

Bidriware to Madhubani: India's Rare Embroideries

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India hosts centuries-old embroidery and handicraft arts that now face extinction. Meanwhile, mass production and modern fashion threaten artisanal groups who rely on traditional stitches. Although global interest exists, many crafts lack sufficient economic support to stay alive. Therefore, several rare embroidery forms are struggling to preserve cultural presence.

Bidriware: Metal Art with Persia's Echoes

Bidriware began in 14th-century Bidar under the Bahmani Sultanate. Its hallmark is white brass inlaid with silver, on metal objects and fabric panel work.

Influenced by Persian and Turkish motifs, it evolved under local hands over centuries. Today, Bidriware's intricate designs demand patience and skill. Yet few artisans remain who can still do it with its original finesse.

Kasuti: Karnataka's Courtly Embroidery

Kasuti hails from Karnataka, and belongs to the folk-court tradition of Mysore district. It uses up to 5,000 tiny hand stitches on Ilkal sarees and other fabric. Originating during the Chalukya period, it later became essential for bridal trousseaux. However, Kasuti's detailed patterns require long hours, limiting its appeal to younger generations.

Toda Embroidery: A Vanishing Pastoral Beauty

Toda embroidery, also called "pukhoor," belongs to the Toda people of the Nilgiris. It features red and black threads on white cotton, creating designs that mimic woven cloth. Both men and women wore cloaks and shawls bearing this handiwork.

Over time, the craft's usage declined sharply as clothing styles shifted.

Madhubani: From Walls to Fabrics

Madhubani (Mithila) art is originally a painting tradition from India-Nepal border region. Its motifs—Ramayana, nature, mythological figures—were formerly painted on walls, floors, and in ritual spaces.

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