights that reinforced and expanded upon the study's findings on Marathi book cover design. Pawar's expertise highlighted how genre-specific design choices, particularly in mythological and spiritual books, utilize traditional Devanagari fonts and earthy tones to evoke authenticity. His comparison of the straightforward, readability-oriented typography in technical texts compared to the more creative, genre-specific typography of recreational texts rang true in terms of the research on how design responds to reader expectations and gets attention. Deshmukh's observations also noted the strategic role cover design plays in influencing the way readers think about a book. She emphasized that a cover and blurb of a book need to have an integrated relationship such that the visual and text contents are fused to produce a coherent message. Her own perspective also supported the findings of the study that good teamwork among publishers, designers, and writers is needed to make typography, imagery, and layout both visually attractive and correctly convey the book's genre, mood, and thematic overtones, and thereby enhance marketability and reader interest. Jogdeo brought a nuanced awareness of evolving book cover design dynamics to the study, supporting findings on the unconscious influence of design on readers' perceptions. She described the importance of typography, imagery, and composition in depicting genres and the unique aesthetic appeal offered by various visual strategies, from hand-painted

illustration to computer graphics and hybrid techniques. Her discussion of the evolution from reference to old design models to instant access to global styles through technology and social media reflected the study's exploration of modern influences. Despite these innovations, Jogdeo's continued use of techniques such as hand-painting and hand-cutting and pasting, demonstrated the way that blends of old and new could produce book covers with a strong, naturalistic look.

3.1 Genre – Humour

Book Cover	Book Name	Typeface Style	Typeface Legibility	Typography Hierarchy	Colour Palette	Overall Style
	Bendbaja by D. M. Mirasdar	Modern	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Bright Genre-Specific	Classic Vibrant
	Sarmisal by D. M. Mirasdar	Modern	Moderate	Subtle	Bright	Vibrant
	Makadmeva by D. M. Mirasdar	Modern	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Classic
	Hasnaval by D. M. Mirasdar	Decorative	Decorative-Difficult	Title-Dominant	Bright Contrasting	Experimental
	Gappangan by D. M. Mirasdar	Decorative	Moderate	Balanced	Contrasting	Vibrant
	Gappagoshtil by D. M. Mirasdar	Decorative	Decorative-Legible	Balanced	Bright Genre-Specific	Experimental

	Title	Style	Legibility	Hierarchy	Color	Approach
	Batatyachi Chaal by P L Deshpande	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Balanced	Muted	Experimental
	Asa Me Asa Me by P L Deshpande	Decorative	Decorative-Difficult	Overwhelming	Bright Contrasting	Experimental
	Gathod by P L Deshpande	Decorative	Decorative-Legible	Title-Dominant	Muted	Minimal
	Hasavnuk by P L Deshpande	Modern	Moderate	Overwhelming	Bright Contrasting	Experimental
	Golaberij by P L Deshpande	Hand-drawn	Decorative-Legible	Title-Dominant	Bright Genre-Specific	Vibrant
	Khogirbharati by P L Deshpande	Modern	Decorative-Difficult	Overwhelming	Bright	Experimental Bold
	Pulakit Shatkar by P L Deshpande	Decorative	Decorative-Legible	Title-Dominant	Bright	Experimental
	Khilli by P L Deshpande	Ornamental	Complex	Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	UrlaSurla by P L Deshpande	Ornamental	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Minimal

	Agal Pagal by P L Deshpande	Ornamental	Decorative-Difficult	Title-Dominant	Contrasting	Experimental
	Chimanravache Charhat by C V Joshi	Decorative	Clear	Title-Dominant	Bright	Balanced
	Anakhi Chimanrao by C V Joshi	Decorative	Moderate	Overwhelming	Bright	Vibrant
	Tisaryanda Chimanarao by C V Joshi	Traditional	Clear	Subtle	Bright	Classic
	Chauthe Chimanarao by C V Joshi	Decorative	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Classic
	Hasya Chintamani by C V Joshi	Decorative	Decorative-Difficult	Overwhelming	Bright	Experimental
	Gundya Bhau by C V Joshi	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Muted	Balanced
	Char Divas Suneche by C V Joshi	Decorative	Moderate	Overwhelming	Bright	Balanced
	Gharbashe Aani Palapute by C V Joshi	Decorative	Clear	Overwhelming	Bright	Experimental

	Aamacha Pan Gav by C V Joshi	Modern	Moderate	Overwhelming	Monochrome	Experimental

