

# RAKAAN: Changing Trends of Phulkari

**Kaur Jasmeen\***

Student

[97kambojjass@gmail.com](mailto:97kambojjass@gmail.com)

Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab

**Sharma Rohita\***

Associate Professor

[rohita.19359@lpu.co.in](mailto:rohita.19359@lpu.co.in)

Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab.

## Abstract

This research is focused upon how fashion and tradition has changed over the period of time for females in Punjab. The research process includes information about how phulkari fabric changes from time to time or its change is like a generation gap, it's not changes in fabric also the quality of fabric, or designs of flowers embroidery time to time changed. If we talk about the 20th century even before that, girls embroidered phulkari with their hands and for help groups of girls even mother and sister also. But now in this time period this trend has totally changed the hand embroidery converted into machine works, because of 21st century girls going to school for education or job.

**Keywords:** embroidery [kadayi], Phulkari, yaran [thread], fabric, generation gap, motifs.

## 1. Introduction

Tradition and culture are an important part of society and its evolution. Trends and fashion serve as a major display of thoughts and ideas prominent in a society, which also reflects the vital tradition and cultural value for the same. Trends and fashion changes as a society evolves; the old trends get embedded in the fabric of new ones just beneath them, holding the essence of the previous ones. In the research, I have to try to put light upon changing trends of Phulkari from before the partition between Lehnda Punjab or Charda Punjab. It is made from two words, Phul means flower and Akari means Shape, the word 'Phulkari' translates into 'flower work'. The origin of Phulkari has not been traced and has a history etched in the culture of punjab. Spun from the charkha this spectacular style of embroidery is patterned on Dupatta or shawls. Phulkari is a thread work that uses linear stitches to create intricate flower patterns. The finished work is known as Baagh [ or garden].The fabric used for phulkari is usually Khaddar, a heavy cotton that is locally woven. The support fabric is most often an auspicious dark red, or more rarely, indigo blue or a white for older women. Darning stitch is used to embroider from the reverse side of fabric. Phulkari is an art form that offers women a chance to express their creativity and thoughts on a piece of cloth. It is an age-old traditional activity in which women sit together after finishing their household work and make such kind of art. It is not for commercial purposes. Phulkari is a main part of dowry [ daaj da shingar Phukari] which was embroidered by the bride herself. In that time , it was limited colors embroidery is done with a pat known as silk thread which is untwisted silken floss such as white, red ,blue, green,crimson red, orange, pink. Design themes for women surrounding life,such as floral motifs, geometrical motifs, birds and animals motifs etc can be used.

**Difference between Phulkari and Baagh** - on their wedding they wore phulkari or Baagh. Phulkari have a space between embroidery patterns. In Bagh dupatta covered with embroidery without leaving any space.

**Subhar** – One of them is called Subhar [phulkari]. Subhar is embroidery with the design Patiyani

wali wale, Chandi buti, Bara buti pati, or Patt embroidery.

**Types of Phulkari** - Sainchi Phulkari, Darshan dwar, Sheeshedar , Suber Phulkari, Satranga Phulkari, Nila Phulkari.

**Types of Bagh** - Bawan bagh, Vari da bagh, Surajmukhi, Chand Bagh, Sheesha bagh, Ghunghat

Bagh.

**Tools** - Metal needle, Scissors, Wooden blocks.



Fig.1.1 Scissor



Fig.1.2 Needle



Fig.1.3 Wooden block

## 1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To explore the traditional values of Phulkari.
- To study the revival of Phulkari art of Punjab.
- To explore the prosperous culture and tradition of handmade Phulkari or its process.
- To have a better understanding about the changes trends of phulkari from 20th century to till yet .

## 1.2 Literature Review

Maskiell, M. May (1999).

- Embroidering the Past: Phulkari Textiles and Gendered Work as “Tradition” and “Heritage” in Colonial and Contemporary Punjab. While the men worked in the fields in the wine-like [winter] air, the women sat in the afternoon sun spinning and embroidering. While they sang together, before starting to cook for their men, they embroidered phulkaris

Patterns of Phulkari: Then and Now, November 2014, Anu H Gupta

- Skilful and artistic decoration of textiles is an ancient art of undivided Punjab and now of two Punjab's located in India and Pakistan. Phulkari reveals the innate artistic sensitivity of the Punjabi women and their desire to combine utility with finesse. It is also referred to as embroidery of flowers.

