

“The Beauty of Balochi Embroidery”

Zainab – Income Generating Grant Beneficiary from Khuzdar

Pakistan is a country with a diverse culture and each area has its own signature style of embroidery. The province of Balochistan, which brings an image of barren lands and rugged mountains also holds an exclusive richness in its culture that is intriguing yet unknown to many, who live in other parts of Pakistan. Among other gifts from this province, Balochistan really stands out for its embroidery. The fine-looking embroidery that women at home create is prized not just in Pakistan but also abroad. These traditional patterns are created by the Baloch women with a variety of colours and require a lot of hard work, concentration and time.

When you go to Balochi embroidery women, they show you a variety of patterns, made as samples on a big cloth. The customer chooses the patterns of choice and provides the women with threads and cloth. These women then create personalised designs for each customer, according to the color scheme and the chosen fabric. These designs can take days to be prepared but they are worth the time. The Baloch women are not usually allowed to go out of their homes to earn a living, so they create amazing pieces of art while staying at home. These patterns are made on shawls, waist coats, caps, dresses, wall panels, floors and sofa cushions. Tiny round mirrors are used in the embroidery that make the embroidered stuff stand out from the other types of embroidery.

44-year-old Zainab from Village Saifabad in District Khuzdar received a Zigzag machine, as part of an Income Generating Grant under European Union in Pakistan funded BRACE Programme in July 2019. She has since earned over PKR 60,000 and expanded her business by buying "*Thappay*" for block printing.

Earning an average of PKR 5000 per month, Zainab is now earnestly saving her profits. She has also lent money to two neighbors; this helped one travel for work and the other used the money to take his sick child to the hospital.

What is fantastic about this embroidery is that it is never old and extremely adaptable. It can be merged with new fashions and seems highly trendy, when a mix of traditional embroidery is created with new styles. The embroidered wall panels are fascinating and give homes an artistic hint. Floor and sofa cushions also attract a lot of attention because they are so beautifully made and a lot of color contrasts are used that cannot be ignored by the human eye. We certainly need to cherish this artistic talent which is a part of our culture and identity, so it does not die away.

The present fast-paced lives are making it harder for people to indulge in creating such crafts but it is possible to keep this tradition alive, by providing it the support and appreciation it deserves.



