

Design Resource

## Rabari Embroidery - Bhujodi

Inspired by Mythology and Desert Habitation  
by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S.,  
Srikanth and Tejas  
NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/rabari-embroidery-bhujodi>



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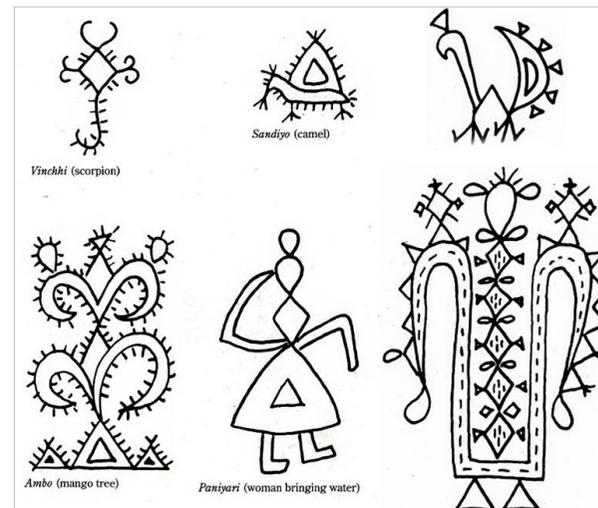
## Introduction

Rabari embroidery gets its name from its community from Bhujodi, who were a nomadic/ semi nomadic community of cattle raiser living in the western region of India, from Rajasthan to the Kutch region in Gujarat.

Earlier, the term Rabari was loosely applied to migratory camel herders having similar customs and beliefs due to their profession and different sub communities of Rabari's. Each community and culturally linked group in Gujarat is distinctively identified by the kind of embroidered costuming, body tattoos and living settlements. The white dress is commonly wore by all Rabari men but black wool clothes, is worn only by the minority population of bharvad shepherds in the east of the region, relates to rule made by Chach, a Hindu ruler who conquered in the 8th century. [1]

Mirror chain stitch in various size and shapes is the specialty of Rabari embroidery, given this style a unique and beautiful edge compared to various other types in the league. Women use their creativity, aesthetics in embroidery works on textiles.

All girls in the community involve in embroidery work of Kanchali (backless blouses), Paheranu (wrapped skirts), a ghaghara (stitched skirt), and ludi (woolen veil). The girls prepare their own bridal dress, Toran (doorway hanging), shawl, bags, bedcovers and decorative camel covers for her future husband and family. All the girls have to learn the art of embroidery for the collectives for the dowry. This tradition has been passed on to the daughters through generations.



Design illustration of Rabaari embroidery. (Image source; Threads of identity)

