

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results and Discussions**

This chapter deals with the findings of the study entitled ‘Documentation of Phulkari Motifs for Its Revival and Sustenance’. The data was gathered and analyzed in tabulated and untabulated form. The results achieved have been discussed in the presented chapter.

The results and discussions are in accordance with the objectives of the study and are discussed under the following heads.

#### **4.1 Documenting the process of phulkari making**

- a. Market research to understand and comprehend the awareness about the craft
- b. Market research to understand the product range of the craft in market
- c. Documentation of phulkari geometric motifs most extensively used commercially in the present market
- d. Documentation of the craft process traditional and contemporary

#### **4.2 Studying and documenting different types of phulkari by visiting museums**

#### **4.3 Documenting and creating a motif vocabulary in terms of, name of the motif, Its inspiration, Socio cultural significance, Stitches & technique used to create the motif**

#### **4.4 Training the artisans of self-help groups to recreate the lost motifs of the embroidery using traditional technique**

#### **4.5 Providing wider avenues to the crafts person by developing a product range using revived motifs for niche markets**

#### **4.6 Filming a documentary of the craft and its motifs, to create awareness about its importance and rich heritage**

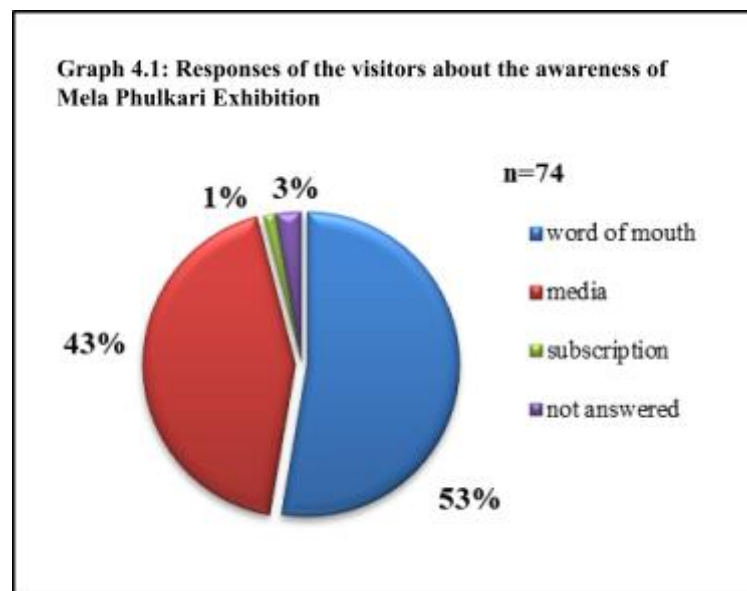
#### **4.1 Documenting the process of phulkari making**

##### **a. Market research to understand the awareness about the craft**

The researcher conducted the pilot study in order to understand the craft, the craft

awareness and its place in the market. The survey was conducted at an exhibition at India Habitat Center, where visitors who were willing to be part of the survey were interviewed using a semi structured interview schedule.

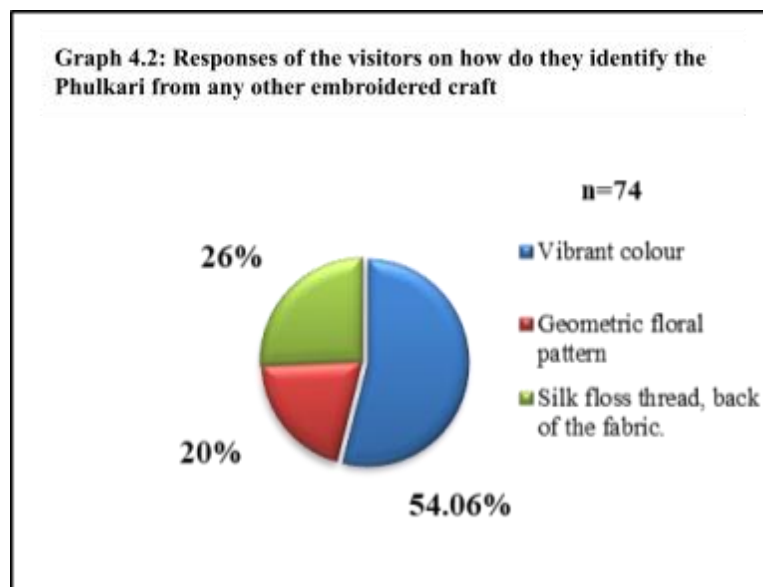
The responses received for the semi structured interview scheduled were computed and graphically represented for a comparative understanding. The problem was addressed to the respondents with the help of broad questions based on the exhibition as well as the craft. The idea of posing questions on exhibition was to get a reflection of the concern of the respondents towards the craft and its existence. The majority of the respondents had known about the exhibition by word of mouth from the organizers and the curator. Out of the total respondents only 23% of them had witnessed the earlier series of Mela Phulkari. This shows the inclination of the people towards a craft, and their loyal curiosity to witness what innovative dimensions have been taken up. 98% of the respondents said that they have an inclination towards Indian traditional crafts. But most of the respondents on interviewing revealed that they were not able to identify the traditional or contemporary form of any traditional craft, which is also a challenge.



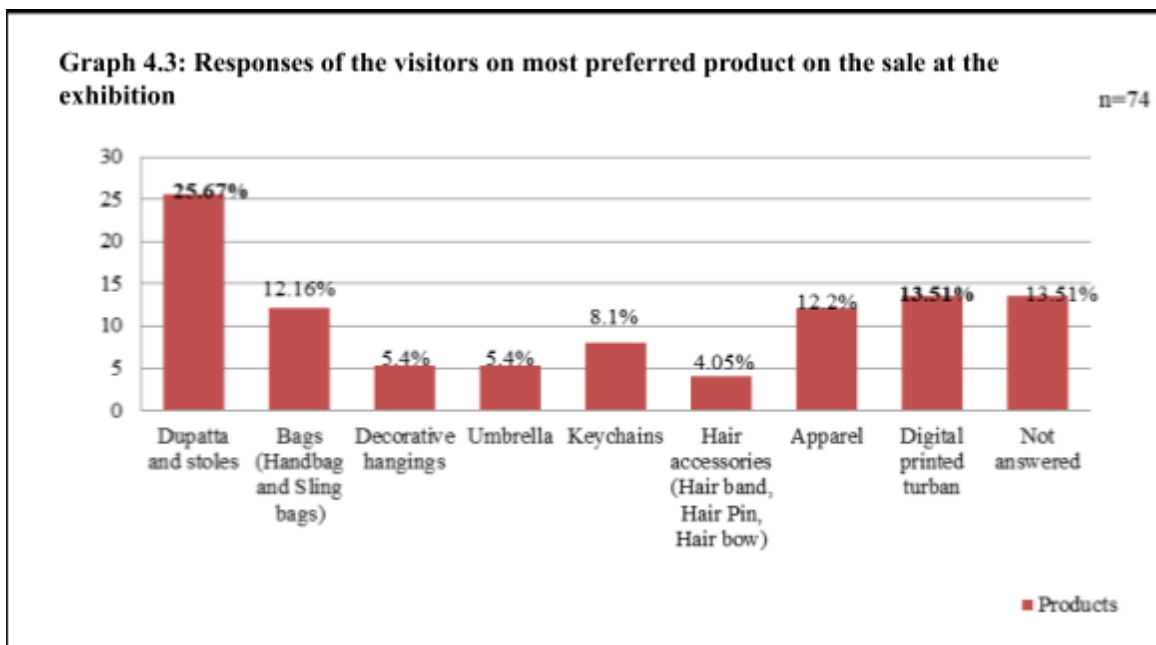
The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the embroidered craft of the Punjab to which 96% respondents reported that they were well aware and the remaining 4% were not. These 4% were students, professionals from diverse fields, and home-makers. The biggest challenge identified here is to create awareness of the craft

universally. To be able to identify the craft that was handmade and to be able to differentiate it from machine made.

The responses on how phulkari can be identified from any other craft, maximum respondents with a huge percentage of 54.06% reported that the bright colour of the craft was the only distinguished identification for the craft whereas 26% reported as the silk floss thread and the plain reverse side of the fabric helps them to identify that the craft was phulkari from Punjab and the remaining 20% said that it is the geometric floral pattern, which helps them to differentiate between phulkari from any other craft.



Punjab has many other crafts like phulkari that are exclusively made only in Punjab, but 99% of the respondents were not aware of these crafts like, *punja durrie* weaving, *nala* braiding, metal crafts, wood inlay work and *jutti* making. The respondents preferred *dupattas*, *stoles* (25%) and digitally printed *mulmul* turbans (13.51%) over other products.

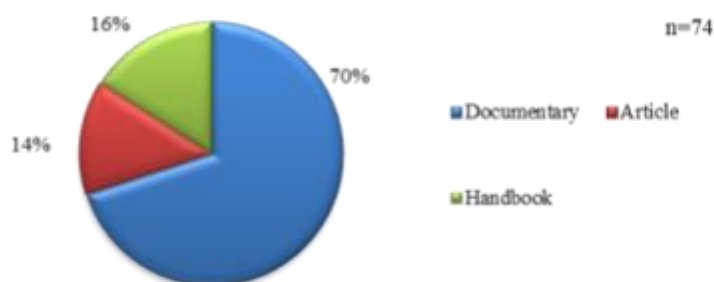


The price range of the hand embroidered products was also towards the higher side depending upon craftsmanship involved. The products were digitally printed on cotton as stoles and fabrics that can be used to stitch *kurtis*. They also had key-chains and hair-bands that were also appreciated by the visitors in terms of the quality and the price.

The silk stoles, scarves and dress materials were available in hand embroidered and digital print as well but were priced same as hand embroidered products. It was also observed that as the majority of the visitors were from college going age group and therefore could not afford to purchase the products on sale due to their heavy prices.

The respondents were also enquired about their inclination toward traditional textiles; this was done mainly to understand the market acceptability of products if the researcher introduces a line. It was also enquired what inspires them to wear traditional clothing to comprehend what the main influences are playing a major role in molding their dressing habits. Majority of the respondents reported that they are inspired by their family practices and influenced by Bollywood. The respondents reported that they would love to wear a phulkari for festival celebrations or a wedding, as the bright colours make it lively for any festivity. Understanding the inclination of the respondents to this craft the researcher also enquired about whether they are familiar with the fact of how this craft is made.

**Graph 4.4: Responses of the visitors on preferred method to know the history of phulkari**



The respondents' reports gave a data of 70% of them who were not aware about how a *phulkari* was made traditionally and the story of this craft. The best way to educate the people about any craft is to educate them about the process, the technique and the method followed to make this craft, through handouts, videos and books and articles. The maximum number of the respondent's i.e 70% reported that they preferred documentary over article or a handbook to know about the history of phulkari. Documentary also gives access to showcase a larger amount of detailed information than a book or an article. The moving visuals supported with the audio note also hold the interest and transmission of detailed information to the audience is achieved efficiently.

#### **b. Market research to understand the product range of the craft in market**

The researcher in continuation also conducted a market survey as well as an online survey to study the existing products, their motifs, material used, colours used, quality of embroidery, price range and views and responses of the shopkeepers on salability of a particular product. The markets of Delhi, Haryana and Punjab were explored for this survey. The survey revealed that the products of all categories were available in the market. Product categories like apparels, home decor, accessories and gifting items. Products range included *dupattas*, stoles and suits under apparel, table runner, napkin holder, and cushions under home decor, bags, *juttis* and purse under accessories and file folder, notebook cover and keychain under gifting items.



Plate 4.1: Some examples of the phulkaris available in the market

The motifs used were mainly the geometric motifs and its variations. The materials used for the base was cotton-poly blend fabric of low quality and rayon silk floss embroidery threads.

Some products like *dupattas* and stoles were also made with chiffon, chinon, crepe and kota-doria apart from cotton-polyester. The embroidery thread used was in a variety of new shades like blue, purple, mauve that were not used traditionally. Researcher also observed that the products especially apparels were also embellished with sequin and stones which was a new adaptation to craft. Fancy edgings on *dupattas* were also seen.

The craft as observed in the market was mostly available in computerized embroidered suit sets. Few shops had hand embroidered phulkari *dupattas* and stoles. Some stores were seen selling products made of acrylic thread under the name phulkari. The motifs on these products were nothing like phulkari but were floral *jaals* embellished with *gota* as in **plate 4.1**. The quality of the computerized phulkari embroidery was inferior; the feel and essence of the craft seemed to be completely lost. The reverse side of the fabric had loose uncut ends of the bobbin thread. The vendors also kept *dupattas* made in pure tussar silk embellished with densely hand embroidered darning stitches in monotone colour the same as the fabric. The quality of such hand embroidered *dupattas* was better as compared to observed in the local market. Vendors reported that the price range for products varied significantly depending whether it was handmade or made with computerized embroidery. *Dupattas* and stoles were priced between rupees 500 to

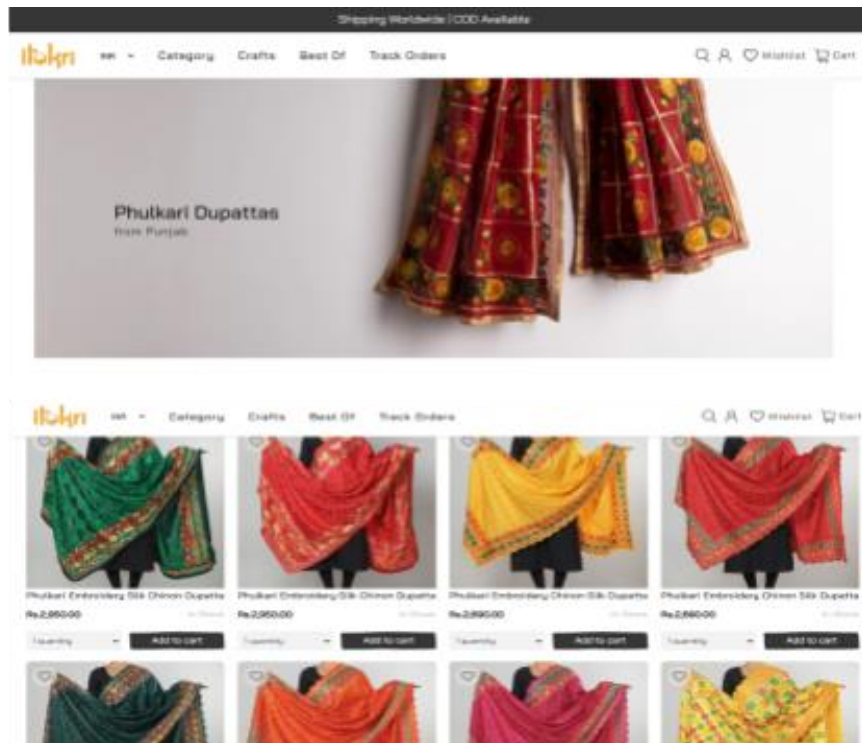


Plate 4.2: Products on sale over online platforms  
Source: <https://www.itokri.com/collections/phulkari-work-dupattas>

rupees 5000, while phulkari bags and shoes were priced between rupees 1500 to rupees 6000. Vendors also reported that there was a great demand for the craft. The demand was so much that meeting the ends from an embroiderer to the customer is difficult to achieve as hand embroidered products take a lot of time to be delivered. They also stated that the majority of the market cannot afford to buy a hand embroidered product due to its high cost. Therefore the introduction of machine or computerized phulkari embroidery was done, to cater each market segment and its varieties of consumers.

### **c. Documentation of phulkari geometric motifs, most extensively used commercially in the present day market**

The most important factor involved while documenting a craft or a creative art is identification of its authenticity. To understand the resources and materials required to create that authentic craft. **Bhandari (2016)** in her webinar on 'Best Practices for Documentation of Handicrafts in the Field' at The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University discusses in depth that documenting crafts involves a multifaceted strategy because we are dealing with problems that cross multiple fields such





Plate 4.3: Visit to a phulkari vendors home in Patiala, Punjab

as sociology, psychology, religion, culture, economy, and many others. Many traditions and routines have disappeared over time as a result of modern lifestyles and changes in the way of life. Related trades have also become outdated as a result. Historically, crafts goods were utilitarian; shape and function were inextricably linked.

The researcher visited Punjab from 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec to 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018. While meeting with Mrs. Rekha Mann the researcher discussed the details of the workshop modules to be undertaken in Patiala for the phulkari artisans. The researcher got the opportunity to meet various retailers and wholesalers of machine and hand embroidered phulkari products through Mrs. Rekha Mann. While the researcher interacted with the retailers and wholesalers; she also got more contacts as followed in snow ball technique.



Plate 4.4: (Left) Mr. Mahinder Singh a phulkari block printer and his son (right) printing a phulkari dupatta for a client, Patiala



As stated by Mahinder Ji, the blocks are made in Amritsar. The designs are mostly made by using and mixing the available blocks. He says creating a geometric pattern doesn't require a lot of expertise. Just by using a few blocks of similar design and rearranging them in different patterns will give you a different design. He also states that many times the customers bring their old machine embroidered suits to explain the kind of pattern or design they want to get printed for embroidery. More often he says that his lady customers ask him to print the similar design as given on the *dupatta* available with her to be printed on a new set of suit, so as to use the same *dupatta* with more than one set of suit.

The following collection of geometric and a few stylized motifs of phulkari are being taken from Mr. Mahinder Singh. He is the block printer residing in Tripadi market, Patiala. He is taking forward the business of block printing textiles for phulkari embroidery done by his father.

### **The process of making the printing paste**

- i. Materials:** one kilogram of *Kikar ki Gond* aka Gum Arabic in five liters of water. Pidotint Colour concentrates in blue colour.
- ii. Method:** Soak gum Arabic in water for five days. Keep mixing the gum with water between intervals of 5 to 10 hours. Sieve the final achieved thick viscous solution for a smooth consistency. Mix the solution with blue colour to make the paste ready for block printing.
- iii. Tools required:** Printing table, block printing tray and choice of designs on wooden blocks.



Plate 4.5: Block, printing pigment, and block printed crepe for phulkari dupatta

**iv. Cost of printing:** Depends upon the size of motif, intricacy of design, placement of design and fabric to be printed on. Generally one inch of motif single print costs around 5 to 8 rupees and a five inch motif would cost 20 to 30 rupees.

#### **d. Documentation of the craft process traditional and contemporary**

Punjab is invariably associated with colorful phulkaris and *baghs* with its rich textures, intense hues inspired by its rich history of traditions. The major part of any phulkari or *bagh* consists of an untwisted silken thread creating surface darning stitches forming patterns inspired by surroundings. It is an invaluable family heirloom that is handed down to generations and is saved for auspicious and important occasions and celebrations in family. Phulkari is an important part of Punjabis and their culture. It is one of the most prized and valued textiles from Punjab. It is admired for the incredible amount of talent and patience necessary to create it. Indian artisans have been recognized for design innovation and adaptation rather than documentation since centuries. The revival of the craft of phulkari demands majorly a new dimension and direction to enrich the vocabulary of traditional motifs, symbols and styles. Documenting the design vocabulary of phulkari craft will not only help in reviving the craft's design language but will also aid the artisans to explore these designs and move towards a stable and sustainable livelihood.

Since there were no pattern books that were developed by the Punjabi women, their only reference to designs and patterns were the phulkaris and *baghs* already embroidered. The technique of phulkari embroidery was passed down to the younger generation by word of mouth, it therefore led to the variation in the designs and patterns of the embroidery from community to community and region to region.

The embroidery has undergone changes in terms of its technique, designs, patterns and also materials. **Gupta (2014)** notes these changes by documenting the reflections of the artisans who have been witness to this change of the art form. The technique of phulkari making used to be completely organic. The raw materials were locally sourced. A most common local resource was cotton that was used both by urban and rural women. The base fabric khaddar was woven by the women at home using hand spun cotton yarn. It was then dyed using vegetable dyes and was prepared for embroidery. The silk floss was

purchased from the hawkers who carried the skeins in the form of locally used terms *lachhiyan* or *guttiyan* that were commonly dyed in Amritsar.

Preparation of the base fabric began from sourcing the right yarn that was hand spun by women at home. The cotton thread was locally called *sut*. The spinning of the cotton for weaving was usually done by the daughters of the *zamindar* family and handed to the weavers or as locally called as *julaha*. The cloth was woven, washed thoroughly and then was dyed accordingly. The fabric was woven on pit looms with narrow widths. Hence it had to be stitched together using multiple panels in order to achieve the width of a *dupatta* or shawl. The complete width invariable consisted of two and a half panels that were hand stitched lengthwise to form the base of phulkari. Sometimes to achieve the width of the fabric the panels were joined widthwise too this was mainly done in the central panel. The width of standard khaddar depends upon its end use i.e for a shawl it used to be between 3 meter lengthwise and 2 meter width wise and for *dupatta* it used to be 2.5 meter length wise and 1.5 meter widthwise. Apart from khaddar there were two more kinds of base fabric used for phulkari embroidery namely *chaunsa khaddar* and *halwan khaddar*. These were of finer variety and were difficult to work on because of the fine weave. The main centers that produced these were Lahore and Amritsar and these were used by the women of west Punjab especially from Hazara and Rawalpindi (Naik, 1996)

The fabric was thoroughly washed before it was dyed with locally available vegetable dyes. The women had knowledge of extracting dyes from various sources like roots, barks, leaves and flowers. Some of these included the flame of the forest (*palasa*), bark of acacia (*kikar*), indigo (*neel*) and Indian madder (*manjeeth*). *Kikar da satt* a form of local gum arabic, was used as mordant and to prevent colour bleeding. Once the fabric was dyed it was washed with *fitkari* or alum to remove extra unabsorbed colour and give it a lasting effect. The fabric was dyed in shade to colour bleached caused by direct sunlight. (Gupta, et.al., 2019)

The silk floss used to embroider the phulkari embroidery was locally called *pat*. The embroiderers sometimes used cotton yarn to teach the craft to younger girls; this cotton embroidery thread was called *suta* and it was usually only white in colour. The social norms did not allow younger women to go to the market for buying materials. The senior women usually would make a list of required materials and their quantities and would

procure the raw material weekly. The literature also reveals that the yarn was often sold street side by the women known as *golianis* who belonged to the poor nomadic tribes. These women usually sold items like toys, yarns, needle and silk floss. To prepare the skeins of the silk floss before embroidery, these were washed and were smacked against the mud wall of the house. The pat was allowed to dry stuck on the wall till it fell on the ground once it was completely dry. This process made the floss fluffy. This skein was then put around the knees and was transferred in the form of small batches of reels to be used while embroidery. The silk floss was available in more or less seven shades of colour that were majorly used. The embroiderers in the west were known to use predominantly the golden yellow and magenta as their major colour of the embroidery, whereas in the east there was not such predominance of the colours. Women embroiderers of east Punjab used up to all seven colours available in the variety of the *baghs* that they embroidered for various occasions. Silk was also an inevitable choice because of its feel, shine and purity.

To begin the process of embroidery of a phulkari or *bagh* an auspicious day was selected and prayers were done by inviting elderly women of the village. Prasad was distributed amongst all and the family and materials were blessed for its beautiful fulfillment. The pieces were joined together with majorly three types of hand stitches: the plain stitch, slip stitch and run and fell stitch. The choice of stitches for joining two fabrics was carefully done to avoid obvious joint markings and to avoid bulk at seams. The seam allowance was kept around 0.5 cms to have enough fabric to hold the pieces together yet not cause the extra bulk of the coarse khaddar.

The researcher observed while documenting the artifacts at the museum that there were many ways of commencing the phulkari without any reference. The main observation was that the embroiderer marked the layout of the *bagh* with a running stitch to demarcate the areas required for the borders, the field and the ends. These were then highlighted along with the choice of stitches like herringbone stitch or cross stitch and then the patterns were embroidered between the demarcated portions. The second method according to the literature suggests that the embroidery used a broom stitch as reference to mark the distance between the motifs starting from one end of the fabric. For the pieces like *bagh* that were densely embroidered were marked by folding the fabric to get the exact center and start the embroidery from the center of the piece instead of starting it from the end or by demarcating the layout. For *baghs* like *sainchi* the embroidery was always

started from the central lotus followed by marking the border and ends and then filling the field with various multidirectional motifs.

The embroidery was done without use of the embroidery frame that is used in recent times. The typical position of the embroiderer was to sit against the wall on the floor with one knee raised to support the fabric portion that was to be embroidered. It was taken utmost care that the rest of the embroidered fabric or the embroidered fabric was covered in white muslin to avoid its contact with dirt or stains. The traditional geometric phulkari was invariably made without outlining the actual motif. Counting the number of warp and weft of the base fabric was the only method to achieve the size of motif required. The distance between two motifs in a geometric *bagh* was added to the area required to be embroidered and the second motif was once again begun from the center of the marked piece. Counting was always relied upon to get an equidistant exquisite pattern of a *bagh* for the beginners or learner of the craft. The elderly women found no need to count the number of yarns as through their experience the approximation of the distance was gauged and the embroidery was done.

Women sat together in the afternoon siesta hours to embroider their pieces. They would sit in group locally called as *trijan* or *trinjan* in a veranda i.e an open compound or near a well-ventilated place like door entrances locally called as *deli*. Sometimes many embroiderers worked on one piece from different directions on different sections of the *bagh* and when a friend came to pay a visit she would often join and embroider a unique motif as a token of her presence or *yaad di nishani*.

The process of embroidering the *bagh* tradition involved a lot of patience and perseverance. Although it was not mandatory to embroider a phulkari or *bagh* in each household, it lasted for several years, maybe because it was connected to the rituals followed mostly during auspicious occasions. There are many omens that are believed by Punjabi women while commencing a new piece of *bagh* or phulkari; like if a person who is malicious or envious of a woman embroiderer's skill should not be standing close to the embroiderer when she casts the first stitch. Also like if anyone sneezes while taking the first casting stitch the embroidery was stopped there and was started after sometime or was postponed for the next day.

The designs and patterns were often shared and copied from each other, the women

used to teach each other the techniques that they learnt and its application in creating newer motifs to make their *bagh* a grand magnificent and unique piece. The women were also highly inspired from the surroundings. The social events of those times are often reflected in the pieces like *sainchi* embroidery. They are also reflected in the geometric style of *baghs* which are called by the motifs embroidered on them, for example, *mirchi bagh*, *velaniya da bagh* etc.

The embroidery was done using a sharp pointed needle between 8-12 sizes, these were medium in length and had large eye to draw fluffy silk floss. The embroiderer took care of keeping the tension of each stitch equal or with minimum pull to keep the yarn fluffiness as it would contribute to covering the base of the fabric completely, therefore more the tension of the yarn, the more the strain on the stitch and lesser the coverage of the floss on the fabric. The casting and the ending stitches in the embroidery were never done using knots. For the casting stitch the embroiderer would take a small back stitch to secure the end of the stitch into the fabric and then begin to embroider the motif. It was also observed while in the field that the embroiderer secured the embroidery thread using a double strand thread and fixing it using a lark's head knot. This helped in achieving a neat and knot free reverse side of the embroidery. For the closing stitch i.e towards the end of the embroidery thread the thread was laid approximately one inch under the already embroidered areas on the face side of the fabric. Due to the fluffiness of the yarn the laid thread would camouflage leaving the reverse side of the fabric as neat and finished as the face side. To start embroidering in continuation to the earlier closed stitch, the process remained the same where a small back stitch was made and the extra thread at the end was tucked under the already embroidered area.

#### **d.i Embroidery Characteristics**

Hand embroidered crafts have many facets to it that mostly go unnoticed. A detailed analysis of the museum pieces was done to study and understand various features of the embroidery. These features were identified and documented. These were majorly categorized into technical characteristics and ornamental characteristics.

**d.i.a The technical characteristics** included aspects that are considered crucial while execution of an embroidery stitch like type of stitch, direction of the stitch, outline stitches



and filling stitches. The most common type of stitches used in phulkari and *bagh* are discussed and analyzed as below

### 1. Running stitch

The running stitch is the most common stitch used in the phulkari embroidery pattern. It is used for outlining the motifs or patterns used in the field or borders. It is also used for creating the guideline base pattern for phulkari *bagh*. This stitch is also known as the straight stitch, also known as '*kachcha taropa*' or '*chalda taropa*' in local language. It is made by running the needle and thread in

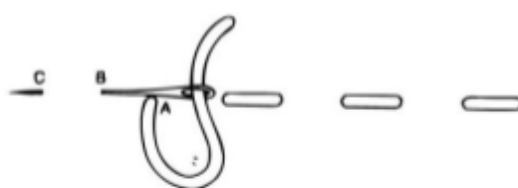


Plate 4.6: Schematic diagram of a running stitch

Source: <https://www.sewmamasew.com/january2014/IndygoJunction3.jpg>

and out of the fabric in equal or varying lengths. Essentially, the running stitch is more visible on the outer side of the fabric than it is on the underside. The stitch length depends upon the fineness of the embroidery the smaller the stitch length the finer the embroidery.



Plate 4.7: An example of running stitch in phulkari

Image Courtesy: National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

The phulkari in plate 4.7 is embroidered with a cotton thread dyed with yellow vegetable dye. The use of running stitch can be seen along the widthwise border towards the end of the piece. The running stitch is used in double fashion to create a thick border outline.

## 2. Darning stitch

Darning stitch was locally called as *kacha taropa* or *pola taropa*. It is basically several rows of running stitches following one direction but may be of any desired length. The surface floats of the embroidery thread usually form a pattern. Each row of running stitches consists of a long float on the top with only a few fabric threads picked up by the needle on the wrong side. The long floats of each row are evenly stitched so they lay just below short spaces of row directly above to resemble a 'brick-repeat' design.



Plate 4.8: Schematic diagram of darning stitch  
source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-techniques/darning-stitch>



Plate 4.9: A detailed view of darning stitch used in *sainchi* phulkari for filling  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

The plate 4.9 is a classic example of the darning used in most of the *sainchi* phulkaris. These stitches are used in multi direction as the motif outline demands. The embroiderers

have been very exploratory while using this stitch and this is evident from the other samples that were studied.

### 3. Surface satin stitch

The surface satin stitch is a technique whereby the stitches are worked in close, parallel rows to create a shape. They are used to fill in all or part of a design. At first glance, the surface satin stitch looks like the satin stitch, but instead of the stitches being taken across both the surface and reverse of the ground material, a surface satin stitch only covers the surface of the cloth. It is an economical way to obtain the look of the basic satin stitch. The floral motif in plate 4.11 is an example of the surface satin stitch extensively used in phulkari embroidery to create geometric motifs that entirely cover the base of the fabric



Plate 4.10: Schematic diagram of surface satin stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/surface-satin-stitch>



Plate 4.11: An example of surface satin stitch used in border of sainchi phulkari  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

#### 4. Back stitch

The backstitch in sewing is usually used to attach two pieces of cloth together, also known as '*bakhiya*' in local language. Back stitch is most often used as a straight outline stitch. Its simple line effect is seen in various Indian and western embroideries. This stitch also forms a base line for other decorative stitches.



Plate 4.12: Schematic diagram of back stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/back-stitch>



Plate 4.13: An example of back stitch in outline of the motif  
Image courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi

The back stitch was mostly seen in the outlining of the motifs and borders of the *baghs* and *phulkaris*. The Plate 4.13 exhibits the back stitch in red silk floss. The tension of the back stitch was seen to be more than the filling stitch. The embroiderer here proved to be of a true designing skill where without changing the strands of the silk floss they were able to achieve a finer stitch by twisting the floss a little and by increasing the tension of the silk floss.

## 5. Split stitch

Split stitch is worked like a stem stitch, except when the needle emerges it splits the working yarn; the final effect resembles a thin chain stitch. Similar to the backstitch, the split stitch creates a solid line. But its braid-like texture is all its own. This stitch is another good option for text and outlines, but also works well for filling in designs.



Plate 4.14: Schematic diagram of split stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/split-stitch>



Plate 4.15: An example of split stitch used for the outline of the motifs  
Image courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

The Split stitch here is seen in the outlines of the motif. The careful picking of the yarn in the base fabric is seen in plate 4.15. The main way of observing this is the manipulation of the stitch according to the shape of motifs helps the embroiderer to get a smooth curved embroidered line. This modification helps in translating the vision of the embroiderer. One must note that none of the outline stitches are covered with the filling stitches. This is a unique way of balancing each stitch.



## 6. Chain stitch

Basic chain stitch locally known as *janjir taropa*, it is one of the most popular embroidery stitches for outlining or, if worked out closely for filling an area.

The chain stitch was also widely used in *sainchi* phulkaris. These usually constituted the outlines of the naturalistic motifs like humans, birds and animals. The stitch here is seen embroidered with a single strand of silk floss as it forms a fine border to create the sharp shape of the motif.

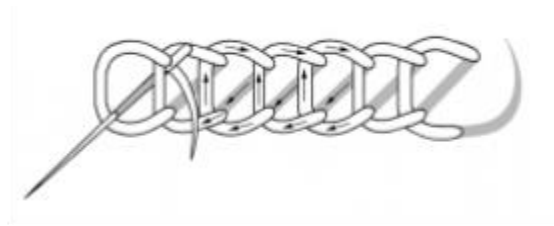


Plate 4.16: Schematic diagram of chain stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/chain-stitch>



Plate 4.17: An example of chain stitch in the outline of the motif  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi



## 7. Herringbone stitch

Herringbone stitch locally called as *macchi taropa* is a popular embroidery stitch often used for borders. This basic overlapping stitch is sometimes also referred to as catch stitch when used in sewing. This stitch forms a foundation that can be decorated with a second colour.

A rare sighting of the herringbone used as a filling stitch is seen in plate 4.19 where the borders are commonly seen embroidered with this stitch but the filling of the peacock motif here is unusual and rare. The experimental mind of the embroiderer here is seen applying the versatility of stitch to make it appear as the feather of the peacock.



Plate 4.18: Schematic of a herringbone stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/herringbone-stitch>



Plate 4.19: An example of the herringbone stitch in the outline and a filling stitch  
Image Courtesy :The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi.

## 8. Cross stitch

Basic cross stitch's simplicity and versatility make it a highly popular stitch. Cross are usually worked in rows of even, slanted stitches, first from right to left laying down half crosses, then back from left to right to complete them.

The plate 4.21 is an example of a phulkari border embroidered using cotton thread in yellow, white, indigo and mint green colour. Such pieces were embroidered by the young girls who were learning the craft of embroidery phulkari as it was easier for them to handle the thread and master the technique before they started using silk floss. The silk was also expensive and wasting it while trying the hands on the craft was a costly affair.

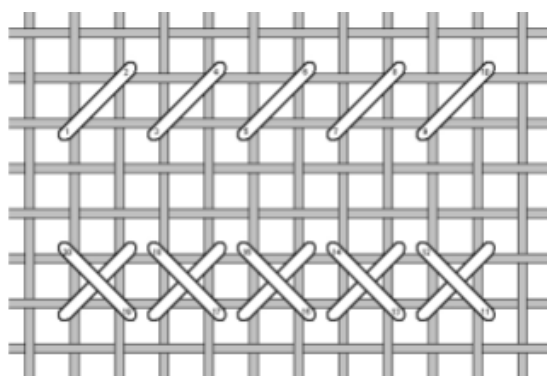


Plate 4.20: Schematic of a cross stitch  
Source: <https://www.threadneedlestreet.com/Hints.html>



Plate 4.21: An example of cross stitch forming the main motif of the border  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

## 9. Cretan stitch

Cretan stitch is a type of feather stitch that produces a decorative border. Unlike most of the feather stitches, it is worked horizontally. Open cretan is the most common stitch used in the border of the *sainchi* phulkaris, it is also used in *darshan dwars*. The stitch is mostly seen creating borders or divisions of the layout of the phulkari or *bagh*.

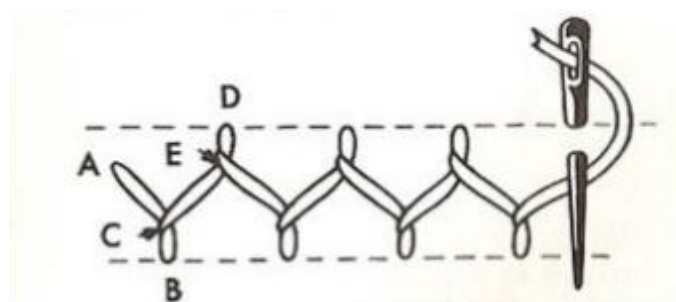


Plate 4.22: Schematic of open cretan stitch

Source: <http://www.artedelricamo.com/en/embroidery/embroidery-classes/open-cretan-stitch.html>



Plate 4.23: An example of open cretan stitch in the border of phulkari  
Image courtesy: The national Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi

## 10. Cluster stitch

Cluster stitch is used to showcase radiating lines. These lines start at one point on the fabric and radiate to represent a flower, a sun etc.

The cluster stitch is most commonly used for creating the *kikkar* flowers in the field of the phulkari. These motifs are usually used as filler motifs to cover the empty spaces between the motifs. Plate 43 is an example of such evidence where the *kikkar* flowers embroidered with cluster stitch are used to fill space between the two animal motifs.

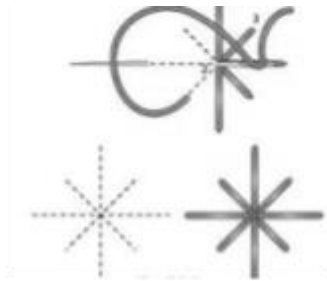


Plate 4.24: Schematic of a cluster stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/star-stitch>



Plate 4.25: An example of a cluster stitch in the form of a flower  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi



## 11. Holbein stitch:

Holbein or the double running stitch is an outline stitch used often in black work embroidery. This stitch is worked with two journeys of running stitches.

