

February 2024

DHAGA

Twisted tales & tangled threads

Knitting Communities:

How Dhaga Connects Cultures
Through Craft

Stitching Narratives:

The Cultural Significance of
Dhaga

Crafting Culture:

Exploring the Artistry
of Dhaga







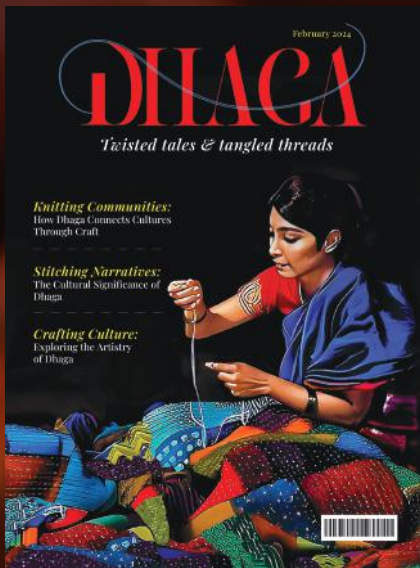
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CREDITS :

Editor-in-Chief & Publisher
Swarada D. Athalye

Creative Director:
Swarada D. Athalye

Content
Google
The Economics Times
Cover Story : Shubhda
Deshpande

Images Source
Pinterest
Google
Cover page : Shashikant Dhotre

Ad Designer
Swarada D. Athalye

Special Thanks
Sachin Kelkar Sir

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Editorial Note

In every culture, in every corner of the world, the thread holds a significant place in the tapestry of human existence. From the delicate strands that weave together the fabric of our societies to the invisible ties that bind us to our past, present, and future, the thread symbolizes connection, continuity, and resilience.

In this edition of magazine, We explore the intricate and diverse aspects of “Dhaga” - the thread. The concept is from the intricate stitches of traditional crafts to the unbreakable bonds of family and friendship, the dhaga binds us together, weaving a story that spans generations.

Through thought-provoking articles, captivating stories, and stunning visuals, we explore the myriad ways in which the thread manifests in our lives. We celebrate the artisans who skillfully manipulate it to create works of art that transcend time and culture. We examine the thread's role in rituals and traditions, from the tying of sacred knots to the weaving of intricate patterns in ceremonial garments.

But the thread is more than just a symbol of connection; it is also a metaphor for the resilience of the human spirit. Like the strongest of fibers, we are woven together by the threads of our experiences, our triumphs, and our struggles. In the face of adversity, it is the thread that holds us steadfast, reminding us of the strength that lies within.

As we unravel the many layers of the dhaga. Join us on this journey as we explore the thread of life

- Swarada D. Athalye

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THREAD: AN ESSENCE OF LIFE

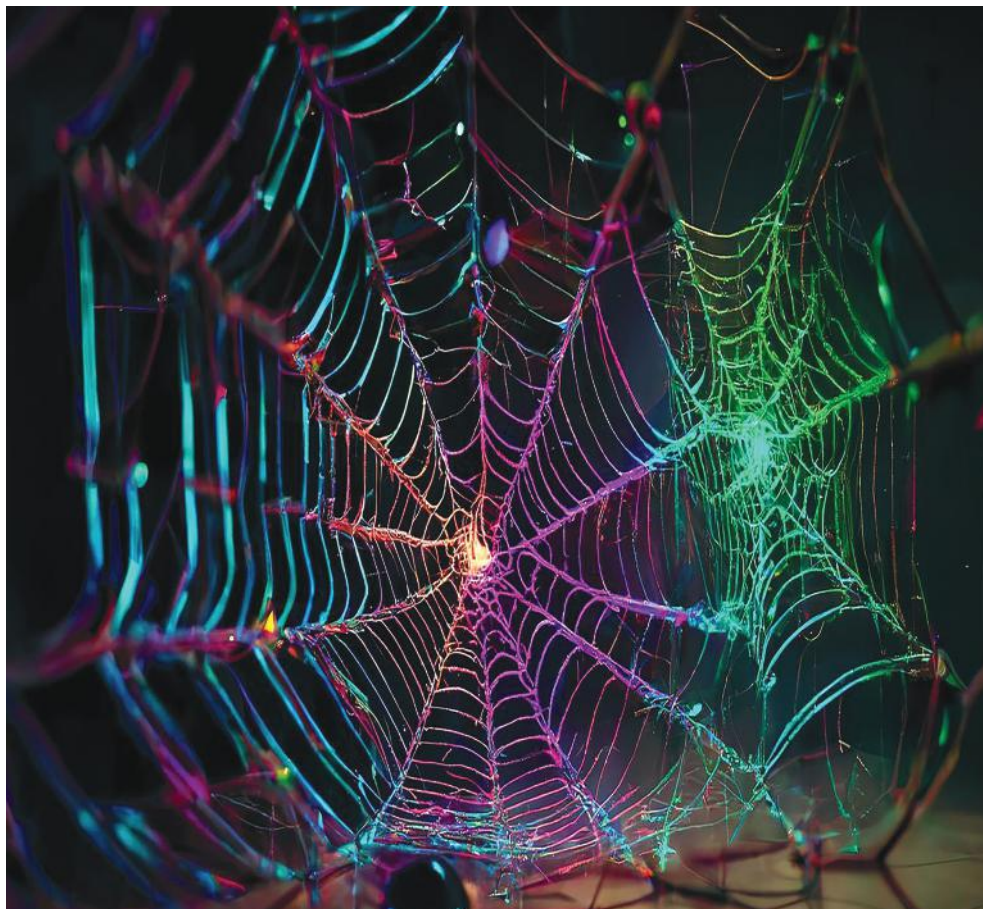
“Dhaga,” a seemingly simple word, belies its complexity and profound impact on human life. Woven into the fabric of our daily routines, it transcends its apparent simplicity to become a reflection of human ingenuity and adaptation.





The word 'Dhaga' is very easy to read and write but to understand very difficult and complex. It's an every day ingredient of our daily routine. When thought over it much can be written and spoken about it. When we think about dhaga i try to express it from the writing. The "dhaga" or thread has woven its way into the fabric of human history and daily life. It serves as a testament to human ingenuity, drawing inspiration from nature's creations. I think human being has taken inspiration from nature for its use of daily life. For e.g. he could have got the idea to catch the pray from nature's creation by the spider and how spider catches a small insect captured in it. Human being did not had equipments to create net like the spider but while wandering in jungle he would have seen creeper and thought of using them to create the primary net, could it be so? Could he have used these nets to capture fish, birds and small animals? Human being is brilliant and intellectual after accepting the situation he made changes as per his convenience,

one of that is 'Net'. Today we see of net in multiple applications like hunting animals, fishing, this is the primary use of net. However we also see mosquito net to nets for safety during the construction of buildings. In the easily stage of net creation humans might have use creepers, however as human life progressed the threads also changed from very small to very large as per the needs. We can find this from nilon material as well to stitch clothes and also to run water machines in field. So the use of threads progressed from the early days of natural materials to the modern era of synthetic fibers like nylon. The versatility of threads is evident in their applications, ranging from stitching clothes to operating machinery in agriculture. Threads have been an integral part of our recreational activities When we were kids we would have played skipping ropes, tug of war, during these play we have used ropes made of these threads of dhaga. While flying the kites we use a very delicate but very strong version of thread.



