

Women's Fashion Predilection for Innovative Fashion Articles of *Phulkari***Mandeep Kaur¹,****Dr. (Mrs.) Sandeep Bains²,****Dr. (Mrs.) Sumeet Grewal³**

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The handicraft of *Phulkari* is a blend of creativity, colour and skill. Daughters from every house of the Punjab women were made proficient in the embroidery as she transformed into a beautiful women. With the predominance of westernisation the traditional craft has witnessed disappearance. An amalgam of tradition and modernity has been tried to figure out for the present day consumer without any compromise with quality. This has been implemented through development of fashion articles made using *Phulkari* work. The preferences of the female prospective consumers were taken to have a clear view of knowledge of consumer taste and create customer amazement for the traditional craft in a new avatar.

Keywords: Traditional Embroidery, *Phulkari*, Fashion Articles, Computer Aided Designing, Consumer Preferences

Introduction

The *Phulkari* embroidery is peculiar for its geometrical patterns of flowers, leaves, birds, animals, and other elements from nature and surroundings of the Punjabi culture of the golden days. It was beautifully executed by the hands of the Punjabi women on a coarse *khaddar* with the untwisted silken floss called *pat*. The base fabric used was of rust brown, red, white, or black or blue in colour. The embroidery was done with *pat* of bright colourful shades using a small amount of black/blue thread to make the *nazar booti*. The main stitch of *Phulkari* was darn stitch with the length ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ ". This stitch was also assisted by other stitches like stem stitch, chain stitch and herring bone stitch for outlining the borders and marking. The use of cross stitch and button hole stitch was very limited.

Bagh and *Phulkari* embroidery was executed from the back side of the fabric. The *Phulkari* was made with sparsely located traditional motifs embroidered with the *pat* while; *Bagh* fully covered the base fabric with visible lines of base yarns as outlines where the yarn had been lifted to form the pattern.

The traditional craft which was earlier practiced in Peshawar, Sialkot, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Hazara (all now in Pakistan), as well as in Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ambala, Ludhiana and former Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Kapurthala. This craft is now carried forward in and around Patiala, Rajpura and Fatehgarh Sahib areas of Punjab (India) and by some self help groups in the villages of Punjab. The craft is also practiced in the state of Haryana. However long stitch length differentiates it from the *Phulkari* of Punjab which is finer.

With the speeding life, the number of people practicing the craft is shrinking day by day and the quality of the embroidery has also been deteriorating. Whereas, there is a constant hike in the price of the embroidered products, as it is a laborious task in the present day. Moreover, the range

of embroidered products offered fails to attract today's fashion conscious consumer who are always searching for unique and creative items.

An effort has been made to develop a range of fashion articles using the *Phulkari* embroidery for the female consumers of the modern India who no longer want to lag behind in race of fashion. A fusion of *Phulkari* and fashion has been experimented keeping in mind the women's eye for style.

Objectives

The study was undertaken with the objective to:

- To contemporize the use of *Phulkari* embroidery in fashion articles
- To access consumer preferences for the developed fashion articles

Methodology

Patterns using the traditional motifs of *Phulkari* were developed for the fashion articles - belt, headband, bracelet, handbag, scarf, *potli* bag, jacket, footwear, border and yoke. Designs of the embroidery patterns, fashion articles and placement of the designs on the fashion articles were executed through Computer Aided Designing software. The developed designs were streamlined for product development.

The selected designs were drawn on trace paper which was pinned to transfer design patterns on the pattern pieces of the fabric for various fashion articles. The designs were transferred onto the cut pattern pieces using a mixture of kerosene oil and powder blue or zinc dust for dark coloured fabrics. After the transfer of design, the embroidery using the *pat* thread was done and the fashion articles were prepared.

An interview schedule was constructed to study the preferences of the respondents for the embroidered articles. The preferences were taken on the basis of base fabric suitability, design, colour combination and overall impact of the fashion articles. The response was taken from ninety female prospective consumers.

Results and Discussions

1.1 Details of Prepared Fashion Articles

The details of the prepared fashion articles are:

Belt: A belt with dimensions of 35" × 2.5" was prepared using elastic at the back side. Black casement fabric was embroidered with darn stitch using *pat* thread employing gradation of green colours. Buckram was used for stiffness in the belt. A decorative buckle with studs was used to make it functional.

Border: The border was made of the dimensions 42" × 3" which was embroidered with darn stitch, satin stitch, stem stitch, cross stitch and back stitch using blue, yellow and green coloured *pat* thread. *Gota* was used on the edges (lengthwise) to give a formal look.

Jacket: A thigh length jacket of XL size was made using a heavy textured cotton fabric. Embroidery was done with yellow coloured *pat* thread using darn and running stitches. Embroidery patterns were employed on sleeves and centre back. Buckram, button and lining material were used for finishing.

Scarf: A scarf of size 36" × 36" in dark brown shade of cotton fabric was embroidered using darn stitch, running stitch and herring bone stitch with a yellow coloured *pat* thread. A pair of tassels was used to accessorize two of the alternate corners of the scarf.

Yoke: Flowers were embroidered along the V-shape neckline with navy blue, magenta and cerulean blue coloured *pat* thread. Laces of colours similar to that of *pat* thread were used to decorate and finish the edges of the yoke. The length of the prepared yoke was up to the bust level.

Footwear: Velvet fabric in green colour with embroidered straps was used to make a pair of footwear. Darn stitch as well as back stitch was executed using yellow and magenta *pat* threads.

Headband: Tericot fabric in dark blue shade was used with one half elasticized for easy wear. The band of 12" × 1" dimensions was embroidered with darn stitch using turquoise and green coloured *pat* thread with shell tucks on the two edges of the headband.