Table 1. Analysis of 25 book cover, Genre – Humour

The majority of the books have expressive and playful typography which creates a lighthearted and humourous tone for the readers. The overall style draws inspiration from cultural and traditional themes, along with a few modern influences. The title and bright colour palette play a significant role in grabbing attention and conveying the book's essence. Most of the books opt for visually engaging designs. There are only a few cases of muted colour palettes or a serious look which suggests that sometimes humour may be presented with depth.
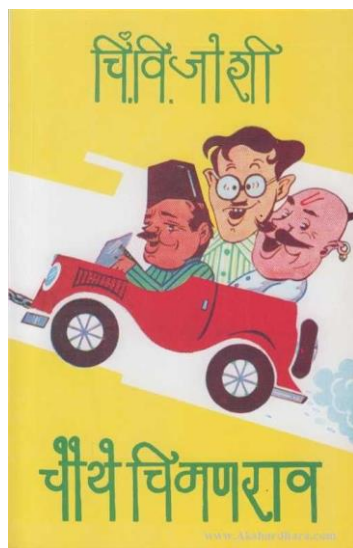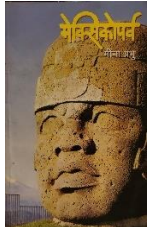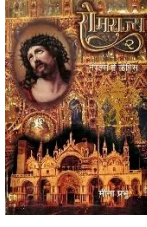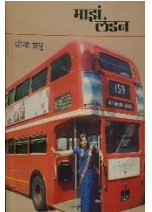

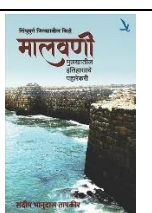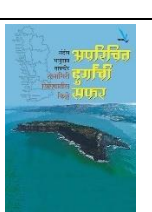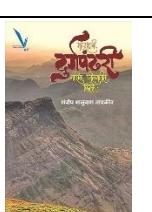Figure. 1 Chauthe Chimanrao by C. V. Joshi. 1958

'Chauthe Chimanrao' is the fourth book in the Chimanrao series, published by Continental Prakashan in 1958. The series is written by C.V. Joshi, who is known for his humorous writing. The typography of the book title and the author's name is playful and appears stylized with a slightly rounded typeface. The readability may be affected due to the tight tracking. The book title is slightly heavier in weight than the author's name, which makes the title more prominent even if both of them are of the same size. The book title is positioned at the bottom, while the name of the author is placed at the top. Both are centre-aligned. The
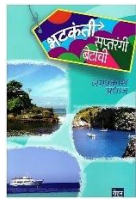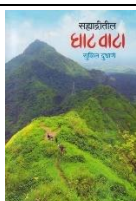
anuswaar (अनुस्वार) in the author's name is replaced with a heart, emphasizing the book's light-hearted nature. The velanti (वेलांटी) have additional flourishes, which reinforce the playfulness. The typeface has wide counters and apertures with stubbed matras (मात्रा) and long dandas (दंड). Letterforms like ज, र, श appear more experimental than others. The book cover's bright yellow background immediately grabs attention. The green colour of the typography helps it stand out against the yellow backdrop. The overall colour palette is bright with yellow, red and green dominating, signifying fun and humour. The illustration appears as a cartoonist caricature, which aligns with the book's genre. Each character shows exaggerated expressions and distinctive characteristics with details like the bhigbali (बिगबाळी), which represents Marathi culture. The little details like the chain towing the car spark curiosity in the viewer's mind. The imagery is slightly tilted which adds to the overall playful feel. The layout is balanced, with the imagery placed in the centre and the text at the top and bottom, leaving enough negative space. The cover effectively communicates the humourous and light-hearted nature of the story through the hand-drawn typography, cartoon caricatures and a simple layout with playful elements.

3.2 Genre – Travelogues

Book Cover	Book Name	Typeface Style	Typeface Legibility	Typography Hierarchy	Colour Palette	Overall Style
	New York New York by Meena Prabhu	Decorative Modern	Clear	Overwhelming Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	Chinimati by Meena Prabhu	Modern	Experimental -Difficult	Title-Dominant	Bright Monochrome	Experimental Bold

	Turknama by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Title-Dominant	Earthy	Classic
	Mexicoparva by Meena Prabhu	Hand-drawn	Clear	Title-Dominant	Earthy	Minimal
	Dakshinrang by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Vibrant
	Romrajya-1 by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Moderate	Balanced	Contrasting	Bold
	Romrajya-2 by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	Gatha Irani by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Contrasting	Bold