The introduction of rope in students life hapenes in scout, guide, NCC field for making different types of knots and use of them to climb on hills, trees, walls etc. This rope is the best friend of mountaineers. Beyond the tangible threads, the metaphorical thread of time connects generations. Each generation weaves its own chapter into the grand tapestry of history, passing on knowledge, traditions, and innovations to the next. The threads of the past shape the fabric of the present and lay the groundwork for the future. Like look back in history and could find use of this ropes during the battle of Kondhama (Sinhagad) Narveer Thanajee used these ropes to climb the mountains and this trick helps them to win the battle.

The small threads woven an net made up of nylon or neeneetwal fabric are used for fishing. However they need a strong rope to bring their boad on the shore. Boads with sail can not be imagined without ropes.

From above all examples, we can see the thread is a subtle yet powerful symbol that intertwines with the very essence of what it means to be human. It serves as a reminder of our ability to innovate, connect, and create, reflecting the threads of continuity that run through the intricate masterpiece of human civilization. Also see any buisness or work, any age these ropes which are made of threads is our friends.



THREAD: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

When we think from our Indian society we use many naturally gifted things and given them religious nature. This keeps Indian human beings in contact with natural aspects of threads. In India as the child is born we perform many 'sanskara' for e.g. during naming ceremony we tie 'jivati' the black thread in the waist, in the wrist and in the ankle. This black thread is made up of cotton. The main intention of this thread is to avoid evil forces affecting the child. In the early times kids were sent to their teachers' house when they complete 8th year of their

age at that time teaching system was like. The students will stay 12 years at teachers' house. One ceremony was conducted which is known as 'Mounji Bandan'. Even today those rituals are done. At this time the thread known as 'janve' is put over the neck and shoulder. It is made up of special threads which are tied with a special knot. This sacred thread is the identification of the ritual, signifying the responsibilities and duties the individual is expected to shoulder throughout their life. The ritual of tying a red thread, known as 'mouli' or 'kalava' around the wrist is prevalent in many Hindu

customs, believed to provide protection and symbolize goodwill.

Tying threads in mandirs, or temples, is a customary practice deeply embedded in the spiritual tapestry of India. Devotees engage in this ritual for various reasons, ranging from seeking the fulfillment of desires to expressing profound devotion. When individuals tie threads around the railings or pillars within the temple premises, it signifies a symbolic connection with the divine and serves as a tangible representation of their prayers and



'Kanknbandan' couple sit in front of each other and bride's & groom's sister take the thread in hand and create a circle around bride and groom.

aspirations. Tying threads is considered a visible commitment and an expression of faith. Also in some temples, the tying of threads is part of specific rituals. Beyond Hinduism, similar practices can be found in other dharmic traditions. In Sikhism, for instance, devotees may tie threads around the sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, as a gesture of respect and devotion. In Jain temples, the tying of threads is often associated with seeking forgiveness and spiritual purification.

The act of tying threads is not limited to a specific religious community; it is a cultural phenomenon transcending religious

boundaries. People from various faiths engage in this practice to express gratitude, seek protection, or make promises to the divine. The threads, often vibrant and symbolic, serve as a physical representation of one's prayers and commitments.

Marriage is a very important ritual in Indian culture. Not only the two lives or the two families are tied with each other due to this marriage. During marriages, this thread shows its existence right from the beginning. It is made up of pearls or flowers. They are recreated with tying threads. Even the garlands which are worn by husband and wife are made up of flowers

tied in threads. Another important ritual in the marriage is 'Kanknbandan'. Husband and wife are made to sit in front of each other and bride's sister and groom's sister take the thread in hand and create a circle around bride and groom. Different Mantras are being spoken during these rituals. After the ritual, the thread is tied on each other's wrist. It is called as 'Kankn'. This kankn is taken out or removed on the second day with a special ritual. This kankn is made up of thread which is a 'sacred thread'. The bride wears a 'muhurtmani' tied in a silk thread. Here the thread becomes rich! a silk thread. This indicates the importance of thread in marriage ceremony. In South India, the 'thaali' or 'mangalyam' is a sacred thread or necklace tied by the groom around the bride's neck during the wedding ceremony. It symbolizes marital bliss and is a vital part of the matrimonial customs in the region.

In Bhadrachalam we have a festival on 'Mahalaxmi' where we create a necklace with a raw thread and we tie 16 knots on the necklace. We colour it with turmeric. After the festival, every married woman wears it in her neck as a necklace. This necklace is called as 'Povti'. In India, we also have a festival where women use thread and tie it around a banyan tree for seven times. This symbolises her relation with husband for seven lives spending together. The thread symbolises regional importance in social life. This particular festival comes every year, but the thread ceremony and marriage are once in a lifetime. However, this thread is important in our daily routine also.



The thread is tied on wrist. This ritual in the photo is 'Kanknbandan'.



Cotton thread to lit lamp with oil or ghee



'Vat' made up of cotton thread

Everyday we lit a lamp where we use and thread made up of cotton by spinning it on hand. We use this cotton thread to lit lamp with oil or ghee that is clarified butter on every day, festival or auspicious occasion. This is used to perform 'Aukshan' on birthdays, Dashahara, Diwali also. The ritual of lighting a lamp with a cotton thread holds a profound significance in daily life and during auspicious occasions in India. This simple yet sacred act is a symbol of illumination, purity, and spiritual awakening. The different forms of thread weaving are performed and used in pooja of 'tripuripornima' and 'mahashivratri'. The thread takes different form and shape, the special types of vati are placed in front of Mahadev. They are also called Tripuravat and Shivratravat. Although they are made of cotton thread, but they have a unique style. It emphasizes the cultural richness and diversity embedded in India's religious practices. The use of threads, therefore, becomes not only a practical aspect of daily life but also a profound symbol of devotion and reverence in the tapestry of Indian spirituality.

Overall, the use of thread in festivals and marriages across India is deeply ingrained in cultural and religious practices, adding a layer of symbolism and significance to these celebratory occasions. Thus, the use of thread in India transcends mere utility, becoming a powerful emblem of cultural identity, spirituality, and interconnectedness.

NARRATIVE WEAVE

How it possible that our literature will remain away from this threads ! one of the marathi poet 'Shanta Shelke' was impressed and wrote a beautiful folk song or poetry 'reshamchy reghani lal kalya dhagayni' using those words she has elaborated the beautiful saree known as 'shalu' and this folk song become very very popular. Also this thread is important for spiritual people as well.

There is one song which says 'dhaga dhaga akhand vinuya vithal vithal mukhe mhanuya' means let us weave a thread into an thread during this let us chat vithal name from our outh and an thread saint janaibai has a different view to look at this thread. She say Dharila Pandharicha Chor gala bandhuniya dor which means she tries to capture and captivate vithal the lord by using this thread so that he does not leaves us. In mahabhart there is an incident where Draupadit eared her precious 'shela' (precious cloth) to tie lord Krishna's little finger without thinking for a second. Here the thread help to stop the blood flow from lord Krishna's little finger.

A marathi great poet known as 'Modern Valmiki' Ga. Di. Madgulkaranchya used these threads weaving as spiritual and imagined this with human life and wrote a poem 'Ek dhaaga sukhacha Shambhar dhaage dukkhache Jarataari he vastra maanasa Tujhiya aayushyache' means one thread of joy and hundreds of sorrow with these threads a cloth which gets created is humans life. The thread, with its cultural, spiritual, and existential connotations, has indeed become an integral part of Marathi literary expression. Its presence is not just limited to the physical act of weaving but extends to profound reflections on life, spirituality, and devotion, making it a timeless and versatile symbol in the rich tapestry of Marathi literature.