Holbein stitch or the double running stitch was the most complicated stitch that was used to create double sided patterns in *chope* phulkari. There are specimens studied in the museum where the embroiderer has used a combination of holbein stitch and surface satin stitch to create interest in the embroidery.

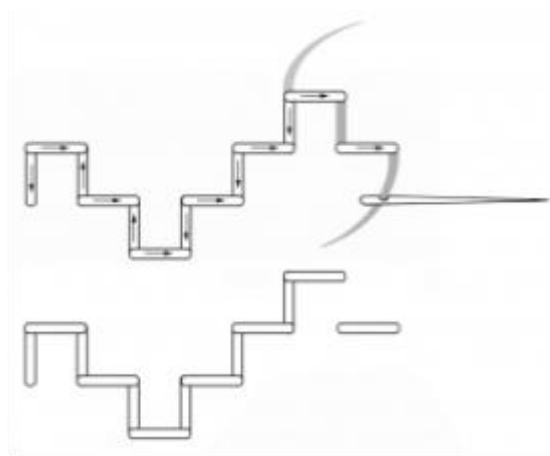


Plate 4.26: Schematic diagram of a holbein stitch

Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/double-running-stitch>



Plate 4.27: An example of holbein stitch in chope phulkari  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi

## 12. Buttonhole stitch

Basic buttonhole stitch is worked like a basic blanket stitch, except that the stitches are placed very close together to a firm edge. This tight little band of stitches is used extensively to finish the edgings of *bagh* or phulkari. It is also known as ‘*kambal tanka*’ and ‘*phanda tanka*’ in the local language.

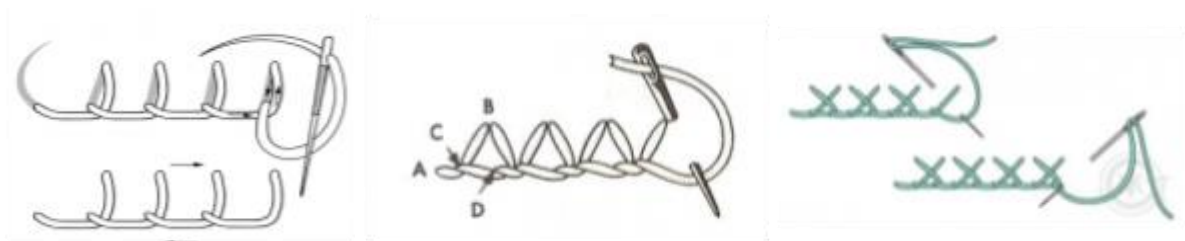


Plate 4.28: Schematic diagram of open buttonhole, closed buttonhole and crossed buttonhole stitch  
Source: <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/techniques/embroidery/embroidery-stitches/crossed-buttonhole-stitch>



Plate 4.29: An example of open and closed buttonhole stitch in the edge finishing of phulkari and bagh  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi

The embroidery stitches discussed are the most common stitches observed by the researcher while doing an in depth analysis of each artifact of the museum in display as well as in store. According to literature review there were traditionally fifty two stitches used in phulkari



embroidery, but while analyzing traditional museum artifacts only twelve most common were observed.

#### **d.ii Direction of the stitches**

The most important factor while executing the phulkari embroidery stitch is the direction of the stitch. The untwisted silk floss created an interesting play of light and colour and added a dimension to the embroidery. This can be observed in *bagh* that are densely embroidered. The change in the direction of the surface satin stitch reflects the light differently. In relatively limited colour shades that were available the women embroiderers used their creative mind to explore the most out of it.



Plate 4.30: An example of vertical direction of stitches



Plate 4.32: An example of diagonal direction of stitches



Plate 4.31: An example of horizontal directions of stitches



Plate 4.33: An example of multi directional stitches

During the analysis of the artifacts at the museum there were four major directions that were identified, namely vertical, where the embroidery thread was following a vertical direction along the motif. The second was the horizontal where the change of direction in one motif was done to add the play of light to the motif design, the diagonal stitches

where these were mostly used as filling stitches for the motifs of the *sainchi* phulkari, these diagonal stitches were used to fill the naturalistic shapes of human figures, birds and animals and the fourth that was multi directional where the stitches like cluster stitch was used to create flowers and filler motifs. The control of the direction of the embroidery thread was done to add interest in the pattern or design. It is observed that all these four directions types are still practiced while making phulkari embroidery.

The length of these stitches in each direction was also controlled by the embroiderer. As observed from the artifacts the finer artifacts were seen to have length of the stitches between 0.5 cms to 1 cm and the pieces that lacked craftsmanship ranged with stitch length of 1cm to 2 cm these were of low quality of workmanship.

#### **d.iii Outline line stitches**

The outline stitches it was observed that majorly back stitch, split stitch and darning stitch was used. These stitches varied in the number of strands used depending upon the purpose of the stitch. In cases like that of *sainchi* it was used to demark the portion to be embroidered in a different colour and predominantly to create a bold outline as in plate 4.34.



Plate 4.34: An example of contrast outline in bold colour



Plate 4.35: An example of thin outline in matching colour

In the case of a *dabbi bagh* where the *bagh* was divided in sections for demarking the area of the motifs the outline was done with a finer strand of silk to hide under the main motif or design as in plate 4.35. In the former variety where the bold stitches were used as

outlines the colours used were often in contrast to the filling and all outlines were usually done with single colour thread. Such examples can be seen in most of the *sainchi* phulkaris or *darshan dwar bagh*.

#### **d.iv Filling stitches**

The filling stitches mostly used for *baghs* was the counted surface satin stitch, darning stitch, split satin and back stitch. These stitches were embroidered densely packed to cover the surface of the base fabric. The strands used to execute these stitches were kept multiple to cover the larger area. All four types of stitches were used in the geometric *baghs* and phulkaris and in the phulkaris like *sainchi* or *darshan dwar* where human figures, birds and animals in naturalistic form were depicted were filled with darning, split stitch and backstitch. The counted surface satin stitch was not used to cater the curves of the naturalistic motifs; the other three were best suited where the length of the stitch could be of varied lengths.

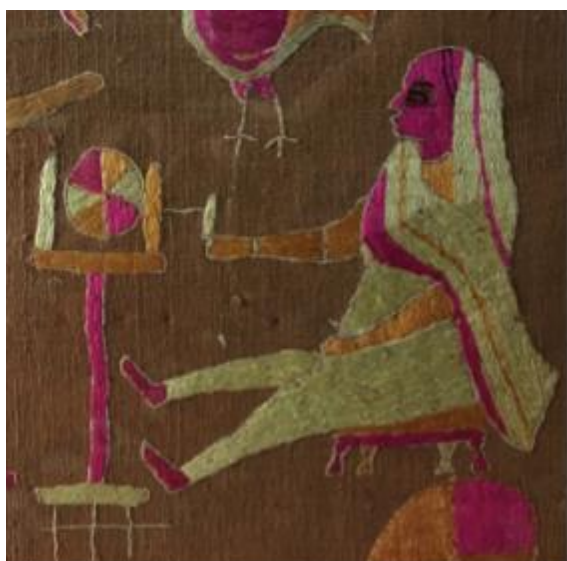


Plate 4.36: An example of filling stitches in a naturalistic figure



Plate 4.37: An example of filling stitch in a geometric bagh

**d.i.b The ornamental Characteristics** are categorized based on the stitches that were used to enhance the aesthetic and visual appeal of the piece. These aspects included the edge finishing, *nazar battu*, texture created by use of colour and texture created by using the direction of the stitch.

- 1. The edge finishing** was done using stitches to secure the selvages of the fabric.



Sometimes when after joining the narrow width panels of the fabric it reached the required width; the extra fabric was cut. This edge was then turned towards the reverse side of the fabric and was finished most commonly with the buttonhole stitch. It was also observed while studying the artifacts at the museum that the edges were finished with a thick band of surface satin stitch like in the case of the *ghunghta bagh*. In the case of lightly embroidered phulkaris like *tool di phulkari* it was observed that the edge finishing was done only with one single line of back stitch to mark the border or the selvedge. The edges were also seen finished with a crossed buttonhole stitch to add a decorative interest at the selvedges. In the case like that of *darshan dwar* the edges were finished using the darning stitch creating a brick pattern that was as dense as the field of the bag. The tiny diamond shaped lozenges matched the motifs of the field. It is interesting to note and observe that each *bagh* and phulkari is unique in its own way as the embroiderers kept exploring their own collection of *baghs* and phulkaris with new designs and new patterns to challenge their own skill and embroider the finest of their time.



Plate 4.38: Some examples of edge finishing done on various types of bagh and phulkari  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

2. The *nazar battu* is an interesting feature which literally means an element that distracts the evil eye. The *nazar battu* was embroidered by the women as a deliberately

made mistake to break the even eye gaze on the perfectly embroidered *bagh*. Such *nazar battus* usually were in contrast colour by that it means they were usually dark in colour. The most common *nazar battu* that was observed was on the *vari da bagh* where the embroiderer has embroidered the entire *bagh* in golden yellow silk floss and a small portion of the *bagh* is embroidered with a multicolored diamond motif. Such contrast motifs serve as a distraction to the eye while viewing the *bagh* as whole. It was further observed that in some artifacts majorly from the Rohtak area that is present day Haryana, use of mirrors was done as *nazar battus*. It was believed that the reflection of the mirror will keep the evil eye away and will protect the beauty of the embroidery.



Plate 4.39: Some examples of nazar battus to repel the evil eye  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi

The artifact like *chope* which was a *do rukha* or double-sided *bagh* was also considered to be of high value and interestingly it had no ends. The embroiderer would often embroider a striking contrast motif in the corner of the *chope*, sometimes a cluster of

motifs in a corner and these had no connection to the design or pattern of the *chope*. The *vari da bagh* also was observed to be embroidered with the same colour thread but with a changed direction which created a standing out distraction to the viewer. This was the most unique style of nazar battu that was observed amongst all discussed above.

This ornamental feature called as *nazar battu* was also actually a source of protecting the wearer from the evil eye.



Plate 4.40: An example of chope with a nazar battu in isolation at the end of the piece  
Image courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi.

**3. Texture created by the use of colour** was observed in the *sainchi* phulkaris where the embroiderer used two contrast colours to add interest in the filling of the motifs. These colour textures were usually in a striped pattern. Such coloured textures were seen embroidered in the clothes of the human figures. Similar effect of texture using colours was also observed in the stylized version of a *darshan dwar bagh*. In some the architectural patterns were also embroidered using two or sometimes three contrast colours.





Plate 4.41: Textures created by the use of colour and choice of embroidery stitch  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

**4. Texture created by change in the direction of the stitch** was observed in the pieces like *chand bagh*, *vari da bagh*, *tota bagh*, *ghunghta bagh*. The main feature of this ornamental feature was to create an interest by change in the direction of the stitch and hence was done on the *bagh* that were embroidered by counting the threads of the base fabric. Hence the above discussed variety of *bagh*.



Plate 4.42: Textures created by the change in the direction of stitch  
Image Courtesy: The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi

## 4.2 Studying and documenting different types of phulkari by visiting museums

### 4.2.1 Layouts for *bagh* and phulkari

Phulkari and *baghs* were the two main categories in which the embroiderer embroidered the pieces. These pieces were differentiated on the basis of the amount of embroidery or type of motifs embroidered on them. The fabrics used as base cloth for these pieces were woven on a narrow width loom hence these pieces are often seen with min two or maximum four panels adding up to the total width of the *bagh* or phulkari. An in depth study of the *baghs* and phulkaris revealed their unique layouts that were found to be the base of each distinct category.

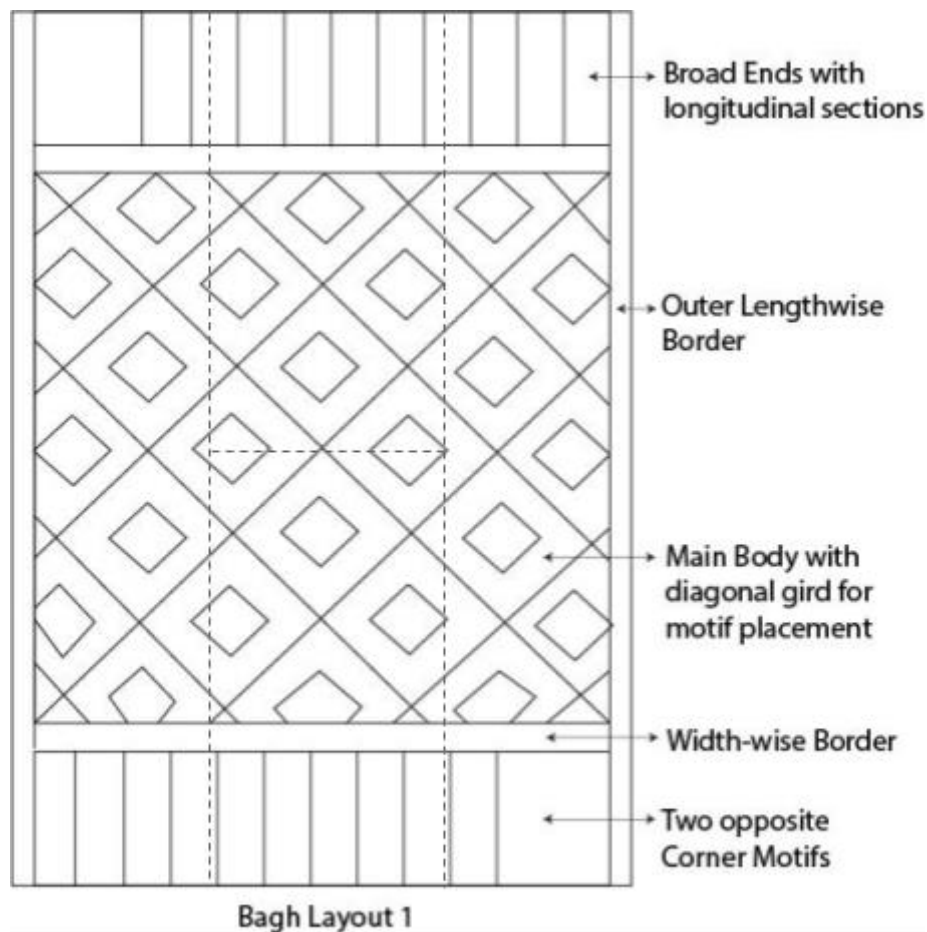


Plate 4.43: Bagh style layout 1

**The layouts** of these pieces were planned by the embroiderer beforehand and the sections were made using a running stitch in each panel separately. A typical *bagh* usually had the main center body densely embroidered and surrounded by a four side

rectangular border. It also had broad ends and lengthwise borders. The central body was often divided into lozenges and was densely embroidered with silk floss to cover the base of the fabric. Plate

Plate 4.43 illustrates the central field divided by joining four panels. This ‘H’ arrangement of the joint pieces was done when the leftover piece from earlier narrow khaddar matched to achieve the required width of the fabric. Such joints were given in *bagh* especially because the embroidered was sure that these joints would be entirely covered with the embroidery and would not be visible to the eye. In such cases the pieces were stitched first and then the embroidery was done. The layout is also observed to have one length wise narrow border running parallel to the selvedge and ends with one narrow and wide border divided in sections to divide the area before embroidery for even matching of the motif pattern. Experimentation with different types of motif was done by keeping the layout the same.

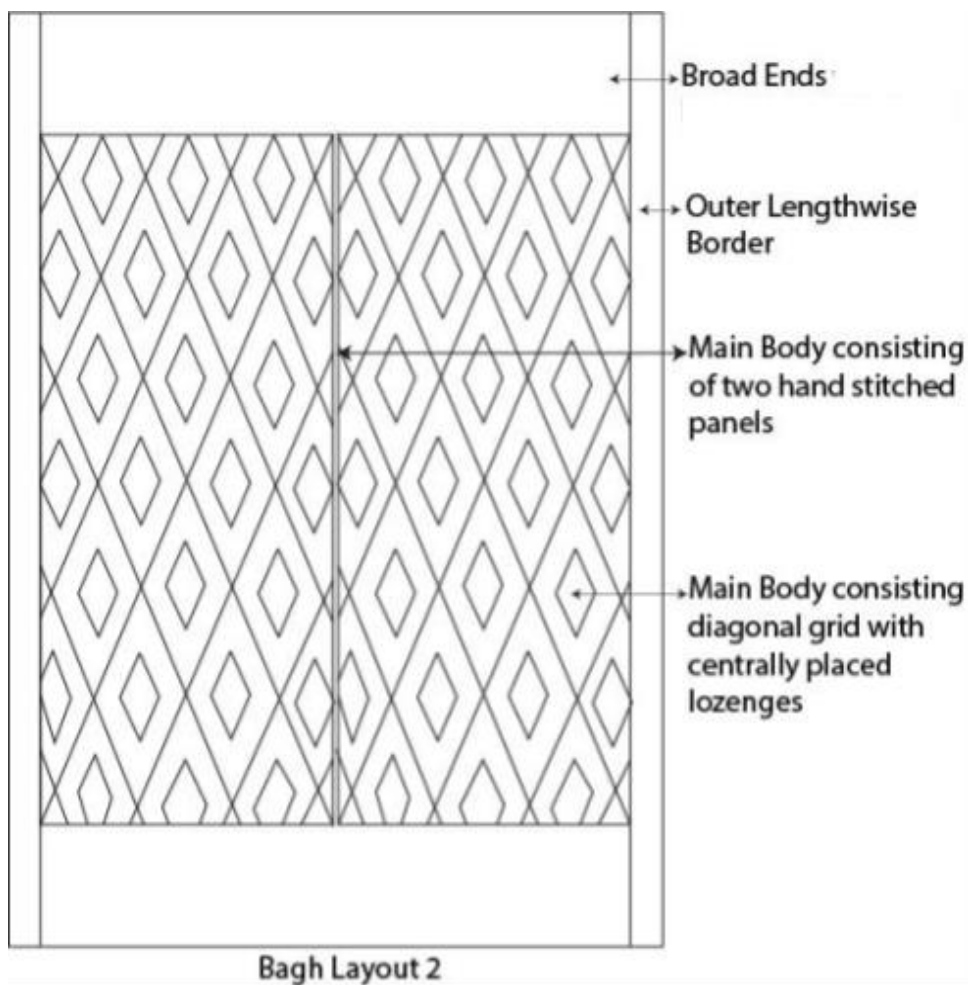


Plate 4.44: Bagh style layout 2

**The second *bagh* layout** is different in terms of joining the panels and the borders running lengthwise and widthwise. The central field is divided in elongated narrow lozenges to increase the intricacy of the piece. Such layouts were seen in *vari da bagh* where the intricacy level was high, the stitch length was kept to be very fine. Experimentation with the motif was done inside the shape and the same was repeated all over. The layout was also explored with a check layout to lay the same pattern innovatively.

**The third variety of *bagh* layout** is with three panels that are hand stitched vertically end to end. Densely embroidered *bagh* with increased number of lozenges and with enclosed small lozenges is observed. The ends have corner motifs that stand out from the piece. These could be in a different colour. Such *baghs* were usually done in two or three colours.

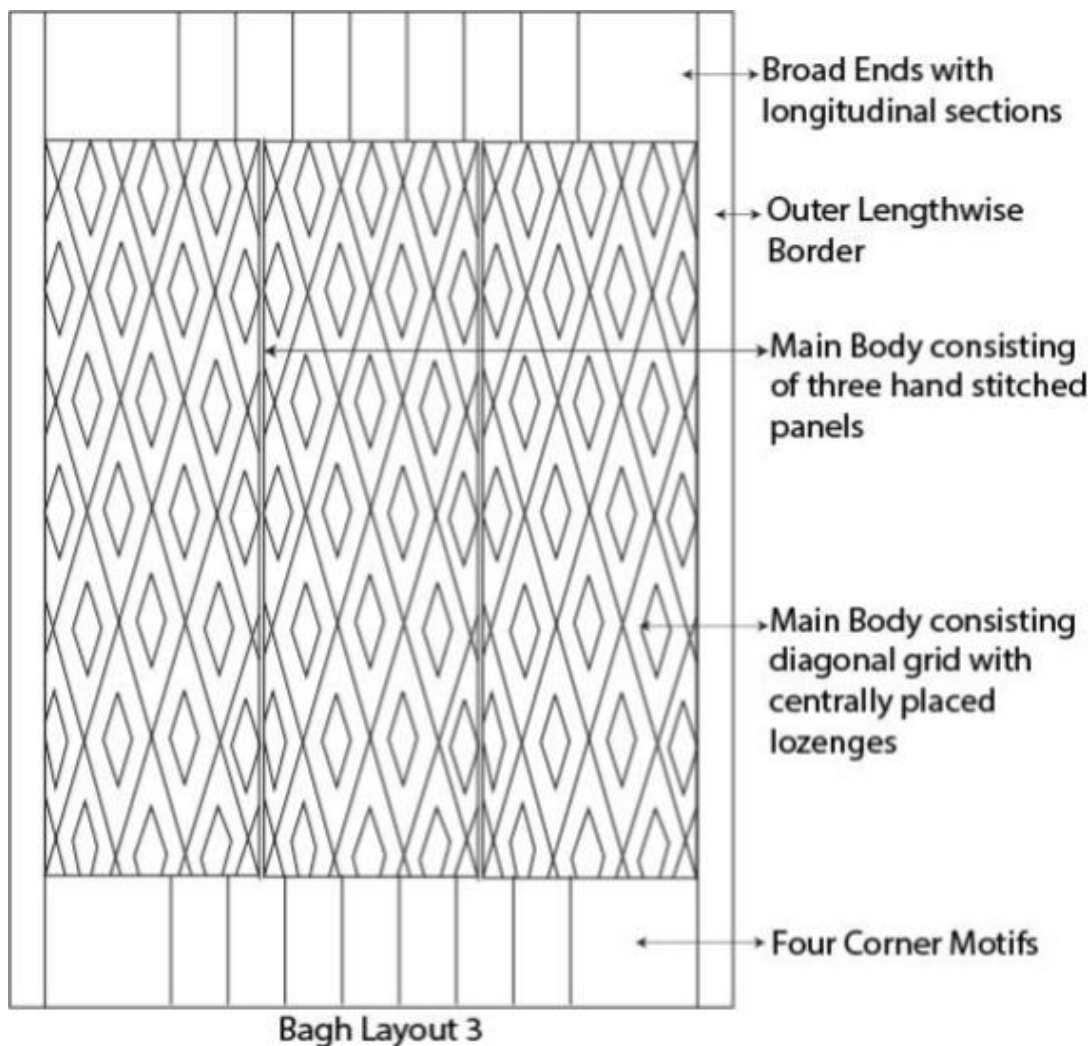


Plate 4.45: Bagh style layout 3

The *sainchi* had a central lotus motif surrounded with various figurative or non-figurative motifs inspired from daily life. The four corners of the central body had either identical or four distinctive large motifs. The ends were embroidered with a repetitive motif throughout or it was further divided into squared sections and embroidered with same or different motifs.

Plate 4.46 illustrates the first style of layout observed with a central placement of lotus that was commonly observed followed by a circular arrangement of motifs enclosed in a lengthwise Border with ends divided in square sections. This was observed to be the most common layout in *sainchi* phulkaris.

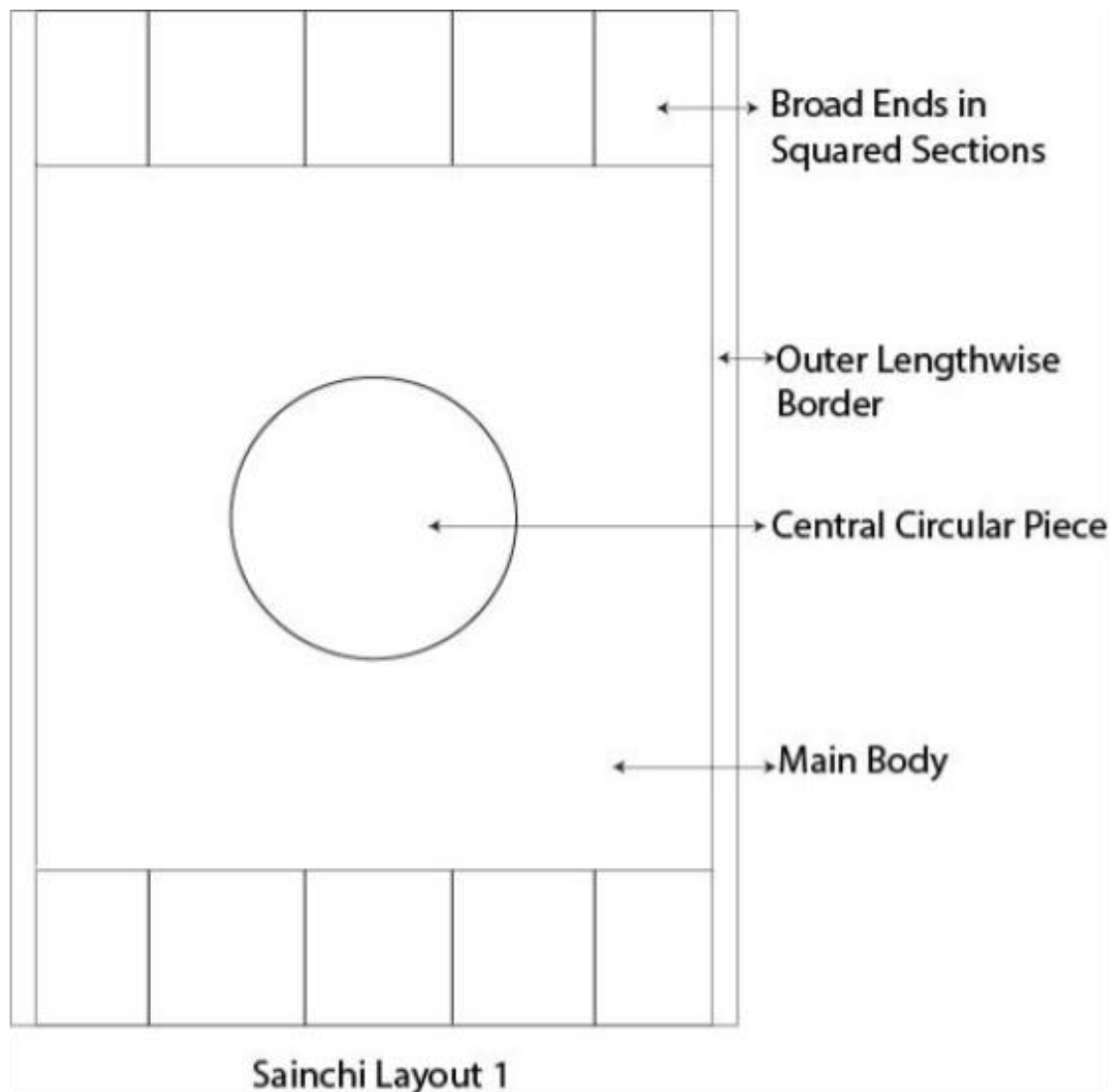
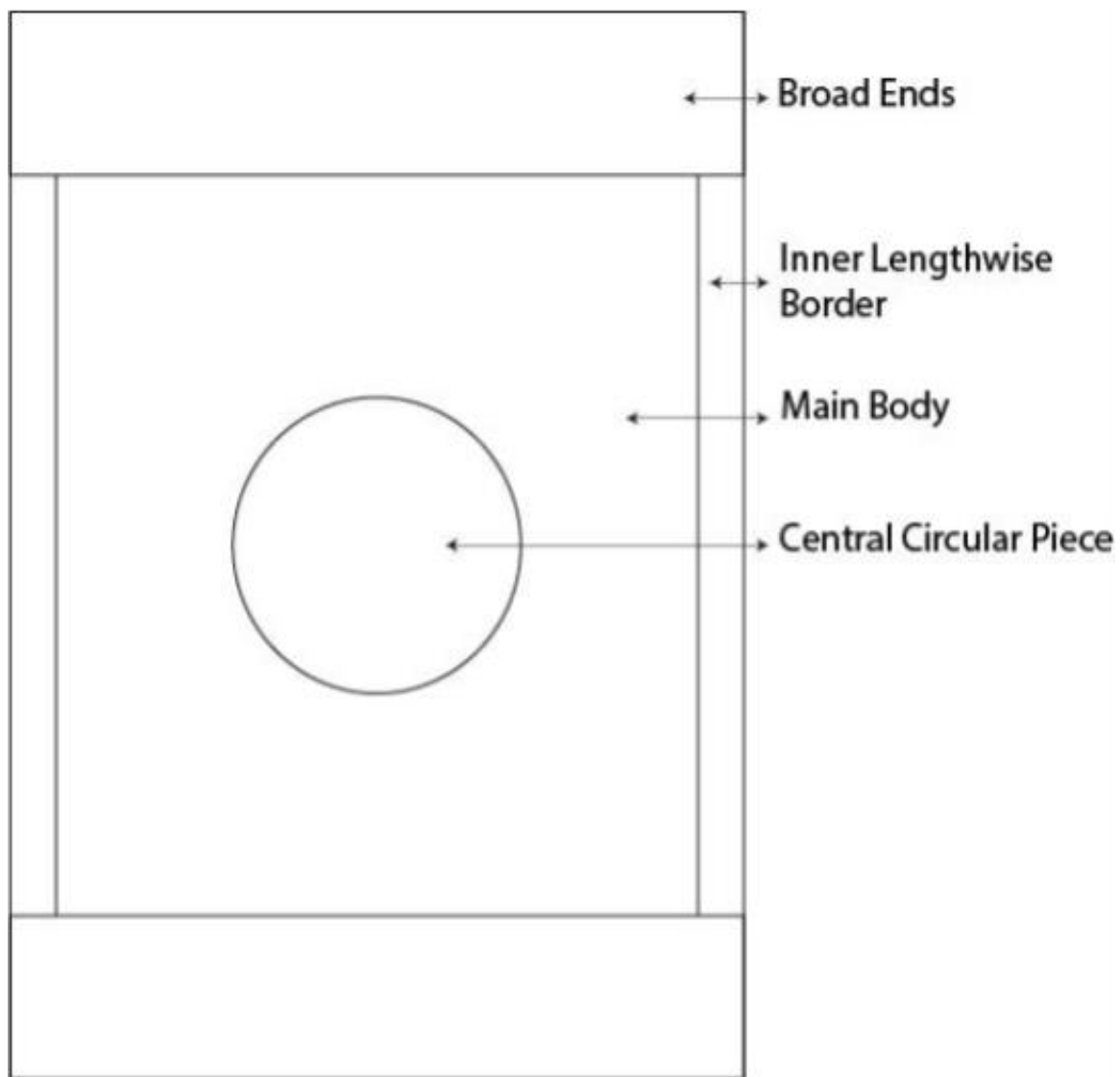


Plate 4.46: Sainchi style layout 1

**The second type of *sainchi phulkari*** was observed to have ends embroidered with matching motifs in the central field. Sometimes such *sainchi* phulkaris had the central lotus decorated more elaborate than the others, multiple layers of embroidered motifs taking up most of the central space. Sometimes the layout may or may not have the corner motifs in the broad ends. The planning of such layouts was easier as compared to the layout of any other *bagh* or *phulkari*. These layouts did not require planning of sections like that required in *bagh*. The embroidery was carried out from multiple directions making it easier for the embroiderer to plan the looking at the empty spaces around the central motif.



**Sainchi Layout 2**

Plate 4.47: Sainchi style layout 2

The third type of *sainchi phulkari* was observed to have a high level of intricacy. This exhibits a high level of embroidery skill as compared to the other layouts. Upon observation it was revealed that the layout was possibly planned by an experienced embroiderer as it consists of number of borders running lengthwise parallel to the selvedge creating a complicated set of longitudinal borders the end is also observed to be divided in various sections to be filled in with different type of motives with high intricacy. Such layouts were used to show off the skill of embroiderers.

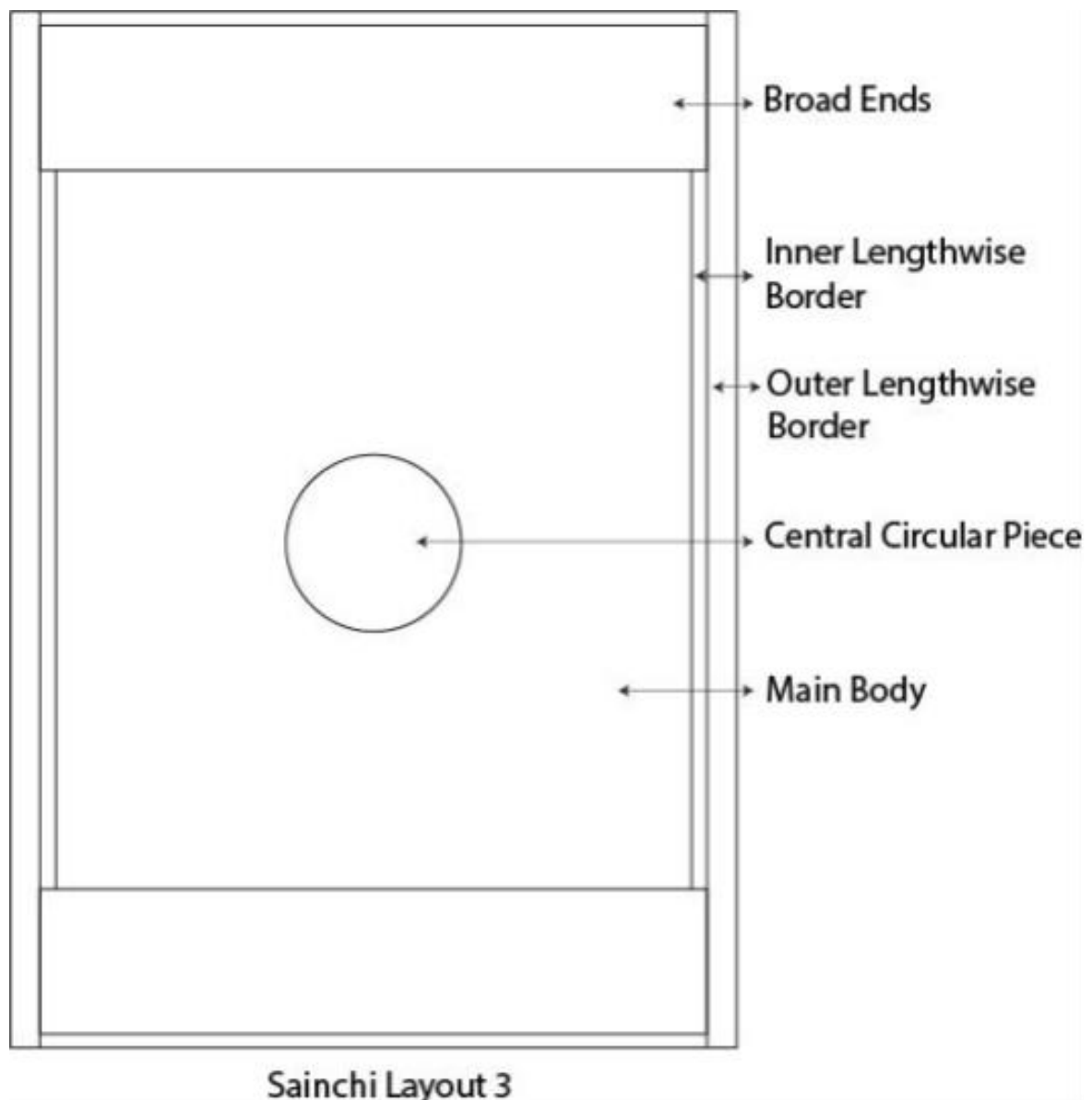


Plate 4.48: Sainchi style layout 3

The **phulkari** style of layout had lengthwise borders and broad ends that were embroidered densely. The central field of phulkari was roughly divided into half drop repeats embroidered with small motifs using a half drop repeat. These motifs were sparingly embroidered leaving the ground body mostly open or unembroidered. Such layouts were used to embroider lighter versions of phulkari like *tool di phulkari*. These may or may not have heavily embroidered ends.

These layouts had a piece divided in the central almost square area surrounded with a dainty border and border ends with lightly embroidered motifs.

