

CHAPTER II-REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction to the Chapter:

A literature review is a piece of academic writing demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the academic literature on a specific topic placed in context. A literature review also includes a critical evaluation of the material; this is why it is called a literature review rather than a literature report. It has an organizational pattern that combines both summary and synthesis. One of the most important purposes of review of literature is formulation of research gaps.

Bhopal, the present capital of central Indian state Madhya Pradesh and former capital of the princely state of Bhopal, possesses a rich cultural past and heritage. It is home to numerous heritage structures, oral traditions and cultural legacies. It was one of the prominent *zardozi* centers and till date is famous for *zardozi*, beadwork and *batuas* which can be understood by a popular local dialect:

“Char cheez taufie Bhopal,

Batua, gutkha, chuneti aur roomal.”

(Bhopal is known for four products which are famous as gifts and souvenirs; Purse, fragrant mouth freshener, small tool for picking *chuna* and handkerchief.)-

Anonymous

The *Begums* patronized the craft of *zardozi* and *batua* making which motivated the artisans to create masterpieces with exquisite workmanship. With time the workmanship declined and artisans started to shift towards other jobs which provided them continuous employment. Today the Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery is facing threats from machine embroidered cheaper imitations and reduced demand owing to vast options available both in the online and physical markets. The craft not only serves an important link to the city's cultural heritage but also has a significant artisan pool which has renewed the interests of scholars, designers and policy makers especially in *zardozi* of Bhopal.

In the light of the above the review of literature was carried out to take a note of the research already undertaken and to also examine the gaps with reference to Bhopal

zardozi embroidery. The review of literature revealed that the data was not only scattered, there was an absence of comprehensive scholarly research and documentation also. So the investigator sincerely tried to not only authenticate the information from various sources but to also present it systematically which could be of use to designers, academicians, scholars, policy makers and art connoisseurs. The chapter has been divided into following sections:

2.1 Handicrafts as Bearers of Sustainability, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Community Identity:

2.2 Handcrafted Textiles of India:

2.2.1 Embroidered Textiles of India:

2.3 The Craft of Embroidery and Indian Embroideries:

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2.4.2 Tools, Techniques and Material of *Zardozi* Embroidery:

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2.4.2 Traditional Products, Motifs and Designs of *Zardozi* Embroidery of Bhopal

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2.5 Present Status and Trade Practices in *Zardozi* Embroidery of Bhopal:

2.5.1 Present Status of *Zardozi* Embroidery Artisans in Bhopal:

2.5.2 Feminization of the Craft and Home Based Women Artisans:

2.5.3 Issues and Challenges of the Artisans:

2.6 Initiatives and Policy Measures for the revival and sustenance of the Zardozi Embroidery of Bhopal

2.6.1 Impact of Government and Non-Government Efforts for Handicraft Promotion:

2.7 Skill Development Training for Artisans:

2.7.1 Benefits of Skill Training

2.8 Gaps in Implementation of Welfare Schemes:

2.9 Research Gap

2.1 Handicrafts as Bearers of Sustainability, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Community Identity:

A handicraft is any of a broad variety of works in which ornamental and practical items are created primarily by hand or with the use of basic, manual tools such as knives, hooks, scissors, and carving equipment. Handicrafts encompass a wide range of creative activities that include creation of utilitarian and aesthetic articles with soft material such as fabrics and hard materials such as clay, wood, metal. Artisanry, crafting, artisanal products and handmade are collective nouns for handicrafts. Handicraft industries are those that make goods by hand to cater to local demand without the use of machinery (Thakker, N. P., 2022; Chattopadhyay, K. 1995). The handicraft industry, furthermore, gives work opportunities for the upliftment and success of all types of individuals whether poor or wealthy, those who live in rural or urban areas and most importantly those who live in underprivileged situations. Furthermore, the industry is a significant space to express craftsmanship and skill in crafts and art and bring awareness of the culture by making crafts accessible locally (Din., *et.al*, 2014). Moreover, the materials utilised for manufacturing the handicrafts are local and effortlessly accessible. Artisans and craftspeople can create items in unlimited numbers without any negative effect on sustainability. The items of handicrafts have various applications and they can have utilitarian purposes, ornamental, decorative, functional, religious, and symbolic significance. Thus

handicrafts have been vital and significant in everyday life (**Choudhury and Agrawal, 2012**).

In India handicrafts were revered as an integral aspect of its rich cultural heritage. They not only fulfilled the utilitarian or physical need but also served as a provider of aesthetic demands as well as acted as a medium for self-expression (**Chattopadhyay, K. 1985**).

The handicraft sector has traditionally been one of the primary sources of employment creation in India. Also, it contributes to the preservation of Indian heritage, art, and culture as the artists depict a variety of experiences and emotions through their artwork, crafts, designs and products. A community's or culture's treasures can be unlocked through the handicrafts as designs represent the unique qualities of each civilization and the vibration of their creator. It also fosters the richness of culture (**Shah, A. 2017**).

India after independence has appeared to have the potential of investing in agriculture for the improvement of its agro-based economy. In a general sense, India's economy depends on agriculture and its associated industries. It includes silk worm rearing, textiles, handicraft, and other small-scale businesses (**Chattopadhyay, K. 1985**).

Handicrafts have been a fundamental aspect of civilization and an innate part of human life. They bring a deep cohesion in human relationships that has the power to transcend any barrier including linguistic barriers (**Dholakia K.L. 2012**).

The craft itself and the craftspeople of the sector are a critical part of the economy and are creating an impression in the global market. Moreover, the culture and heritage of extraordinary craftsmanship have enhanced its value in the global market. The handicraft sector features a history of several centuries in the country. The handicrafts of India were well known to the export market through centuries. The inhabitants of Indus valley were popularly known for their craftsmanship, culture, and art. Their strength in craftsmanship has been characteristic of modern India. Additionally, the incredible designs and carvings on temples affirm the fact that craftsmanship is not new to India. It is a skill which is passed down from one generation to another (**Rao, 1979**).

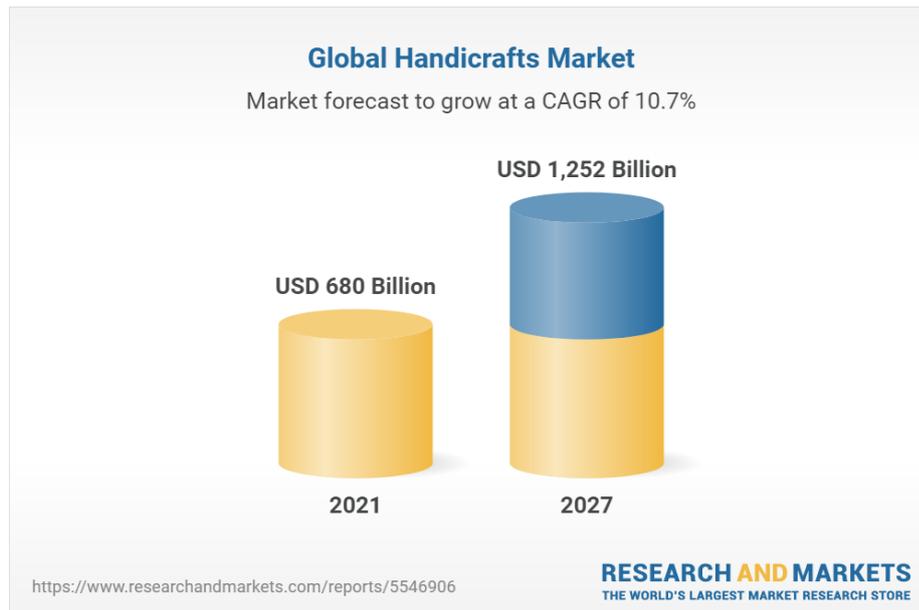


Figure 2.1 Global handicraft market. (source: internet)

The word handicraft suggests creations of craft mainly by the use of hands and negligible or miniscule intervention of machines. Handicrafts reflect the traditions of the places carried forward and brought to us by the craftspeople (Yang *et al.*, 2018; Sharma, C.S. 1989) and belong to the unorganized and informal sector (Roy, 2022). In India, the handicrafts were revered and considered an important part of the country’s cultural heritage (Chattopadhyay, K. 1995). Along with crafts, the craft community in India form an integral part of indigenous traditions and historical assimilations that span over millennia (Jain, R. 2003 and Thakker, J., 2019).

Crafts have been a creative manifestation of people’s skills displaying both form and function and thus crafts are both a method of industrial production as well as a form of artistic activity. Apart from it being cultural and creative expressions, these have also been an important commodity for world trade and economy, since antiquity (Bhatia, R. 2005). India has a vibrant craft tradition which has survived the ravages of time, colonization and globalization

The geographical location, climatic conditions and the natural resources available in that region also have a deep influence on the local textiles made in that region.

Originally initiated as a part time and leisure activity for making utilitarian objects and decorating the surroundings, handicrafts in present times are a potential source of

employment as they hold the key for sustaining not only the existing millions of artisans but also for ever increasing new entrants in this sector (**Compendium of Handicrafts Schemes for 12th five year plan *n.d.***).

The handicraft items were traditionally utilitarian and prepared by artisan/craft persons for day-to-day use. Craft forms, traditionally passed down through generations, are disappearing due to industrialization, changing tastes, and lack of patronage. To revive and preserve these forms, proper training and skill upgradation are needed. With globalization and the desire to connect to roots, there is a great demand for contemporary products from the craft sector (**Madan *n.d.***).

Handicraft sector is an unorganized, labor-intensive decentralized industry that provides employment to millions of craft persons in rural and semi-urban areas. Handicrafts form a substantial part of Indian exports and their share in the exports is increasing each year. The development of the handicraft sector has however been hampered due to factors such as lack of education of craftswomen, exposure to technologies, market intelligence and infrastructure. ⁷ The importance of these crafts has been understood and steps have been taken by non government organizations as well as the government to improve the life of craftsperson and preserve the craft treasure for the world and coming generations. Several organizations, initiatives, NGOs and craft parks have established connections with artisan communities. There are many such registered centers which are working with the similar objective to preserve the age-old crafts, convey identity and respect to craft persons, and empower women through socially and financially sustainable development of traditional crafts (**Gupta, E. 2021**).

2.2 Handcrafted Textiles of India:

Dhamija, J. 2004, opines that the vibrancy of textile traditions connects the world and its people, as fabrics inform about cultural history, beliefs of people and also the place of people in the world.

The Indian textile tradition is one of the unparalleled textile traditions of the world with a repertoire of design variations and a wide range of techniques. The native handicraft and textile collection of India were made even more vibrant by the assimilation of techniques and processes brought to the country owing to foreign

invasions, trade routes with distant foreign lands as well as various geographical and cultural factors that all jointly contributed towards creation of a rich handicraft and textile tradition in the subcontinent (**Garg, V. 2017**).

Each piece of textile, even those that are only found in shards now, originated in certain locations at specific periods. Textiles are people's nonverbal languages, and they may convey a lot. The raw material describes the geo-climatic conditions and trade connections, while its motifs reflect the cultural beliefs and lives of the artists. However, the methods used in its production indicate a great deal about the ability and progress of that specific culture (**Dhamija Jasleen, 2004**).