Also in literature, the metaphorical use of a thread seamlessly weaves through the narrative, embodying a rich tapestry of meanings. This delicate strand often symbolizes the interconnected lives of characters, intricately binding their fates and destinies. Like the hands of mythical weavers measuring and cutting the threads of human life, the narrative thread emphasizes the inescapable and unpredictable nature of destiny. Moreover, the thread serves as a temporal marker, symbolizing the passage of time and the continuity of events. It unfolds through the fabric of the story, mirroring the



cyclical nature of life and contributing to the narrative's coherence. The fragility of a thread becomes a poignant symbol, representing the vulnerability of relationships, dreams, and life itself. Yet, in its vulnerability lies potential; the metaphorical thread can also signify hope, redemption, and the opportunity for positive change. As a narrative structure, the thread connects disparate elements, forming a cohesive and engaging story. Its diverse colors and textures may symbolize unity in diversity, celebrating the harmonious integration of varied elements into a collective whole. In literature, the metaphor of a thread, with its nuanced implications, enriches the narrative, inviting readers to explore complex themes and emotions. Threads of different colors, textures, and origins coming together to form a larger fabric can symbolize unity in diversity. This metaphor is often employed to celebrate the richness that arises when diverse elements harmonize and contribute to a collective whole. By using the metaphor of a thread, authors can add depth and layers to their storytelling, allowing readers to explore complex themes and emotions in a more nuanced and evocative manner. Much more can be written about this thread as it has occupied our entire life. However let us stop here only.

-Shubhda Deshpande

THREADS OF LOVE



Threads of love weave through the fabric of human relationships, binding hearts together in a tapestry of affection and connection. Like delicate strands interwoven with care, these threads symbolize the bonds that unite us, transcending distances, differences, and time itself.

The young generation which includes teenagers as well are waiting for first sunday of August month as this day is celebrated for the friendship and is aptly named as 'friendship day'. The preparations for this starts from the last week of July. Everyone searches for a true beautiful band or a thread which can tie on his or her friends wrist. This band is ultimate representation of emotional bonds between friend. Another bond which represents

emotional relation between brother and sister and the festival for this also celebrated in the month of August which is known as 'Raksha bandhan'. Generally this Raksha Bandhan day is celebrated on full moon day of Hindu calendar month 'Sharvan'. Originally this festival is from Rajasthan but now is celebrated in the entire nation rather in the world as we Indians are widely spread across the globe and as Indians we insist to celebrate this relation of



brother and sister.

Now the basic concept of brother protecting the sister has changed from protection to support. This represents that we will be together in all the odds of life. With the concept of support this has crossed the relation of only brother and sister and is how widely accepted and celebrated within sisters only as well. As in life sister also need support from other sister. Many organisations, school also organise this festival in a different nature where they tie this rakhi on the wrist of our soldiers/ police as they protect entire nation's brothers and this in turn reflects our protection as entire nation safe guarded.

The reference of rakshabandhan come in history. It has a reference to queen of Udaypur Queen Karnavati. The story goes back to the glorious pages of history where the sacred thread of love was respected by kings and queens from across the borders who transcended the religious barriers too while being connected with the pious thread which defined the symbolic brother-sister relationship.

The queen of Chittor Karnavati and Mughal emperor Humayun is remembered on each Raksha Bandhan in this context.

While the queen sent the sacred thread (rakhi) to Humayun when her kingdom was surrounded by enemies, Humayun also respected the sentiments and rushed to help her.

Rani Karnavati was a queen of Chittorgarh who was from Bundi. She was married

to Rana Sangram Singh from the Sisodia dynasty of Chittorgarh, which was the capital of Mewar. The mother of two Ranas, Vikramjit and Uday Singh, Karnavati was the grandmother of Rajput warrior Maharana Pratap. Rana Sanga of Mewar marched against him with Rajput nobles, but was defeated in the Battle of Khanua in 1527. Rana Sanga died, leaving Rani Karnavati a widow. Her elder son Vikramjit meanwhile also suffered a defeat by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. At this time, Queen Karnavati requested Rajput rulers to help in defending the honour of Chittorgarh. The rulers accepted her request, but on the only condition that her two sons should be sent to Bundi during the war which was meant for their personal safety.

Karnavati accepted their advice. Meanwhile, she sent a Rakhi to the Mughal Emperor Humayun, offering him the brother's status while appealing for help. Humayun at that time was in the process of reducing Bengal; he left the campaign in between and came rushing to her rescue, giving a meaning to the Rakhi she sent.

Mewar stood vulnerable against the menacing Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat. With an invasion threatening her kingdom's very existence and a dearth of allies, Rani Karnavati's situation was precarious. Understanding Rakhi's potent symbolic significance, Karnavati took the unprecedented step of sending one to Emperor Humayun. This was not merely a ritual but a fervent appeal from a mother and monarch to shield her realm and her son's future.

Touched by Rani's overture, Humayun, valuing Rakhi's sanctity, pledged his support. He rallied his forces, embarking on a mission to aid Karnavati, setting aside their ancestral differences. Fate, however, had its plans. Humayun reached Mewar after Bahadur Shah's invasion had wreaked havoc. Facing an insurmountable threat, Rani Karnavati and the royal court's women had resorted to 'Jauhar'. Although the emperor couldn't avert this tragedy, he later vanquished Bahadur Shah, restoring Mewar to Karnavati's offspring.

The narrative of Rani Karnavati and Humayun underscores Rakhi's profound symbolism, which surmounts mere familial ties and religious divides. Their actions encapsulate Raksha Bandhan's genuine spirit - unwavering trust, honour, and the oath of guardianship. This Thread comes in our life in different forms which is really fascinating

THREADS OF UNITY & TRADITION



The “Do Dhage Sri Ram Ke Liye” campaign commenced in Pune, capturing the spirit of lakhs of people who came together to weave dresses (vastras) for the revered Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya.

This handloom machine encapsulates the artistry and precision of traditional weaving, showcasing the timeless craftsmanship that intertwines history

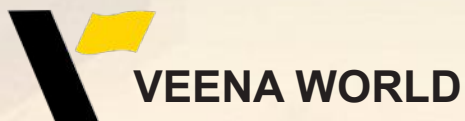
The “Do Dhage Sri Ram Ke Liye” campaign commenced in Pune, capturing the spirit of lakhs of people who came together to weave dresses (vastras) for the revered Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya. The 13-day campaign, a collaborative effort by Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra and the Heritage Handweaving Revival Charitable Trust of Pune, started on December 10 (Sunday) and concluded on December 22 on Geeta Jayanti. Anagha Ghaisas, the organizer of the campaign, expressed enthusiasm about engaging the community in this endeavor for Ram Lalla.

The “Do Dhage Sri Ram Ke Liye” campaign

in Pune stands as a remarkable testament to the unity, devotion, and craftsmanship embedded in the cultural tapestry of India. The collaborative effort between Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra and the Heritage Handweaving Revival Charitable Trust of Pune brought together approximately 10 lakh people, uniting them in a 13-day endeavor to weave dresses for the revered Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya. Beyond its religious significance, the campaign served a dual purpose by not only engaging citizens in this sacred work but also promoting the traditional art of handloom. The initiative underscored that handloom weaving is a skillful craft, requiring mathematical precision, patience,

and scientific understanding” attributes comparable to engineering.

“Do Dhage Sri Ram Ke Liye” stood as a shining example of how collective efforts could bridge communities, promote traditional craftsmanship, and celebrate the spirit of unity in diversity. Beyond its religious significance, the campaign underscored the importance of preserving and reviving cultural heritage, fostering community bonds, and imparting valuable skills to future generations. As the threads wove together, they created not just dresses for the Shree Ram the deity but a tapestry that reflected the strength and beauty of a united community.



