

## Mangayarkkarasi: Creating Magic in Embroidery

Written by Valsala Menon

Wednesday, 23 March 2011 16:20 - Last Updated Friday, 25 March 2011 12:07

---



Bright eyed, enthusiastic, and smart. That best describes Mangayarkkarasi. Born into a family of jewellers and entrepreneurs, it was little wonder that Mangai too was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug pretty soon. After graduating from MOP Vaishnav college in , Chennai in the year 2000, she immediately tied the knot. After a brief stint in the US, she eventually came back to Chennai and wanted to start her own boutique and deviate from the family jewellery business.

Mangai had no funds to invest. This is precisely where MOP Vaishnav college 's EDP cell training came to her rescue. While at college , she had completed a project on opening a dry cleaning shop. The project had involved everything from fixing the rent to marketing, recruiting, pricing , accounting , stocking etc. She had learnt the entire gambit from the EDP cell which she put to good use in drawing up an action plan for the boutique. . Her husband was suitably impressed and agreed to invest for her. She assured him that, if within a year, she had not made profits, she would call it quits.

Initially she procured material and commenced operating from home . She got the material dyed in colours of her choice . Dyeing was a messy affair and one of her friends agreed to lease out one of her apartment complex to her for a reasonable rent. Mangai now required stock for her boutique. She had made up her mind to specialize only in salwar materials and kurta tops. Mangai spent days browsing the net, visiting other boutiques, assimilating facts and data as to stockists who could supply for her. Many advised her to go to Mumbai but the stockists there were adamant that she would have to buy 300 branded pieces from them, each costing Rs. 1000. It was way too heavy an investment for Mangai.

Hard work always pays and she found free lance cluster distributors right here in Chennai who were willing to supply regularly. Slowly but steadily she diversified into opening her own

## Mangayarkkarasi: Creating Magic in Embroidery

Written by Valsala Menon

Wednesday, 23 March 2011 16:20 - Last Updated Friday, 25 March 2011 12:07

---

stitching unit , hand embroidery and machine embroidery units.' I take salwar material , dye them in contrast colours or colours that are currently in vogue and do block printing on them. Embroidery, badula work, zardosi, copper embroidery , ghoti work, kanta work , kashmiri embroidery these are a few of my specialities-' dimples Mangai. She personally selects the block prints used for printing on her dyed material.

'Nowadays I do ribbon work, patch work, brocade work, which are all very much in vogue. I have too many orders now and literally hard pressed for time to execute all of them'. Mangai bustles around attending to clients as they drop in to her Varna boutique in a steady stream.' I have two tailors – one for pattern work and another for stitching plus two embroidery workers.'

Mangai accepts orders for heavy embroidery work on saris . She prices them at Rs 10, 000 for each sari and designs blouses for them too. Well trained in gemology from SISI. She plans to go into designing accessories for her salwars. Mangai frequently travels down to Bangalore and Hyderabad to buy exquisite cool voils and patti work for saris. Plain saris are bought and patti work done, transforming them in to great attire for an evening out. Every year, she conducts at least two exhibitions.

Very near to her boutique are several hotels where students from Angola in South Africa come to stay month on month on student exchange programs. Mangai has tied up with their guide and he very regularly brings these students to her boutique. They love to wear sleeved and long blouses with embroidered designer saris and even the Indian salwar is remodeled to give it a touch of the western, with off shoulder kurtas. This is done exclusively by Mangai to suit their tastes and even when they go back to their respective countries, word about Mangai is spread by word of mouth and the next batch of students religiously make it to her boutique to get their apparel designed. This alone fetches her a solid income of Rs 20, 000 per month .

As customers keep walking in, Mangai gets busy and we take our leave, wishing charming Mangai all success in her mix and match designer boutique.