

KATHIAWAR EMBROIDERY

Gujarat is embedded in with Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Arabian sea and Pakistan. The **embroidery** of Kathiawar is similar to that of Sindh to some extent, unique in its own style. The craft is basically employed to decorate the traditional ladies costume of Gujarat, the Choli and Ghagra (chaniya). Kathiawar **embroidery** has a great influence of neighbouring states and places like Sindh, Punjab and Kutch. According to Jasleen Dhamija the Kathiawar women not only beautified their traditional costume by embroidering in vivid colours but also prepared household articles like toran, Chakla and Chandrawa. Displaying toran at the doorway is a symbol of welcoming the guests, as believed by the folk. It was also believed that the beautifully carved and decorated entrance doorways are the symbol of welcoming the people entered and the poorest of the poor, in absence of such carved doors, prepared the torans at her own labour. Brij Bushan explains, 'toran is a long embroidered flap or bits of patterned cloth decorating the lower edge of the valance'. During the wedding time, all the new costumes stitched for the bride are tied into a bundle by toran and latter is used as a decorate for doorways as symbol of welcome.

The main feature of Kathiawar **embroidery** is the lavish application of mirrors. However, the base stitches used are chain stitch, Heer Bharat, Abla Bharat and interlacing stitch or Sindhi taropa.

Chain stitch is similar to that of Kutch, but most of the times done with white colour and occasionally supplemented with other colours to give a bold impression. Chain stitch is accompanied by mirrors and used to emphasise face, eyes, hand, flower, sun, moon etc. The motifs also comprised of gal holding a flower, boy playing kite, man riding a horse and a palanquin. It is a distinct style of Bhavanagar **embroidery**.

Heer Bharat is the **embroidery** done with silk floss, the pat, highly lustrous, gorgeous that brings rich effect on the base. Though the stitch employed is darning, the name Heer Bharat is given for the thread that is being employed. The influence of phulkari of Punjab is evident at this juncture. Not only with respect to silk floss, the **embroidery** of Kathiawar tallies with stitchery and geometrical motifs of Phulkari. The composite units of square, triangles, rectangles and hexagonals cover the complete ground fabric. It resembles Bagh of Phulkari. The long stitches in each triangle run parallel to weft and perpendicular to warp producing shot coloured (light and dark) effect. According to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, 'Heer Bharat is carried on a bluish gray base with deep orange, dark blue and purple coloured floss, very rarely white. However, the most dominant colour is crimson red with little of cream and black, indigo, ivory, yellow and green in small places to touch up. At times to emphasise a pattern, design or motif, a small mirror is affixed in the center by buttonhole stitch. An interesting design was created by dividing a square into four equal triangles and a mirror in the center. Two each corresponding triangles are filled in by long stitches in vertical and horizontal direction. Gudari is a popular quilting where swirls and spirals are worked out with long stitches especially in black colour, building a background for the actual design. Over this background of black colour the motifs are embroidered in contrasting colours, however the emphasis is made by use of mirrors randomly.

Abhla Bharat is nothing but use of mirrors or a mirror inset **embroidery**. Though it is the traditional **embroidery** of Kathiawar, is now universally appreciated and thus used by all folk ways of India. The current trend is to inset the mirrors on a dark background to bring about a glittering effect specially at a candle light dinner or any evening functions. For fixing the mirrors especially the traditionally accepted round ones, the design is traced leaving a circle to attach them. The rest of the **embroidery** work is completed with stem or herringbone stitch by using silken floss. The traditional colours are blue, red, green and pink. The floral motifs with various shapes, types and colours of foliage, creepers, climbers, tendrils are the most common ones. Abhla Bharat is carried out on both family clothing and household textiles.