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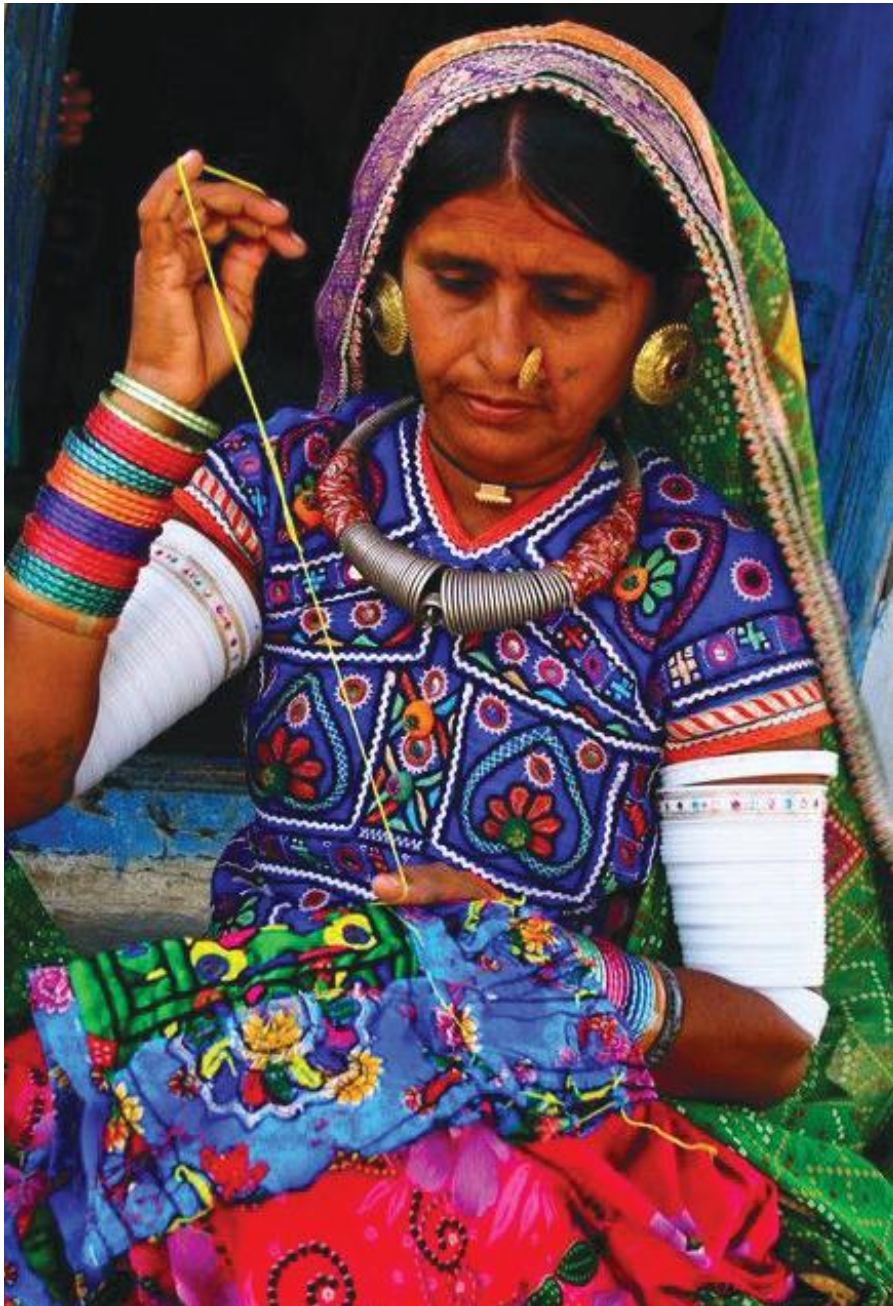
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THREADS OF HERITAGE

Exploring the Timeless Elegance of Rabari Embroidery in Gujarat's Cultural Tapestry. Unraveling the Intricate Beauty of Rabari Community.



Rabari community lady delicately engages in the art of embroidery. Her hands, adorned with vibrant thread, meticulously weave tales of tradition and cultural richness onto the fabric.

The Rabari community has a long and fascinating history that dates back centuries. Believed to have originated in Rajasthan, the Rabaris gradually migrated to different parts of Gujarat, where they established their distinctive way of life. Historically, they were pastoral nomads, relying on herding cattle and camels for their livelihoods. Over time, however, many Rabaris have transitioned to settled agricultural lifestyles while still maintaining strong ties to their traditional roots. One of the defining features of the Rabari community is their nomadic lifestyle. Traditionally, Rabari families traveled with their herds across vast stretches of land in search of grazing pastures. This nomadic way of life not only shaped their identity but also fostered a deep connection with the land and animals they cared for. Despite modernization and urbanization, some Rabari families continue to maintain elements of this nomadic lifestyle, although on a smaller scale.

In addition to their rich cultural and artistic heritage, the Rabari community also places a strong emphasis on community ties and social structures. The community traditionally follows a system of exogamous clans, where individuals from the same clan are considered relatives and marriages within the same clan are prohibited. This practice helps maintain social cohesion and strengthens the bonds within the community. The Rabaris are known for their unique housing structures called "bhungas" or round huts with conical thatched roofs. These traditional dwellings are designed to withstand the harsh desert climate of Gujarat and reflect the resourcefulness of the community in adapting to their surroundings. While many Rabaris have transitioned to settled agricultural lifestyles, a significant number continue to practice traditional occupations such as cattle rearing and farming. The community's resilience and ability to adapt to changing circumstances highlight their resourcefulness and determination to preserve their way of life.



Rabari embroidery unveils intricate tales—a vibrant kaleidoscope of threads and mirrors, echoing the rich craftsmanship and cultural tapestry of the Rabari community.

Despite the challenges posed by modernization, the Rabari community actively engages in various cultural events and festivals that showcase their vibrant traditions. Events such as weddings, fairs, and religious ceremonies are occasions for the community to come together, reinforcing their cultural identity and passing down traditions to younger generations.

The Rabari community is known for its exceptional craftsmanship, particularly in the realm of embroidery. Their intricate embroidery work, known as 'Rabari embroidery' or 'Rabari Bharat,' is characterized by elaborate patterns and vibrant colors. This art form often decorates their clothing, adding a unique touch to their traditional attire. The embroidery tells stories, reflects their beliefs, and serves as a form of self-expression. It is made in several villages in the Kutch district

The materials used for the embroidery consist of fabrics made of threads of cotton, silk woolen and mashru (an Arabic name). The types of threads used are of floss silk and other varieties. Tracing paper and its associated product are used for drawing the designs. Other essential embroidering tools and material are needle, mirrors, and sequins. Embroidery is done with the fabric fixed on an adjustable embroidery frame to adjust the tension of the cloth or by holding the fabric in hand. The embroidery process involves the use of traditional tools such as needles and an adjustable embroidery frame. These tools, combined with the artisan's skill, allow for precise and controlled stitching.

The designs created on the cloth to embroider relate to the themes of daily lifestyles, animals and birds (like elephant,

camel, parrot, peacock, etc.), flora, religious places such as temples, and figurines of women in dancing postures. The embroidery is characterized by the use of vibrant and bold colors. A distinctive feature of Rabari embroidery is the use of mirrors and sequins to add sparkle and dimension to the designs. Mirrors, often circular or polygonal in shape, are intricately stitched onto the fabric, creating a reflective effect. The Rabari embroidery not only serves as a means of artistic expression but also as an economic activity for many community members. The intricate craftsmanship has gained recognition not only in India but also internationally, contributing to the community's economic well-being.

