

**COMMUNITY: MOCHI**  
**EMBROIDERY: AARI**

Aari embroidery is well known for its realistic, portraiture-like representations of flowers, birds, animals and other living beings.

Aari is the only embroidery that uses just one stitch - a very fine, flat and longish *saankdi* stitch. It is rendered with an awl - a thin, hooked needle.

The embroidery is rendered on leather as well as on coarse and fine fabrics. Threads of different materials and thickness are used. They include metallic as well as thin, glossy, twisted threads.



The Aari practised by the Mochi community in Banaskantha does not use mirrors.

Craftswomen from this community render Aari in a particular way for Shrujan. Each motif is embroidered in many gradations of a single colour. As many as five to seven shades of the same colour are used in one motif. This creates a subtle effect much like a painting done with watercolours.

Floral and tree-of-life motifs, peacocks and parrots as well as a variety of trellis details abound in the Aari embroidery of Shrujan.



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 Aari embroidery are:

- saankdi stitch is very tiny, flat and longish
- different colours are used in different motifs
- many gradations of the same colour are used within a motif.