1. Pochampalli Silk Saree, Andhra Pradesh
2. Embroidered Kasuti Silk Saree, Karnataka
3. Kanchipuram Silk Saree, Tamil Nadu
4. Toda Embroidery, Tamil Nadu
5. Mekhala, Assam
6. Jhapi Design, Gamucha, Assam
7. Chhapra, Jacket, Tripura
8. Embroidered Border, Phanek, Manipur
9. Embroidered Dhaccai Silk Saree, West Bengal
10. Baluchari Silk Saree, West Bengal
11. Ikat Silk Saree, Odisha
12. Zilang Shawl and Pusalendra Skirt, Arunachal Pradesh
India has inherited a great tradition of handicrafts which has its beginnings in Man's basic need for creating objects of beauty and social utility. Even simple household articles such as pots, mats and furniture have been decorated with stylised motifs inspired by nature.

Apart from other handicrafts, India is also famous for the excellence it has achieved in the rich variety of textiles. Excavations show that, as far back as in the third millennium B.C, cotton fibre was woven into cloth and samples of printed fabrics have also been found.

India had trade links with many countries of the West and one of the commodities being exported was Indian textiles. The fabrics produced by early weaving techniques were woven with great artistry and skill.

Most of Indian textiles can be commonly classified under the category of the fibre used, such as cotton, wool, silk, the process employed for weaving such as, types of looms, the method used for ornamentation such as, printing, embroidery, painting and dyeing.

The hand spun and hand woven cotton fabrics of India are known for their delicacy, sometimes popularly referred to as evening dew, woven air to suggest their fine quality. In the medieval period there was a great degree of sophistication in the designs and weaves of the muslims and India was famous for the fabrics produced at special centres in eastern India.

The Jamdani or embroidered muslins are the product of the loom and the shuttle in which the design motifs are added during the course of weaving.

Indian silks are known throughout the world for their superior quality and varied textures. India has four types of natural silk fibres, the finer quality is produced by the silk worms that feed on the Mulberry leaves. Tussar, Eri and Muga are of slightly coarser variety because they are produced by insects that feed on leaves of other trees and plants.

West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Maharashtra produce a large variety of Tussar both plain and with designs woven into the fabric. The 'mekhala' worn in Assam has small motifs woven which are produced by insects that feed on leaves of other trees and plants.

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known as Himru and Mashru. In the courts of the Nawabs and other Muslim rulers in the medieval period, Himru material was used for royal dresses and shawls. Even today, Himru shawls are very popular. The Maheswari sarees of Madhya Pradesh also use a mixture of cotton and silk yarns.

In nearly every part of India we find embroidered fabrics using a variety of techniques and designs, for example, the Phulkari or the Bagh embroidery work of Punjab is done mainly in darning stitch. The whole woven fabric is covered with embroidery using a variety of geometric designs and motifs from nature. The Chamba rumals of Himachal Pradesh in which the influence of Chamba pahari painting is evident, are delicately embroidered kerchiefs in subtle shades of green, yellow and ochre with themes taken from Radha and Krishna stories. All of nature including trees, flowers etc. are depicted in these rumals. Gujarat and Kutch are known for mirror work embroidery in which tiny pieces of mirror are fixed to the fabric using herringbone and satin stitch. In West Bengal, layers of old pieces of cloth are stitched together and embroidered using simple darning stitch. These are known as Kanthas and are used in the homes for different purposes like cushion covers, etc. Today they are valued as decorative pieces. Chikan work embroidery of Uttar Pradesh which is the most delicate to be found anywhere was originally done on sarees and kurtas, but is now adapted for linen, table mats, napkins, etc. In Manipur, delicate silk thread embroidery in dark colours is done on the borders of phaneks worn by women. Beautiful geometrical motifs are created in cross stitch in the Kasuti embroidery of Karnataka. Mention must also be made of the centres in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country that have specialised in using metal (gold or silver thread) for embroidery. This work is also done on purses, shoes and caps.

