

## Traditional Zardozi Embroidery in the Design and Development of Custom Wall Decor

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### Abstract

**Background:** Zardozi embroidery is a traditional Indian method of surface decoration and needlework. This ancient embroidery uses metal wires, thread, beads, sequins, and stones. Once used to adorn royal attire with gold wires, zardozi now employs more affordable metals. It is commonly found in sarees, dupattas, and lehengas, with a significant market in wedding attire for its regal appeal.

**Purpose:** Every year, Zardozi's local and foreign markets grow. The government provides programs and incentives to support Zardozi craftsmen. However, Zardozi items are expensive, reserved for special occasions, and not affordable for all. As a result, machine-made imitations have emerged. Modern machinery affects traditional artisans, prompting new research to reduce costs and improve their quality of life

**Methods:** Zardozi works are done on clothing to enhance its appearance. However, there is a need to take the effort to teach the general public these procedures and make the Aari stitched sample available to everyone. Therefore, we must create a product that is both economical and accessible to everyone. A few research studies on motif selection, frame size, and product pricing were examined, and the items were prepared. Wall hanging production has been scheduled.

**Results:** A fresh attempt at creating the zardozi wall hanging was created using the appropriate fabric, and its appearance, cost, and client acceptability will all be favorable. In contrast to the clothing, the item was reasonably priced and looked good hanging on the wall. Therefore, the majority of clients might be drawn to it.

**Conclusions:** A craft training was undergone by the artisan, and by adopting the learned experience, a new product of embroidered wall hanging was prepared successfully.

**Keywords:** Zardozi Embroidery, Wall Decor, Zardhosi craftsmen, Zardozi wall hanging

## 1. Introduction

India has had a thriving culture, since the ancient period. Dress and Ornamentation played an important role in Indian culture. Here the ornamentation refers to the embroidery. There are several embroidery practised in India, each state has its own kind of traditional craft techniques. Zardosi is a long-established embroidery since the medieval period [1]. Zardosi is the traditional art of Persia, where “zar” means gold and “dosi” means embroidery. Originally, the embroidery was done with actual gold leaf and pure silver wires. Today, however, craftspeople utilize a combination of copper wire and silk thread with a golden or silver mirror [2].

The process of zardozi begins with the craftsmen drawing the basic layout of the design on butter paper, which is later perforated by using a needle. The main instrument in the procedure is a needle with a hook at the tip that runs up and down through a densely woven cloth draped over a big wooden frame (adda). This craft of needlework is typically passed down from father to son, with particular abilities being taught in the strictest of confidence. In most of the villages the arts and crafts works are done as a cottage industry. Family members join together and they produce products. The house, resting place and workplace all fall in the same house. The infants in the family are trained from their younger period onwards, without handling any instruments in hand the gesture of work is trained to them, when the child reaches the age of 6-7 years, a small stick will be given to them to imitate his/her father’s craftwork on air. At the age of 8-10 years onwards only, the kids are permitted to handle the needle to get real-time experience. Kids do practice with the needle and thread, but at a young age imitative experience supports well to the kids to reach the good speed in the workmanship.

This Persian craft has a strong influence on the Indian essence, due to the use of the metal embroidery in Indian textiles and costumes which are used for various ritual and ceremonial purposes. Traditionally, zardosi was used to embellish lehengas, dupattas and sarees, presently it reaches out to accessories namely purses, caps, footwear etc. [3]. The constant demand of the present market has brought in a successful transition from traditional techniques of zari embroidery, to modern ones.

All the equipment used in zari manufacture is locally fabricated making the industry more self-sufficient and a unique one. Motifs like birds, fishes and floral patterns are used in this embroidery. In most of the villages the arts and crafts works are done as a cottage industry. Family members join together and they produce products. The house, resting place and workplace all fall in the same house.

The infants in the family are trained from their younger period onwards, without handling any instruments in hand the gesture of work is trained to them, when the child reaches the age of 6-7 years, a small stick will be given to them to imitate his/her father’s craftwork on air. At the age of 8-10 years onwards only, the kids are permitted to handle the needle to get real-time experience. Kids do practice with the needle and thread, but at a young age imitative experience supports well to the kids to reach the good speed in the workmanship.

