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LANGUISHING CRAFT



DANKE KA KAAM | Udaipur, Rajasthan



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## **Acknowledgement**

Craft Revival Trust thanks the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, for their support and sponsorship of this very important subject.

We acknowledge with thanks Shri S.S. Gupta, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for his help and support.

Thanks to Smt Alka Arora, Additional Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for her constant support.

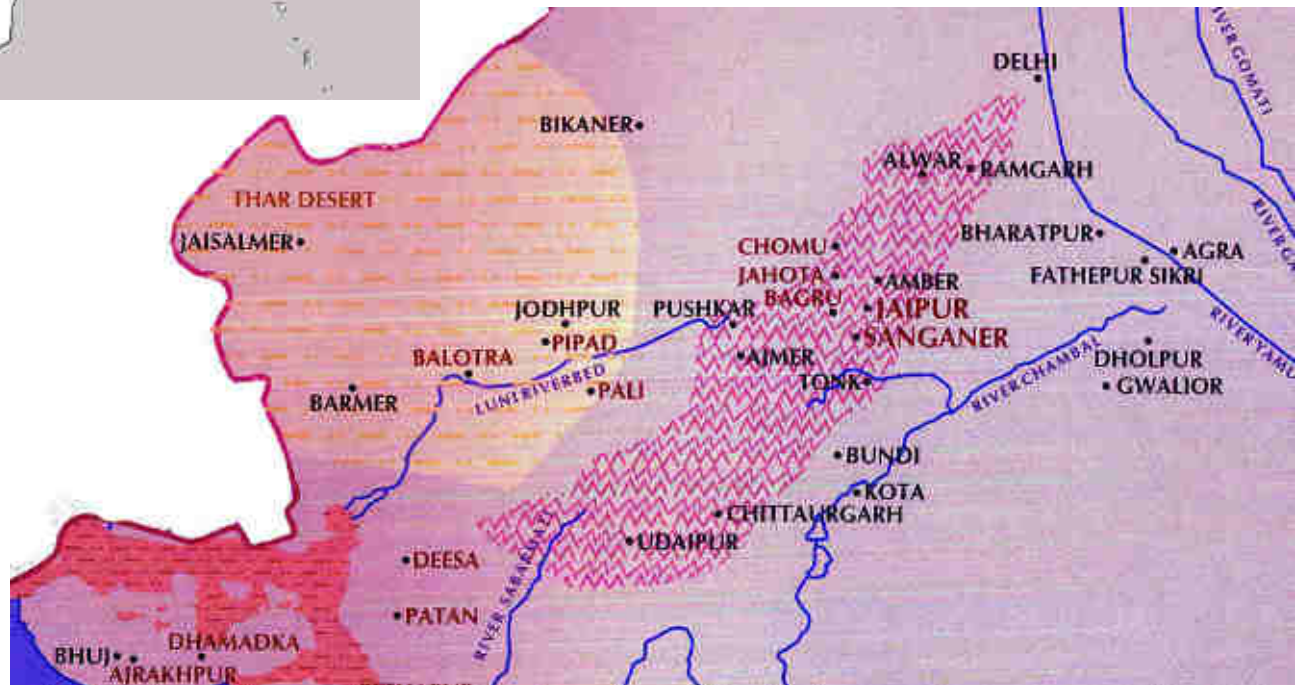
Our thanks to Shri Rohit Bhardwaj, Director, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)

Thanks are also due to the office and staff of Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)



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## About Danke Ka kaam

Danke Ka kaam, is an unusual and unique textile surface ornamentation technique that is practised in Udaipur, in the Mewar region of Rajasthan. Using small diamond concave relief shaped cut pieces of sheet metals, such as real gold, silver or plated metals, that are hand-stitched on to fabrics with zari yarn, it is complemented by Zardozi embroidery that is worked around it.

Danka builds up motifs like paisleys, flowers and peacocks, borders, vines and scrolls to create opulent textile garments.

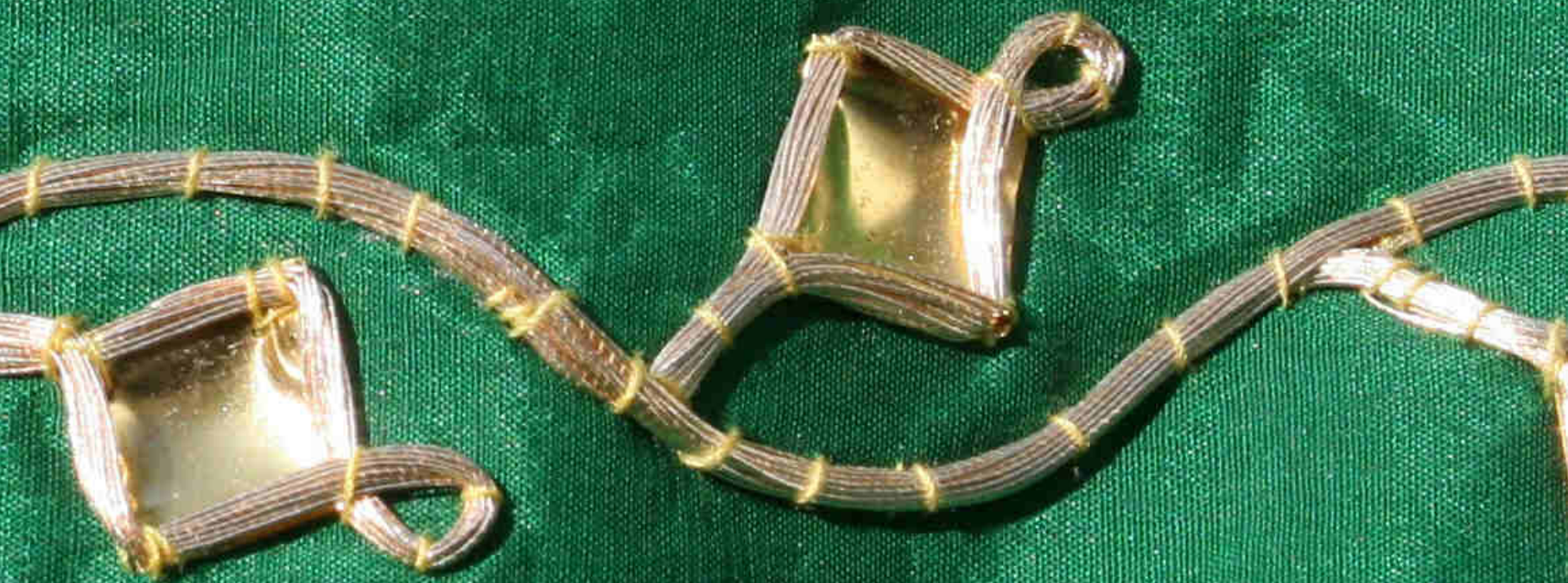
The commonly used turn of phrase “ Danke ki chot”, literally the hurt of the danka, could refer to the nick on the metal plate through which the needle pierces the concave shaped metal piece in its four corners, an intrinsic part of the embroidery that adds to the four-D look of the embroidery, as it glints and catches the light.