Handbag: Maroon coloured *khaddar* fabric of dimensions 16" × 16 ½" was embroidered with darn stitch using geometrical pattern. It was embroidered using yellow and turquoise *pat* thread. Two lines of running stitch were also made at the edges. A zipper, pasting, beads and pompons were used as trims.

Potli bag: The *potli* bag of size 11"X15" was prepared using a combination of wine coloured silk and tissue fabrics. Darn stitch, satin stitch and stem stitch were employed to embroider the *potli* bag with yellow, orange, green and lavender coloured *pat* thread. Buckram, pasting, a pair of *latkans* and a multi coloured *dori* were used as trims. The images of the developed articles are given in the plate 1.

Bracelet: A maroon coloured self print fabric with three bead strings on its either sides of size 4 ½" × 1" was prepared. It was embroidered with yellow and purple coloured *pat* thread using satin stitch and cross stitch. A lock was used to finish the article.

1.2 Preferences of the Female Respondents for *Phulkari* Fashion Articles

The results for the preferences of the respondents regarding various fashion articles were recorded. The parameters for observing the preferences included suitability of fabric, design, colour combinations and overall impact of the prepared articles.

1.2.1 Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of suitability of fabric used

Fabrics are an ideal base for various forms of embroideries. Careful selection of fabric requires the suitability of texture, appearance, comfort and durability. Accordingly the fabrics for various fashion articles were planned and preferences for the base fabrics used were recorded.

As per the analysis of the recorded data, footwear made using velvet on base, voile fabric embroidered to make straps was most preferred by the consumers (with weighted mean score 7.32) and ranked first whereas, last rank was given to the tericot fabric used to prepare bracelet (weighted mean score 3.97). The tabular representation of the preferences has been given in the table 1.

Table 1: Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of suitability of fabric used

n=90		
Article	Weighted scores	Ranks
Footwear	7.32	I
Potli bag	6.48	II
Jacket	6.27	III
Yoke	5.82	IV
Belt	5.69	V
Handbag	5.60	VI
Border	5.40	VII
Scarf	4.53	VIII
Headband	4.04	IX
Bracelet	3.97	X

1.2.2 Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of design used

The traditional *Phulkari* motifs were assembled to form designs which were embroidered on the various fashion articles. The preferences of the embroidery design are represented in the table 2. As per the observations the *potli* bag was ranked first as per the consumer preferences (weighted mean score 7.13) whereas, the border design was ranked second by the consumers (weighted mean score 6.48). The ranking also revealed that headband was least preferred articles according to the design used.

Table 2: Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of design used

n=90		
Article	Weighted scores	Ranks
Potli bag	7.13	I
Border	6.48	II
Footwear	6.21	III
Yoke	5.90	IV
Belt	5.53	V
Jacket	5.52	VI
Scarf	5.17	VII
Handbag	5.14	VIII
Bracelet	4.27	IX
Headband	3.67	X

1.2.3 Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of colour combination used

Colours were combined *to* ornament the fabrics for product development. Traditional and contemporary colour combinations were used for the *Phulkari* based fashion articles. The preferences for colour combinations used in various articles have been arranged in tabular form in the table 3 which revealed that the footwear obtained the weighted score of 6.77 and was ranked first. The last rank was given to the bracelet by the consumers with the weighted mean score 3.87.



Plate 1. Developed Fashion Articles: Belt; Border; Jacket; Scarf; Yoke; Footwear; Headband; Bracelet; Handbag and Potli bag.

1.2.4 Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of overall impact

The base fabric, design, colour combination and embellishments are what a fashion article is composed of, but, the overall impact of an article is something which has an important impact on the consumer. Data in table 4 gives a view about preferences of the prepared fashion articles according to their overall impact. The footwear was found to be the most preferred article and was ranked first with weighted mean score 6.89. *Potli* bag was given second rank by the consumers (weighted mean score 6.83) and headband was ranked last with weighted mean score 3.62.

Table 3: Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of colour combination used

n=90		
Article	Weighted scores	Ranks
Footwear	6.77	I
Yoke	6.54	II
Border	6.51	III
<i>Potli</i> bag	5.91	IV
Jacket	5.88	V
Handbag	5.38	VI
Belt	5.30	VII
Scarf	4.55	VIII
Headband	4.30	IX
Bracelet	3.87	X

Table 4: Preferences of the respondents for the fashion articles on the basis of overall impact

n=90		
Article	Weighted scores	Ranks
Footwear	6.89	I
<i>Potli</i> bag	6.83	II
Border	6.43	III
Belt	5.79	IV
Yoke	5.75	V
Jacket	5.47	VI
Handbag	5.22	VII
Scarf	4.47	VIII
Bracelet	4.28	IX
Headband	3.62	X

Conclusion

Even International designers like Alexander McQueen developed a western interpretation of *Phulkari* giving an East Asian cut to short length jacket in one of his collections. Even though such designs have little proximity with the traditional crafts but this makes evident that it takes the impartial eye of an outsider to appreciate things that the locals ignore and take this embroidery

for granted. The modern day demands to expand and reinvent the use of the traditional craft of *Phulkari* on other fashion articles like footwear, *Potli* bags, borders, belts, yokes, jackets, handbags, scarves, etc. These articles were designed and developed exclusively for the female prospective consumer segments which form a major part of the consumer market. The present study gives an idea of the preferences for fabric, design and colours which are important attributes of any fashion article from consumer's point of view. The production of *Phulkari* embroidered fashion articles like footwear, *Potli* bags, borders, belts, yokes, jackets, handbags, scarves, etc. are recommended.

Review

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