

Renewal of Folk art with women empowerment

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Abstract

Punjab has a rich artistic tradition which helps Indian handicraft gigantic. In Punjab art 'phulkari' is appealing expression of folk art. Earlier phulkari plays 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. This work of art mainly use for the purpose of marriage where the phulkari dupatta is gifted to the bride by their parents. Phulkari not only represents tradition and culture of Punjab but also represents hard work, creativity of rural women. Lot of folk art emerge in the history, due to revolution phulkari became modernized mechanization. In few years it has regained popularity within the market due to its unfading beauty and artistry. The skill of untrained artists shifted to profession in modern world. Currently this commercial phulkari has provided living conditions to many rural women and contributed in rural economy by empowering rural women of Punjab. The study reveals the art of leisure time as livelihood in today's world.

Keywords: Phulkari, folk art, culture, rural, symbolism, globalization

1. Introduction

Punjab is well-known for its art and craft. It has unique culture. The women of Punjab have creative and imagination that enables them to make admirable arts. Constitution of India gives equal rights to both men and women. But women still are not treated as equivalent as men (Anchal soni 2015). In olden times women of Punjab were illiterate, but all of them were well trained in the household arts such as spinning and dying, cooking, weaving, sewing, knitting and embroidering. Embroidery is an age old craft of Punjab. Embroidery is a form of ornamentation on fabric with the help of needle and thread.

Phulkari is the glorious textile of Punjab. Phulkari is not only a beautiful traditional art but a symbol of maternal love and faith expressed in embroidery. The word Phulkari comes from Sanskrit words *phul* (flower) and *KARYA* (to do) and thus means to do flower work. (Malik Shabnam Bahar 2011). Mainly Phulkari means flower work. In Punjab, the art of embroidery was given great importance which is knowable from what Guru Nanak Dev ji (1469 – 1538 AD) the founder of Sikhism, said in the sacred book GURU Granth Sahib. "*KadhKasidaPehrehCholi, Ta Tum JanohNari*" implying that an accomplished lady is who knows how to embroider her own costumes.

In Punjab, handicrafts are source of livelihood to a large number of rural poor women. To some extent, it helps curb migration of work and workers from rural to urban areas in

search of better employment. Many government and non-government organizations focusing on improving the conditions of rural women. It also provides part-time employment to women, who traditional practice the craft form. Through jobs the livelihood of women as well as their families increases. As Jawaharlal Nehru said “You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women.”