Phulkari and Bagh folk art of Punjab - a study of changes design from traditional to contemporary time, by Rajinder Kaur , February 2014

- Traditional Phulkari was made of hand-dyed and hand-woven spun cloth called “khaddar” using high quality untwisted silk thread called “pat” with bright colors like red, green, golden, yellow, pink and blue. It was done with an ordinary needle in the darn stitch, without the help of any tracing, drawing, pattern or design.

Textbook Handmade in India, A Geographic Encyclopedia of Indian Handicrafts. Edited by Aditi Ranjan And M.P.Ranjan ; Abbeville Press New York London.

- From Phulkari and Bagh - Embroidered Textiles .Throughout the punjab, in the hindu, muslim and sikh communities alike, women embroider odhni [veils] or chaddar [wraps] ornamented with phulkari, literally ‘flower work’ and bagh, garden , a variation where the embroidery completely covers the support material.

Renewal of Folk art with women empowerment

- In Punjab art ‘Phulkari’ is an appealing expression of folk art.. Earlier phulkari played a vital role in the lives of Punjabi girls. The art of Phulkari was learned through techniques and experiences of elders, as one used to embroider her own imaginary world onto a canvas of khaddar. It shows how the role of phulkari develops in modern times.

## 1.3 Research Gap

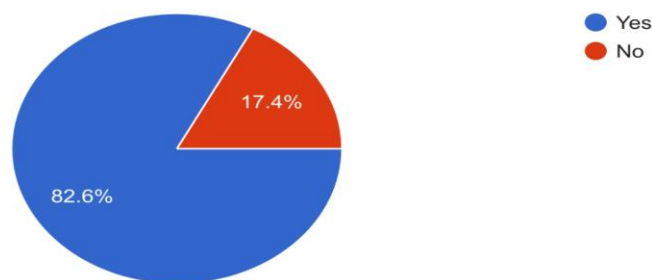
Many research scholars have done research on Phulkari , but mostly choose the Motifs of phulkari , or designs or types of phulkari and author choose this topic because in this research , shows phulkari trends change generation. Phulkari style changes from generation to generation , fabric of phulkari and motifs of phulkari and the process of the phulkari.

### 1.4 Survey

Extensive literature survey, on focused interview, data collection through primary and other sources, analysis and interpretation of data through qualitative research reports, journals, textbooks, articles, published and unpublished documents. The collected information from the literature will be critically examined and analyzed. From the internet [ google scholar, academia, JSTOR, and other sources] relevant literary materials and visual data have been collected for the analysis. This research paper is possible with the help of my grandmother Bibi Pajan Kaur g , with interaction she shares her time period memories of what things they did in the 20th century, what or how they do.

Do you know the difference between Phulkari and Baagh ?

92 responses



This question is about how many people know about their traditional embroidery between phulkari and baagh, 82.6% answered yes they know and 17.4% they don't know.