	Title	Style	Legibility	Layout	Color	Aesthetic
	Egyptayan by Meena Prabhu	Minimal	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Classic
	Greekanjali by Meena Prabhu	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Title-Dominant	Earthy	Minimal
	Mazha London by Meena Prabhu	Minimal	Clear	Balanced	Bright Contrasting	Classic
	Malawani Mulakhatil Itihasache Paharekari by Sandip Tapkir	Traditional	Clear	Title-Dominant	Bright	Classic
	Aparichit Durganchi Safar - Ratnagiri Jilhyatil Kille by Sandip Tapkir	Traditional	Clear	Overwhelming	Contrasting	Vibrant
	Maharashtrachi Durgpandhari Nashik Jilyatil Kille by Sandip Tapkir	Decorative	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Earthy	Bold
	Offbeat Bhatkanti 5 Khandatil Vividh Deshatil Dilkhulas Mushafiri by Jayprakash Pradhan	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Contrasting	Experimental

	BHATKANTI Saptarangi Betanchi by Jayprakash Pradhan	Traditional	Clear	Overwhelming	Bright	Vibrant
	End Of The World Bhatkanti by Jayprakash Pradhan	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Balanced	Contrasting	Vibrant
	Sahyadritil Ghatvata by Sushil Dudhane	Hand-drawn	Clear	Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	Bhatakanti Prachin Leni Va Mandiranchi by Sushil Dudhane	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Contrasting	Classic
	Aparichit Gadkot by Bhagwan Chile	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Muted	Classic
	Durgam Durg by Bhagwan Chile	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	Durg Daulat Maharashtrachi by Bhagwan Chile	Modern	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Vibrant

	Narmadechya Tataki Dakshinvara Mavaltiche Gahire Rang by Gopal Nilkanth Dandekar	Traditional	Clear	Overwhelming	Bright	Experimental
	Kille by Gopal Nilkanth Dandekar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Experimental
	Durgabhramangatha by Gopal Nilkanth Dandekar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Contrasting	Minimal

Table 2. Analysis of 25 book cover, Genre – Travelogues

Most Marathi travelogues book covers focus on exploring different cultures and regions around the world. There is more global cultural resonance. The use of bright colour palettes reflects the excitement and vibrancy of travel. The experimental styles play a significant role in drawing attention and conveying the essence of the books. Travelogues usually opt for clear and prominent presentations of the title. Many covers are pictorial style which works well but a minimal and illustrative cover can communicate similarly. The cover also hints at an adventurous genre.
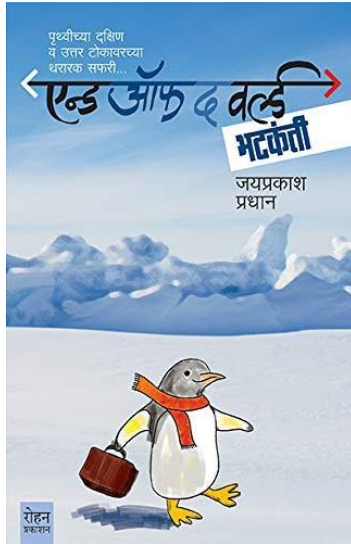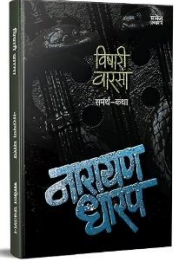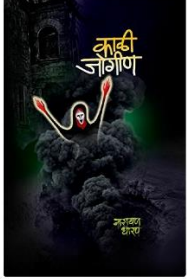
Figure. 2 End of the World Bhatkanti by Jayprakash Pradhan, 2019.

The book 'End of the World Bhatkanti' is a travelogue in Marathi written by Jayprakash Pradhan. The book is about the adventurous travels of the author and his wife to the Arctic and Antarctic. The book was published by Rohan Prakashan in 2019. The title is a mix of Devanagari and English, reflecting its contemporary theme. The typography is hand-drawn with a hint of calligraphic style. The slight curvature and dynamic strokes add movement and excitement. The Shiro Rekha has arrows on both sides which indicate the two poles of the earth. The differentiation of words is shown through the colours across one shirorekha (शिरोरेखा). The word Bhatkanti (भटकंती) is very geometrically constructed and the placement is slanted, showing the fun in the book. The title is more dominant than other typographical elements. The subheading and author name are proper fonts which ensure readability. The colours used are cool tones - blue, white and grey to depict the polar landscape. Similar colours are used for the typography. The most prominent element is the penguin illustration which is hand-drawn and semi-cartoonish. The penguin is carrying a brown suitcase and has a red scarf which adds a warm contrast, drawing attention to the character. The Background consists of realistic icy mountains, blending realism with a playful visual tone. The overall cover is visually balanced with typography on the top half and illustration on the bottom. Unlike many other travel books, instead of using photographs, the illustrated approach gives it a whimsical touch. The bilingual title makes it accessible to a wider audience. The cover successfully conveys adventure, travel and exploration while maintaining a playful and inviting tone.

