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Cultural Documentation and Collection Development: Toda Tribes of Nilgiris

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Abstract

The documentation focuses on the art of Toda embroidery. This document can be divided into an initial ethnographic study and collection development. The first part of the paper starts with understanding the research methodology, followed by in-depth research on Tamil Nadu, its cultures, festivals, and art forms. It moves towards studying Nilgiri and the several tribes that reside within it. Among the different tribes living in Ootacamund and the surrounding areas of the Nilgiri hills, the focus is on the Toda tribes, their life, and their embroidery. The second half of the document, collection development, attempts to incorporate Toda embroidery and traditional fabric into a ready-to-wear clothing line. This is done by understanding the embroidery technique plus additional data from market research, wardrobe study, client study, and trend research, which is feasible for the upcoming season. This project also focuses on providing the people of this community with an opportunity to earn and, at the same time, showcase their work through the project.

Keywords: Nilgiri, Tribes of Nilgiri, Toda tribes, Toda embroidery

Introduction

India is a land of diverse cultures and art forms. Several of these historical art forms are being forgotten or losing value with time as the years pass. One such art is the Toda embroidery done by the Toda Tribes of the Nilgiris. Todas are a pre-Dravidian tribal community residing in the hilly regions of Nilgiri, Tamil Nadu, and especially around Ootacamund. There are about 2000 of these people now. They have their different customs, rituals, and language with no script. Todas are widely known because of their embroidery skills. The Toda embroidery done on their traditional garment is the identification factor for these tribes. It is a highly delicate and sophisticated embroidery done using wool on loosely-woven cotton fabric. The fabric structure is so as the embroidery technique involves counting of threads. The embroidery motifs are inspired by nature and their livelihood. These tribes are spread over the Nilgiri ranges in several settlements, and women of all these settlements know the embroidery, as the men focus on jobs for the daily economy.

Research Methodology

This craft documentation and collection development were done based on initial online research and consequent field visits to the settlements of the Toda tribal community. The information leading to the completion of the document was collected through field visits, one-on-one

interactions with the community members, and a comparison of these with other secondary or tertiary resources. Besides the ethnographic study, detailed research on the current trends and market research were done. With this data and the help of the local Toda artisans, we have created the definitive collection incorporating Toda embroidery.

Tamil Nadu

The state of Tamil Nadu is located in the southern part of India. The Indian Ocean bounds this state to the east and south and by the states of Andhra Pradesh to the north, Kerala to the west, and Karnataka to the northwest. It is known for its distinguished intricate historic style temple. Chennai is the capital city of Tamil Nadu, located in the northernmost area of Tamil Nadu[1].

Geography And Climate:

The geography of this state can be broadly classified as the eastern coast, which comprises the flatlands/plains region, and the hilly region in the west. The overall climate of Tamil Nadu can be stated as tropical, i.e., with an average monthly temperature of about 18C. The coldest months are January and December, while May and June are the year's hottest months and rainy days fall between October and December[1].

Culture and Festivals:

Tamil Nadu is a land filled with various traditions, cultures, festivals, and rituals. All religious, seasonal, and harvest festivals are celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm all over the state. Thai Pongal is one of the famous harvest festivals celebrated for four days (13th-16th) of January, and during Pongal, Jallikattu is another notable festival in Tamil Nadu along with Diwali, KarthigaiDeepam celebrated in Kartik months, and Chitirai[1].



Fig 1. Pongal



Fig 2. Jallikattu

Art Forms:

The list of art forms in Tamil Nadu is quite lengthy. Bharatanatyam, a classical dance of Tamil Nadu, is one of India's primary classical dance forms, and Karnatak music and South Indian classical music are both widely practised. Tanjore dolls and mural paintings are well-known arts of Tanjore, Tamil Nadu. Other important artforms include Puliaatam, Mayilaatam, Karagatam, Oyilaatam, Kavadiaatam, Devaraatam, etc[1].



Fig 3. Puliaatam



Fig 4. Kavadiaatam

Nilgiri Hills



Fig 5. Nilgiri hills

Geographical Significance:

There are three primary sections in the Nilgiris District: Ooty or Ootacamund, Kotagiri, and Coonoor. Coonoor is situated at a height of 1,502m from sea level, while on the other hand, Kotagiri is placed at an elevation of around 1,793 m from sea level. It has exceptional weather as the Doddabetta mountain ranges protect the areas from the severe effects of southwest monsoons[2].

The most notable hill station is Ooty or Ootacamund, situated around 2,240 m from the average sea level. It is home to dense forest ranges having shola trees and soft. This region is also home to several tribal groups such as Irulas, Todas, and Kurumbhas. These tribal communities still reside in these areas practising the same endemic ways but with changes in the past centuries.



Fig 6. Mountain areas of Ooty

Nilgiris Flora And Fauna:

Nilgiris is known for its endless green lands, waterfalls, tea plantation, gardens, and breathtaking viewpoints and is home to a wide range of flora and fauna. Nilgiris Biosphere reserves more than 3,700 plants, among which 200 are medicinal plants and 132 endemic plants (plants that grow only in a specific geographical area). The Nilgiris is also known as the blue mountains due to the blooming of the flower Neelkurunji which produces a purple-blue hue (blooms every 12 years).