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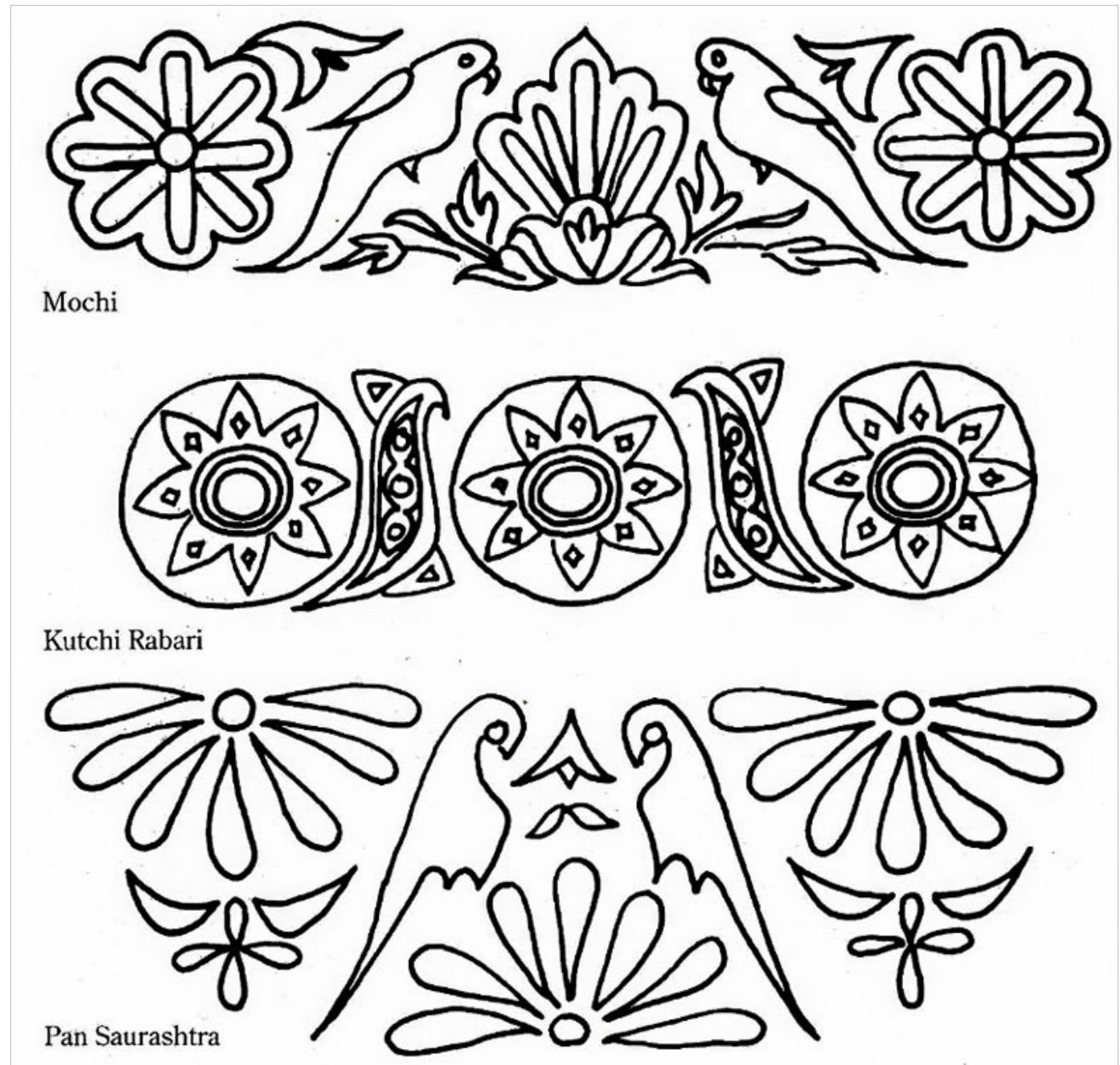
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Sketch representing floral and birds patterns .  
(Image source; Threads of identity)