The Rabari community in Gujarat stands as a testament to the rich cultural diversity of the state. Their nomadic roots, distinctive attire, skilled craftsmanship, and vibrant festivals contribute to the unique tapestry of Gujarat's cultural landscape. As the community navigates the challenges of modernization, efforts to preserve and celebrate their heritage become increasingly important, ensuring that future generations continue to cherish the traditions of the Rabari people. In the face of globalization, the Rabari community's ability to adapt and thrive while holding onto their unique identity highlights the strength and resilience of indigenous cultures. The distinctive housing structures, social structures, and cultural events contribute to the vibrant tapestry of Gujarat's cultural landscape. As we move forward, it is essential to appreciate and support the efforts made by the Rabari community to preserve their heritage, ensuring that their traditions continue to be cherished and celebrated for generations to come.

The embroidery work, known as 'Rabari embroidery' or 'Rabari Bharat,' is characterized by elaborate patterns and vibrant colors. The embroidery tells stories, reflects their beliefs, and serves as a form of self-expression. It is made in several villages in the Kutch district.



Rabari embroidery



THREADS OF CULTURE

Indian embroidery, a cultural masterpiece, weaves intricate stories through stitches, from Lucknow's Chikankari to Punjab's vibrant Phulkari. Beyond ornamentation, it symbolizes heritage, adapting seamlessly to modern aesthetics.

Indian embroidery stands as a testament to the country's rich cultural tapestry, a vibrant and intricate art form that has flourished over millennia. The embroidery techniques in India are as diverse as the nation itself, reflecting the regional nuances, customs, and materials available. From the delicate finesse of Lucknow's Chikankari to the regal opulence of North India's Zardozi and the vibrant storytelling of Punjab's Phulkari, each style is a unique manifestation of regional identity.

Embroidery in India goes beyond mere ornamentation; it is a living art, intertwined with rituals, religious symbolism, and the daily lives of its people. The craftsmanship is not merely about stitching threads onto fabric but rather a meticulous narrative conveyed through needle and thread. Motifs often carry deeper meanings, telling stories of cultural heritage and spirituality.

The resilience of Indian embroidery lies in its adaptability. While preserving traditional techniques, the craft has embraced modernity, influencing not only the vibrant landscape of Indian fashion but also leaving an indelible mark on the global stage. The intricate stitches are not just patterns but a language that transcends borders, communicating the timeless

beauty and cultural richness of India.

The economic and cultural significance of embroidery in India cannot be overstated. It provides a livelihood for many skilled artisans, contributing significantly to the country's textile industry. Efforts to preserve and promote traditional techniques are ongoing, with organizations, designers, and the government actively involved in initiatives to safeguard this heritage.

In the global context, Indian embroidery has become synonymous with luxury and craftsmanship. Designers worldwide seek inspiration from its diverse repertoire, leading to collaborations that bridge traditional artistry with contemporary

In essence, Indian embroidery is more than a craft; it is a living heritage, a visual language that weaves stories, traditions, and cultural identity into every stitch. As the threads intertwine, they create a narrative that transcends time, connecting the past with the present and ensuring the enduring legacy of this remarkable artistic tradition. These embroideries are legacy of Indian craftsmanship, remains vibrant and cherished, bridging the past with the present and inspiring generations to come. There are some different styles of embroidery as follows :

1.TODA :

Toda embroidery is a hereditary craft which is known by its geometric motifs and beautiful finish and appears like woven cloth. Toda embroidery plays a vital role in preserving the cultural identity of the Toda tribe.

Traditionally, Toda embroidery is done using woolen yarn or cotton thread in bright colors such as red, blue, yellow, and green. The base fabric is usually a coarse, hand-spun cotton cloth. These motifs are often arranged in repetitive patterns, creating visually striking designs. However, modern variations may incorporate other materials such as silk threads and synthetic fabrics.

The primary stitch used in Toda embroidery is the herringbone stitch. This stitch creates a series of parallel lines that intersect at an angle, resembling the bones of a herring fish. The herringbone stitch is fundamental to the intricate patterns found in Toda embroidery.



A fusion of bold geometric motifs and vibrant hues, embodying the rich cultural tapestry.



A mesmerizing blend of intricate patterns and meticulous craftsmanship, capturing the essence of tradition

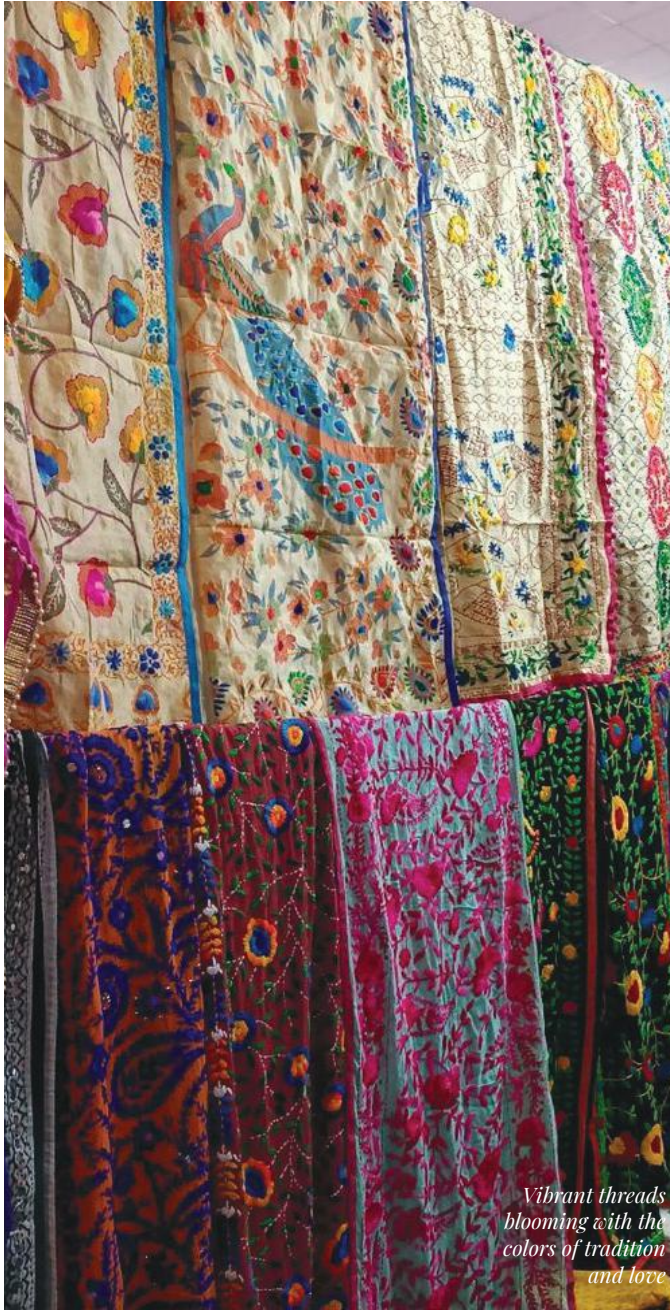
2.KASUTI :

Kasuti is a traditional form of folk embroidery practised in the state of Karnataka. Kasuti embroidery is characterized by its intricate patterns and fine stitches. Kasuti embroidery holds significant cultural importance in Karnataka, representing the rich textile heritage of the region. It is often associated with festivals, weddings, and other special occasions.

The technique involves counting threads on the fabric to create precise geometric designs. Traditionally, Kasuti embroidery was done on handloom cotton or silk fabric using black or dark-colored thread, although modern variations may incorporate a wider range of colors.