The fauna of Nilgiris includes about 370 birds, 100 species of mammals, 31 amphibians, and 316 species of butterflies. Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, chital deer, gaur, dhole, golden jackal, Indian boar, Nilgiri tahr, Indian spotted chevrotain, Asian palm civet, sloth bear, four-horned antelope are some of the species found in Nilgiris[2].

Social And Culture Of Nilgiris:

The Nilgiris is home to many tribal groups. These tribal groups depend on each other for different goods and services (Trading). Each tribal group has its own beliefs and follows its traditions and customs, but most tribes follow Hinduism. The culture of Ooty is heavily influenced as there are a lot of migrants living in Ooty[3].

Tribes Of The Nilgiri Hills And Western Ghats

The Nilgiri Mountains house some tribal communities, such as the Toda, Badaga, Kota, and Kurumba. History says that these tribal groups have relied on each other for a long time for several kinds of services and merchandise in a highly complex network for trade. They are also associated with other groups such as Irulas, Pnias, Chettos, and Uralus. The Kota provided music for funeral services and works relating to thatching and wood, whereas the Badagas helped with artefact and food trades.



Fig 7. The tribes of Nilgiris

The Todas



Fig 8. The Toda Community

Todas are one of the tribes that live in the Nilgiris. The population of this tribe is about 2000 currently. The Todas live in 125 different settlements called "*mund*" in Nilgiris. Their language is called "*orlwash*" in their native language, and other people generally call it as Toda language. Toda language is a proto-Dravidian language and does not have a script. This community consists of 14 clans. All the people living in a settlement belong to one family, and they are considered to be related to each other as they have a common ancestor. One clan people may occupy more than one settlement, but everyone in a settlement belongs to one clan/community. The Toda tribes have a close connection with nature, and most of the people are involved in buffalo rearing. This tribe has adapted to various cultures, education, and technological changes. Though they are modernized to some extent, they still believe and follow their customs and rituals.

Traditional House and Temple:



Fig 9. Traditional Toda Temple

The traditional houses and temples of the Toda have a unique dome-shaped structure. They believe that their god has asked them to build their homes and temple similar to the shape of a rainbow. The entire house/temple is made using only natural materials. Stones are placed to form the front and back structures of the building. Bamboos are bent into a dome shape structure and are tied using ropes. Bamboos are used to frame the basic structure of the house. Dried grass was laid over the bamboo structure to cover and complete the look of the temple. After completing each stage of construction, like placing stones, arching the bamboo, and laying the grass, special prayers and rituals are done. After applying the grass over the structure, i.e., a grand ceremony called "*pulvasth*" is performed to complete the construction. Outside each temple, round sacred stones are placed. These rocks are brought from the holy river to the temple by their ancestors. Every *mund* has 1-2 temples. In earlier days, houses and temples were built similarly, but nowadays, the tribes have adopted modern ways of constructing their homes using bricks. The structure of the temples remains the same to date.



Fig 10. Sacred motifs on the entrance to the temple**Fig 11. The holy grass used for covering the temple roof****Fig 12. A modernized version of the Toda house**

Religion And Culture:

The Todas have about 1800 ancestor gods. Their religion is known as "*orl*" in their native language, which means "mankind." But in the official certificates of the tribes, they are stated as Hindus. The Todas believed "*urn*" as their ultimate god, and he had two daughters and two sons. One among his daughters is lord *Tökisy*, and Today believes that lord *Tökisy* created the sacred buffalos.

Today, many conventional Todas worship Hindu deities *Shiva*, *Mariamman*, and *Aiyappan* and take part in pilgrimages to Hindu sacred places. There are some Todas who believe in Christianity. This minor population of Christian Todas still follows the rituals and customs of their tribe.



Fig 13. A member praying at the temple

Greeting:

Greeting another Toda member is considered very important in the culture of the tribes. There are two types of greeting methods '*etherth*' and '*kolwerth*.' *Etherth* is greeting by word, and *Kolwerth* is greeting by kneeling. Todas have different greeting words for every clan. The greeting words are different for every member depending on how they are related. Toda also kneels before their elders to get their blessings, apart from greeting words. While getting a gift, the elder's toe touches the forehead of the person kneeling, and the fingers of the person kneeling touch the foot of the senior person.



Fig 14. Greeting

Priest:

Any male in the Toda community can become a priest once they reach adolescence. Every man of the Toda community must serve as a priest at least once in their lifetime.

To become a priest, a particular ritual is performed by the male. The male goes to the holy river and takes *Mahonia leschenaultii*, a torn plant, dips it in the river, sprinkles the water around his head, and chants mantras. After performing the rituals, the priest enters the temples, cleans the temple, and lights the lamp. He milks the buffalos. Once a person becomes a priest, he must follow the rules and regulations, such as he cannot go back to his home and stays in the temple till he serves as a priest. He should separately cook for himself. The priest should not touch anyone and vice-versa. Nobody is a permanent priest. In the olden days, the priest serves for three years – to 18 years, but nowadays, a male can serve as a priest for as long as they want (a few weeks, a few months, or a few years). A man can serve as a priest more than once or how many times they want to. If a man dies without acting as a priest, the torn plant is kept in the hands of his dead body and is considered shameful. The priest wears only shawls with black embroidery on them.

