

ILA SACHANI: EMBROIDERING DREAMS WITH HER FEET

Let us do these activities before we read.

1. Look at the given picture and information. Discuss the questions with your teacher and classmates.



Pranav M. Balasubramaniam is from Palakkad in Kerala. Though he was born without both hands, he has excelled as an artist, a singer, and a para-sportsperson.

- (a) Do you think Pranav's task is simple? Why or why not?
 - (b) How does Pranav's special ability make you feel?
 - (c) What qualities do you think were important for Pranav to become successful?
 - (d) What message does Pranav's story give us?
2. Look at the picture of *Kathiawar* embroidery. Discuss in pairs.

- (a) List the steps you think are needed to create this embroidery.
- (b) Discuss if these steps can be done with feet, instead of hands.
- (c) What efforts would be needed if someone has to embroider with their feet? Do you think it is possible?



Kathiawar embroidery





Let us read

1. When you enter a tiny room in Moti Vavdi village, Bhavnagar, Gujarat, you will see lots of bright colours. There are many lovely things like cushions, bedcovers, pillows, and more, with beautiful designs. Ila Sachani, a wonderful lady with a big smile, makes all these using a shiny needle to create these designs. She is very good at *Kathiawar* embroidery—a style that needs a lot of skill.
2. Ila Sachani's journey began in the quiet settings of Amreli, Gujarat, where she was born into a farmer's family. From the beginning, life presented its **challenges**, as Ila was born with her hands hanging loose by her sides. Unlike other children, she could not use her hands in the usual way. While other small hands drew figures in the sand or plucked wild flowers, she wondered why she could not join them. She too wanted to hold a chalk in her hands and draw figures on a slate.
3. Ila's mother and grandmother encouraged the little girl and were **single-minded** to help her overcome her challenge. They were skilled in the traditional art of *Kathiawar* embroidery and decided to share this art with Ila. They taught her to create many



Ila Sachani

challenges:
difficulties



single-minded:
focused

beautiful patterns using her feet! It was certainly not an easy task, but Ila accepted the challenge with **determination**. Her parents also helped her learn to do things with her legs, like eating and combing her hair.

4. Threading a needle was hard, but Ila did not give up and became an expert at a young age. Her younger brother and sister helped her too. She learned many styles, even ones from outside Gujarat—*Kachhi*, *Kashmiri*, *Lucknawi* and others.
5. For Ila, embroidery became a way to express herself. At first, she crafted fine designs only for her family and friends, who were **awestruck** by her talent. They talked about those designs to others. Soon, the people in the village, too, discovered Ila's special skill and the admiration for her work began to spread.
6. Word reached the government office, in Surat. They were moved by Ila's story and impressed by her work. They decided to display some samples of her embroidery at a state exhibition. This experience opened new doors for Ila. People observed the beauty woven by her feet and readily purchased the creations. Ila was no more a hidden talent, but famous!

determination:
will power

awestruck:
amazed



7. Encouraged by this **popularity**, Ila participated in more exhibitions, not just within the state but at the national level. She received many awards and honours, not just for her art but also the willpower and creativity that her work showed. Ila Sachani, once a farmer's daughter facing a tough challenge, worked hard and became a celebrated artist and receiver of the President's Medal.
8. The most important change for Ila was the new independence. Through her skill, she not only earned a regular income but also found joy in doing what she loved. She proved, through her creations, that challenges can be turned into victories with focus, hard work, positivity and never giving up.
9. Her embroidery, created with her feet, reminds us that art has the power to rise above physical boundaries and touch the soul.

popularity:
fame



Kachhi embroidery

Let us discuss

Read the paragraphs and write the main idea for each. Then, match the main idea with two supporting details.

Paragraph	Main idea	Two supporting details
1	Introduction to Ila Sachani's colourful embroidery	(i) Examples of embroidered things (ii) Ila's use of shiny needle
2	Early challenges and family support	(i) (ii)
3		(i) (ii)
4		(i) (ii)
5		(i) (ii)
6	Recognition at a state exhibition	(i) (ii)
7		(i) (ii)
8-9		(i) Financial independence and joy (ii) Challenges can be turned into victories





Let us think and reflect

1. Read the following lines and answer the questions that follow.

Unlike other children, she could not use her hands in the usual way. While other small hands drew figures in the sand or plucked wild flowers, she wondered why she could not join them. She too wanted to hold a chalk in her hands and draw figures on a slate.