Costumes have been known to establish the individual identity of wearers in the society and also for display of social hierarchy. In order to fulfill the clothing and textile production different communities in society were entrusted with work relating to production and ornamentation of textiles (**Kothari, G. 1995**).

India produced exquisite handcrafted textiles for trade which include; printed textiles, chintz, quilts, bed covers or palampores, decorative hangings for Europe; sarongs, religious wall hangings for the Far East; turbans, sashes, hangings, tent and floor coverings for Persia and the Middle East (**Dua Sharmila, 2014**).

For centuries, the Indian subcontinent has been clothing the rest of the world with a huge range of utilitarian and ceremonial textiles that have been manufactured and exported from this region up to the present day. These have found a place in the lives of people from the ancient world to the twenty-first century global markets (**Crill, R. 2005**).

Known for its vibrant textile traditions, India has fabrics as an integral part of everyday life. Ranging from trousseau to furnishings, tapestry to ancient burial clothes, Indian textiles are known to integrate the multidisciplinary approach of traditions, scientific knowledge with aesthetic sensitivity and practical skills. Antique textiles find a place in many homes, not necessarily as intentional art collections and which may have been passed as an heirloom.

www.antiquerestorers.com/.../conservation_articles.html

In India textiles had been a prized possession. From individual to society level it had extended identities, position and recognition. It had been widely used in the form of cloth as well as furnishing. In festivals and special occasions, it is commonly used for decoration from mud huts to palaces. It is often said that textiles communicate about the wealth of a person as well as cultural tradition of a country (**Dhamija & Jain, 1989**).

Indian textiles have had a celebrated tradition that has fascinated the world for more than two thousand years. History is witness to the relentless efforts made throughout the ancient times by cultural groups and communities to fashion elaborate textiles. Different regions in the subcontinent explored and experimented with the natural resources at hand forming enduring traditions for their use (**Tomar, S. 2018**).

2.2.1 The Craft of Embroidery and Embroidered Textiles of India:

Humans have the inherent nature and instinct for embellishment and ornamentation which is universal and has persisted from primitive times to present day (**Srivastava, B. 1987**).

Embroidery is the addition of pattern or other ornamental effects to the textile by the use of needles and thread. The art of embroidery is ancient, and it evolved from the process of plain sewing. The precise history of embroidery has become obscure due to the perishable nature of textiles, but information regarding this art has been gathered from the statues, paintings, literature and archaeological findings (**Grewal, 1988**).

Embroidery is enriching fabrics with a needle and thread. It's a way of embellishing fabrics and has its roots in ancient times. Threads of various kinds such as metal, cotton, silk, wool and animal hair have been utilized along with mirrors, shells, beads, semi-precious stones, metal pieces, insects' wings, coins and bells to ornament a variety of pliable material such as leather, felts, silk, velvet, wool, cotton, linen and so on and so forth (**Brijbhushan, J. 1990**).

In the field of ornamentation perhaps embroidery alone can match jewellery in splendour (**Chattopadhyay, K. 1985**).

The magnificent workmanship from India is acknowledged worldwide and Indian craftsmen have not only produced but also ornamented the most exquisite textiles with variegated charms of embroidery (**Naik, S.D. 1996**).

Embroidery as an ornamentation technique is fundamental to many cultures across the world. Dating back to antiquity, embroidery has been used in almost every culture to beautify a wide range of articles from personal possessions like handkerchiefs, garments to the extravagant and elaborate royal paraphernalia (**Crill, R. 1999**).

Throughout history, embroidery has been employed in a myriad of contexts and for a broad spectrum of purposes. Examples include adorning ornate trousseaux and burial wrappings, proclaiming the majesty of monarchs and the glory of God, bringing some color into the modest dwellings of peasants, and showcasing status and wealth (**Mahale, G. 1997**).

Paine, (1990) reported that embroidery is the ornamentation of fabrics with threads and other decorative material such as beads, coins, tassels, buttons, mirrors, feathers, beetle wings and bones. A majority of needlework entails straightforward stitching. The designs are applied with a needle, though occasionally a hook can be employed as well. The designs are meticulously drawn or created by counting threads of the base fabric. Threads made of silk, cotton, linen, wool, gold, silver, etc. are utilized for embroidery. When embroidering with metal or other precious threads, a different method is used. These are placed on the fabric and couched with the help of another thread onto the fabric so that none of the decorative material is hidden under the fabric or cloth.

Kale, S. (2011) has opined that it is impossible to say when and where the first embroidered piece or first motif was executed but there is evidence of needles and threads being in use from early civilizations. There are innumerable samples of exquisite embroidery exhibits in museums across the world from Egypt to Europe to China to America. The foundation of some of the embroidery techniques can be linked to making of beaded strings, garlands or for stitching of clothing, purses, belts or basketry where stitches were probably used for joining of textiles or attaching of strings, handles or loops. Embroidered fragments dating back to early periods have been found in various sites in Europe and Asia too.

Virani, P.J. (2019) was of the opinion that embroidery motifs vividly bring out the cultural values and community experiences and in fact are more than just designs. **Dholakia, K.L. (2012)** has also reported that structural and surface are the two ways in which textile ornamentation can be accomplished. Embroidery comes under the second category and depicts the cultural heritage.

2.3 Indian Embroideries:

India has a long history with embroidery since needles have been described in centuries-old texts. Idols and figurines wearing embroidered robes and also bronze needles used for needlework dating from 2300–1500 B.C. have been found during various excavations. The ancient Buddhist stupa sculptures also depict similar embroidered cloths (**Chattopadhyay, K. 1985**).

In India also, embroidery has almost always been at the forefront in uniquely rich textile tradition and it can be safely said that very few societies can claim as prominent a role played by embroidery as can be seen in India (**Crill, R. 1999**). Needles dating back to the third millennium B.C. have been discovered at all excavation sites in India. Some figurines from *Mohenjo-daro* and *Harappa* are shown to be attired in what appears to be embroidered garments. On the basis of the travel accounts of Marco Polo dating back to 4th BC, Strabo, a Greek geographer describes Indians dressed in muslin robes embellished with richly flowered gold patterns. Venetian Traveler Marco Polo, visited India in 13th century, reported of red leather mats from Gujarat which depicted beasts and birds in gold and silver and sewn subtly. He also wrote about couches and cushions skillfully embroidered in gold and silver which were rare to find anywhere in the world (**Brijbhushan, J. 2006**).

An obvious intent of a craft is self-expression and communication of cultural values. Like any other art or craft, embroidery welcomes anyone who is dexterous and zealous to excel. While it demands a set of discipline and covenants to be followed, it also provides a room for the craftsmen to let their creative juices flow. Embroidery is a craft of decorating articles, apparels or fabrics using a needle (**Dholakia, K.L. 2012**).

According to **Dongerkeri Kamala (as quoted in Bhatia, R. 2005)**, "The term "embroidery" in India, when used broadly, is not just the work accomplished using a

needle and thread in fact it also refers to an artistically designed adornment, whether it be made of silk and cotton thread, metal, tinsel, mirrors, sequins, buttons, bells, beetle wings, shells, pearls, or beads.

In Indian society, embroidery has always played a prominent role and has been one of the most enduring and prominent crafts among the rich textile heritage of India. Vedic literature indicates that Indian embroidery has been practiced since prehistoric time and dates it back to 5000 BC. **(Shrikant, U. 2009)**. Embroidery is a craft that involves working of raised designs on fabric surface with needles and threads of silk, cotton, gold or silver and has been known in India from very early times **(Virani, P. J. 2019)**.

For gaining an insight into Indian embroidery it is of utmost importance to consider India's past trade, invasions, its geographical location in relation to other countries and migration patterns. There have been considerable changes owing to the above factors. India lies along the ancient Asian trade routes stretching across Asia. Many cultural and religious influences from other countries were thus introduced. Trade and influence from the west came from Iran and Afghanistan, from the east came the rich textiles from China. The extensive Indian coastline also enabled flourishing trade with many countries like Portugal, France and Britain. The latter became invaders rather than traders which resulted in conspicuous effects on Indian culture as well as crafts. Many European trading companies exported embroideries and other textiles in huge quantities from the areas around Bengal and Gujarat for centuries **(Morrell, A. 1995)**.

In Indian society, embroidery has always been of the utmost significance and has always been used for a specific purpose. Whether it was in the lives of rural people as trousseau items and paraphernalia, as tribal group identifiers or at the royal courts, embroidery was omnipresent. Nobles' robes, tents, canopies, tents and furnishings were all embellished with embroidery **(Shrikant, U. 2009)**.

Embroidery, an ancient craft, has transformed over time as it depicts the prevailing social, cultural and sometimes even the political mood of the times **(Bhandari, V. 2004)**. Various social, cultural, geographical and political factors have made an impression on Indian embroidery too. Adding to the richness and diversity of local embroidery traditions was the assimilation of these varied ideas and techniques by Indian artisans to suit the indigenous culture and traditions.

One of the major influences on Indian textiles was the Persian taste and tradition which prevailed during the mughal empire (1526 CE-1756CE) (**Morrell, A. 1995**). The mughal rulers gave a lot of importance to arts and crafts and embroidery was no exception to this. The mughal emperors paid detailed attention to their appearance and hence to their attires too. Skillful artisans and craftsmen were settled in the country by them who taught an improved manufacturing system to the local artisans (**Mehta, R. J. 1994**).

Various regions in India had differing historical developments. It is not then surprising that the use of embroidery stitches differs between distinct communities. Often the same embroidery stitches can be found in use across various geographical locations in India but their adaptation and purposes differ. Thus, there is a difference in individual motifs owing to differences in techniques and material. Many stitches that were brought from other countries by invaders and settlers reflect changes and development as these have been incorporated into local culture and work (**Morrell, A. 1995**).

As per the vedic literature Indian embroidery is as old as 5000 BC thus it indicates that craft of embroidery has been practiced since prehistoric times in India. Numerous specimens with high aesthetic value are provided by the ruins of Mohenjo-daro which dates back to 2000 BC. There were many indications, such as the discovery of bronze needles during excavation, that point to the existence of embroidery into the day to day life of prehistoric men (**Shrikant, U. 2009**).

Mahale, G. 1997 in a study on folk embroideries of Karnataka has opined that despite the common stitches and techniques used in some embroidery styles, every region in India has developed a unique style. This could be because embroidery, more than any other craft, reflects the folk customs, cultural heritage, and natural surroundings of a region.

Unfortunately, no specimens of the existence of early embroidery can be found in India. There is a profusion of different kinds of embroidery after the 16th century, a great many of which can be seen in the museums across the country as well as other parts of the world (**Brijbhushan, J. 2006**).

The oldest surviving specimens of Indian embroidery were most probably the two pieces made in the fifteenth or sixteenth century for Jain nuns. Ample specimens from the Mughal courts of the seventeenth century are available although. There were exclusive *karkhanas* or workshops in the Mughal courts to cater to the needs of the royal families and the courts (**Shrikant, U. 2009**). Decorative arts have had a prolonged and captivating history in India. The system of Karkhanas or organized workshops was established with the emergence of Islam to corroborate the harmonious growth of Indian Arts and crafts (**Nigam, M.L. 1987**).