Festival:

1. *Uporth*: In the Early periods, this festival was celebrated three times a year (once every season). A pit is dug into the ground during this festival, and saltwater is poured. The buffalos are made to taste the salt, and the priest milks the buffalo. The leftover salt is mixed in buttermilk and served to the Toda people as prasad.

2. *Modhweth*- This is celebrated at Muthanadumund. During this festival, the Toda tribes from all munds come together to pray. They pray for their temple to gain more power. The women of the community are not allowed to go near the temple.



Fig 15. Modehweth

Rituals:

Marriage Rituals :

Members of the same clan are not supposed to marry each other as all the clan members have a common ancestor and are related (like brothers and sisters). They can marry different clans.

The Todas have a straightforward ritual for a couple to be declared husband and wife. The wife comes to the husband's home and lights a lamp. Then she gets a blessing from her mother-in-law and other elders. After this ritual, the couple is considered to be a married couple. During the wife's pregnancy, a grand tradition called the bow and arrow ceremony is celebrated.

Bow and arrow ceremony: This ceremony is done when a wife is 5-7 months pregnant on a new moon day. This ritual is usually performed in a forest. The bow and arrow ceremony is a clan confirmation ceremony, i.e., to confirm which clan the baby in the mother's womb will belong to. During this ceremony, the husband makes a bow and arrow using plants and offers them to his wife. Before receiving the bow and arrow, the wife asks the husband for the name of his clan bow. The husband says his clan bow name thrice before giving the bow and arrow to his wife.

The husband and the wife belong to a different clan. The baby born to a couple will belong to the father's clan.



Fig 16. Husband giving the clan bow to his wife during bow and arrow ceremony

Death Rituals:

A. If a husband dies, his wife is supposed to sew a purple-coloured flower to his *puthukuli* before cremation. The wife places the flower on the *puthukuli* of the husband and a small piece of cloth over the flower and sews it in all four corners. The wife does the process if the husband dies. The daughter-in-law does this ritual if the mother-in-law dies. In the olden days, this ritual was

followed, but nowadays, Todas do not keep the flower (as it is a rare flower) but make a stitch on the *puthukuli* of the dead person.

B. Before taking the dead person's corpse to the cemetery, men of the Toda community join hands and sing songs about the deceased person and his life. This is called "*owt*". They believe that the dead deceased's soul watches the people singing about him.

C. In the Cremation ground, before burning the corpse, people sing sorrowful songs.

D. In earlier days, Two funerals were usually conducted. Before the corpse, a handful of its hair is cut during the first funeral. During the second funeral hair of the dead person is burnt. The second funeral is conducted on the first new moon day after the first funeral.

E. In the olden days' buffalo were abandoned in the west direction in place of sacrificing. Buffalos are still, but few Toda tribes follow this custom.

Jobs And Economy:

During the olden days, men were the earning members of the family, and their main job was to raise buffalos. The number of buffalos showed how wealthy the family was, so the more buffalos one had, the higher their status. There wasn't much requirement for any other economic activity at this time as they got everything required for survival from nature itself. They mainly focused on connecting to nature and enjoying it. Later as income became vital for survival, they started giving ghee alone as trade. The milk or butter was considered more sacred, and ghee was obtained after the butter melted, making it less valuable religiously.

Following times they started selling household buffalo milk. The government made several changes to lands in Nilgiris, such as eucalyptus plantations which destroyed their grazing areas. In 1974 a scheme was introduced that subdivided the grounds to help the Toda cultivate.



Fig 17. Buffalo stable and grazing

There weren't any tools used to dig the soil in historical times. Instead, they wanted to respect the land that gave them life. In modern times, community people have become more civilized and have adapted to other professions such as agriculture, government jobs, medical sectors, etc. I sacrificed today Kids are also sent for schooling nowadays.



Fig 18. Toda women doing embroidery

Food Habits:

The Toda's are strictly vegetarian. Their food is made with naturally available items, mostly from buffalos they raise. They are simple food items; one dish is *Uduthwor* which is made of rice to which buttermilk is added; with some chutney and ghee to accompany. The dessert they prepare when a guest comes is rice boiled along with jaggery and ghee. They are made of millets and ghee, similar to ghee rice. *Ashukudi* is another dish prepared by first roasting the millets, then honey and jaggery are added to it and rolled like laddoo.

The traditional kitchen is unique for the Todas. Their utensils are made of brass. The male family members use big brass plates, while the women use smaller ones. After the use, the dishes are hung so that they don't touch each other.



Fig 19. Traditional kitchen (Bigger copper plates for men and smaller for women)

Dance And Music:

These are also an integral part of the Toda culture. Dancing is used to communicate happiness during significant festivals, and at the same time, it is performed during death rituals. Men and women take part in dancing, but it is done separately. Generally, men perform ceremonial dances. The men form a circle with everyone facing inward and holding each other's hands while dancing systematically, accompanied by a form of shouting how-how together consistently creating the rhythm. This is called, in general, *Orshth*.