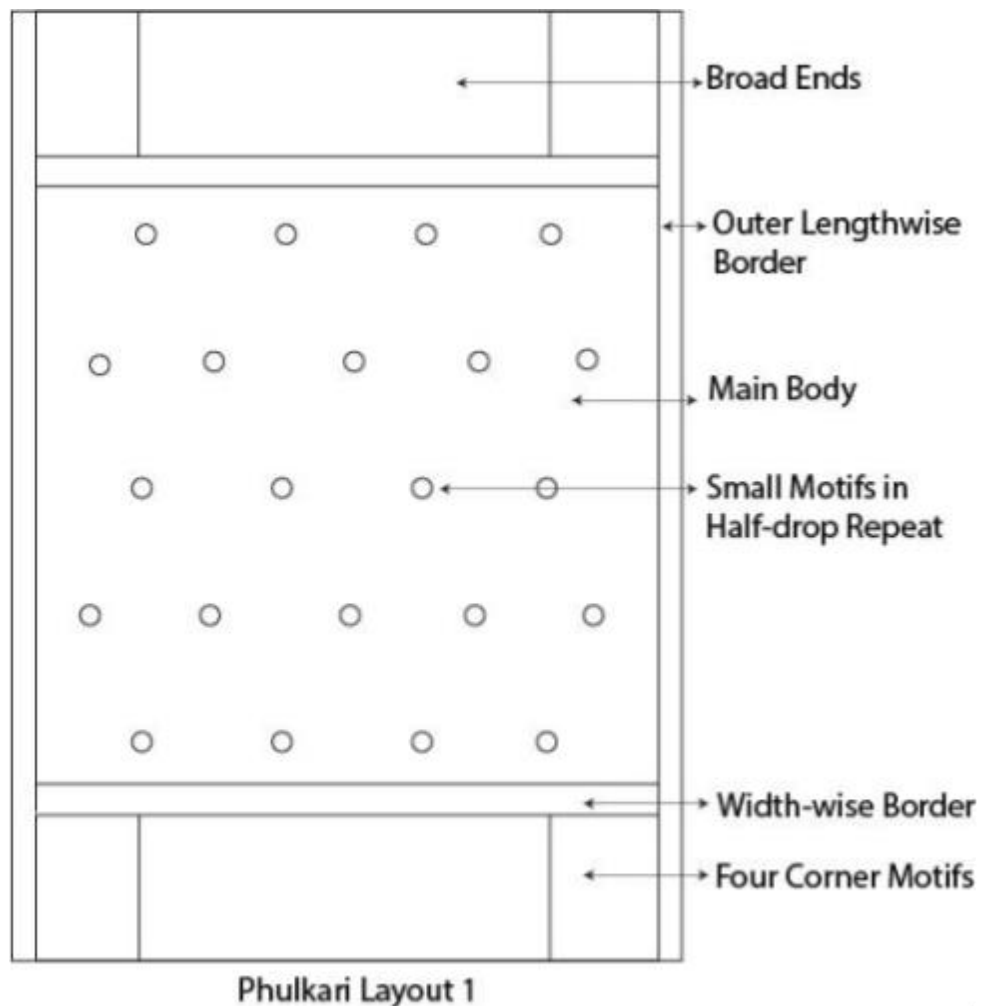


Plate 4.49: Phulkari style of layout 1



**The phulkari style layout two** in plate 4.50 illustrates the layout where the motifs of the central field are divided in a diagonal format. The sections were measured by counting the number of threads of the fabric and the pattern was planned accordingly. The coarse nature of the fabric allowed the women to count and embroider the first motif. In the case of diagonal format the first line of motifs running in horizontal direction from selvedge to selvedge was embroidered first then followed by the second line where the first motif of the second line was started from the mid-point of the first two motifs of the first line. This motif was later completed to achieve a complete horizontal visual effect. There are artifacts that have been observed to have divisions that are embroidered in diagonal format using different stitches like back stitch or cretan stitch; the stitches that do not require counting while embroidery.

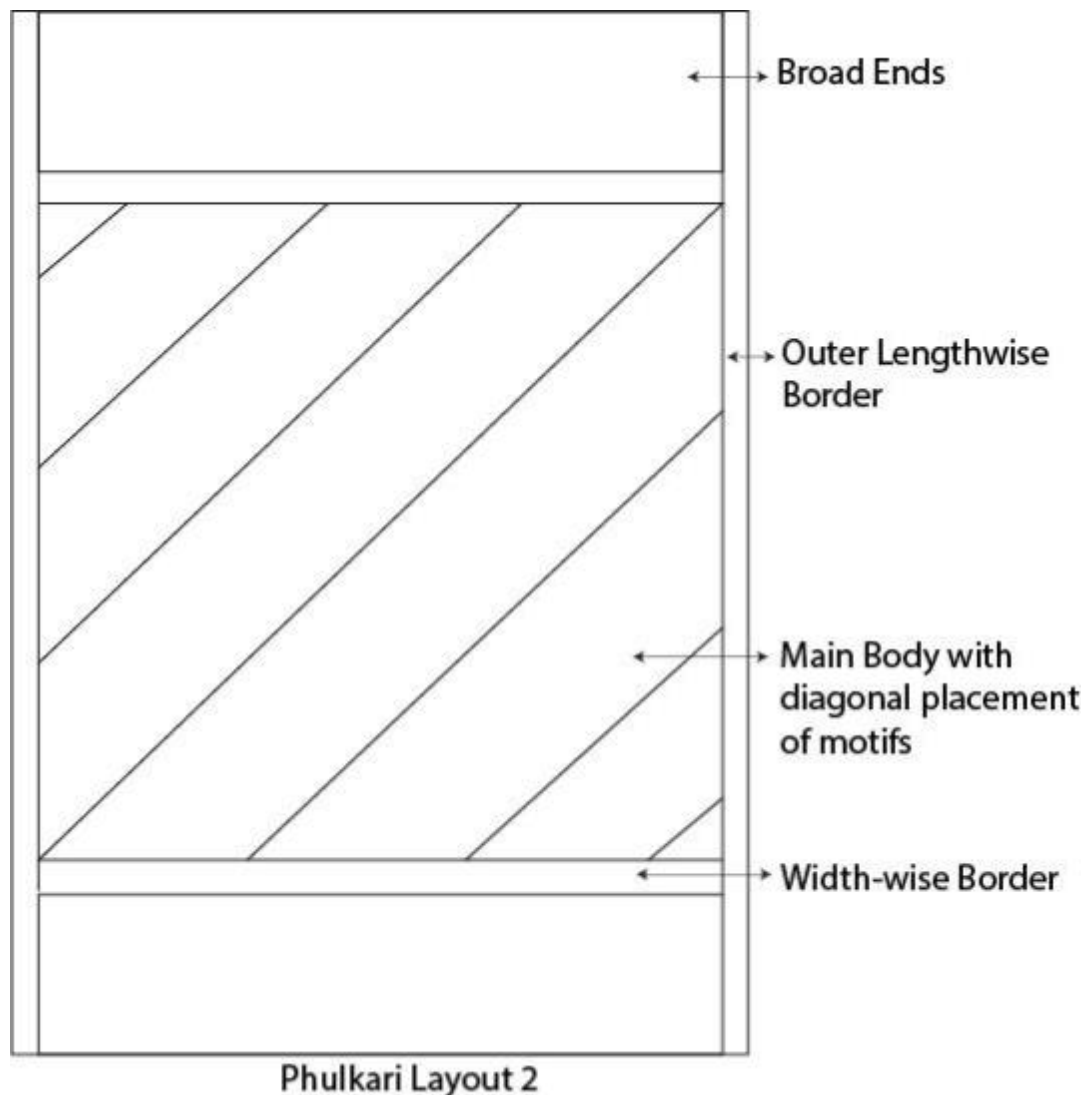
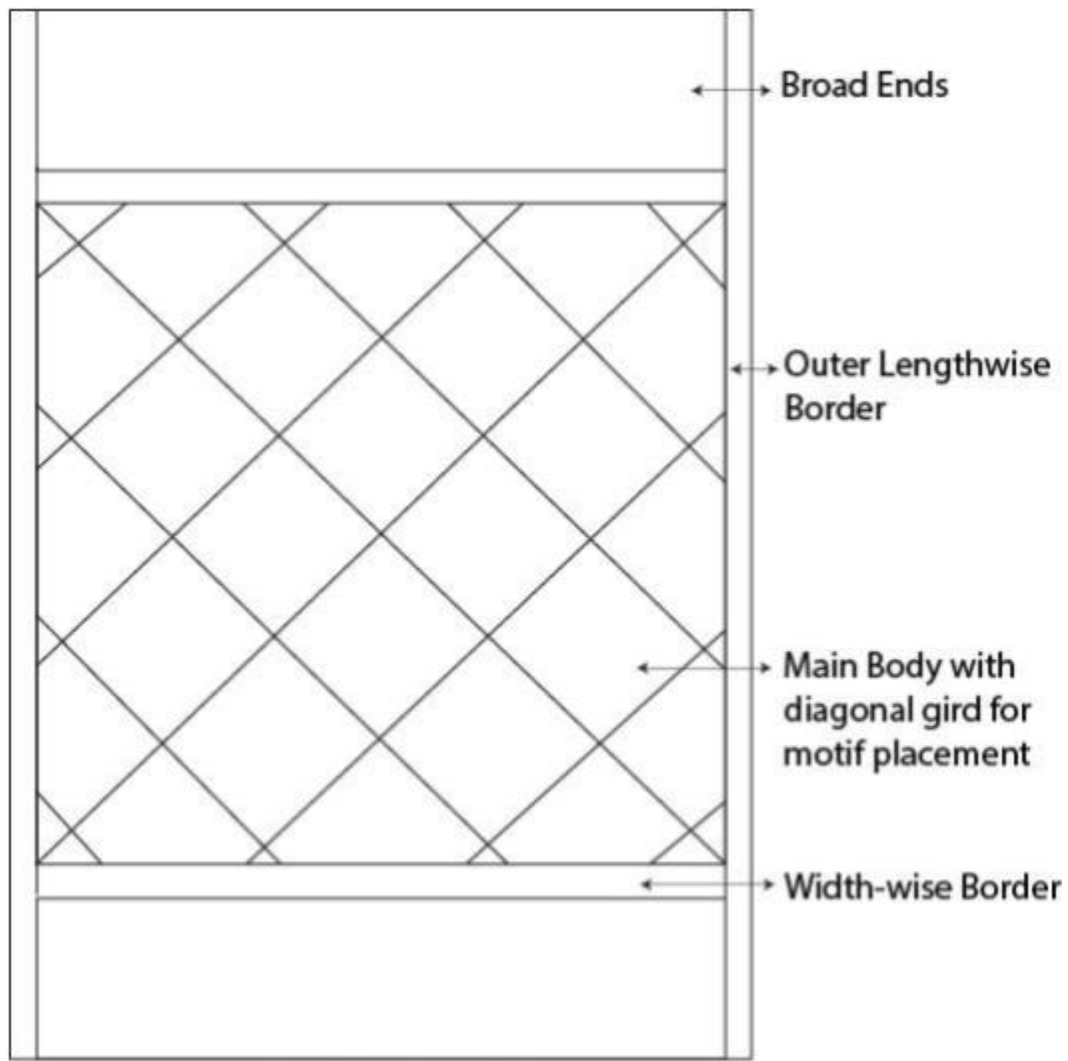


Plate 4.50: Phulkari style of layout 2

**The third type of phulkari** layout is divided in a diagonal grid pattern. This grid was also observed to be a check grid with the motifs laid within the designated area. The longitudinal border parallel to the selvedge had elaborate borders that matched the motif embroidered in the central field. The ends were kept as broad borders that were observed to be embroidered with motifs.



**Phulkari Layout 3**

Plate 4.51: Phulkari style of layout 3

**The *ghunghta bagh*** had a unique division of the field and placement of motifs. It was designed and planned in a way that was aesthetic as well as functional. *Ghunghta bagh* just like the *chope* did not have ends but only the length wise borders that went right from one end to the other. The uniquely planned placement of the veil with triangular motifs sat rightly on the forehead of the wearer and the rectangular band or panel on the opposite length fell in the back.

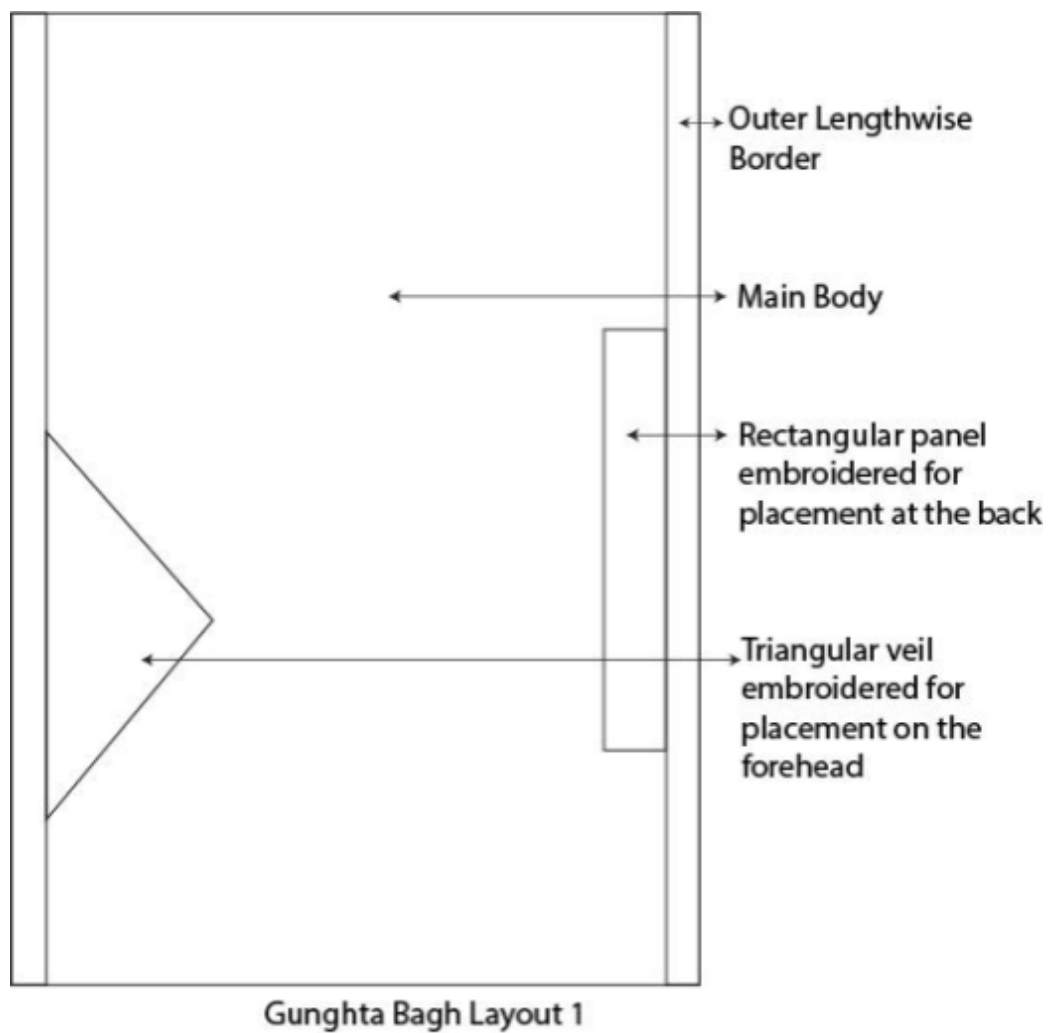


Plate 4.52: Layout of a *ghunghta bagh*

**The *darshan dwar bagh*** has a distinct layout as compared to any other *bagh*. The main field is divided between temple-like borders running perpendicular to the selvages. The pointy ends of the temple canopy connect in the center of the *bagh*. The layout of the *bagh* is mostly identical.

This *bagh* usually is observed to have broad ends embroidered with a dense motif. The central field of the *darshan dwar* also had diamond shaped space that was embroidered with the blessing that the embroiderer wanted to thank for. The *bagh* had beautiful and elaborate borders. These borders usually were kept intricate as this *bagh* was embroidered as an offering to the *Gurdwara*, to thank the almighty for granting all the wishes of the family.

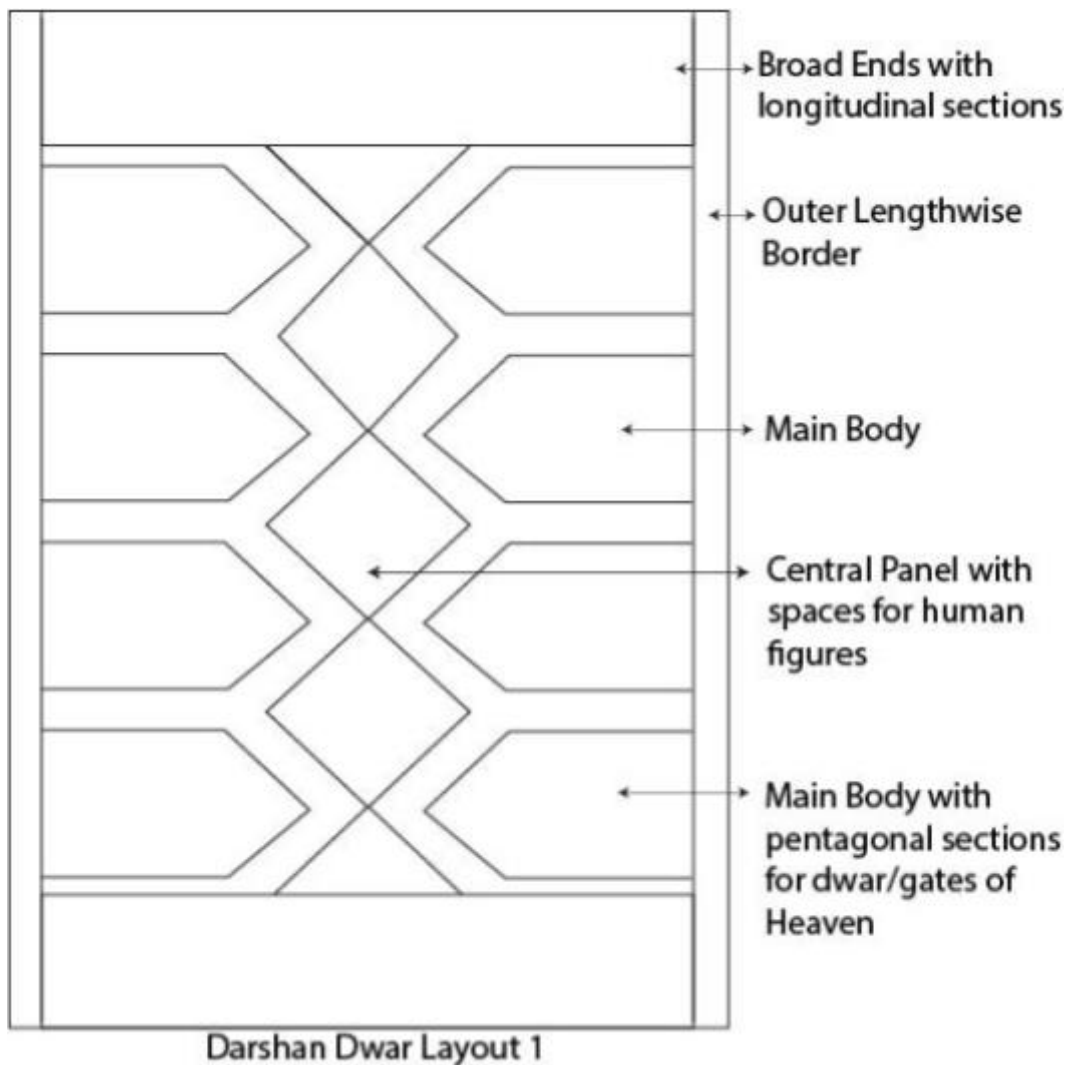


Plate 4.53: Layout of a darshan dwar bagh

The **chope phulkari** is the most unique in layout; the field layout resembles the layout of a *darshan dwar* as the triangular motifs running perpendicular to the selvedge are similar as embroidered in the *darshan dwar bagh*. The layout was planned with thick borders intricately embellished with the holbein stitch. The size of this phulkari was larger as compared to any other phulkari or *bagh*. The piece had three full width panels hand stitched to get the required width. The width was important as it covered the bride from head to toe. The layout of the motifs was done by equally dividing the piece in two and the motifs were embroidered identically with the pointy end of the triangle meeting in the central field with the pointy end of the identical triangle. The piece had no ends and it was kept embroidered or small motifs representing *nazar battus* were embroidered in one of the corners of the *bagh*.

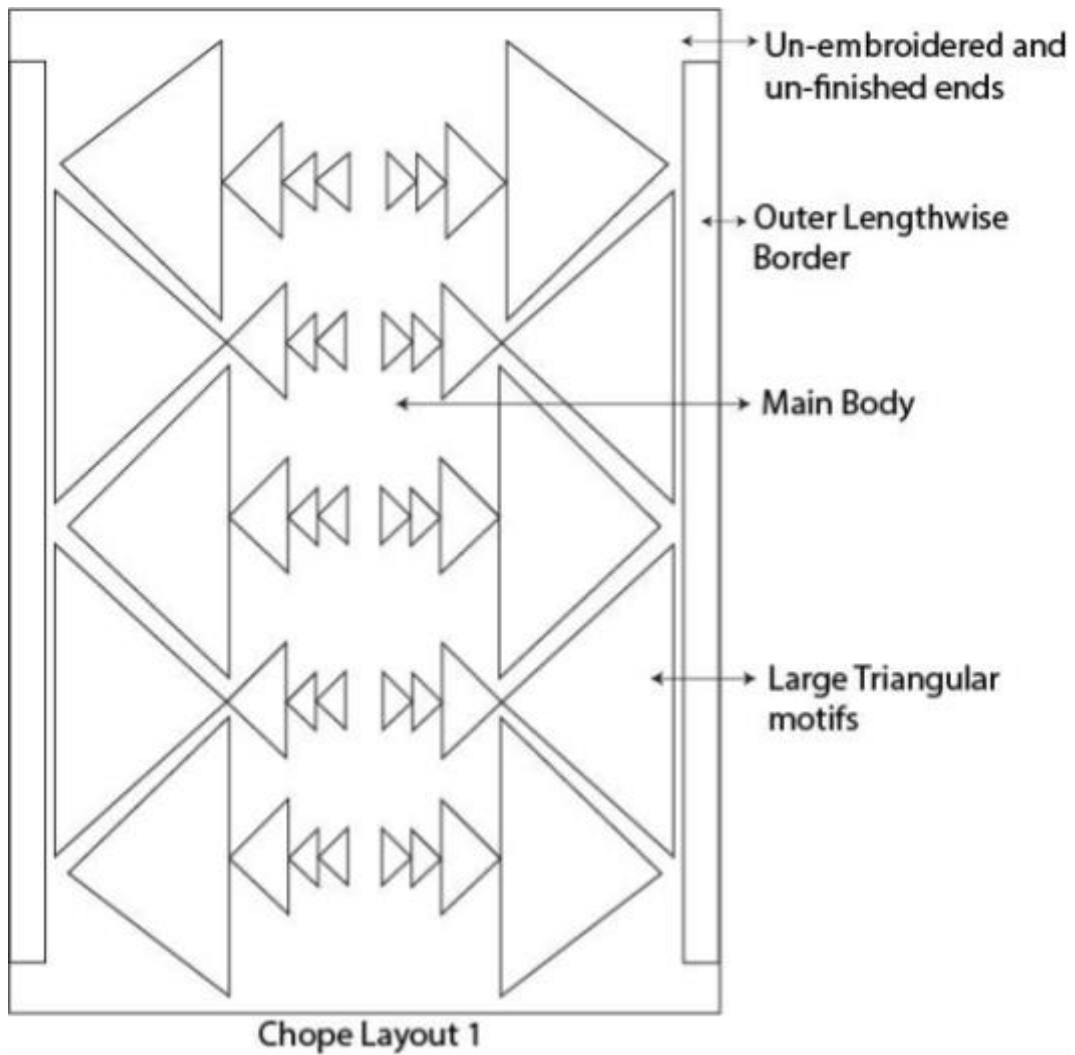


Plate 4.54: Layout of chope phulkari

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of *baghs* and *phulkaris* and their social significance

*Bagh* and *phulkari* were more than just covering for the upper body during changing weather. It was a gift that was embroidered with the most affection by the mother for the bride. The tradition of gifting *phulkaris* was prevalent in Punjab as it was equated to the family status and reputation. It was a quintessential part of a bride's trousseau along with the sets of her garments. Generally 11 to 21 pieces of *phulkaris* and *baghs* were matched with the 11 to 21 number of dresses. As Punjabi brides were required to wear two sets of *dupattas* after marriage, a lighter one that covered the head and a *phulkari* that was layered over head or shoulders. Mostly *phulkari* is associated with marriage rituals.

Antique textiles narrate the cultural history and its associated tradition in the past. These artifacts are the actual evidence of the past that provide meaning to the present and direction to the future. One can call these artifacts as physical records of people, events, and places from a particular region and help to maintain and reclaim their identity in the present and future. Therefore digitizing the collection of the past is an attempt to preserve the craft and its legacy. The digitized documentation therefore holds immense importance to serve as a reference to the exquisite art pieces that define the cultural history of our nation. It will be fair to state that the future might have lost the ease of access to the physical piece and these documentations will be the only accessible source to witness the magnificence of the craft and its associations with the culture, tradition and history.

Such associations of textiles with cultural history are the source of understanding the traditions and social structure of a community as well. Hence, it was considered important to prepare a systematic report layout that would assist the researcher in documenting the *phulkari* collection of the National Handicraft and Handloom Museum, Delhi, in depth. This systematic report will assist in comparing the pieces on similar grounds and derive meaningful analysis.

Based on the literature survey and by consulting the curator of the National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, a sketch of the report was generated. It had all the important aspects that were considered of significant value to be documented and would be of most value with reference to its technical and decorative detail. It was decided to develop



a monograph for the museum that would be exclusively for the phulkari collection in the possession of National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi. After the required permission from the direction the study was commenced.

The developed report had the heads as described in table 4. Each head was finalized thoughtfully to document each aspect of the artifact. The first was the serial number in the sequence of its examination; this head would allow us to document the total number of pieces in the collection on display and storage. The second was the accession number, this number is assigned by the

**Table 4.4: Report heads developed to document the phulkari and bagh artifacts of The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi**

Serial number in its sequence of examination	
Accession number	
Type	
Year/Period	
Provenance	
Dimension in centimeters Length Width	
Number of panels	
Fabric type	
Fabric count	
Fabric colour	
Embroidery thread type	
Thread colour	
Embroidery stitches used	
Edges and finishing	
Length of stitches	
Description	

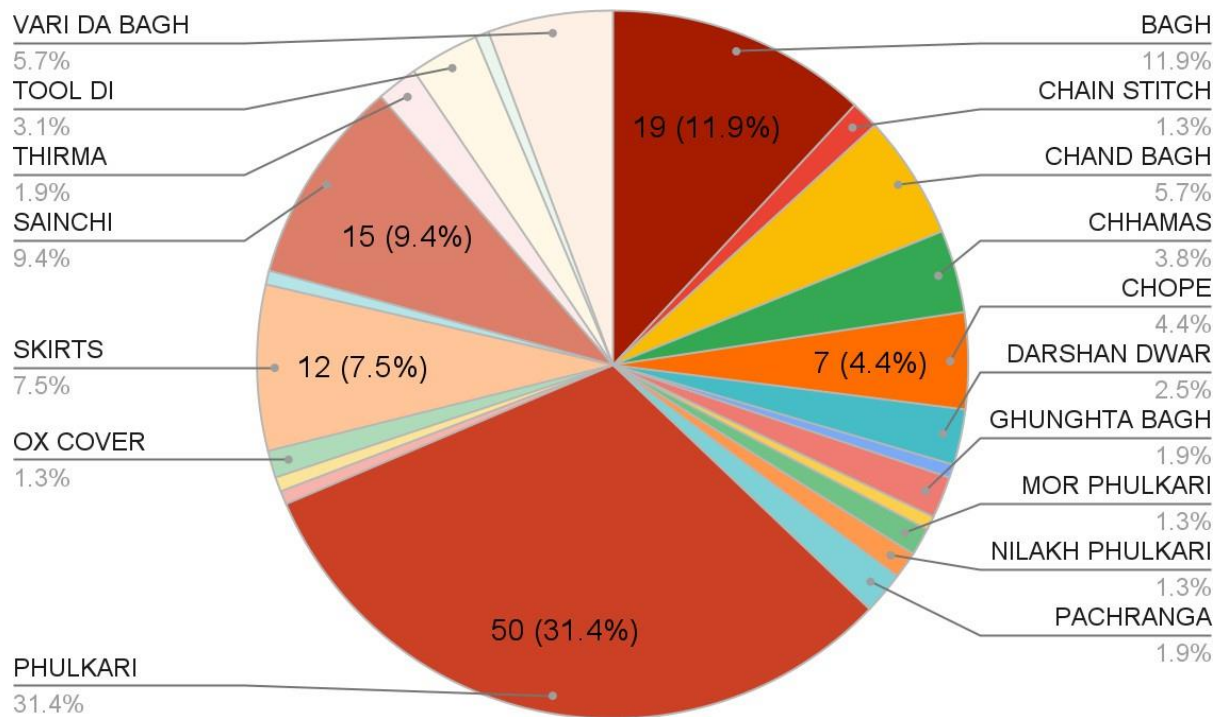
museum authorities to keep a record of the piece. The accession numbers are unique numbers given to each item by the museum. These consist of codes that help the curator and museum staff to track the exact artifact.

The collection was studied from the pieces that were on display and the pieces that were in the storage of the museum. It was documented for its type of *bagh* or phulkari, the year of its acquisition by the museum and if traceable the year of its making. The province was also an important aspect to document since the craft belonged to Punjab of pre partition times, and there was a large area that was covered under Punjab. It was important to document the province as it would help to analyze the influence of the geographical surroundings on the craft and its evolution. The dimension of the craft was also crucial, since at the time these were artifacts that were found to be deteriorating due to poor handling or over exposure to light and moisture. It was important to note the actual dimension of the *bagh* so as to keep its original stats intact. As discussed earlier the to achieve the required width the embroiderer used to join panels of khaddar and these were observed to be joined in various styles, hence documenting the number of panels used to achieve the width was crucial as well. The base fabric was also documented for its fiber content, count of the fabric and colour of the base fabric followed by the documentation of embroidery threads and its aspects for content of the embroidery thread and its colour. The types of embroidery stitches were also documented to understand the design language of the craft. The analysis report was closed with a detailed description of the type of motifs used, the layouts, analysis of the stitches used in various parts of a *bagh*.

After studying and documenting one hundred and fifty nine pieces from the museum's collection it was revealed that there were 50 pieces of phulkari, 19 pieces of *bagh*, 15 pieces of *sainchi* phulkari, 12 skirts, 9 each *vari da bagh* and *chand bagh*, 7 *chope*, 6 *chhamas*, 5 *tool di phulkari*, 4 *darshan dwar*, 3 each *thirma*, *pachranga bagh* and *ghunghta bagh*, 2 of each stitched phulkari ox covers, *nilakh phulkari*, *mor phulkari* and chain stitch skirts, and 1 each of *tota bagh*, *theli* that is bag used for daily needs, a *kurti*, *chanani* i.e used to hang like a canopy above *Guru Granth Sahib ji*, a *kaudi bagh* and a diamond phulkari. A supporting pie chart is illustrated in graph 4.5.

The extensive research conducted and after many observations revealed many mysteries. The choice of colours, length of stitches and finesse of the embroidery surfaced the probabilities of the involving craft.

**Graph 4.5: Total number of artifacts studied at The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, Delhi**



The design language of the *bags* and phulkaris spoke volumes about the history and heritage with their colours, layouts, motifs, and fineness. The process of embroidering and exchange of stitches and crafts became an excuse for women to socialize from different regions, blurring religious boundaries. More than just being used in ceremonial practices (particularly weddings) and as a catalyst for the socialization process, phulkari was also a form of expression for women.

Phulkaris and *Bags* have several designs each demonstrating its inventiveness, uniqueness, and the depiction of colour mixing skills. Women embroidered phulkaris and, along the process, gave their pieces names based on the patterns they used. It was not required for these pieces to appear the same because every woman used her own creativity and flair when embroidering them. There was no reason for them to synthesize

their styles; rather, each piece of phulkari was valued for its originality and personality.

To give a summary of some of these varieties, *thirma*, one of the rarest, was distinguished by being stitched over a white backdrop. *Thirma* was exclusively made for Hindu women; it was an integral part of a woman's dowry in the North-West Punjab region.

East and southeast Punjab produce another form of phulkari known as *sainchi*. The central field has a huge lotus and the corners are often embellished with vibrant motifs. According to **Beste (2000)** the layout of *sainchi* phulkari is similar to that of *suber*, which is carried by the women when she takes *phas* i.e the holy rounds around fire. Various motifs are seen embroidered on a *sainchi* phulkari like scenes of everyday life, like jewelry of a bride,



Plate 4.55: Scenes of *sainchi* depicting daily life

animals and birds, ox-cart, horse cart and trains, comb and daily objects, men playing *chopad* the dice game and woman spinning *charkha*, scenes from a circus and animals with acrobats. Some scenes also convey the social issues of the past like, a man beating his wife, a man with an axe with his daughter and wife.

It was also observed that the *sainchis* predominantly were embroidered in two of its variations, one where the base fabric is maroon and is embroidered with human motifs in spangles in multi-directions and the second where the base fabric was of darker shades like indigo or brown and seldom black where the motifs were more or less embroidered in a symmetry.



Plate 4.56: Two examples of *sainchis* on dark background showing symmetry in the placement of the motifs and on a red-brown background showing symmetrical arrangement of motifs.

The *vari da bagh* was a special type of *bagh* that was embroidered by the mother of the boy child. Such intricate *baghs* were a specialty of the west. The *bagh* was embroidered in one colour predominantly in golden yellow and was gifted to the bride the new daughter-in-law. The surface of this *bagh* was covered with small diamond shapes and each enclosed a small diamond, sometimes the diamond had three or four concentric diamonds. It is believed that this division of smaller diamonds in set of 4 represented the addition of a





Plate 4.57: Vari da Bagh embroidered all-over with intricate packed stitches in one colour



Plate 4.58: Details of vari da bagh main motif diamond enclosed with a set of four diamonds representative of family and colourful ends border embellishment

new member to the family two parents-in-law and two for the new bride and groom, and the outer bigger diamond represented the home of the bride. The longitudinal ends of the *bagh* usually had colourful motifs that added a striking contrast to the rest of the field.

Another was the *ghunghata bagh*, *ghunghat* meaning veil was never a part of the east Punjabi culture. The purdah system was prevalent in the west. The densely embroidered *ghunghata bagh* was also a difficult variety of *bagh* to embroider. It was done by the experienced woman as the layout of the *bagh* must have a dedicated section with a huge triangular motif and corresponding to it a wide band that sits on the wearer's waist at the



back. The huge triangular motif was embroidered shifted to one side rather than in the center as it was required to cover the face by draping the *bagh* from the back and then continue to drape it to the shoulder to cover the entire upper body of the bride.



Plate 4.59: Ghunghta bagh with detail of enclosed diamonds and colourful veil

Another fascinating piece studied was the *bagh* in plate 4.60. The piece identifies as *thirma* since it is embroidered on white base. It also conveys that the *bagh* belongs to a Hindu woman, but it has the layout of a *ghunghta bagh*, whereas as discussed earlier *parda* was not practiced in Hindus or Sikhs. Therefore this piece becomes a unique representation of cross cultural connection and exchange of ideas. The detail of the piece also has a diamond motif enclosed with 16 diamonds; this could be a representation of 16 family members. Joint families were a common norm in olden days.

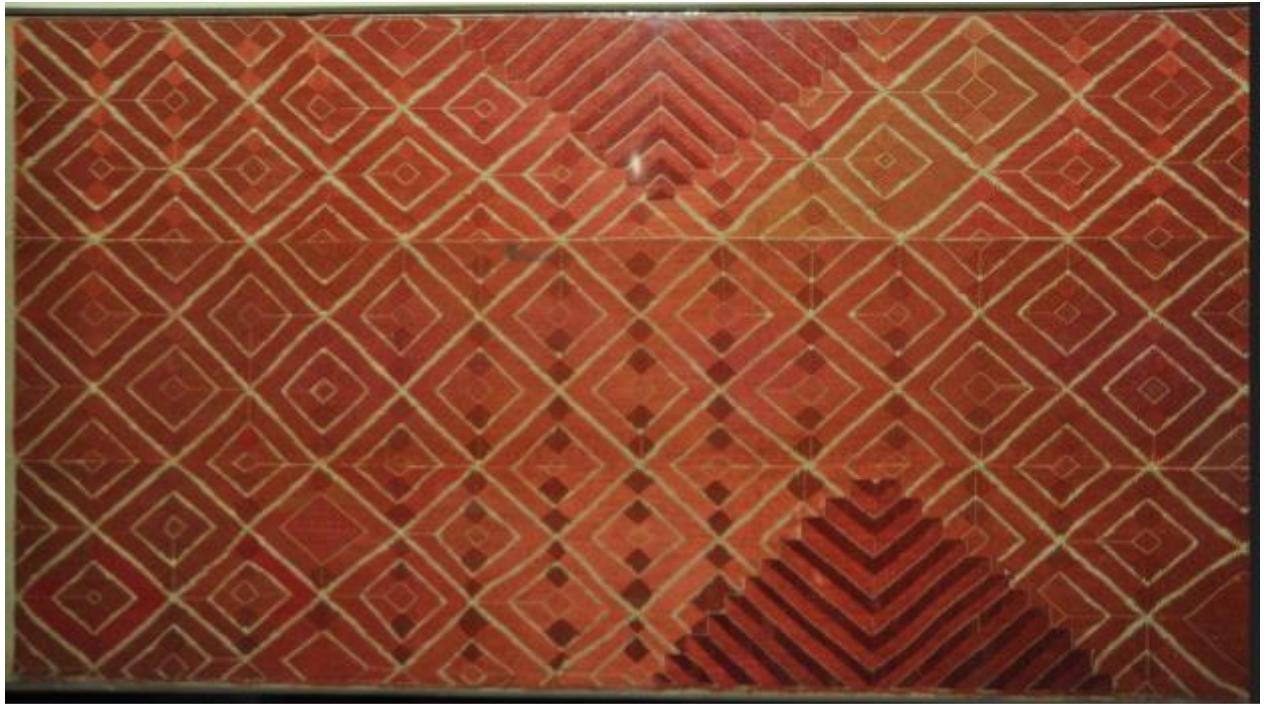


Plate 4.60: A unique ghunghta thirma bagh



Plate 4.61: Closeup for the diamond enclosed with set of 16 diamonds representative of family members

On the other hand *sarpallu* was a variety from the east Punjab where the *bagh* was embroidered densely on the longitudinal ends with huge triangular motifs and the central field was embroidered with lighter motifs, or sometimes with motifs representing human figures, bride's jewelry, daily household items like that embroidered in *sainchi* to count the number of blessing of the bride. As discussed *parda* was not an eastern trend but covering the head in the presence of elders was followed as a gesture of respect amongst Hindus and Sikhs. Hence *sarpallu* was also an integral part of a woman's trousseau.



