

COMMUNITY: JAT

EMBROIDERIES: JAT-GARAASIYA, JAT-FAKIRAANI, JAT-HAAJIYAANI, JAT-DAANETA

There are four major subgroups of the Jat community in Kutch, each with its own distinctive embroidery style.

Jat-Garaasiya embroidery resembles the mosaics found in Islamic tile work. This embroidery is rendered only on the yoke. Only one stitch - the cross - is used to create a fixed number of geometric designs. Colour is used in a very specific manner in these designs.

Jat-Garaasiya is a counted thread embroidery style: there is no outline or drawing done on the fabric to guide the craftswoman. Instead, the geometric forms are mentally conceptualized and plotted by counting the threads of the fabric. The embroidery is rendered on thick, coarse cotton fabric. Using a very tiny and fine cross stitch rendered in double thread, the craftswoman plots the squares and rectangles that constitute the grid of the geometric forms. The grid is of the same size throughout the composition. The spaces within the grid are filled in with bold colours and small, round mirrors.



The thick, coarse cotton fabric, the small round mirrors, the tiny and fine cross stitch rendered densely in bold colours - all these aspects make Jat-Garaasiya embroidery vibrant and weighty at the same time.

Embroidery is an integral part of the lives of the craftswomen. And the pursuit of excellence is a strong motivator. Craftswomen acknowledge that the criteria for evaluating creative excellence vary from one embroidered piece to another. They have, however, identified a set of indicators by which the technical excellence can be assessed.

The indicators of technical excellence in Jat-Garaasiya embroidery are:

- grid is of the same size throughout the design and it is uniformly balanced
- small, round mirrors are used
- the base fabric underneath the embroidery does not show through.

Jat-Fakiraani, **Jat-Haajiyaani** and **Jat-Daaneta** embroideries celebrate geometric and abstract motifs that have two distinctive features: a mirror at the centre of each motif; and, radiating lines within the motifs and all over the composition as well. These embroideries are rendered only on the yoke. The motifs are grid-based. The open chain stitch builds the grid and the satin stitch in radiating patterns fills in the grid. The stitches are rendered dense and tight



This manner of rendering the stitches on thick, coarse cotton fabric gives these embroideries a solid and sturdy appearance. Mirrors lighten the denseness. The indicators of technical excellence in Jat-Fakiraani, Jat-Haajiyaani and Jat-

Daaneta embroideries are:

- embroidery is densely rendered; it has a textured and tactile feel
- stitches used for embroidering the mirrors are rendered tightly so that maximum area of the mirrors is exposed
- the base fabric underneath the embroidery does not show through.