Fig 20. Toda men dancing during a celebration

Women sing *Tok* songs, which tell stories about birds, rituals, milking of the buffalos, their sacred gods, or their life, and the ragas change according to emotions such as sadness or happiness. Each clan has a particular idol (*Kula daiwam*), and during any celebrations within that place, all the clan members come together to perform. The men form a circle around the deceased body for the death ceremony and pray. Then, during cremation, they sing about the dead and mourning songs.

Poohoori is a bamboo flute (*Kalmoongi*), *kojhar* plant *nagaswaram* (which creates the music) that they make themselves and is the only musical instrument Toda use. It has five holes that will mimic sounds from nature when played. It is played during the grazing of buffalos or going to the mountains to release emotions or sacred feelings and is generally played by individual men and not in groups. Now only two people in the community play this flute.



Fig 21. Poohoori(bamboo flute)

Hairstyle:

In older times, men and women used to wear their hair long, and women let their hair hang in the form of curls or ringlets. Nowadays, it is not mandatory, and hence this particular hairstyle is used during special occasions. This look is achieved very quickly. They curl small sections of their hair using their hands when wet and then let it dry, keeping the curls stable. Thicker hair has around 30-40 ringlets. Ghee is said to be used, but it is to smooth the hair like we use oil and not for the look itself.



Fig 22. The ringlet hairstyle

Jewelry And Footwear:

Most of their jewelry is made of silver except earrings which are to be made of gold. *Kahot* and *Kevilli* are neckpieces, *Takarsh* is a bracelet or bangle, *Konorch* is worn on the upper arms made of beads, *Tulwoith* is also for upper arms but is made of silver, *pal* is a bangle which is thick and hollow. Most of the used designs are derived from nature, such as mountains, landscapes, and, most importantly, buffalo horns. People who made the jewelry that the Toda wore are from Sathyamangalam.

They didn't wear footwear in older times and now don't wear them around or near the temple grounds since they wanted to respect the earth by touching it directly. When they enter their village, they don't wear footwear to show respect to the ground.



Fig 23. Traditional bangles and upper arm ornaments



Fig 24. Traditional Neckwear



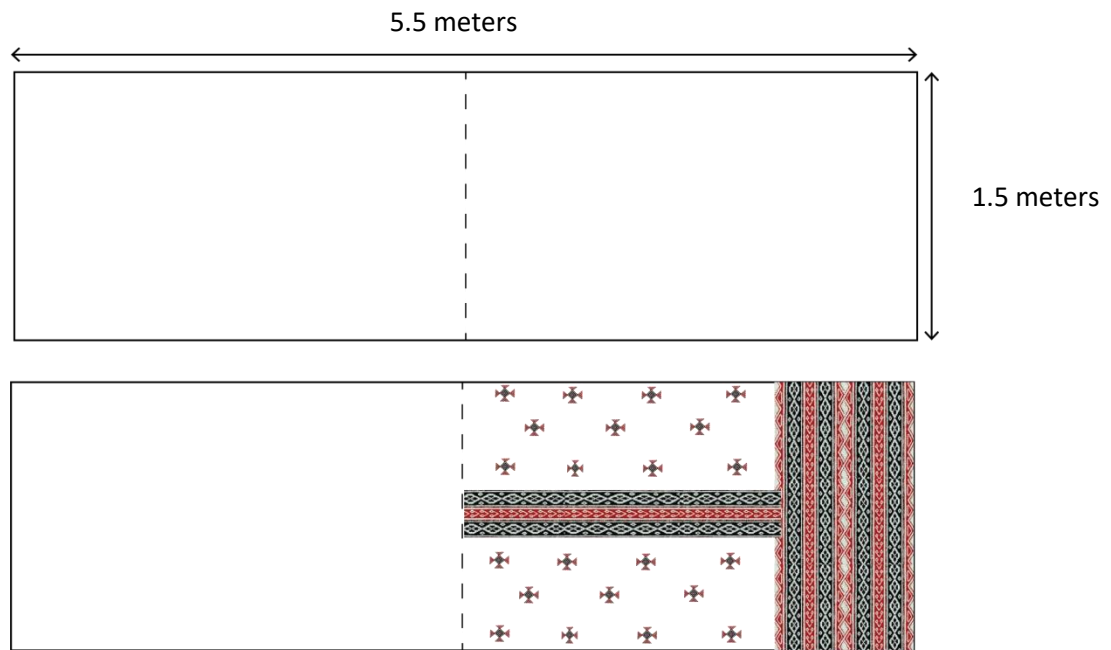
Fig 25. Buffalo earrings(Traditionally made of gold)

Toda Clothing:

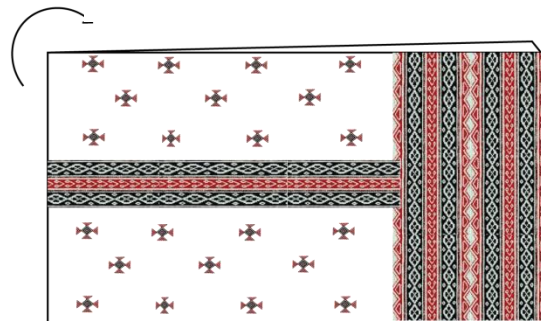
The traditional clothing called *puthukuli* is similar to a double-layered shawl with embroidery known as *puhkoor* wrapped around one's body and worn by men and women. The fabric was sourced from a place known as Allongombu. There are two layers known as *kutkurt* (*kut* meaning joining together), which is very important as it represents a pair connected, the border is known as *Kartal*, and the inner portion is known as *kurshta* (*tal* meaning side), *orthwairt* is the edge finishing.