Kasuti embroidery patterns are typically geometric, with motifs such as squares, rectangles, triangles, diamonds, and lines forming intricate designs. Kasuti embroidery primarily utilizes a limited color palette, often focusing on contrasting colors to create visually striking designs.

Kasuti embroidery primarily utilizes a few basic stitches, including the straight stitch, cross stitch, double running stitch, and zigzag stitch. These stitches are used to create the intricate patterns and fill in the motifs with precision.



*Vibrant threads
blooming with the
colors of tradition
and love*

3. PHULKARI

Phulkari embroidery is a traditional form of handcrafted embroidery that originated in the Punjab region. Phulkari is made of two words: Phul means flower and Akari means shape. Phulkari meant the shape/direction of flowers which symbolized life.

Floral motifs and vibrant colors like The use of bright hues, including reds, blues, yellows etc. enhances the visual appeal of the embroidered patterns. Phulkari designs often feature geometric patterns, floral motifs, and other traditional symbols.

The primary stitching technique used in Phulkari involves long and short darning stitches. These are used to cover the entire fabric with vibrant and colorful threads. The colors used are bold and vivid, creating a visually striking and vibrant effect. The contrast between different colors adds to the overall beauty of the artwork.

4. KASHIDA

Kashida embroidery, originating from the regions of Kashmir, It is a traditional needlework technique celebrated for its intricate and diverse stitches. his labor-intensive craft demands skilled craftsmanship, emphasizing meticulous attention to detail.

This art form showcases a rich palette of colorful threads, creating vibrant floral, paisley, and geometric motifs. Kashida designs often draw inspiration from nature, mythology, and local customs.

kashida is distinguished by a stitching style that encompasses a diverse range of intricate techniques. Characterized by a variety of stitches such as satin stitch, chain stitch, and herringbone stitch, Kashida achieves its distinctiveness through the meticulous combination of these elements.



*Aesthetic beauty with
its cultural heritage and
the stories tells through
its motifs and patterns.*

5. CHIKANKARI

Chikankari embroidery is a form of hand-embroidery that originated in the city of Lucknow. This art form has a rich history dating back to the Mughal era. The word “Chikankari” is derived from two Persian words – “Chikan,” meaning embroidery, and “Kari,” meaning work.

Chikankari is typically done on lightweight fabrics such as muslin, cotton, and silk. One of the hallmark features of Chikankari is the use of white thread on a white or pastel-colored fabric. Traditional Chikankari designs often incorporate floral motifs, paisleys, vines, and geometric patterns. However, modern adaptations may incorporate colored threads on different fabric bases, expanding the color range to include vibrant hues, and occasionally contrasting tones.

Chikankari embroidery is characterized by intricate stitching styles, including Bakhiya for shadow work, Phanda for French knots, Murri for seed stitches, Keel Kangan for thread weaving, and Jali for net or mesh work.



Delicately handcrafted with intricate precision, epitomizes elegance.



Showing simplicity and soulful. Every stitch reflects the creativity

6. KANTHA

Kantha embroidery is originated in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in the states of West Bengal and Odisha. The word “kantha” refers to a type of quilted or embroidered fabric, and the technique involves simple running stitches along the edges to create elaborate and intricate patterns.

Motifs in Kantha embroidery draw inspiration from nature, mythology, and daily life, featuring animals, birds, flowers, and geometric designs. Kantha’s unique embroidery technique is a key element in repurposing old fabrics, transforming them into vibrant and culturally rich pieces.

Kantha embroidery showcases a distinctive stitching style primarily characterized by the use of a simple and continuous running stitch. This fundamental technique is applied in varied lengths to create texture and depth, with longer stitches for outlining and shorter ones for denser areas.

Artisans often employ a free-form and organic approach, allowing for spontaneous creativity in crafting intricate patterns. The stitching style may involve layered stitches, contributing to the complexity and dimensionality of the design.



7.AARI :

Aari embroidery, also known as maggam work. The name of this embroidery comes from the hooked, sharp needle, which is used for this technique. Aari owes its origin to the Mughals and is practised in Rajasthan, Lucknow, and Kashmir.

The very image of finery, the Aari embroidery is created by using a hooked needle to make chain stitch loops, often using beads and sequins for embellishments.

With highly detailed designs inspired by nature, Aari stands apart in its richness. Oftentimes focussing on the body of the saree, the blouse is left plain, which adds to an unparalleled style

statement. Easy to maintain and style, any material with Aari embroidery provides comfort with fashion.

This embroidery technique is commonly used to adorn sarees, lehengas, dupattas, and other traditional Indian garments, as well as home decor items such as cushion covers and wall hangings.

Delicately adorned with intricate Aari embroidery

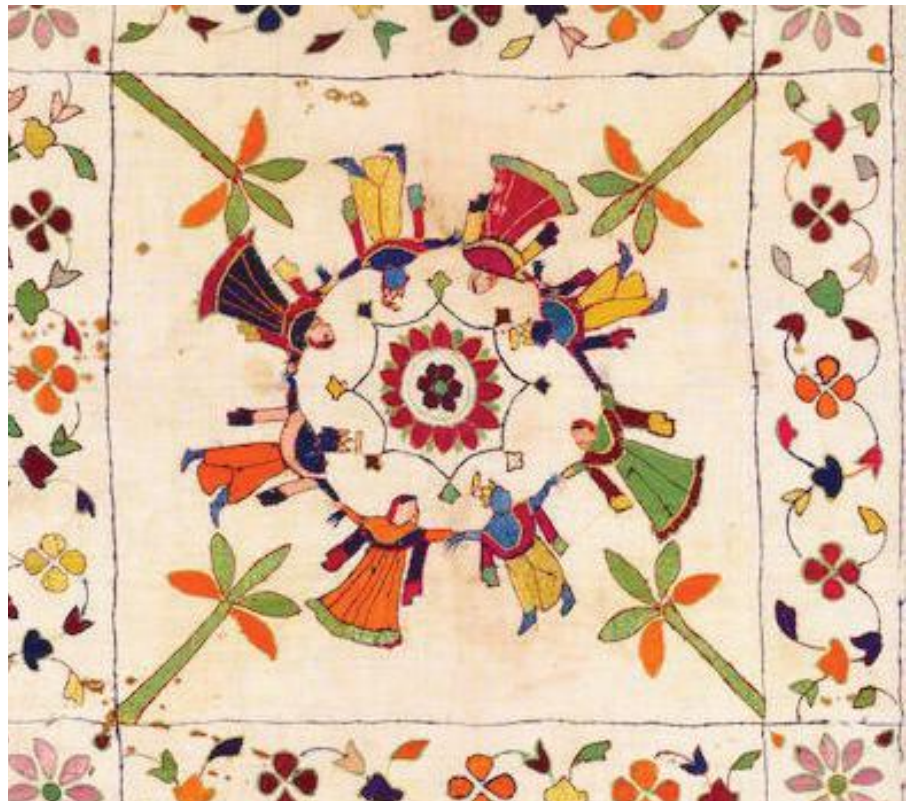
8.CHAMBA :

Chamba embroidery has been practiced for centuries in the Chamba region, which is located in the foothills of the Himalayas in northern India. It has its roots in the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Chamba embroidery is primarily done by hand using a variety of stitches. The most commonly used stitches include satin stitch, chain stitch, stem stitch, herringbone stitch, and running stitch. These stitches are used to create intricate patterns and motifs.

Chamba embroidery is characterized by its intricate stitching techniques. Artisans use a variety of stitches such as satin stitch, chain stitch, stem stitch, herringbone stitch, and running stitch to create elaborate patterns and designs.