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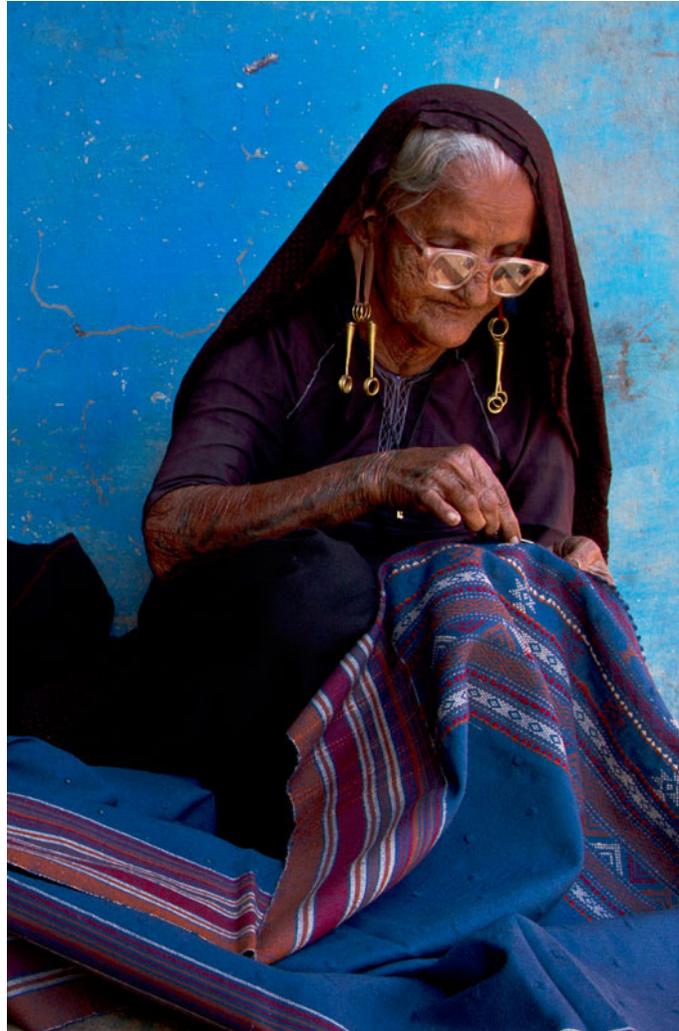
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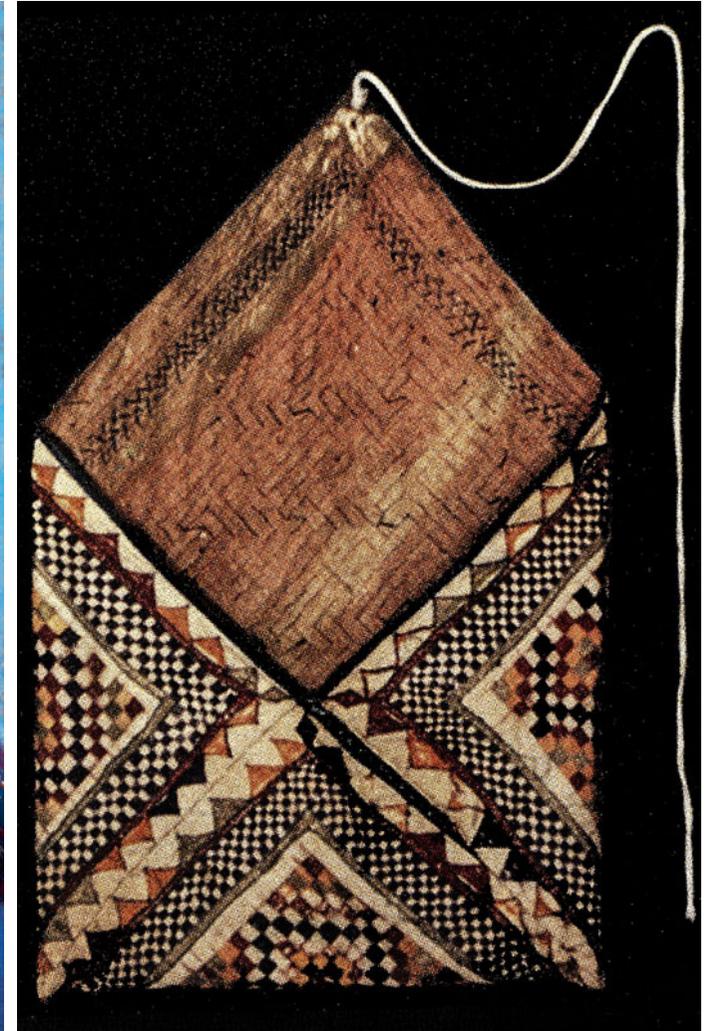
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Rabbari embroidery works are also done by senior craftsman.



Hand stitched rabaari embroidery bag with elegant look. (Image source; Threads of identity)

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Gujarat is famous all over the world for its embroideries and mastery of intricate mirror work.