Thus, it will not be wrong to conclude that India was inhabited by people of various ethnicities owing to trade, invasions, migration, travel and religion. All these have influenced the embroidery traditions and skills of Indian artisans who have assimilated these and developed a unique and unparalleled craft tradition.

2.3.1 Gold and Silver Embroidery / Zardozi in India:

Embroidery that uses pure gold and silver wire, popularly called *zari*, is known as *zardozi* (**Ojha, S. 2014**). The word *zardozi* has its roots in Persian words *zar* meaning gold and *dozi* meaning embroidery. The embroiderer is thus called a *zardoz*. This style of embroidery incorporates a variety of metal wires of different shapes and forms. Other materials such as beads, sequins of various kinds, semi-precious stones, even wings of Elytra beetles and the likes are used for filling into patterns. The outlines of the patterns are defined by *zari*.

The term *zardozi* today is viewed as a generic term which is applicable to a wide range of surface embroideries worked in metal (**Bhandari, V. 2015**). The embroidery done with metallic threads such as pure silver, silver or gold coated silver wire and other light reflective material such as coiled wires and discs of various kinds is called *zardozi* embroidery. *Zardozi* embroidered textiles were an expensive luxury and were mostly reserved for royal and courtly costumes as also for ceremonial robes (**Kumar, R. 2006**).

The nomenclature of metal embroideries has been an issue of debate among scholars. Different scholars have used the term in myriad ways. These nomenclatures also vary regionally and different artisans may further refer to the similar technique by different names. This has led to difficulties in documentation and issues such as problems in

geographical identification. For example in Bhopal *zardozi* is termed as *zari-zardozi*, which implies both *aari* as well as *zardozi* embroidery but in reality its the heavier version that is *zardozi*.

Bhandari, V. (2015) in her book has attempted to define the unique features of prominent metal embroideries from different regions of India and described nine types of metal embroideries which are *zardozi*, *zari/aari*, *vasli* and *dhok*, *kamdani*, *mukka*, *dori (kangani/marori)*, *tilla*, *gota* and *danka*.



Figure 2.2 Categories of Gold and Silver Embroidery or Metal Embroidery

This type of embroidery uses satin, chain, stem, running stitches which can also be seen in other regional embroideries of India. Couching or laid stitch is also used and is one of the most important techniques of gold and silver work.

The fact that the silver/gold thread embroidered velvet fabrics could only be afforded by the rich and famous, made it exclusively available to the royal families of India. Soon enough, its popularity led to its increased production in the karkhanas of several princely states of ancient India, the famous ones producing the finest quality including

Gujarat (specifically Ahmedabad), Lahore, Murshidabad, Agra and Benaras. With the exclusiveness, sense of style and fashion culminating from these fabrics, the introduction of international exhibitions gave India a platform as a colony of the British Empire to display some of its finest textiles. International exhibitions arose out of the need and wish for Britain to exhibit its splendid artifacts that were being manufactured by them and their colonies. With the coming of the Industrial revolution and fashion being a major focus of many rulers around the world, Britain started the trend of International exhibitions (Raheja, R. 2017).



Plate 2. Exquisite Zardozi embroidered garments from India. source:

<https://in.pinterest.com/>

In all probability the term 'zardozi', the most commonly used term for gold and silver embroidery, was first used in the 14th century CE. in Firoz Shah Tughlaq's autobiography *Futahat-i-Firozshahi* (Kumar, R. 2006; Bhandari, V. 2015; Omar, H. 1957). This form of art includes making elaborate designs on dress materials like silk and velvet. The only notable difference that has been observed over the years is that the embroidery which was initially done with pure silver wires and real gold leaves is now replaced with cheaper alternatives like silver or gold polished copper wires. Studded pearls and precious stones and gems are used as well (Rowlo, S. 2020).

Though embroidery has been in existence in the Indian subcontinent since prehistoric times, there is no evidence as textiles are a perishable item. Thus it might be possible that various embroideries including the renowned gold and silver embroidery were being practiced in India much before the mughals, portuguese or other influences arrived. Mention of such exquisite embroideries also finds a place in our religious scriptures, though the evidence is only available from the fifteenth century CE or sixteenth century CE onwards. Thus, in the absence of any evidence, it is widely believed and is present in written records also that mughals brought embroideries of various kinds with them including *chikan kari* and *zardozi* in India. All these however indicate a possibility that India was already having gold and silver embroidery but under some other name. Use of words such as *hiranya atkan*, *swarna tantu* in ancient Indian literature gives an impetus to this thought.

The *mughal* courts had exclusive *karkhanas* (workshops) to cater to their needs. All the *karkhanas* were funded, patronised and had skilled *karigars*. Many artisans were brought from Iran and Persia to set up their workshops in India and to train the local counterparts in various crafts (**Shriram, U. 2009**).

Zari finds widespread use in weaving but it is also used in embroidery though more selectively. This tradition goes back to the *vedic* times where reference of gold and silver embroidered fabrics is mentioned (**Chattopadhyay, K. 1985**).

Naik, S.D. (1996) has also mentioned the references of gold and silver embroidery in Indian *vedas* and epics.

Use of metal for enhancing the value as well as beauty of cloth has been an ancient and continuing tradition in the Indian sub-continent. Weaving and embroidery with gold and silver in particular have made rich contributions to India's repertoire of craft skills. Scholars, across the world and India too, have reviewed the origins of dress as well as usage of gold and silver on textiles through ancient literature. The use of gold embellishments, popularly believed to have been inspired by Persians and later glorified by mughals, first finds mention in *Rig Veda* (**Bhandari, V. 2015**). Thus it might have been possible that gold and silver embroidery was practiced in India since antiquity but it was popularised and its manufacturing made more profuse and systematic during sultanate and mughal period.

Thus it could be suggested that use of gold in textiles and gold and silver embroidery was prevalent in India since *vedic* times however its prolific mention under the name *zardozi* got impetus from the *sultanate* and the *mughal* periods. Also textiles being perishable specially under the weather conditions of Indian subcontinent there are no actual samples from *vedic* and prehistoric times. The *mughal* rulers were also believed to have organized the *zardozi* craft under *karkhanas*. They were very particular about documentation hence detailed documentation of administrative proceedings and their personal lives could be found in the extant literature. Thus we may say that gold and silver embroidery was prevalent since *vedic* times as can be seen in the sculptures, paintings and through oral traditions such as *jataka* tales but the samples are available only from the times of *sultanate* and *mughal* rulers. Thus it might be concluded that in the absence of samples and literature from ancient periods (before 1200 CE) the term *zardozi* found profuse use bur this type of embroidery or similar embroidery could have been possibly used in India too but its production and use of new terminology became profuse after twelfth century CE. However in the absence of any concrete evidence it is just a possibility and more research is required on this aspect of *zardozi*. Thus we may say that the account of the origin of the gold and silver embroidery is not very clear but it was certainly in the *mughal* period that the gold and silver embroidery reached glorious heights.

2.3.2 Traditional Tools, Techniques and Material of Zardozi Embroidery:

Bhatia, R. 2005 in her study reported that both *zari* and *zardozi* were done using the wooden frame, commonly known as *karchob* and *adda* in Lucknow and Bareilly, *dhadha* and *khatia* in Kolkata and *khatia* in Surat. The word *adda* in fact meant the place of work where karigars sit together and embroider. It is now loosely used for the frame on which they do the embroidery. The single, double, triple or four legged support for embroidery frames was termed as *ghodi*, *tipai* or *paya*. In Kolkata it would be a single legged bamboo unit which would often be permanently fixed on the floor. The other important tool was an *aari* and needle in different sizes, each serving a specific purpose. *Badla*, embroidery done using flattened wire was accomplished without the use of *adda*. *Fatila*, *kauri*, a wooden hammer with a *dabber*, scissors, clips, *gaddi*, inch tape, carbon paper, etc were some tools used. The *aari*, a hooked needle was carved out of a darning needle or an umbrella or cycle spoke with the help

of a stone and ‘*reti*’ a sharpener This hooked needle was placed in a wooden holder called ‘*muthiya*’ with the help of ‘*pinvas*’ a hook installer, made of mild steel

Rastogi, J. 2021 in her study on *zardozi* embroidery, its prospects and problems faced by craft persons in Lucknow district reported that *zardozi* work is done on various types of embroidery frames, but mainly on a particular type of wooden frame, called *adda*. To set up the frame, adequate space or a minimum 10X12 feet of room is required, depending upon the size of frame. Like *chikankari* and other embroideries, this cannot be done easily by sitting anywhere. In this work, artisans sit at the *adda* for 8 hours continuously, which is extremely difficult for women. That is why this work is mainly done by men. In *zardozi*, *kamdani* work is done on a common embroidery frame and can be done easily by sitting anywhere in the house. That is why *kamdani* work is done mostly by women and they also do stone work in their homes. She further opines that the basic knowledge and skill of *zardozi* work, various tools and techniques is very essential for the craft persons involved in this work.

2.3.3 Traditional Products, Motifs and Designs of Zardozi Embroidery

Ojha, S. 2014 conducted a study on ‘Sustainability of the Metal Embroidery Industry of Rajasthan’ and reported that the artisans in ancient times were majorly inspired from nature and daily life. Floral motifs such as *butas* and *butis*, *guldasta* sunflower, lotus are more popular though peacock motifs are also used frequently. In fact a number of flowers, creepers, and *jaal* motifs have been passed down through the generations largely unaltered.

The *zardozi* embroidered goods, which were divided into furnishing, religious, garments and accessories categories, were discovered to be made of velvet, silk, net and wool and to be consistently fashioned and finely embroidered, mostly with silk and metal thread (**Bhatia, R. 2015**)

In a study on the royal costumes of Bhopal state it was reported that the costumes of the royal family of Bhopal namely *shararas*, *turki kurta*, *salwars*, *dupattas*, *sherwanis*, caps and various other apparel items along with *batuas* were embellished with *zardozi* (**Jain, R. 2003**).

2.3.4 Prominent Gold and Silver/Zardozi Embroidery Centers of India:

Mehta (1994) has described the diversity of styles, techniques and raw materials used in zardozi. Depending upon the market demands and creativity of the craftsperson, a wide range of effects and patterns are being generated in this traditional craft. *Zardozi* work is very popular in different textile markets of India like Delhi, Lucknow, Varanasi, Agra, Bhopal, Bombay, Surat, Jaipur, Ajmer, Chennai, Hyderabad, Aurangabad, etc.

Brijbhusan (1996) & Gupta (1996) stated that Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Banaras, Jaipur, Bhopal, Surat, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Hyderabad and Murshidabad were important and active centers of gold and silver embroidery.

Gold and silver embroidery is practiced all over India and main ones Delhi; Agra, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh; Ajmer in Rajasthan, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Bombay in Maharashtra, Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh; Madras City; Kathiawar and Surat of Gujarat(**Naik, S.D. 1996**).

Bhandari, V. 2015 in her book while describing the development of regional centers of *zardozi* has reported that the mughal courts in north India possibly drew talented artisans from across the country and many of those might have returned back to their village after the disintegration of mughal seat. In the process they might have carried back with them the skills that they learnt at the courts which they must have shared and developed locally. She further reports that Bhopal, another city of the Deccan and influenced by the Islamic culture, presented ideal conditions for the practice of *zardozi* embroidery and it was perfected not only on apparels and clothing but shoes, scarves and batuas were also embellished with *zardozi*.