To create an artistic Zardhosi work more effort to be invested. The best result of the product will be achieved only by the experienced artisans. The value of the product increases because of the time, workmanship and effort invested by the artisans [4]. So machine embroidery is started to boom with the golden and silver zari work which imitates the zardosi art, and also these products are comparatively cheaper than the handcrafted zardosi products. These attracts the customers to buy these products, which simultaneously affects the life of artisans. To bring changes in the artisan’s life, to create job opportunity to them and make the original hand crafted Zardhosi products easily available to all with the affordable cost, a trial study has planned. The concept of making wall hanger was dawn on the investigator’s mind as it tried to make as an end products.

## 2. Review of Literature

Zari zardosi is used to embellish the clothing of kings and royals in a Zardozi was brought to India in full bloom by the Turks during the Tughlak period. Zardosi became a popular embroidery of royal robes and courtly nobles during the reign of Mohammad Bin Tughlak. The term zardosi premiered in Futuhat-Firozshahi, the autobiography of Firozshah Tughlak. Firozshah Tughlak made a code of laws on this craft and confined the designs and patterns. This led to the setback of Zardosi [5]-[6]. But during the mediaeval era, it became popular for decorating the clothes of Mughal kings. It was not only used to ornament royal clothes but it was also used to adorn other types of clothing like royal tent walls and the accoutrement of elephants and horses. For Empress Mumtaz mahal, Shah Jahan developed the art of producing woven sarees using this zari zardosi technique with his craftsmen named Zardosi. Zardosi had another obstacle during the Aurangzeb period. The cost of the raw materials was extremely surged, which led to the migration of craftsmen [7] They migrated to Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Rajasthan, and Mysore and many artisans were recruited by Rajput Rajas in ancient India. It was mainly



**Figure 1:** Traditional Aari Embroidery

done with gold and silver threads. The information about this embroidery work was found in the Vedic period.

Atka, clothes embellished with gold thread is mentioned in Rig Veda. There is also much evidence in Ramayana and Mahabharata regarding the gold thread work. Other writings, such as the Jatakas, provide more evidence, such as golden turbans and elephant trappings created with gold work. There are some depictions of embroidered garments in the Jain kinds of literature Acharanga Sutra and Ajanta Painting cave.

According to Bana Bhatta's Harshacharita, the Muslim robes were adorned with gold thread embroidery. Embroidery using golden thread was also used during the Gupta and Kushana period [1].

## 2.1 Craft Evolution

Later, zardosi became the royal costumes of Nawab of Awadh. They also wore zardosi embellished caps and shoes along with their attire. Nawab Asaf al-Daulah granted lands to many Artisans. Lucknow, the traditional capital of Awadh became popular for heavy zardosi embroidery. When Awadh culture came to an end, zardozi was practised by the local karkhandas. During British time, European influence can be noted in this work [8]. Even the Nawab began to follow the European style and designs. Despite a brief decline in popularity following independence, zardozi has made a strong resurgence in the last 50 years [8]. In recent years, zardozi has been used widely in wedding attires as they portray royalty. Furthermore, this embroidery is practised in Pakistan and Bangladesh as they were counted in the Mughal kingdom and culture [9].

### 2.1.1 Importance of the craft

Zardosi is one of the traditional embroidery done in India over a long period. The usefulness of this craft has opened

on to many surface embellishment purposes. This craft demands top-level skills and experience [10]. The job is still done entirely by hand by the artisans today. As the skill is so complicated, it takes approximately two to three days for five to six craftsmen to adorn a six-meter sari (Bhattacharya). According to Artisan Mohammad Bilal, zardosi is high-fashioned and it can be noted in European fashion shows. He designed zardozi worked garments and umbrellas that spoke about purposeful themes [11].

A wooden frame called an Adda is used to perform this beautiful embroidery, where it supports for the beautiful finishing of the craftsmanship. This frame tightly holds the fabric in position, which supports the artisan to work fast. In the wooden frame stand the fabric is mounted well, where the craftsman works with both hands, there is no need to hold the frame or fabric. The small hooked needle helps in designing complex designs.