3.3 Genre - Mystery / Horror

Book Cover	Book Name	Typeface Style	Typeface Legibility	Typography Hierarchy	Colour Palette	Overall Style
	Vishari Varsa by Narayan Dharap	Decorative Hand-drawn	Clear	Author-Dominant	Contrasting Genre-Specific	Bold
	Grass by Narayan Dharap	Ornamental	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Contrasting Genre-Specific	Bold
	440 Chandanwadi by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Balanced	Genre-Specific	Experimental
	Pathlag by Narayan Dharap	Decorative	Experimental -Legible	Title-Dominant	Bright	Experimental
	Kaat by Narayan Dharap	Minimal	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Balanced Classic

Seemepalikadun by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Contrasting	Bold
Navi Maansa by Narayan Dharap	Decorative	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Muted	Experimental
Kulvruttant by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Experimental -Legible	Author-Dominant Title-Dominant	Contrasting	Bold
Chetkin by Narayan Dharap	Ornamental	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Experimental
Shapath by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Experimental -Legible	Balanced	Monochrome	Balanced

	Title					
	Swaha by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Clear	Balanced	BrightContrasting	Classic
	Dast by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Clear	Author-Dominant Title-Dominant	Bright	Bold
	Darvaje by Narayan Dharap	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Earthy	Experimental Balanced
	Grahan by Narayan Dharap	Ornamental	Complex Experimental -Difficult	Author-Dominant	Earthy	Bold
	Krushnachandra by Narayan Dharap	Decorative	Moderate	Balanced	Genre-Specific	Classic

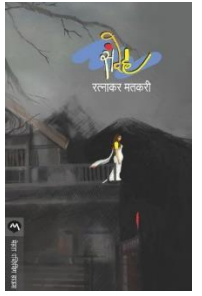|	Title					
	Kali Jogali by Narayan Dharap	Hand-drawn	Clear	Title-Dominant	Contrasting	Classic
	Phashi Bakhal by Ratnakar Matkari	Hand-drawn	Complex	Balanced	Monochrome	Bold
	Rangandhala by Ratnakar Matkari	Decorative	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Vibrant
	Antarbrahya by Ratnakar Matkari	Decorative	Moderate	Balanced	Monochrome Earthy	Experimental
	Kabandh by Ratnakar Matkari	Modern	Clear	Balanced	Contrasting	Minimal

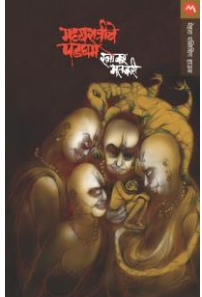|						
	Khekada by Ratnakar Matkari	Modern	Moderate	Subtle	Contrasting	Minimal
	Sandeh by Ratnakar Matkari	Decorative	Experimental -Legible	Balanced	Muted	Experimental
	Madhyaratriche Padgham by Ratnakar Matkari	Hand-drawn Decorative	Experimental -Difficult	Title-Dominant	Monochrome	Experimental
	Nijdham by Ratnakar Matkari	Decorative	Experimental -Legible	Author-Dominant	Earthy	Experimental
	Sambhramachya lata by Ratnakar Matkari	Modern	Clear	Author-Dominant Title-Dominant	Contrasting	Bold