2.4 Geographical, Political and Socio-Cultural Study of Bhopal:

Bhopal was formerly a part of the Bhopal princely state, which was founded in 1723 CE by Dōst Moḥ ammad Khan, an Afghan adventurer, and was the second largest Muslim principality of the British Empire. www.britannica.com In present times, Bhopal is a district in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and was formed in the year 1972 CE. The headquarters of the district is Bhopal which is also the capital of the state. www.bhopal.nic.in

Bhopal was constituted as a municipality in 1903 CE. At India's independence in 1947 CE, it remained a separate province until 1949 CE, when it acceded to India. In 1952 CE the nawab's absolute rule was abolished, and a chief commissioner's state was established. It merged with Madhya Pradesh in 1956 CE, and Bhopal replaced Nagpur as the state capital. www.britannica.com

Situated in the heart of Madhya Pradesh, the historical city of Bhopal is deservedly the capital of the state. Besides the excellent location of Bhopal, the city is blessed with beautiful landscapes, busy commercial centers, peaceful residential areas and historical monuments. The geographical location of Bhopal City lies within North Latitude 23°16' and East Longitude 77°36'. The location of Bhopal falls in the northwestern portion of Madhya Pradesh. If seen in the Map of India, Bhopal occupies the central most region of the country. The city of Bhopal shares its border with two large and picturesque lakes. Like few other big cities of the country, Bhopal is also divided into two parts - the old city and the new one. The Old Bhopal is situated in the northern part of the city, while the southern part is called the New Bhopal. The two lakes of Bhopal City are referred to as the Upper and the Lower Lakes. Due to its central location, Bhopal is very easily approachable from all parts of the state and country as well. <https://www.mapsofindia.com/bhopal/>



Figure 2.3 Location of Bhopal state in India before accession.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhopal_State_%281949%E2%80%931956%29#/media/File:Bhopal_in_India_\(1951\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhopal_State_%281949%E2%80%931956%29#/media/File:Bhopal_in_India_(1951).svg)

Bhopal city has a hilly terrain and it lies on the edge of the Malwa plateau. Three major rivers, *Kaliyasot*, *Halali* and *Betwa* flow through Bhopal city and it enjoys a sub-tropical monsoon climate. The weather is ambient throughout the year, neither extreme cold in winters nor very hot during summers. The Tropic of Cancer traverses through the North of the Bhopal region. The normal temperature varies between fifty degrees Fahrenheit and one hundred and four degrees Fahrenheit. The month of May has the highest recorded temperature (forty degrees Fahrenheit approximately), while the month of February has the lowest (ten degrees Fahrenheit). The rainfall occurs predominantly during July and August with average annual rainfall being around

twelve hundred millimeters. Bhopal enjoys all three seasons that are winter, summer and rainy seasons which roughly correspond to November-February, March-May and June-September. There is a transition from rainy to cold weather during the month of October. www.bhopal.nic.in

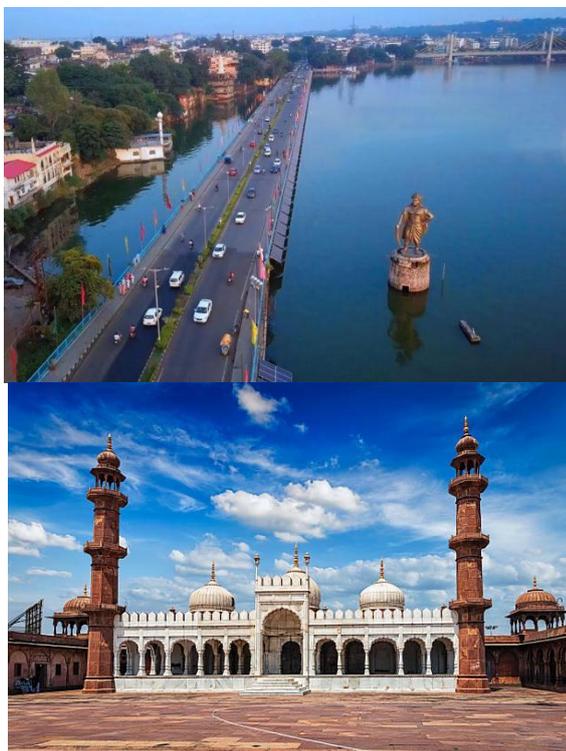


Plate 2. Present day Bhopal (source: <https://www.treebo.com/> and <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/bhopal>)

Its population according to the two thousand and eleven census is seventeen lakhs and ninety six thousand approximately and is expected to cross thirty lakhs by the year two thousand and forty one. There were seventy wards and fourteen zones for administrative purposes in Bhopal Municipal Corporation (<https://bhopal.nic.in/en/public-utility/bhopal-municipal-corporation/>) which have now increased to eighty five wards and nineteen zones with an increase in the total area to four hundred and ten sq. km. Approximately fourteen percent of the population of the city belongs to Schedule Caste whereas around three percent belongs to Schedule Tribe. Almost six and a half lakhs slum dwellers inhabit Bhopal which make up for around thirty six percent of the total population of the city .The sex-ratio in Bhopal city is nine hundred and twenty one females per one thousand males whereas the state average is nine hundred and thirty one females per thousand

males and national average is nine hundred and forty females per one thousand males (<https://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/311-bhopal.html>). Bhopal occupies a third place in the state in terms of literacy rate which is around eighty percent for the Bhopal district. The female literacy rate in Bhopal district is around seventy five percent and the female work participation of the district stands at around twenty percent of the total female population. The female population of Bhopal city is approximately nine and a half lakhs while the male population is estimated to be around nine lakhs. www.bhopal.nic.in

The major industries of Bhopal include cotton and flour milling, cloth weaving and painting and also the manufacture of transformers, switch gears, traction motors, and other heavy electrical equipment as well as matches, sealing wax and sporting goods.

Bhopal is the home of many universities and the highest number (Fifteen) of Institutions of National Importance. The institutes and universities headquartered in the city include Gandhi Medical College, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, Barkatullah University, Indian Institute of Forest Management, National Institute of Design, National Institute of Fashion Technology, School of Planning and Architecture. www.britannica.com

The city is well connected to other parts of the country with rail, road and air transport. The only airport of the city is the *Raja Bhoj* International Airport which is located near the suburb of *Bairagad* in MP.

Four illustrious and progressive women rulers ruled Bhopal in succession from the year eighteen hundred and nineteen to eighteen hundred and twenty six. In an age where polity was completely male centric, the Bhopal *Begums*, their gender notwithstanding, were granted the male indigenous elite appellation, *Nawab*, by the British. The *Begums*, on their part, amply demonstrated that they were worthy of this distinction as their visionary approach to governance ushered economic and social development in the state and transformed the capital, Bhopal, into a culturally vibrant city. The British conferred upon the *Begums* of Bhopal with the elite title of *Nawab*, notwithstanding their gender, in an era of polity that was entirely male dominated. The *Begums*, for their part, more than proved they deserved this title, since their innovative style of governance brought about social and economic advancement in the

state and in turn made Bhopal, the capital, a thriving center of culture **Khan, S.M.2004.**

Table 2. 1 The four illustrious Begums of Bhopal

Qudsiya Begum	1819-1837	She was a spirited figure in history and a force to be reckoned with. Some of the most intrepid things she did include playing mind games with rivals to protect her estate while breaking the barriers of being a Muslim woman.
Sikander Jahan	1847-1868	Sikandar Begum was trained in martial arts, knew how to play polo and sway swords. She was shaped to survive in a man's world without letting patriarchy subdue her prowess. She proved to be highly competent, landing her the role of the commander of the army, where she inspected district offices. She also had a humanitarian side, which drove her to personally visit local villages and promote the welfare of her folk.
Shah Jehan	1868-1901	Shah Jahan Begum was a feminist who uplifted culture and art during the Begum rule in Bhopal. She also wrote the very popular <i>Tahzib un-Niswan wa Tarbiyat ul-Insan</i> , a reformist manual that is regarded as the first encyclopedia that highlighted women's contributions and their status in Islam.
Sultan Jehan	1901-1926	Begum Sultan Jehan, the last ruling Begum of Bhopal State, oversaw a successful administration. She was a reformist at heart who developed several educational institutions to drive female tutoring.

2.4.1 Advent and Development of *Zardozi* in Bhopal:

Rastogi, J. 2021 opined that the decorative arts and crafts in India reached an unparalleled peak under the patronage bestowed by the various ruling clans, particularly the mughals, the rajputs and the nawabs of Deccan.

Bhandari, V. 2005 describing the development of various metal embroideries mainly *zardozi* and *aari* has stated that the craft has mostly survived in the places which had ties or association with provincial Muslim and Rajput rulers in some way as they were the patrons of these crafts.

Dikshit, P.K. 1965 in a census on *zari* embroidery and *batwa*-making of Bhopal has reported that the initiation of *zardozi* embroidery in Bhopal could be traced back to the rule of Nawab Shahjehan Begum. It is cited further in the study that numerous craftsmen and embroiderers from Kanpur, Lucknow and Delhi were invited by her as she was a zealous patron of this craft. The migrant craftsmen were bestowed with free housing, steady remuneration as well as state patronage.

The ruling clans of Deccan (of which the present day Bhopal and Madhya Pradesh were a part) were passionate for grandeur and magnificence (**Ayachit, S. 2021**). This may be the cause of their inclination and patronage to *zari* work. The royal family members could be seen wearing exquisite *zari* robes in portraits and paintings. The state museums particularly those in Bhopal, Gwalior and Indore showcase the exquisitely *zari* embroidered royal attires. The pivot of *zari* embroidery was Bhopal, the present capital city of Madhya Pradesh, which was renowned for being a historic cultural and architectural haven. *Zardozi* embroidery has been practiced here for about three hundred years now with Gwalior and Indore being its other centres in addition to Bhopal. It is believed that the craft came from western India.



Plate 2. 1 Her Highness Begum Sikander Jehan in all her finery and robes.

<https://archive.org/details/indiaitsnativepr00rousoft/page/458/mode/2up>

The Begums of Bhopal were great patrons of art, architecture and crafts. **Nawab Shah Jahan Begum** wrote the first women's encyclopedia in India. *Tahzib un-Niswan Tarbiyat ul-Insan* (The Reform of Women and the Cultivation of) and was also instrumental in founding numerous educational institutions. She was the founding and the only female (till date) Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University.