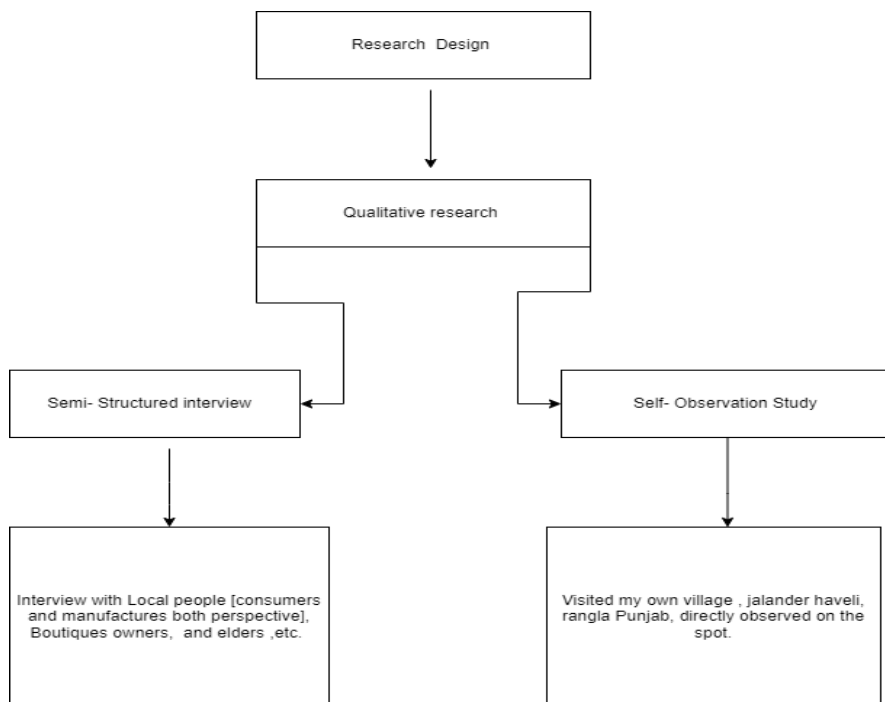


Fig.1.4 Frame work of survey

## 2. Process of Phulkari

Phulkari was made of thick fabrics, especially a thick cotton fabric known as Khaddar. In the 20th century, firstly women prepared cloth in a traditional way. For khaddar dupatta firstly they weave charkha for making thread or material to prepare dupatta. After this that tread rolling on Aterna its a traditionally instrument which helps in rolling thread. And the next step is that thread pasting or joining on Khadi is also traditionally a term which helps to prepare cloth or embroidery and also for Dari bunna. By this process the cloth is ready. After dying with natural pigment , the final step they started needlework , embroidery is created with colorful silken thread and darn stitched on the back of khaddar, a coarse cotton fabric. Darning stitch is used to embroider from the reverse side of the fabric.

## 3. In Their Leisure time

In 20th century ladies whenever they are free they sit together in groups even while they start embroidery [phulkari embroidery] on shawls, dupatta, suits, bed sheets, on stick fans also. Some of them prepared clothes and some started embroidery. In that time girls spend time in these kinds of creative things, they create motifs on fabric. But this is the 21st generation on mobile phones.

## 4. Changing Trends of Phulkari

If we talk about the 20th century Phulkari, there are so many changes. Fabric quality or the style. Whenever I see my grandmother's phulkari, that phulkari from the 20th century before the

partition from Lehnda Punjab, whenever I wear that phulkari I feel royal or how classic that tradition is. Its feeling is different. Its fabric quality is pure Khaddar, a heavy cotton that is locally woven and handmade embroidery with colorful silk thread. And by the generation gap my mother's phulkari is totally different. That phulkari is also from the 20th century. My mother embroidered by herself for her Anand karaj. Its fabric is semi chiffon and embroidery style and quality is so much different from my grandmother's phulkari. But now in the 21st century the trend has totally changed. Girls not embroidered their phulkari by themself even not for their marriage. Hand embroidery converted into machine work. In Fig.4.1 Baagh of my Grandmother, In this Baagh [Phulkari] from the mid-20th century, before the time period of partition. It's my grandmother's phulkari, which was embroidered by her mother in law before her marriage. And my grandmother wore this phulkari for her wedding. Baagh shows this beautiful unique Phulkari, vintage style. This is embroidery on pure khaddar fabric. How beautiful color combinations were used. By this we know about how creative our grandmothers were even at that time they didn't have the source of schooling or social media , they used their own creativity and sometimes they imitated motifs from others dupatta design. By the generation gap in Fig.4.2 Phulkari of my mother, fabric quality is totally different or motifs also , she wore this phulkari on her Anand Karaj. In Fig.4.3 In this image the daughter wore her mothers phulkari. Whenever I wear my mothers phulkari I feel proud of her because she's creative and talented. She embroidered this phulkari by herself and my aunts helped her to complete this phulkari. Fig.4.4 In this about today's era bride 2022, is totally different because today's generation adopt tradition with western style. Jewelry style changed , fabric quality ,

outfit style changed, or today's brides do not carry phulkari on their marriage even not on their Anand Karaj. Fig.4.5 Contemporary trend of wearing Phulkari , Today's generation has not embroidered Phulkari with their hand. That trend totally converted into machines or if they want hand embroidered they got from orders.



Fig.4.1 Baagh [Phulkari] of my Grandmother.[ Before Partition]

Source: By author



Fig.4.2 This Phulkari is from my mother's marriage[1994].