The motifs are inspired by mythology and desert habitation. (Image source; Threads of identity)

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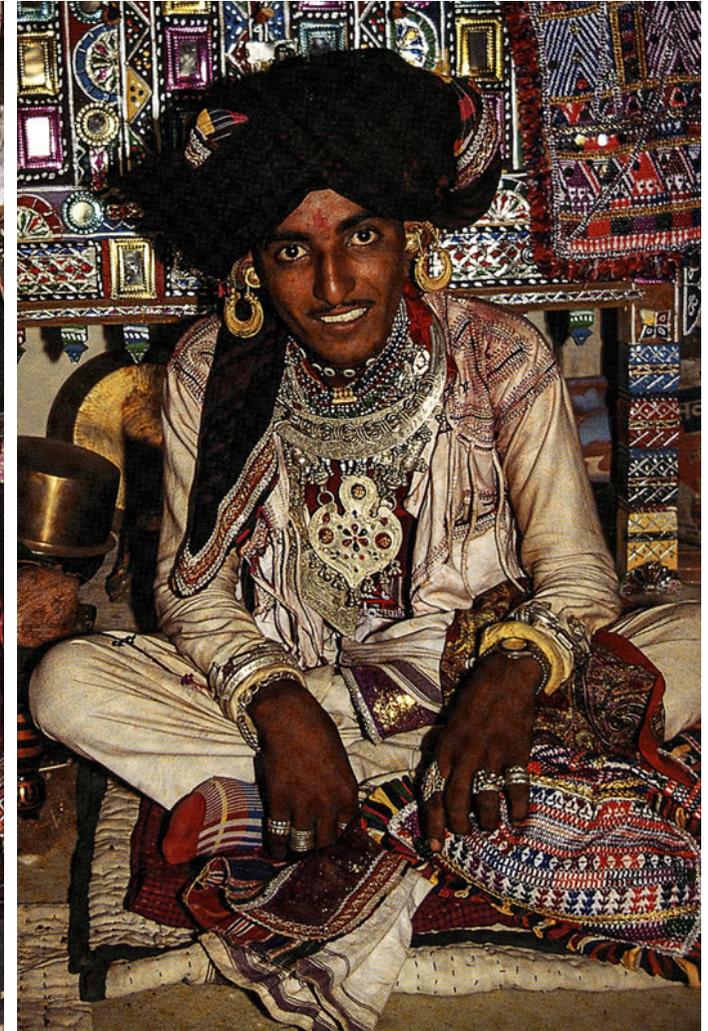
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Young Rabari tribal girls wearing traditional attire rabaari community. (Image source; Threads of identity)



Rabaari bride groom dressed with white outfit and wrapped with tribal ornaments. (Image source; Threads of identity)

Reference:

[1] FRATER, JUDY, (1995) Threads of identity, Reprinted and published by Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd, Ahmedabad 2003.

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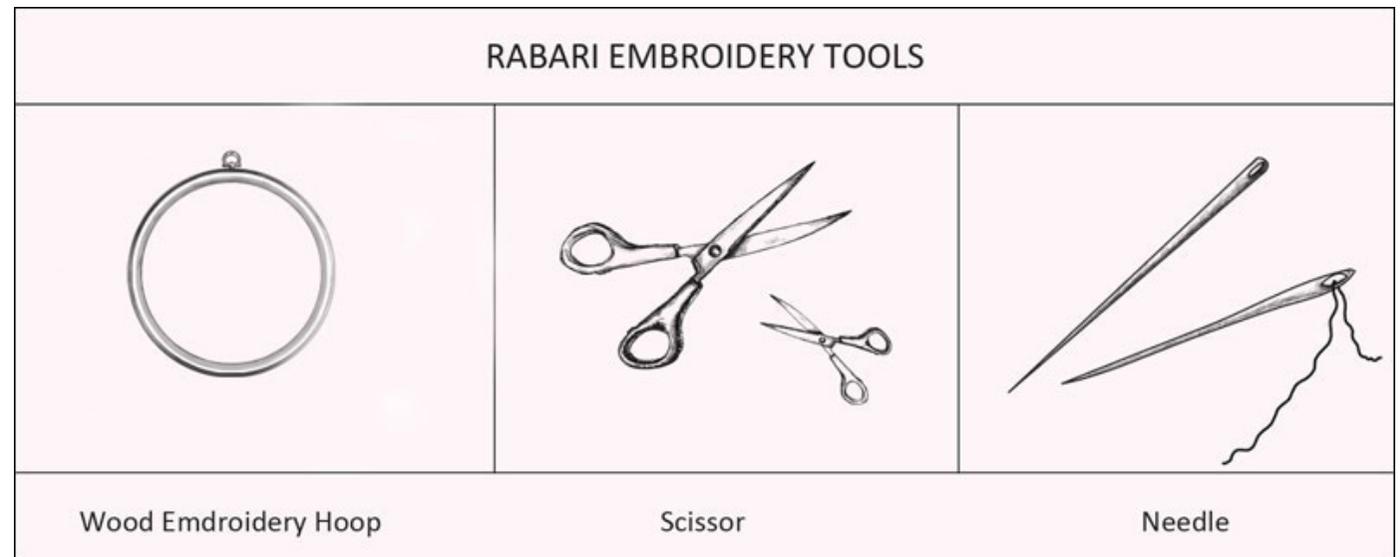
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## Tools and Raw Materials

