

# Developing Product Range through Victorian Age Redwork Embroidery

Sulekha Ojha

For thousands of years man has felt the urge to decorate textiles by means of weaving, dyeing, printing and embroidery etc. Every year plenty of embroidery is done onto the fabric. Redwork embroidery started in America in the late nineteenth century. Redwork is a style of decorative needlework that consists of embroidering the outline of designs onto a white or off-white background with a contrasting color thread. It has been in and out of fashion during this period and is basically done on muslin fabric. Hence the researcher felt the need to experiment the Redwork embroidery on different fabric. A study was undertaken on "Developing Product Range through Victorian age Redwork embroidery".

The different designs were documented of the Victorian age. The best design was selected by the researcher, and then the article was developed by using this embroidery. After the development of the article, a questionnaire was prepared by the researcher to determine the acceptability of the product. A five-scale rating pro forma was used to rate the article. The present study is an attempt made by the researcher to retrieve the Redwork embroidery into modern age and its application on different fabric.

## Introduction

Embroideries everywhere have been fascinated with different designs. But only its natural form that embroiders love is beauty in their stitches. Today designers and artists pick up motifs from traditional designs and incorporate them while weaving, embroidering and colouring according to the market demand. Keeping this in mind, an attempt has been made to work with Redwork embroidery in furnishing the house hold items. This study has contributed in developing varieties of cushion for Indian Markets.

Redwork, a style of "art needlework," first became popular in the United States in the late part of the nineteenth century. Red thread is typically used in this style because the red color contrasts well against a light background.

## Keeping the above points in mind, following objectives were framed:

- 1) To document motifs and patterns of Redwork embroidery
- 2) To develop the range of articles using motifs of Redwork embroidery on different variety of fabrics
- 3) To find the acceptability of articles produced for home-furnishing.

## Methodology

Keeping this in mind, the researcher tried to develop cushions for home-furnishing with Redwork embroidery on different fabrics and also tried to find the acceptability of the articles.

The various steps which were followed to achieve the objectives are:

- 1) To document the motifs by searching Victorian-age motifs from various resources i.e. books, magazines, internet, etc.
  - a) Selection of Motif: The motifs were selected for developing the articles and after being explored, approximately 50 motifs were documented. Finally, 5 motifs were selected for preparing the articles.
  - b) Selection of fabric: The fabrics selected for the articles are cotton, silk, tissue, organdy and satin.
  - c) Selection of thread: Red anchor thread is used to embroider the articles.
- 2) Product Development:

Cushions were developed with the application of five best designs.
- 3) Acceptability of the product: A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to evaluate the acceptability of the product. Developed articles were again evaluated by a panel of judges to analyze the product for its acceptability among the consumers.

## Rating Scale

A rating scale was prepared to assess the acceptability of the product. Following criteria were followed for rating the article:

1. Most preferred fabric
2. Excellent motif
3. Best overall appearance
4. Placement of motif
5. Design suitability according to the article
6. Marketability of the product

The scale parameters are as follows:

Excellent-5, Very Good-4, Good-3, Average-2 & Poor-1

**Plate 1**  
**Selected Design**



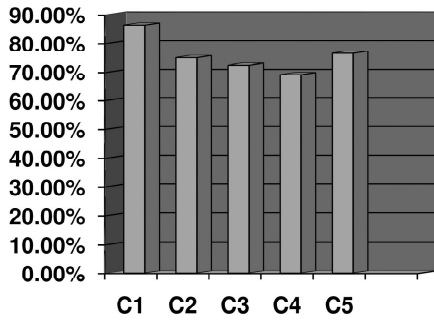
### Results and Discussion

Researcher made an attempt to collect the motifs of Redwork embroidery through a survey. Motifs were critically analysed by the researcher and out of 50 documented motifs, the best 5 were selected for cushions.

After the selection of motifs, embroidery was done on to the fabric. The designs developed on the cushions were evaluated by a panel of judges. These cushions were evaluated by 20 respondents to find the ranking and consumer acceptability. The parameters rated were most preferred fabric, excellent motif, best overall appearance, placement of motif, design suitability according to the article and marketability of the product. It was seen that C1 cushion scored maximum marks. Cushion C5, C2, C3 and C4 were ranked second, third, fourth and fifth respectively.

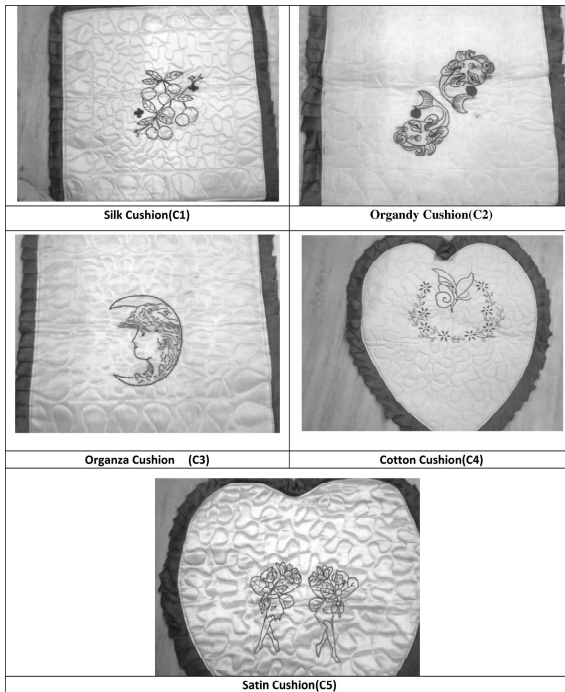
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
Acceptability index	86.30%	74.80%	72.30%	69.12%	76.32%

**Total score obtained by each embroidered cushion**



**Criteria for evaluation**

**Cushions developed through Redwork embroidery**



## Conclusion

Current trends are propelling people towards the ancient and traditional art and designs. There would be a great demand for this embroidery because of its white and red combination. There would certainly be a competition for other articles in the market. There is a great scope for such embroideries in the modern age.

## Works Cited

- Bhatnagar, P. *Traditional Indian Costume and Textiles*. Chandigarh: BBAP, 2004. Print.
- Brackman, B. *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*. American Quilters Society, 1993. Print.
- Cummings, L.P. *Redwork Embroidery and Needlework Traditions in Europe and America*. Concord : Quilters Muse Publication, 2004. Print.
- Cummings, L.P. *Redwork Renaissance: 49 Designs from 1839 Coverlets*. Concord : Quilters Muse Publication, 2002. Print.
- Gillow, J. & B. Sentence. *World Textiles*. London: Bulfinch Press Book, 1999. Print.
- Greenway, K. *The Language of Flowers*. New York: Gramercy Publishing Company, 1978. Print.
- Harding, D. *Red & White: American Redwork Quilts and Patterns*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2000. Print.
- MacDowell, M. *American Quilts From Michigan State University Museum*. Tokyo, 2003. Print.
- Norden, M. *Decorative Embroidery*. Octopus Publishing Group, 1997. Print.
- Poore, J. *Santa's Parade of Nursery Rhymes: A Historic Redwork Quilt*. Kansas City: Starbook, 1999. Print.