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## CREATIVE HAND EMBROIDERY

All of you must have seen embroidered fabrics at home and in the market. Have you noticed how a few tiny stitches in a variety of threads can magically transform the plain fabrics into an artistic creation? Embroidery has always played a very significant role in the lives of Indian people. It is an art which both men and women have practiced not only to satisfy their creative urges but also to earn a living. It was and is being used to adorn everything from the smallest personal things like handkerchief to cushions, curtains, wall hangings, bed and table linen, various articles of apparel, etc.

You can also learn to embroider but for that you will have to get familiar with some basic information and collect necessary materials and equipment needed for the same. This lesson will introduce you to all these. So let's enter into the world of embroidery and learn about it.



### OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of embroidery;
- recognize the equipment and the materials used for embroidery and elaborate the functions of each.

### 28.1 MEANING OF EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is the art of creating decorative effects on the surface of a fabric using designs and stitches made with the help of needle and thread. It can be beautifully described as a painting with needle and thread. Our museums contain beautiful pieces of work from all over the world, each of them different but still sharing a

similarity with regard to the use of basic stitches and techniques. Some of the famous traditional Indian embroideries are:

- Phulkari of Punjab
- Kantha of Bengal
- Kasuti of Karnataka
- Chikankari of Uttar Pradesh
- Zardozi of Kashmir
- Sindhi and Kutchi of Gujarat

Remember, these are only a few examples, there are many more embroideries which are created in our country. Do visit the Crafts Museum of Pragati Maidan, whenever you come to Delhi.

### 28.2 EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED FOR EMBROIDERY

Once you decide to make an embroidered piece, it is important to collect the proper material and equipment which will help you to work smoothly. Not many items are needed; so choose the best you can afford. Good tools produce good work. Learn to use your embroidery tools properly and you will find your work to be the best.

- (a) **Hand sewing needles:** A good embroidery needle is the most important thing required for embroidery. Sized from coarse (#1) to very fine (#10) you must choose the right needle for the right fabric. Use a finer needle for a delicate fabric and vice versa. The needle should be slightly thicker than the sewing thread so that it makes a sufficiently big hole in the fabric for the thread to pass easily. Needles should always have a fine tip so that they can easily move in and out of the fabric. Do not use a needle which is bent, without a point or rusty. This will affect the regularity and neatness of work. Protect your needles by storing them in a needle case.



Fig. 28.1 : Sizes of Needles

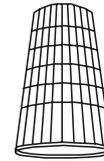


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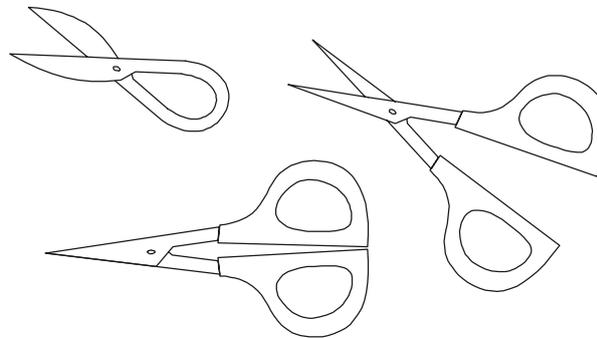
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- (b) **Thimble:** This is small light weight metallic piece which fits snugly on the middle finger of the needle holding hand. It protects the finger from getting injured with the needle while pushing it into the cloth. Thimbles come in different sizes. Try on a few for correct fit before you buy.



**Fig. 28.2 : Thimble**

- (c) **Scissors:** Embroidery scissors are small, with sharp, narrow, pointed blades. Protect the blade by keeping them in a sheath or cover and get them sharpened occasionally. These are used to cut and neatn the loose ends of thread. Now-a-days thread clippers are also available. These appear like small scissors or like tweezers with sharp edges, which help in cutting the thread neatly.



**Fig. 28.3 : Scissors and thread clippers**

- (d) **Threads for embroidery:** Thread is a very important feature of embroidery. There are a variety of threads available in the market. Different types are used for different kinds of embroidery. The kind of thread used also depends on the end product to be made. Thread may be of cotton, silk, wool or synthetic material. It could have more or less twist. Hence, different threads will differ in fineness and lustre. Some embroidery threads are also available in ply. This means a number of yarns are twisted together. You can pull out and use any number of yarns you require out of that plyed yarn. One ply will give very fine embroidery. If you use all 6 ply it will give a bold embroidery. In the market embroidery threads are commonly available as cotton embroidery threads, silk floss (also known as *pat*) – it is a low twisted silk yarn which has a lot of shine but low strength, silk thread (resham ka dhaga) – it is a twisted silk yarn, has good shine but lower strength than cotton. Woollen yarn can also be very beautifully used to produce good embroidery pieces.

Hence, the choice of thread depends on the kind of embroidery you are creating and the texture required in your embroidery.