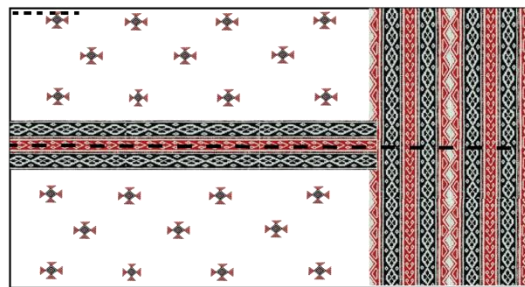
Fig 26. Puthukuli



Embroidery is done on one half of the fabric



The plain half of the fabric is folded behind the embroidered half.



In the middle, a horizontal line is a hand sewn by using a woollen yarn and a stitch line is made in the top right corner also(this serves as a pocket when wrapped around the wearer)

Fig 27. Construction of Puthukuli

Construction of puthukuli- A long fabric with dimensions of 5.5 meters in width and 1.5 meters in height approximately is taken. Embroidery is done vertically dividing one-half of the rectangular fabric. Then the plain half is folded behind the embroidered half and a horizontal line is a hand sewn in the middle. A small line is sewn in one corner (This serves as a pocket when wrapped around the wearer)

A 3-4 inch wide red band connects the base fabric .5pieces in the original fabric where the embroidery is done. And generally, there are two white parallel stripes with no particular meaning on this red band which is unique to the Toda clothing.

In the olden days, dhoti was a must for women along with *puthukuli*. They were considered primitive tribes, and around 100 years before, since the fabric was an expensive item to source, only higher rank people or VIPs used to own these shawls. The wrapping technique is the same in the case of both men and women, but the only difference is the line length they fall, i.e., women wear it till calf or ankle, and men wear it till knees. Nowadays, they wear their traditional garments mostly during special occasions. Every member of the family owns at least one puthukuli. They wear similar clothing to any other individual in Ooty on average days. They have also started to make single-layered shawls with embroidery, but it is not their traditional garment.

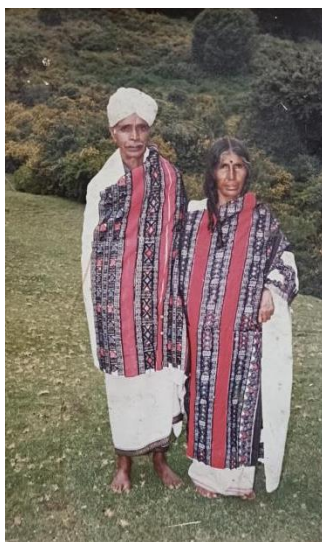


Fig 28. Length in which puthukuli is worn

Toda Embroidery

The traditional art of the Toda tribe is Toda embroidery, a form of hereditary art passed down through generations. It can be identified by its peculiar geometric patterns and seamless finish. Women are the ones undertaking this activity and act as a cultural interaction among their community. After finishing all the household work, the women of the mund come together and sit outside to do the embroidery on their shawls.

The Toda embroidery, which they call *puhkoor*, is done on their traditional wear *puthukuli*. Since this is a significant part of their culture, all the women must know how the embroidery is practised, and once in their lifetime, they make their *puthukuli*. Both men and women wear the *puthukuli*.

They use red and black wool on the white/off-white shawl base and intricately do the geometric motifs that are rich and impressive. For a wedding, a newly embroidered shawl is most preferred. The motifs for this are related to fertility, security, and prosperity. A newly woven puthukuli is also used for death rituals known as "*Pekhadaar*."

Their embroidery designs are inspired by nature, such as mountain valleys, honeycomb, peacocks, and buffalos.

Embroidery Technique: The technique of Toda embroidery is counting the threads of the loosely woven base fabric. The material is matted and woven loosely. The thick woolen threads ensure that the designs are raised when finished. They only use darning stitch. The needle goes through the fabric starting from the backside, then the material is turned, and again the hand goes through the fabric; this process is repeated several times according to the design, and the weave count changes. While doing the embroidery, they leave loops at the ends of each cycle or stitch, creating a thick motif line and producing a rich texture. Even though the viewer assumes the loops to be on the backside of the fabric, it is the right side for them.

They don't use an embroidery loop but use their fingers to stretch the fabric. By doing so, they can scan a few weaves clearly and count the threads. The embroidery is then done according to the count of warp yarns. The final result of the embroidery looks similar to that of geometric patterns. Interestingly, the women doing the embroidery are that without any mathematical knowledge, they can still create designs with complete precision without any help from rulers or scales. The embroidery is also reversible, and both sides can be used.