Nawab Sahajahan Begum, the third begum of Bhopal, who ruled Bhopal from 1868 to 1901 A.D., is credited with establishing and advancing the art of *zardozi* in the city. Following Aurangzeb's death and the subsequent downfall of the Mughal empire the artisan fled the courts of Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur. During that period, the Begum welcomed these craftsmen to Bhopal, provided them with state facilities and established numerous *zardozi* training centres under their supervision. Today *zardozi* is practiced widely in Bhopal by artisans from their homes and is passed down from generation to generation. This is largely attributed to her efforts and those of her daughter, Sultan Jahan Begum, who followed her.

http://www.mphandicrafts.com/Modules/booking/frm_KnowAbout.aspx

It's widely accepted that the Begums of Bhopal greatly aided the development of the age-old elaborate *zardozi* embroidery technique by inspiring their subjects and organising its training for them. They themselves carried *batuas* for keeping cash, cloves, and other personal items. Additionally, the royal attires and paraphernalia were also ornamented with exquisite *zardozi* embroidery on luxurious textiles. (**Zari Zardozi - An Art that Speaks Richness**<https://www.mptourism.com/zari-zardozi.html>)

Encouraged during the rule of Her Highness Nawab Shah Jahan Begum, Bhopal, the *zardozi* embroidery technique was also introduced as one of the subjects in the curriculum for ladies (**Bhopal's Royal Zari-Zardozi Art: Origin, Making And More!**<https://curlytales.com/bhopals-royal-zari-zardozi-art-origin-making-and-more/>). Mention of it being taught in schools to girls from 1891 CE onwards is also done in state gazetteer and memoirs (**Shrivastav, P.N. and Guru, S.D.1989**). Nawab Sikander Begum, in 1853 CE, was instrumental in opening up of a school where ladies of Bhopal were given training in various handicrafts including embroidery. This was specially done to give a decent source of livelihood to women who were restricted to their households due to the *purdah* system (**Ali, A. 1981**). Bhopal became famous all over the country for its excellent quality of *zari* products and *batuas*. These were also excellent foreign exchange earners. **Shrivastav, P.N. and Guru, S.D. 1989**



Plate 2.2 A detailed sketch of a Muslim lady and her attire. (source: <https://archive.org/details/indiaitsnativepr00rousuoft/page/458/mode/2up>)

2.4.2 Traditional Products, Motifs and Designs of Zardozi Embroidery of Bhopal:

Both *zari* work and *zardozi* embroidery was done in Bhopal. It could be because of this fact that a collective term *zari-zardozi* might have come into usage depicting both *zari/aari* embroidery done only with threads and the heavier *zardozi* embroidery employing both metallic threads as well as decorative material.

Traditionally the *zari* work was carried out by using pure silver wire coated with real gold, while the *zardozi* work was done with the use of *salma*, *sitara*, crinkled *badla* and semi-precious stones apart from threads <https://curlytales.com/bhopals-royal-zari-zardozi-art-origin-making-and-more/>.

Zardozi is embroidered on various types of costumes, furnishings and other items of formal and casual use, to make them attractive. Traditionally, *zardozi* embroidery was done on garments like *saree*, *lehenga*, *sherwani*, *kurta* etc. and shoes. But presently, apart from these garments, *zardozi* embroidery is done on other accessories like table cover, cushion cover, wall hanging, bed sheets, pillow cover, hand bag, curtain etc **Rastogi, J., 2021.**

Dixit, P.K., 1965 in a study on *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal has reported that the original *zari* work took inspiration from Persian motifs in floral pattern. However he did report the change in preference in peoples' taste and their interest in birds, animals and motifs inspired from monuments such as Sanchi *stupa*, *Ashoka* pillar. In the similar study he has reported about the introduction of patterns found in tribal houses too.

Traditional *zardozi* motifs included naturalistic motifs, mostly floras such as buds, flowers, leaves, creepers and geometric motifs such as diamonds arranged in the form of borders, lattice and dispersed motifs. The *zardozi* motifs in contemporary times include animal motifs such as dancing peacocks, parrots and other birds too.

In Bhopal however, the motifs are still derived from flora and fauna. Birds, animals and human motifs are rarely seen in local *zardozi* products.

The traditional *zardozi* embroidery is characterized by glittering and heavily encrusted gold thread work. **Rastogi, J. (2021)** In Bhopal also the work is primarily very heavy

and golden colour is a preferred choice though nowadays metallic threads in several colour variations are also available.

Naik, S.D. 1996 has reported that the metal embroidery is regionally famous in various parts and articles prepared are also unique by themselves. Bhopal is specialized in making small fancy bags, purses, Lucknow is known for both *zardozi* and *kamdani*, Surat for *Karchobi* work, Delhi for *chappals* and shoes and Agra for evening bags.

The photographs, portraits, paintings and royal paraphernalia belonging to the royal family of Bhopal and dating back to the period of Bhopal State exhibit extensive use of *zardozi* embroidery in costumes, furnishings, accessories and precious gifts. Royal family members and nobles can be seen dressed up in ornate and richly embroidered costumes with *zardozi* embroidery executed with gold threads and precious stones. Even the elephants, the horses and camels used during the processions and ceremonies could be seen covered with *zardozi* embroidered saddles.

Delicate *zardozi* work on opulent fabrics was also used for making the dresses worn by the *Begums* of Bhopal. <https://www.goheritagerun.com/zari-work-zardozi-craft-of-bhopal/>.

Opulent attires with intricately embroidered *zari-zardozi* work in gold was a prized possession of *Begums* of Bhopal which they adorned with great pride. The royal costumes and other garments were embroidered with delicate and sophisticated designs whereas the *masnads* (floor coverings), *kanats* (side wall of the tents), *jhoor* (elephant covers) and decorative panels were ornamented with heavy embroidery work. *Zardozi* adorned *batuas* were also made use of to carry the personal belongings by the *Begums* of Bhopal. These are popular even today and called *bhopali batuas*. <https://nmk.world/bhopals-royal-zari-zardozi-art-origin-making-and-more-170443/>

Practiced in regions like Bhopal, Gwalior, and Indore, *zari* work is a traditional craft of the state that involves a specific style of delicate needlework using metallic threads. The beautiful and innate appeal of *zari* art remains intact, despite its origins dating back almost 300 years. *Zari* embroidery was once employed to adorn traditional objects, but it now has a place in the modern market. The latest fashion includes

elaborately embroidered gowns, purses, bags, cushions, and *juties* (shoes).

<https://www.mptourandtravels.com/arts-and-crafts-of-madhya-pradesh.html>

Achkans, caps, *Kurtas*, *farshi pajamas*, *dupattas*, caps, *juties* of royal family members were regularly embellished with *zardozi*. *Batuas*, *potlis*, *zuzdans* (book covers), *paandan* covers, *kanhghadan* (comb covers) were also embellished with *zardozi*.

A common practice during those days was to constantly update the garments by retaining the main body of embroidery and extracting and reusing the pure silver and gold metallic element on fresh fabric. (Kumar, R. 2006)

The size, intricacy of the embroidery and type of product determines the price of *zardozi* embroidered products. <https://www.dsource.in/resource/zari-zardozi-embroidery-bhopal-madhya-pradesh/products>

2.4.3 *Batuas* of Bhopal, Most Favourite Creative Expression of the Artisans of Bhopal:

Batua or *batwa* is a small bag made of cloth, containing a few compartments inside. It has string fasteners. Most commonly it has three or four compartments and accordingly it is called a *teen khana* or *char khana batua*. Dixit, P.K., 1965

The *Begums* of Bhopal used to carry *batuas* or purses adorned with *zardozi* to keep their personal belongings. These traditional *zardozi* pouches are popular till date and even called *Bhopali batuas*. <https://curlytales.com/bhopals-royal-zari-zardozi-art-origin-making-and-more/>



Plate 2.3 a A traditional *zardozi batua* with *surahi* or decorative tassels and various accessories and traditional batuas from the personal collection of a royal family member of Bhopal

Even today the city is known for its exquisite batuas and tea cosies. These are bought as souvenirs by the tourists visiting the city.



Plate 2.4 The *bhopali batuas* and teacosies available in the local markets of Bhopal. (source: <https://gaatha.org/Craft-of-India/study-zari-zardosi-craft-bhopal/>)

2.5 Present Status and Trade Practices in Zardozi Embroidery and Craft:

After 1947, the artisans lost royal patronage and hence turned to the common people or the masses. However these new customers found *zardozi* unaffordable due to high costs of silk, gold, silver thread and precious stones. This compelled the artisans to shift to ordinary fabrics such as cotton and synthetic threads (Jafri, S. S. 2017).

Bhatia, R. 2005 in a study titled "A study on the present status of *zardozi* craft of selected places in India and its market trends" reported that the *zardozi* craft was once limited to the wealthy class and survived only through their patronage. However, in the modern day, the craft is commercialized and is now a significant commodity in the fashion market. It has now reached a wider audience regardless of age, gender, or social class. She further opined that the spread of *zardozi* embroidery has increased compared to earlier times. Though an increased demand was reported, the workmanship in the products was reported to be suffered which was attributed to the use of cheap materials and quick embroidery techniques.

Vandana Bhandari, 2005 in her study opined that it is rarer to find gold and silver worked textiles in their pure form. It's also difficult to find intricate handwork designs that were the characteristic of the metal thread embroidery in its heyday.

Rastogi, J. 2021 reported that the *zardozi* industry works usually on a three-tier basis in which the power is majorly centred in the hands of the rich manufacturers, retailers

and exporters. The manufacturers (who are also the exporters usually) and the traders are at the top of the system and control the finance for the production. They supply the required raw materials like the fabrics and yardages on which the embroidery work is to be executed in specific designs as per the client demands. Each manufacturer or trader is associated with a *karkhanedar* or a contractor who gets the work accomplished by the artisans. The *karkhanedars* form the second tier and are also the commission agents. Mostly these are also the artisans. The practicing *karigars* do the actual embroidery work and form the third or the bottom most tier. The professional *karigars* involved in *zardozi* work are most commonly men which can be attributed to the traditional working of this handicraft sector. The embroidery material and fabrics are usually provided to the artisans by the retailers and traders through the *karkhanedars*. The raw material may or may not be made locally. Most of the time it comes from Surat, Mumbai and even Tamil Nadu. With time the industry has undergone several transformations and imitation materials such as alloys of gold and silver and other metals, coloured stones, pearls and supplementary iridescent materials have brought down this art of pure metal work to a considerable extent.

While new entrepreneurs work to break down obstacles and turn their trade into a successful endeavour, "zari zardozi" craftspeople face challenges such as limited market space, low earnings, and lack of recognition. <https://www.outlookindia.com>

2.5.1 Present Status of *Zardozi* Embroidery Artisans in Bhopal:

An artisan employs simple and easily adaptable technology and works with manpower at a nominal cost. Artisans live in clusters called *mohallas* in vernacular language and their skill is passed on as a hereditary business from father to son. They are self employed people and the entire family is dependent on the same trade. They mostly work through their homes. They are experts in their own skill but are not very articulate due to lack of formal education (**Hungund, S. M. 2002**).

Artisans are vital to our society as they enhance the aesthetics in our life by creating beauty in everyday life with their handcrafted creations. They also contribute significantly to our national economy. The products made by Indian artisans have carved a niche worldwide. Artisans are the people who create utilitarian or aesthetic objects. The term "artisan" refers to skilled persons working with simple hand tools or

only hands to make products. They mainly employ locally available raw material and make handcrafted objects without using heavy machinery (**Shah, A. 2017**).

Traditional craftsmen have been worst affected by globalization, increasing corporatization of their local economy and handcrafted production techniques **Sankaran, P.N. (2018)**.