Zardosi is a prominent fashion in wedding attire, as it gives a rich and lavish look. Nowadays zardozi is seen in accessories like shoes, bangles and headpieces. Zardosi embroidery is also used in elephant Jhuls. Jhul is a wide carpet-like covering that is draped over the elephant's back and cannot be held down since it is thrown down on both sides of the animal. Jhul is a term derived from the old Marathi Prakrit word jhul, which means cloth on the Elephant body. The needlework is carefully done in a couched method to provide a puffy impression since the trappings contain huge and complex patterns enclosed with defined boundaries [12].

### 2.1.2 Domestic and export scenario of zardosi

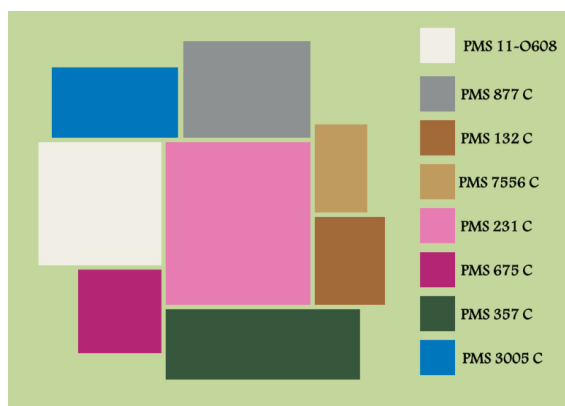
The zardosi market in India is mostly driven by events and festivals. The old city of Delhi is known for its zari zardozi garments. This area is dedicated exclusively to the wedding market. Here one can get not only zardozi bridal clothes but also zardosi embellished juti, jewelers and turbans. In traditional shops, the customers are seated on mattresses and the salesman displays the garments. Mannequins and window displays are used in modern stores [13]. In Tamilnadu the bridal blouses are lavishly decorated with zari and zardozi. The starting price for zardozi-adorned blouses at the tailor's is 1000 rupees.

Zari zardozi goods share less than 2 percent of India's handicraft exports. The world market of zari zardozi was 8.4 billion US dollars in 2003, which is 18% higher than in 2002. Varanasi, Agra, Lucknow, Farrukabad and Bareilly are major centres for zari zardozi goods. Hong Kong, USA, Germany, China, France, Italy, Spain, Mexico and Romania are the main exporting countries for zari zardozi goods. Zari zardozi goods world market kept



**Figure 2:** Inspiration Board

increasing from 1997-1998 but had a slight fall in 2001-2002. Later it regained its market value. In 2008, the export of zari zardozi goods increased by more than 11% compared to the previous year. Zardozi is a good source of income for the Indian economy. Its market value keeps increasing year by year. (2006) Schemes that promotes Zardozi [14]. The Government of India classifies zardozi



**Figure 3:** Colour Board

as a handicraft, and it receives support from the Office of the Development Commissioner (DC) (Handicrafts). The Ambedkar Hastashilpi Vikas Yojana (AHVY), which supports craft clusters like Zardozi by providing input, infrastructure, training, and social security, is the Ministry of Textiles' flagship programme for handicraft craftsmen [15]. The Zardozi clusters are mostly found in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh, as well as the Delhi Union Territory. The government of Uttar Pradesh recently authorized the creation of marketing hubs for Zardozi artisans, known as zardozi, who are found in significant numbers throughout the state.

Handicraft artists get MUDRA loans and margin money from the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). The following are the specifics of the loan

margin money granted to handicraft artists by banks:

- I. SHISHU Loan, which provides financial assistance of up to INR 50,000
- II. KISHOR Loan provides financial assistance in the range of INR 50,000 to INR 500,000.

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, which is part of the Ministry of Textiles, facilitates communication between Indian handicraft exporters and overseas customers, as well as buyer-seller meetings and trade shows. It is also in charge of developing a National Design and Product Development Centre in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

Zardozi is one of the crafts that falls under the council's jurisdiction. The Lucknow-based Kalatmak Handicrafts Self-Help Group Foundation works with Zardozi craftsmen and has acquired a Geographical Indication (GI) registration for Zardozi as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of San Luis, Argentina. Locally made handicrafts and handloom goods may now be sold in Latin American and Argentinian markets, thanks to the foundation.

Initiatives in the non-profit sector for Zardozi include those that focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of artisans and those that provide training programmes in the city. The activity of the Self-Employed Women's Association is focused on training and welfare, as well as union and cooperative activities. It teaches women the art of Zardozi and places them in jobs with large corporations [16].

