

Design Resource

Ahir Embroidery - Kutch, Gujarat

Rhythmic Row of Embroidery Patterns

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sandhya B.

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/ahir-embroidery-kutch-gujarat>



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Introduction

Ahir embroidery of Gujarat is a rhythmic row of embroidered patterns, circular mirrors encircled with stitches enriching the fabric and material of this kind can be used for home decor, clothing and other utility. The bright colors of the threads and glittering pieces of mirrors embellish fabric and it is a feeling of grandeur appeal to every soul and remains in heart. There is an outline stitch, filling and pattern stitches that goes in Ahir embroidery. It is all hand stitched and time taking, yet women folks indulge themselves in this type of embroidery and create striking patterns. There are plenty of stitches that are used to beauty the product. There are many communities who involve themselves in embroidery and each community has their signature sews that distinguish the stitches from the rest. Some of the known communities are rabaris, ahirs, jats, bharwads and harijans, and they all have their own styles of embroidery.

Ahir is the name of the community and they have their set of stitches and techniques hence the embroidery has got its name Ahir embroidery. Basically it is a cow herding and farming community and are called as agricultural tribe. They have a historical background of being warriors, considering fearless, they were also named martial race as well.

The embroidery is one of the most easily identifiable styles of embroidery from Gujarat and a supported handicraft textile in India. It is characterized by the use of bright colors, mirrors and intricate needlework that embellishes the entire fabric.

Gujarat is a pool of handicrafts and to visit villages will lead to exploration of crafts that are joy to the eye and also to take some of the products home for a traveler as a memento for the journey. Traditional handicrafts such as Bandhani, Bead work, Patola, Jewelry, Pottery, Zari and needle work embroideries are very much known all over the country and people from all over the world come and visit this place for the diverse culture. Embroideries are quite known, and are traditionally done by women folks of the village. Some embroidery designs are regional and others are specific to their community. It plays a major role in marriage. In many communities, a girl makes articles for her bridal goods throughout her childhood. Her ability as an embroiderer is important in her gaining a husband, and the embroidered bridal goods is publicly displayed to demonstrate her skill and the textile wealth she is bringing to the marriage. The embroideries mainly consist of a lifetime's supply of clothing for the bride and gifts for the family such as beetle bag, linen for the bed and so on. Apart from contributing to the considerable economic exchange required for marriage, embroideries created by village women bring a spark of color into objects of their every day and ritual use. The colorful sparkling garments and household decorations, portable objects suited to mobile life - have traditionally been used during auspicious occasions, to honor deities, or to make wealth. Patterns, motifs and colors are usually very specific relating to that particular region.

Hiralakshmi Memorial Craft Park is a place which is created with a vision to preserve restore and promote the

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arts of Kutch and making it accessible to the people. This place has become a platform to encourage the artisans to retain the craft and enhance. The park is available to the public free of cost and are allowed to have a look around. A few kilometers from the park, Bhujodi, is the village Chapredi. It is a small village of Bhuj in Kutch district and comes under Chapredi Panchayath and a family from that village have sustained the craft of hand embroidery Ahir, and display variety of products at the park.



Artisan who are involved in ahir embroidery work.



Bags made with ahir embroidery work.

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Round slim bag made using bright color.



Artisan involved in embroidery work.



Artisan is getting the design on cloth from butter sheet.

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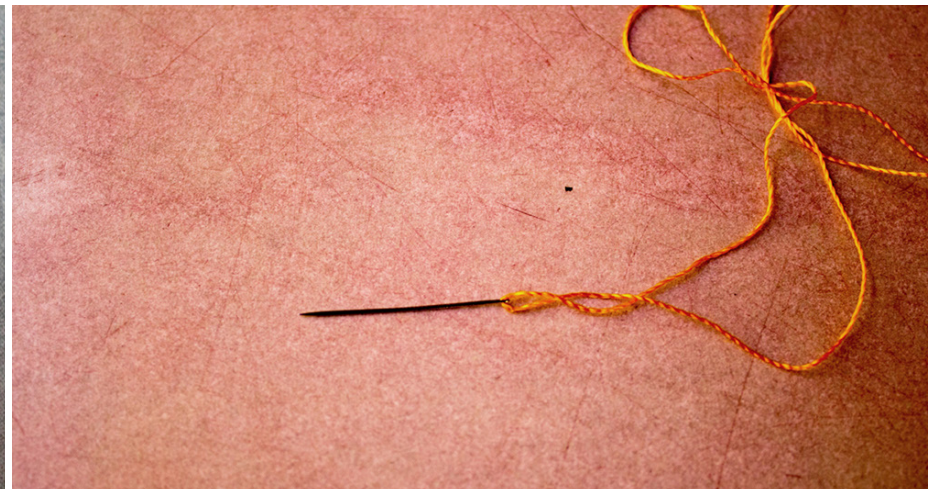
Tools and Raw Materials