Plate 4.62: Two examples of sarpallu phulkari

It was noted that there were many aspects on which the phulkari of the west can be differentiated from the east Punjab. To begin with the base fabric of west Punjab was of a finer quality hence while counting the number of stitches the embroidery grew dense and of good quality. The quality of silk was also better as compared to east Punjab. The base colour of the fabric in the west was mostly red or shades of red and in the east the embroiderers explored the base colours from brown, to maroon to white to indigo, and rarely green and black. On the other hand the darker colors were never used by the woman of the west as they were considered inauspicious. On observation it was also revealed that the west did not experiment with motifs or stitches. While the phulkaris and *bagh* from the east had a larger variety of motifs, designs, patterns, and colours along with a huge vocabulary of stitches. It is said that highly skilled embroiderer could embroider 52 stitches exhibited in the *bawan bagh*, that was most colorful and of high quality.

The patterns embroidered by the woman of the west used one motif and repeated the same throughout the files. The longitudinal ends were also a small motif inspired from the field to match the entire *bagh*. The end motifs were usually the same as the field motif; it showed no experimentation with the motif or layout. On the other hand a phulkari from the

east had various layouts that were experimented; the wildest is the *sainchi* phulkari which was embroidered in multi direction. The end motifs and the borders were also embroidered with different motifs and patterns.

Human motifs were also another example that was typical of the east phulkaris, in the west use of motifs inspired from humans or animals was forbidden and therefore they practiced only geometric patterns. One major point was also noted while observing the *baghs* like the *ghunghta bagh* or the *vari da bagh* that the pieces were embroidered first and then were sewn to get the required width; due to this one can observe a disconnected pattern near the joints. On the other hand the phulkaris of the east were sewn first and then were embroidered, which led to camouflage the joints and focus only went on to the pattern.

The *chhamas* or commonly known as the *sheeshedar* phulkari was prevalent in the present day Rohtak and Haryana. The *chhamas* is embroidered with a silk or cotton threads yellow in colour and is embellished with mirrors to repel the evil eye. It is also believed that the mirrors reflected the colour of the cotton thread and made it look lustrous like silk. The museum has 12 varieties of skirts and the majority of them have mirror embellishments. Some skirts are observed to have *chopad* game or motifs of birds and animals like camels, elephants with some human figures. Such abstract motifs are embroidered in one part of the skirt. The skirts are lined with a block printed red and white striped band to finish the hem. This red hem was a symbol of a married woman. Widows or unmarried women did not wear these skirts with the red band. Majority of the *chhamas* were observed to be embroidered in cotton thread dyed with yellow vegetable dye. This could be a possibility that the embroidered was from a lower economic background and could not afford to buy the silk threads. There is another possibility that these phulkaris were embroidered by younger girls while they were learning the craft from their family elders. The waist band was interesting and finished with a casing white in colour. Such hand stitching techniques are not seen in present day tailoring techniques.





Plate 4.63: Two examples of chhamas or sheeshedar phulkari

The pieces of the museum were observed to have names written with ink or embroidered with the embroidery thread, mostly on the reverse side of the fabric, validating as evidence that the traditional technique was embroidered from the reverse side of the fabric. These names are mostly written in *Gurmukhi* but few in *Farsi* language. It could not be affirmed whether these names are of the wearer of the *bagh* or of the embroiderer of the *bagh*, as the richest used to commission the pieces to an embroiderer.



Plate 4.64: Embroidered names of people on bagh and phulkaris



Apart from the name of the people written on the *bagh* sometimes the *baghs* were also embroidered with Holy Scriptures or the name of the god, as a symbol of eternal blessing to the wearer. It cannot be traced as to when these *baghs* and phulkaris became a ritualistic symbol. But while decorating with and embroidering the holy blessings, there is a probability that people started associating each piece with significant value. It was customary for the elder to bless the younger generation or younger couple with good wishes and a gift; could be grains or jaggery, some piece of jewelry or clothes. If one tries to connect the dots it could be connected to the fact that people from all stratas would want to bless the family with all required and defined by the norms but only some could do it. Possibly then the people began to embroider the representation of this on a piece of cloth that was already part of the marriage trousseau with *baghs* and phulkaris embroidered with motifs like jewelry, architectural motif like *tulsi ghar*, the medicinal and auspicious plant for Hindus and Sikhs. Motifs like elephants, tigers, birds like peacock and parrots, reptiles like snakes. All were symbolic of a particular significance.

Further in the collection were observed pieces that were embroidered in phulkari technique that is with surface satin stitch but did not look anything like phulkari or *bagh*. The colour palette was also very different to the traditional colour palette. The base fabric seemed to be mill made cotton rather than hand woven khaddar. The colour of the base fabric was rose pink that was nothing near the colour palette of a traditional phulkari. It is suspected that these pieces could be the part of the revolutionary phulkari export to the British in 1832, when the Maharaja of the then Punjab agreed to export the first ever contract of phulkaris. With the growing demand for phulkaris and severe drought in the northern region families were forced to create and sell phulkaris. Subsequently the market of the west was flooded with all kinds of phulkari items and products. New colour combinations and patterns were developed to cater this new growing market; that's when the Manchester and Jubilee *bagh* were created and sold exclusively to the west. These two *baghs* in the museum collection very much match the literature. The cheaper quality of fabric that does not feel like hand-woven khaddar embroidered with coarse stitches of more than 2cms in length and an unassociated colour palette to the original craft.



Plate 4.65: Coarse work phulkaris unlike traditional pieces

Apart from the *baghs* and phulkaris the researcher came across items that were stitched out of phulkaris were items like a *chanani*. *Chanani* is the canopy that is hung on the ceiling to cover the holy shrine of the sikhs, the holy Guru Granth Sahib. This is usually square in shape and has a decoration of frills in all four sides. The four corners have four strings to attach and hang on the hooks fixed on the ceiling. The museum piece looks like it was made out of old phulkaris, since the embroidery pattern does not match with the frill or at the joints.

Another interesting piece that is in the possession of the museum is a machine stitched *kurti* of small size. The machine stitching is evident and the pattern reveals use of darts for fitting and a placket for buttons or hooks. The third item was a small phulkari bag or as locally called as *theli* that was a daily use item to carry vegetables or groceries. Lastly, the museum has pieces that were developed as ox hides. These are *chhamas* variation of phulkari with mirror embellishment. The placement of the embroidery is done in such a way that the central square motif is placed just behind the hump of the ox. And the two hanging ends have a broad border detail with mirror embellishment.



Plate 4.66: Embroidered artifacts other than bagh and phulkari shawls and khaddars

### 4.3 Documenting and creating a motif vocabulary

During data collection it was noticed that the artifacts had a wide range of motifs. This array of motifs mostly became the identity of the *bagh* or phulkari it was embroidered on. Also with the results of the market survey, there was felt an urgent need to document these motifs into a catalog that will serve as a reference source to reorient the artisans and design community with respect to the traditional designs, motifs and patterns. The original pieces in total of 157 were studied and documented using a report as discussed earlier. These *baghs* were photographed and segregated with respect to types of motifs used. These segregated motifs were digitized using adobe illustrator 2022 and original motifs were digitally extracted to serve as a reference of colour and stitches used to create a particular motif. These motifs were classified as geometric and naturalistic categories with sub-division of motifs based on its nature.

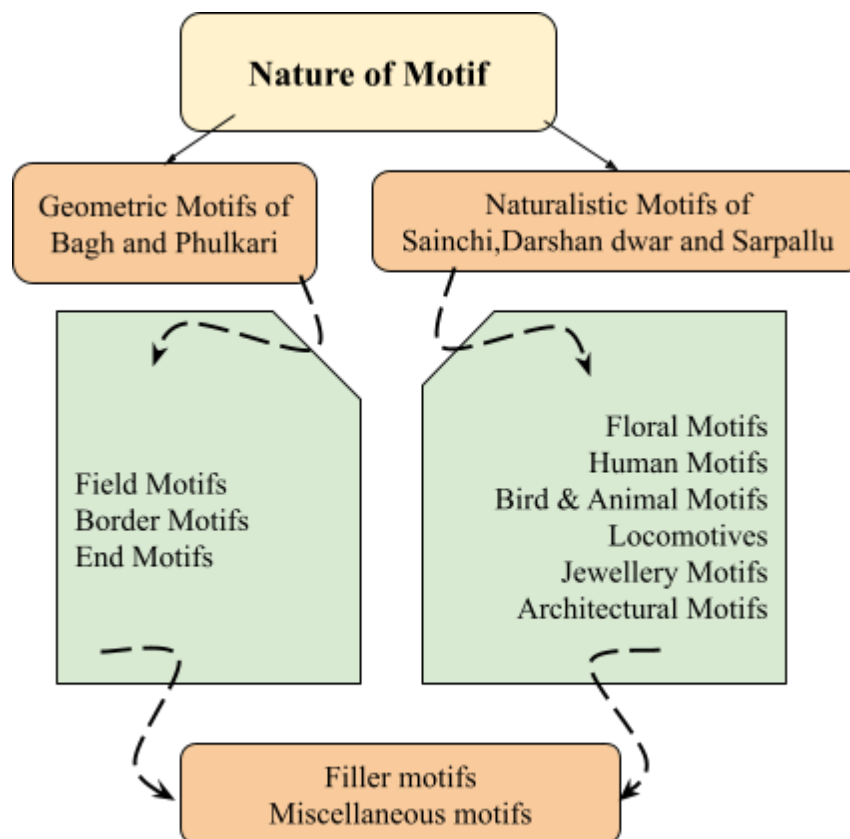


Plate 4.67: Classification of Motifs



#### 4.3.1.a Geometric field motifs

These motifs were usually used to complete the pattern in the central field of phulkaris. Since phulkaris were the less embroidered variety than the *bagh* it had more variations. The most common design observed was the four directional geometric flower that was manipulated in different lengths of stitches, and different lengths of petals to create interest in the pattern.

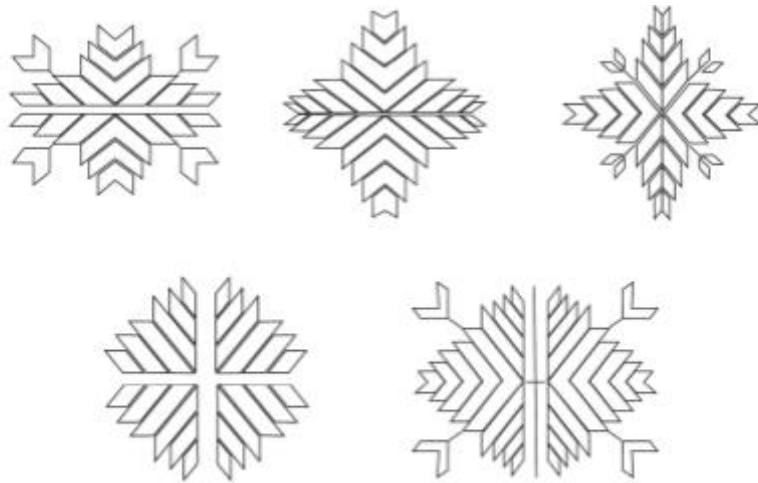


Plate 4.68: Digitized geometric field motifs

#### 4.3.1.b Geometric border motifs

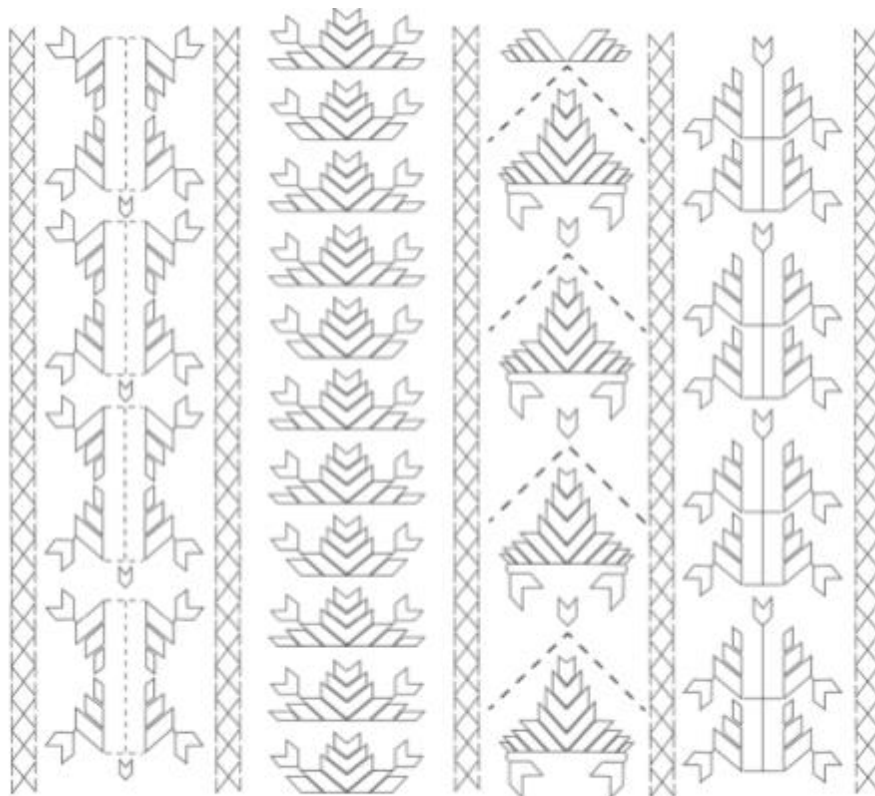


Plate 4.69: Digitized geometric border motifs

These motifs generally consist of longitudinal repeats of one motif, commonly observed to be moving in one direction. The border motifs were used to enclose the field embroidery. The most common borders were observed to be of an abstract version of floral motif stacked on one another.

#### 4.3.1.c Geometric end motifs

The end motifs were usually elaborate as compared to the field motifs or border motifs. These were observed to be embroidered in square shaped boxes in equal multiples to match the width of the fabric. The end motifs were observed to be the biggest size motifs. The combination of stitches and techniques was often observed. The ends of the phulkari usually were observed to be embroidered with one separate abstract motif than the rest of the end pattern. This was to add an element of interest in the design.

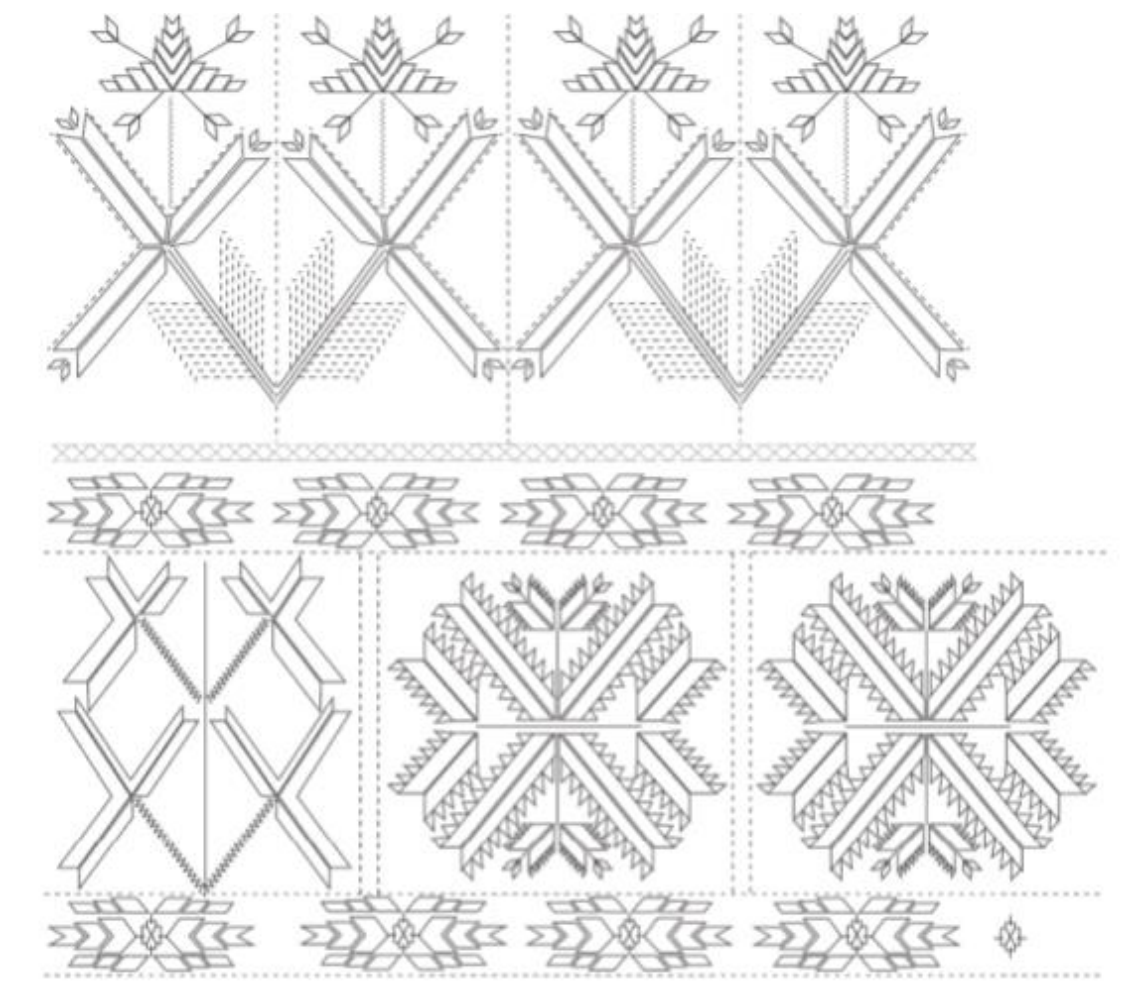


Plate 4.70: Digitized geometric end motifs



#### 4.3.2a. Naturalistic floral motifs

Naturalistic floral motifs were observed to be less as compared to the wide array of geometric florals, the embroiderers have been innovative in modifying the shape of the flower to achieve a naturalistic feel. Such motifs were used in light phulkaris that were part of the daily routine of Punjabi women. These were also used like filler motifs in many other varieties of phulkaris.



Plate 4.71: Digitized naturalistic floral motifs

#### 4.3.2.b Naturalistic Human motifs

Naturalistic human motifs are a specialty of *sainchi* phulkari. *Sainchi* as discussed earlier is the canvas of stories that embroiderer is inspired with and wants to pass on to the younger generation. These motifs visually narrate the stories of the olden times. The scenes that were of social importance were usually embroidered care. Stories like Shravan Kumar and Heer Ranjha or men wrestling and a man training the bear were few of the scenes that were commonly embroidered on *sainchis*. Apart from *sainchi* such human motifs can also be seen on *sarpallu* or on the *darshan dwar*. The difference would be that the *sarpallu* or *darshan dwar* would have only human figures in a position and not like a social scenario

depicted in *sainchi*.

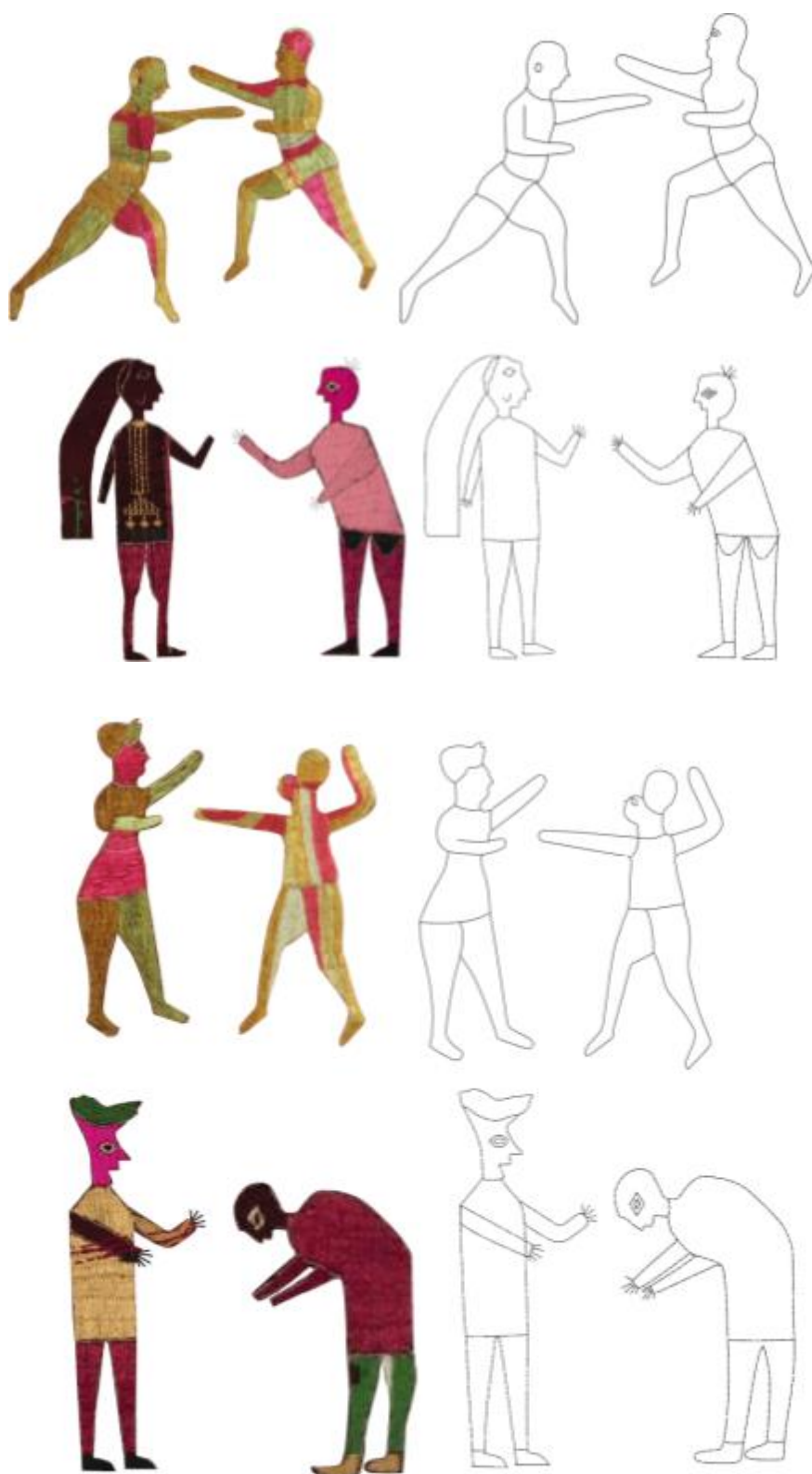


Plate 4.72: Digitized naturalistic human motifs

#### 4.3.2.c Naturalistic birds and animals

Naturalistic birds and animals were also predominantly part of the *sainchi* phulkari. Most frequently observed birds and animals were, lion, tiger, elephant, camel, peacocks, parrots etc. these animals were shown in naturalistic form or few were observed to be in folk style. These were symbolic of various meanings and were often seen embroidered towards the end borders of the *sainchi* phulkari.

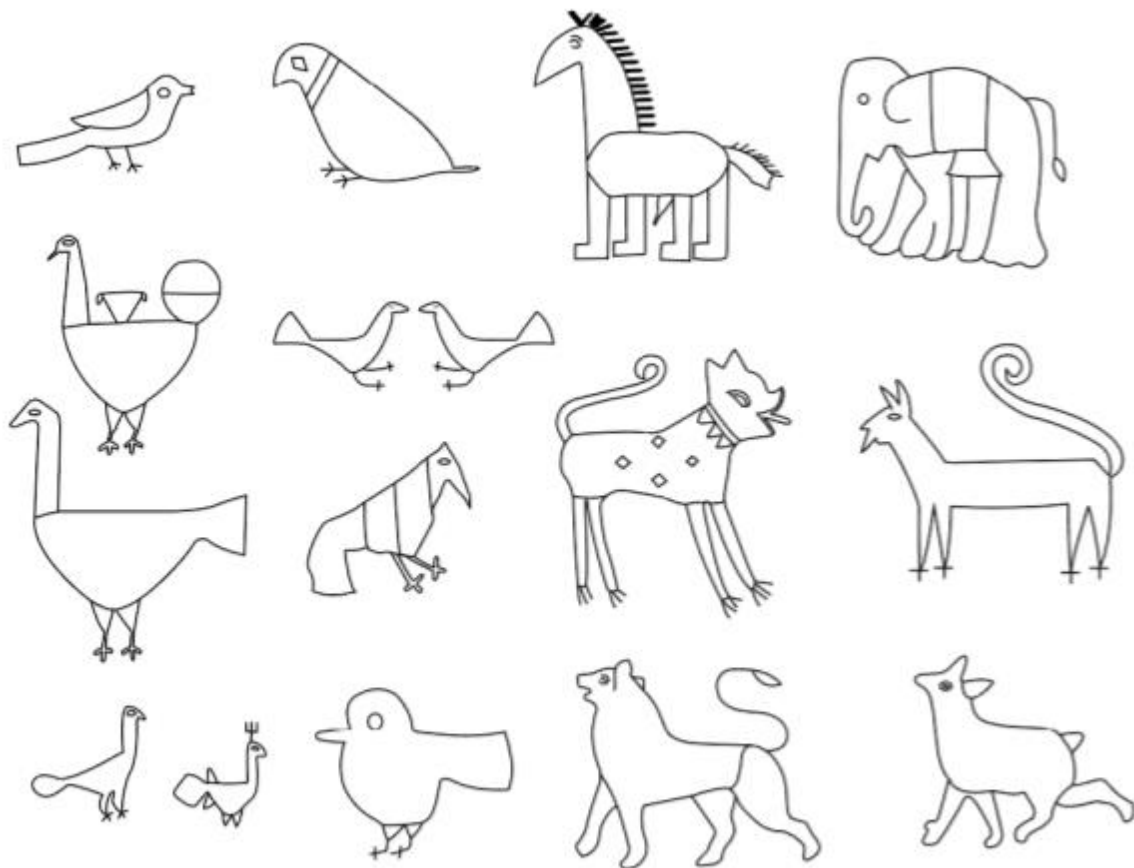


Plate 4.73: Digitized naturalistic birds and animals

#### 4.3.2.d Locomotives

The locomotives observed as in *sainchi* were mainly of two kinds, one was the Indian carts with horses and bullocks and other was trains with engines piping clouds of smoke into the air. Both varieties were observed in mostly all *sainchis*. The skill of an embroiderer can also be evaluated from the accuracy of the shape achieved. Women were not permitted to move out of the house freely and from the little that they visualized from stories, it is their exceptional embroidery skill that one can identify and decode the hidden stories and many meanings of *sainchi*.

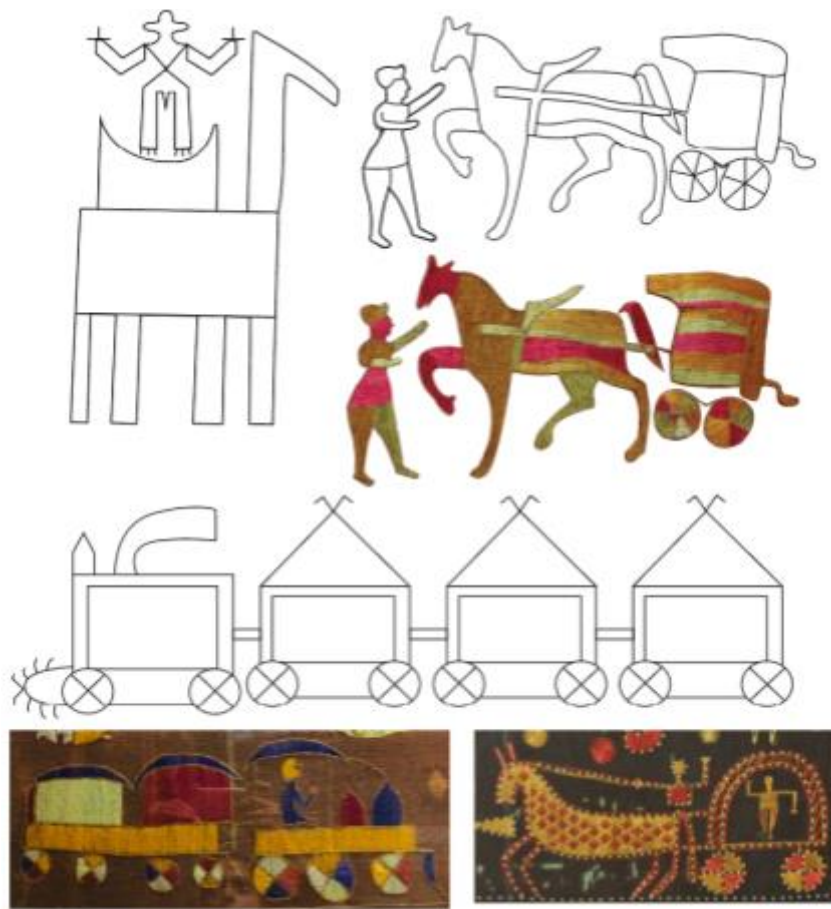


Plate 4.74: Digitized locomotor motifs

#### 4.3.2.e Jewelry Motifs

Jewelry motifs are also commonly observed motifs in the *bagh* and *sarpallu* phulkari. Stylized embroidered jewels depict the aspiration of the embroiderer. Women's desire for jewelry like *ranihar* the necklace, *jumki* the ear rings, *mata patti* the forehead jewelry, *nathni* the nose pin were few most commonly embroidered jewels. These were often embroidered in golden yellow silk floss. The jewelry symbolized abundant wealth and it was an integral part of the *suhag nishani* or the married woman's identity. These motifs were often embroidered around reptile motifs like snakes or lizards symbolizing the protector of wealth.

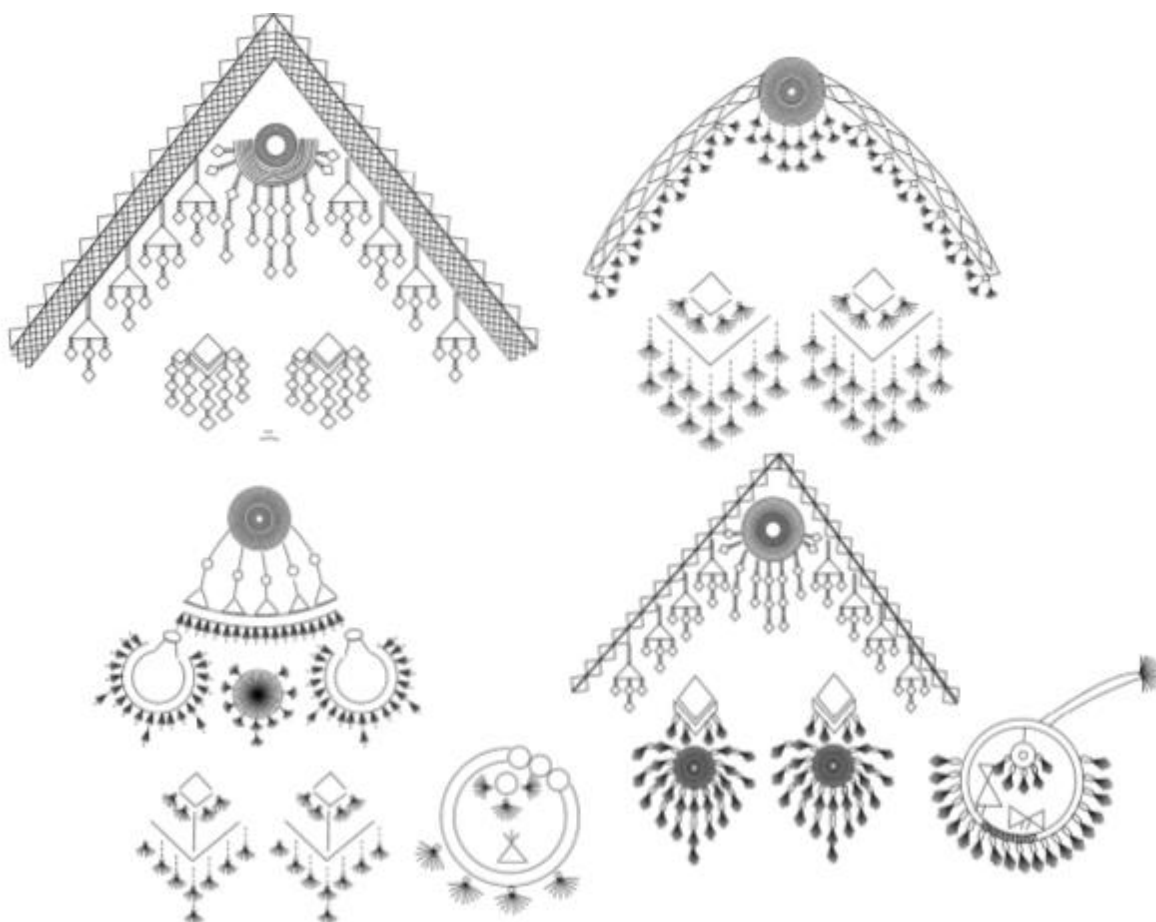


Plate 4.75: Digitized Jewelry motifs

#### 4.3.2.f Architectural motifs

The architectural motifs are mostly in the *darshan dwar*. This variety of phulkari showcases the highest level of elegance that the craft has accomplished. The complex stitch pattern is the most difficult of all stitch techniques. Counting of the fabric to create a positive and negative space with the help of darning comprised the main stitch type of this *bagh*. The gate-like structures with pointed canopy and with lengthwise pillars are entirely embellished with this complex stitch. Enclosed in the *dwar* were embroidered humans and animals. Some similar structures are also seen in the *sarpallu* phulkari where the lengthwise borders are embellished with triangular structures and the central field is decorated with flowers and animals along with human figures and some jewelry motifs as well.

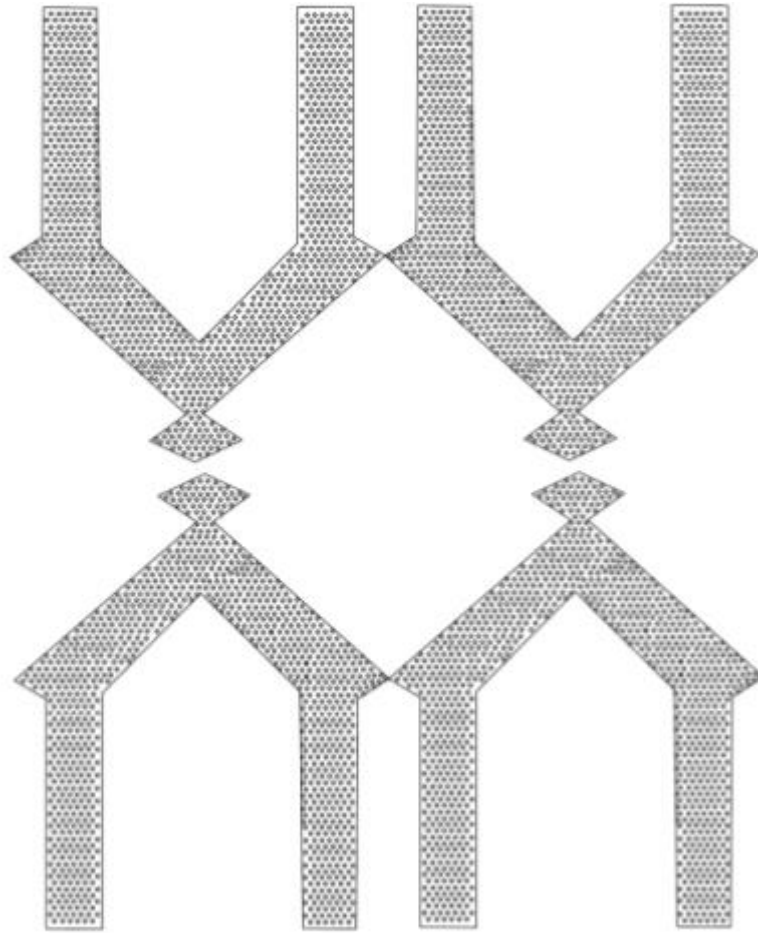


Plate 4.76: Schematic illustration for architectural motif

#### 4.3.3.a Filler motifs

The filler motifs are observed to be spangled in the field to cover the area and balance the visual appeal. Filler motifs are used in phulkaris that were lightly embroidered like tool di phulkari to fill the field with small and dainty motifs. It had matching motifs on the ends and borders. The *baghs* also have these motifs used in the field where after the central body was covered with the main motifs these small filler was embroidered with sprinkles usually derived from the border or the end design. It could be an abstract flower in geometric form or flowers that gave a naturalistic appeal like marigold or *kikkar* also called as acacia. The *sainchi* phulkari is seen with a wide variety of filler motifs which may or may not have any symbolism. Random motifs like a comb or a centipede, a frog or a mouse were also observed embroidered between the main human motifs. The layout usually was planned beforehand but due to free hand embroidery with tracing the outlines of the motif it made difficult to manage



the empty spaces, hence were embroidered with these motifs to balance the visual appeal of the piece.