With years of practice, the women have mastered the embroidery technique and can even finish an entire puthukuli in a small amount of time. The designs reflect the skills and creativity of the Toda women, who can invoke a new method and can produce them on the fabric without tracing those patterns.



Fig 29. Toda embroidery

Tools And Materials

There isn't a wide range of tools used to do the embroidery. They use a metal needle and thick woolen threads. Since it is counted as thread, the fabric used for their traditional clothing should be loosely woven and are generally heavy or light cotton. The line used for the embroidery is 3-ply, primarily wool in black and red colours. Nowadays, they use other unconventional colours as well. The only essential tool is a long needle that can easily slide through the fabric.



Fig 30. Needle and wool used for the embroidery

Motif And Symbology:

As mentioned before, their embroidery motifs are inspired and derived from nature. Other newer designs or filler motifs are from the imagination of the ladies, such as the running river, 6'O clock flower, and much more. Fifteen central motifs have names given to them. Nowadays, apart from these motifs, they use other simplified or self-thought motifs for their garments that don't have a specific meaning or name.

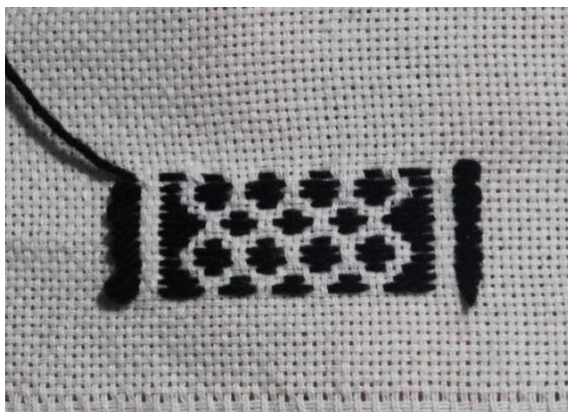


Fig 31. Honeycomb motif

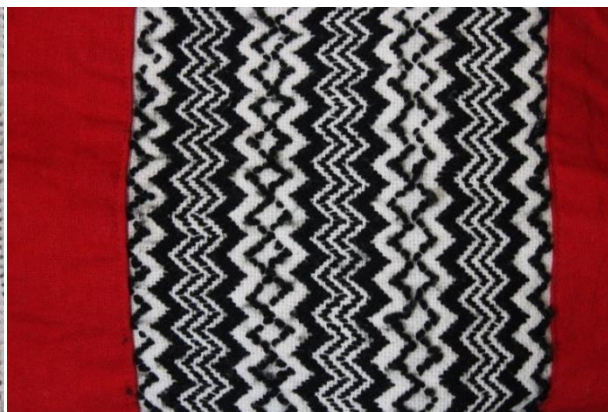


Fig 32. River inspired motif



Fig 33. Buffalo horn motif



Fig 34. Flower motif

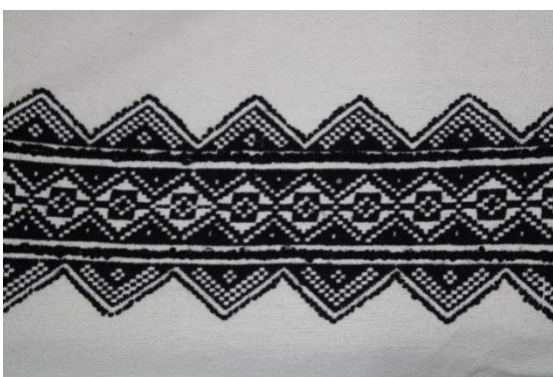


Fig 35. Mountain motif



Fig 36. Edge finishing (Wartwairt)

Colours Used:

The Toda embroidery is done with the least number of colours. The traditional colour for the base fabric is off-white, and white is also used at times. The colours used for the embroidery are black and red, and now they occasionally use blue. There are mainly three colours that are used in traditional wear. The off-white represents the infant stage, the red represents adolescence, and the black represents maturity.

Step By Step Procedure

Motif-1 (Motif depicting sun rays)



Threading the needle with 3 ply woolen yarn (knotted at the end)



Inserting the needle from the right side to the wrong side of the fabric.



Taking the needle out from the wrong side of the fabric



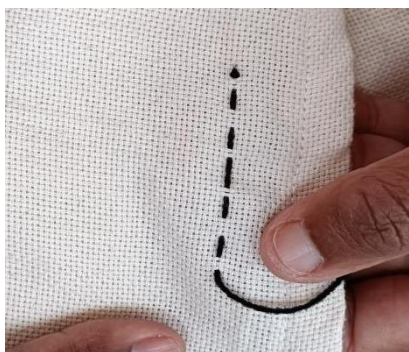
The needle is again inserted into the wrong side of the fabric



The process is continued by Counting the thread



The needle is passed through the right and wrong side of the fabric till the length of the motif is achieved



The Thread is pulled till the end



The fabric is turned to start the next line of the embroidery



Same process is repeated and the fabric is turned after completion of every line.