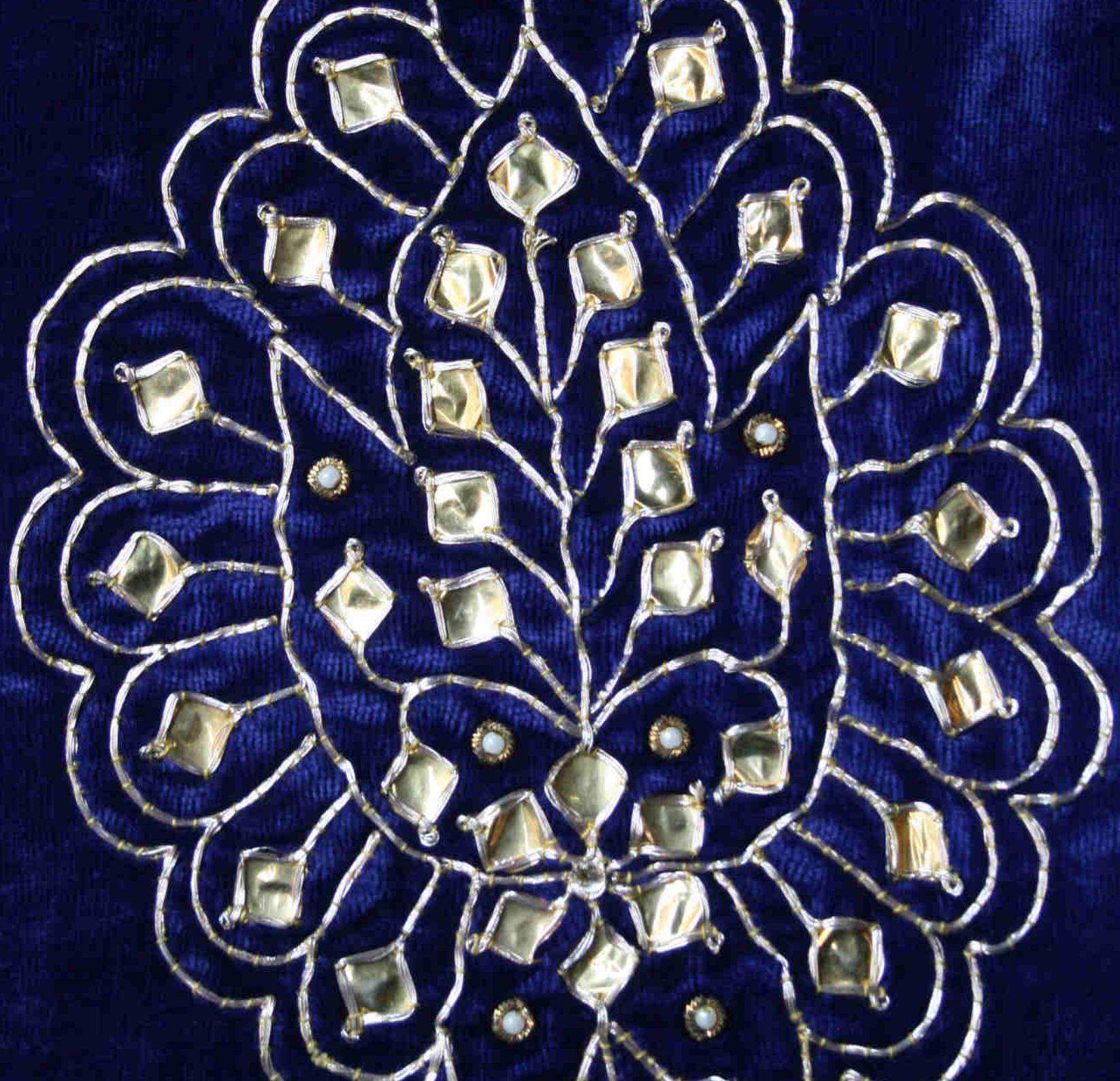












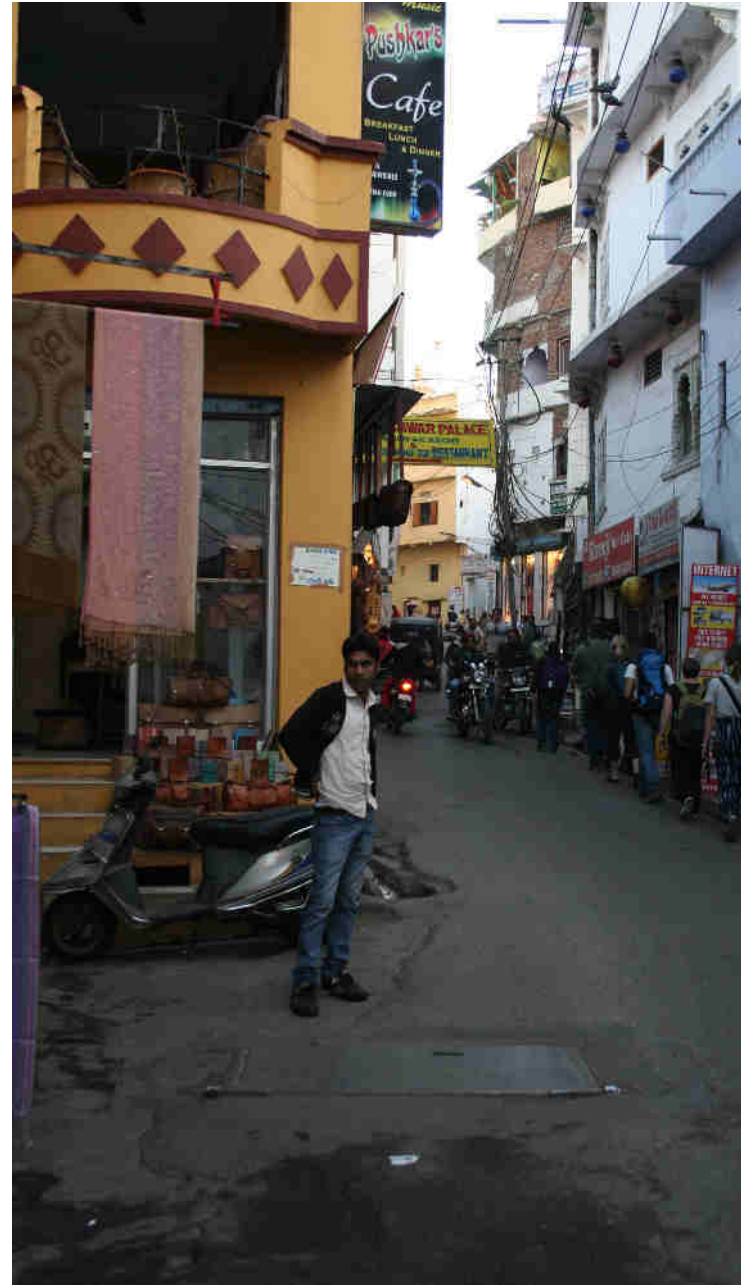


## About the Place

Udaipur located in the Mewar Region of south-central Rajasthan. It enjoys a tropical climate. Rainfall averages 660 mm/year, and is generally higher in the southwest and lower in the northeast of the region. Over 90% of the rain typically falls in the period June to September every year, during the southwest monsoon. The city on an average receives about 20 plus, hours of electricity. In this arid region, water supply is ample due to the comparatively high water table of the region. The economy of the Udaipur region relies primarily on tourism.

Udaipur city was established by Maharana Udai Singh II, in 1559 and his successor built on its foundation over a period of the next 300 years. It is a place that is replete with history and the founding of the city and building of the palace complexes, considered the largest royal complex in Rajasthan, cannot be looked at in isolation as the Maharanas lived and administered their kingdom from this palace.

Prior to moving their capital from Chittor to Udaipur, the Mewar kingdom had flourished initially in Nagda (30 kms to the north of Udaipur), established in 568 AD by Guhil, the first Mewar Maharana. In the 8th century, the capital was moved to Chittor, a hill top fort from where the Sisodias ruled for 80 years. Maharana Udai Singh II inherited the Mewar kingdom at Chittor in 1537 but by that time there were signs of losing control of the fort in wars with the Mughals. Udai Singh II, therefore, chose the site near Lake Pichola for his new kingdom because the location was well protected on all sides by forests, lakes and the Aravalli hills. He had chosen this site for his new capital, much before the sacking of Chittor by







कुलुब प्रदत्त

के विक्रेता







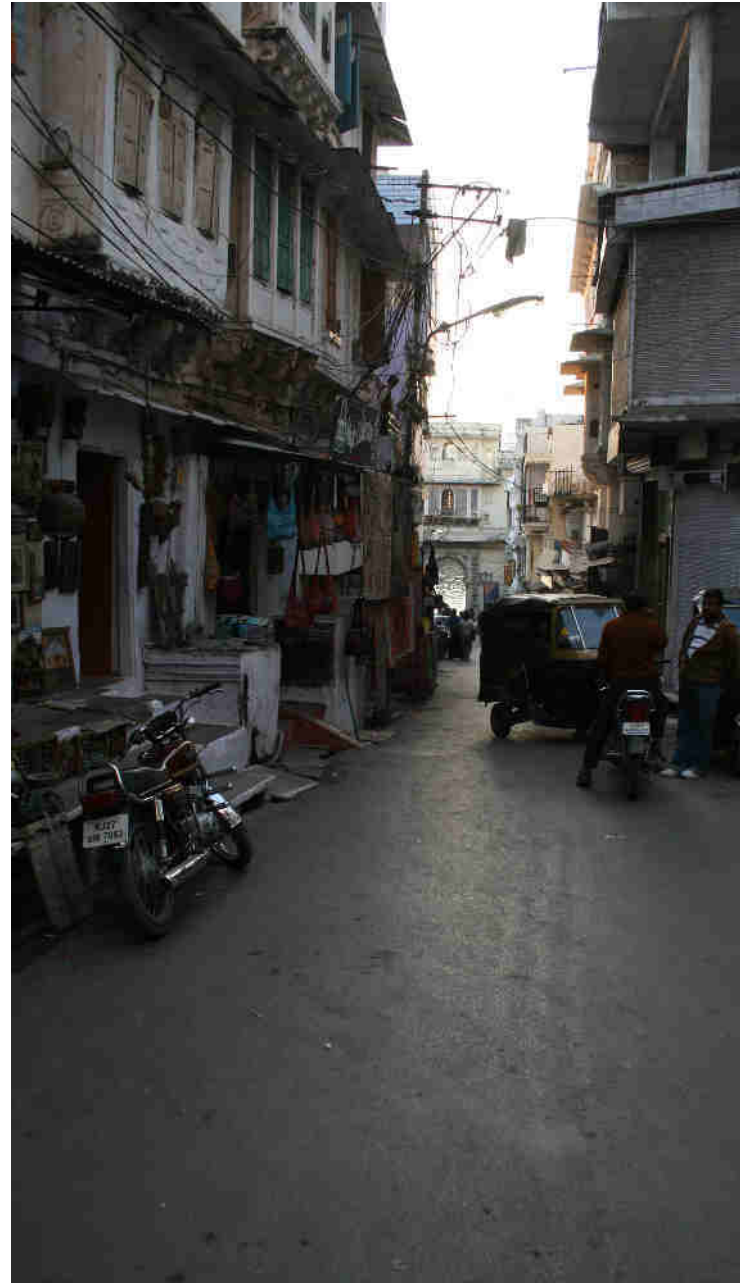


Emperor Akbar, on the advice of a hermit he had met during one of his hunting expeditions.

After Udai Singh's death in 1572, his son Maharana Pratap took the reins of power at Udaipur. He was successful in defeating Akbar at the battle of Haldighati in 1576 and thereafter Udaipur was peaceful for quite some years. With this, prosperity of Udaipur ensued; palaces were built on the shore and in the midst of the Pichola Lake. Concurrently art, particularly miniature painting, also flourished.

But in 1736, the marauding Marathas attacked Udaipur and by the end of the century the Mewar state was in dire straits and in ruins. However, the British came to Mewar's rescue in the 19th century and soon the State of Mewar got re-established and prospered under British protection, under a treaty signed with the British. Once India got independence in 1947, the Mewar Kingdom, along with other princely states of Rajasthan, merged with the Democratic India, in 1949. The Mewar Kings subsequently also lost their special royal privileges and titles. However, the successor Maharanas have enjoyed the trust of their people and also retained their ownership of the palaces in Udaipur. They are now running the palaces by creating a trust, called the Mewar Trust, with the income generated from tourism and the heritage hotels that they have established in some of their palaces. With the fund so generated they are running charitable hospitals, educational institutions and promoting the city.

Udaipur is well connected by road, rail and air links with the rest of the country. The city lies on the Golden Quadrilateral, midway between Delhi and Mumbai

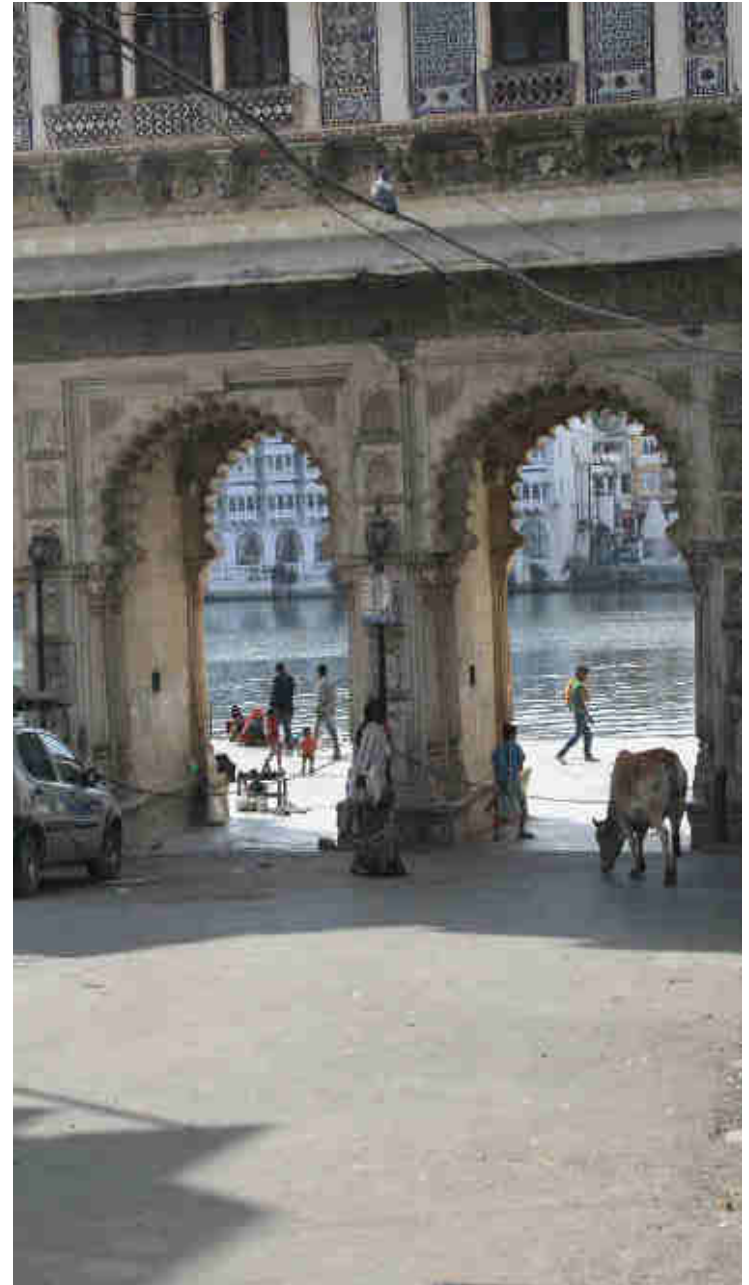








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National Highway (NH) 8; it is about 700 kilometers, from either metro. The East-West Corridor, which starts from Porbandar and ends at Silchar, passes and intersects the Golden Quadrilateral and shares the common space from Udaipur to Chittor.

Train connectivity is established between Delhi, Jaipur and Ahmadabad. Udaipur is connected with Delhi, Kota and Mathura with the “Mewar Express” on broad gauge tracks. Udaipur is connected with Kolkata, by the “Ananya Express”. A train has also been introduced between Mumbai and Udaipur via Vadodara, Ratlam and Chittorgarh.

Dabok airport, also known as Maharana Pratap Airport, is 24 kilometers from the city centre. Daily flights connect Udaipur with Jodhpur, Jaipur, Aurangabad, Mumbai and Delhi.

The city has transport facilities of unmetered taxis, auto rickshaws, horse drawn carriages/tongas and buses.