Kashmir, the home of unique craftsmanship is also known for its very fine and delicate embroidery. Neatly embroidered shawls on pashmina or shahtoosh woollen fabric and treasured by many. Chain stitch embroidery is done on woolen Namdas which are spread on the floor or used as coverings on beds. The motifs used are generally taken from nature such as the mango, apple blossoms, tulip, etc, these are stylised and exquisitely embroidered kerchiefs in subtle shades of green, yellow and ochre with themes taken from Radha and Krishna stories. All of nature including trees, flowers etc. are depicted in these rumals. Gujarat and Kutch are known for mirror work embroidery in which tiny pieces of mirror are fixed to the fabric using herringbone and satin stitch. In West Bengal, layers of old pieces of cloth are stitched together and embroidered using simple darning stitch. These are known as Kanthas and are used in the homes for different purposes like cushion covers, etc. Today they are valued as decorative pieces. Chikan work embroidery of Uttar Pradesh which is the most delicate to be found anywhere was originally done on sarees and kurtas, but is now adapted for linen, table mats, napkins, etc. In Manipur, delicate silk thread embroidery in dark colours is done on the borders of phaneks worn by women. Beautiful geometrical motifs are created in cross stitch in the Kasuti embroidery of Karnataka. Mention must also be made of the centres in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country that have specialised in using metal (gold or silver thread) for embroidery. This work is also done on purses, shoes and caps.

Gujarat, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are a few of the states known for beautiful applique work.

A variety of dyeing and printing techniques are employed by the Indian artists to decorate and design the fabric. The most popular of these is the tie and dye which is found in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Tie and dye is commonly known as bandhej or bandhani which is resist dyeing process where the portions tied do not take on the colour in which the fabric is dipped. Making a series of knots, and using a variety of colours, the artists design the fabric.

Block or hand printing techniques differ from region to region. Direct discharge, indigo and rogan printing processes are employed in different centres of hand printing. For example, Jaipur, Chittorgarh, Nathdwara and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan are famous for their centres of printing with characteristic motifs and colour.
Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh is noted for Kalamkari work. The term itself is derived from kalam (pen) and kari (work). It is a hand painting process using vegetable dyes. The outlines in brown and black make a bold and striking effect. These are either drawn free hand or copied from an old piece of Kalamkari. The background colour and figures are then filled in by the artist. Kalamkari sarees and bedspreads are very popular today.

Motifs and textiles, whether woven or embroidered are influenced by the environment and one can see the flavour and essence of the culture of the region in all fabric designs. Special fabrics created for wearing or offering on religious or social ceremonies use a distinct design or material specific for the occasion.

In nearly all parts of the country we find communities of weavers and families doing fabric designing or embroidery living together. In many textiles, whether it be a Kanjeevaram saree woven on a complicated loom or Kantha embroidery of West Bengal, all members of the family have contributed to the final product.

To maintain harmony with nature, one sees that in the deserts of Rajasthan, women wear bright and contrasting clothes richly embroidered and printed. In Kerala, where the environment is lush green, plain white garments with restricted use of motifs or borders are preferred.

The artist sitting behind the loom or working with thread or paints produces with his hands, a variety of textures and designs always striving for excellence. Each piece of fabric produced is unique and one of its kind. Today, modern textiles produced in bulk using machines and synthetic materials tend to replace the methods and materials used by traditional artists. Unfortunately this is true of all handicrafts and objects of utility that the Indian craftsmen made with such love and care with their hands.

In this Folio, we present a few designs and motifs used in Indian textiles. The motifs and designs of textiles are from various states such as, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Bengal, Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh. In the picture cards, a small part of the design is shown, whether it is a piece of embroidery, weave or print. This design or motif may be completed by the students or new designs created taking inspiration from the given motifs.

We hope that students working with the visuals provided in this Folio will understand and appreciate that rich tradition of textiles and learn to respond to the beauty in colour, design and texture found in the fabrics of our country.
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

A few activities for the study of textiles are suggested below. The aim of such activities is to create an understanding and appreciation for the beauty and richness of Indian fabrics as also to motivate students to learn more about local fabric designs and techniques. On completion of such studies, the students would be able to relate their findings in design and technique to the geophysical features, social and religious festivals and other areas of knowledge.

* Study the traditional textiles of your region. Observe the weaving techniques, colours, designs to understand the aesthetic values. Make a comparative study with textiles from other states.
* Collect designs on old fabrics found in your homes and make a scrapbook. Try to understand the mathematical precision that has been used in creating the design for the weave.
* Visit the local museums to observe the textiles and costumes of ancient times. Make drawings to study the history of a particular period through costumes.

If possible, visits to weaving centres or homes of craftsmen should be organised to enable the students to get a first-hand knowledge of the different processes involved in preparation of textiles.

* Learn simple embroidery stitches. Cut small pieces of cloth of different shapes and sizes of one fabric and stitch them to form a design. This is known as applique work. Similarly, patchwork designs can be made from old or inexpensive fabrics.
* Encourage students to learn the techniques of block, stamp or stencil, printing. Simple geometric or floral designs can be made on wooden blocks. They can also be encouraged to visit block makers and printers.
* Trace or make your own design and transfer it on to the fabric then try making your own colours from vegetables or stones and use these to paint or print. Simple geometric or floral designs can be made on wooden blocks.
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