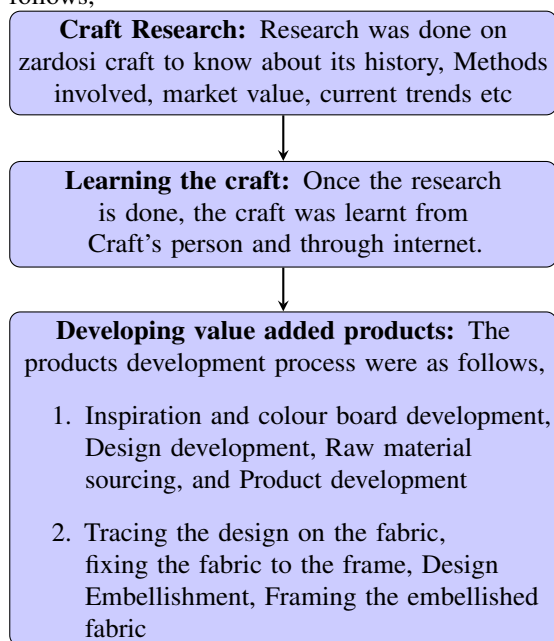
### 3. Methodology

There are more innovative and technological developments were found in the fields of textile and fashion. These technological developments supports for the fast and easy production, where it eliminates the involvement of more man power, flaws in the production process reduction of waste etc., but it also spoils the original hand craft people's life. The hand crafted products are costlier than the machine made products, where it reduces the sales and quality of their life style. The Concept of the articles was arrived by the author for upgrading the craftsman's life. A training program was undertaken by the author. The original aari embroidery work with the use of Zardhosi was learnt. By the learned concept how to create a new innovative products to elevate the craftsmen's life by increasing the sale and profit of the business. So a new product was planned to produce.

### 3.1 Intricate needle work

The traditional zardozi embroidery is famous for its intricate fine craftsmanship. The first preference for the zardozi embellishment goes to the bridal wear and the garment used for the special occasion. Later the accessories used for the dress are decorated with this zardozi work. These fabrics are closely decorated with zari, bead and zardozi. More care and effort to be invested in the maintenance of these garments. Dry cleaning is only the preferable method for maintaining these garments.

Most of the time these designed garments are kept safely in the cupboard and worn on special occasions. These designed garments are very costlier than the other king of embellishments. So the investigator wishes to make a product which is to be bought by all and it should be kept outside for the visitor’s view. But washing must not be done, because it may spoil the outlook of the product. By using this traditional zardosi craft, three wall hangings were developed. The product development process was as follows,



Designing the new product has its way of more process. The newly designed product must be accepted by all. For that, it should be designed to the recent trend. The process of imagining, creating, and iterating products that solve users’ problems or address specific needs in a given market. The key to successful product design is understanding the end-user customer, the person for whom the product is being created. The overall process of conceptualizing, designing, planning, and commercializing a new product to bring it to market. There are several different approaches to this process. Some approaches are customer-centred, team-based, or systematic as examples.

An inspiration board or mood board is used to gather ‘inspiration’ for the design process. Designers use it to find the style for branding a client’s business. Designing the products based on the current trend and customer expectations will lead to the product’s success.

The theme for the product was taken as floral, which gives more curves and femininity to the design. Curves always create attraction to the person. Inspiration board helps in conveying the mood or feeling of a particular theme. The above inspiration board was useful in developing the design for the products. It delivers a pleasant and joyful mood. The products are designed with different floral motifs and patterns inspired by this inspiration board.

The colour board helps in selecting colours for the products. It aids in choosing the appropriate colours for design elements and background fabrics. The colours are inspired by the inspiration board.

### 3.2 Design development

The basic design for the products were developed keeping in mind the floral theme. All the three designs had floral motifs. The first design focused on the leaves and flowers were used less. The second design had a festive feel, where the top part of the design acted as door to ran and the bottom part represented flower rangoli. The Third design had only on motif, which was repeated to get a pattern. The design dimensions are mentioned in Table 3.1

**Table 1:** Design dimensions

Category	Length	Breadth
Product 1	8.5”	7.5”
Product 2	6”	9”
Product 3	9”	9”

### 3.3 Raw Material sourcing

The Raw materials like zardosi, sequins, mirror, beads, threads and needles were sourced carefully based on the designs selected. These materials were purchased by analyzing the suitability of design application and colour combination etc., the base fabrics were selected carefully with more examinations. The end product was a wall hanging, where it should be attractive when mounted, but too much of glossy feel of the fabrics surface may spoil the sheen of embellishing tools like zardozi and beads.