Table 3. Analysis of 25 book cover, Genre – Horror/Mystery

A common strategy for Mystery and Horror book covers is to use contrasting colour palettes with darker backgrounds. This creates suspense, intrigue and fear focusing on the genre. The use of covers in this genre gives a cryptic reference to the story in visually heavy illustrations or graphics. The genre prioritizes exploring diverse cultural elements rather than focusing on specific traditions or blending different cultural elements. The overall style of most of the covers is bold and experimental. There is a clear and prominent presentation of the title and author information.
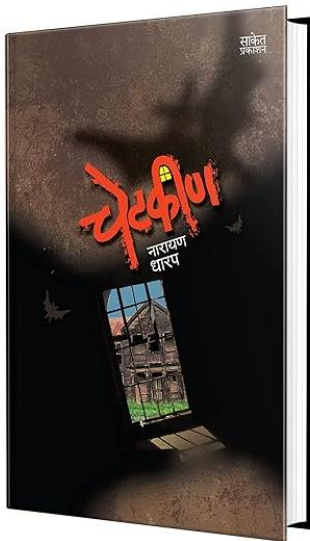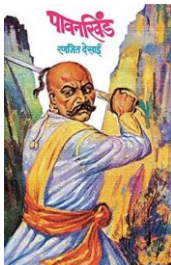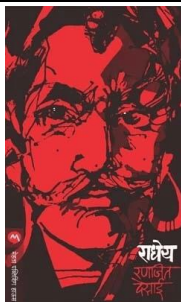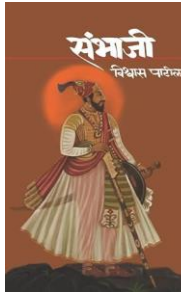

Figure. 3 Chetkin by Narayan Dharap, 2017.

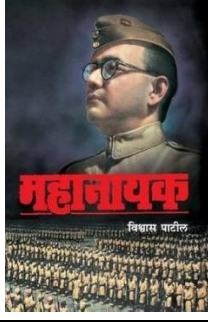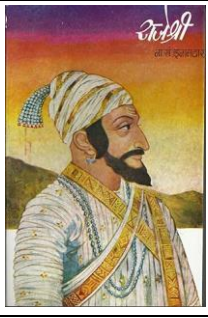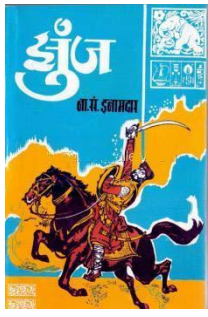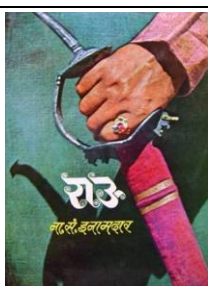The book 'Chetkin' is a horror and suspense story, a Marathi book written by Narayan Dharap. The book is about a woman who can see and talk to ghosts. The book was published by Saket Prakashan in 2017. The title typography is expressive and has a distorted and rough texture on its edges evoking a sense of horror and eeriness. It is not a conventional serif or calligraphic Devanagari font. The title feels intense because of its red colour and heavy flesh. It is the most dominant element of the cover. It is clear and the placement of the title makes it more dynamic and hints at chaos or instability. The glowing window in the velanti (वेलांटी) within the letter 'क' is possibly signifying a haunted house. This is a visual metaphor showing the cultural relevance. The hierarchy of the cover is maintained through the striking contrast in the title typography and background, while the author's name is positioned second in the flow. The cover imagery showcases a broken window through which a gloomy and odd-looking house can be seen, which adds depth and perspective. It can give a feeling of looking into another world
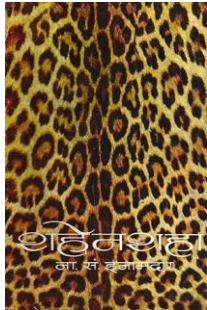
to the viewer/reader. The gothic horror theme is enhanced by the silhouettes of bats, subtly implying supernatural elements. The overall artwork of the book cover is a mix of digital realism and minimalism. Despite being asymmetrical, the design is balanced. In contrast to traditional Marathi horror book covers, which often feature hand-drawn or highly detailed illustrations of supernatural figures, this cover takes a more modern and minimalist approach, using strong typography and suggestive imagery rather than explicit horror visuals.

3.4 Genre - History / Historical Fiction

Book Cover	Book Name	Typeface Style	Typeface Legibility	Typography Hierarchy	Colour Palette	Overall Style
	Chava by Shivaji Sawant	Modern	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Bright	Classic Vibrant
	Mrutyunjay by Shivaji Sawant	Traditional	Clear	Title-Dominant	Bright	Classic
	Yugandhar by Shivaji Sawant	Decorative	Experimental-Difficult	Title-Dominant	Bright	Minimal
	Pawankhind by Ranjeet Desai	Decorative	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Vibrant