The ends are secured by making a knot

Final motif on the wrong side of the fabric

Final motif on the right side of the fabric

Motif-2 (River Motif)



Threading the needle with 3 ply woolen yarn (knotted at the end)



The needle is again inserted into the wrong side of the fabric



Taking the needle out from the wrong side of the fabric



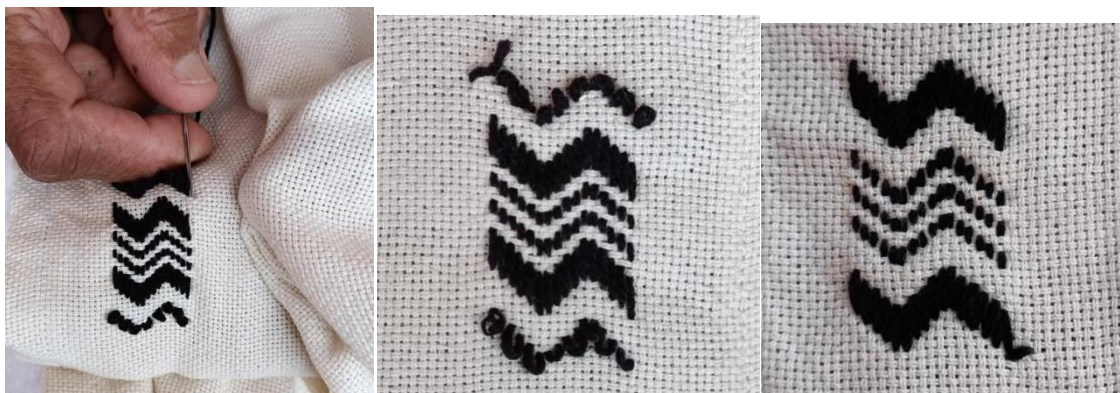
The process is continued by counting the thread

The needle is passed through the right and wrong side of the fabric till the length of the motif is achieved

The Thread is pulled till the end and the fabric is turned to start the next line of the embroider



Same process is repeated and the fabric is turned after completion of every line.



The ends are secured by making a knot

Final motif on the right side of the fabric

Final motif on the wrong side of the fabric

Motif-3 (Mountain Motif)



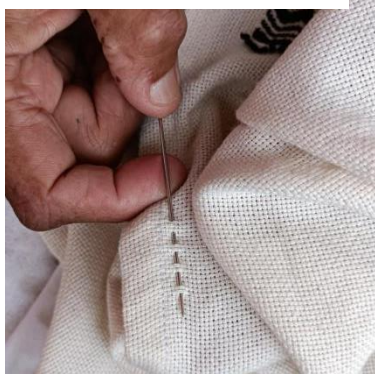
Threading the needle with 3 ply woolen yarn (knotted at the end)



The needle is again inserted into the wrong side of the fabric



Taking the needle out from the wrong side of the fabric



The process is continued by counting the thread



The needle is passed through the right and wrong side of the fabric till the length of the motif is achieved



The Thread is pulled till the end and the fabric is turned to start the next line of the embroider



Same process is repeated and the fabric is turned after completion of every line.



The ends are secured by making a knot



Final motif on the right side of the fabric



Final motif on the wrong side of the fabric

Collection Development

In this part of the document, there is an attempt to use the information collected from the initial research about Toda embroidery and the following data and use this art form in our garment collection.

Trend Research

For understanding the current trends in the market, the first step is to collect information and identify repeated styles that are standing out. This is done by looking into the current market and collections produced on the runways and through a wardrobe study. With the data gathered, a trend board is created.

TREND BOARD



INSPIRATION BOARD

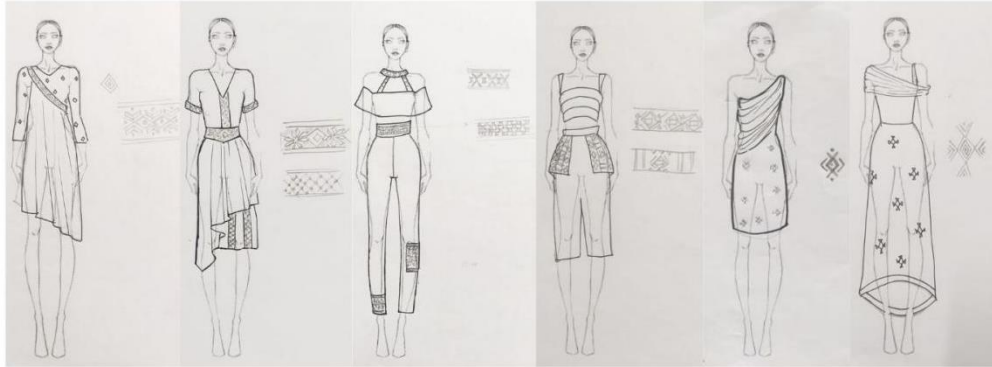


The concept "Synchronous la floresta" can be best explained with lifestyle of Todas. Being one of the pre-dravidian tribal community, these people have been long associated to the nature, hence the respect Todas have towards their provider is immaculate and they intend doing no harm to the mother earth. This association can be observed in their art form that is the Toda embroidery, where they use the nature as the major inspiration for creation of motifs. Our inspiration revolves around the life style of the Toda community, their houses, their association with the nature, and most importantly their embroidery.