The threads are used according to the embroidery work. Different sizes of needle are used for making the designs and styles of the embroidery. Colorful threads, beads and mirrors works are done to give an elegant look to the product.

Below are the basic tools and raw materials used for Rabari Embroidery work:

- **Needle:** Needle is used to stitch the thread of embroidery on fabric.
- **Woolen Threads:** Woolen threads are used for embroidery work.
- **Mirrors:** Various shapes of mirrors are used to decorate the embroidered work.
- **Embroidery Threads:** Varied colors of threads are used to make the work look bright and attractive.



Basic and simple tools are used make the rabaari embroidery.

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Scissors and cotton threads are used to create the design patterns.



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## Making Process

Embroidery is an integral part and a decorative work of a needle in which designs are created by stitching strands of material on to a layer of another material. Embroidery of choli (blouse) is the most important art form because it is heavily embroidered ornamentation. They attach different shapes of mirrors around which the embroidery thread is revolved.

Embroidery is a needle work and color thread of woolen or cotton is inserted through the eye of the needle which are stitched along the cotton or woolen cloths. These cloths are usually procured from Bhuj and nearby towns.

The artisan creates traditional patterns using chain stitches and a liberal use of mirrors. The varieties in this embroidery are mainly observed in the placement of the mirrors and the fascinating stitches made along the borders, they use glass mirror in various shapes like round, diamond, rectangular, square, triangular shape. The compositions created comprise specific motifs each of which has a name and meaning. The women depict the world around them, without the help of sketches or patterns. Chain stitch (Shankari) accompanied by an array of accent stitches adds in graphically illustrative quality in their needlework.

Back stitch is also locally called as 'bakhya' which is one of the stitches that adds lot of emphasis on the creative work. Contrasting and non-repetitive use of colors is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Rabari embroidery. This embroidery is like expiration (running out, does in free time) of women who usually does this in afternoon time after their household works. The motifs of the Rabari embroidery are usually derived from the everyday life that shows how the community sees their world. The style of the embroidery is not static as these stitches and color changes as per the spontaneity and imagination of the artist. It is the expression, creativity and amazing capacity of adaptation that keeps this craft constantly evolving and their tradition vital.



The cotton threads are inserted in eye of the needle.



Extra threads are cut using scissors.

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The threads are interlaced around the round mirror through the needle.



Threads are pulled tightly for the perfection.



Mirror and cloth are looped together using thread to do the mirror work.



The mirrors are interlocked completely with the threads.

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Back stitch 'bakhya' local is one of the simplest stitches taking thread down to up of the fabric.



Embroidery is considered as the art of decorating textiles using a needle and thread.



This work is a traditional art of Gujarat which is practiced from long generation.