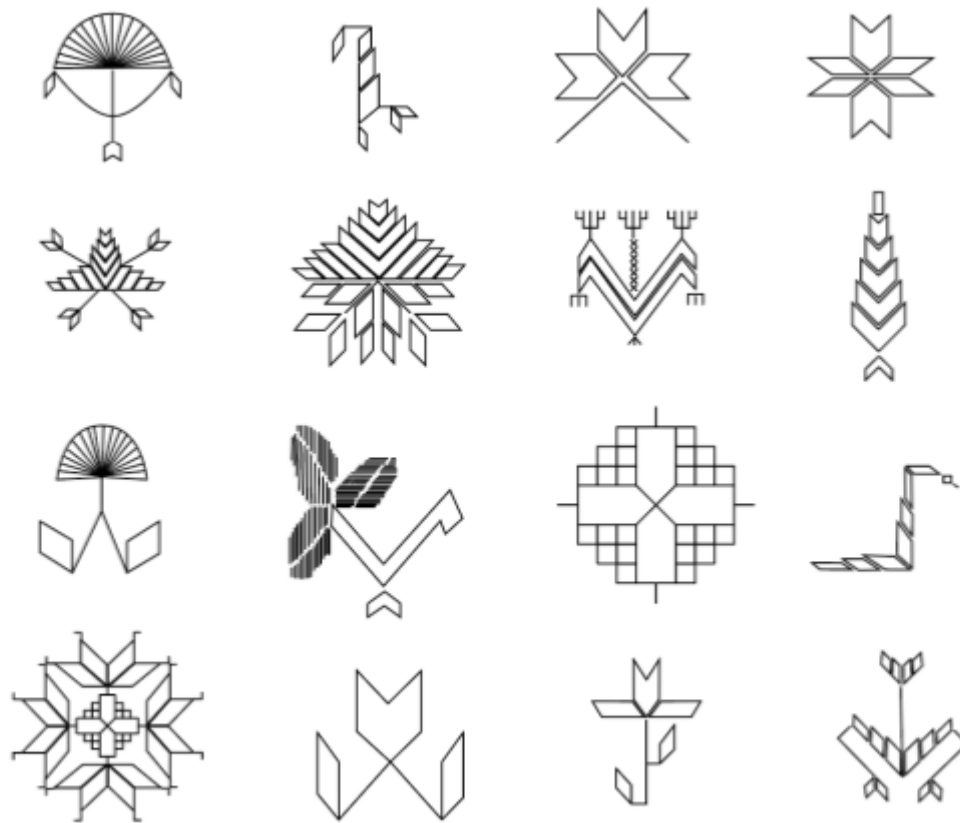


Plate 4.77: Digitized geometric filler motifs

#### 4.3.3.b Miscellaneous motifs

While studying the artifacts it was observed that there were motifs that were usually embroidered in the corner of the *bagh* or phulkari. These four corners could be of the same or different designs. These are embroidered along with the thin border that separated the field motifs and end motifs of the *bagh*. These seldom have any design connection with the *bagh* or the motifs embroidered in it. These motifs are embroidered with a design contrast to catch the eye of the viewer and highlight the extraordinary skill of the embroiderer. The colour scheme of these are kept matching the colours used in the *bagh*. The specialty of these motifs is that these can be used as a main motif for the *bagh* patterns as well. It could be a way of demonstrating the skill of embroidery. More number of motifs embroidered with intricacy was considered a high skill and also was believed to get the embroiderer a good match for marriage purposes.

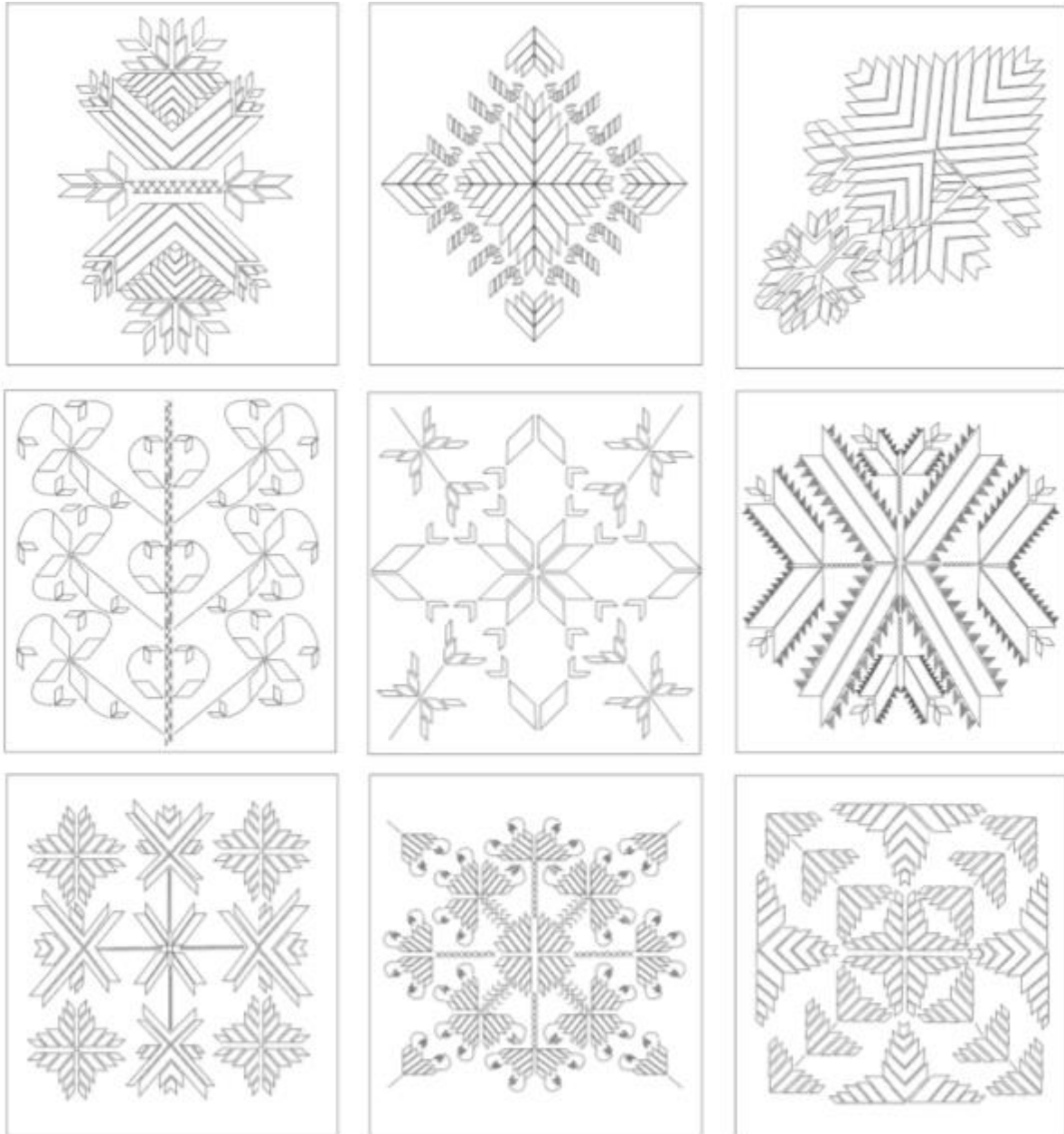


Plate 4.78: Digitized geometric miscellaneous motifs

#### 4.3.4 Motifs and their symbolic significance

India has a rich cultural legacy that includes several notable epics known as Hindu mythology. Hindu tales of mythology are chronicles found in Hindu texts that tell the epic stories of Gods and their wise activities. Indians have been studying these legendary stories since earliest times in order to live a life that has a purpose. Dharma, or ethics and obligations, samsara, or the continual cycle of birth, life, death, and reincarnation, karma, or action, purpose, and consequences, moksha, or liberation in this life, and the many yoga, or ways and practices, are all prominent topics in Hindu teachings.

The vast majority of people in India have followed these ideas in the form of storytelling. Stories about triumph, stories about conflict, stories about love and devotion, stories about generosity, stories about showing thanks to others, and many more are examples of mythical legends. Myths and tales are an essential aspect of human culture. They have always been around us. Though their veracity is questionable, no one appears to mind because they serve as evidence of human faith in heavenly forces. Many artists in the country and throughout the world have been inspired by Indian mythological stories depicting good and terrible acts.

Typically, the same myth exists in several variants and might be depicted differently among socio-religious cultures. These tales have also been transformed over time by many intellectual systems, most notably the Hindu tradition. These tales are thought to have deeper, typically symbolic meanings and have been subjected to a wide range of interpretations.

Those representations or commemorations have been transformed into numerous arts and crafts. Each of these representations conveys a message. These may be found in the motifs used in many crafts, as well as the colours used and the location of a motif amid other motifs. To summarize, these crafts served as a vehicle for communicating these beliefs to people of the period.

The study of motifs was the most important aspect of this research. The most important aspect of all was that these motifs gave the craft its identity. The status of a basic dyed fabric was raised by embroidering these motifs on it. These motifs are not only for aesthetic reasons but they also serve as an expression of the woman who embroidered it. These motifs are representative of the world around these Punjabi woman embroiderers. The world seen by women was manifested in the form of phulkari embroidery. The women with many aspirations, feelings and emotions, ideas and thoughts were expressed with embroidering various motifs symbolic of the socio-cultural and the geographical background of the embroiderer. These motifs help one to learn about the societal norms of the times when the piece was embroidered, it also helps one to understand the transition of the craft through the shift in societal structures.

The women in the olden days were expected to be humble and reticent of expressing their thoughts in words and actions, they found a way to communicate through embroidery. These motifs provided an outlet to speak social stories by creating vibrancy on the coarse khaddar.

The embroiderers assigned names to these phulkaris from where its design was inspired. To comprehend its significance and relevance it was important to study the association of motif with the craft in detail.

#### 4.3.4.a The geometric motifs' symbolic significance

The geometric motifs were inspired from basic geometric shapes and these shapes have a proven history of conveying a symbolic meaning in various cultural, religious and spiritual contexts. The 'triangle' denotes 'trinity' in many cultures, the three folds of nature and the cosmos in terms of body, mind, and spirit. It also represents the passage of time in your past, present, and future.



Plate 4.79: Example of the triangle motif in chope



Plate 4.80: Example of the diamond motif in bagh

The heavenly character is represented by a motif surrounded within a square, circle, or polygon. The amount of changes in the surrounding nature, as well as the basic form of the peasants, are represented by multi-colored squares put one against the other. The circle represents life's continuance, completeness, and harmony. The squares or lozenges centered on a circle represent reproduction, growth, and fertility. The number of squares is highly important and is frequently unequal since an uneven number is seen to be auspicious. Wavy lines represent a sacred spring or pond. The flower and plant patterns represent the primary occupation, which is agriculture. For example *balian* motifs (ears of the wheat with a stalk), cotton, sugarcane, millet motifs. Flowers symbolize beauty, youth, and freshness.



Plate 4.81: Example of depiction of floral motif



Plate 4.82: Example of depiction of deity in polygonal shape



Plate 4.83: Examples of wheat motif in skirts

#### 4.3.4.b The figurative style of motifs and their symbolic significance

Hindu and Sikh phulkaris like *sainchis* also incorporate human figures, animals, flowers and birds, presenting a rich repertoire of life. They depict scenes of everyday life. These are interspersed with stories of epics, myths, personal aspirations and desires. Local animals are represented moving amongst wrestlers, farmers, weavers etc. The animals were brought to the *mela* to show entertaining acts like those of the circus. The wrestlers also used to put up shows to showcase their strengths. Hence it can be observed of many traditional weight lifting tools being embroidered on the *sainchi*. Train is also often displayed on *sainchi* phulkari. This means of transportation brought by the British in the second half of the century, had a big impact on the life of the local population. Many men were relocated in different parts of the city or country on British jobs or other business opportunities like farmers markets for British colonies. One can observe an embroidered train often with men and women as passengers embroidered as an aspiration to unite with their far away spouse.





Plate 4.84: Examples of lord krishna with gopis, jewelry, human figures in leisure activity

Beyond their aesthetic values, *sainchi* phulkaris can be compared to our now-a-days media as they depict the ways of life, interests and environment of the old time and rural people of Punjab. These are several reasons it became so appreciated by the collectors and occupy a very unique position among the different varieties of phulkari in those days. The geometric designs seen in the *baghs* are primarily associated with Muslim communities, which reflect the Islamic restraint on work. Hindu and Sikh embroiderers used a variety of combinations of geometric and non-geometric motifs to embellish their *bagh* of aspirations.

*Sainchi* phulkaris and its comparison amongst an array of motif categories embroidered in different styles by embroiderers in different locations bring forth theories and ideologies that women embroiderers could be similar. The bird represents freedom and the desire to go higher. The peacock is a sign of affection and fertility, yet it may also represent an absent lover. The parrot is regarded as the typical truth teller and represents our conscience. The pigeon represents love letters. The crow represents good news and happiness. The cock is a symbol of rebirth and enlightenment. Sparrows represent spring. Camels represent successful love. Horse is a symbol of manhood. Serpent was the emblem of wealth, protective power and the healer of the earth.





Plate 4.85: Examples of scenes from daily life depicted in sainchi phulkari, woman churning butter, men playing chaupad, man beating his daughter, the british woman in conversation and a woman offering butter to the saint

#### 4.3.4.c The narrative style of motifs and their symbolic significance

Embroidered household articles and themes like man ploughing, playing *chaupad*, lying on *charpoy*, smoking *hukkah* or guests drinking sherbet were commonly embroidered. Domestic chores of women, such as churning the milk, grinding the *chakki* or hand mill, playing the charkha were also the most common topics. Women also embroidered scenes which they found interesting, like the scene of a British officer visiting a village; the women carrying umbrella and walking along with memsahib the British lady, scenes such as railways, circus as well as scenes from popular Punjabi stories like Sohni Mahiwal, Sassi-Punnu were among popular themes. The researcher's observation ponders on the human figures, birds and animals that are embroidered in geometric shapes on a rare black colour khaddar. The motif includes scenes where women is spinning over Charkha, Lord Krishna with Gopis, a blue horse symbolizing Sikh's tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji's savari, a monkey charmer, depiction of Shravan Kumar the son who carried his parents in two baskets on his shoulders and complete set of bride's jewelry. Although the motifs were sometimes geometric, they depict all Hindu mythological stories. The *sainchi* is also observed with a central lotus motif which holds high importance in Hindu mythology. Apart from the mythological scenes one can observe a train with men and women passengers accompanied



Plate 4.86: Examples of locomotives like chariots, carts and trains

with children. The passengers can be seen carrying items for their train journey that probably could be gifts for their loved ones living afar. Another motif of interest in the *sainchi* is the horse chariot with men and women and a rider on the riding seat. The embroiderer in this *sainchi* could be trying to capture the stories of the changing times. Apprehended by the advancements of those times got the embroiderer fascinated to put it in colourful threads with a story for her art-piece.

The motifs of the jewelry that the woman has longed for and never had are made her own, by creating them. There is the *shringar patti* for decorating the forehead and framing her face, along with the nose ring, the cascading earring and the *hathphool*, *guluband* and *pariband* are some of the important jewelry motifs embroidered in golden yellow and white, the colour denoting the gold and silver metals used.





Plate 4.87: examples of jewelry motifs in sainchi phulkari

The women embroidered articles and scenes from day to day life which included the spinningwheel, also considered as the wheel of creation and of the steady preparation for the ultimate union with the lord. The churning of butter in the early hours of the morning, usually before dawn, is associated with the earliest movements of earth and heaven and the churning of oceans. Scholars believe that the spinning of the wheels and churning of the waters (in Hindu mythology) have a highly specific importance, owing to the various interpretations of this theme. The wheel theme is meant to represent the cycle of creation, constant preparation, and ultimate unification with God, which is accomplished through purity and contentment with life and beyond and by embroidering these wheels on the fabric a thread of unity is created. It is believed that by following this spiritual practice it will result in a shift from one's nature that is associated with raw cotton to being cultivated that is associated with sublimated harmony of perfection.

The central motif of *sainchi* phulkari is the most sacred motif. It resembles the lotus flower. Lotus flowers are often connected with purity, inner strength, and tranquility, but their meaning goes well beyond that. The flower is symbolic in many religions, including

Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. The lotus flower is regarded as one of the most holy flowers due to its rich symbolic connotations and link to religion. Here's a close-up of the lotus. The Lotus Flower thrives deep in the muck, hidden from the sun. But, inevitably, the Lotus blooms into the most gorgeous flower ever.



Plate 4.88: Examples of central motif as lotus or seed of life motif

The central motif of *sainchi* also represents the seed of life from the sacred geometry. It is a two dimensional circular form that is created by overlapping seven circles. There is one circle in the center and six circles interconnect with the seventh circle in between. This also resembles an equally proportioned flower. It is also a universal symbol of seven days of creation. This motif is observed at many historical sites across the globe.

One of the most powerful links of the lotus flower with religion is found in Hinduism. The lotus flower is connected with beauty, fertility, wealth, spirituality, and eternity in this religion. The white lotus bloom is the most prevalent lotus shape in Hinduism. Many Hindu gods and goddesses are associated with the flower; for example, the goddess of fortune, Laxmi, is generally represented perched above a fully opened lotus flower. Similarly, Brahma, the deity of creation, is represented as emerging from a lotus that creeps from Lord Vishnu's navel.

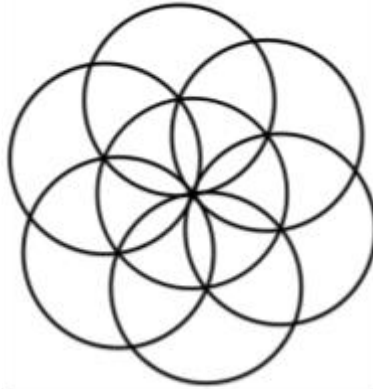


Plate 4.89: Graphical representation of seed of life

Peacock is yet another motif that is widely embroidered in phulkari embroidery. Embroidery depicts several types of peacocks such as peacocks in pairs or holding a lotus flower, dancing, or killing snakes, and many more. Peacock has been represented in phulkari embroidery in a variety of forms including geometrical, abstract and stylized. The geometric lines of the peacock patterns convey organization, stability, consistency, and dependability. The combination of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines has long been seen as a sign of stability, longevity, and immovability. These geometric patterns have also signified the spirit of regeneration, as well as a sense of optimism and continuation in life. Because geometry has traditionally represented balance and assurance, the peacock in phulkari is likewise seen as a sign of balance and oneness. The angels in the shape of peacocks also signify continuity since they are built in ascending order and near to a very short point. Peacock around a lotus flower symbolizes royalty, beauty and spirituality as both are known to have its association with the creator. Peacock with a cross legged posture, represents dance and expression of pleasant mood and high spirit. It is believed that with the pair of peacocks and their gestures the embroiderer depicted one's own relationship with their spouse.

The embroidered piece is more than just embroidery since all the emotions felt by the creator, while translating their world into a beautiful embroidered creation and all things



in that creation; is transferred energy to the piece. Embroidering early morning the time that is considered as the time of devotees or *bhaktas* is a symbol of earth's first movement as a celestial body. The music of charkha or the music of churning butter that generates a rhythmic sound aids like the sound of meditation and creates the same impact as meditating for self-enlightenment towards a spiritual destiny.



Plate 4.90: Examples of peacock motifs in various forms

The above discussed types of *sainchis* motifs are distinct in their forms and reflect heavy influence of the surroundings in its embroidery styles. The embroiderer although had similar ideologies when it comes to depict her belief and observation the examples have many things in common yet are diverse in nature. The colours of the base are different for all yet the colours of threads are mostly the same. The women of Punjab had their set daily routine of waking up before the sun to start the daily chores and deliver tiffin to their husbands in fields. They had day hours to sit together, sing songs while embroidering phulkaris and exchange stories of each-others household and probably also stories they heard from their traveling



Plate 4.91: Depiction of weaving processes like spinning, combing and warping

Husband's to other cities or states. The exchange of experiences and describing the scenes forced women to visualize the scenarios and put them down to be remembered and shared with the next generations.

Therefore the *sainchi* became the medium of storytelling when embroidered motifs of means of transport or British lady or the harsh reality of infanticide of a female child. It was also a medium of teaching the younger generation through examples to lead a righteous life. Especially when embroidered motifs of Hindu mythology depicting stories like Shravan Kumar that symbolizes to serve and support one's parents just as they did for their children, or motifs with great symbolic meanings like the lotus that symbolizes beauty and spirituality, Peacocks symbolizes its association with goddess Saraswati or symbolizing benevolence and patience. A snake embroidered with a jet of jewelry as a snake represents a god of wealth also called as Kuber. It also represents death, rebirth and mortality. Similarly the colours have their own significance like the golden yellow depicts the colour of Lord Vishnu, the colour of purity, victory, chastity also since in spring unmarried girls wear yellow clothes and *baghs* and *phulkaris* were especially made for the marriage trousseau of the bride. Some also believe that the colour yellow has powers to keep evil spirits away. The colour red or maroon

symbolizes fertility as it's the colour of earth, it also symbolizes purity and is also connected with the spectrum of the rising sun.

To conclude, the women embroidering *phulkaris* were extremely creative with their designs and patterns. Their brilliance of embroidering without any visual reference or pattern or print is far superior to anything comparable. The researcher is captivated with their ideologies that were the same all over. Probably carried with them the songs they sang or the stories that they heard from their traveling husbands or from the silk thread hawker that used to travel from various cities and villages.

#### **4.3.5 Colours of phulkari and their significance**

Phulkari is known to be a vibrant and colourful craft. Each colour associated with phulkari or *bagh* had a meaning. Since the craft was originally practiced by Hindu and Muslim women the association of the colour for each of the communities is different yet connected.

The colour golden yellow predominantly the main colour known for its gold like appearance is considered auspicious in Hinduism and Sikhism as it is considered as the colour of Vishnu, colour of victory, chastity, colour of purity and sensual as well. On the other hand in Islam yellow is forbidden to be worn by men, it is a colour that only women exclusively could wear. This could be a reason why the finest varieties of *vari da bagh* were embroidered entirely in yellow to signify the bride and make her stand out. The colour golden yellow is also often associated with the occupation of people in Punjab. The golden yellow signifies the ripe fields of wheat that were most important for a Punjabi family as it was the only source of income for the locals.

The colour red that is used extensively for the base fabric also holds huge importance in Hinduism and Sikhism, as it is considered to be symbolic of affection and commitment. It also symbolizes strength and bravery as it is associated with goddess Durga. While in Islam the colour red symbolizes life force. In both the cases the religious importance of the colour suits the purpose of the craft. The colour red is also associated with the fertile soil of Punjab region and when embroidered with the golden yellow silk floss becomes representative of a full ripe produce of wheat grown from the fertile land. The colour magenta or deep pink was also associated in this category as while embroidery the base was entirely covered a pop of maroon or magenta lifted the pattern while keeping the symbolism intact. It was also

representative of goddess Laxmi as it is the colour of the lotus. It was symbolic of unlimited wealth.

The colour green was used in the shade of mint. According to Hinduism, green is the colour of happiness and it signifies Mother Nature. The colour is also associated with stability and peace as it gives a soothing effect when looked upon. In Islam green colour holds the highest value as it also represents the same symbol as in Hinduism that is nature and life, it is also associated with paradise as expressed in their holy book.

The colour blue in Hinduism has deep meaning, it is associated with the majority of the Hindu gods, and it represents the formless and infinite Brahman. It is also representative of lord Krishna, or with lord Shiva the Neel Kantha. In Islam blue colour signifies impenetrable depth of the universe. It is also believed that a person with blue eyes is blessed with divine qualities.

The colour orange represents fire and purity in Hinduism and on the other hand it is restrained to wear orange colour in Islam. Therefore the use of orange colour would mostly be observed in the Hindu or the Sikh embroidered phulkaris and *baghs*.

The colour white is symbolic of peace and purity in all religions and faiths. The colour black too globally is associated with negative energy and evil but most commonly it is used to ward-off the evil eye.

#### **4.3.6 Current status of craft with respect to motifs and colours**

Observing modern phulkari pieces, one can clearly distinguish between old and contemporary phulkari, especially based on the themes used. The ancient traditional phulkari was dominated by themes incorporating plants, birds and animals, human figures and other natural elements, each with its own value and symbolism as previously discussed. However, one may argue that this is no longer the case now. As a result of the commercialization of the art form, all of the old action-oriented themes have been replaced with floral and geometric designs of the current day. This has resulted as phulkari is no longer intended at expressing the artisan's thoughts and emotions; rather, it is concerned with matching commercial needs in order to be widely marketed in the market. However, some traditional phulkari shapes can be seen in modern floral and geometric motifs, such as the triangle motif (symbol of the holy trinity, representative of the number "three" symbolic of the past, present, and future, and of the universe in terms of spirit, mind, and body), which is used to embroider flower motifs.





Plate 4.92: Examples of present day hand embroidered phulkari dupattas after printing geometric floral motifs on base fabric and embroidered using unconventional colour palette  
Source: <https://www.gitagged.com/product/punjab-phulkari-red-green-hand-embroidered-dupattas/>

The alterations in motif have mostly resulted from distinctions in what the designs are aiming and catering to. Previously, embroidery patterns were based only on human desire and were affected solely by personal prejudices, preferences, and culture. The past's themes would vary from woman to woman. There used to be apparent variances when comparing the identical motifs embroidered by two different ladies. This was due to an embroiderer's interpretation playing a significant part in how the designs appeared. Another explanation for the lack of consistency is the disparity in skill levels among women.

In more recent times, the commercialization of the creative form has resulted in a tendency of purchasing phulkari from stores rather than devoting time and effort to producing one's own work. As a result of this, as previously noted, market pressures govern which themes are used. As a result, the shift in the function of the phulkari has altered the original intent of the motifs as well. The themes have evolved as phulkari is no longer regarded as a part of a woman's trousseau and is more of a cultural product than an integral aspect of existence. This has resulted in a shift in the meaning of the themes. Previously, the themes may reveal a lot about the creator of the phulkari. Now, it only provides information on the market's interests and preferences, omitting the maker of embroidery from the picture.





Plate 4.93: Examples of computer embroidered phulkari dupattas

Source: <https://www.etsy.com/in-en/listing/1235775614/heavy-phulkari-dupatta-threadwork>

In contrast to human figures or train themes, the prevalent geometrical patterns provide the impression that they are fashionable and in high demand. The woman artisans who work in the embroidery business are given cloth that already has traces on it. In this way, their freedom of speech is limited. Pattern references are used even by artisans who practice phulkari simply for the purpose of showcasing their creative aptitude. As a result, the possibility of creating a fully unique product is quite limited. As a consequence, it is reasonable to conclude that automation of the method of making phulkari is an outcome of public desensitization, which no longer appears to appreciate the process of creativity and the effort put in by the embroiderer. This reflects not just a shift in the importance of needlework in a consumer's life, but also the consumer's expectation that *dupattas* and bedspreads will match everything, rather than seeking for an original creation that will connect with them on an individual level.

Colours, in addition to themes, played an essential part in embroidery. The craft originally was an organic process. This includes dyeing the hand-woven foundation material with hues mostly derived from vegetables. They could only use red and white and rarely black, and blue. Red khaddar was largely utilized in the making of phulkaris for auspicious events such as weddings. White, on the contrary, was designated for widows, as it is in other regions of India. Women wore the items, which had a blue or black ground, on a daily basis. When the khaddar was finished, embroiderers carefully selected a material that would complement the hue of the foundation. Red, orange, green, white, golden yellow and deep blue were the most popular pat colours.

Today artisans have conquered the necessity to dye the cloth, and now go to the market and select from the countless alternatives of ready coloured fabric sold. There is no colour that is not accessible. Shops have rows and shelves filled with threads of every colour conceivable. With possibilities like these, it's no surprise that the embroiderers' colour palettes vary so much. The colour choices of commercial phulkari items, like most other features, are determined with the sole goal of appealing to consumer's taste.

#### 4.4 Training of Artisans

The researcher got an opportunity to mentor the phulkari artisan selected under New India Artisan Fellowship program conducted by Fair trade Forum, India and funded by European Union. This workshop focused on training artisans to not only uplift their skill but to sensitize them about the product market and right ways to develop a product market fit. There were various sessions conducted in the workshop for the artisans from various backgrounds. Sessions on developing new designs, developing fusion designs and planning the price point of the product beforehand. The session on marketing the products at the right platform was also conducted. The researcher as a mentor got to interact with the artisans and understand their most common problems faced. This opportunity helped the researcher to plan a



Plate 4.94: Researcher with mixed group of artisans selected for New India Artisan Fellowship Program, organized by Fair Trade Forum India and funded by European Union



Plate 4.95: Researcher in conversation with artisans and Ms. Meenu Chopra Former Executive Director of Fair Trade Forum India

work-shop focused for phulkari artisans and introduced them to important aspects of designing, producing, finishing, packing and marketing a product on the right platform.

The training of the artisans of The Nabha Foundation was planned to be conducted in the field but due to the pandemic of covid-19 and announced lock-down, it had to be shifted and re-planned to be conducted remotely. There were many challenges to connect the artisans as not all the artisans had internet access and due to lockdown gatherings at offices or community centers were prohibited. The researcher after consulting with the organization staff decided to communicate with the trainer and take the workshop further. Upon telephonic discussion with the trainer and organization representatives it was communicated that the artisans would be trained for creating the motifs first and then the sessions could be conducted post lockdown since internet connectivity was not available with all the artisans.

The training commenced to make the artisans understand the basic stitches used in phulkari embroidery. The trainer conducted a small training session for the artisans to understand the technique and working of the new motifs. It was important to understand the skill of each artisan as a revival of complex motifs was planned for the collection.

The session included imparting hands-on experience in important points to be kept in mind while performing the casting stitch, keeping the length of the stitch equal by



Plate 4.96: Trainer conducting phulkari training program for the artisans at Nabha village

counting the number of yarns of the base fabric and points to be kept in mind while closing off the stitch. Topics like important points to be kept in mind while changing to a fresh thread

was also covered. It was important for the artisans to understand that the embroidery must be started and finished without knotting the thread. The researcher explained to the trainer over telephonic conversation the importance of a small backstitch to mount the thread onto the fabric as well as laying the thread below the floats of the face side of the fabric to keep the reverse side of the fabric free from loose hanging threads. Some artisans practiced with a cotton thread as working with silk floss required accomplished skill and patience.

The artisans also explored a few geometric motifs to understand the progression of the stitch in one direction to create the motif. Since phulkari embroidery is now-a-days mostly worked with geometric patterns the trainers also explain the working of different patterns. Upon conversation with the trainer it was revealed that the working of the geometric stitch was mostly done from the center of the motif; this allowed the artisan to measure the required size of the motif to be achieved for a particular design. To commence the stitch the fabric was folded in half to achieve the midpoint and the embroidery of the motif was commenced. Post training program the designs for the products were planned and designed using adobe illustrator. These designs were planned with layouts in full scale. It was done for the artisans and trainer to understand the actual size of the motif.

#### **4.4.1 Planning of the Collections**

The collection of draped textiles and wall pieces using revived motifs was developed for a niche market. It was crucial to plan a collection as introduction of the revived motifs in the market was also one of the main objectives of the study. It was decided to design the collection in two kinds, one for the contemporary market and the other for the design spaces for interiors. The planning of the collection was done based on the market survey conducted. The survey revealed the already existing products and their price range. These products were mostly *dupattas* and matching suits, stoles, bags and purses, file folders and pouches. There was no product in the market for space design. It was also noticed that the quality of embroidery and base fabric varied from vendor to vendor and market to market. The shops in Delhi and Chandigarh had a different product range as compared to Patiala and Ludhiana. As the base material and quality of stitch changed, it also directly changed the price range of the product.



The researcher also studied the most used colours, motifs and patterns embroidered in the already existing products. The most common motifs and patterns were a repetition of one motif throughout the fabric length and width. The patterns were embroidered with striking contrast and were even embellished with pearls, stones and sequins.

Based on the survey report digital layouts of all the designs in the contemporary collection were planned in full scale. These designs were developed using the traditional layouts and motifs.



Design A



Design B

Plate 4.97: Digital design and layout of Tussar Silk Dupattas



Design A



Design B

Plate 4.98: Digital design and layout of Tussar Silk Stoles

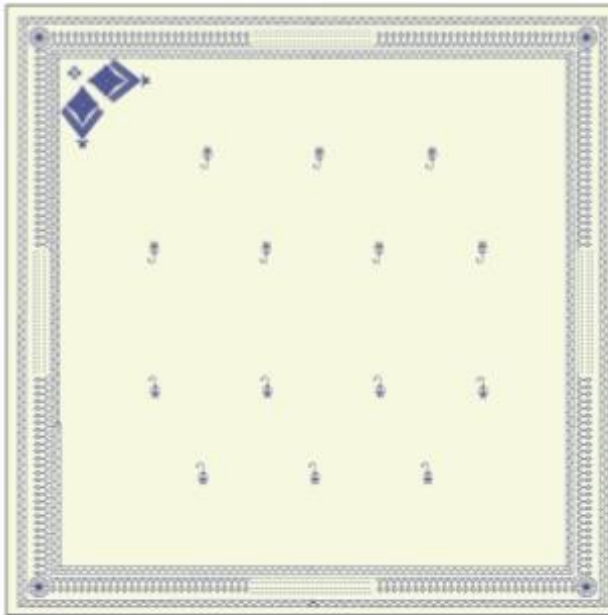


Design A

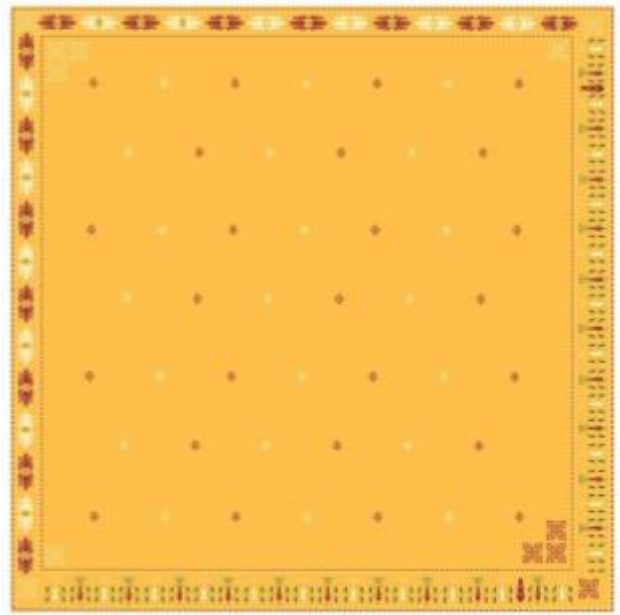


Design B

Plate 4.99: Digital design and layout of Woolen Shawls



Design A



Design B

Plate 4.100: Digital design and layout of Handloom cotton scarves

#### 4.4.1.a Selection of the raw material for the collection

The selection of the fabric was done keeping in mind the technique of the embroidery. The important aspects of selecting the fabric was to keep in mind the end use of the product, the target market, the technique of the embroidery. It was crucial to introduce an innovative and modern collection that still has the essence of the embroidery intact with the



Plate 4.101: Selection of the fabric and embroidery thread for Contemporary Collection

revived products. Keeping this in mind three varieties of base fabric were selected in earthy colour palette to compliment the embroidery threads. The three varieties of fabric were handloom cotton, Tussar silk and wool. The products planned for the collection were draped

textiles that included two sets of scarf, *dupatta*, stole and shawl.

The fabrics were sourced locally and were sent to the artisan along with the layout of the design and color palette of embroidery threads. The colour palette was developed by referring to the colour catalog of embroidery threads used by the artisans.



Plate 4.102: Colour palette for Tussar Dupattas



Plate 4.103: Colour palette for Tussar Stoles



Plate 4.104: Colour palette for woolen Shawls



Plate 4.105: Colour palette for Handloom Cotton Scarves

The fabric selection for the collection of wall pieces was kept as it was traditionally done, the base; handloom fabric was sourced from a local vendor in Delhi and the mulberry silk yarns were sourced from a designer in Hyderabad. Designing a wall art collection for space decor was thoughtfully done. There felt a need of reviving the traditional materials used in the craft of phulkari. In the market survey conducted for raw materials it was revealed that even Khadi Bhandar did not have hand woven khaddar in the stores, on inquiring it was revealed that the khaddars are no longer made as the use of khaddar is replaced by thicker mill made fabrics that are sold in the name of poly *khadi* or *khadi* casement. The count and hand of the fabric was also considered while sourcing the base fabric for both the collections.