Chamba embroidery is an integral part of the cultural heritage of Himachal Pradesh. It has been passed down through generations of artisans and is valued for its artistic and aesthetic qualities. The embroidery tradition also plays a significant role in preserving the cultural identity of the region.



Every thread carries the essence of Himalayan culture and craftsmanship.



9.GOTA :

Gota embroidery, also known as 'Gota Patti' or 'Gotapatti', is a traditional form of Indian embroidery that originated in Rajasthan. It is closely associated with the culture and traditions of the region.

Gota embroidery involves the use of thin strips of metallic ribbon or 'gota' which are typically made of gold or silver-coated copper. These metallic ribbons are first stitched onto the fabric using basic stitches such as running stitch or backstitch and secured to create intricate designs and patterns.

Gota embroidery designs and patterns often draw inspiration from nature, geometric shapes, and traditional motifs. Common motifs include flowers, leaves, paisleys, and peacocks, among others.

Golden thread delicately entwined, adorning fabric with a timeless elegance

10.PARSI GARA :

Parsi Gara embroidery is a style of embroidery that originated in Persia and was brought to India by the Parsi community. Parsi Gara embroidery has its roots in Persia (modern-day Iran) and was brought to India by Persian immigrants who settled in the Gujarat region during the 8th century AD. Over time, it evolved into a distinct style influenced by Indian motifs and aesthetics.

Parsi Gara embroidery is characterized by its delicate and intricate needlework. It typically involves the use of fine silk threads on silk or satin fabric. The designs are meticulously hand-embroidered using a variety of stitches, including satin stitch, stem stitch, chain stitch, and French knots.

The color palette used in Parsi Gara embroidery is typically vibrant and rich, featuring a wide range of hues including deep blues, reds, greens, and golds. The use of contrasting colors adds depth and dimension to the intricate designs.



Showing parsi gara embroidery.

THREADS OF EXPRESSION

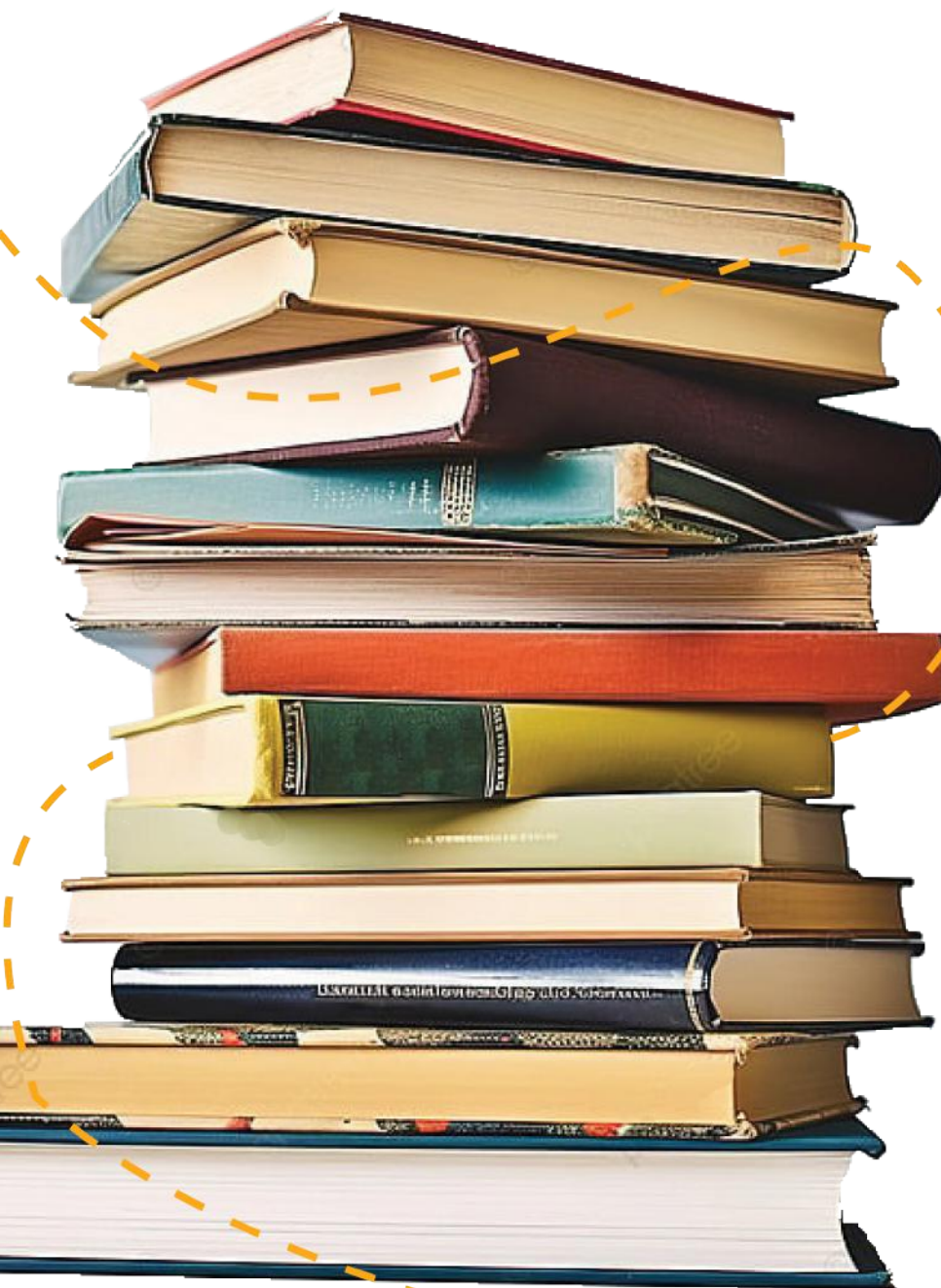
The art of sewing emerges as more than just a practical skill it is a powerful cultural force that weaves through the fabric of women's lives, shaping identities, communities, and societies. From ancient civilizations to modern times, countless books have illuminated the profound significance of sewing in women's history.

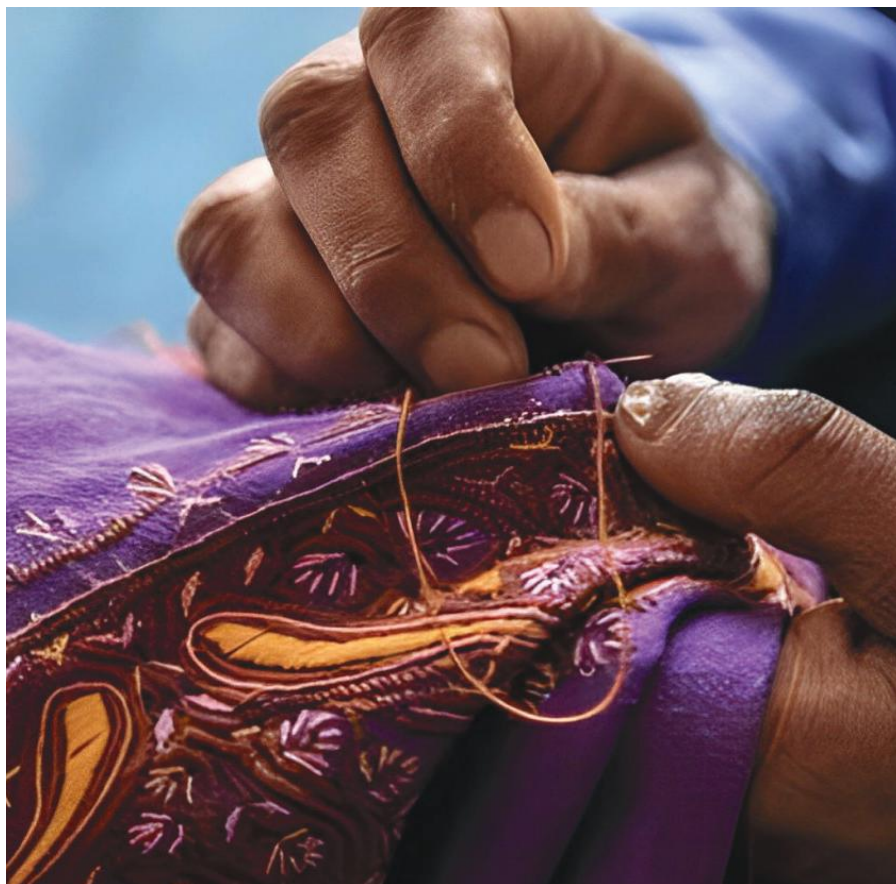
In the intricate tapestry of human history, the art of sewing stands out as a thread that has woven through the lives of women across cultures and epochs. More than a mere practical skill, sewing has emerged as a powerful cultural force, shaping identities, communities, and societies. From the earliest civilizations to the complexities of modern times, countless books have illuminated the profound significance of sewing in women's history.