Design Exploration

SILHOUTTE EXPLORATION

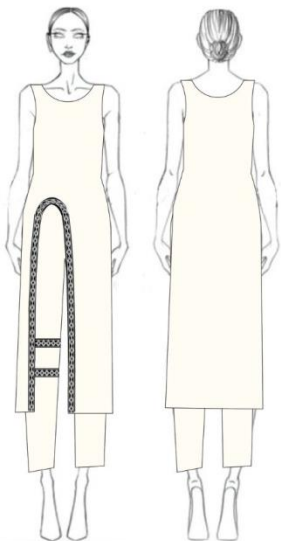




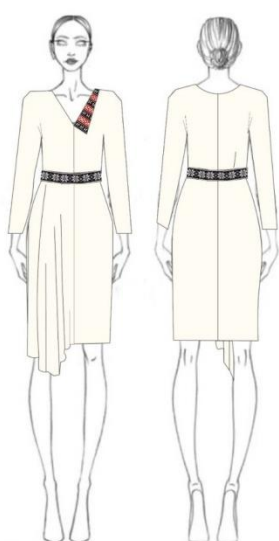
FINAL RANGE :



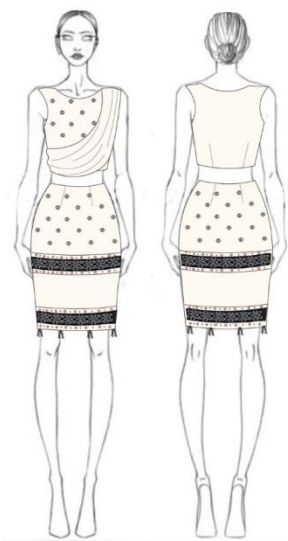
GARMENT-1



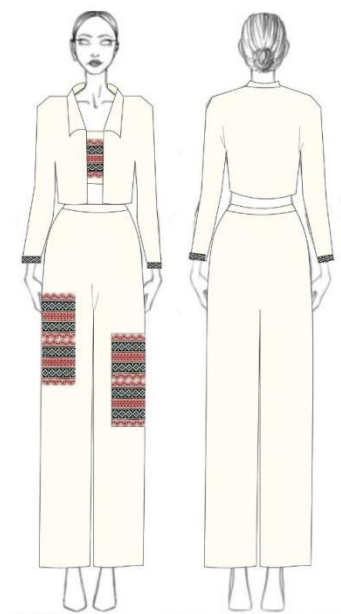
GARMENT-2



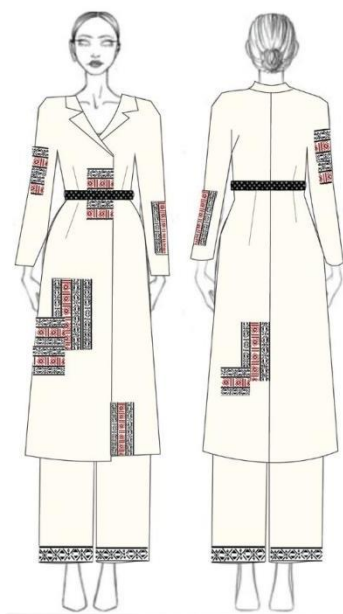
GARMENT-3




GARMENT-4







GARMENT-5



Artisan Profile

S.NO	PROFILE PICTURE	NAME	DETAILS
1		Mrs. Vasamalli	<p>Age: 63 years</p> <p>Education: Completed BSc</p> <p>Experience: She has practiced the art form of <i>Puhkoors</i> since childhood for more than 40+ years. She is an active member of several organizations supporting early cultures and tribal committees.</p>

2		Mrs. Vinodha	<p>Age: 38 years</p> <p>Education: Completed M.A, B.Ed</p> <p>Experience: Has experience in traditional embroidery for 12+ years. She also attends events to promote the Toda embroidery around the country.</p>
3		Mrs. Jayashree	<p>Age: 23 years</p> <p>Education: DL.Ed</p> <p>Experience: She has an experience of around 5 years of embroidery. She also works as a teacher.</p>
4		Mrs. Sumathi	<p>Age: 55 years</p> <p>Education: Completed 9th standard</p> <p>Experience: She has an experience of 25+ years with embroidery.</p>

5		Mrs. Niroshasin	Age: 23 years Education: Completed BSc Nursing Experience: She has an experience of 5+ years with embroidery.
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Conclusion

The Ethnographic study of the Toda tribes gave us a brief knowledge about the lifestyle, clothing, food habits, culture, rituals, and many more. This small community takes pride and embraces its culture and its embroidery skills. Their simple way of living, respect toward their culture and ancestors, and connection with nature are things that everyone should learn from this tribe.

This intricate embroidery done by the Toda community women is a time-consuming process. The outcome of the embroidery is very beautiful and worth all the effort and time consumed. Like every other art form, the Toda embroidery is evolving; new designs and products with the embroidery are created.

Our collection was developed to showcase the elegance of the embroidery to a more significant audience. This historic art form is worth preserving and passing on to the next generation.

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Declaration of Conflict of Interests

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