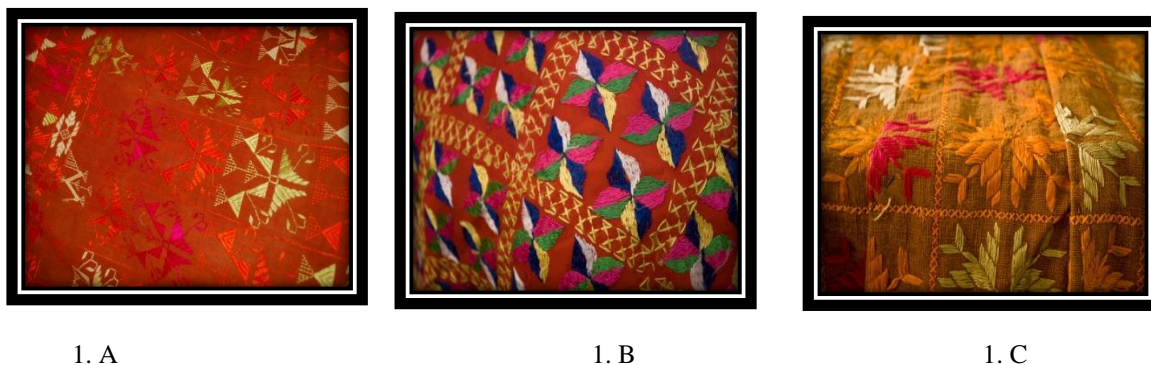


Figure: Close view of traditional phulkaries

Source: online

1.1 Historical Background

Due to lack of evidences and documentations, the history or origin of Phulkari varies from person to person. It is mention in the famous tales of *Heer-Ranjhaby* the poet *Waris Shah*. One more theory which is related to Phulkari is that the jatt tribes of east Punjab are the pioneers of this craft work. The art of Phulkari are also found in the Vedas, the Mahabharata and Guru Granth Sahib. During 15th century, *Bebe Nanaki*, the sister of first Guru of Sikh religion. Guru Nanak Dev ji (1469-1539). The Phulkari shawls and hankies embroidered by Bebe Nanaki preserved in the Gurudaspur (Punjab). Another shawl used by Mai Ganga in her marriage with 5th Sikh Guru, Arjun Dev ji.

It's difficult to outline the exact origin of Phulkari art because of these theories and existing articles.

1.2 Objectives

- To study how Phulkari as a source of income for women
- To study how government and semi-government bodies helping in developing skills of art in people

1.3 Research methodology

This paper is based on interview and observation methods. Data has been collected through primary as well as secondary sources.

Primary data has been collected by taking interviews of embroiders, sellers, customers, supervisors, professors and artists. The open ended questionnaire was prepared to understand role of Phulkari helpful in ones livelihood and to know occurring from olden days till now in making Phulkari. The study was conducted in different bazaars at Jalandhar, Punjab, India. The interviewees selected randomly. The interviewees are in between 25 to 50 in age.

Secondary data has been collected from different books, research papers, library and journals.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The planned design to achieve the objectives of the research as follow:

1. Area of research – is in Jalandhar, Punjab, India
2. The questionnaire was prepared based on various questions related to Phulkari embroidery, techniques, method, material, etc.

2. Phulkari time-honored

The leisure art of Phulkari is favorite of all. The use of reserved base color with limited colors of threads in embroidery tells the story of imagination and creative power of unlettered rural women. Phulkari and Baugh were the classic embroidered shawls from rural Punjab. Phulkaris are the main part of dowry and wear in ceremonies connected with marriage.



2. A



2.B

Figure Showing art for all age groups

Source: Online

3. Traditional material of phulkari

The basic material used for Phulkari is handspun cloth known as “Khaddar”. In past, it is available in few shades such as white, red, blue, black and brown. Embroidery is done with pure silk. It is called pat which is untwisted silken floss. Available in green, white, crimson red, orange, pink and blue.

In olden days, the process of making Phulkari is organic without any use of chemical, either for dyeing, for strengthening the thread or the fabric. Dyeing colors were extracted from leaves, flowers, barks and roots. The main centers of dyeing were Amritsar and Jammu (Das1992). With the change in time traditional material changes.



Figure 3.A



Figure 3.B

Figure: Showing basic material used in phulkari, 3A showing clothe and 3B showing threads

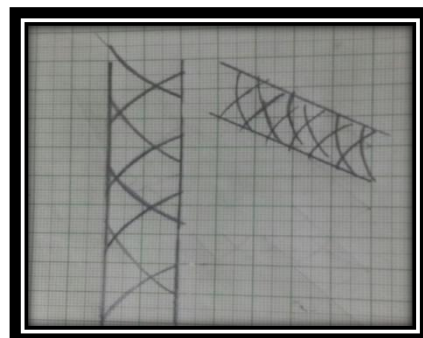
Source: 3A online and 3B by author

4. Technique of stitches

Phulkari is known as stitch art form of Punjab, which is simple but attractive to all age groups. In Phulkari embroidery is done on the back side of the cloth and patterns itself occurs on the front. It is an art of handling single stitch. The darning stitch is the main in traditional Phulkari. The quality of Phulkari depends on the length of the stitches. In Phulkari each part is embroidered in single color. Either horizontal or vertical or diagonal stitches are used.