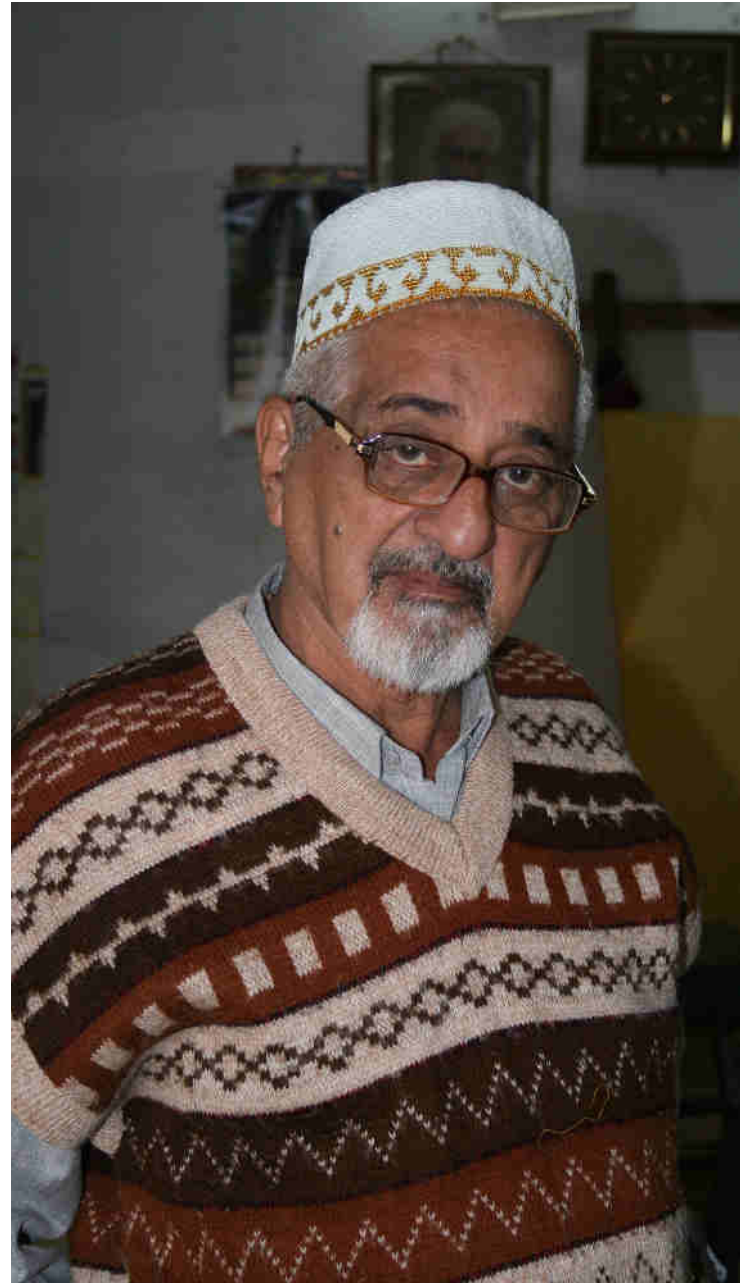


## Tracing the History of the Practitioners

Oral history of Danke ka Kaam can be traced to its origins with the Bohra Muslim community who migrated to this area in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and continue to practice it till today in this small corner of Rajasthan. The community themselves do not throw any clear light on the origins of this craft and as to whether it was already being practiced at that time or before or if it travelled to the subcontinent during their migration here cannot be clearly established because of lack of any written or oral history about the craft. The fact that traditionally and even today almost completely, the embroidery is practiced by the Bohra's suggest that it travelled from Yemen to this corner of India, references have emerged that this technique is practiced in Pakistan as well and needs to be looked into. The name 'Danka too has no oral or written reference available through archives or the surviving practitioners of the craft.

The Dawoodi Bohra community is a sub-sect of the Ishmaili Shia Islam; their belief system originates in Yemen where it evolved from the Fatimid Caliphate and where they were persecuted due to their differences from mainstream Sunni Islam that prompted the shift of Dawoodi Bohras to India in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

The word *Bohra* itself comes from the Gujarati word *vehwahar*/trade, while the term *Dawoodi* refers to their support for Dawood Bin Qutabshah in the 1592 Dai dispute which divided the Tayyibi sect, creating the Dawoodi Bohra. They have a very small, tight-knit



community made up of approximately one million adherents worldwide, with the majority residing in India. Dawoodi Bohras have a blend of cultures, including Yemeni, Egyptian, African, and Indian. In addition to the local languages, the Dawoodi Bohras have their own language - Lisānud-Dā'wat/language of the Dā'wat, which is written in Persio-Arabic script and is derived from Urdu, Gujarati and Persian. The Dawoodi Bohra community is known worldwide for their various projects, including philanthropic efforts, hospitals, schools, and renovations and restorations of Islamic and Shi'a Islamic landmarks.

Ordinary Bohras are highly conscious of their identities; this is especially demonstrated at religious and traditional occasions by their appearance and attire. Dawoodi Bohra men wear a traditional white three piece outfit, plus a white and gold cap/ *topi*, and women wear the *rida*, a distinctive form of the commonly known Burqa which is distinguished from other forms of the veil due to it often being in color and decorated with patterns and lace. The *rida* additionally differs from the burqa in that the *rida* does not call for covering of women's faces like the traditional veil. It has a flap called the *pardi* that is usually folded to one side to facilitate visibility, but can also be worn over the face if so desired.





















## About the Clientele

The few facts that trace the embroidery to the Mewar region in India are that the materials used for the craft have been available and used in the region for the longest time and that the only known patrons of the Danka embroidery have been and continue to be the Mewari Rajput ladies.

Though the craft is practiced by the Bohra Muslims they themselves are not the users, their own dress is a clear distinguisher of their community (see information on practitioners). This craft has been practised by them solely for commercial and economic reasons.

Though their continues to be work for the crafts person, it is on a very low scale and diminishing, with their traditional clientele the Mewari Rajputs, with changing norms, fashions and competition.

The Mewari Rajput women have been commissioning the embroidery on their traditional customised attires called the *Poshaks* that comprise of the *kurti*, *kanchali*, *ghaghara* and *odhna*, to be worn ceremonially at weddings, child birth etc. In the last few decades the applications of the embroidery have also been seen on saris but yet not outside the Rajput community. Not much of the embroidery has been known to be used on male attires, at least historically. Till today the largest patronage of the embroidery is from the Rajput community where it is a 'must have' with the Mewari Rajput women.











# Embroidery Motifs

The unusual aspect of the embroidered Danka textile is the extent to which this elegant four sided concave metal piece allows for versatility in shapes. Its combination with zardozi embroidery, coloured threads and beads allows for a whole directory of motifs.

Motifs, however tend to have a traditional basis with a preference for those traditional auspicious Hindu ones best suited for the clientele, like the 'Peacock', 'Paan' or betel leaf, 'Kalash/urn' and 'Ambi' or the paisley.

Though Mughal influences has been noted in borders and motifs like the *Chaand/crescent moon* , *Tara/* stylised star and the geometric Mughal floor patterns, these motifs are now almost completely absorbed into the current sensibilities.

The motifs despite the fluid lines have a structured feel to it as the base component of the embroidery is a small concave diamond shape that factors in the motif to reflect a certain amount of structure.

*Ambi/* paisley is the most recurring motif closely followed by the stylised *Mor/* peacock. The paisley as a motif allows the maximum flexibility to the use as with subtle extensions in the motif it not only beautifies the motif but also allows it to blend in well as a repeat.

Often motifs are used in combination with borders that edge the garment, with heavier motifs like the *Boota* used to delineate the space above them. Smaller motifs like *Bootis* are used more a spread all across the fabric area.





















During the research no typically craft exclusive names were found referring to a specific motif but for a linear border called *Muda khil* this was also spotted as a decoration on some Bohra households even though they do not adorn their own attires with the Danka embroidery or its motifs.

## Motif Developments

The motifs have been known to be traditional and auspicious but no known development in motif was noted in the available oral records available through the artisan's. The fact that the artisans did oblige the few enterprising patrons by customising specially requested motifs occasionally, may have resulted in some new motifs being recorded. During the course of this study, one specific motif that was recently customised about 30 years ago was that of a potted plant, and the result was a rather pleasant one.

## Describing the Motifs and Terminology

- *KAIRI*- or a motif shaped like mango also has resemblance to the European Paisley. Has both celebratory as well as auspicious relevance. Is a popular motif in Indian embroideries and has always been experimented with to achieve a range and variety of variants. (See Photographs)
- *MOR*-or the Peacock is another of the popular Indian motifs. Considered more festive than auspicious and symbolic of beauty. Also found in abundance









in the region of reference. The embroiderers have used it in all its variations both as a main motif, a subsidiary one and in the borders

- *BOOTA-* or a larger motif in the Indian surface ornamentation terminology. This can cover a free standing motif reflective of any shape in singularity or collective of shapes. Normally a largish free standing placement motif.
  - *PLATE- BOOTA-1 to -4*, refer to this motif. *BOOTA 4* needs a special mention as it seemingly was developed about 30 years ago for an influential Rajput lady from Jodhpur.
- *BOOTI* - or a smaller free standing motif which is normally used as an even spread over an expanse of fabric.
  - *PLATE-BOOTI-1 to 8*, refer to this form of motifs. As you may notice the peculiarity in the names of some –they simply describe the number of petals.
- *KALASH-* or the sacred pot of offering to God or also referred to a pot like container holding water. Used here mainly as a decorative, probably meant for ceremonial robes. Not a very popular motif now.
- *PLATES- KALASH-1 to 4* refers to this motif.
- *CHAND TARA* - a more Mughal influenced motif and seldom if ever used as the patrons to the embroidery were/ are Hindus. May just be an artisan's personal experiment.
- *PHOOL BOOTA / PHOOL BOOTA BADO* - a large





















flower motif.

- *PANKHI* - or a small wing like motif. Could be an add-on to other motifs.
- *PAAN PATTI* - or the betel leaf, a motif inspired from the leaf could have auspicious usages as the betel leaf is used for ceremonial purposes in India besides being used as a digestive.
- BORDERS-1 to 35 refer to borders and some need special describing.
- BORDER 31 *FARSHI* - refers to a typical *Farsh* or floor pattern.
- **MUDA KHIL BEL**- the only border which is still referred to in its original name.
- BORDER 32 *TEEN DO EK*-titled for the progression of Dankas used in the border.
- BORDER 15 *MOR CHAMAN*-referring to border depicting a peacock in a garden.
- BORDER 19 *PHOOL CHOPAD* - border using four petal flowers placed to resemble the pattern of *CHOPAD*- a game of dice.









## Kaarkhaana/Workplace

The Danke ka Kaam is usually practised in a clean, well lit kaarkhana. Usually a small set of not more than 4 to 5 embroiders working in each kaarkhana, with one artisan – the most experienced and senior in age, dealing with the patrons.







# Materials

(REF Plate MATERIAL)

**DANKA** – The danka itself is a small diamond faceted metallic plate made of thin well finished sheets of about 30 cm X 2 cm that are then cut to a usable size of about 1 to a maximum of 1.5 sq cm. Tiny holes are punctured on to its four corners so as to sew it on to the fabric base with threads.

Before they are sewn they are hammered with a blunt stone implement to dent a concave depression on the plate. Originally known to be using pure gold plates the artisans with time moved to using gold plated silver and silver danka. Of late metals like brass and even plastic sheets have been applied to compete with other cheaper embroideries available.

The pure danka are priced at about Rs 3000 for 10 gms of danka which is issued to the kaarigar by counts.

**KASAB** – a core spun yarn, usually cotton core with metallic filament wound over it.

Traditionally gold filament was used lending the name *Suchcha* / pure to the *kasab*. The same treatment as the danka where gold plated silver and silver core spun yarns replaced the pure gold ones.

Now the gold plated *kasab* is very rarely available hence most used are synthetically made.

**DAPKA** - A metallic spring like yet supple material that is cut to desired lengths and sewn as an accompaniment to the danka.







