



A FUSION OF VELVET AND AARI WORK: CREATING CONTEMPORARY HOME TEXTILES

Dr. Sonu Mehta

Senior Assistant Professor, Fashion Design Department, Nootan Institute of Design and Communication, SPU, Visnagar, Mehsana, Gujrat.

Abstract

The art of Aari work, a traditional form of hand embroidery, is renowned for its intricate, raised designs, often incorporated into textiles such as sarees, dupattas, and home decor items like cushion covers. Velvet, with its soft, luxurious texture and deep color, provides an ideal base for Aari embroidery, enhancing the beauty and richness of the design. This research article explores the design and development process of a velvet cushion cover embellished with Aari work, examining its material selection, design conceptualization, embroidery techniques, and the cultural significance of combining these elements in home decor.

Keywords: Aari work, Velvet fabric.

Introduction

The fusion of **Aari embroidery** and **velvet fabric** in cushion covers represents a timeless marriage of art and comfort. Velvet, historically associated with luxury, is a fabric that lends itself to the elegance of intricate needlework. Aari work, on the other hand, has its roots in Rajasthan and Gujarat, where it has been practiced for centuries, adding texture and visual appeal to garments and home textiles. Velvet cushions adorned with Aari embroidery not only serve as functional items but also as pieces of art that can elevate the aesthetic value of any living space.

This paper focuses on the process of designing and developing a **velvet cushion cover** using the traditional Aari embroidery technique. The research explores the interplay of material and technique, the impact of embellishments, and the final outcomes of this fusion in terms of both design and functionality.

Key Features of Aari Work

1. **Intricate Stitching:** The stitches used in Aari work are fine and detailed, creating raised patterns that give the fabric a textured, three-dimensional look.
2. **Rich Decorative Motifs:** Common motifs include florals, vines, peacocks, paisleys, and geometric patterns. These designs are often symbolic and culturally significant.
3. **Use of Embellishments:** Sequins, beads, and mirrors are frequently added to enhance the overall look, adding glamour and visual appeal.
4. **Variety of Threads:** Aari work is typically done using silk threads, cotton threads, or metallic threads, depending on the desired finish and the type of fabric being worked on.

Materials and Tools

1. Velvet Fabric

Velvet is a woven fabric with a soft, plush surface, usually made from silk, cotton, or synthetic fibers. Its distinctive texture, created by the arrangement of fibers in short loops, makes it ideal for intricate



needlework. Velvet's rich, glossy finish enhances the visual depth of Aari embroidery, providing a luxurious backdrop for the embellishments.

- **Type of Velvet:** For cushion covers, a medium-weight cotton velvet is preferred, as it is durable, comfortable, and easy to handle for embroidery.
- **Color Selection:** Traditional hues like royal blue, maroon, emerald green, or deep gold are popular choices for velvet cushion covers, as they create a striking contrast with metallic threads. Royal blue colour was selected for the study.

2. Aari Needle

The Aari needle, a long, hooked needle, is essential for creating the signature raised stitches of this embroidery form. It allows for swift and accurate stitching, which is important for intricate designs on velvet fabric.

3. Threads and Embellishments

- **Threads:** Silk, cotton, and metallic threads were used in Aari work. Silk threads give a smooth finish, while metallic threads (gold, silver) add a touch of luxury to the design.
- **Embellishments:** Sequins, beads, and mirrors are often integrated into Aari designs. These elements not only enhance the visual appeal but also provide a tactile dimension to the fabric, making the cushion cover more decorative and dynamic.

4. Cushion Inserts

Cushion inserts, available in various sizes, serve as the structural element of the cover. Standard sizes include 12 x 12, 16x16, 18x18, or 20x20 inches, with some designers opting for bespoke sizes to fit specific interior design requirements. 12x12 was selected as it works as highlighter.

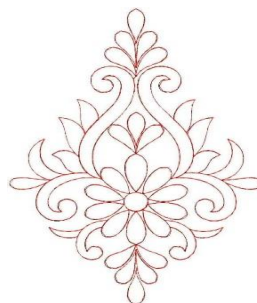
Aari Design Motifs



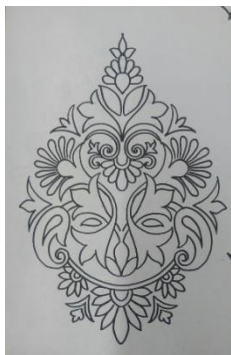
Design-1



Design -2



Design -3



Design -4



Design -5



Design -6



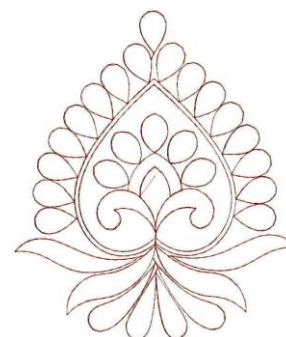
Design -7



Design -8



Design -9



Design -10



Aari Work Embroidery Process

1. Preparing the Fabric

The velvet fabric is first washed and ironed to remove any creases or dirt. Velvet should be handled with care, as it is prone to crushing. The fabric is then cut to the desired dimensions of the cushion cover.

2. Transferring the Design

A lightweight tracing paper or fabric pencil is used to transfer the design onto the velvet. This helps ensure accuracy and allows the artisan to follow the pattern while stitching.

3. Embroidery Process

- **Thread Preparation:** The selected thread is threaded through the Aari needle, and the embroidery begins from the center of the design.
- **Basic Stitches:** Techniques such as **chain stitches**, **French knots**, **satin stitches**, and **loop stitches** are used to create depth and texture in the design. These stitches are strategically placed to form the desired motifs.
- **Adding Embellishments:** After the base embroidery is complete, beads, sequins, and mirrors are sewn onto the design, creating visual interest and enhancing the opulence of the cushion cover.

4. Finishing the Cushion Cover

Once the embroidery is completed, the fabric edges are neatly stitched to form the cushion cover. A zipper or button closure is added, depending on the design preferences. The finished cover is then placed over a cushion insert, and the final product is ready for use.

Developed Cushion Covers



Cushion -1



Cushion- 2



Cushion- 3



Cushion- 4

Conclusion

The design and development of velvet cushion covers using Aari work is a beautiful example of traditional craftsmanship meeting contemporary design aesthetics. The intricate embroidery enhances the luxurious texture of velvet, turning a functional home accessory into a work of art. By combining rich fabrics with centuries-old embroidery techniques, this process not only preserves a cultural legacy but also offers a creative avenue for designers to explore. Velvet cushion covers with Aari work are a testament to the enduring appeal of handcrafted textiles and their role in elevating interior design.