



INTACH

## LESSER KNOWN CRAFTS OF INDIA

### SUJINI EMBROIDERY



Sujini or Sujani is a beautiful handicraft from Bihar. It is a form of embroidery originated from Bhusra village of Muzaffarpur, Bihar. The handicraft can also be found in few villages of Madhubani in the state of Bihar and also in the southern parts of Rajasthan. The history of the craft can be date back to 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Initially the embroidery was made for traditional purposes exclusively done by women in rural areas. The embroidery was generally made from easily available cloth that was layered and then sewn together for new born babies using colourful threads. The design of these products interprets a mother's emotion and imagination regarding her baby. In these quilt the design depicts the mother's dream for her new born. The Sujani technique is based on two ancient beliefs. One ritualistic tradition is that, it represents the presence of a deity known as "Chitiriya Ma, the Lady of the Tatters" and stitching together the pieces

symbolizes the concept of unifying together elements that is out of place into a unified whole. The second believe was to make soft bedspread to wrap the newly born child to give the impression the soft hug or embrace of its mother. Infact, the word Sujani is a compound word of 'su' meaning "easy and facilitating" and 'jani' meaning "birth.

In recent times, Sujani artisans have started making bed sheet, cushion cover, wall hanging, sari, dupatta, suit, top, kurta pajama, shirt and bag. The products are also used for decorative as well as utilitarian purposes. The handicraft is not just a traditional craft but it is also a way to convey social and political messages. The artist design or used motifs mostly of narration of a village or religious scenes. They also stitch their sorrows and their realities on the Sujani, transforming the mundane cloth into testimonies of their lives and challenges.



The process of Sujani embroidery is that, the outline of design is first traced or drawn directly on to the cloth where stories, compositions and colour combination are worked out by the women on their own. The background is filled with the fine running stitch with thread whose colour is similar to the background to gives a wavy effect. The main outline of the motifs is done by chain stitch usually in darker colours such as black, brown and red thread and the design is then filled with running stitch in coloured threads. The



embroidery is very simple but requires a lot of patience and time. The smaller items can be made individually but a bigger product such as large bed sheets or quilts requires three or four women to finish the work.

The Sujni embroidery of Bihar is very similar to the Kanthas of Bengal but they differed in their techniques. In Sujni embroidery, a running stitch worked in straight line is done but in Kantha they use

spiral, circular or conical forms. The outline of the motifs in Sujni are done by chain stitch in dark colour but in Kantha out lines are done by running stitch.

The Sujni embroidery work of Bihar is protected under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act (GI Act) 1999 of the Government of India. It was registered by the Controller General of Patents Designs and Trademarks under the title "Sujni Embroidery Work of Bihar" and recorded under GI Application number 74, Class 26 as a textile item. The GI tag was approved on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2006.

Sujni embroidery is now supported by the Government and NGOs. Nirmala davi was the first women to take the initiative in the Sujni project under the Mahila Vikas Sahyog Samiti. Today many women are now working under this project. The market for this product is also grown from national to international level. The various arts and crafts exhibitions hosted also helped in popularizing the art. The traditional handicraft is worth preserving. When the rural women are tied down with traditional and ancient customs where women are not allowed to step outside their homes, the practice of this art has allowed them to earn livelihood and add to the family's income. The art gave an expression of imagination and spirit of the woman of Bihar. The women embroiderers are now able to share their exquisite art to the world at the same time preserving the handicraft.



Activity-

1. How and why it is important to preserve the Sujini traditional art? Write in short about your opinion.

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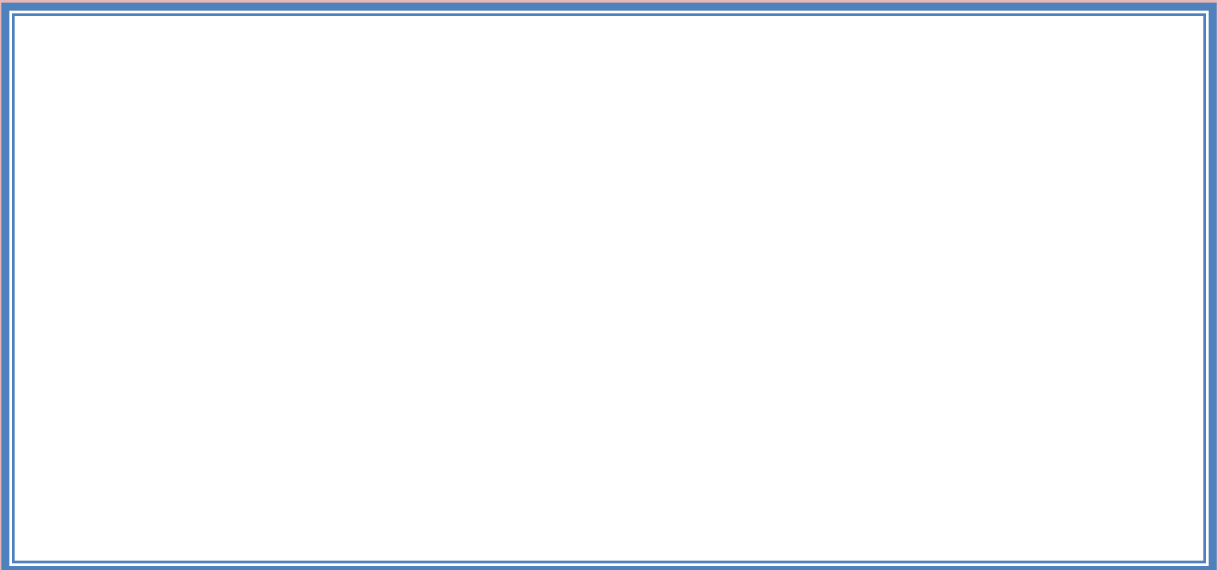
2. Write the difference between Sujini embroidery and Kantha embroidery. Provide an illustration.

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3. Find out a craft that is famous in your town/city\_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Local name of the craft\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) The materials used\_\_\_\_\_

- c) Describe the process of making the craft\_\_\_\_\_
- d) How the craft item is used\_\_\_\_\_
- e) Draw or paste a picture of the craft.



Reference-

*<http://www.umsas.org.in/en/bihar-arts-crafts/sujini-embroidery/>*

*<https://www.utsavpedia.com/motifs-embroideries/sujani-embroidery/>*

*<http://www.jiyo.net.in/site/content/sujini-embroidery>*