The above description implies that artisans contribute a lot to sustainability goals and form an important part of the sustainable value chain. However, The impact of modernisation and neoliberalisation has not percolated down to the unorganised sector of artisans. A majority of these artisans have continued to work with traditional tools and technology which has led to adverse consequences on the artisans themselves as well as on the rural economy. The artisanal products are not competitive as compared to the machine made products. Thus, over the years, the artisans' economic status has been declining which has become a major reason for the discontinuation of the ancestral skills by a large number of craftspersons (**Hungund, S. M. 2002**)

As reported by CNN and BBC the loss of traditional crafts and artisans has become a global issue (**Alleyne, 2020; Gorvett, 2021**).

These days, a *zardozi karigar* is more of a wage earner than a craftsman. His identity and role are no longer as important as they once were. However, the karigars have adjusted to the shifting consumer needs, fashions, and marketplaces (**Bhatia, R. 2005**).

Bhopal has a large population of traditional artisans who have been creating beautiful embroideries without recognition and markets. These mostly depend on local market demand and hence lack regular incomes.

There are many shops in the old city of Bhopal that make and sell exquisite pieces made with *zari* embroidery. <https://www.mptourism.com/zari-zardozi.html>

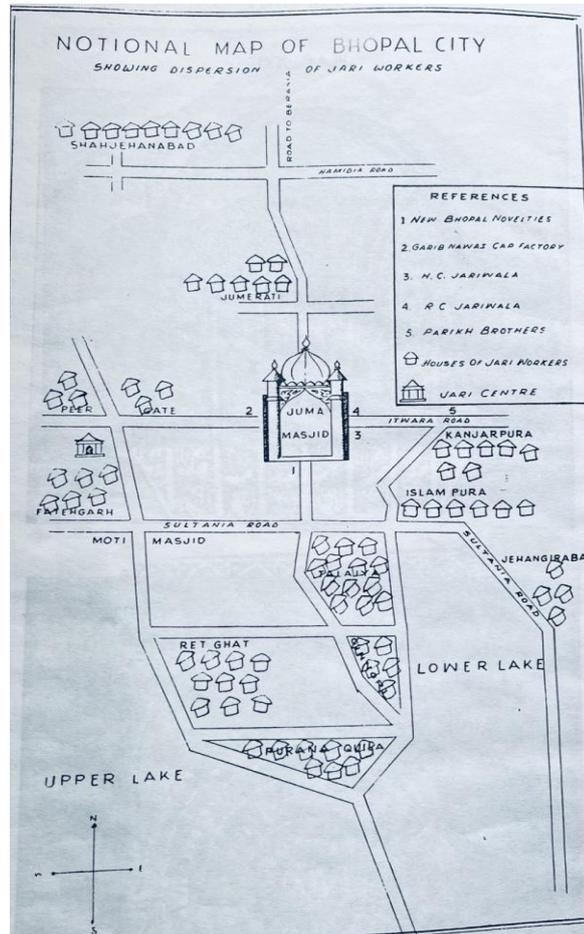


Plate 2. A 1964 notional map showing distribution of *zardozi* artisans in Bhopal which was mainly concentrated in Old Bhopal.

An article on <https://gaatha.org/> about *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal states that the *zardozi* embroidery craft is still practiced in its traditional and authentic way in Bhopal. The narrow alleys of the old town of Bhopal house the *zardozi* workshops and artisans. The craftsmen presently pursuing this craft have forayed into the craft not merely as ancestral occupation but also because it's a source of income for them. The artisans mostly procure the orders through middlemen who in turn provide the finished goods to bigger retailers and traders and thus the artisans don't get the money they deserve. Artisans are dissatisfied with the wages they receive despite working hard and some of them aren't even able to sustain their families. Most of the artisans suffer from medical conditions like back pain, eye strain and neck pain due to prolonged working hours. Belonging to rural areas or being illiterate a majority of artisans are unaware about the government schemes and policies for them. Thus often, the benefits of these schemes don't even reach these artisans. This craft also faces

decline due to decreased demand. <https://gaatha.org/Craft-of-India/study-zari-zardosi-craft-bhopal/>

Women artisans are also working in the city on *zari-zardozi* embroidery and trying to preserve the heritage of Bhopal. These women artisans learnt the craft of *zardozi* embroidery from their ancestors and others during Covid lockdown and through government training programmes. Some women artisans have also trained other women. Women are learning this craft to achieve financial independence. The state government has also declared *zari-zardozi* under One District One Product (ODOP) initiative in 2020. <https://www.freepressjournal.in/bhopal/madhya-pradesh-bhopals-heritage-safe-in-nimble-fingers-of-women-artisans>

As per numerous reports in newspapers growing employment opportunities in the service industry, lack of sustainable livelihood in *zardozi* embroidery, poor payment, exploitation and inability of taking advantages from government schemes have resulted in a dwindling number of traditional *zardozi* embroiderers. A number of organizations, both government and private, have been imparting training in various aspects of *zardozi* embroidery in Bhopal **Agrawal, S. (2023)**.

There are training programmes of long duration as well as short duration ranging from skill development to capacity building to empowerment and so on and so forth. Training programmes like *USTTAD* (Up-gradation of Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts through Institutions) , *SAMARTH* (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector) , *SFURTI* (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Textile Industries) are being implemented along with facilities to artisans such as *MUDRA* loan, artisan card, health insurance, buyer seller meets to name a few <https://handicrafts.nic.in> .

Many stakeholders such as NGOs, SHGs and various design institutions have been working alongside the government to provide employment and recognition to the *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal. www.goheritagerun.com However the desired results are still to be achieved.

There is nominal documentation about the *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal in terms of its origin, development and its cultural aspect. At the same time, the craft is undergoing a lot of transition in terms of design, material and end-product due to

changes in lifestyle and access to social media, entry of new artisans owing to a spurt of training programs and design interventions. All the above have made it imperative to document this craft, which is also linked to the intangible cultural heritage of the city as well as the community identity of its artisans. This has to be done before the purity and specialty of the craft is not only endangered but it gets evolved to the extent that it loses its identity. The central as well as state government has initiated many steps like luxury brand creation, GI tag, training and capacity building for the *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal. Despite numerous efforts the desired results are far from achieved and artisans are not able to fully utilize these welfare measures owing to a variety of reasons which range from simple ignorance to more complex issues such as rigidity on part of artisans, gaps in policy implementation of government bodies, presence of middlemen etc.

2.5.2 Feminization of the Craft and Home Based Women Artisans:

Home based work is a growing global phenomenon, with over hundred million people working from their homes in countries both rich and poor (**Sinha, 2006**). In textile especially, the advantage of women's labor with limited mobility was fully exploited. The women's work from home at very low wage was to the advantage of the embroideries. The traditional embroideries now have modern demand and global markets. Working from home has become a significant and growing part of the modern world economy. The products made for exports which are labor intensive are usually outsourced to home based workers (women) who sit at home and do the work (**Ahmed, S.E.2012**).

Jan, S. 2015 in a study reported that the number of women engaged in the *Kashmiri* handicraft sector vis-a-vis men is not available though the State Directorate of Handicrafts did carry an overall estimation of the artisans involved in the handicraft industry. In addition to this a number of artisans, particularly women have adopted it as a home based work but it's difficult to assess their count.

It was reported by the **National Commission on Labor (2002)** that ninety five percent of the total women workers fall in the unorganized sector. This unrecognized work puts women workers in a very vulnerable position as the unorganized work lacks security and is characterized by irregular and meager wages, lack of social

security or any access to institutional finance. As a result there is a burden of debt and borrowing at high rates from informal sources.

Carrol, 1983 revealed that some of the main factors contributing to Muslim women's backwardness and disempowerment are extreme poverty, rising illiteracy, insecurity, domestic abuse and deprivation from welfare programs.

Akhter, F. 2019 in a study on educated Muslim women and social media reported that most of the respondents that is about three fourths of the respondents feel uncomfortable and insecure in using social media.

Home based artisans produce embroidered articles from the confinement of their homes. Some of these are self-employed while some are subcontracted. Home-based artisans, mostly women, lack basic infrastructure services in their homes.

Wilkinson-Weber, C. M. (2004) in a study on the *chikan* embroidery implied that the muslim women artisans' peculiarities and conditions are utilized as an aid to boost the demand of *chikankari* products by creating narratives around tradition, heritage and women embroiderers. The *chikan* embroidery is widely depicted as a leisure activity and largely employs the poor, Muslim women workers on a piece rate basis. It is further opined in the study that though a large number of women artisans are employed in the handicraft industry, but often the communication and discourses about women and crafts often either ignore their contributions or marginalize their efforts. It is further argued in the study that despite handicraft development projects being favored by various government and non government agencies, the artisans are not benefited due to widely prevalent exploitation. Overall, very little critical analysis of women's handicrafts is available.

Thus it can also be corroborated that manufacturers and retailers employing home based women artisans and artisans from marginalized sections benefit from their sub optimal conditions and use it to generate more business rather than helping them.



Plate 2. Women zardozi artisans of Bhopal

(source: <https://gaatha.org/Craft-of-India/study-zari-zardosi-craft-bhopal/>)

Ahmed, S.E. 2012 in her study on Women in the unorganised sector_ a study of women embroiderers in Aligarh reported that the home based women artisans themselves do not regard themselves as workers in true sense and perceive their work as simply a leisure time activity that also fetches some income.

Jhabvala & Tate 1996 revealed that when *SEWA*, Ahmedabad, first began their survey on home based women artisans across different crafts and skills the respondent expressed their need for more work despite already laboring for around sixteen hours a day.

Sudarshan et. al. 2007 in a study opined that the women artisans themselves consider their earnings supplementary despite their sizable contributions. The study further quotes around six hundred rural and urban home based artisans across three sectors in India and revealed the contribution of rural artisans to be around thirty five percent and that of urban women artisans to be around thirty six percent in their respective household incomes.

2.5.3 Issues and Challenges of the Artisans:

Several reports and studies and (**Shah, A, 2017; Dholakia, K. 2015;**) in the recent past have reported about the plight of artisans and craftspersons. Years of colonization followed by rapid commercialization and industrialisation could not be taken well by the artisans owing to their socio-cultural backgrounds. As a result, despite numerous welfare and skilling programmes most of the artisan population has not achieved satisfactory progress.

Rastogi, J. 2021 in her study on 'Zardozi embroidery, its prospects and problems faced by craft persons in Lucknow district' reported that *zardozi* work is done on various types of embroidery frames, but mainly on a particular type of wooden frame, called *adda*. To set up the frame, adequate space or a minimum 10X12 feet of room is required, depending upon the size of frame. Like chikankari and other embroideries, this cannot be done easily by sitting anywhere. In this work, artisans sit at the *adda* for eight hours continuously, which could be extremely difficult for women. That is why this work is mainly done by men. *Kamdani* work is done on a common embroidery frame and can be done easily by sitting anywhere in the house. That is why *kamdani* work is done mostly by women and they also do stone work in their homes. The researcher further opined that the basic knowledge and skill of *zardozi* work, various tools and techniques is very essential for the craft persons involved in this work.

Shah, A. 2017 pointed out that only thirty five out of four hundred (8.75%) artisans have experience of selling their products in exhibitions or fairs among which twenty eight were 'Entrepreneurs'. The percentage of 'Entrepreneurs' selling their products through government agencies, self help groups/cooperatives and non-profit organizations was merely 3.36%, 5.04% and 6.72% respectively. Majority of artisans faced competition from the producers/sellers of machine made products, as two hundred and twenty six out of the total four hundred artisans (56.5%) replied affirmatively on being asked about competition from factory produced goods.