	Shriman Yogi by Ranjeet Desai	Traditional	Moderate	Balanced	Earthy	Classic
	Raja Ravi Verma by Ranjeet Desai	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Muted	Classic
	Radheya by Ranjeet Desai	Traditional	Clear	Subtle	Bright	Bold
	Shambhaji by Vishwas Patil	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Muted	Minimal
	Panipat by Vishwas Patil	Modern	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Classic Vibrant

	Title	Style	Legibility	Composition	Color	Aesthetic
	Mahanayak by Vishwas Patil	Modern	Clear	Overwhelming	Contrasting	Classic
	Rajeshri by N S Inamdar	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Title-Dominant	Bright	Vibrant
	Zhunj by N S Inamdar	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Overwhelming	Bright	Bold
	Shikasta by N S Inamdar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Minimal
	Rau by N S Inamdar	Ornamental	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Bright	Classic

	Title	Style	Legibility	Layout	Color	Design
	Mantra Vegala by N S Inamdar	Hand-drawn	Moderate	Balanced	Earthy	Minimal
	Zhep by N S Inamdar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Bold
	Shehenshaha by N S Inamdar	Decorative Modern	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Bright	Experimental Bold
	Raja Shiv Chhatrapati 1 by Babasaheb Purandare	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Muted	Minimal
	Raja Shiv Chhatrapati 2 by Babasaheb Purandare	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Muted	Minimal

	Fulwanti by Babasaheb Purandare	Traditional	Clear	Title-Dominant	Earthy	Classic
	Rajgad by Babasaheb Purandare	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Classic
	Yayati by V S Khandekar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Minimal
	Maharani Tarabai by Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar	Modern	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Vibrant
	Marathyancha Itihas - Peshwai by Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar	Decorative	Experimental-Legible	Balanced	Contrasting	Classic
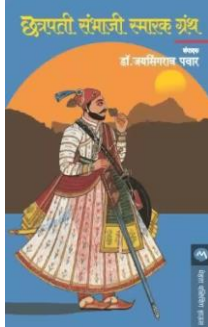
	Chattrapati Sambhaji Smarak Grantha by Dr. Jaysingrao Pawar	Traditional	Clear	Balanced	Bright	Vibrant

Table 4. Analysis of 25 book cover, Genre – History/Historical Fiction

Most of the historical book covers' typography was either calligraphy-based or hand-drawn. The book covers seem serious/dignified, which is consistent with the genre. The style of layout is largely clear and balanced, consistent with the emphasis on historical accuracy and credibility. Traditional design styles are more prevalent in this genre. Most of the colour palettes were bright which was likely for attention-grabbing and attracting readers. Most books feature detailed imagery rather than minimalistic designs. Most books feature detailed imagery rather than minimalistic designs.

Figure. 4 Chaava by Shivaji Sawant, 1979.

'Chaava' is a historical book that explores the life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Written by the famous author Shivaji Sawant, the book was published in 1979 by Mehta Publishing House. The typography of the book title 'Chaava' appears to be bold, rigid and structured geometrically. Due to its thick and heavy strokes, the title has a striking effect which

complements the historical genre. The typography also features sharp 45-degree angles at the end of all the dandas (दंड) which resembles the calligraphic style. The legibility of the title might be affected due to its small counters and less spacing despite having a very good contrast against the background. The book title is placed at the top right corner of the cover and the author's name appears below it in a simple and legible Devanagari font. The lighter weight and smaller size of the author's name ensure that it is noticed but only after the book title. The imagery features a realistic portrait of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj with a background of a fort-like structure. The confident posture of Sambhaji Maharaj represents strength, vision and determination. His royal robes and jewellery signify nobility. The sword he holds signifies his role as a warrior. The little details done on the clothes and jewellery together make the illustration look elegant and intricate which also complements the Marathi aesthetic. The hand-painted style of the illustration gives it a classical look. The cover uses a warm palette with mainly shades of orange and yellow dominating whereas there is a contrasting blue background of the sky which helps in highlighting the illustration in the foreground. The colour choices rightly align with the Marathi culture, as saffron is associated with leadership, war and dharma. The layout feels balanced and gives required emphasis to the illustration, title and author's name. The cover successfully conveys the majesty and historical importance of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj's life through bold typography, a realistic and detailed illustration, a well-suited colour palette, and a thematically fitting design.
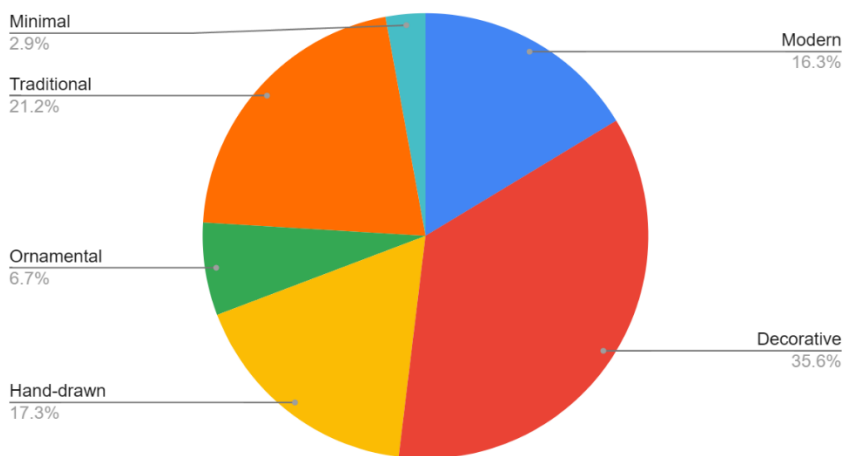