4. A



4.B

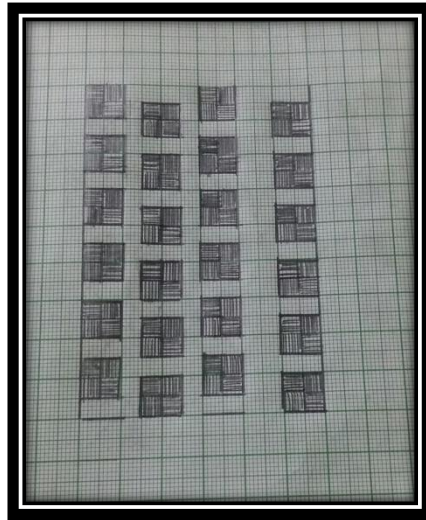
Figure: Showing the technique of stitches

Source: 4A online and 4B By author

5. Types of phulkaries

The type of work, patterns and style categorized Phulkari as Phulkari, Bagh and Chobe.

- Phulkari



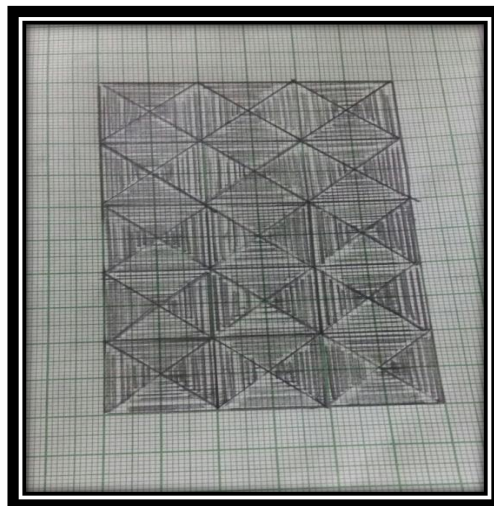
5.A

Figure: Showing placement of motifs in phulkari

Source: By author

In which base is visible, simple but creative designs without any drawn work on clothe. Embroidery done by counting threads. Only Sanchi Phulkari is type of phulkari in which patterns outline drawn on clothe before embroidery.

- Bagh means garden, is a kind of Phulkari

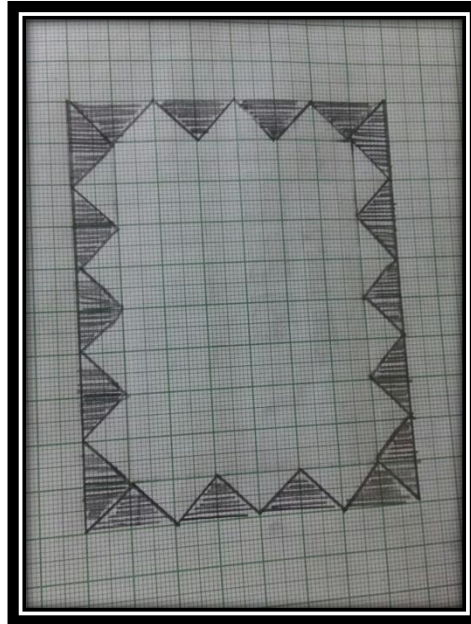


5.B

Figure: Showing placement of motifs in bagh Source: By author

in which base is not visible due to richly ornamented with continuous design. There were huge varieties of bagh ,depend on its pattern of embroidery. Such as Satranga, Panchranga, Vari-da, Ghunghat or Sari-pallau, Bawan, Meenakari or Ikka, Kaudi bagh.

- Chobes is third kind of phulkari



5.C

Figure: Showing placement of motifs in chobe

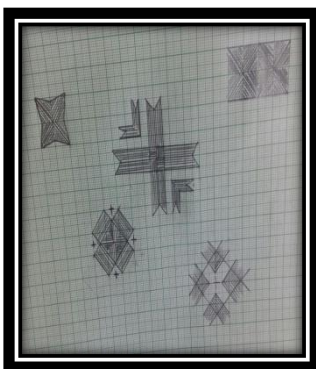
Source: By author

this has plain base in the center. Embroidery is done at edges of fabric only.