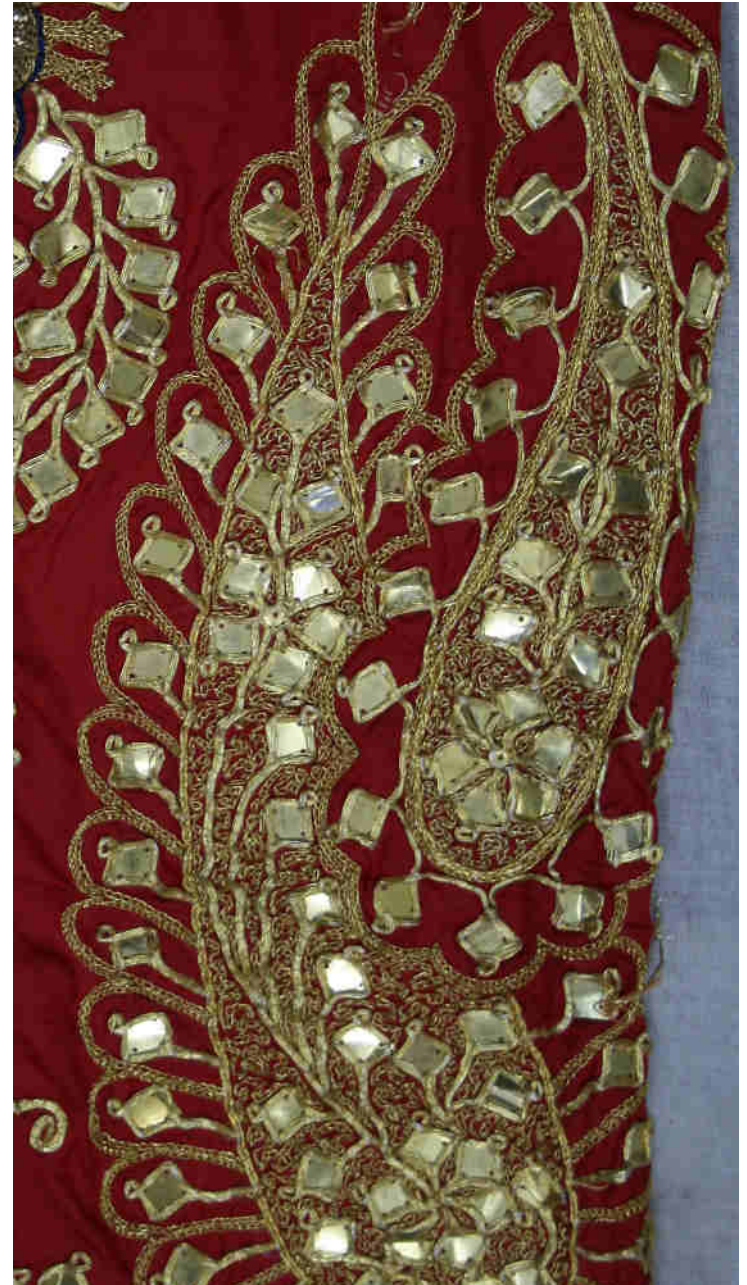






*SALMA* – also a metallic spring like metallic material but square like spiralled and usually more radii than that of the *dapka*. The square spirals give out more sparkle compared to the *dapka*.

*SITARA* – or the sequin is a circularly cut metallic piece with a punctured hole in the middle to sew it. The danka artisans used to use pure metals like gold and silver sitaras earlier but not anymore. Brass or plastic sitaras are used now.

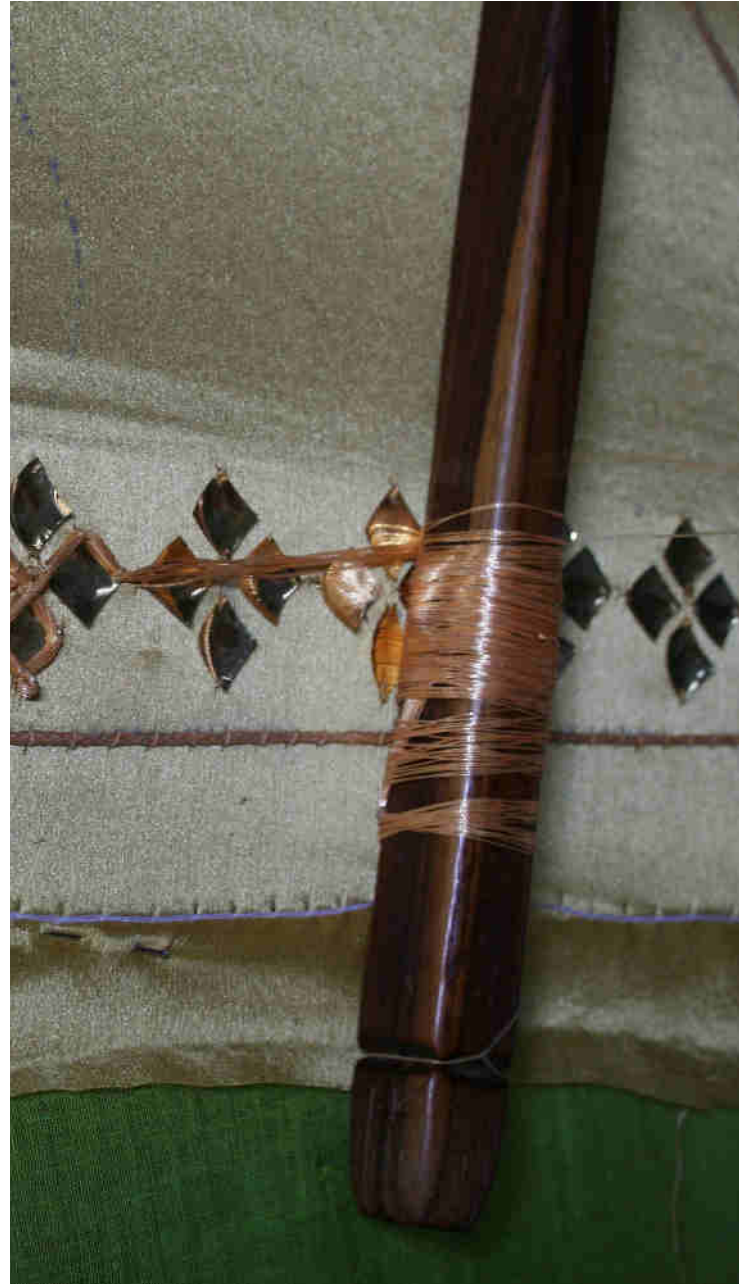


## Tools Used

**NEEDLE/ *SUI*** – a strong not so thin but pointed needle is used primarily to puncture holes in the *danka* and also to sew it onto the fabric.

***ARI***- A long instrument with a hook shaped needle that is plied vertically through the fabric to create a chain like stitch on the fabric. The *Ari tanka* or the chain stitch is used as an outline stitch or to stitch *dapka*. This can be used to apply a satin stitch with longer floats in *Kasab*. (ref Plate ARI)

***ADDA*** – is an expandable wooden frame. An *adda* is a frame of rectangular wooden beams that can be expanded or reduced to stretch the desired area of the fabric that needs to be embroidered. The crafts person sits on the floor, the height of the *adda* being chest high it makes it ergonomically comfortable for him to use. (ref plate-ADDA-THE FRAME)



















## Availability of Material and Tools

DANKA- The Danka in pure metals like gold plated silver or silver are to be ordered by weight and is usually for about Rs. 3000 for 10 gms .

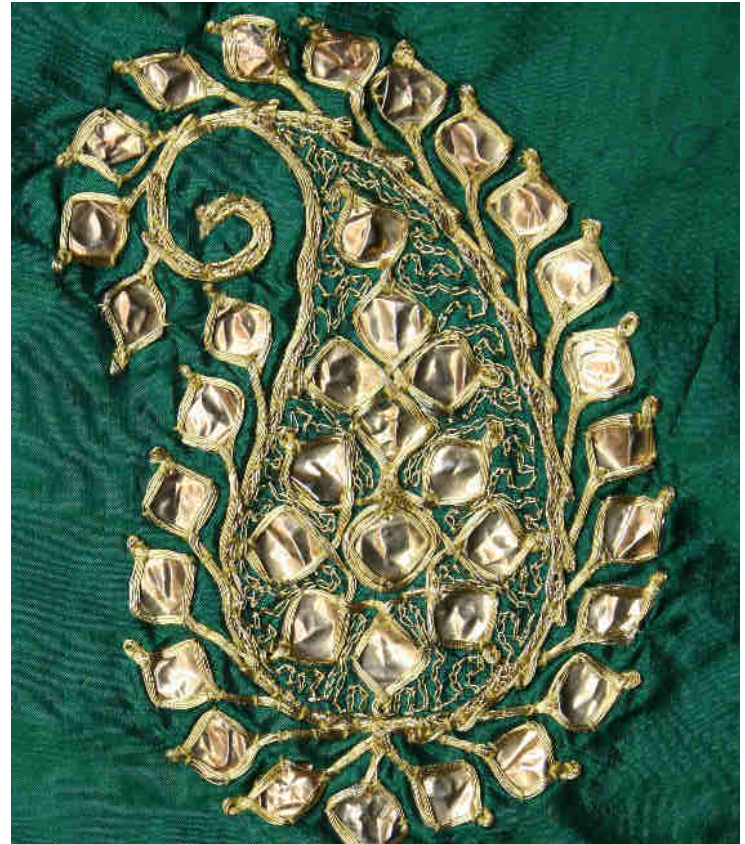
The artificial dankas in plastic are readily available at a very low price of about Rs 1200 per kilogram.

SEQUIN / *DAPKA* / *SALMA* – are material that are easily available in and around Udaipur town as there are other forms of embroideries being practiced that use the same materials.

All required tools are easily available for the same reason as above

### **Wastage:**

The Danka material damaged during the process could always be preserved for future use or melted back to be used and created again.













# Step Wise Technique and Process

## The making of the Danka

To make the danka, thin, highly finished and polished sheets of silver of a 98 percent purity are cut into strips of 30x2.5cm. These elongated cut strips are then electroplated in gold.

After electroplating they are washed in water and polished with fine sand.

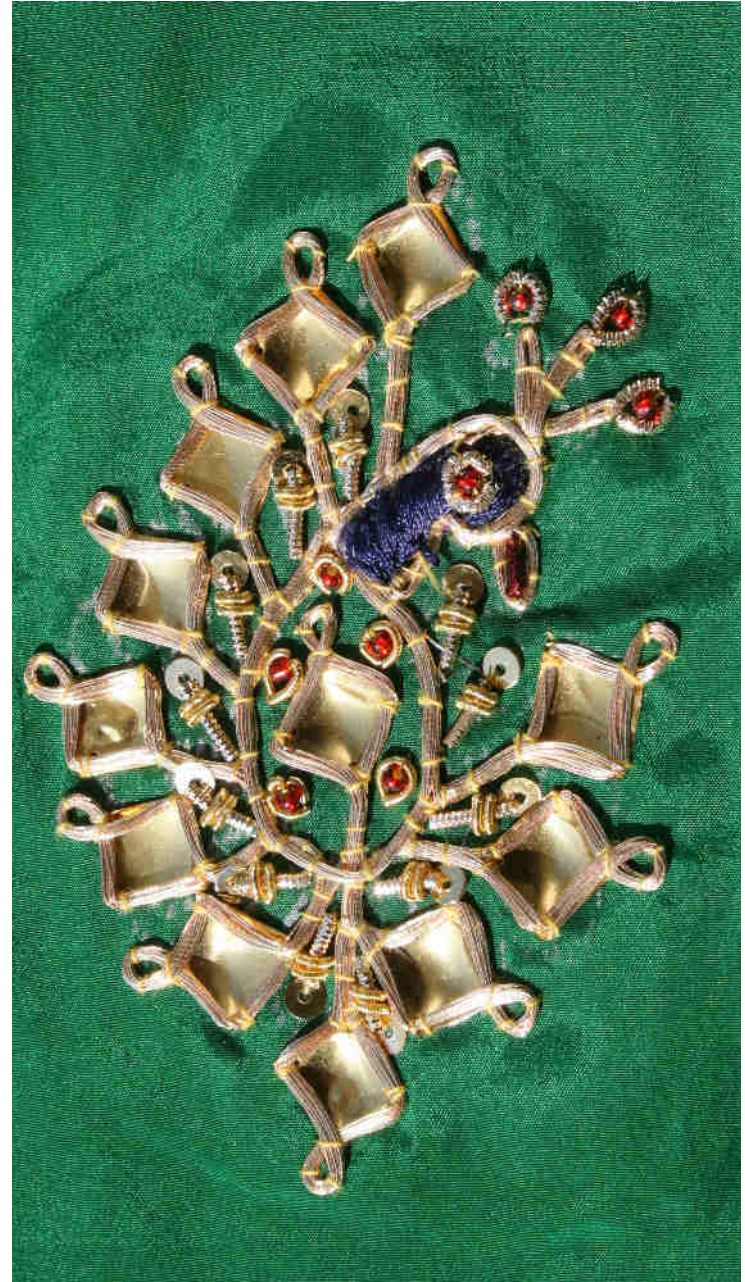
These strips are then cut into the first danka shape of 1 to 1.5cm as required. The small squares are hammered with a stone implement till they achieve their characteristic concave 3 dimensional shape. This method was earlier also known as korpatti-ka-kaam.