Systemic stresses on communities involved in textile crafts are ever present, but they are also often invisible (**Chatterjee, A. 2022**). However, studies demonstrate that craft producers in developing countries confront many obstacles that limit their performance. (**Kanungo et al., 2021; Shafi et al., 2021; Yadav et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018**) as cited in **Dalal, A. et al (2023)**

The pressures on traditional textile crafts in India have a long history, dating back to colonization and subsequently industrialization. Traditional textiles are also positioned in an unregulated and globalized market marred by the proliferation of fake craft products, and lack of support at the government level, which manifests as lack of data on the size of the crafts industry, and identification of crafts as an informal

economy that remains unsupported by financial and policy interventions (**Shrivastava, 2018 as cited in Chatterjee, A. 2022**).

Since independence, governments at central as well as state level have constantly undertaken initiatives and efforts through various schemes and programmes for the promotion of handicrafts by making provisions for technological, marketing, training and financial assistance to craftspersons, artisans and entrepreneurs. But still the outcomes have not been observed as they are set in the objectives of policies. Despite humongous efforts by numerous government and non-government institutions, the reality is not satisfactory. On the contrary, the focus on export markets and commercialization of crafts has resulted in encouraging quick production, standardized and low cost replication. Consequently the uniqueness of the craft forms and workmanship, artistic vision involved and hand-made quality has been negatively affected (**Shah, A. 2017**).

"Craft is bracketed as ethnic and decorative. Craftsmen and artisans are looked upon as skilled workers, not creative ones," says **Jayakar, D. (2019)**.

Ahmad, Y. 2020 conducted an exploratory research and tried to identify the problems in the *chikan* and *zardozi* handicraft industry of Lucknow. The researcher classified the problems faced by artisans into the major heads of material, process, training, government factors and Linkages with twenty one percent respondents citing material related issues as their biggest issue and sixteen percent of them saying process as the major issue they had. Largest percentage of respondents, twenty three percent, said that artisan training was their most crucial issue. Another twenty two percent of the respondents said that the biggest problem they faced was related to the government factors while some eighteen percent cited poor market linkages as their most pressing concern.

Various researches, reports and studies have brought out the issues and challenges of artisans, some of which are as follows:

2.5.3.i Long Working Hours and Ergonomics and Health Implications:

Several studies including (**Ojha,S. 2014; Bhatia,R. 2015; Ahmed, S. 2012**) show that most of the artisans in the *zardozi* embroidery sector were caught by serious diseases like asthma, gout, heart disease, diabetes, liver disease and kidney disease due to unergonomic working conditions. It was also found that some artisans have also quit this work due to arthritis and spine disease and have joined other occupation to earn their livelihood. Long working hours of twelve to fifteen hours a day were a cause of concern among zardozi artisans**Ojha, S. 2014. Ahmed, S. 2012** reported that traditional embroiderers from Aligarh showed health problems especially the embroiderers with more than five years of experience. This has also been reported by **Rastogi, J. 2021; Ojha, S. 2014**and several scholars.

Apart from the above listed issues and challenges, lack of market linkages, competition from cheaper machine made and imitation goods, fast fashion have been cited as factors challenging the existence of artisans ([Marketing rural products in India \(practicalactionpublishing.com\)](http://practicalactionpublishing.com)),

2.5.3.ii Unawareness Of Schemes:

Jain (2016) examined the impact of government policies on the marketing strategy of handicrafts, focusing on 220 artisans who participated in 12 trade fairs in Madhya Pradesh. The research found that artisans were unaware about most of the schemes and were particularly dissatisfied with various government schemes namely financial support, training, export, common facility services, buyer-seller meet, and promotion while respondents were comparatively satisfied with government support in marketing through fairs, craft bazaars, and exhibitions.

Shah,A. 2017 in a study revealed that most of the artisans in the study did not have much knowledge about handicraft exports and commented that the handicraft was globalized but not the artisans. It was further opined in the study that there should be a well-designed support system for the training and guidance of the artisans which would also facilitate the artisans in exporting their product themselves.

Kumar and Kumar (2018) argued that a majority of the artisans possessed almost no information about various government schemes for handicraft artisans.

The artisans during field studies revealed having very basic information and knowledge that too about selected schemes only. Most of the artisans reported lack of government programmes or campaigns for creating awareness about government programmes. **Bhat, A. H., and Azam, R. (2023).**

The government supports rural handicraft artisans, but most respondents are unaware of government schemes. Bigger and influential manufacturers and artisans often benefit from the government but do not share information which resulted in reduced unity and cooperation among artisans. Supporting organizations should spread awareness and organize awareness events in targeted rural areas. **Shah, A. 2017**

2.5.3.iii Dissatisfaction from Implementation of Government Schemes:

Shah, A. 2017 in a study on rural artisans reported that only a handful of artisans that is about five percent artisans were found satisfied about the government's role in handicrafts promotion while the majority of them, over ninety five percent expressed their dissatisfaction towards it. The study further opined that though the creation of policies and programmes may not always produce the desired results, there nonetheless is required an efficient structure for oversight and implementation of the same.

2.5.3.iv Unsatisfactory Payment and Socio-economic status:

Ojha S. 2014; Ahmad, Y. 2020; Ahmed, S. 2012 have reported about unsatisfactory wages earned by hand embroiderers despite working for long hours.

Indicating the poor remuneration in the *zardozi* embroidery sector **Rastogi, J. 2021** opines that *zardozi* was a handicraft that required a substantial level of skill and expertise on the part of the *karigars* (artisans) due to the very nature of this work. The craft persons were the backbone of the work and so they deserved sufficient wages, in fact, much higher than those of unskilled labourers.

2.5.3.v Rigidity in Artisans:

Shah, A. 2017 reported in a study that it was very difficult to change the mindset of artisans. Artisans sometimes show their rigidity to accept new things which could be observed in the implementation stage.

2.5.3.vi Poor Educational Levels:

Ojha, S. 2014 in her study on metal embroidery of Rajasthan revealed the unsatisfactory educational status of metal embroidery with a very miniscule percentage of zardozi artisans with college education.

Shah, A. 2017 in a study on ‘Sustainability of Rural Artisans’ reported alarmingly low levels of educational attainment in the handicraft artisans of selected areas of Gujarat and opined that steps should be taken to encourage artisans to enroll for further education.

2.5.3.vii Gender Issues:

Gender definitely mediates in the bargaining position of workers. **Wilkinson-Weber's (1997)** work on chikan embroiderers of Lucknow brings out how female embroiderers strongly identified themselves mainly in the roles of wives, mothers and housekeepers, which was also very advantageous for the employers who regarded them as 'leisure-time' embroiderers, inferior in quality and therefore not worthy of high wages.

2.5.3.viii Discontinuation of craft by younger generation:

Hashmi (2012) in his research studied the markets and the threats with the help of secondary data. He analyzed that the handicraft industry is an unorganized sector in spite of having a major role in the economy it suffers due to lack of education, low capital, low exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence, poor institutional framework.

Vijayagopalan (1993) conducted a study on “the economic status of handicraft artisans”, especially those who were engaged in export oriented crafts for National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). The study analyzed various aspects of artisan lives such as Family size, Educational status, Skills and training, Occupational structure of household, Assets and liabilities, Working environment, Productivity and production, Wages/income from handicrafts and so on and so forth. The findings revealed the aspirations of the wage earning artisans to be financially assisted to set up units, paid leaves, job security, better working conditions,

government initiatives for better wages and intensive training. The self employed artisans on the other hand named raw material at fair prices, Orientation courses in export documentation, Prompt payment by government departments and emporia after procurement, Industrial sheds and machinery leasing and intensive artisan training.

There are many issues in the handicraft sector that need urgent attention and concerted efforts.

2.6 Initiatives and Policy Measures for the Revival and Sustenance of the Zardozi Embroidery of Bhopal:

Although many concerted measures have been initiated by various government and non-government organisations for the development and wellbeing of the artisans but the impact of these have not yielded satisfactory results so far as the majority of the *zardozi* artisans are still struggling with various issues that has become a challenge for the continuity of the craft.

Adlakha, P.G. 2017 in a study on ‘Traditional Embroideries of Rajasthan and their Contemporary Perspective’ opined that Indian government is continuously making efforts for promotion of traditional arts and crafts through cluster development approach. This approach has been adopted by the ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises as a blueprint for capacity building and improving the competitiveness and productivity of micro and small enterprises as well as their collectives. This clustering of units also aids the service providers such as banks and credit agencies in providing services economically which in turn results in cost reduction and availability of the services to the needy entities.

2.6.1 Impact of Government and Non-Government Efforts for Handicraft Promotion:

Handicraft sector in India is decentralized and unorganised. It has its reach in rural, backward and inaccessible areas. Originally this sector was involved in production of utilitarian items but over the years it has seen a transition into a flourishing economic sector due to strong market demands. Not only does the sector hold huge potential for millions of existing artisans as well as an increasing number of new entrants in this sector it also contributes substantially towards employment generation and exports.

However it suffers due to its unorganized nature and several other additional constraints like lack of education, poor exposure to new technologies and market intelligence in artisans, inadequate finance and poor institutional framework (**handicrafts.nic.in n.d.**).

In line with the views expressed by different studies, several schemes and policies have been launched by the Indian Government to develop the handicraft business ecosystem in general and the BOP artisans in particular. However, studies have identified low awareness regarding these government schemes among Indian artisans (**Kanungo et al., 2021; Kumari, 2016; Yadav et al., 2022**)

Shah, A. 2017 in a study on artisans discovered that 62.5% artisans were unaware of the government role in promoting handicrafts whereas a little over one third of the artisans displayed only basic information that too only about limited schemes and programmes. Only negligible percentage of artisans that is about 4.8 percentage were satisfied of the government's role in preservation of handicrafts and majority of the artisans that is 95.2 percentage expressed their dissatisfaction towards this. The respondents further opined that there must be accountability and an effective monitoring system for ensuring effective implementation of various government schemes.

Although the main goals of these different programs are aimed at cultural preservation and employment creation in rural areas, they also fulfill the increasing needs of India's growing ethnic fashion industry and its need for authentic Indian traditional textiles (**Tara Mayer 2018**).

In a livelihood project involving handicrafts, it was reported that after agriculture, handicraft production was the largest source of handicraft generation in rural populations. It was also estimated that in 2013 about twelve million Indians were engaged in craft production which would grow further in 2013 and would reach up to around 18 million in 2022. Unofficial data sources indicated that around two hundred million craftspeople or artisans were dependent on the handicraft sector for their livelihoods. This indicated of a need for a conscientious mapping and understanding of this sector

[Handicraft Livelihood Creation Project • The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute \(harvard.edu\)](#)

Sen, Archana 2019 in a study on quality of life in Bhopal has opined that there is a strong need of drastic measures by the government in policy making. The study necessitates the need of stringent actions for population control, creation of employment opportunities as well as welfare measures to fulfill not only current needs but also long term initiatives for overall development and quality of life improvement. The study advocates an integrated approach for bringing a change in the lives of the people of Bhopal city.