Every Phulkari has its own use and value in women lives. Such as Chobe and Suber were wedding Phulkaris, Saloo as household wear, Til Patra shawls as gift for servants and peasants during marriage, Wari-da-bagh as trousseau Bagh, Ghunghat Bagh as head cover shawl, so on.

6. Subject matter

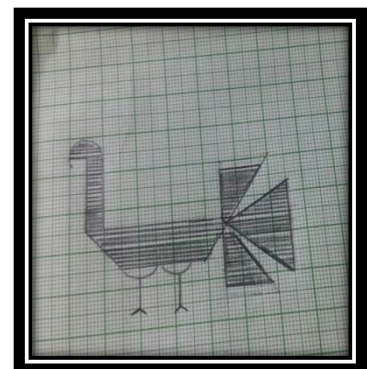
There are numerous varieties of motifs used in Phulkari embroidery. The motifs are basically from surroundings. With years of practice women could create or embroider freely without any reference of pattern books (Pal 1955). Women create designs just by multidirectional usage of draining stitch. In motifs one can find women imagination, thoughts and emotions. Some of motifs are geometric, floral, birds and animals, jewelry, miscellaneous motifs, etc.



6.A



6.B



6.C

Figure: Showing some motifs of phulkaries

Source: Figure 6.A, 6.C by author and 6.B online

a. Change in subject matter

Little changes in old designs are known as Kharcha. In today time period the layout of design is combination of two to four designs or motifs from past. Today Phulkari is available in unlimited colures. Earlier the work is done on the back side by counting clothes. Now the work is done on the right side of the clothe. Now design is planned properly before by designer or the shopkeeper.