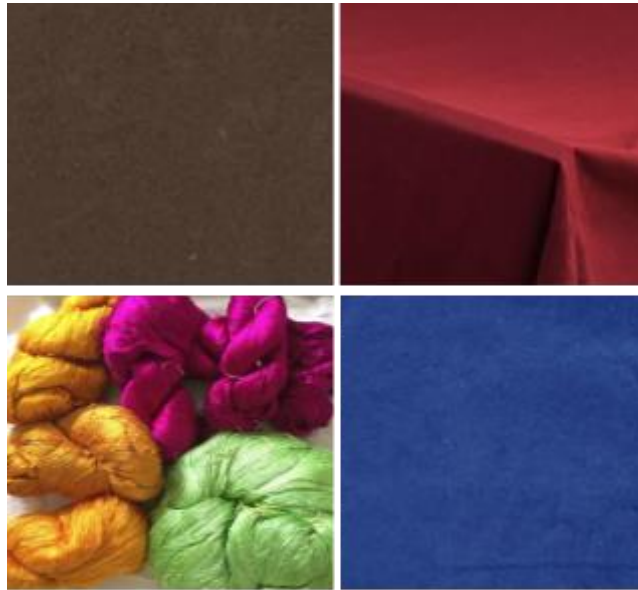


Plate 4.106: Selection of the fabric and embroidery thread and colour palette for the wall art collection

#### 4.4.1.b Execution of the embroidery for the collection



Plate 4.107: Selection of the colour palette for Tussar Dupattas



Plate 4.108: Selection of the colour palette for Tussar stoles

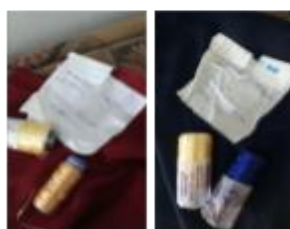


Plate 4.109: Selection of the colour palette for woolen shawls



Plate 4.110: Selection of the colour palette for Handloom cotton Scarves

The selection of embroidery threads, according to the colour scheme sent for the contemporary collection was done. The trainer communicated by image sharing through whatsapp. After the selection of the threads, the placement of the embroidery was done on the actual fabric.



The pieces of paper or newspaper were cut in the shape and actual size of the motif to get a proportionate layout of the fabric. It was important to explain about placement motif in actual size as it would directly affect the cost of the fabric. Colour of each motif was planned once again along with the layout, for the embroiderer to understand the execution of the embroidery.



Plate 4.111: Actual motif placement of Tussar Silk Dupattas



Plate 4.112: Actual motif placement of Tussar Silk Stoles



Plate 4.113: Actual motif placement of Woolen Shawls



Plate 4.114: Actual motif placement of Handloom cotton scarves

The embroidery was executed one by one motif. Each motif was perfected for its size and stitch and colour combination. The exchange of images was done through whatsapp for approvals and rectification. During the process of actual embroidery it was noticed that the artisan was finding it difficult to understand the direction of the stitch from the digital layout, therefore actual motifs from the artifact were shared with the artisan to translate the technique as done in the traditional piece. This point was also considered while designing the motif catalog and hence the line drawings were supported with actual motifs for artisans better understanding.

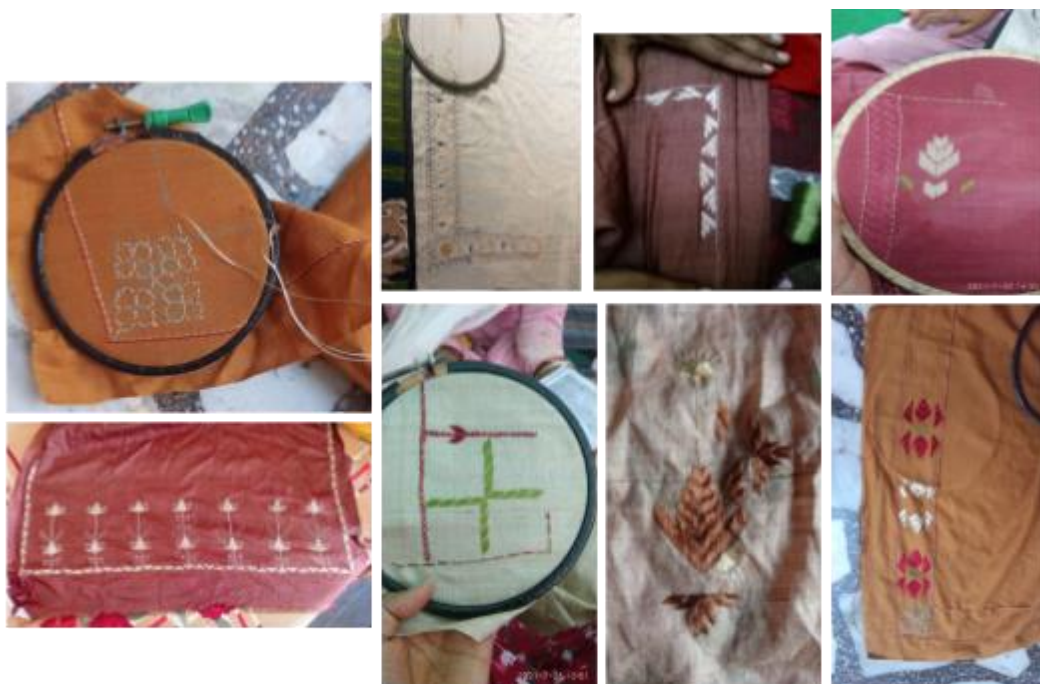


Plate 4.115: Some examples of the approval images of motif technique and execution for contemporary collection

During the process of embroidery it was important to note the time taken for completing each product. The motif embroidered and time taken to embroider a motif both played a crucial role in cost of the overall product. Below are the heads that were considered for cost calculation of the product.

Table 4.5: Heads for cost calculation of contemporary collection

Heads	Dupatta A	Dupatta B	Stole A	Stole B	Shawl A	Shawl B	Scarf A	Scarf B
Fabric used	Tussar	Tussar	Tussar	Tussar	Wool	Wool	H.Cotton	H.Cotton
Cost of fabric	850/mtr x 2.5	850/mtr x 2.5	850/mtr x 1.5	850/mtr x 1.5	2500/pc	2500/pc	350/mtr x 1	350/mtr x 1
Cost of Emb thread	20/reel x 3	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2	20/reel x 2
Finishing	250/-	250/-	250/-	250/-	-	-	150/-	150/-
Cost of embroidery	14515/-	19063/-	7207/-	5806/-	10871/-	16258/-	6366/-	7487/-
Miscellaneous	800/-							
Sampling cost	Rs. 17,050/-	Rs. 21,578/-	Rs. 8,872/-	Rs. 7,471/-	Rs. 13,511/-	Rs. 18,898/-	Rs. 7,006/-	Rs. 8,107/-



Tussar Dupatta Design A



Tussar Dupatta Design B



Tussar Stole Design A



Tussar Stole Design B



Woollen Shawl Design A



Woollen Shawl Design B



Handloom Scarf Design A



Handloom Scarf Design B

Plate 4.116: Final Images of the products developed in contemporary collection



**The designing of the wall art piece** was planned in order to introduce a new product of the craft in the market. The market survey in the pilot survey revealed that there were no products as wall art or for the space decor segment. As discussed earlier the craft traditionally was also used as wall hanging. The best known examples are *darshan dwar* and *sainchi phulkari*, it was strange to know that a craft like phulkari has immense potential in the space design segment and was never explored for wall art pieces. Keeping this in mind the researcher identified the market need and attempted to introduce a phulkari wall art piece for space design.

The wall art piece was planned to be designed keeping in mind the traditional raw materials along with the traditional technique. The motifs were kept a mix of all styles like *bagh*, phulkari and *sainchi*. While planning the design and layout for the wall piece the researcher got an opportunity to create and display a wall piece to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Indian Independence. Therefore a wall art inspired from the tree of life motif enclosed in *darshan dwar* was designed.

The fabric selection for the wall piece was done locally and the natural dyed silk floss was obtained from Hyderabad. The process of the embroidery was kept the same as the

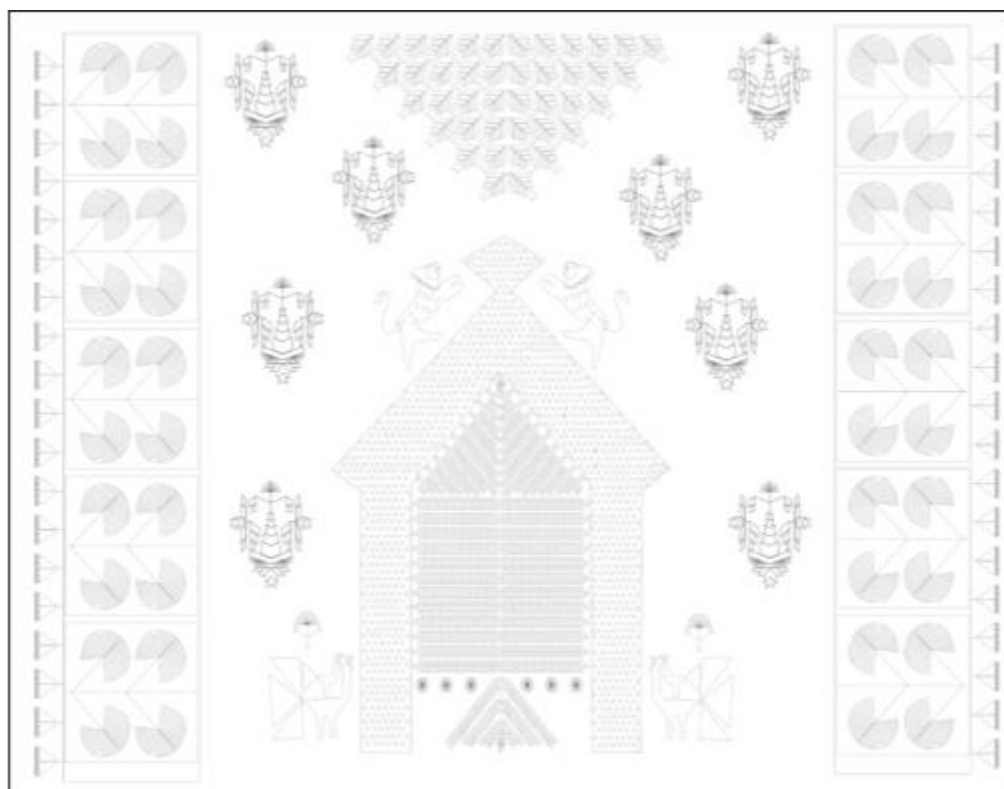


Plate 4.117: Digital illustration of the layout for wall art piece titled 'Tree of Life'

contemporary products, the raw material was sent to the embroiderer along with the digital layout of the actual wall art on paper for calculating the actual motif placement.

The cost calculation for the wall art pieces was also done under the same head. The products developed in both the categories were calculated for the sampling cost. Since the Designs were fairly new to the artisans it was more time consuming and hence costly to produce.

**Table 4.6: Heads for cost calculation for Wall Art Pieces**

Heads	Art Piece A	Art Piece B
Fabric used	H Cotton	H Cotton
Cost of fabric	250/mtr	250/mtr
Cost of Emb thread	3000/hank of Mulberry Silk	
Finishing	150/-	150/-
Cost of embroidery	55,200/-	12,468/-
Miscellaneous	400/-	
Sampling cost	57,100/-	14,368/-





Plate 4.118: Approval images and embroidery execution for wall art piece



Wall Art Piece A



Wall Art Piece B

Plate 4.119: Final Images of Contemporary Wall Art Pieces

#### 4.4.1.c Artisan Interaction and training workshop

Post covid-19 scenario the researcher got an opportunity to conduct a stitching workshop for phulkari artisans from The Nabha Foundation. The main aim was to create home furnishing products embroidered with phulkari. The workshop was organized by All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA). The opportunity enabled the researcher to interact with the artisans by visiting the field and conduct a workshop as planned in the objective to impart knowledge of craft history and design for creating market ready products. Upon discussion with the authorities at AIACA it was noted that the artisans of the self-help group were in need of a holistic understanding of the process of creating a handcrafted product from beginning to end.

A three day workshop was planned keeping in mind the combined objective of the research with the goal suggested by the AIACA representatives. The training workshop was divided into four sessions. Session one was on aesthetic and decoration which covered topics like importance of the craft revival, awareness of the traditional raw materials used basic knowledge of natural dying about how it was done in the olden days and introduction to the elements and principles of design. Session two was on the technical aspects of phulkari

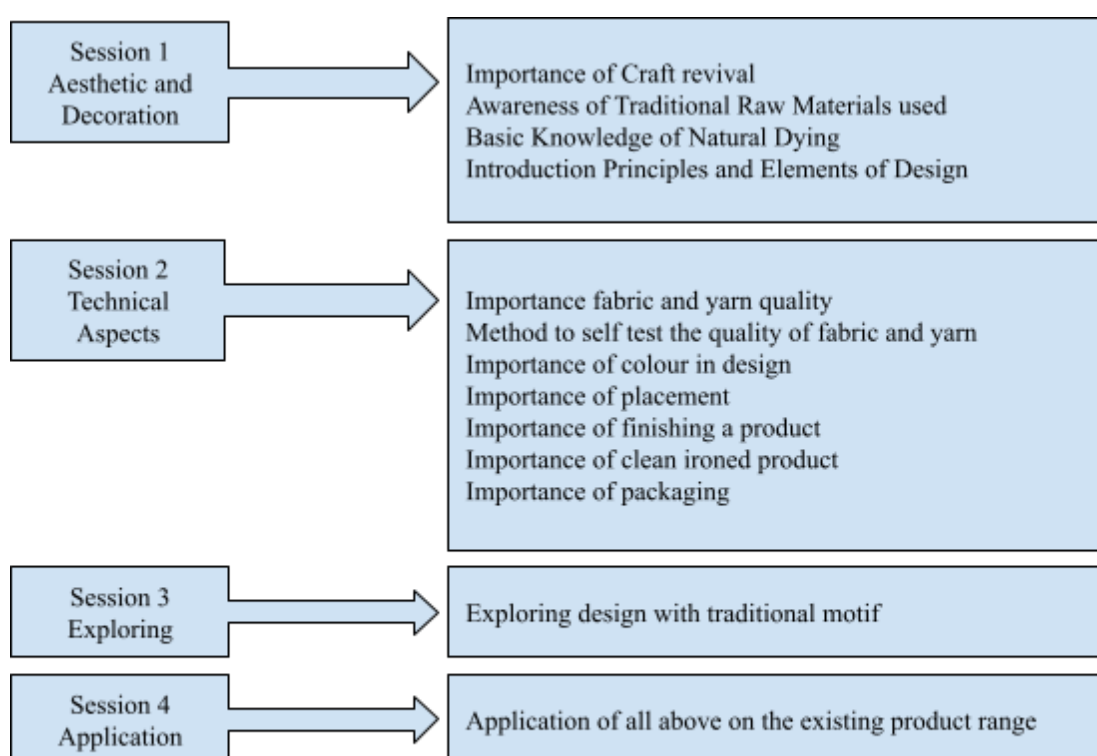


Plate 4.120: Sessions for Artisan Training

embroidery which covered topics like importance of the yarn and fabric quality and its impact on a marketable product. Methods of self-testing the quality of the fabric and yarn, importance of the colour in design, importance of placement of the embroidery were explained and demonstrated. It also covered the importance of the finished product in terms of cutting extra threads, finishing of the edges or inner seams depending upon the type of product that was made. One important aspect of finishing the product with a stain free and clean product was suggested by the organization.

The interaction with the artisans of the self-help group was found to be productive. The sessions conducted were interactive and practical. After each session a question and answer round was covered to keep a participatory observation for understanding the views and problems faced by them. Through the session it was revealed that the artisans had little or no knowledge about the history of the craft. Many of them had not even seen a traditional phulkari or *bagh*. It was also noticed that many of them were first generation artisans as no one in their family had ever embroidered a phulkari or *bagh*. This could be possible as many communities from nearby states have started moving through states in search of promising job opportunities. Upon further interaction with the artisans it was revealed that the women of the village are still not allowed to move out freely. They are also not encouraged to study or work. Few artisan families support their family women to learn crafts like phulkari as work can be managed from home. The authorities at Nabha Foundation also stated that the villagers trust selective people from the village or organization and only allow them to work if they are advised by the trusted people.

The developed products were handed over to AIACA for market deliberation.



Plate 4.121: Artisan Interaction at the Nabha Foundation and some process images of products



Plate 4.122: Product development using phulkari embroidery conducted with AIACA at The Nabha Foundation, Nabha

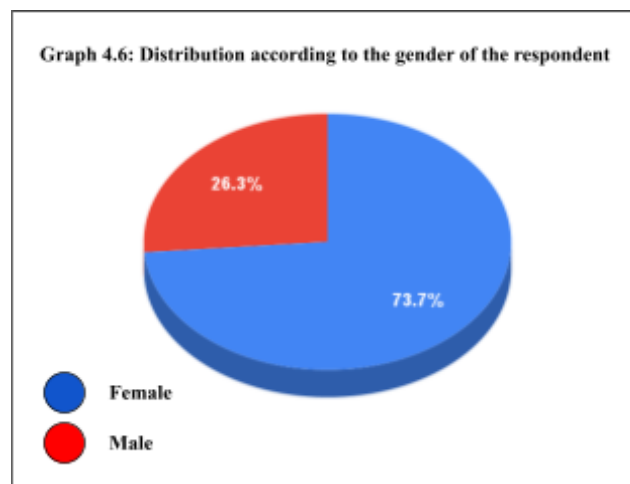
#### 4.4.2 Statistical Analysis of the Survey for Contemporary Products

The developed products were evaluated for various aspects using a Google form. The Google form was circulated via various social media platforms and the collected data was evaluated to statistically test if there was any association between dependent and independent variables. The main aim of gathering data from maximum sources was to cater a large group to understand the inclination of the respondent towards Indian traditional craft. The survey was voluntarily filled by a total 135 respondents. Below discussed are the results of the survey.

##### 4.4.2.1 Results based on the demographic details of the respondents

The first section of the survey focuses on the demographic details of the respondents. In order to determine if the participants in a given study are a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes, demographic information about the participants in the study plays an important role.

Results for section one are based on the demographic details of the respondents. The survey revealed that it was filled by 73% female and 26.7% male respondents.

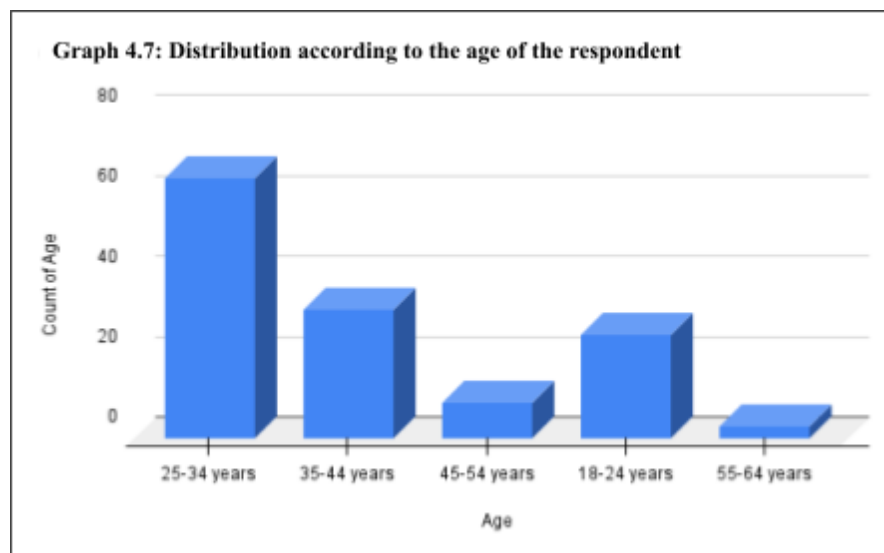


The survey also revealed that the respondents were located all across the globe. It was crucial to record the location of the respondent as it would assist to understand the awareness of the craft. Majority of the respondents were from West (48.9%) and North (37.4%) India. The place of stay of the respondents was also recorded, a maximum of 48.9% were from the city and 43.5% were from metros, the rest were from towns and villages. Majority



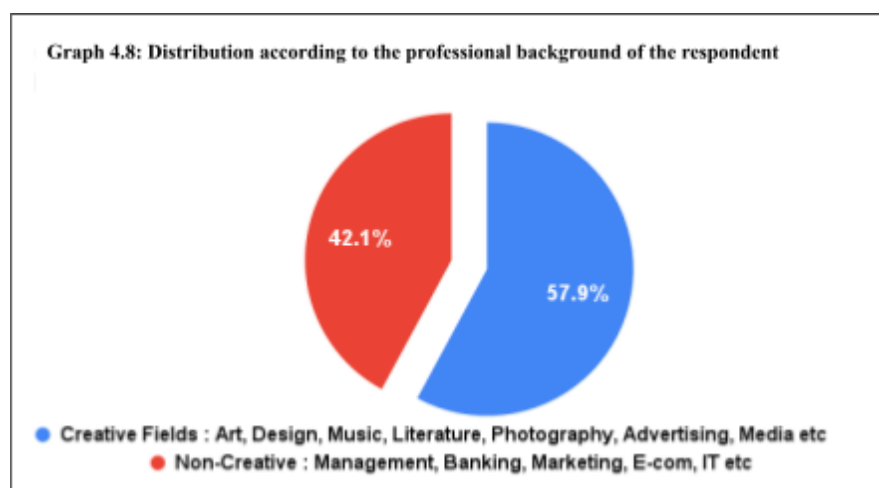
of the respondents were from Hindu religion (77.1%) followed by Muslim (14.5%) and the rest were from other religions.

The maximum number of respondents was between the age group of 25 to 34 years and the second most significant percent of respondents was from the 35 to 44 years age group (Graph 7). The researcher's idea of circulating the survey to the younger crowd was



to create awareness amongst them. The younger generations are considered the change makers. It was crucial to test their understanding of the craft as they would be responsible to provide future support to the artisans and craft. Below chart is a graphical representation of the discussed data.

On observing below graph 8 it was deduced that the majority of the respondents (57.3%) were from creative fields like art, design, music, literature, photography, advertising, media etc and the rest were from non-creative fields like management, banking, marketing, e-com, IT etc.





The work experience of the respondent was majorly observed in two groups. The majority of the respondents were from less than 5 years of experience and the second highest were between 6 to 10 years. Work experience of the respondents was a critical aspect for data collection as it could be associated with the awareness about the craft and also with the ability to identify the craft. The years of experience based on two professional backgrounds also could be a major factor in perceiving the craft in a certain way.

#### 4.4.2.2 Analysis based on awareness and identification of phulkari craft

The section two of the survey focuses on gathering information about the identification and awareness of the craft amongst respondents. The results revealed that 63.4% of the total respondents were aware about the craft. Although only 75.6 % of the respondents could identify the authentic phulkari bagh (Plate 4.123; option: 4) displayed amongst other

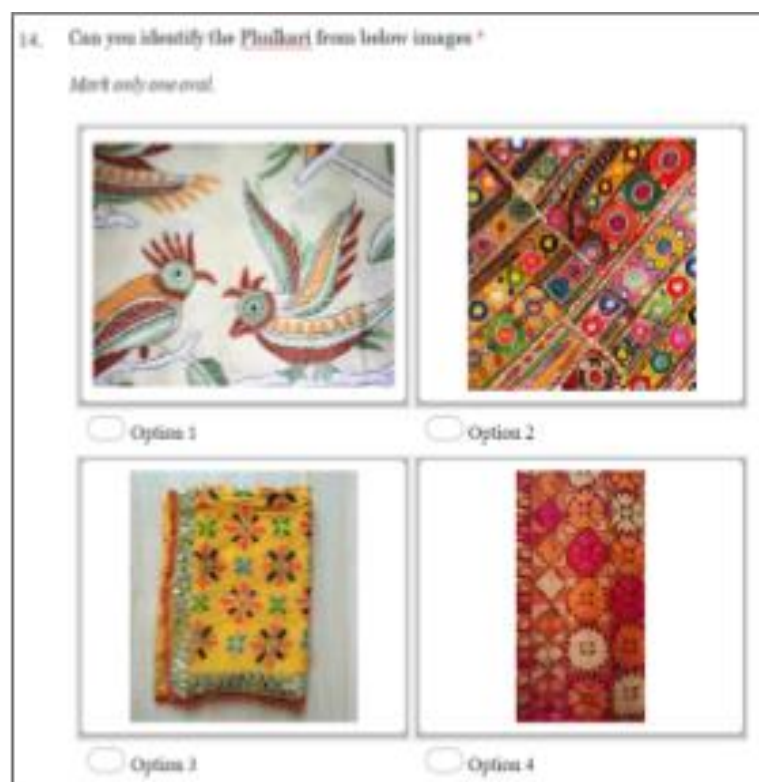


Plate 4.123: Snippet of the question from the survey on identification of the authentic phulkari craft.

craft images like, *kantha*, *lambani* and a floral *dupatta*. It is no surprise that a second significant number of respondents 18.3% identified the floral *dupatta* (Plate 4.123, option 3) as phulkari. The idea of posing the question of identification of the authentic craft phulkari was to understand the impact of using a term (here phulkari) related to the craft; to sell a product that is not originally made from the same craft (history).

During pilot study and market survey, the researcher tried to enquire with the vendors about whether they possess an old phulkari to which their responses were the same as derived in above results. The shopkeepers could only identify (Option 3) or the computerized versions of the craft. It can be deduced from the result that the term used for marketing new colorful products in the market as ‘phulkari craft’ that are not even close to the original or contemporary phulkari could be the main reason for the transfer of the same mindset amongst respondents. It could be said that because a certain product is sold in the name of phulkari people are buying it because they have never seen the original phulkari or have not known what an original craft looks like.

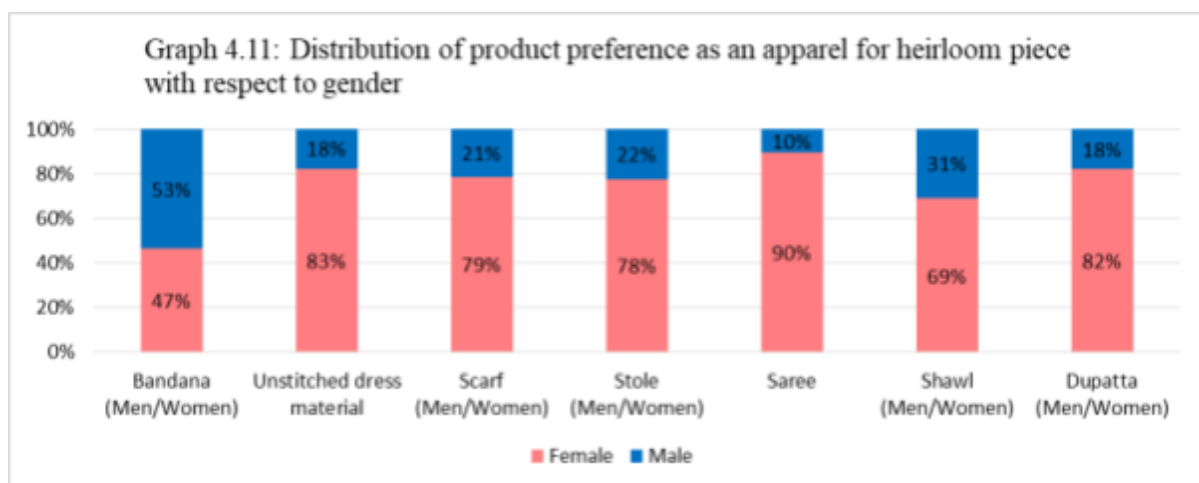
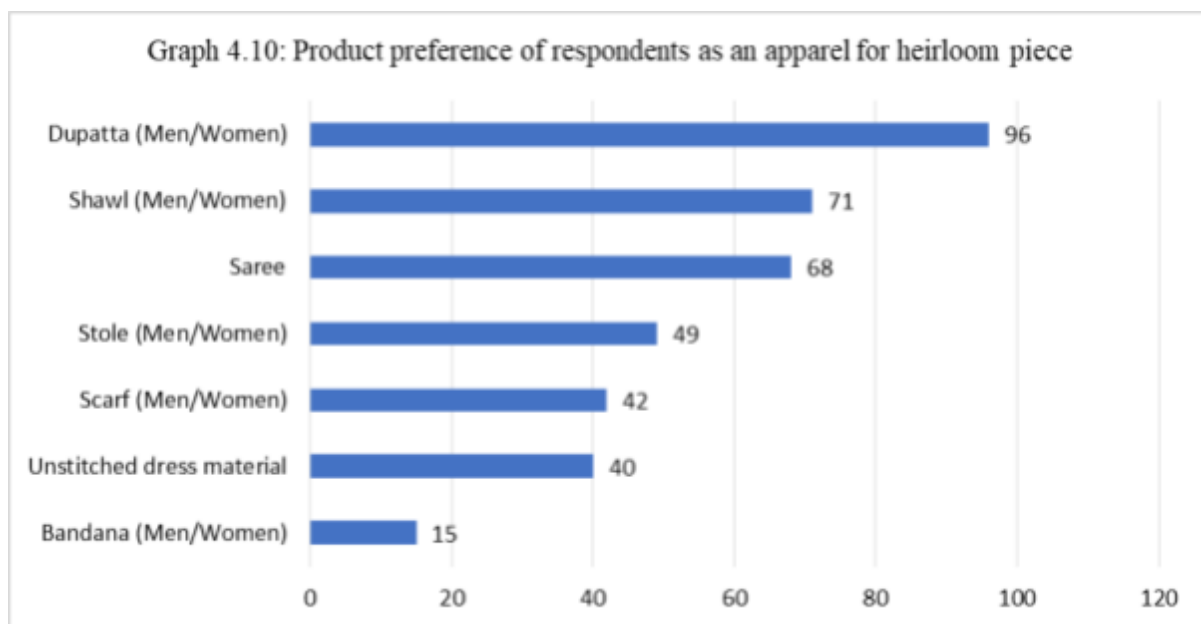
#### 4.4.2.3 Ranking of self-awareness about the craft and identification of the craft amongst other crafts

On comparing the two questions posed about identifying the phulkari craft amongst other crafts where one was supported with the images (Q14- Annexure ) and was with a question framed as ‘If you can identify phulkari amongst other embroideries like *Kantha*, *Lambani*, *Kutchi* and phulkari’ (Q17- Annexure ) asked as a likert style question to give rating to self; the results revealed that about 67% of respondents were able to correctly identify the traditional phulkari craft from images given and also gave themselves high rating for question no.17. On the other hand 9% of the total respondents were able to identify the phulkari craft amongst other three options given in question number 14, whereas on the other question (Q.17) the results reflected a lower self-rating for identifying the craft amongst *Kantha*, *Lambani*, *Kutchi* and *Phulkari*. The results are illustrated below the graph.

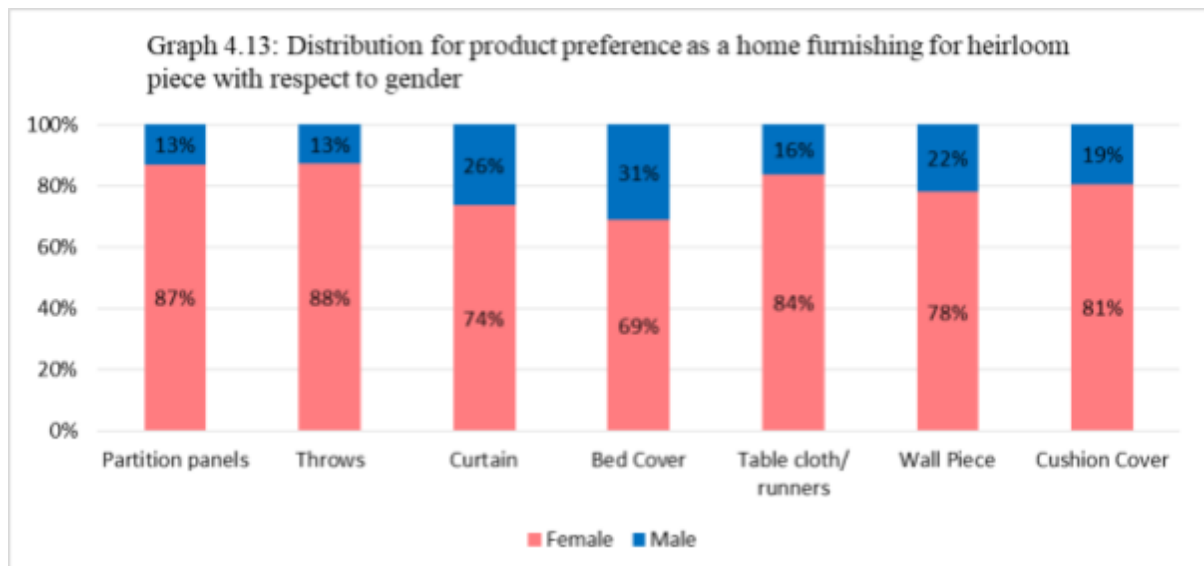
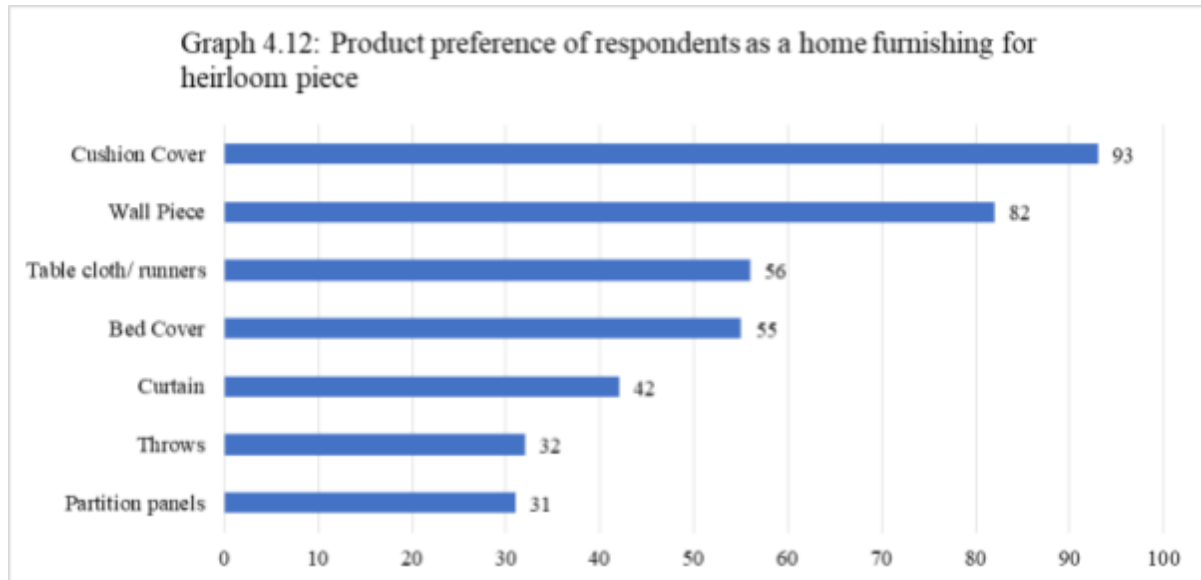


#### 4.4.2.4 Analysis based on preference for Apparel, Home Textile or Gifts and Souvenirs as an Heirloom Piece

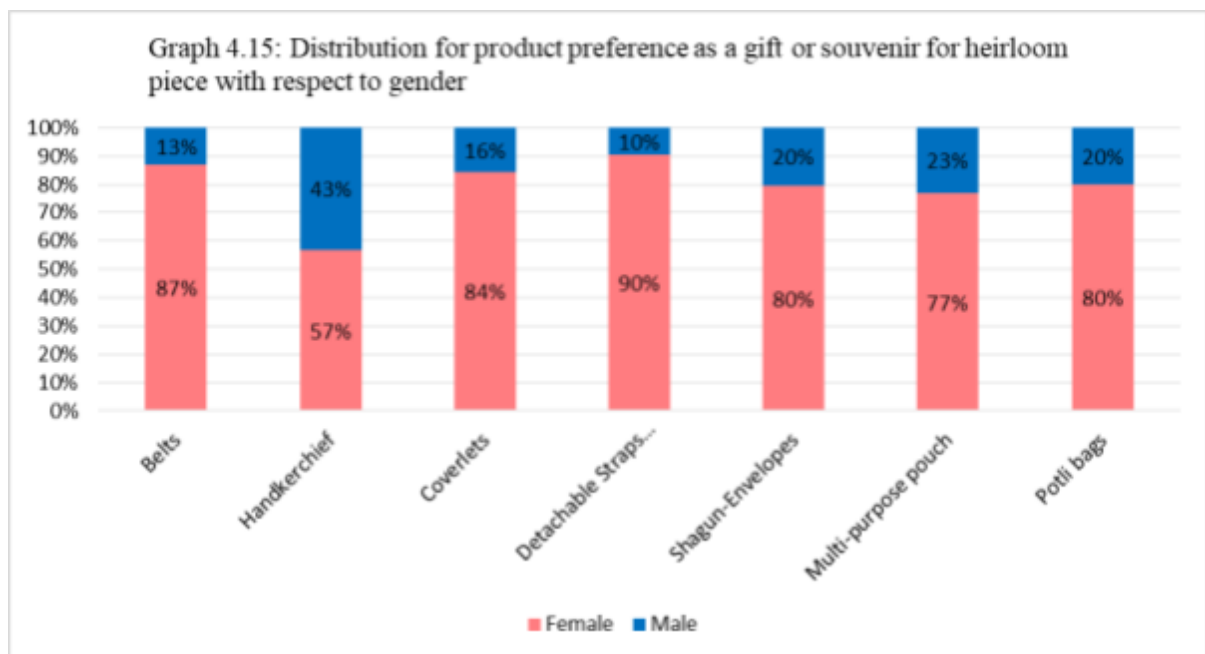
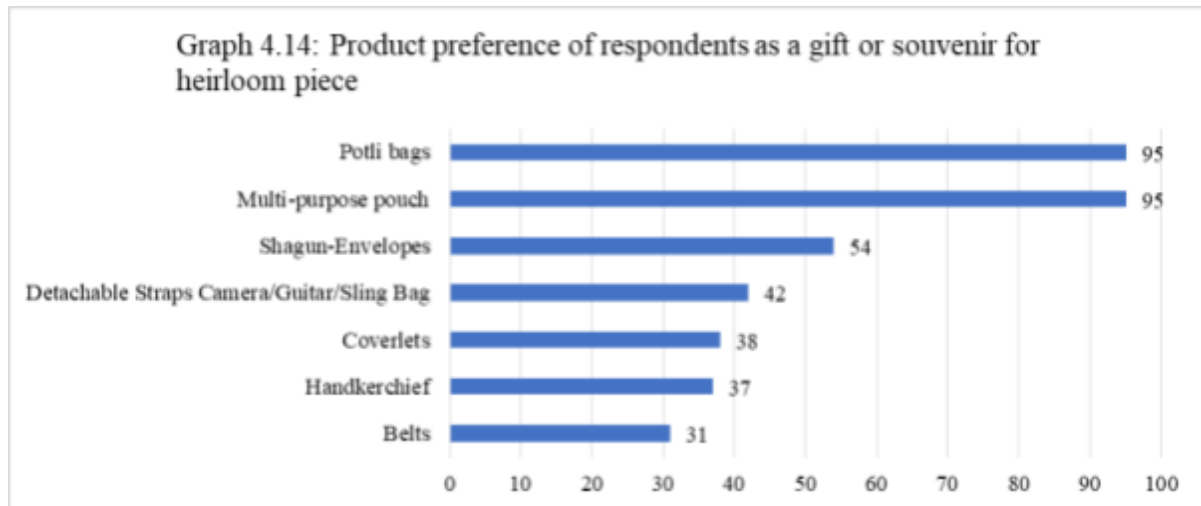
In the category of apparels *dupatta* was the most preferred product as heirloom amongst all the other listed products. (Graph 4.10) Further observation of the products with respect to gender revealed that male proportion was higher (53%) than female (47%) for the bandana. While for the rest of the products the proportion of female respondents was higher as compared to male respondents.