The materials are made ready by cutting the Danka rectangles into squares (the Danka sheets usually come in a rectangular shape that equate to almost two square halves if cut in the middle), holes are perforated along all four corners with a needle that is heated over a running flame.

The cost of the Danke ka kaam is calculated according to the weight of the metal and the labor cost.

## Starting Embroidery

Once the Danka is procured the embroidery can

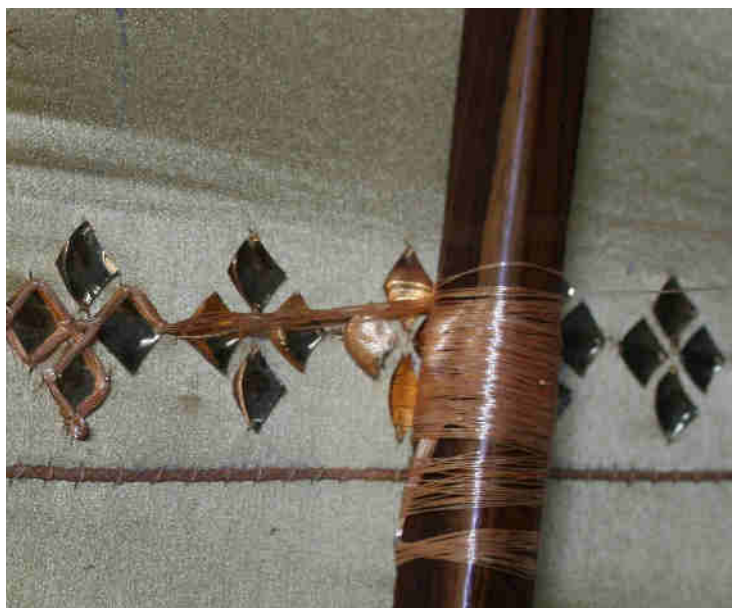
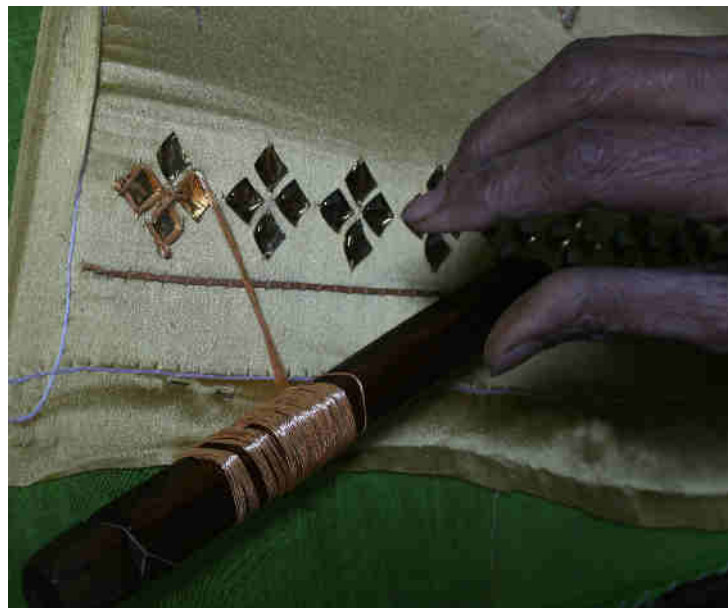
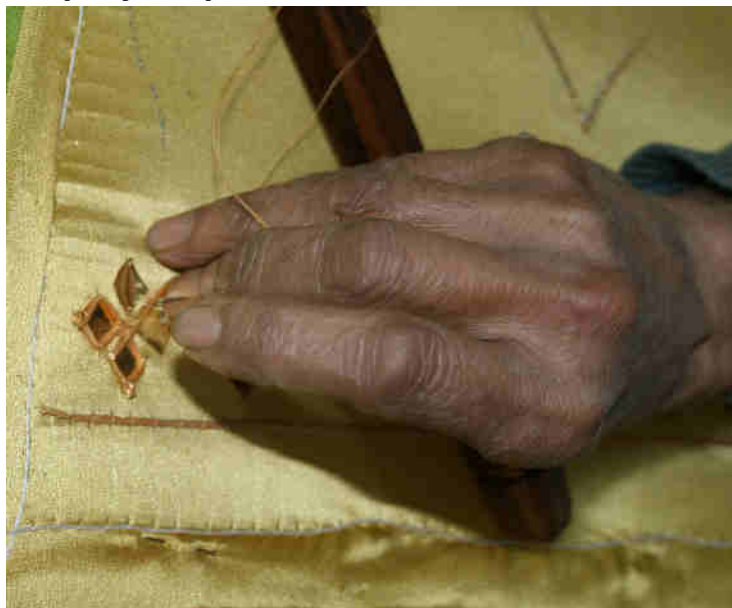




## Step by Step Process



## Step by Step Process











commence. The Danka is worked on a variety of fabrics from velvet, satin, chiffon and silk depending on the client.

## The Laying of the Panel

The fabric or the component of the dress that needs to be embroidered is stretched on to the wooden frame called *adda*, with a soft cotton cord called the *Sooth*. The stretched fabric or the panel, as it is now called, is checked for the amount of pull it has in all directions. It needs to be evenly stretched on the frame or else it can affect the final outfit. The craftsman sits on the floor to work on the embroidery.

## Marking of the Pattern

The pattern / design / motif has to be marked on to the desired area of the stretched panel.

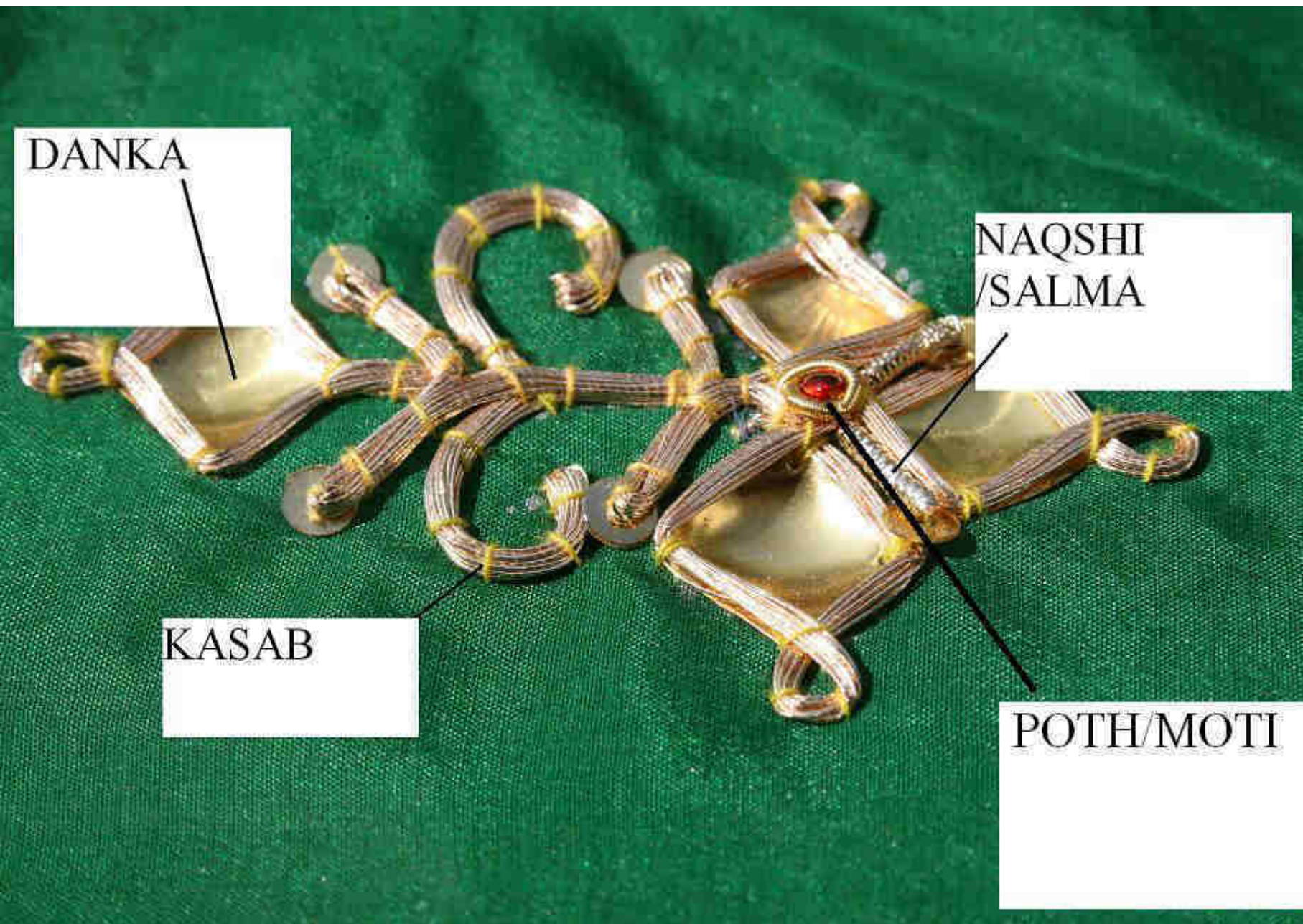
First the pattern is drawn on a butter paper and holes are manually perforated on the pattern. The paper is placed on the panel at the required place and a dab of cotton or cloth is dabbed in a paste of kerosene and paper ash or kerosene and aluminium powder or kerosene and indigo, that is whipped across the perforated design and a rough design outline gets transferred onto the fabric. The mixture of the paste varies on the fact that different concoctions show the patterns on different fabrics and colours and the choice is made according to that.

## Winding of the Kasab

8-10 strands of *kasab* are wound together on a 6" long wooden sticks, these are drawn from separate spools of *kasab*. ( Ref Plate PROCESS 2)







DANKA

NAQSHI  
/SALMA

KASAB

POTH/MOTI







## Embroidering the Danka

Danka pieces are placed on to the panel, picked up with great dexterity with the needle it is then attached on to the fabric from first one corner. The danka is the first to be embroidered on irrespective of the pattern. The thread used usually matches the colour of the danka. This is stitched with a single strand of thread. (Ref Plate PROCESS 3 A to 3D and END OF PROCESS 3)

## Working the Kasab

The multi strand *kasab* is stitched along the pattern outlines especially the Danka squares and detailing the top corner of the Danka square with a loop of *kasab* to give it a virtual conical appearance. This detail could be technical detail as well besides just a design feature as while giving the loop a twist the torque of the multiple strands of *kasab* gets broken and it is less likely to curl into a twist. The process is easier and neater if the kasab outlines are in a continuous line as long as possible, thus allowing the threads to be cut into loose ends less often as a result there are then less loose ends to stitch down, resulting in cost and time saving. (Ref Plates PROCESS 4A to 4D)

## Sitara, Dapka and Naqshi

The other components like the *Sitara*, *dapka* or the *Naqshi* are stitched as additions to the main Danka patterns. (Ref Plate PROCESS 5)





















## Lace/Kasab making in gold and silver by the Bohra Muslim community, Udaipur

The Bohra community also practices the craft of making handmade laces out of pure silver and gold kasab. This kasab is one of the components of the Danka embroidery practised by the Bohra Muslim embroiderers in Udaipur. The lace is crafted either by the use of crochet needles or by using lace making shuttles. Crafted by the Bohra women it also forms an intrinsic part of their own wardrobes. It is said that the art of kasab making is known to all Bohra women, and is as essential for them as knowing how to cook. Though similar looking synthetic zari laces are now seen in the market, the Bohra women prize these possessions made out of pure silver and gold as heirlooms. The Bohra women create these laces to adorn their own outfits, especially dupattas and saris and seldom do the kasab for commercial purpose. Outfits adorned with these laces are also an essential part of their dowries.

