In the rich tapestry of human existence, the art of sewing emerges as a delicate yet resilient thread, intricately woven through the lives of women across generations and civilizations. Beyond its practical utility, sewing has transcended mere function to become a potent cultural force, influencing the very fabric of identities, communities, and societies. From ancient times to the present day, the profound significance of sewing in women's history has been celebrated and dissected in countless books, each revealing a unique facet of its enduring legacy.

Throughout history, women have wielded the needle and thread with skill and ingenuity, leaving behind a trail of embroidered stories that speak to their creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness. In ancient civilizations, from the Nile to the Indus Valley, sewing was not only a means of clothing oneself but also a form of artistic expression, with intricate patterns and motifs adorning garments and textiles. Books such as "Threads of Antiquity: Sewing in Ancient Cultures" delve into the archaeological evidence of early sewing techniques, shedding light on the integral role of women in preserving and transmitting these skills through generations.

As societies evolved, so too did the significance of sewing in women's lives. In medieval Europe, the needle became a symbol of status and refinement, with





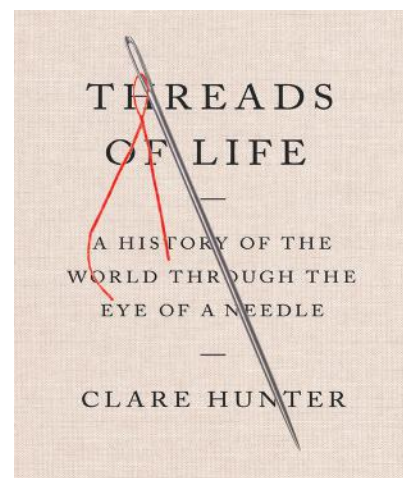
Highlighting the meticulous craftsmanship of every stitch

elaborate embroidery adorning the garments of nobles and royalty. Meanwhile, in the cottages and villages, women gathered in sewing circles to stitch together the fabric of their communities, sharing stories, skills, and solidarity. Works like “Stitches of the Middle Ages: Women, Needlework, and Society” offer a glimpse into this dynamic tapestry of medieval life, revealing how sewing served as both a social bond and a means of economic empowerment for women.

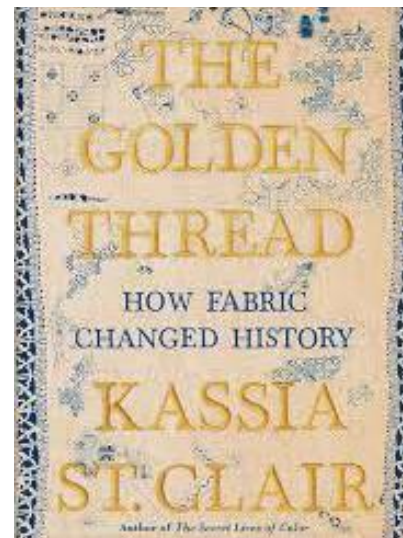
The advent of industrialization brought sweeping changes to the practice of sewing, as mass production replaced handcrafted garments with factory-made clothing. Yet, even in the face of mechanization, sewing retained its cultural significance, serving as a means of personal expression and creativity for women of all backgrounds. Books such as “Threads of Change: Sewing in the Industrial Age” examine the impact of these shifts on women’s lives, exploring how they adapted to new technologies while preserving traditional needlework skills.

In the modern era, sewing continues to resonate as a powerful force in women’s lives, albeit in evolving forms. From the rise of DIY culture to the resurgence of craftivism, women are reclaiming the needle and thread as tools of empowerment and resistance. Books such as “The Seamstress’ Manifesto: Crafting Identity in the 21st Century” explore how sewing intersects with issues of gender, identity, and sustainability in today’s globalized world, highlighting the enduring relevance of this ancient art form.

In conclusion, the art of sewing stands as a testament to the creativity, resilience, and ingenuity of women throughout history. Across cultures and epochs, from ancient civilizations to modern times, sewing has served as a powerful cultural force, shaping identities, communities, and societies in profound ways. Through the pages of countless books, the rich tapestry of women’s history is illuminated by the delicate stitches of the needle and thread, weaving together a narrative of strength, solidarity, and enduring legacy.



“Threads of Life” by Clare Hunter is a captivating exploration of the profound significance of sewing throughout history, interweaving personal narratives, historical anecdotes, and cultural insights to illuminate the enduring power of needlework. Hunter takes readers on a journey across continents and centuries, revealing how sewing has been intertwined with human experiences of love, loss, resilience, and creativity.



The Golden Thread by Kassia St Clair is an exploration of the history and significance of fabrics throughout civilization. Here’s why this book is worth reading: Rich in historical context, it uncovers the stories behind various textile traditions and reveals their impact on society.

THREADS OF CREATIVITY



Detailed patterns woven from imagination's, each stitch shares a tale, each thread a work of art.



SUPPLIES:

1. Wood (mine was 13" x 18")
2. Pre-wood conditioner
3. Stain (I used Classic Gray by Minwax)
5. 4 boxes of 5/8" of linoleum nails (got mine at Lowes for \$1.30 each)
6. Drill & 1/16" drill bit
7. Hammer
8. Embroidery floss (I used 2 white, 4 blue/green, and 2 coral)
9. Optional: Silhouette Cameo

STEP 1

The Boards: Cut your board the size you want it. Mine is a 13" x 18". Sand smooth and then apply pre-wood conditioner if you use a soft wood like pine.

STEP 2

The Design: Next design your saying. I used the Pacifico font for "sweet" and Abadi MT Condensed for "home".

STEP 3

Cut It Out: Either cut out your design with a Silhouette machine and vinyl or print copies of your design and use tape or repositionable spray adhesive to hold it in place.

STEP 4

The Holes: Next pre-drill holes about every 1/4" – 1/2" apart around your design. This saves you from getting your fingers smashed by trying to pound every nail in the right place.

STEP 5

Remove Vinyl: Remove the vinyl when all the holes are drilled.

STEP 6

The Nails: Then just push your nails in place (have a cute little helper do this with you) and then hammer them in a little deeper.

STEP 7

Outline: Then tie some embroidery floss on (yes I used all 6 strands) and go around the outer edge of your nails, like you are outlining it.

STEP 8

Fill It Up: Then fill it in by wrapping your floss around the nails.



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