Source- By Author



Fig.4.3 Mothers phulkari carried by her daughter in 2022.

Source - By Author



Fig.4.4 today's era bride 2022

Source - From Akriti by Ritika and shakun , Patiala, collection.



Fig.4.5 the motifs of contemporary era

Source - from fashion tips of google

## 5. Discussion

The fabric used for Phulkari is usually Khaddar, a heavy cotton that is locally woven, darning stitch is used to embroider from the reverse side of fabric. Phulkari is also from that time period of Sikhi, during the 15th century, Bebe Nanaki, the sister of first Guru Nanak Dev ji [1469-1539] practiced Phulkari on shawls and hankies preserved in gurdaspur [punjab].

The influence of Phulkari spreaded in different areas like Nort- western area of India and the phulkari name has been recoined as Tandoori Chikan.

The industrial revolution has ecalstised the design morphed, computerized layout traced in sofis software.

## 6. Conclusion

The conclusion, though, is based upon how fashion and tradition has changed over the period of time for Phulkari in Punjab. Further making it more prominent I have chosen only Punjab region from that when Lehnda Punjab and charda Punjab are one. By this study I did a comparison between three generations from the 20th to 21th century. The one Phulkari of my grandmother in Fig.1.1 that is from Pakistan also creates a relation with two boundaries. After the one generation gap my mother Phulkari in Fig.1.3 has different motifs and fabric and today's era the trend has totally changed , even girls do not carry Phulkari on their wedding. They do not embroider phulkari by themselves even though they do not know how to embroider. Hand embroidery converted into machines. If somebody wants hand embroidery they get it from orders by the group of karigars. In 2005-2010 girls was like simple phulkari even it was not proper phulkari it's kind of copy but in this time from 2020 the same trend came again , girls like that classic and royal style which was wore by our ancestors. Girls still start with motifs of phulkari and fabric, also Khaddar.



## 7. References

- Maskiell, M. (1999). Embroidering the Past: Phulkari Textiles and Gendered Work as “Tradition” and “Heritage” in Colonial and Contemporary Punjab. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 58(2), 361–388. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2659401>
- Tyabji, L. (2008). Tandoori Chikan, Polyester Khadi. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 35(3/4), 250–259. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23006264>
- . Pal, Rampa, “The Phulkari, a Lost Craft”, Delhi, 1955
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287700795\\_Patterns\\_of\\_PhulkariThen\\_and\\_now](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287700795_Patterns_of_PhulkariThen_and_now)
- [https://www.google.com/search?q=2022+bride&sxsrf=ALiCzsajSTpeXs1b2y\\_dMEycKknxyAy-vQ:1670914308539&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjI1b3ugPb7AhVqJaYKHXoqDFUQ\\_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=1517&bih=694&dpr=0.9#imgrc=UOBVMSmXALgt\\_M](https://www.google.com/search?q=2022+bride&sxsrf=ALiCzsajSTpeXs1b2y_dMEycKknxyAy-vQ:1670914308539&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjI1b3ugPb7AhVqJaYKHXoqDFUQ_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=1517&bih=694&dpr=0.9#imgrc=UOBVMSmXALgt_M)
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316433155\\_Phulkari\\_and\\_Bagh\\_folk\\_art\\_of\\_Punjab\\_a\\_study\\_of\\_changing\\_designs\\_from\\_traditional\\_to\\_contemporary\\_time](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316433155_Phulkari_and_Bagh_folk_art_of_Punjab_a_study_of_changing_designs_from_traditional_to_contemporary_time)
- <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1970&context=tsaconf>
- <https://dip.flame.edu.in/pdfs/reports/2015-16/Phulkari%20Report.pdf>
- <http://www.researchguru.net/volume/Volume%2013/Issue%201/RG170.pdf>
- Textbook Handmade in India, A Geographic Encyclopedia of Indian Handicrafts. Edited by Aditi Ranjan And M.P.Ranjan ; Abbeville Press New York London.
- Hitkari S.S, “Phulkari: The Folk Art of Punjab”, Phulkari Publication, New Delhi, 1980
- Kaur G, “Sober Shades Brighten Future of Phulkari”, the Tribune, September, 20, 2003
- Gupta Sonal, “Phulkari: The Art of Stitching”, the Industrial Design Center (IDC), IIT Bomba