## Other Crafts Observed with Similarities

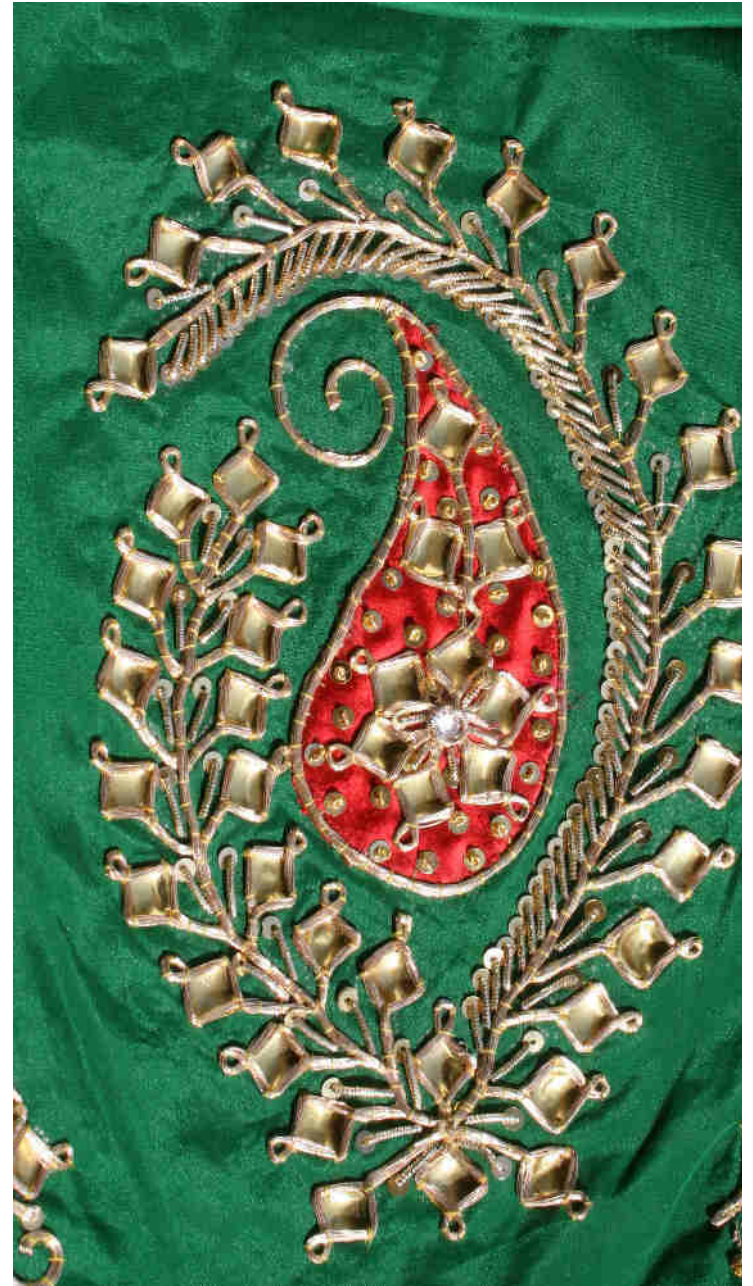
*Gota Patti* which is principally similar in technique but for the Danka being replaced by *gota*-a woven zari ribbon cut in various shapes and treated the same way with multi stranded Kasab outlines and other accompanying decorations. In comparison, the *Gota patti* work is more supple in handling and experienced a wider patronage also owing to its cost. This form of embroidery can be termed as an extension of the Danka embroidery as the technique is similar and the patronage for *gota patti* was also traditionally the Rajputs.







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# Observations and Reflections

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE BOHRA COMMUNITY:** A very close knit community that has lived and worked here since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century they live very harmoniously with others in their neighbourhood.

Though the community is still found living in close proximity to each other they are not all involved with embroidery. Within a family too not all family members were involved in the practice of embroidery as they follow other trades, with a number of them involved in making, sourcing and trading of pure metal Dankas. The other accompanying materials are made, sourced or traded by other communities too.

Mainly practiced by men, women were also know the embroidery but were not seen practising it. With about 39 recorded Danka practitioners - all of them belonging to the community a great deal can be done to bring them into national prominence.

## Marketing

Very sporadic and insufficient measures were noted in attempting to take the craft to cities nearby.

## Trade Practices

As far as the selling of the embroidery was/is concerned, the artisans never needed to move out of their kaarkhaana's as the patrons were as few as the makers and the work was and continues to be commissioned.



Even till date danka work is not available off the shelf. Rajput women would take their fabrics or panels to the kaarkhandaars, choose patterns from the artisans archive and commission the embroidery.

Usually the Head of the kaarkhana weighs the fabric accepted to be embroidered, make a note of it before starting the work and weigh the same again at the stage of completion to calculate the weight of the material used. This is a major factor in calculating the cost of the work. Most kaarkhanas expect about half the expected amount as an advance as the investment in the material is high. This is also a practice that has stayed till date.

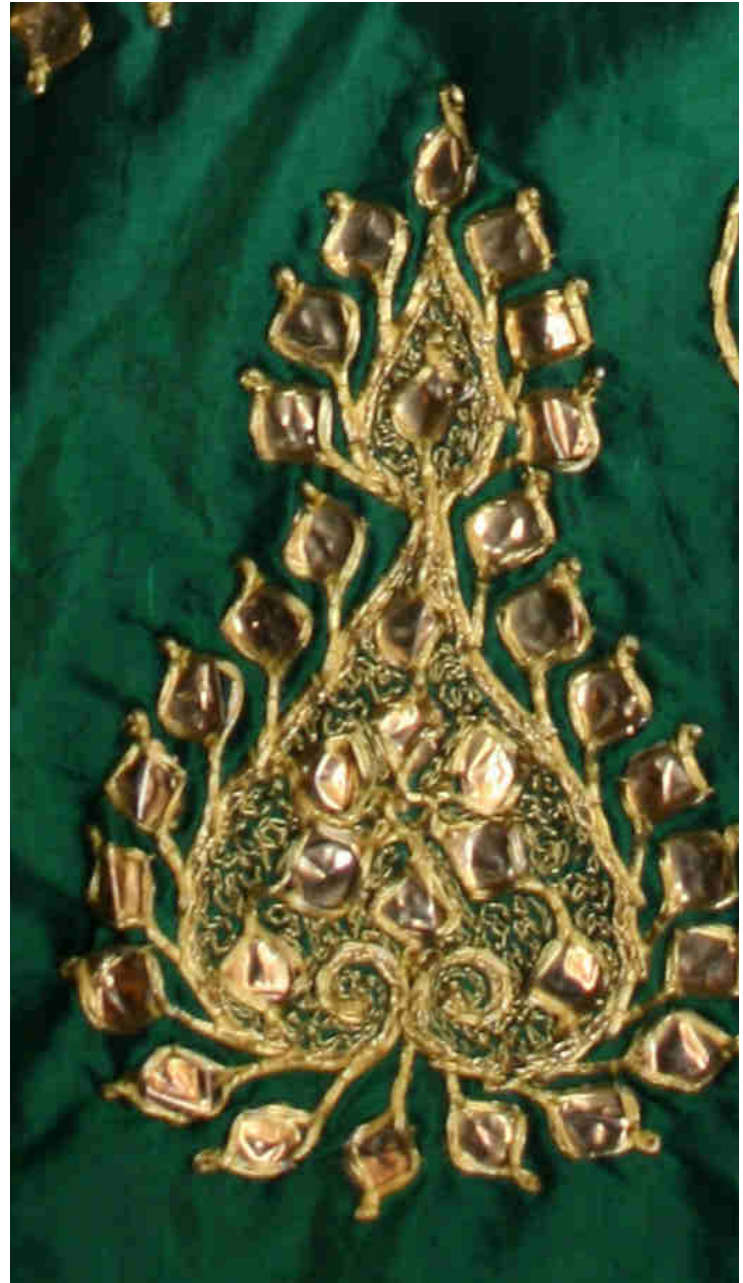
Since a long time even the making, sourcing or the trading of the Danka materials is governed by Bohra community and are not very open to supplying the same to artisans other than their community. Few artisans, not succumbing to the use of artificial Danka, have resulted in a very small number that are still holding the roots to the original form.

Most practicing artisans have no qualms in running the use of both pure and artificial Danka in their work, parallel to each other. as long as it keeps the craft alive and the patrons catered to.

**Despite accepting the fact that there are very few practicing artisans left and even few takers of the craft, the community is still known to be very content, prosperous and well informed.**

### **Propagation of the craft through generations:**

It has been, like most other crafts, practised within the









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community and taught to apprentices from within the family or the community. Youngsters would normally devote a few hours a day learning the craft alongside their education.

### **Observation about quality and time factors:**

The quality of work may vary from one artisan to another and so would be the consistency of work and the time taken. It has been noted that this may not be a form of embroidery that can be mass produced beyond a certain number that too with a time and consistency tolerance.

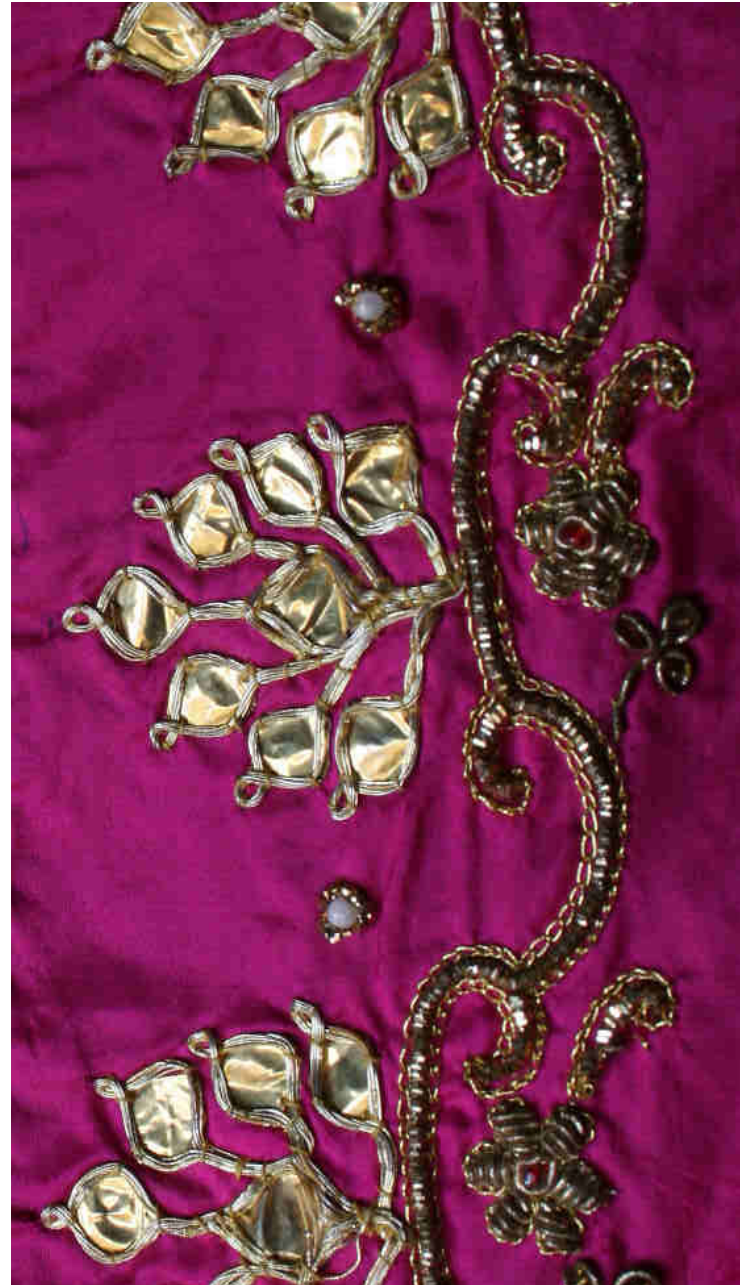
### **Observations regarding infrastructure:**

**ELECTRICITY:** The city on an average receives about 20+ hours of electricity and the same is available to the kaarkhanas. They are well aware of the alternate means of power available. Electricity plays no direct role in the making of the craft.

**WATER:** An important necessity as any other in an arid region, water supply is ample due to the comparatively high water table of the region. That could also be a reason for the craft to have prospered in the region since it was a major prerequisite in the making, cleaning and polishing of the Danka plates.