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## Products

Many designs are inspired by mythology and desert habitation. It's an interesting collaboration of style, design and colors with temple motifs, women balancing pots on their heads (paniyari), mango leaves, coconuts, scorpions, camels, parrots, elephants and the tree of life are some of the beloved and auspicious motifs of Rabari embroidery. The Rabari women give a new dimension to the stark landscape of Kutch, through colorful threads and vivid imagination on the clothes.

Few products of Rabari embroidery are:

- Toran (Door way hanging),
- Scarf,
- Rabari Shawl,
- Kapadu (Backless Blouse),
- Paheranu (Skirt),
- Bags,
- Bedcovers,
- Camel covers.



Mirror and colorful threads are the major attraction of rabaari embroidery.

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Toran (Door way hanging) - Toran or Door way hanging designed with ethnic style which are used to welcome guest.



Woven colorful cotton and metallic thread runner with heavy hand embroidery Cushion table cover which embossed the furniture. (Image source; Threads of identity)



Exquisite, enormous chakda.



Scarf - Hand Embroidered Woolen Formal stole/scarf are extra improving for the Evening Dress.

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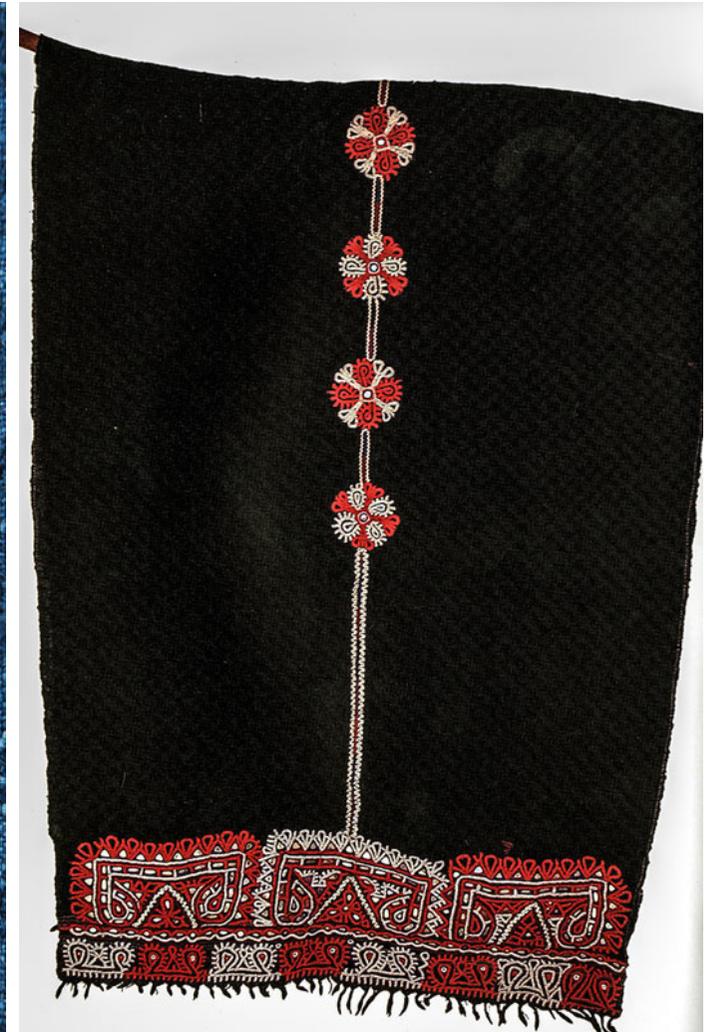
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The fabric border is embroidered with colorful threads.



Rabari Shawl- Woolen embroidered shawls have long been a cultural identity for Rabari community it has been collected from the personal ensembles of young Rabari brides.

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Toran -Different types of vintage Rabbari cultural “Door drapery” wall style toran.



Multi-colored brocade with goat wall hanging, glimpse of the work on display which is used to decor home.



Toran-Stunning pieces of Tribal design door hanging, will bring vibrant home for the festivity. (Image source; Threads of identity)

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## Video



Rabbari Embroidery - Ahmedabad

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## Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S., Srikanth and Tejas at [NID Campus, Bengaluru](#).

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