In the category of home furnishing with frequency of 93, cushion cover was the most preferred product amongst other listed products. On analyzing further it was noted that the percentage of female respondents was significantly high across all products but for curtains and bed cover the percentage of male respondents were also considerably better.



In the category of gifts and souvenirs it was observed that *potli* bags and multi-purpose pouches were two products that had the highest preference over other listed products. While looking at products with respect to the gender it was observed that for handkerchief the percentage of male respondents was significant with 43%.





#### **4.4.2.5 Analysis based on research collection titled ‘Gunn Phulkari’: Hypothesis testing for understanding association between attributes**

The third section of the survey was based on gathering the feedback from the respondents based on the developed collection of draped textiles.

To know if any association is present between two qualitative variables, the chi-square test of independence was applied to know association between gender, educational background, Family economic status in connection with awareness about embroideries, buying preference. When the p-value is less than 0.05 the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis framed for the same is defined below:

- I) **H<sub>01</sub>: There is no association between gender and awareness about embroideries.**  
**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no association between gender and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**  
**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no association between gender and buying authentic Phulkari if kept for sale.**

**Vs**

- H<sub>11</sub>: There is an association between gender and awareness about embroideries.**  
**H<sub>12</sub>: There is an association between gender and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**  
**H<sub>13</sub>: There is association between gender and buying authentic phulkari if kept for sale.**

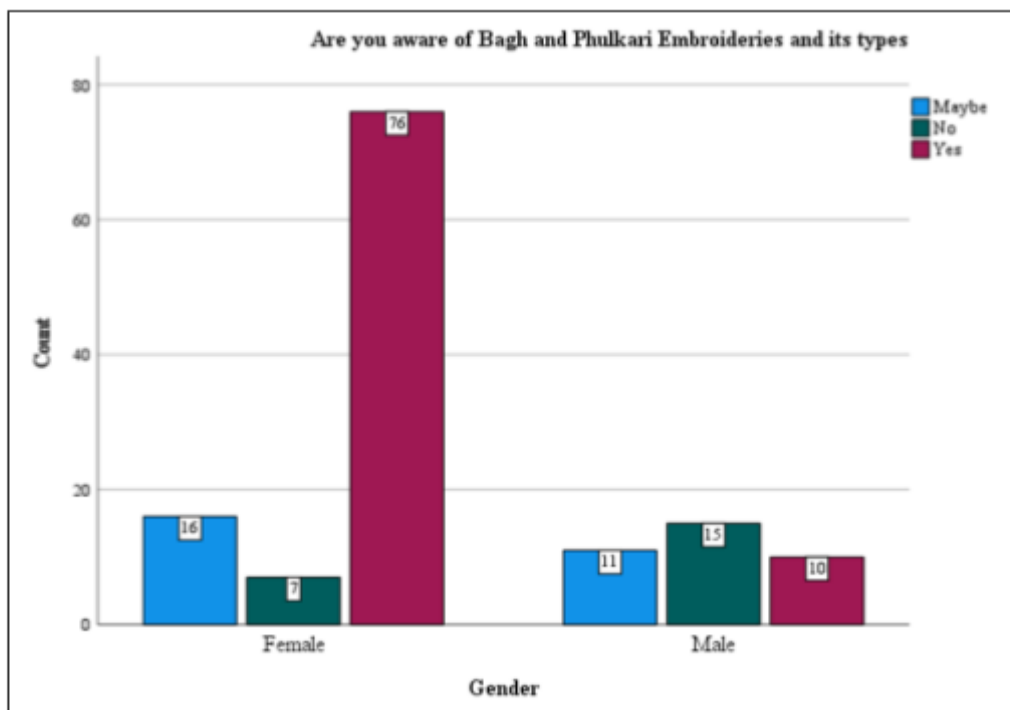
Based on the p-value, a decision on the rejection of the null hypothesis is made. And further to know the type of association further Cramer’s v statistic is computed as displayed in the below table.

**Table 4.4: Results of Cramer's V statistic to evaluate the type of association between the attributes**

Attributes	p-value	Cramer's V
Gender vs Awareness about Bagh and Phulkari Embroideries	1.0864E-7	0.438
Gender vs Do you prefer buying Heirloom Textiles	0.000145	0.362
Gender vs Would you like to buy the authentic Phulkari if kept for sale	0.000376	0.342

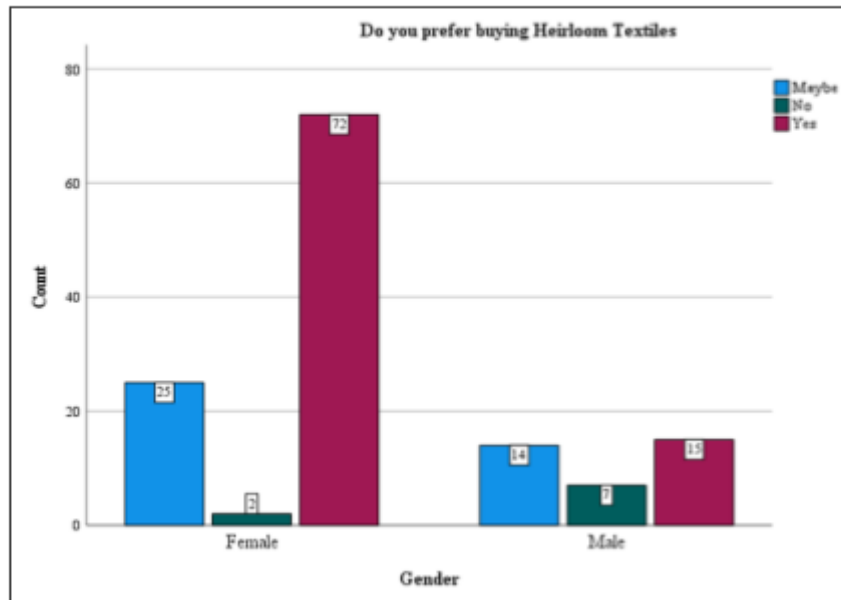
The p value conveys the proven association between the designs and the attributes. To find out the degree of association between the dependencies of attributes Cramer's V was computed, where it was found that gender had a moderate degree of association with that of awareness about the craft, while the other two had a low association as compared to that of the first result. The same have been illustrated below multiple bar charts.

**Graph 4.16: Bar Chart according to the association between gender and awareness about the craft**



Based on the rejected hypothesis the association can be clearly seen between gender and awareness about the phulkari and *bagh* varieties and types as the count of female respondents is significantly high.

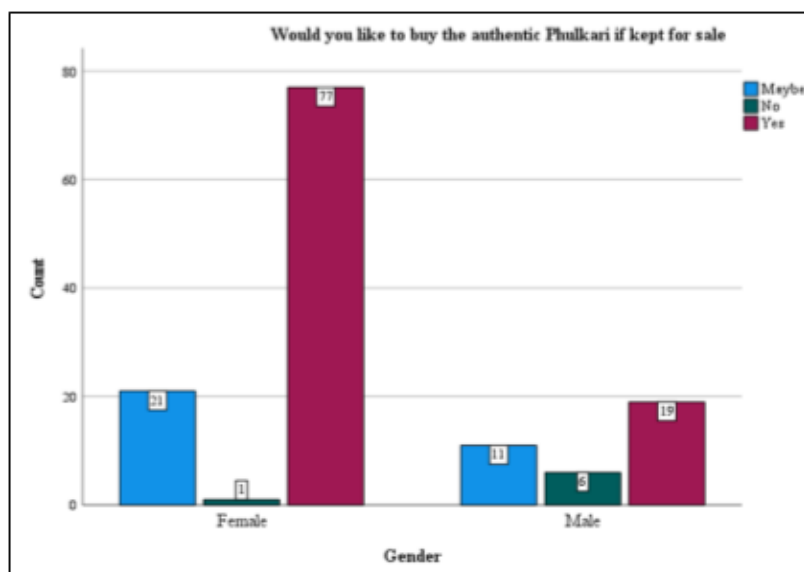
**Table 4.17: Bar Chart according to the association between gender and preference for buying heirloom textiles**



Based on the rejected hypothesis the association between gender and buying preference can be observed in Table 4.10 as the count of the female respondents is high.

Based on the rejected hypothesis the association between gender and likability to buy heirloom textile is high in female respondents as observed in Table 4.11

**Table 4.18: Bar Chart according to the association between gender and likability to buy revived phulkari collection piece**



II) **H<sub>01</sub>: There is no association between educational background and awareness about embroideries.**

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no association between educational background and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**

**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no association between educational background and buying authentic phulkari if kept for sale.**

**Vs**

**H<sub>11</sub>: There is an association between educational background and awareness about embroideries.**

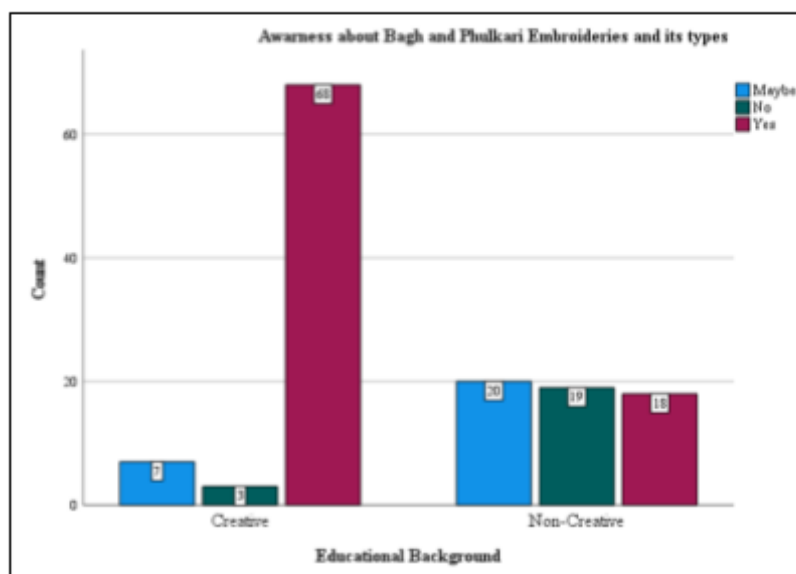
**H<sub>12</sub>: There is an association between educational background and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**

**H<sub>13</sub>: There is an association between educational background and buying authentic phulkari if kept for sale.**

Based on the p-value the rejection of the null hypothesis is made. And further to know the type of association further Cramer's v statistic is computed as displayed in the below table.

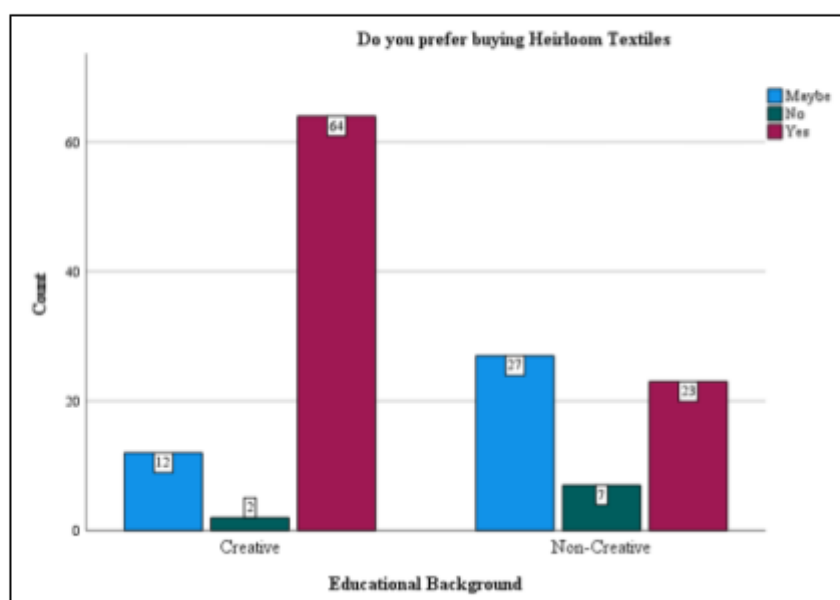
<b>Attributes</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Cramer's V</b>
Educational Background vs Awareness about Bagh and Phulkari Embroideries	1.8864E-10	0.576
Educational Background vs Do you prefer buying Heirloom Textiles	0.000003	0.432
Educational Background vs Would you like to buy the authentic Phulkari if kept for sale	0.012	0.255

**Graph 4.19: Bar Chart according to the association between educational background and awareness about the craft**



Based on the rejected hypothesis the association between educational background and awareness of the craft can be observed as the count of respondents from creative background is significantly high.

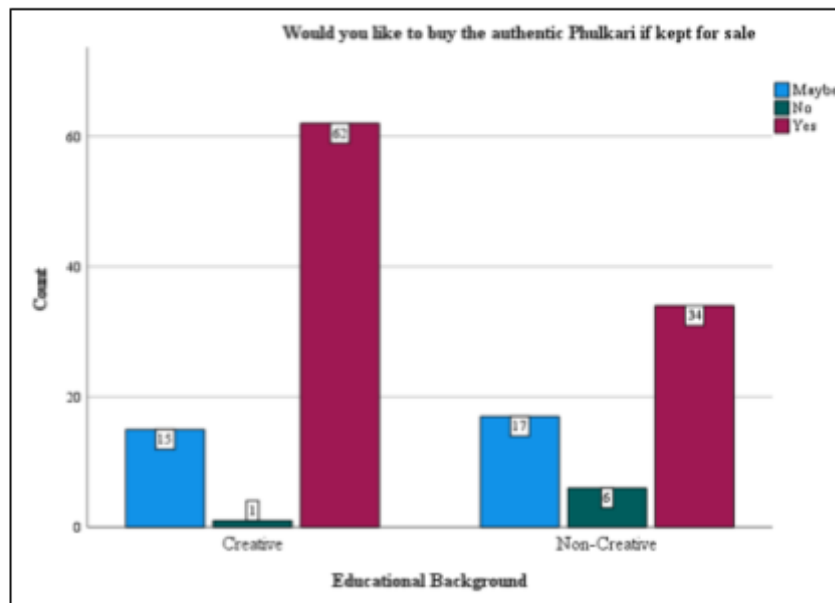
**Graph 4.20: Bar Chart according to the association between educational background and preference for buying heirloom textiles**



Based on the rejected hypothesis the association between educational background and preference to buy heirloom textile can be observed as the count of respondents from creative background is significantly high.



**4.21: Bar Chart according to the association between educational background and likability to buy revived phulkari collection piece**



Based on the rejected hypothesis the association between educational background and likelihood to buy revived phulkari collection pieces can be observed as the count of respondents from creative backgrounds is significantly high.

**III)  $H_{01}$ : There is no association between family economic status and awareness about embroideries.**

**$H_{02}$ : There is no association between family economic status and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**

**$H_{03}$ : There is no association between family economic status and buying authentic phulkari if kept for sale.**

**Vs**

**$H_{11}$ : There is an association between family economic status and awareness about embroideries.**

**$H_{12}$ : There is an association between family economic status and buying preference about heirloom textiles.**

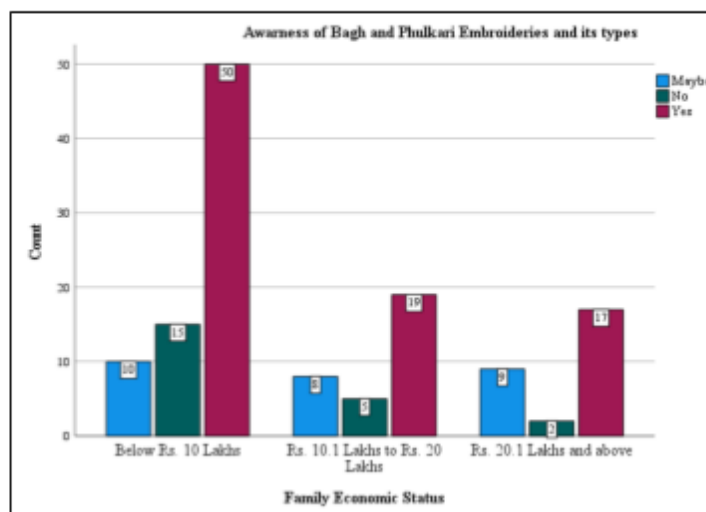
**$H_{13}$ : There is an association between family economic status and buying authentic phulkari if kept for sale**

Based on the p-value decision about the acceptance of the null hypothesis is made. And further to know the type of association further Cramer's v statistic is computed as displayed in the below table.

Attributes	p-value	Cramer's V
Family Economic Status vs Awareness about Bagh and Phulkari Embroideries	0.168	0.155
Family Economic Status vs Do you prefer buying Heirloom Textiles	0.945	0.053
Family Economic Status vs Would you like to buy the authentic Phulkari if kept for sale	0.491	0.112

For the above table it is observed that p-value with respect to attributes gender, educational background against awareness and buying preference of heirloom textile and phulkari we have enough evidence to reject null hypothesis thus able to conclude that both qualitative

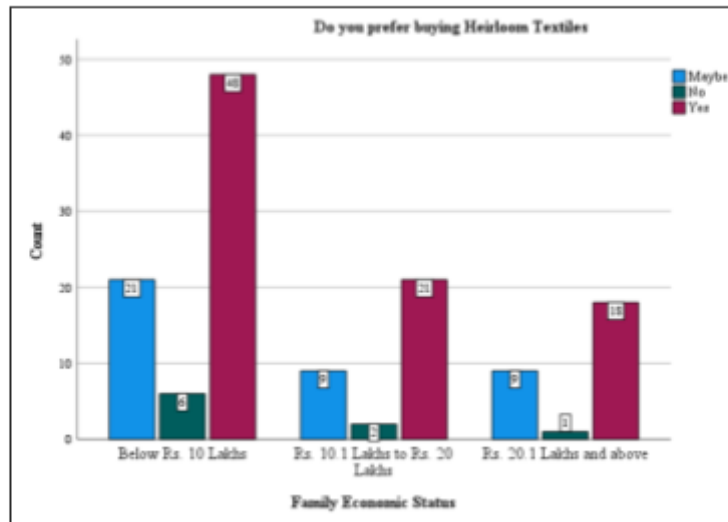
**Graph 4.22: Bar Chart according to the association between socio-economic background and awareness about the craft**



variables under study are associated with each other i.e gender has some association with awareness about embroideries and also with buying preference of embroideries. Same was the case with education background and awareness, buying preference of textile and

embroideries. On the other hand, family economic status p-values are greater than alpha (0.05) thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that both are independent.

**4.23: Bar Chart according to the association between socio-economic background and preference for buying heirloom textiles**



Since the frequency of family economic status is significantly varied, the hypothesis is rejected and it can be deduced that there is no association between socio-economic background and preference for buying heirloom textiles.

**Graph 4.24: Bar Chart according to the association between socio-economic background and likability to buy revived phulkari collection piece**

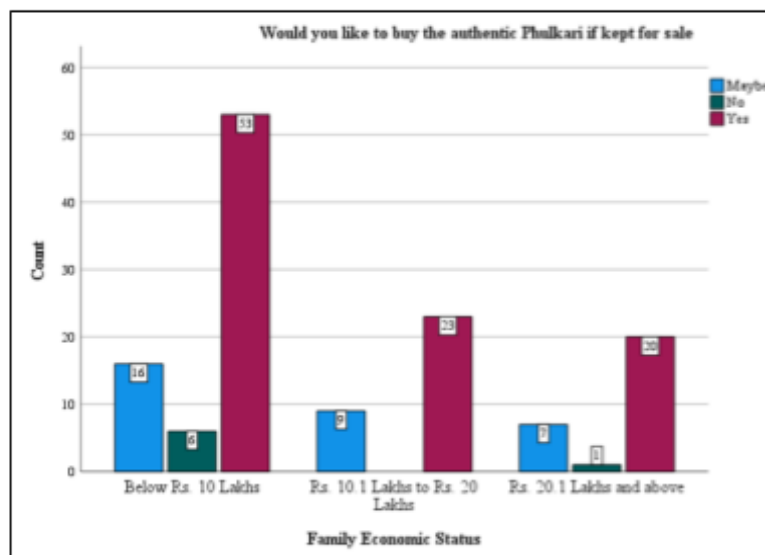


Table 4.24 illustrates a varied count of responses of the respondents from different economic status, this result in acceptance of the null hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is no association between socio-economic background and likability to buy revived phulkari collection pieces.

#### 4.4.2.6 Measuring the degree of association between attributes with the help of Cramer's V

Cramer's V is used to measure how strong the two categorical fields are associated. It is an effect size measurement for the chi-square test of Independence.

Further Cramer's V was computed for all which help us to understand the type of association between two attributes. Values corresponding to gender and educational background were high while values of Cramer's V corresponding to economic status were low. Frequencies of the same cross tabs are represented in the form of clustered bars below.

**Table 4.7: Scores of garments with respect to design A and B in different categories**

Categories	A	B
Dupatta	1313	1132
Stole	1244	1082
Shawl	1330	1184
Scarf	1433	1291

The above table shows the scores of garments with respect to design A and B in different categories and below is the charts of social association which depicted that in all the categories design A was most preferred.

#### 4.4.2.7 To check if any association exists between any socio-economic parameters with that of ranking

To statistically compare observed results with expected results chi-square test is used. The basis of this test is to determine if a difference between observed data and expected data is due to chance, or if it is due to a relationship between the variables.

Therefore, a chi-square test was applied which is summarized below in the table. Hypothesis framed to test the association between two attributes is defined

as:

**H<sub>0</sub>: There is no association between socio-economic parameters and design (Products)**

**H<sub>1</sub>: There is association between socio-economic parameters and design (Products)**

Parameters considered under socio-economic parameters are gender, age and occupation.

**Table 4.8: p values for socio-economic parameters and products developed**

Socio-economic parameters	Scarf		Stole		Dupatta		Shawl	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Gender	0.058	0.233	0.251	0.826	0.084	0.172	0.087	0.365
Age	0.096	0.769	0.715	0.655	0.447	0.313	0.322	0.425
Occupation	0.113	0.910	0.143	0.072	0.643	0.190	0.964	0.228

The values summarized above are p-values corresponding to two attributes (product A and B of each category) are considered at a time for chi-square test. If the p-value is less than level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) i.e ( $<$ ) 0.05 then we reject the null hypothesis therefore it helps us in concluding that a relationship exists between both attributes.

Here, on observing all values it can be interpreted as all values are greater than ( $>$ ) 0.05 therefore we do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no association between the socio-economic parameters and two attributes (product A and B of each category). This means we can't clearly state if gender, age and occupation has its impact on the ranking products.

Below are the tables which comprise the frequencies and percentage of ranking to the design with each product. It can be observed in overall aesthetic, authenticity, thread colour, motif, layout, edge finishing, neatness of the embroidery and dimension that design A from the category of scarf secured a higher rank therefore secured a higher frequency and percentage as compared to design B (table 4.9). For the rest three categories design B secured a higher frequency as compared to design A (table 4.10 to table 4.12).



**Table 4.9: Frequencies and percentage of ranking to the design of Scarf A & B**

	Scarf			
	A		B	
Rating	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 Highest	84	30.4	12	4.4
2	33	11.9	70	25.2
3	35	12.6	31	11.1
4	19	6.7	45	16.3
5	23	8.1	27	9.6
6	10	3.7	23	8.1
7	29	10.4	47	17.0
8 Lowest	45	16.3	23	8.1
Total	278	100.0	278	100.0

**Table 4.10: Frequencies and percentage of ranking to the design of Stole A & B**

	Stole			
	A		B	
Rating	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 Highest	16	5.9	6	2.2
2	23	8.1	12	4.4
3	72	25.9	31	11.1
4	29	10.4	84	30.4
5	47	17.0	33	11.9
6	33	11.9	39	14.1
7	33	11.9	23	8.1
8 Lowest	25	8.9	49	17.8
Total	278	100.0	278	100.0

**Table 4.11: Frequencies and percentage of ranking to the design of Dupatta A & B**

	Dupatta			
	A		B	
Rating	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 Highest	35	12.6	19	6.7
2	21	7.4	25	8.9
3	29	10.4	35	12.6
4	41	14.8	23	8.1
5	95	34.1	25	8.9
6	25	8.9	99	35.6
7	19	6.7	29	10.4
8 Lowest	14	5.2	25	8.9
Total	278	100.0	278	100.0

**Table 4.12: Frequencies and percentage of ranking to the design of Shawl A & B**

	Shawl			
	A		B	
Rating	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 Highest	51	18.5	54	19.3
2	60	21.5	35	12.6
3	16	5.9	29	10.4
4	27	9.6	10	3.7
5	16	5.9	12	4.4
6	12	4.4	37	13.3
7	76	27.4	23	8.1
8 Lowest	19	6.7	78	28.1
Total	278	100.0	278	100.0

Based on the observations of all the products and with them in design all respondents gave higher ranking to design A in comparison with that design B. However, the ranking values for design A and design B do not have a significant gap/difference.

#### 4.4.2.8 Analysis of total scores achieved by products of collection

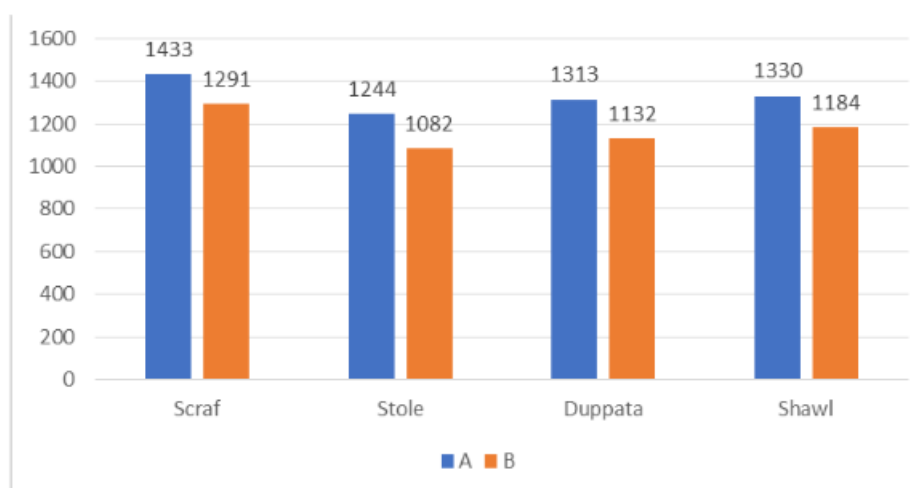
The above analysis of scores achieved by each design from each category it was noted that there was a difference between the responses of the designs. On the other hand when comparing and calculating scores of all products together across all attributes and analyzing their frequencies, percentages and total scores it was observed that product design A secured higher scores as compared to design B across all four product categories.

**Table 4.13: Analysis of the Frequencies, Percentage and Scores achieved by each product**

Rating			8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Scarf	A	Frequency	84	33	35	19	23	10	29	45	278
		Percent	30.4	11.9	12.6	6.7	8.1	3.7	10.4	16.3	100
		Score	672	231	210	95	92	30	58	45	1433
	B	Frequency	12	70	31	45	27	23	47	23	278
		Percent	4.4	25.2	11.1	16.3	9.6	8.1	17	8.1	100
		Score	96	490	186	225	108	69	94	23	1291
Stole	A	Frequency	16	23	72	29	47	33	33	25	278
		Percent	5.9	8.1	25.9	10.4	17	11.9	11.9	8.9	100
		Score	128	161	432	145	188	99	66	25	1244
	B	Frequency	6	12	31	84	33	39	23	49	278
		Percent	2.2	4.4	11.1	30.4	11.9	14.1	8.1	17.8	100
		Score	48	84	186	420	132	117	46	49	1082
Dupatta	A	Frequency	35	21	29	41	95	25	19	14	278
		Percent	12.6	7.4	10.4	14.8	34.1	8.9	6.7	5.2	100
		Score	280	147	174	205	380	75	38	14	1313
	B	Frequency	19	25	35	23	25	99	29	25	278
		Percent	6.7	8.9	12.6	8.1	8.9	35.6	10.4	8.9	100
		Score	152	175	210	115	100	297	58	25	1132
Shawl	A	Frequency	51	60	16	27	16	12	76	19	278
		Percent	18.5	21.5	5.9	9.6	5.9	4.4	27.4	6.7	100
		Score	408	420	96	135	64	36	152	19	1330
	B	Frequency	54	35	29	10	12	37	23	78	278
		Percent	19.3	12.6	10.4	3.7	4.4	13.3	8.1	28.1	100
		Score	432	245	174	50	48	111	46	78	1184

A bar chart representation can be observed in graph 4.25, to observe the scores achieved by each product. The product design A scored higher in comparison to product design B, irrespective of male or female respondents.

**Graph 4.25: Total scores give by respondents to each product**



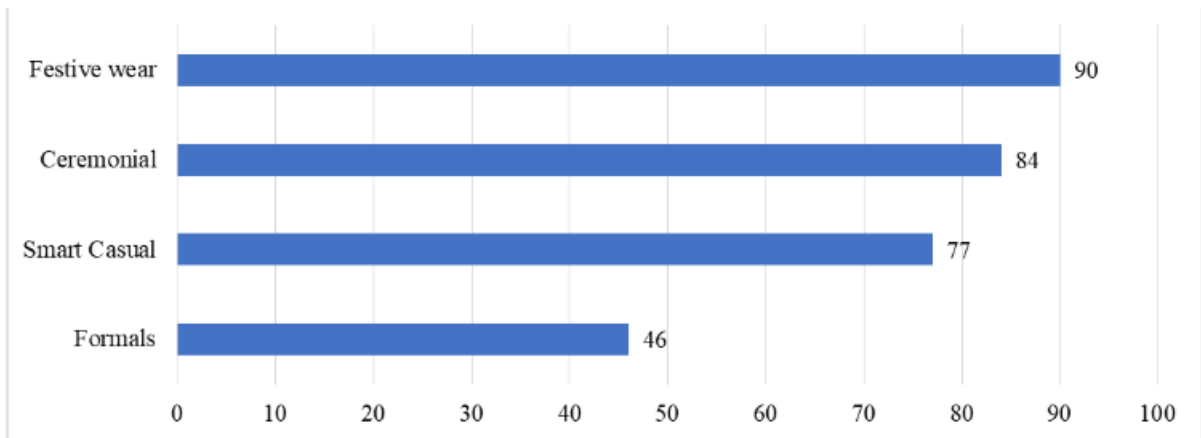
#### **4.4.3 Analysis of the data for collection based on male and female respondents for preferences of occasion, base fabric and colour scheme for customized product**

The survey feedback of the developed products also consisted of questions based on the preference of the respondents for the occasions to use the developed products. It also had an enquiry of the preferred colours of designs and motifs, and of the base fabric for self-use. The central idea of this part of the survey was to analyze the inclination of the respondents towards buying if the developed products were kept for sale. The data bifurcated for male and female was to understand each of the gender and their likeness towards each of the discussed attributes. The results would assist and help the researcher to improvise on the collecting according to the feedback received from the respondents.

##### **4.4.3.1 Analysis of the preferred occasion to use the developed products**

It can be observed from the graph 4.26 that maximum respondents preferred to wear the developed collection as festive wear, followed by ceremonial, smart casuals and formals. But on observing the graph 4.27 where bifurcation of the data is compared according to male and female respondents it can be observed that the maximum number of female respondents choose formal occasion to wear or use the developed textiles. On the other hand, data reflects that the maximum number of respondents preferred to wear or use the developed collection as ceremonial wear.

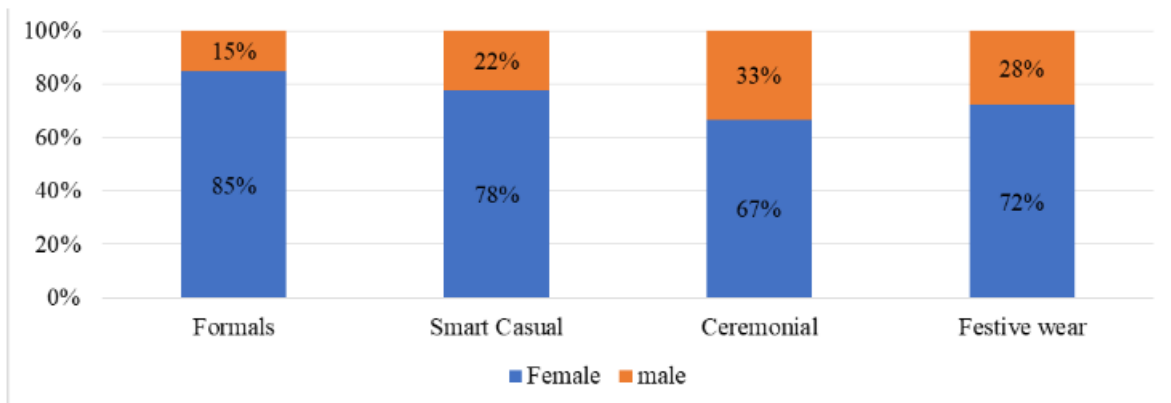
**Graph 4.26: At which occasion you will consider to use the developed textiles**



The researcher's observation could deduce that the main idea of developing the collection was not only to focus on reviving the designs of phulkari but also to introduce these designs in the market as contemporary wear. The market survey has been of major help to identify the gaps in categories like colour, base fabric and products to be worn on formal occasions. In a formal setting for female respondents cotton and silks as fabrics are considered 'formal' and subtle colours or non-bold colours also are considered in the same category, it is probably the reason for the higher frequency of responses for formal wear. The result as analyzed fulfills the target objective set by the researcher to develop this collection with regards to female respondents.

On the other hand the results of the male respondents are not surprising as men are expected to dress 'formally' meaning in smart solid colour shirt with a straight cut solid pants, this norm of formal dressing could be the reason the male respondents chose ceremonial occasion, as

**Graph 4.27: Distribution of preference at which occasions you will consider to use the textiles with respect to gender**





they could freely experiment with the colour palette and design language of the developed products.

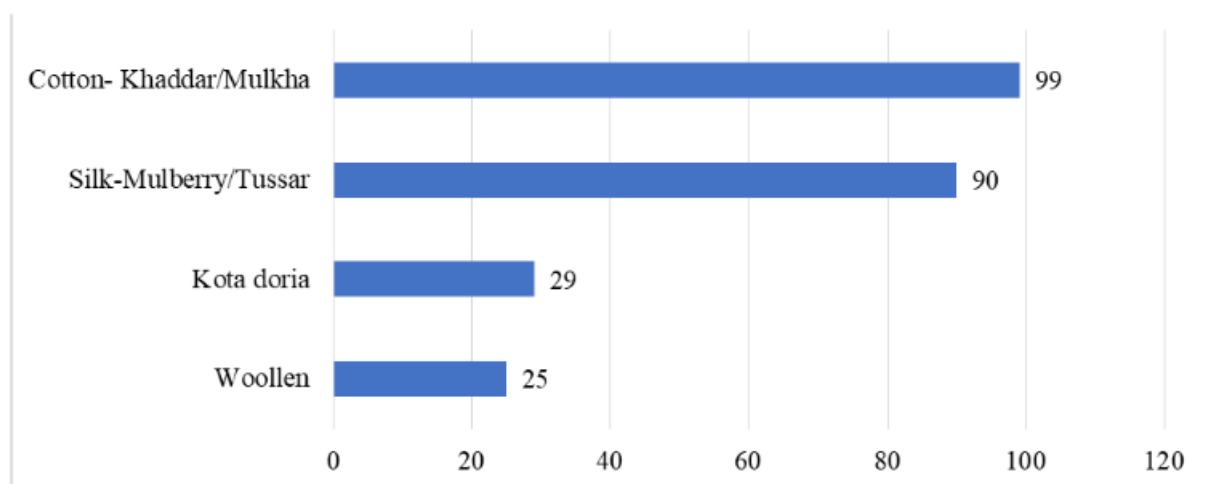
#### 4.4.3.2 Analysis of data according to the preference of respondents for the base fabric and colour of phulkari for their personal use

As discussed earlier the researcher wanted to understand the inclination of the respondents for buying the developed products if kept for sale. Therefore questions for personal preference were allied to the survey to understand their inclination for the same. Since respondents already had an idea of how the actual product looks, questions like these would assist the researcher in innovating the designs according to the taste of the target market.