### **Observation about People in the Mewar Region:**

A very popular region world wide as a tourist and



heritage destination , the native people are in a state where they are inching to the future and the west but are still seen clinging to very identity that defines them ,even if it is in a very small way.( refer plate PEOPLE 1- a small scarf reminiscent of his roots on a uniformed hotel attendant)

## Reasons for the Craft to be Gradually Fading and Languishing

**COST OF THE MATERIALS:** This is the most visibly obvious reason for the patronage to decline. The cost of the pure materials traditionally used has been on the rise for a long time, but the last few decades saw a very steep rise resulting in lesser number of patrons being able to afford the craft.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUNG:** Through the oral history available, never as a practice would the entire family be involved in the craft/ trade. But as the patronage declined the few left practitioners either moved into practicing other forms of embroideries or completely different professions altogether. Also with education being available to the community and the fact they could afford it, the newer generations found comfort in moving loyalties, and rightfully so in their situation. It be noted that the responsibility to keep the craft alive is not only with the Artisan.

**A CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITY:** The community as a whole has been not open to propagating the craft outside the clan, not even accepting apprentices' eager from other Muslim communities to be taught the craft. Bohra traders dealing in the Danka material have been noted to make



















it difficult to make the material available to other eager but non Bohra practitioners. Though there are no legal/ social bindings in other communities practicing the craft, it is just not feasible to follow this as a profession. It is an apparent case of a communal monopoly.

**THE MAKING OF DANKA:** A process known to be technically difficult with few who ventured into making it .Traditionally “ Neela Thotha” or copper sulphate was used in the cleaning the Danka’s but in recent times a cheaper chemicals are used to do the same process. Some artisans were heard calling it cyanide- but this was not a conclusive observation.

**GOTA PATTI- A CLOSE COUSIN:** Embroidery that could have possibly branched out of the Danka embroidery became a cheaper alternative and could sustain the mass appeal.

## **What has been done/ Not done for the Crafts / Embroiderers Survival till Date**

- STATE HANDICRAFT CENTRES have been established in the area, though their guidelines may not have relevance to the Danka work or its embroiderers who require another approach.
- No notice has been given to the craft/ embroiderers by the D C (H) for bringing it in the eye of patrons other than its traditional ones.
- No large scale commissions have been made / made available by D C (H) or other such bodies to increase and widen the visibility of the Craft.









# Recommendations

**This unusual embroidery form must be revived and brought under a spotlight. It is ready for revival as a high end bridal embroidery form. Expensive, bespoke and worth it.**

- **The craft/ embroidery /embroiderers be given its due respect in form of State/ National Awards as it needs recognition as a unique and unusual craft practice.**
- For the craft to survive in the long run and get a new lease of life it will need to be promoted by couture designers. Let's accept the fact that to blend it with their signature style they would bring about changes

/ introductions that will keep the tradition alive and contemporise it.

- As mentioned before, prominent commissioning from the state or national level bodies can bring it a heritage status .i.e at Bridal Asia, In the Fashion week, large scale works to be displayed at prominent locations/hotels along with displayed literature on the craft.
- Attempts to bring it to mass appeal will do more damage than help.
- Scholarships/ pensions to the surviving practitioners so they can support their families' better and that they do not need to look at other professions as a livelihood.



# Artisans Contact List

## Danke ka Kaam

Abdul Waheed

7, Bhoot Mahal, Inside Soniyon Ka Nohra

Udaipur – 313001

Mobile: 9314299954

Saifuddin Zari Wala

Bohrawadi

Kutubpura

Udaipur

Tel: 0294-2420677

Mobile: 9413286425

Kaizar Ali Motiwala

39, Bada Bazar

Udaipur – 313001

Tel: 0294-242845 / 2420007

Mobile: 9928697652

Craft Revival Trust

Zafar Ali Kurban Ali

42, Bada Bazar

Opp. Parakh Ji ka Kotha

Udaipur – 313001

Tel: 0294-2417715

Mobile: 9829583526 / 9269174128

## Lace Work

Inayat Hussain

Plot No. E-89(A)1,

Road No. 1-Q

Mewar Industrial Area

Udaipur – 313001

Tel: 0294-2491499, 2491617

Hemant Periwal

1, Moti Magri Scheme

Near UIT Office

Udaipur – 313004

Tel: 0294-2428214, 2427718

Email: [periwalexports@rediffmail.com](mailto:periwalexports@rediffmail.com)

# Research Methodology

## Diagnostic Study on Languishing Craft leading to specific recommendations for its safeguarding

### Structured and Non-Structured Questionnaire

The manner in which the assessment was conducted was with a structured and non-structured questionnaire that suited the requirement/uniqueness of context and place specific issues of each languishing craft. This template allowed for an analysis within the context and needs of each languishing craft within the overall objectives. The unstructured questions adopted is broad, clearly and prescriptive to allow the capturing of a picture of a craft that is in urgent need of safeguarding or otherwise.

The long list of open ended questions/areas to be tackled will be on:

### Terms of Reference

1. To identify the number of craft persons, their names, and address
2. To study the problem faced by the artisans individually and the group as a whole, in practicing the craft.
3. To study the interest of the artisans in continuing the craft tradition
4. To study the main bottle necks and the difficult areas

which an artisans encounters in practicing the craft

5. To study and gather information whether the craft languishing is also practiced in the vicinity of the area or outside it
6. To study and analyze required intervention of the Government viz. a viz. different scheme under implementation for development of the handicrafts sector.
7. To study and suggest measure of revival of the languishing craft beyond the ambit of Govt. schemes.

### Documentation Template

#### About the craft centre

#### PART I

- Area name
- Cluster size
- Map
- Topography (*especially presence of local water bodies*)
- Geography (*particularly to understand problems relating to infrastructure, the provision of services, isolation from markets*)
- Environmental conditions (*in particular, are there negative impacts from the effect of climate change, for instance, more regular droughts, and does this affect the cluster?*)



- Climate *(especially its impact of production cycles, availability of resources, or on sales)*
- Transport links/Accessibility of cluster viz. road, railway etc *(Nearest bus station, railhead, frequency of vehicles)*
- Facilities available in area *(courier, postal services, medical service, stores where materials required are available, other sources, retail venues)*
- Gender *(How is the work activity divided between the genders. Are the activities inter-changeable? Or are there gender norm, which restrict this, does this affect production? If women are producers, what are their domestic arrangements)*
- Age: *Is activity/role also dependant on age of worker? Probe*
- History - How was the craft initiated in this region? By whom? At what time?

*(For e.g. the Mughal miniature painting traditional was formally initiated by Emperor Humayun who on his return from exile in Persia, brought with him 2 masters from the Persian court. Early Mughal miniatures therefore share many characteristics as well as content of Persian miniatures and it was not until the reign of Akbar, who actively encouraged the inclusion of regional elements that a truly Mughal style was developed)*

- What patronage did the craft enjoy in the past *(if any)*
- What art/ architectural/ performing arts traditions

exist locally? Have any of these influences the craft in any respect? Do they share any motifs, symbolism, ritual usage?

- Does the pattern or design represent status, age, gender, community etc? If so, identify the design, and its meaning.
- Is it predominantly a craft cluster? What other occupations exist in the area? Are these linked in any way to the craft?

*(For e.g. the lacware tradition of Ettikopaka exists only because tribals journeying to the South carrying lac to be sold to the jewellers of Tamil Nadu used to pause at this location and would barter some of their product in exchange for food)*

- Is the tradition oral? Do craftspeople have access to documentation of their own traditions? Does documentation exist – if yes – whose hands is it in?
- Number of practicing artists/ households *(Obviously, a census like mapping is not possible but it would be very helpful if we could get a sense of how many practitioners exist even if the numbers are mere estimates hazarded by the craftspersons)*

## PART II

- Are there any DCH centres or other associated government or semi-government institutions in the region eg MPHSN or Rajasthan State Organisation?
- Are the craftspersons working with/for any NGOs in

the region? Which NGOs/ SHGs/ cooperatives are active in the area?

- How far is the nearest government support institution?
- Which NGOs are active in this area? This is critical as they could be long term monitoring partners
- How frequently do officers from government support institutions visit? Probe
- In order to assess and understand the local situation, please provide a brief SWOT analysis about the strengths; weaknesses, and threats to the cluster.

#### **About the tools**

- What tools are used? Where are they sourced from? How much do they cost? (*Do keep an eye out for innovations made by the craftspeople such as the bicycle pump operated dye sprayer invented by a craftsperson in Kucchh to facilitate even staining of large bolts of fabric*)
- If they are made by the craftspersons themselves, how is this done?
- What are they called locally (please use vernacular terms and include translations for same)
- Include all tools used (like dye pots, printing beds, tables etc in case of printing). Specify materials, prices, measurement, frequency of purchase
- Question access to government funds/schemes for purchase of tools/dye vats etc

#### **About the raw materials**

- What is the base material used? Does it differ for different products
- Where are they sourced from? By whom? How much do they cost?
- Are raw materials readily available? If not, what are the challenges faced in accessing the material?
- In what quantity is it purchased. What are the minimums
- How are materials stored?
- If the material is produced locally, which community produces it?
- Have there been any changes in the material used? Where was it sourced from earlier
- What prompted the change? Does market demand for cheaper products result in substitution with cheaper raw materials?
- How has it impacted the form/style/ product?
- Can raw materials be purchased on credit? If yes from whom and at what interest rate?
- Is there a collective procurement of materials or is it done individually?
- In case of challenges, what do the craftsmen themselves recommend to improve the situation?

#### **About the process**



Note the entire production process, step by step, with a live demonstration, writing down any actions, and, or explanations, including time frames for each step.

- Describe in detail the process followed in step-by-step manner with photographs for each stage.
- Describe the primary work area and preparations, along with the amount of time taken in each step.
- Note the desired output of each step – consistency/colour/texture/volume; and warning signs that the process is going wrong.
- At each stage, crosscheck the sequences of the production process.
- Are there any specific stages in the technique or combinations of techniques that definitively characterise this particular tradition?
- What special skills are required to make the product? Does everyone in the cluster possess the skills and expertise for making it?
- Have there been any innovations in technique? Describe.
- What are the wastes associated with the process? How are they disposed of?
- Have any value additions been made to the product?
- Who have the traditional designs, motifs/layouts changed? Is the master craftsperson responsible? Are designs skills passed on by particular community

members? *Note, that this may be informal, for example, through oral traditions.*

- What is the traditional vocabulary for designs (please give local names)? Which is the oldest known design? What designs are associated with rituals?
- Are designs readily adapted? What designs are favoured now? Who introduced them?

### **About infrastructure**

- Does the cluster have electricity? For how many hours in the day? If not, why is electricity not available? Are there alternative options for power, if so, what are they? Do they have generators?
- What about water supply? Taalabs/tanks/water source
- In case of dyeing textiles, where are they washed, dyed, dried?
- Existence of health and safety standards and measures. If none, exist are they required? *(For e.g. are the workshops well illuminated? Ask them about their health; list any health problems, along with symptoms. List potential chemical, toxic, electrical, heat, noise, and, or ergonomic hazards.*
- Are there any health centres near by?
- Eco-friendly techniques or materials for treating raw material, craft process, and/or disposal of wastes/by-products
- Where do the workers live? If in a housing-cum-

work shed – please describe. Include information on toilets.

- If they live away from the workshop area, how do they commute to work and how long does it take to commute?
- Is there a computer, with access to internet Information Communication Technology (ICT) available? Are there the knowledge and expertise to use computers? If so, is there an email address for the cluster, with a nominated person who has the skills to receive and send emails?
- Do they have a Common Facility Centre? If yes – get all details
- Do the children go to school?
- Is there a showroom where visitors or clients can see the textiles produced?
- Specify requirements for the cluster to improve quality of life

#### **About the design, colour palette and product range**

- What were the traditional products made with this craft?
- Does the product range being created today differ?
- If so, in what way?
- What has caused these changes?

- Who was the customer for the traditional product?
- Are there any specific prints, colours, motifs associated with the community, in other words, its unique design traditions?
- Describe motifs, both traditional and non traditional, abstract, and figurative etc.
- Do they have any documentation? Or is everything oral?
- What is the symbolism associated with the motifs used?
- Were the products produced/ used on specific occasions such as weddings, deaths, rituals, festivals etc?
- Have these been repurposed with changes in the markets catered to?
- Who is the customer for the current product?
- How did the craftsperson reach this new market segment?
- Do the craftspersons produce any products for their own/ local use?
- Provide a list of products, along with photographs and descriptions (including texture, quality, feel, colour, price, look, sizes).
- Probe prices
- Is there a product development cycle that the cluster follows?