Tools that are used to stitch Ahir Embroidery:-

- **Threads:** Bright color threads are used to sew Ahir embroidery.
- **Cloth:** Cotton and silk fabrics are used to stitch.
- **Needle:** Needle is used to sew.
- **Measuring Tape:** Measuring tool is used to measure the exact lengths to mark designs.
- **Tracing Sheet:** Tracing or gateway sheets are used to transfer designs onto fabrics.
- **Tailor Machine:** Tailor machine is used to pierce and create dotted outlines of the designs.
- **Scale:** Scale is used to draw straight reference lines.
- **Pencil:** Pencil is used to draw the patterns on the tracing sheets.
- **Color Mixture:** Kerosene, chalk powder and color are mixed together to apply on tracing paper.



Tools used to draw the design.



Needle used for hand sewing.

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Thread used for embroidery work.



Measurement tape used to get the exact measurement.



Brush used to apply color on the fabric.

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Scale is used for marking.



Scissor is used for cutting fabric.

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Making Process

Embroidery involves the embellishment of fabric with pattern and design with a needle. The embellishment is made on fabric with colorful threads and other accessories such as mirrors and sometimes beads. The design that is needed to be stitched is drawn on the tracing sheet (gateway sheet) and it is given a dotted outline from the tailoring machine, sheet is passed through the machine and dotted outline is created. Fabric of needed length is cut with the help of scissors and the tracing or the gateway is placed on the fabric. Usually cotton and silk are the most preferred fabrics to carry out the embroidery.

Cotton cloth is cut to the required lengths and a gateway sheet is placed on the fabric. A color mixture (kerosene plus color plus chalk powder) is applied on the trace sheet. The color settles on fabric through the dotted outline and becomes a reference to begin with the embroidery. Bright colors are used to embellish the fabric and make it more attractive. There are various stitches that are adapted. The designs are stitched with free hand embroidery, there are numerous stitches that are followed even today and are traditionally sewed. The women folks mostly work on the embroideries. Each community has their own set of stitches and it all comes from ancestors. It adds to the family income and there are more than two thousand artisans who are involved in embroidery work. There are centers which help artisans preserve, evolve and promote these stitch works. Bhujodi and Qazab in Bhuj are few of such centers which aims at getting quality work of embroidery, promote the artisans and help them uplift their living.

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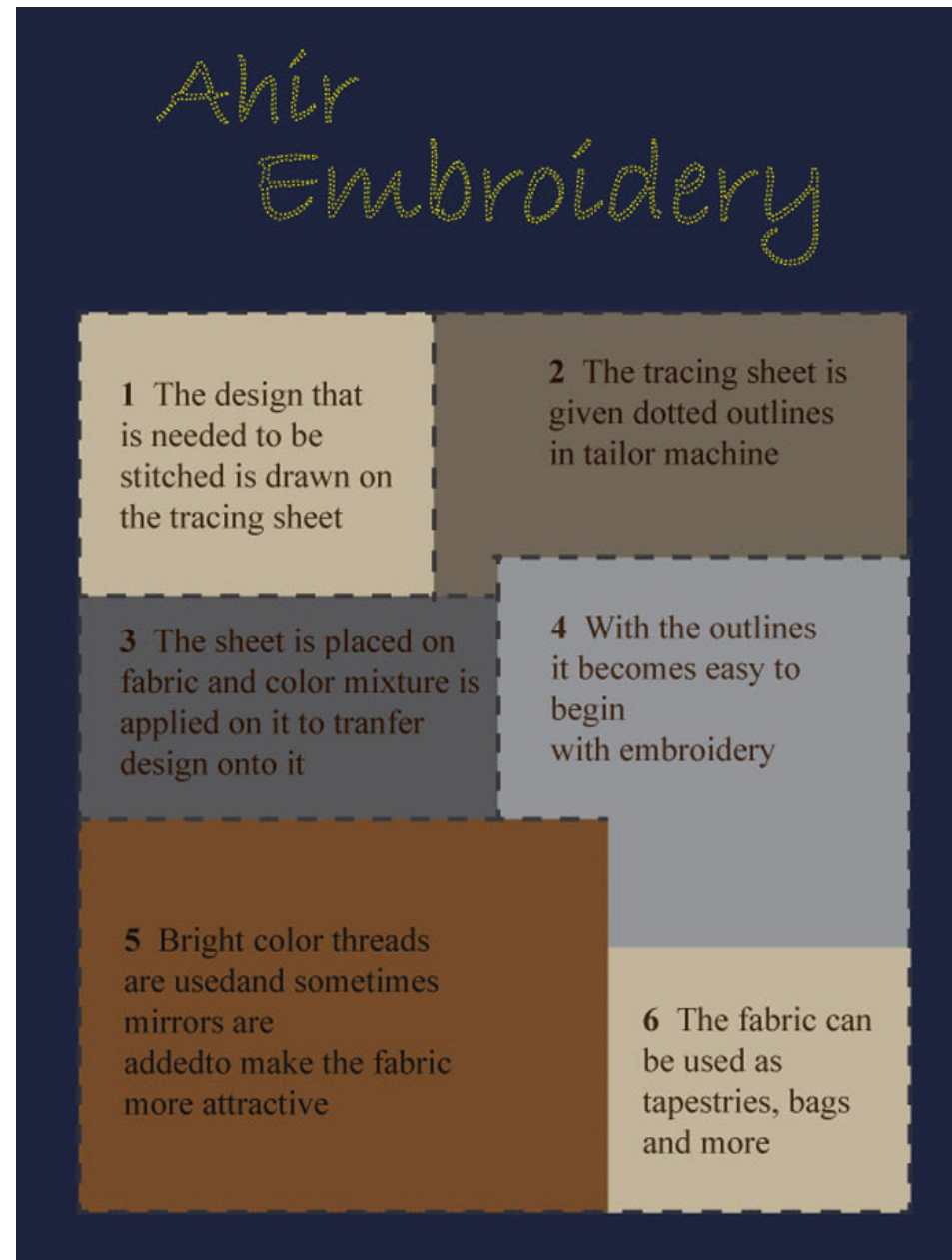
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Flow Chart:



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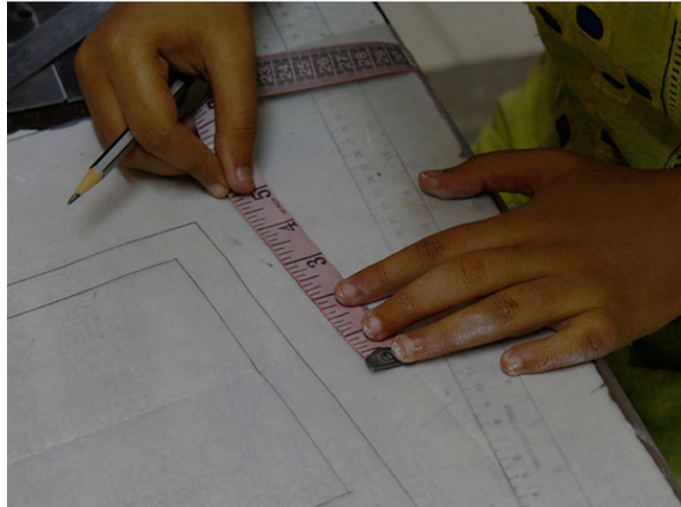
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Artisan drawing line using scale in order to make graphs.



Artisan drawing the design on the butter sheet.



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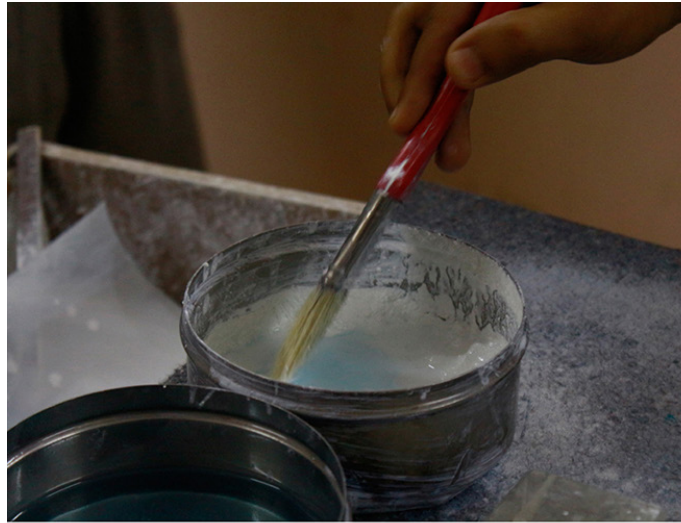
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The mixture of kerosene and chalk powder is applied on pierced gateway sheet.



The color mixture is applied on gateway sheet to get the design on fabric.

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Outline of the design is pierced with the machine.



The thread is insured inside the needle.



Artisan begin the embroidery with the head part.

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The embroidery is begun from the head part of the peacock design.



The eye part of peacock is stitched with the mirrors.



The body part of the peacock is being embroidered.

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Adding a mirror to the eye of the peacock make the fabric more attractive.



The fabric having stitches of Ahir embroidery.

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Products

The fabric that is printed can be used as table cloths, curtains, bed covers, tapestries, hand bags, sling bags, dolls, purses, torana, home decor and also for personal utilities. The hand stitched products have a greater value comparative to the machinery ones as one likes to directly buy from the maker and it also adds to the economic model of the artisan family. The price ranges from INR 500 for a piece of stitched cloth and goes on depending on the intricate designs, patterns stitched and the products.



Hand bags with ahir embroidery.



Red sling hand bag with ahir embroidery.



Variety of pouches.

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Video



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Contact Details

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You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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