So carefully silk cotton fabric with nominal sheen was selected. The fabric colour was chosen with the analogous and complementary with the accessories. The fabric was pretreated i.e., soaked with water and dried under shade and



Figure 4: Raw materials for Aari craft



Figure 7: step by step representation of Aari sample making

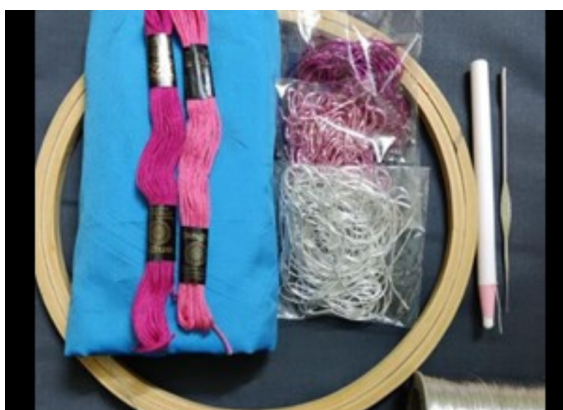


Figure 5: Tools and raw materials for style 1 Product

a steam press was given.

The selected design were traced carefully on the fabric



Figure 6: design tracing and fixing the hoop for work

surface by leaving the ease in the fabric to mount the wooden hoop. Mounting the adda that is the wooden hood on fabric is a kind of art. While fixing the wooden frame if not fixed with required pressure it may seem very loose, unable to apply stitches because of its saggy fixture. If more pressure is applied to fix it, the yarn on the fabric may be dispositioned

and the surface of the fabric get spoiled, even it may get tear as well. So awareness and experience is needed to fix the frame for embellishment.

### 3.4 Pre-preparation for Product development

Hand embroidery or aari embroidery both can be used to decorate the zardozi. Here the investigator chosen aari embroidery to sew the zardozi. Aari needle is iron made thin needle has a hook at the one end. It's very thin slippery needle, bit difficult to handle while working fast. So most of the professionals use to wind twine thread around the needle, where it will absorb the wetness or sweat in the hand and provide good grip to hold the needle. White pencil was used to draw the basic design on the fabric.

Sometimes this needle get rust because it is made with



Figure 8: Finished sample with frame work

iron. So the rusted needle will be soaked in the soap water and wiped with cotton cloth. Some people use the needle without any thread wrapping, when it's kept without usage coconut oil will be applied to avoid the rusting. Zardozi is embellishing material made with very thin metal wire, which looks like a spring. When the

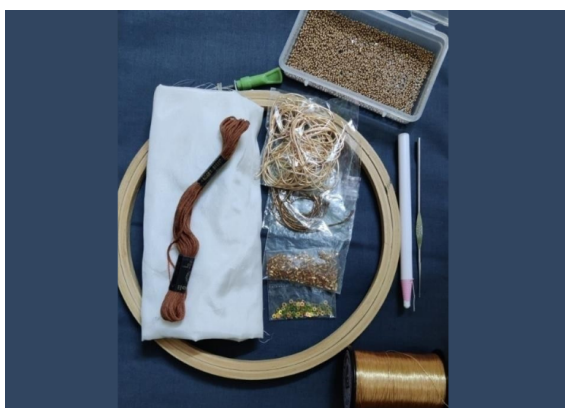


Figure 9: Raw materials for Style 2 sample



Figure 11: Step by step process of sample making

zardozi is handled wrongly or carelessly it get spoiled the spring may get opened. Even washing with machine or the carefully shampoo was usually preferred for the garments Value added products were developed using the above raw materials. Different zardosi techniques like satin stitch method, embossed design, French knots, chain stitch, mat weave stitch etc., were used to embellish the design. Both Aari needle and hand embroidery needle where used in the Embellishment. White pencil was used to draw the basic design on the fabric.

knot. The leaf part of the designs were decorated with the zardozi. In the zardozi work the long smooth zardozi to be cut according to the design area. It can't be cut to the equal size. Based on the place it kept it is to be measured and cut or else the uneven shaped zardozi may spoil the appearance of the design. The leaf part thin zardozi was used for the leaf petals broader and thick pink colour was used to decorate the surface. Chain and stain stitches were used to embellish the fabric. Its allover floral running design, which looks minimal, but spread and covered all over the fabric.