- Does the cluster actively design new products?
- Who designs the products? Are designers hired? Are artists open to working with designers?
- Is there a quality check? What are the benchmarks used by the cluster for measuring quality?
- Is the product designed with awareness for environmental concerns, human safety, health, comfort, and product performance?
- Do products contain information on the material content of the product along with care instructions?
- Do products have a product identification system that is simple and easy to understand?
- What is distinct about the product? What is its Unique Selling Proposition (USP)?
- Probe design development intervention by Govt and others
- Is there a cluster designer appointed? If yes, probe

### **About production**

- What is the cycle of production? For instance, is it seasonal? How has this changed from the method of original production, if at all?
- Where does production take place? In the housing cum work shed, in a karkhana, at a Common Facility Centre/ at the Coop? Specify

- Is each step of the production completed in one central location, or are there multiple locations?
- Describe the artist's workplace. Describe the general conditions.
- What is the production capacity of a cluster/ craftsperson/ karkhana? What is considered a large order? What is the minimum order quantity to be produced for the order to be economically viable?
- What is the total quantity of production in a year? What is the profit margin? How much of this is reinvested in the business?
- Can consistency in quality of output be assured, especially if large production orders are received?
- Are there technological interventions that could be done improve productivity? This could take place at any stage of the production process.
- Does the community face competition from the organized/mass production by manufacturing centres? How has this impacted their business?
- Has any Government scheme helped to improve production?
- Any training programs been organized to improve production?

### **About the craftspersons**

To develop an understanding of the challenges,

problems, constraints and parameters within which the craftspersons operate a selection of them should be interviewed.

- Is the craft the traditional occupation of the craftspersons family or is it a relatively newly acquired skill? If new, when was this occupation taken up and why?
- If it was the traditional occupation, trace the family history through a tree and explore any mythical/folklore connects that explain their arrival/settlement in the region or their initiation into the craft. Are they linked to similar craft communities in other parts of the country?
- Have any trained craftsmen /community members left their tradition? Reason why
- What are some of the problems that they face which impacts the survival of the craft, for instance, access to markets, or raw materials, etc?
- What are the reasons for the languishing craft traditions, and successes and failures in revival?
- Training (*How did the individual learn the trade? Who did they apprentice with? How long did the process take?*)
- Are there requirements for skill levels, training, and, or development?
- Personal questions (*What are their hopes and aspirations? Do they pay income tax? Do they own mobile phones? Do they have insurance? What is their level of education? Do they have bank*

*accounts? How many members in their family? How many are earning members? How many are employed in the same profession? What are some of the difficulties that you face in the village? Can improvements, and or, the revival of crafts help to solve any of these problems?)*

- Labour related an issue (*Who is hired? How is selection undertaken? How many non-artists such as the women and children of the household are involved in subsidiary aspects of the process? Is there a hierarchy amongst the workers in the cluster? What is this based on? Does the organizational structure mimic indigenous systems*)
- Social structure (*Does gender play a role in the craft? How does caste feature in the hierarchy of the workshop? What caste are the owners and the workers? Is it a diverse population/group that partakes in the craft activities? Traditionally, what caste did the owners and workers belong to? Has there been a change in the same? What is the change due to?*)
- Wages (*What are the working hours? How many days a week are the workers expected to come to work/ or they work? How many holidays? What happens in the event a worker falls ill? What wages are paid to the various hierarchies of workers? What are the average monthly earnings of a craftsperson? Does this increase with seniority, and are there opportunities for income growth? Are the subsidiary workers such as the women and children of the household given any remuneration? Do they receive daily/weekly/ monthly wages? Are wages received in cash? Is there*



*any incentive system?)*

- Tradition and revitalization. *(What are the rituals and ceremonies associated with the making of the craft product? What, if any, are necessary rituals when preparing the product? Who conducts the ritual, who participates, and what is the meaning? What are the meanings of the rituals, and are these rituals laid out in texts? Are the rituals informal or elaborate? Are they passed on verbally, as an intangible cultural expression, or are they laid out in texts? Describe, and if possible, record the ritual.*
- Have any craftspeople in their cluster received awards? From whom and when? If Yes, probe further- including if it has helped the community (in Pethapur we found that it had divided the community) If no, probe

### **About the market for the craft**

- Who does the craft caters to? *(Local/ domestic/ international markets or retail/ export/commission work)*
- If the market for the crafts is a combination of various segments, are different techniques/styles/products favoured by specific segments?
- List the top selling products
- How are the various segments reached by the craftspersons (local haats, bazaars, melas, state handicrafts centres, DCH, trade fairs etc)?

- How is pricing done and by whom? Are basic principles and objectives of pricing and costing understood?
- Are legal contracts sought before work is begun? Are artists aware of indemnity clauses, and the impact of delays in delivery, and, or faulty quality products?
- Is there a phased payment plan? How is the karkhana paid? How is money then disbursed to the various employees?
- Access to communication - *Do they have mobiles? Phones? Emails? How are clearances from clients/ orders negotiated and sought?*
- Have the craftspersons explored or heard of E-commerce?
- Have they attended trade shows/ national melas/ handicraft expos? How did they secure their participation in the same?
- Has the woven product always been traded? What were the traditional trading communities? Has this changed?
- Any direct marketing?
- Is marketing and sales handled by the cluster agent? Is there an intermediary, such as a trader, or a middle man, who is part of the supply chain, and responsible for sales? Is the trader paying a fair wage to the artist?
- What, if any, is the indigenous system in place?
- What steps are in place to identify and explore new

markets- for instance, is there a strategy for seeking out new product niches?

- Does the cluster have a marketing plan, and knowledge about product production, position, and promotion?
- Is there an analysis of product sales? Are product lines that do not sell discontinued? What happens to excess stock that does not sell?
- Does the cluster have a brand? If not, why, and would they consider creating a brand?
- Are the artists cognizant of market and buyer expectations? Do they know how to package and label a product for display and shipping, with skills to process orders and dispatch them?
- Do marketing materials, product and price sheets exist? Are there clear terms and conditions, with policies on minimum order quantities, production timelines, along with goods and services tax that can be passed onto buyers?
- Are packaging materials readily available that are safe, environmentally sound, and cost effective?
- Does the cluster possess the necessary resources (staff and financial) to undertake marketing, and promotion efforts? Have market studies, market intelligence, marketing and sales promotions been conducted? If so, analyse these, and identify gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities.
- Are they aware about government marketing and promotional programs?

- Does the cluster have a government approved certification seal to guarantee authenticity, such as the Silk Mark or Handloom Mark? If not, why?
- Do they participate in sales and marketing training? What are the kind of capacity building, skills, and expertise that need to be part of a market readiness training program?
- Government is laying a great deal of stress on Marketing, through Melas etc. Has this had any impact on the community? Probe

#### **About finance/credit issues**

- Who gives credit to the craftspeople when they require it?
- Who do the craftspersons /karkhana bank with?
- How hard was it to open an account with them?
- How far is the bank located?
- How easy is it to get loans?
- Is collateral required?
- What are loans usually taken for? Probe
- What are some of the obstacles they have faced in receiving loans?
- Is there a local money lender? What are his terms for loans?
- Are there microfinance or micro-credit schemes that are available to craftspeople? If so, what has been



their experience of working through these financial networks?

- Have they availed of any government scheme for credit access?
- If yes, what has the credit been availed for?

### About copyright issues

- GI *(Is there an awareness about the government's GI policy? Is there an attempt at securing GI? If so, by whom and how?)*
- Copyright/ IPR/plagiarism

*(Craftspersons copying motifs seen in catalogues of design firms, factory owners or screen printers copying block print designs and mass-producing it. How do the craftspersons understand the concept of design rights? For e.g. a block maker in Pethapur mentioned he shows prospective customers a book containing prints of every block he had ever made, and if the customer liked any of them he would make subtle modifications in the form and produce the block but never duplicate a design)*

- Have there been workshops or training conducted about IP? Would the artists attend a workshop about IP and associated issues?
- Have any designs or products been licensed for copyright?
- Are there efforts to safeguard traditional cultural

expressions?

### About DC (H) and other Govt agencies

- What has been the experience of dealing with DC (H)? Have they found it difficult, time-consuming, and complex? Have there been complaints about the administrative complexity, and procedural requirements in dealing with DC (H)?
- What schemes, if any, State or Central have they had access to? What has their experience been? Details please.
- Do they have an artisan card?
- If yes, how did they get it?
- If no, why don't they have one? Do they know what it is?
- If yes, has it helped?
- Have the craftspersons participated in any government sponsored/ organised programmes/ events such as melas, expos, trade fairs etc?
- What were these oriented towards? *(For e.g., marketing, design development, workshop schemes, technical up-gradation, product diversification)*
- If yes, have these helped them in any way?
- Have they received recognition for their skills?
- If yes, was it a state or national award? When was it

received?

- How did they come to know of it?
- Did they receive any assistance in the application procedure?
- Has receiving the award impacted their business in any way?
- If no, do they wish to apply?
- Do they know how to go about doing the same?
- Do they know of medical/ retirement plans available under DC (H) schemes?
- Who is the contact person at DC (H)?
- What would they like from DC (H)?
- Please meet the local emporium (e.g. Co-optex, APCO, Mrignayani for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthali for Rajasthan etc) to find out where they buy from, what quantities the source, how are purchases made and delivered, who designs the objects etc. What are the problems faced by the emporia in sourcing products – quality control, sizing, delivery, timelines etc
- Meet the Resident Commissioner of state for assistance and information
- Visit the DC (H) extension service office in the region
- Try to critically assess the implementation of Govt Schemes with reference to its efficacy to fulfil the objectives of the scheme. To identify gaps and shortfalls in the scheme's content and implementation

and to suggest improvements.

- To assess the extent to which the interventions are general across-the board rather than being implemented as tailor-made scheme
- To list the measurable outcomes, such as empowerment of artists, credit linkages, product range diversification, marketing etc. and assess the impact of the scheme with respect to those deliverables.
- Comparison of the impact of the scheme within the clusters and those who fall out of the cluster.
- To assess the effectiveness of the monitoring system and to suggest ways for improvement
- To evaluate the efficacy of the schemes in bringing about a sustained transformation in the livelihood of the craftspeople.

## **Schedule Of Data/Information Collection For Study**

### **STAGE I**

#### ***Hiring of resource persons***

As per requirements the resource team will be contracted along with photographers.

#### ***Secondary data collection prior to fieldwork: Its Study and Analysis***



As the craft to be studied is languishing, with the numbers being very limited of the practitioners, the first step after taking on competent personnel would be to collect secondary data.

- Obtain and study reports on the current status through focal points-Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) office, publications, libraries, experts, other civil society organisations etc.
- Thorough study and familiarization of existing documents. Information collated together, examined and sorted. Research and familiarization with the relevant issues concerning the craftspersons and also the supply chain, local institutions etc

### ***Development of the fieldwork plan***

The fieldwork plan will include

- The number and make-up of the team
- Planning of visits to each centre by experts and technical persons
- Pre-departure briefing/training of team
- Establish contact with the craftspersons, NGO's, etc

### ***STAGE II***

#### ***Selection of key informants for coverage and assessment***

Given the constraints within each craft, all craftsperson will be contacted, as far as possible.

### **Primary Data collection Schedule**

A Qualitative methodology will be followed to complement the review of secondary data. Research teams will use a combination of individual key informant interviews, group key informant interviews, observation and other techniques to collect the information. Information will be gathered from a wide range of sources and triangulated: this includes secondary data and data from key informants, community group interviews. Interviewees' privacy will be safeguarded. i.e. Personal information (e.g., names) will be only recorded with consent, and such information will not be shared outside of the team unless necessary.

- Contact with other specialist's, researchers, government officials, institutions, NGO's.
- Research oral tradition, design directory, and get their views on issues, requirements and how they are being addressed within the Schemes. Discuss with the officials and State Government, what problems are they facing.
- Collection of secondary data on site at Cluster
- Understand the local situation.
- Geographically – to understand problems relating to why the craft is languishing.
- List of local institutions
- Access to and linkages for access to raw material, credit market.
- Study the technology and process

- Study Design vocabularies and assistance
- Any other issues

### **STAGE III**

At the Cluster contextualise information, consolidate data and analyse it.

Concerns about information quality, reliability and gaps to be included.

Data analysis.

Preparation of final report as per the Terms of Reference

**Report presented in a print and in electronic format**