- (a) Choose the correct option to fill in the blank.

‘Unlike other children’ means that Ila was _____. (unaware/different/simple)

- (b) What could Ila have felt when she could not join others in things they did?
- (c) Complete the following with a suitable reason.

Ila could not draw figures on the slate because _____.

2. What creative ways did Ila and her family use to overcome the challenges she faced?
3. How did ‘new independence’ help Ila?
4. Why was the first state exhibition an important event in Ila’s life?
5. What does the sentence, ‘art has the power to rise above physical boundaries and touch the soul’, tell us about the power of art?
6. How can we be helpful and encouraging like Ila’s family and friends when someone faces challenges?
7. How can Ila’s story help others to overcome challenges in their lives?



Let us learn

1. Read the words from the text given in Column A. Then, try to understand what they mean by reading the sentences in Column B. Now, match the word to its correct synonym in Column C. There are two extra synonyms given. You may refer to the dictionary.



Column A	Column B	Column C
Word	Sentence	Synonym
tiny	The garden was tiny but the park was really big.	silent
wonderful	The wonderful artwork made everyone clap.	work
quiet	The quiet library was a better place to study than the noisy classroom.	happy
task	Completing the Science homework was a challenging task as it had many questions.	small
tough	We know that tough times can be overcome, if we try sincerely.	difficult
		fantastic
		dangerous

2. Unscramble the antonyms of the words in Column A. An example has been given for you.

Example: display – E D I H

(H I D E)

(a) tiny – E G H U

(H _ _ _)

(b) wonderful – R E E B L I T R

(T _ R _ _ B _ _ E)

(c) quiet – I Y N S O

(N _ _ _ _)

(d) task – S I A E M T P

(P _ S T _ _ E)

(e) tough – S E Y A

(E _ _ _)

Use these antonyms in sentences of your own.

3. Read the sentences from the text and focus on the highlighted words.

- You will see **lots of** bright colours.
- There are **many** lovely things like cushions and bedcovers.
- They taught her to create **many** beautiful patterns using her feet!
- She learned **many** styles.
- She received **many** awards.



(a) The highlighted words tell us about the quantity. Choose what the words show.

- (i) Unmentioned quantity
- (ii) Large quantity

(b) Let us now understand what words of quantity tell us.

Fill in the blanks to complete an example for each word of quantity. Hints are given in the brackets.

(i)	We saw ____ buses on the road.	(countable noun)
(ii)	How ____ milk do you want?	(uncountable noun)
(iii)	There is ____ milk needed.	(uncountable noun)
(iv)	I need ____ examples.	(countable noun)
(v)	I have ____ energy left. She picked ____ flowers.	(countable and uncountable nouns)
(vi)	I ate ____ rice.	(uncountable noun)

Now, create two sentences for each word of quantity (i-vi), and share them with your teacher and classmates.



Let us listen

You will listen to a talk about *Kathiawar* embroidery. As you listen, circle the correct option. (refer to page 164 for transcript)

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. Form | b. Colours |
| (i) old | (i) soft |
| (ii) new | (ii) bright |
| c. Stitches | d. Seen on |
| (i) running stitch | (i) children's caps |
| (ii) chain stitch | (ii) pants |



e. Things used

- (i) small mirrors
- (ii) shapes of buttons

f. Designs

- (i) elephants and horses
- (ii) squares and triangles



Let us speak

In pairs, write down two questions you would like to ask Ila Sachani.

(a) Look at two examples.

Where were you born? Did you go to school?

The Yes/No questions use a rising tone at the end.

(b) Speak the example questions aloud as a peer activity at least five times.

(c) Now, take turns to ask your questions to another classmate. Speak clearly and with the correct rising tone as shown in (a).



Let us explore

1. Does anyone in your family or neighbourhood do embroidery? Find out what type of embroidery they do and how they learnt it.
2. Try a simple stitch on cloth with the guidance of a family member.
3. Visit the given link to find out about embroidery types from different parts of India. Share with your teacher and classmates which one you liked the most and why.

<https://indianculture.gov.in/textiles-and-fabrics-of-india/type-of-textile/embroidery>