2.7 Skill Development Training for Handicraft Artisans:

The skill development and vocational education training courses are considered as one of the crucial measures for poverty elimination, enhancing employability and aiding decent work for disadvantaged sections of the society. (**ILO, 2008; UNESCO, 2016; World Bank 1993**) as cited in **Dagar, P. (2022)**

People with training in crafts showed some reduction in poverty in rural India, where seasonal employment has aggravated poverty. Further the self-employment venture of trained candidates could provide employment opportunities to other people especially in the rural areas. This could help in poverty alleviation of the rural people (**Gangurde, V.B. 2012**).

Shah, A. 2017 in a study on sustainability of rural artisans reported that artisans expressed an interest in the training of innovative designs, modern tools and technology, market driven products as well as marketing of their products so that they could increase their earnings. Majority of the artisans, almost ninety four percent, were also interested in handicraft training and promotion programmes. However, the artisans also revealed that they would take the training only if it has the potential of improving their earnings, socioeconomic status and guarantees steady post training employment.

The major problem of training was classified into different heads such as the deteriorating quality of embroidery, embroidery centre management, skill development training and professionalism among the artisans. Maximum number of

entrepreneurs faced a problem with the embroidery centre management by 35% of entrepreneurs. The next issue faced was about the deteriorating quality of embroidery by 25% entrepreneurs. The need for skill development training was felt by 23% of the entrepreneurs. 17% entrepreneurs said that there was no professionalism among the artisan (**Ahmad, Y. 2020**).

Ojha, S. 2014 reported that training helps women artisans in developing a better understanding and appreciation of various marketing and sales aspects such as consumer needs, markets, products and pricing, quality, production scales through first hand exposure, personal interactions and hands on learning. Product development during training helps artisans in consistent communication and results in market linked products.

Chaudhary, J. and Verma, P. 2020 opined that the government should take more initiatives by providing subsidiaries and training programs for adoption of appropriate methods by artisans and building enhanced understanding about matters such as niche markets, products, processes, pricing, consumer needs and other related matters through first-hand exposure, hands-on training during and product development.

Saraf, A.R. 2008 conducted a research titled "Effect of Indian regional embroidery", which was an educational cum action oriented and developmental one, put forward various recommendations for making the training programme effective. The recommendations include making a thorough rapport with the villagers, meeting with key persons in the villages to overcome the various constraints in conducting training and before implementing the training. It was further recommended to select trainees on the basis of their needs and interests and the training be conducted in rural milieu, local language and dialect for effective interaction with the trainees. The study also recommends minimum transportation time so that it is comparatively easier for women to attend such training.

Vidhale, C.N. reported that the training programme should be need based or tailor made as per the requirements of the trainees as not only it results in effective achievement of desired outcomes but it also saves considerable amount of time and unnecessary problems in the long run. It is further cited in the study that such 'ready to use' training modules/packages can be made as per the desired cost and benefits; and

would also help in improving the quality of the training programme thereby helping prospective users.

2.7.1 Benefits of Skill Training:

Over generations, artisans have learned to make handicrafts and sell them to customers, preserving the local culture (**Ferreira *et al.*, 2019; Guha *et al.*, 2021**). This tradition of passing on skills is dying due to a lack of financial incentive and livelihood opportunity for Indian artisans, as per a study by the **Ministry of Textiles, Government of India (2010)**, causing the cultural heritage of crafts to fade (**Shafi *et al.*, 2021**). However skill training and capacity building could help these artisans.

Nisa, S. and Nisa, Z. 2020 in a study on ‘Assessment of Satisfaction Level of Women towards Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme: Evidence from Districts of Uttar Pradesh’ concluded that training programmes could help women artisans and entrepreneurs in skill building as well as socialization, confidence boosting and thus could result in overall satisfaction.

Ojha, S. 2014 in a study on metal embroideries of Rajasthan concluded that there was an improvement in the knowledge and skill of trainees after the technical training and it also enhanced their capabilities. The programme led to income generation and change in their living pattern.

Deo & Sarkar (2012) reported in their study that a training programme of ten days duration on innovative embroidery was imparted to twenty five trainees. The percentage of participants with a high level of knowledge, which was eight percent prior to the training, increased to thirty six percent after the training programme indicating the positive effects of training.

Upgrading oneself in a changing environment is the key to development and success. Every organisation has a learning process when it comes to training. The organization's objectives specify that training is necessary in the modern world. Its reach extends beyond working personnel to include business owners, self-employed individuals, entrepreneurs, start-ups, MSME, and numerous other industries. It makes everyone more capable of handling obstacles by enabling them to advance their knowledge, abilities, and thought processes. To improve performance, it is imperative

to pinpoint the precise area that needs training. Training efficiently develops the content for increased performance and is a part of strategic planning. (Natesh, S. and Koteswari, B. 2020)

2.7.2 Skill development Training for *Zardozi* Artisans of Bhopal:

Realizing the potential of handicrafts in sustainable employment generation the government has been taking a number of steps for the preservation and promotion of handicrafts. Several schemes and programmes ranging from welfare of the artisans to their skill building through training have been launched by the state government in collaboration with the central government.

A fortnight long training for young women of Bhopal was conducted by National Institute of Technology, Bhopal in the city. The training programme was aimed at preservation and promotion of minority crafts under the scheme called USTAAD (upgrading the skills and training in traditional arts/crafts development) (Ayub, J. 2018).

The USTTAD programme seeks to protect the traditional arts and crafts legacy of minority communities, develop the skills of craftspeople, and build links with international markets. <http://usttad.minorityaffairs.gov.in/>

“Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)” is one of the important programmes of the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India. Launched in the year 2005, the main aim of the programme is to oversee the traditional industries become more competitive, market-driven, productive, profitable and capable of providing sustainable employment for artisans of traditional industry and rural entrepreneurs. [Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries \(myscheme.gov.in\)](http://myscheme.gov.in)

Sathiya Welfare Society initiated embroidery and *zari-zardozi* craft projects in 2014-2015 to boost income and livelihoods. The Embroidery, *zardozi*, and stitching cluster in Karond (Bhopal) was identified as a model cluster by O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India in 2016 and supported with capacity building, skill development, and market development. The Ministry of MSME, GOI approved the SFURTI programme in October 2021 for this

cluster, which is led by the Council of Handicrafts Development Corporation as the Nodal Agency, the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) as the Technical Agency, and Khushali Artisan Handicraft Producer Company Ltd as the Implementing Agency,

[Khushali Artisan Handicraft Producer Company Limited – Bringing the best out of Our Artisans \(kahpcl.com\)](http://kahpcl.com)



Plate 2. Four weeks skill up-gradation training programme in progress in Bhopal
(source:<https://kahpcl.com/>)

Apart from this several government and non-government organisations have been taking skill development and capacity building programmes for *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal.

2.8 Gaps in Implementation of Welfare and Skill Development Schemes:

Williams, P. 2011 conducted a study on experiences of welfare state in an Indian Muslim *mohalla* and put forward that the thinking behind the programmes for the weaving community appeared to be sensitive to the needs of the weaving community

of Madanpura but brought only little perceived assistance as the weavers either lacked awareness of the schemes or had to go through long waiting periods to avail benefits.

Ghouse (2012) studying problems and strategies of Indian handicraft industry for the phenomena used primary as well as secondary data and concluded that handicraft is a productive sector which adds to Indian economy, the artisans come from weaker section, the products are having increasing demand in global market, the researcher recommended that government should take steps like collaboration for new technology, raw material at reasonable price, improving infrastructure, technology updating, training programs and boosting exports to uplift the sector.

Shah.A, 2017 in a study concluded that on being asked about weaknesses of handicraft sector maximum respondents cited “No information about exports” followed by lack of information about government aid/credit facilities” and “lack of organized identity” as the main issues.

Ministry of Textile, Government of India (2020) in a report highlighted that 80.7% of the Indian artisans belong to the poor and backward section of the society, thus belonging to the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) segment.

Phillipa Williams (2011) reported a distance between the theoretical concept of benefits from the welfare schemes and the extent of actual realization or redemption of these benefits. She further reported in her study the inaccessibility of the government schemes due to lack of knowledge in artisans about various initiatives and due to low participation as the artisans could not leave their work for extended periods due economic pressure. Thus the idea that government aid could not actually benefit them at all was prevalent in the artisans.

Shah, A., 2017 in a study on “Sustainability of Rural Artisans” concluded that “improper implementation of government schemes/programmes” followed by “less gain as compared to hard work” and “heavy irregularities in employment” were perceived as very strong challenges by the majority of the artisans.

Dagar, P. (2022) in her study titled “Vocational education and training for indigenous women in India: toward a participatory planning approach” explored the experiences of indigenous women in India with vocational education training and skill development courses and if the implemented courses could correspond to the aspirations and needs of these women. She concluded that there was limited research in India on indigenous women’s experiences with vocational education training.

2.9 Gap Analysis / Research Gap

The investigator during the course of review of literature came across extensive research on *zardozi* embroidery from the Indian states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and West Bengal. Bhopal, despite being a prominent historical *zardozi* center finds only a fleeting mention as one of the *zardozi* centers in the extant literature. Thus the investigator was inspired to bring forth the various aspects of *zardozi* embroidery as it is practiced in Bhopal.

Moreover in recent years the government has been trying to revive the *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal and has been taking initiatives such as training programmes, design development workshops, distribution of *zardozi* kits but the success of these programs has not been proportional to the measures taken up to uplift the craft. In fact the GI (geographical indication) tag for *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal is long due but the efforts have not been fruitful due to lack of authentic information on the craft.

While the thought behind the numerous welfare schemes and training programmes appears to be sensitive to the needs of the artisans, it seems that the programmes have so far brought little visible assistance to *zardozi* embroiderers of Bhopal specially the home based women artisans whose numbers have increased in the past few years.

This also indicates that there exists some gap between the formulation and implementation of policy measures. Thus it was deemed fit to undertake an exploratory study on *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal so that the required scholarly attention could be brought to the craft as there is a dearth of information on how the craft came to Bhopal, what was the kind of patronage it enjoyed and what is the present status of the craft. This would not only help in popularization of the craft but would also assist in preserving its purity and act as an aid for various policies and schemes by various government and private organizations.

An extensive study of the existing literature revealed a lack of comprehensive research on *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal that covers its various crucial aspects namely origin, development present status and the craft community involved in it. There has specially been a lack of scholarly attention that inquires the origin and development of Bhopal as a prominent *zardozi* center and its relation to city's cultural heritage. Moreover, the unsatisfactory and slow progress of the artisans and drifting of the younger generation led to closer study which revealed some points of concern. Therefore, based on the existing literature, the researcher came across some potential research gaps, the foremost among them being:

- nominal documentation about the *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal in terms of its origin, development, its socio-cultural and economic aspects
- absence of documentation of the motifs, material and techniques specific to *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal
- lack of scholarly studies that cover the socio-economic status, cultural identity and issues of the *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal in a holistic manner
- absence of GI tagging for the local *zardozi* products specially the *batua* of bhopal
- lack of explicit focus on the issues, challenges and needs of *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal
- lack of research on effectiveness of the welfare policies and their implementation.