Figure 10: Process of design tracing & hoop fixing



Figure 12: Completed sample with frame work

**Style 1**

Style 1 zardozi work required raw materials were seen in the fig. Blue colour silk cotton fabric, pink colour hand embroidery threads, silver and pink colour zardozi, zari thread were chosen for this style 1 design. The design was traced on the fabric surface and to emphasize the outline white pencil was used. The fabric was mounted on wooden hoop and the designing work was started. The stem parts were worked with silver zari thread, the pollen were made with hand embroidery thread a French

**Style 2**

Style 2 design is a kind of allover design with hanging styles with flowers. White colour fabric with copper surface work was planned. This combination of work looks very shuttle, but will give a pleasant royal look to the work. Brown colour hand embroidery thread, copper colour zari thread, beads and sequins in copper and gold colour were chosen. The designs were traced on the white fabric with yellow carbon, to have a good visibility. Golden zari with copper sugar beads were used to decorate the hanging line of the design.



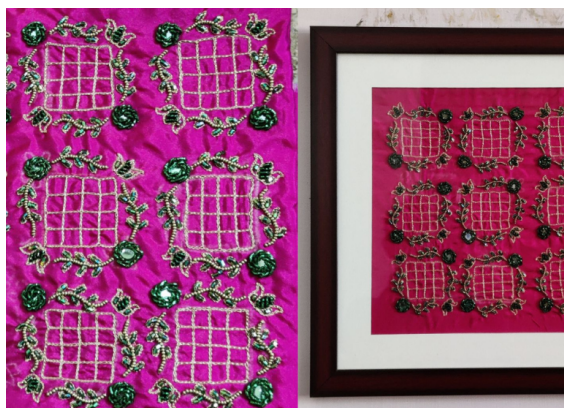
**Figure 13:** Raw materials for Sample 3

Sequins with sugar bead used for leaf design. Flower petal was decorated with zardozi as straight line and woven style method.

#### 4. Analysis and Interpretation

The above three wall hangings were developed using the zardosi craft. The products came out well. The weight of the products was less. They were hung on the wall using stick type hooks. The pictures are added below.

It was found that the products were stable when hung on



**Figure 14:** Completed sample 3 with frame work

these stick type hooks as they weighed less. They can be easily cleaned using clothes and tissues. The embroidery remains long-lasting, as it is secured with frame. Reviews and comments were very appreciable. Their alluring nature added good vibes to the environment.

#### 5. Findings & Conclusion

Zardosi is a traditional art that probably became famous with various dynasties. The cost of the product and unique



**Figure 15:** Final look of the finished Aari embroidery products

workmanship made the products available only to the king families. Making garments with the handcrafted Zardosi work takes more months to create a product. This makes the products only available to the rich people. Here is the trail study made to make the products available to all. The evolution of zardosi craft over the years led to the development of a wide variety of products. Modifying motifs, colours, base surfaces and collaboration with other embroideries; have made this craft inevitable in textile, jewellery and home furnishing products. Hence using this traditional zardosi craft value added products like wall hangings were developed. Hence the investigator planned to make a wall décor with Aari work embellished with zardosi. Suitable designs were planned and products were prepared and framed as a wall hanging. The appearance and cost of the products willing to purchase like those basic questions that were asked to the peer of the investigator. Positive results were obtained. So this can be considered as a good trial study to make it as a further biggest product.

#### Authorship contribution

The first Author Ms. Poornasree, did analysis and produced the product. Mrs. Subathra B, guided her throughout the craft work and prepared manuscript for publication and communication and corrections were done.

#### Funding

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#### Conflict of interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

#### Similarity Index

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than 1.

### Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no data set were generated or analyzed during the current study.

### Declaration

This research has been conducted ethically, reporting of those involved in this article. The selection of product, collection of raw materials, end product of embroidery samples and frame, all the other works are specifically done by the authors. The photographs were not taken from any sources. These are the original photographs taken by the investigator specifically for the work, not taken from any other social media platforms.

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