6.1.A



6.1.B

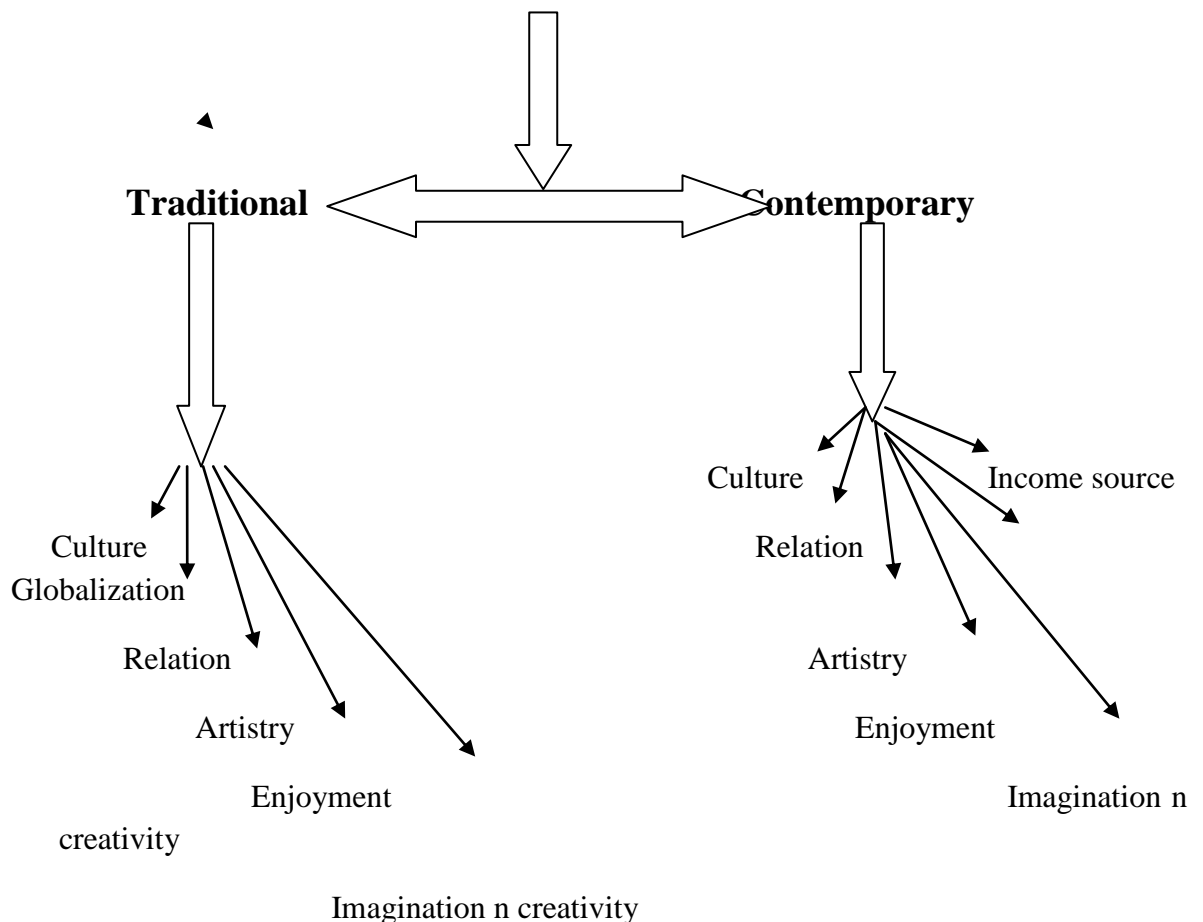


6.1.C

Figure: showing changes in subject matter

Source: 6.1.A,6.1.B online and 6.1.c by author

7. Phulkari as source of income for women Phulkari



7.A Diagram: Showing how role of phulkari develops in modern time

Source: By author

8. Government steps for skill development of phulkari

In our developing nation, culture is one of the key elements for an economy. When we talk about culture development of handicrafts stands behind. For the country the source of earning for an exchange it can be said that development of handicrafts always maintains the aesthetic values and due to its expert craftsmanship exquisites.

Punjab has its own artistic tradition to provide an ample development of handicraft industries in India to make us proud. To reach the next level Punjab is taking a huge step for its growth. There are many associations who are developing the handicrafts for economic balance as well as creating an immense contribution to develop the skills of women's creativity. One of the main handicrafts which Punjab government is spreading internationally is Phulkari art work.

There are number of industries who are promoting handicrafts to India as well as outside India. They are:

- Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation Limited (PSIEC)
- The All India Handicraft Board
- Indian Institute of Craft and Design (IICD)

There are number of NGO's in Punjab working for handicrafts. They are:

- All Indian Salai Kadai Kender society, Gurdaspur
- Welfare Youth Club, Patiala
- Sadbhavan Society, Ludhiana
- We For You Welfare Foundation, Patiala
- VirsaVihar, Amritsar

9. Research findings and discussion

The results were studied to design the conclusion. There are 30 interviewee, out of which 11 were males and 19 were females. Through study it is analyzed that this art is olden and related to women more as compared to men. 90% males agree with statement that this art is for women. 85% interviewee agrees that this government and semi-government bodies helps in developing skills as well as in livelihood. But all government and semi-government bodies are not doing their best for its development. May be this is due to unfavorable conditions or because of corruption, which is the biggest problem in the country. 98% agrees that traditional Phulkari is more attractive then contemporary Phulkari.

Traditional Phulkari is made for reason such as used in marriage ceremonies and it's the main part of dowry in olden days, but today's Phulkari is made without any reason just for business purpose. Contemporary Phulkari is easy in making and helps in living standard of women.

10. Conclusion

The paper concludes that although, original form of traditional Phulkari is fading. Many NGOs and industries have brought around the art and skill sector of Punjab. Traditional Phulkari do not have either purpose or quality for which they were made. Government has been working for the upgrade of Phulkari by organizing special training programs, fairs, exhibitions, competitions, so on. The additional side of this skill development is that it provides source of income to many dependent. Working with different NGOs is the easy way for home making woman as they can work according to their own conditions. As developing skills helpful for uneducated or rural people to mind their own work with comfort. Helps women for leading better life with a source of income.

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