Figure. 4 Pie chart of count of Typeface Style

Decorative typeface dominates the pie chart, at 35.6% of the 100-book cover analyzed. Traditional styles are also popular, as they are culturally resonant. Refer to Figure.4

Count of Typeface Legibility

Experimental-Legible
10.9%
Experimental-Difficult
2.0%
Experimental -Difficult
2.0%
Experimental -Legible
5.0%
Complex
3.0%
Decorative-Legible
4.0%
Decorative-Difficult
5.0%
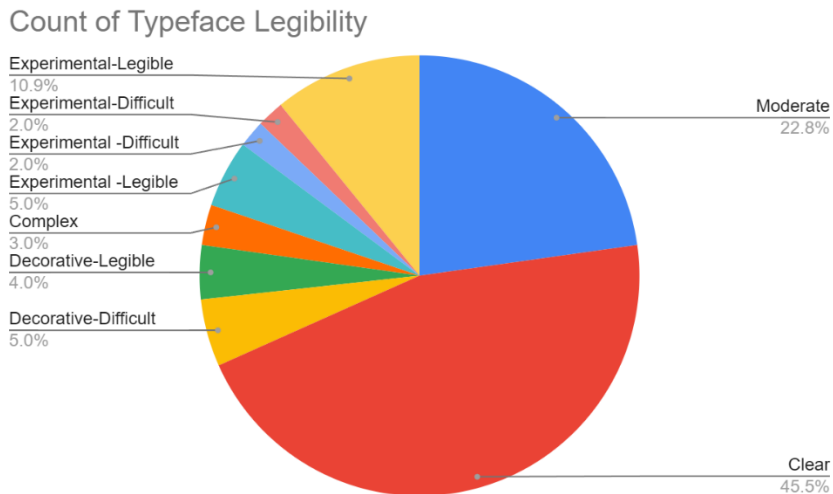
Moderate
22.8%

Clear
45.5%

Figure. 5 Pie chart of count of Typeface Legibility

The above pie chart (refer figure.5) shows clear legibility as most common, representing 45.5% out of the 100-book cover analyzed. Experimental and decorative typefaces both which are legible or difficult to read make up 31.7%, indicating a less conventional approach to typography on some covers.