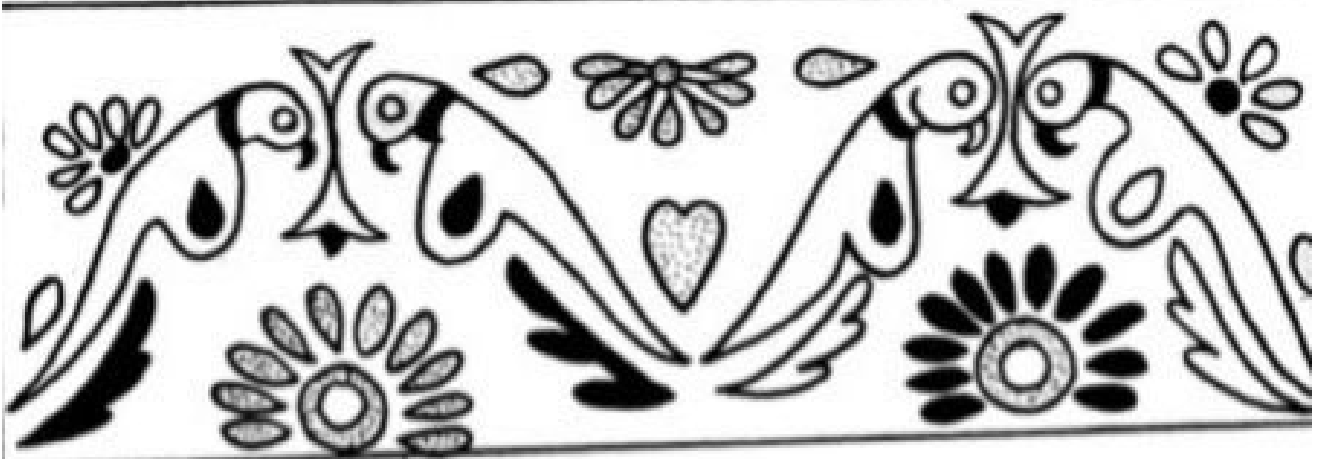
Sindhi Taropa commonly known as interlacing stitch practiced at Sindh, Kutch and Kathiawar. In Sindhi Taropa, the movement of the needle and thread is very important, does not bring any newness in the texture but can simply be said that an impression of the ingenuity of the women folk. Interlacing stitch involves two steps of embroidering, where in the first step, the long threads are stitched into the base of the cloth to form base structure or skeleton and in the second step, the thread is interloped through the basic structure or skeleton in reverse direction. The design is composed of small squares, lozenges, chevrons, discs, sometimes interspersed with flowers, birds, animals, etc. According to Jasleen Dhamija 'Sindhi Taropa was prevalent in Germany but it is really not known whether the Germans have introduced it into India or vice versa'.

Gujarat is also famous for Moti Bharat, the bead work. The main feature of this Bharat is, the beads are not stitched on a back ground but the beautiful rich coloured beads are stitched together with the help of needle and thread. The back ground is usually white beads, against which various motifs

and pattern are stitched (woven) creating a solid surface with coloured beads. However, there exists no special set of motifs but are the same as that of other embroideries like elephant, camel, parrot, peacock, lady churning curds or pondering grain, calf drinking mothers milk and so on. The articles made of Moti Bharat were stiff nonpliable, hence used as torans for doors, bags, purses, wall hangings, play-toys, perch for the lady to balance the water pots on her head and other decorative, ornamental, show pieces to be exhibited in the house.

Though the craft of Kutch and Kathiawar fall under the traditional **embroidery** of Gujarat distinctively have many aspects in common like the stitches, motifs, use of Abhlas and so on. According to Mehta and Thakore who have studied these **embroidery** can be classified broadly into two groups on the basis of motifs geometrical, and figurative. Geometrical patterns are mainly employed in applique work where figurative like, rider on a horse, king in procession seated on elephant, Ras leela, Gopi-Krishna, are picked up from few incidents of mythology.

Gujarat **embroidery** is not only rich by itself but depicts rich heritage of the state where several individuals express their ideas, views by making use of several colour schemes.



BORDER DESIGNS