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(e) **Embroidery frames:** To get good results embroidery is usually worked using frames. Frames hold the fabric tightly and evenly, hence the stitches are more likely to be neat and accurate than if the fabric were held in the hand while working. There are two main types of frames:-

1. **Round frame:** This is also known as hoops. It consists of two pieces, a smaller hoop which fits into a larger one. There is usually a spring or screw adjustment to keep them fitting snugly. The fabric for embroidery is placed over the smaller hoop and the larger hoop is pressed over the fabric, fitting it snugly on to the smaller hoop. These frames are either of wood or metal. While framing a very delicate fabric, it is advisable to place tissue paper over the inner hoop or twist or wrap the inner hoop with a thin material to prevent markings on the fabric.

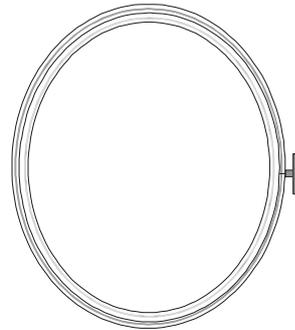


Fig. : 28.4 Round frame (Hoops)

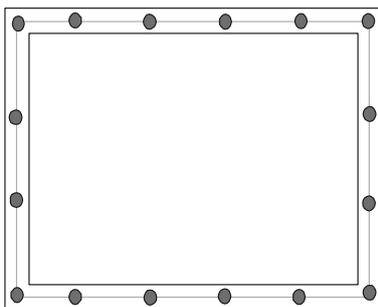


Fig. : 28.5 Rectangular frame

2. **Rectangular frame:** The rectangular frame consists of four pieces attached to each other in a rectangular form. The fabric to be embroidered is stretched on the frame on all the four sides, where the fabric is tacked onto the end of the frame with the help of needle and the thread.

- (f) **Fabric :** You can create embroidery on any fabric available in the market. Correct use of design, needle and thread on various fabrics can produce lovely embroidered fabrics.
- (g) **Design :** You will need a design to create a good embroidery. We will tell you all about it in the next lesson.
- (h) **Materials required for transferring design :** Equipment and material required for transferring design on fabric are varied. You can do it by using carbon paper, butter paper, tracing paper, pencil, rubber, kerosene oil, cotton etc. You will learn about these techniques in the next lesson.



**Activity 28.1 :** Prepare a sewing kit for yourself, using the following steps

- (i) Prepare a list of articles required for the sewing kit.
- (ii) Tick against each item as you keep them in the box.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.1**

- I. Match the following:
- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| i) Embroidery scissors | a) Metallic piece to protect finger.                 |
| ii) Thimble            | b) Needle used for embroidering fine fabric.         |
| iii) Frame             | c) Sharp equipment like tweezers for cutting thread. |
| iv) Fine Needle        | d) Needle for embroidery on coarse fabric.           |
| v) Silk floss          | e) Lower strength than cotton thread.                |
| vi) Thread clipper     | f) Wooden ring to hold embroidery fabric.            |
| vii) Resham thread     | g) Sharp and pointed edge for cutting.               |
| viii) Thick needle     | h) Silk thread with good shine.                      |
|                        | i) Very strong embroidery thread.                    |
- II. Complete the following statements by choosing the correct answer. Justify the statement.
- i). A needle size is chosen according to the
- thickness of fabric
  - texture of fabric
  - colour of fabric
  - weave of fabric
- Justification : \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) Thimble helps in protecting the
- thread
  - needle
  - finger
  - thumb
- Justification : \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- iii) Good embroidery can be created by using only
- cotton threads
  - silk floss
  - silk thread
  - appropriate equipment



**Notes**

Justification : \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- iv) Embroidery scissors must have
- long and sharp blades
  - pointed sharp blades
  - long and pointed blades
  - Long, pointed and sharp blades

Justification : \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- v) While framing a delicate fabric for embroidery
- stretch the fabric tight between the hoops
  - wrap the inner hoop with a thin fabric
  - use a mettalic hoop
  - use a wooden hoop

Justification : \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



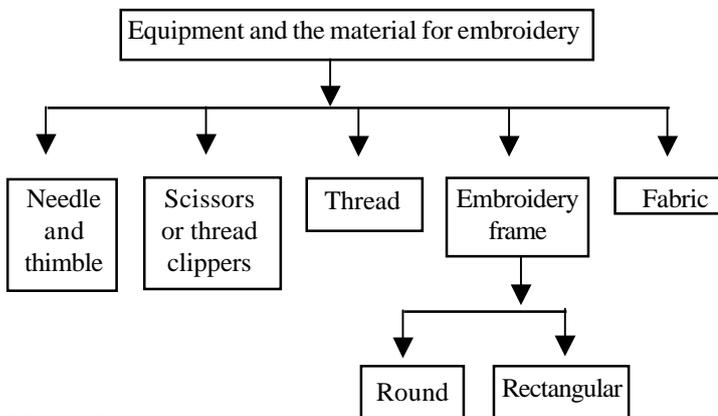
**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

- Define the word 'embroidery'.
- List the equipment required for embroidery.
- What points will you keep in mind while buying embroidery needles? How will you take care of your needles?
- List the different kinds of threads that can be used for embroidery.



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Definition of embroidery
- Equipment and the material for embroidery



**Notes****ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- I i) g), ii) a), iii) f), iv) b),  
v) h), vi) c), vii) e), viii) d)
- II i) a, ii) c, iii) d, iv) d,  
v) b

Refer 28.2