Count of Typography Hierarchy

Author-Dominant
5.8%
Overwhelming
13.5%

Title-Dominant
30.8%
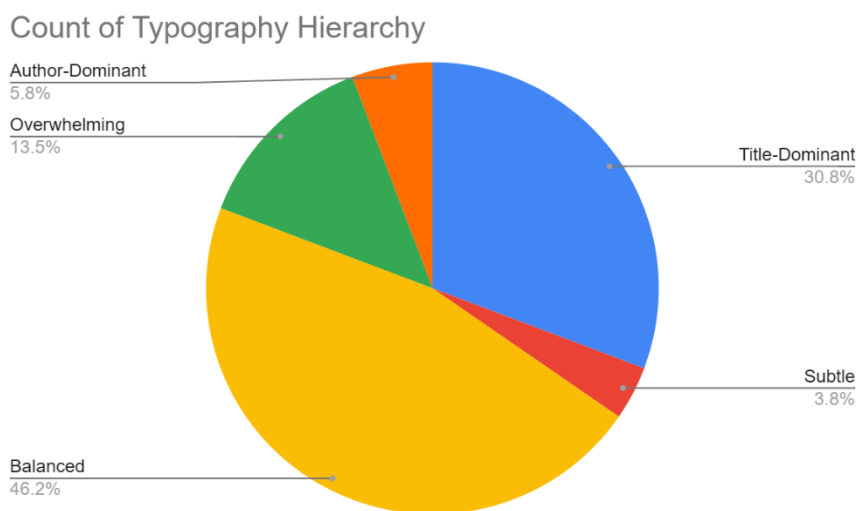
Subtle
3.8%

Balanced
46.2%

Figure. 6 Pie chart of count of Typeface Hierarchy

The typographic hierarchy in Marathi book covers often prioritizes balance (46.2%) or emphasizes the title (30.8%), while author-centric or subtle hierarchies are less common, indicating the title's importance in typographic emphasis. Refer to Figure. 6.
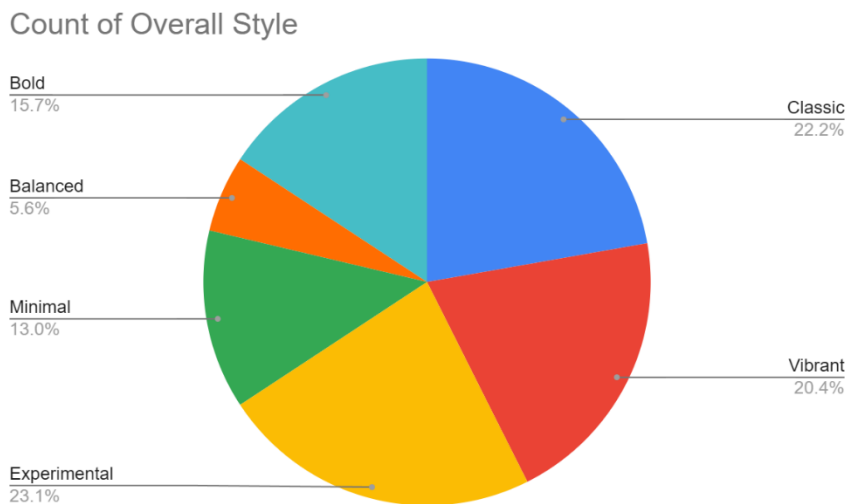
Count of Overall Style

Figure. 7 Pie chart of count of Overall Style

Out of all the 100 books analyzed, experimental and classic styles are the most prominent, representing the largest categories at 23.1% and 22.2% respectively. Vibrant and Bold styles also make up a significant portion, yet minimal and balanced styles are lesser. Refer to Figure.7

4. Conclusion

The research points out that typography is an important part of storytelling and tone-setting for readers. It determines the perception of a book and aids in establishing its genre. Cultural factors also have a strong influence on book cover designs, with Marathi culture prominently being reflected in covers of different genres. This research also focuses on the fact that book covers give clues about the content of the book, and expressive typography adds to the storytelling element as well. Overall, the study emphasizes the significance of typography as an influential visual medium that not only is a mirror to cultural influences but also enhances the art of storytelling, finally defining readers' impressions and connection to Marathi literature.

4.2 Future Scope

This study is limited by its small sample size. It did not reach a wider audience, making it difficult to provide quantitative data and statistics. The parameters used for analyzing the book covers were self-defined, as there was no set of standard parameters we could refer to. This may introduce subjectivity. Additionally, since the books were analyzed by visual designers, there is a possibility of bias. Insights from non-designers could offer a broader perspective that better reflects the general audience's perception.

6. Acknowledgements

7. References

Gudinavičius, A., & Šuminas, A. (2017). Choosing a book by its cover: analysis of a reader's choice. Journal of Documentation, 74(2), 430–446. https://doi.org/10.1108/jd-09-2016-0111

Deshpande, P. (2023). Remaking Marathi. In Oxford University Press eBooks (pp. 80–94). https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197647912.013.3

Serafini, F., & Clausen, J. (2012). Typography as semiotic resource. Journal of Visual Literacy, 31(2), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/23796529.2012.11674697

Kehret-Ward, T. (1988). Using a semiotic approach to study the consumption of functionally related products. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 4(3), 187–200. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0167-8116(88)80004-1

Hu, J., & Noor, S. M. (2024). Why We Share: A Systematic Review of Knowledge-Sharing Intentions on Social Media. Behavioral Sciences, 14(8), 636. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14080636

López-Rabadán, P. (2022). Framing studies evolution in the social media era. 11. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11010009