##### a. Preference of the respondents according to the base fabric of the developed phulkari for personal use.

The respondents preferred cotton khaddar or malkha over any other fabric listed like varieties of silk, *kota doria* or woollen, as observed in graph 4.28. Although the frequency for both the fabric options of cotton *khaddar/malkha* and silk-mulberry and *tussar* were significantly high.

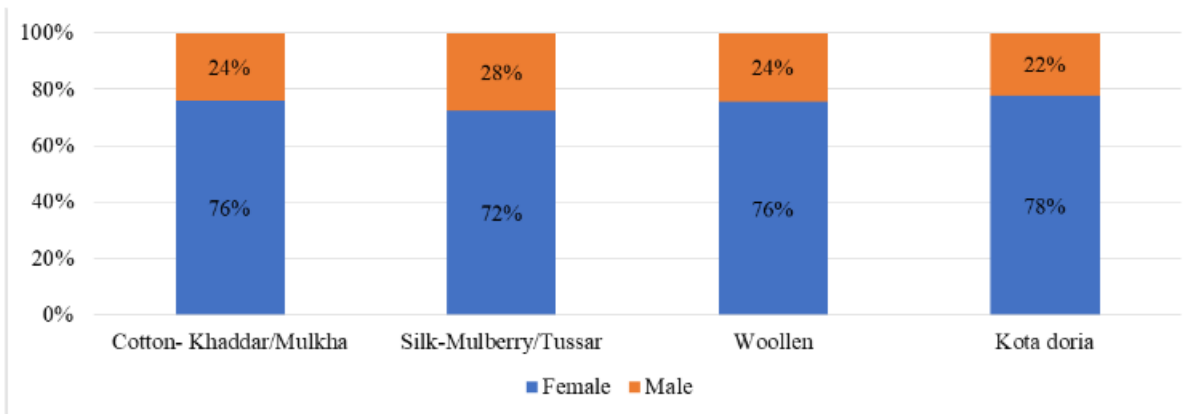
**Graph 4.28: Preference of respondents for the base fabric of phulkari**



Subsequently for results of the data analyzed for male and female individually it was observed that 78% of female respondents preferred *kota doria* over any other fabric listed followed by woollen, cotton and silk and 28% being the highest percentage of male respondents for fabric silk-mulberry and *tussar*, followed by cotton and woollen. There is

no surprise for the last preferred fabric as *kota doria* for men's wear as it is probably never introduced in the mainstream market for male customers. (Graph 4.29)

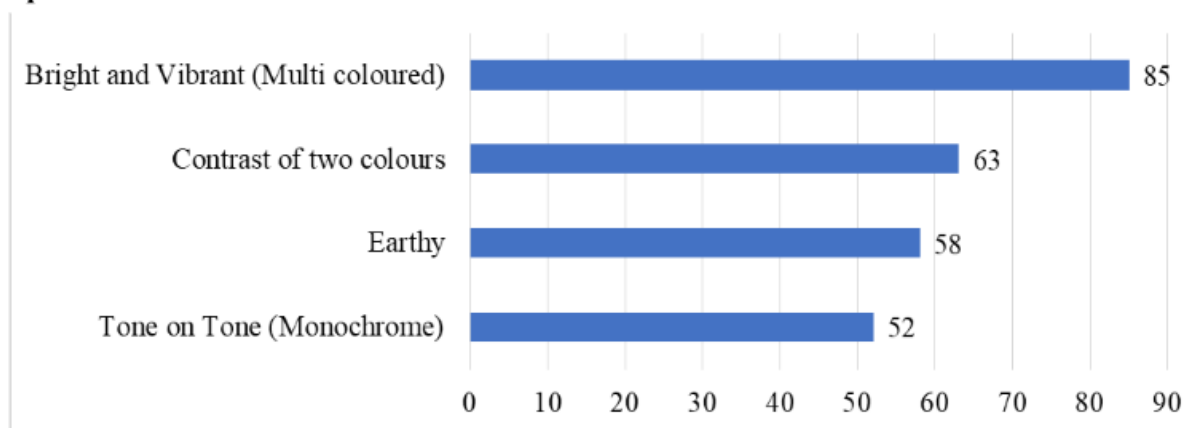
**Graph 4.29: Preference of male and female respondents for the base fabric of phulkari**



**b. Preference of the respondents according to the base fabric of the developed phulkari for personal use.**

The responses on the preference of colour for customized phulkari revealed that bright and vibrant colour or multi coloured, colour scheme was most preferred (85%), followed by contrast of two colours, earthy tones and monochrome.

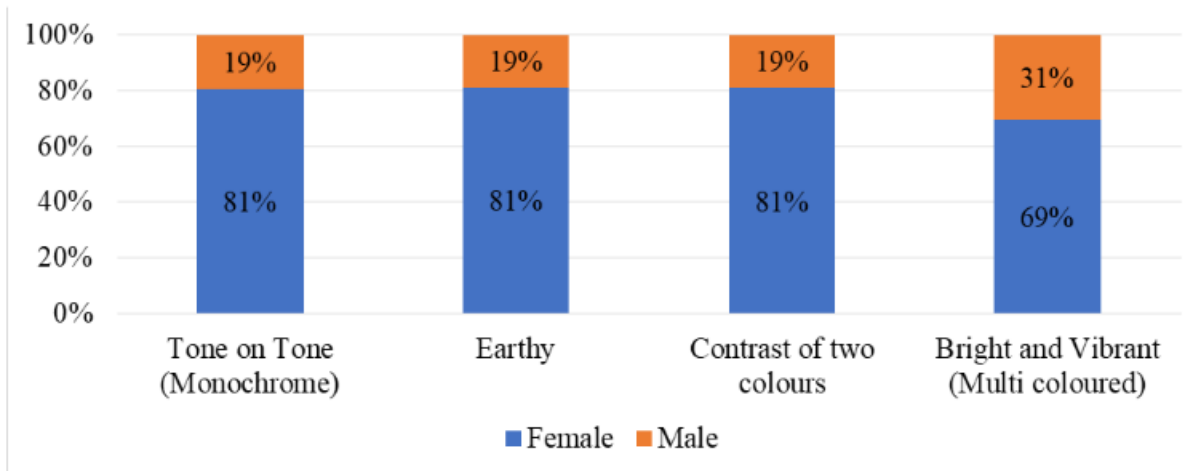
**Graph 4.30 : Preference of the respondents for the colour of designs and base fabric of phulkari**



On observing the data as illustrated in graph 4.31, it can be inferred that male and female respondents have responded unexpectedly. The data depicts varied results. The results show that female respondents have equally preferred tone on tone, earthy and contrast of two colours of fabric but have given low rating to bright and multi coloured phulkari. This could

be in connection to the results that show the results of preference of the occasion to wear or use the developed collection. The results for male also can be linked to the results of graph 4.27.

**Graph 4.31: Preference of the male and female respondents for the colour of designs and base fabric of phulkari**



#### 4.4.4 Analysis of the artisan interaction

The artisans were also presented with a semi structured questionnaire post their training and development of the products below are the results, that are analyzed based on the responses of the 8 artisans that were part of the research study.

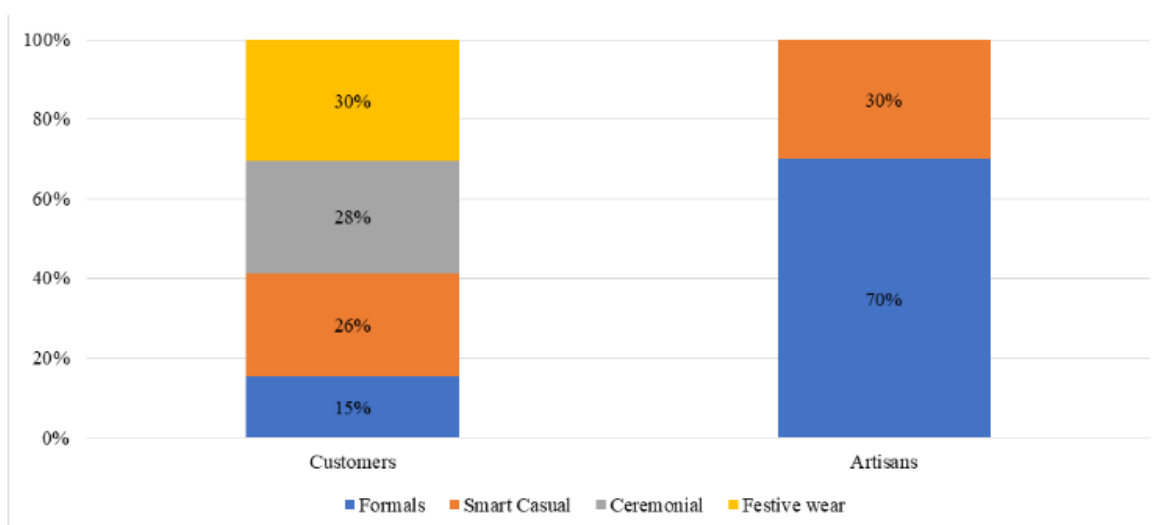
The artisans were also posed with questions that would give an understanding of their skills. To understand if they have worked on similar products before, 62.5% of the artisan respondents said that they had worked with similar categories of products. On the other hand, they were asked about whether they had worked on similar layouts before, to which maximum respondents 62.5% said that they have not worked with such layouts before. It was important to interact with the artisans to understand what kind of work they are doing for client orders to maintain the uniqueness of the products that were developed as a part of present study.

The comparative analysis of data gathered from respondents and from the data gathered from the artisans regarding the most suitable occasion to wear or use the developed collection, revealed that most of the respondents 30% with a mix of male and female of the total population preferred festive wear are the best suited

occasion to wear or use the developed collection. On the contrary the artisans' data revealed that the best occasion to wear or use the developed pieces were formals followed by smart casuals. The artisan respondents did not consider festive or ceremonial occasions to wear the developed pieces. This could be due to their understanding of a festival or a celebration that is celebrated wearing bright colours and flashy ornamentation. The artisans based out of the Nabha village have had the nurturing where festivals are related to bright colours that also reflect youthfulness and enthusiasm, the same argument is also supported by the theoretical review by many scholarly authors.

The reflection of the data can be a huge viewpoint revealed by computing numbers. These comparisons strengthen the purpose and helps in understanding the tested scenario in a better way.

**Graph 4.32: Preference of the artisans and respondents with regards to wear the developed phulkari collection based on occasion**



The age in which the artisans started learning the craft of phulkari was 16 years or more, with maximum respondents 87.5%, and further revealed that maximum artisans learnt this craft from The Nabha Foundation and few were taught by their mother or friends. The artisans also reported that they enjoyed working with craft in groups at Nabha foundation and accompanied with local or folk music.

The question to understand that which different fabrics were extensively used in

the present day market, it was revealed that the artisans gave maximum scores to cotton and *kota doria* as compared to the other fabrics listed like *tussar* silk, crepe or other. The data analyzed in table 4.14, it can be observed that the least score was obtained by *tussar* silk followed by crepe. The researcher's collection consists of two categories where *tussar* is used as the base fabric: *tussar dupattas* and *tussar* stoles. It is revealed that they had never worked before on *tussar* and it was a new experience for them to handle the fabric that was as delicate as the thread. But the overall experience of the embroidery with respect to designs and layout was good.

#### 4.14 Scores with respect to most used fabrics in present day market

Scores	Cotton	Kota Doria	Tussar Silk	Crepe	Other
1	3	0	2	2	1
2	1	3	3	3	1
3	0	2	3	1	3
4	0	0	0	1	2
5	4	3	0	1	1
<b>Total Scores</b>	8	8	8	8	8

Although the artisans started learning the craft at a young age, the artisans, to embroider 10 x 10 cm of a cloth piece took a minimum 30 mins. And with a flexible timing in a day they were able to embroider 20 and more motifs of the size of 10 x 10 cms.

Based on the size of the product the time taken to embroider was completely dependent on the size and the complexity of the work.



Most common thread that the artisans were familiar to embroider with was silk followed by cotton and the main source of procurement of the raw material were nearby local vendors and dealers.

#### **4.5 Providing wider avenues to the artisans by developing a product range using revived motifs for niche markets**

As discussed earlier the year 1880 has been a significant year in the history of phulkari craft, as it was the first time the craft was embroidered for the commercial International market at the time of British Raj. In 1881 Maharaja Ranjit Singh signed the first treaty for the export of phulkaris to the western countries. The market in the west was booming for the phulkari embroidered coats, curtains, purses and covers. Followed by the exhibition of the craft and exquisite craftsmanship the craft received promotion and awareness. According to **Maskiell (1999)**, ‘Punjabi women across a wide spectrum of social positions in the nineteenth century stitched, wore, exchanged, purchased, inherited and hoarded phulkaris’. The primary goal of commercialization was to provide financial assistance to underprivileged artisans. According to **Maskiell (1999)**, phulkari used to be a means for women to pass their spare time and make items for dowry, but it evolved as a significant commercial resource as it gained attention of the British after the 1850s.

##### **4.5.1 Role of the Government and Non-Government Organizations in Revival of the Phulkari Craft**

The revival of the craft of phulkari cannot be done by artisans alone. There are government and non-government bodies that provide assistance to the artisans to uplift the craft. The non-government organizations work like a patronage that provides crucial support to the artisans by providing a helping hand for a sustainable livelihood. It also assists in generating self-employment to improve the socio-economic status of the women from rural communities. As phulkari is the basic source of income for many families from marginalized sectors, it is important to support their continuous contribution in craft sustenance. Therefore the government and the non-government bodies support these artisans at various levels to empower them. These organizations have used the abilities of phulkari artisans to empower them. These organizations primarily provide two functions. The first goal was to empower women artisans, and the second goal is to promote and revitalize the fading craft of phulkari. For the first purpose, these organizations took the initiative to build this cluster after organizing self-help groups to empower women. They teach women and encourage them to participate in rural crafts by utilizing their aptitude and ingenuity. They teach women how to utilize new techniques and tools to create new patterns based on market demand. The second

goal was to promote phulkari through museums, exhibits, failures, artisan festivals, and other venues. Few organizations working towards uplifting the craft are discussed below.

#### **4.5.1.1 Patiala Handicraft Workshop Cooperative Industrial Society Ltd.**

The Patiala Handicraft Workshop Cooperative Industrial Society Ltd. was registered in 1997 with Punjab Co-operative Society. Its major goal of the organization is to improve the development of rural women by organizing training programmes in relevant locations to develop the skill of phulkari embroidery. The ideology of the organization is 'Earn while you Learn'. This NGO is run by the Founder and Chairman Mrs. Rekha Mann who seeks to revitalize Punjabi folk embroidery, phulkari. The NGO's motto is 'society for rural women empowerment'. It is a Punjab Government-registered Society. In a semi-formal interview with Rekha Mann she reported that the organization has over 14,000 women artisans registered with the NGO.



Plate 4.124: Rekha Mann with her group and in an interview

Source: <https://globalprimenews.com/2021/12/09/india-exim-bank-brings-together-more-than-75-artisans-from-20-states-of-india-at-mumbai/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwdBWAwy6A4>

It is a society dedicated to women empowerment as well as the revitalization of the dying art by establishing craft training centers. The Society works for the Revival of Phulkari Art, (Manufacturing Unit) Conducting Women Entrepreneur Development Programme (WEDP) / Rural Entrepreneur Development Programme (REDP), is a supplier to Govt. Phulkari Emporium, participates in National/International Exhibitions, assists in forming Self-Help-Groups, Consultancy work related to Design Industry, Specialization/Guidance, Cluster development activities. The Society is also awarded with a National Award from the Government of India for contribution in the revival of the craft. Upon conducting a semi-formal interview with Mrs. Rekha Mann (Dec 2018) at her residence, it was revealed that Patiala Handicraft Workshop Co-operative Industrial Society Ltd. is the biggest exporter of the phulkari craft to China. The products that are exclusively developed by the SHG were

file folders, bed sheets and pouches embroidered with phulkari embroidery. She mentions about huge potential in the artisans and the craft, but the government should provide sufficient funds to up skill the artisans and launch new products in the market. She also recalls how the women used to get inspired from surroundings and embroidered it in patterns, she suggests that the new age artisans should also be encouraged to design and embroidery motifs from their own imagination. Mrs. Rekha Mann was awarded with Mahila Excellence in 1996 followed by Rural Women Entrepreneurship Priyadarshini Award by IMM NABARD in 2001.

#### **4.5.1.2 The Nabha Foundation, Nabha**

The Khemka family founded the Nabha Foundation in 2003. Through traditional art and craft, this foundation works for the welfare and development of the residents of Nabha and its neighboring areas. In the Punjab hamlet of Nabha, this organization gives traditional instruction to women and forms an autonomous business group for women. This foundation strives to revive the Phulkari art form by creating goods with khadi fabrics and other traditional textiles, materials, and equipment. The organization focuses on the capacity building of the artisans in phulkari embroidery. The organization is also certified by craft mark. Upon personal interaction with Niharika and Namrata (Feb, 2019) from The Nabha Foundation it was revealed that women empowerment is a key objective of the Nabha Foundation. It strives to transmit knowledge, create capacity, and provide opportunities for women to become self-sufficient.



Plate 4.125:Artisans of Nabha Foundation Working on Research Collection

The Phulkari programme was established in 2007 to provide women artisans with long-term sustainable self-employment. The programme has allowed the craftsmen to up-skill their craft abilities, sense of design and techniques in the manufacture of traditional phulkari that appeals to modern preferences. Nabha has also made commercial potential for phulkari items available. The women from SHG developed by Nabha Phulkari Sangh receive a monthly income based on the quality of the work they deliver. Namrata further explains that this method of paying for the quality of the work enables the artisan to understand the importance of work ethic in a professional setting. Niharika adds and claims that the organization's embroidery quality therefore has helped to achieve a quality that is unmatched in the market. Researcher noted further that the organization has collaborated with organizations like Fab India and Good Earth for delivering trendy products. The artisans also get opportunities to showcase and sell their products at Dastkaari haat in Delhi and Chandigarh along with exhibitions at Kolkata and Gujarat or any other states as well. It is through these trade fairs that the craft and the artisan get recognition. The artisans from Nabha Phulkari Sangh have also received awards and recognitions at multiple levels for the quality of the work in embroidering traditional phulkari embroidery.

#### 4.5.1.3 Guru Nanak Phulkari House Patiala



Plate 4.126: Padma Shree Lajwanti Devi, Phulkari Master Craftsperson

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/lifestyle/adding-new-colours-to-traditional-phulkari-art-lajwanti-from-patiala-awarded-padma-shri-204480>.

<https://www.newsncr.com/national/newsncr-exclusive-lajwanti-who-received-padma-shri-in-traditional-phulkari-gave-employment-to-women-got-rid-of-many-children-from-drugs/>

Lajwanti Ravinder hails from a traditional family of craftsmen who moved to Punjab from Multan. She also wove her own cotton khaddar in younger days and made her own cotton cloth, however now purchases a variety of fabric from the stores in town. Lajwanti ji is her parents' only daughter and she attended school till the fifth grade. Phulkari is her passion, which she learnt at an early age from her grandma and mother. She has been practicing this craft for more than 60 years. Her unit registered with the name of Guru Nanak Phulkari House Patiala is an initiative to promote phulkari craft and train women in the craft. Lajwanti jistrives to train young girls, and women from various backgrounds, she says in a personal interview conducted at Delhi Haat that by training one woman she is supporting her entire family. She shows strong concern regarding women who have been victim to domestic violence or drug abuse, she says by training women in phulkari craft she motivates and guides them to live a better life. Mrs. Lawjwati ji feels dispirited as she has not received any recognition from the Punjab Government.

Lajwanti ji has trained more than 500 women for free, and also provides raw materials to create beautiful products. She has successfully developed various self-help groups that are operated by group leaders and the finances are managed entirely by the SHG. Since the income trail is transparent she claims that the women working with her group are satisfied and motivate more women to learn the phulkari craft and secure a sustainable livelihood. Lajwanti ji participated in various government and private exhibitions to sell and showcase the craft.

‘Guru Nanak Phulkari House’ is run by Lajwanti Devi, in Patiala. Her Recent Padma Shree Award states that Lajwanti is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including National Award in 1994; National Merit Certificate in 1993; MSME Award; Khadi Promotion Awards in 2019; India SME Forum Award in 2020. She received many participation certificates in Taj Mohatsav, Agra and from Delhi Tourism. She also got many participation certificates by displaying her work in the international market. She has got many training appreciation certificates in different schools, colleges like NIFT, Mumbai. She has also received honors from Craft Council of India (SUI DHAGA) in 2005 and by Silk Mark Organization of India in 2017.



#### 4.5.1.4 The Craft Revival Trust

This non-profit organization is involved in the reformation of craft persons and craftsmen. The mission of CRT is to promote and revive craft manufacturing while also raising awareness among the younger generation about ancient processes. It also promotes handicraft and heritage study and development through a periodical called Asia InCH periodical (The Journal of Intangible Cultural Heritage).

The researcher got an opportunity to conduct semi-formal interview with Ritu Sethi the founder and trustee of the Crafts Revival Trust at a discussion about the craft status in the present market. She expressed that craft and the story of the craft is the key to convey the efforts put behind developing a hand crafted product. Upon further discussion on the craft specifically she said the craft has a rich legacy and we can witness the same at very few places like museums or art collectors. The craft needs to be displayed along with its story for the people to connect with its rich legacy.



Plate 4.127: Researcher in conversation with Ritu Sethi, Founder and Trustee of Craft Revival Trust at Mela Phulkari India Habitat Centre, Delhi

#### 4.5.1.5 Crafts Council of India

The Craft Council of India was established in 1964. It was Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's most significant endeavor towards preserving and modernizing Indian history. This NGO has several regional centers and works for the betterment of handicraft people and craftsmen. After assessing the market situation, the agency tries to improve the craft via various trainings. Technical personnel are trained to study the market, and the product is subsequently created in accordance with market demand. They also aid in the sale of handcrafted products

in markets. They also inform crafts persons about upcoming events and participating in the agency's training programmes, seminars and workshops, as well as spreading awareness about environmental and health concerns.

Lt. Jasleen Dhamija had worked closely with culture and craft revivalist Kamala Devi in the government of India for reviving art and craft from all over India. Community development and women empowerment were key focuses along with reviving the regional crafts. She had spent her lifespan in studying the craft techniques traditionally applied by the master craftsman and the art that women created out of a needle and thread. She has worked immensely for the craft of phulkari and research had an opportunity to interact with her as an expert on the topic. Upon interaction she expressed that 'like the present research much studies must be done on the textiles of India as with changing times, it is important to preserve our culture and our heritage'. She also added on how today people have started identifying the craft as phulkari but in its original form it was known as the bagh, ' bagh is the real essence' that is much more intricate and exquisite in form as compared to the phulkari. She says 'it is the sacred grid that is based on the *tana-bana* as stated in *Rig veda*, it is a kind of a concept of time, just like two lines run parallel to the earth and drawing the essence from the earth, the aura, the strength and the two lines moving upwards creates a *chowk* when they both intersect, this *chowk* is the 'sacred grid', on the basis of which the original fire temple, the sacred place for worship was created, it was this grid that was used to create temples and mosques and the structures of religious townships, and *bagh* is just like sacred as this grid that grows flowers on it based on the fabric grid'



Plate 4.128: Researcher in frame with Jasleen Dhamija at TCRC National Seminar, Delhi

#### 4.5.1.6 National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum

The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum Delhi is also known as the National Crafts Museum and Hastkala Academy. It was founded in 1956 by Kamaldevi Chattopadhyay and with her extreme efforts; it is today accessible to everyone at Pragati Maidan. The Museum is directly linked to the Ministry of Textiles. It has now transferred as a cultural center of handloom and handicrafts and also promoted craftsmen from all over India. The museum houses more than thirty five thousand rare and distinguished crafts that reflect the regional culture and tradition of India. The collection includes, stone and metal crafts, wood and mud crafts, textiles and embroideries, painting and jewelry from all regions. The museum also has a continuous exhibition and sale of handcrafted products.

The present study was conducted at a crafts museum for studying and analyzing the phulkari collection. During the study the researcher had an interesting conversation with the staff in



Plate 4.129: Researcher with Crafts Museum Team at the Museum's Textile Gallery

understanding how the artifacts were procured for the museum. It was revealed that a serious deliberation was done with respect to the authentic technique of the craft, the region of the craft, if the craft was a personal belonging of an eminent personality, the condition of the artifact before handover to the museum and if an specific event the craft was related to. Mr.

Md. Ansari, a National Awardee for Banarasi Brocade weaving, presently in charge of the crafts museum textile gallery revealed that the current collection of *bagh* and phulkari is a result of search for many years. He also revealed that a sellers' meet is arranged with the concerned curators, experts of the craft, and representatives from the Ministry to carefully study the textile before its addition in the museum collection.

#### **4.5.1.7 USTTAD Scheme**

To enhance the cultural heritage of minorities' traditional arts and crafts, the Ministry of Minority Affairs has proposed the Upgrading Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD) initiative. The main objective of the project is to build the capacity of the artisans and craftsmen through training the younger generation. It also created guidelines for identification of crafts through its thorough documentation. It strongly promotes the preservation of the heritage of the craft of Indian minorities. It strives to bridge the gap between traditional skill and global markets. The project aims in providing employment to the school dropouts and to increase employability of the already existing workers. The USTTAD scheme' vision is to provide better livelihood for marginalized minorities through training programs.

Prof Bandari.V at a seminar on 'Textiles of Punjab' organized by Textile Clothing and Research Centre in collaboration with Government Museum and Art Gallery Chandigarh, shared her work under the USTTAD project with National Institute of Fashion Technology being the knowledge partner for the project. Her presentation discussed the workshops held with phulkari artisans in Patiala, with an emphasis on the tactics used to educate women embroiderers about design. The product range generated in the workshops showcased the methods necessary to initiate contemporary phulkari while showing the craft's relevance in today's times. The products displayed were co-created using a collaborative strategy for safeguarding livelihoods and craft traditions, combining the aesthetic language of craftspeople with that of contemporary designers.

#### **4.5.1.8 1469 Workshop, Delhi**

1469 workshop is a chain of concept stores run by Mr. Harinder Singh and his wife Kirandeep Kaur. 1469 is an initiative by Mr. Harinder to promote Punjab and crafts of Punjab. Every year during winter solstice 1469 organized an exhibition called 'Mela Phulkari' that is curated by Dr. Alka Pande at India Habitat Center. It is based and inspired from one craft concept from Punjab with phulkari as the key focus. The promotion

of the craft is done in innovative ways by 1469 Workshop. They organize a Punjabi festive theme day with performances by Punjabi artists to art and craft enthusiasts who are representative in their own craft. In a semi-formal interview conducted with Mr Harinder Singh and Mrs Kirandeep Kaur, he mentioned about his experience of being called for his physical identity and that inspired him to educate the world about Sikhism, Sikh culture and crafts from Punjab. During the interview he also reported that he works with the women artisans from Sangrur district. These artisans are a group of widows of the farmers from Punjab. He believed that providing them employment is benefiting the family of the artisans as well as craft.

His initiative of reinventing craft in his own capacity like recreating old patterns and designs by digital printing on fine fabrics have contributed in conveying the design language of the craft to a wider audience. Although digital printing of craft is not helping in reviving the authentic technique it is still contributing in educating a wider audience about the original visual appeal of the traditional crafts. A diversified range of products have been introduced by 1469 like trendy t-shirts with logo inspired by Punjab, silk, cotton and chiffon stoles and *dupattas* digitally printed with phulkari and *bagh* motifs, *mul-mul* turbans with phulkari prints and small accessories like hair tie, neck tie, coasters, masks and coverlets.



Plate 4.130: Mr Harinder Singh with his wife Mrs Kirandeep Kaur, founders of 1469 Workshop  
Source: <https://www.thequint.com/lifestyle/a-new-view-of-punjab-as-seen-through-phulkari-its-wonder-weave#read-more>



#### 4.5.2 Contribution of Indian designers in reviving, reinventing and promoting phulkari craft

Indian pioneering fashion designers have shown their contribution in reinventing the traditional form of phulkari to suit the modern day market. Fashion markets have always been a reason for the designers to work with traditional craft and reinvent it as contemporary fashion. For crafts like phulkari that are losing its essence fashion designers have proven as saviors. The designers who have given a new direction to sustain the phulkari craft legacy are discussed below.

##### 4.5.2.1 Manish Malhotra

Manish Malhotra's collection named 'Threads of Emotions' that was showcased at Wills Fashion Week has contributed immensely in promotion of phulkari craft. The designer's take on the essence of the craft was visible all through his collection. It has proved to be a significant contribution in promoting the craft in the international markets as well. He with his collection has opened avenues for market as one, as his collection reflected garments for both women and men, unlike traditionally it was only worn by women.



Plate 4.131: Manish Malhotra's Collection on Phulkari titled Threads of Emotions  
Source: <https://www.weddingsutra.com/blog/manish-malhotras-phulkari-collection-at-wills-india-fashion-week/>

It was noted in his collection that the color palette was kept similar to the traditional and the garments were cut and styled suited to the modern silhouette. This approach to cater the



traditional art and craft enthusiasts and chic vogue classes makes his collection revolutionary for the phulkari craft. He also displayed pieces from his collection *Threads of Emotions* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art at an exhibition titled, ‘Phulkari: The Embroidered Textiles of Punjab from the Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz Collection’ in 2017. The exhibition had various traditional *baghs* and phulkaris like *sainchis*, *darshan dwar*, *thirma* and to showcase the



Plate 4.132: Manish Malhotra's Collection displayed at Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Source: <https://www.luxuryfacts.com/index.php/sections/article/Indian-designer-Manish-Malhotra-to-speak-at-Philad>

modern take it had Manish's Collection *Threads of Emotions* designed for the present day global audience.

#### 4.5.2.2 Ritu Kumar

Ritu Kumar's collection titled '*Panchvastra*' was inspired from the phulkari and *bagh* from Punjab. The collection showcased five incarnations of five mythological women from the epic Mahabharata. Each woman namely *Ganga*, *Draupadi*, *Kunti*, *Amba* and *Gandhari* represented the five moods. The designer has represented each of the five women in five different colours for five different moods, namely white and peach for purity, bold and rich colours for seduction, Swarovski and other mix of embellishments for illusion, a mix of

colour like orange, fuchsia and gold for exile and black indigo and gold for darkness. Each piece was unique in itself. The designer says that the collection took 6 years to take its shape. In an interview with Hindustan Times, she explains, "I think it's a very personal choice that designers don't want to go for hand-woven textiles. For them, synthetic is very important to cater to the modern world but my ideologies are different and I never promote such fabrics,"



Plate 4.133: Ritu Kumar's Panchvastra Collection

Source: <http://asianweddingideas.blogspot.com/2012/04/ritu-kumars-panchvastra-collection.html>

#### 4.5.2.3 Gaurang Shah



Plate 4.134: Gaurang Shah's Kalpavriksha Collection

Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/546624473515205458/>

Gaurang Shah is a textile and a contemporary fashion designer. He designed his collected title *Kalpavriksha* as a *jugalbandi* of four very distinctive and prominent crafts namely Phulkari, Kalamkari, Jamdani and Chikankari. He presented his collection in 2015 at Lakme fashion Week Summer/Resorts. He is an award winning designer and revivalist of

various traditional textiles; he therefore understands the design sensibilities of hand crafted textiles and embroideries. *Kalpavriksha* according to Hindu mythology is associated with the wishful tree. The tree is known for its pure and divine values. The collection comprises *khadi* fabrics embellished with the four techniques but still amalgamate with each other.

#### 4.5.2.4 Kanika Goyal

Kanika Goyal's phulkari collection is a fresh take on traditional craft in modern contemporary form. The traditional phulkari embroidery motifs have immense influence on the designs used for her collection. Although the design and motifs are developed with flat sequin and pipe sequins, it conveys the craft language in this form and shapes. The emphasis on the geometric lines and combined with abstract colour schemes made media call it as Phulkari 2.0. Her collection showcases only western dresses and suits that are lightly embellished with this placement style embroidery in her garments.



Plate 4.135: Kanika Goyal's Collection on Phulkari

Source: <https://vagabomb.com/beauty-and-fashion/phulkari-for-a-cause-meet-kanika-goyal-the-designer-who-uses-phulkari-in-western-wear/>

Although the collection was well received by the audience the question of the revival of the embroidery still remains as the organic form of the original embroidery is lost. But she also engages in training artisans in learning *aari* embroidery as well to up skill and contribute to revive phulkari in an advanced way. In an interview with *vegabomb.com* she says, 'We'll be educating a batch of 60 women, to begin with. The focus will be on

embroidery and other surface techniques involving the Ari method. We'll be working on phulkari in detail, exploring new depths that the craft has to offer by introducing newer fabrics and tweaking the mediums of embroidery. The main aim is to instill confidence in them (artisans) and make them (artisans) independent.'

#### **4.5.3 Exhibitions of developed collections**

Discussed above are proven facts and events of organizations and designers that have with their tireless work and fashion collections have contributed to the up-liftment of not only the craft but also the lives of the women artisans from Punjab. With the same objective, the researcher's developed collection was displayed at various platforms for creating awareness of the craft as well as providing artisans with wider avenues to promote their skill through products developed for niche markets.

##### **4.5.3.1 Display of the draped collection**

As a part of the study researcher designed a collection of draped textiles and wall art pieces. The main objective of developing the collection was to create awareness of the revived motifs through its versatility in contemporary as well as in its traditional form to suit the modern day fashion. The researcher displayed the collection as an individual and as a part of a platform to showcase the developed designs. The designs and products both were very well received by the audience. The list of places of display of products is as below.

**a. Department of Clothing and Textiles, Faculty of Family and Community Science,  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara:**

The developed collection was displayed at the department for Faculties and students. The researcher noted all the valuable suggestions given by the Faculties of the department. The feedback was collected and evaluated through the Google survey.





Plate:4.136:The research collection displayed at the Department of Clothing and Textiles

#### b. Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery

The researcher got an opportunity to present a research paper along with a display of the products developed for the research collection. The experts and textile enthusiasts of the field received the designed collection very well. The feedback was collected and evaluated through the Google survey.



Plate 4.137: The research collection displayed at the Seminar on 'Textiles of Punjab' organised by TCRC, at Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery  
Source:<https://www.tcrc.in/seminar-5-textiles-of-punjab/>

#### c. Sutr Santati, National Museum Delhi

Abheraj Baldota Foundation in association with the National Museum organized an exhibition as part of *Azadi ka Amrut Mohotsav* to celebrate 75 years of Indian Independence. The exhibition represented over hundred textiles by seventy five participants. The main feature of this exhibition was to highlight the diverse interpretation of the beautiful textile craftsman ships from all over India, designed to

celebrate Indian artisans and to promote Indian crafts. The researcher's art piece was selected for display at the exhibition. The art pieces were designed keeping in mind the theme of the exhibition. It was inspired from the Tree of Life motif depicted in *sainchi* phulkari, the divine door as depicted in *darshan dwar*, the geometrical flowers as depicted in *bagh* and phulkari. With the amalgamation of the three varieties of *baghs* and phulkari the collection was titled '*Rukh*' Tree of life; where *Rukh* translates to tree in *Gurmukhi*.

The exhibition was curated by Mrs. Lavina Baldota and it was visited by eminent designers, textile and art conservators, people from the design fraternity, students, media and people from various backgrounds. In a conversation with Elle, Mrs. Lavina answered the question 'In a generation invested in fast fashion, how are you hoping to make traditional weaves more accessible and more appreciated?' saying, 'I feel awareness is the key. Only if gen next understands the effort and knowledge that goes into the handcrafted, can they appreciate and aspire for them. Sutr Santati by use of natural yarns and eco-friendly dyes also is a pertinent comment on slow consumerism and ecological preservation. I think the basic understanding that what is good for the environment is good for the body needs to seep into each one of us. If the influencers,



Plate 4.138: Researcher in conversation with Manish Malhotra and Lavina Baldota, Covered by India Today News Channel



celebrities, designers start promoting traditional hand crafted textiles, it's bound to trickle down.' Resonating with the thoughts expressed by the curator the purpose of research appears in the right direction.



Plate4.138: The researcher's art piece mentioned by the Curator in an Interview for The New Indian Express, Newspaper.  
Source:<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/aug/21/tracing-indian-heritage-through-textiles-2489769.html>

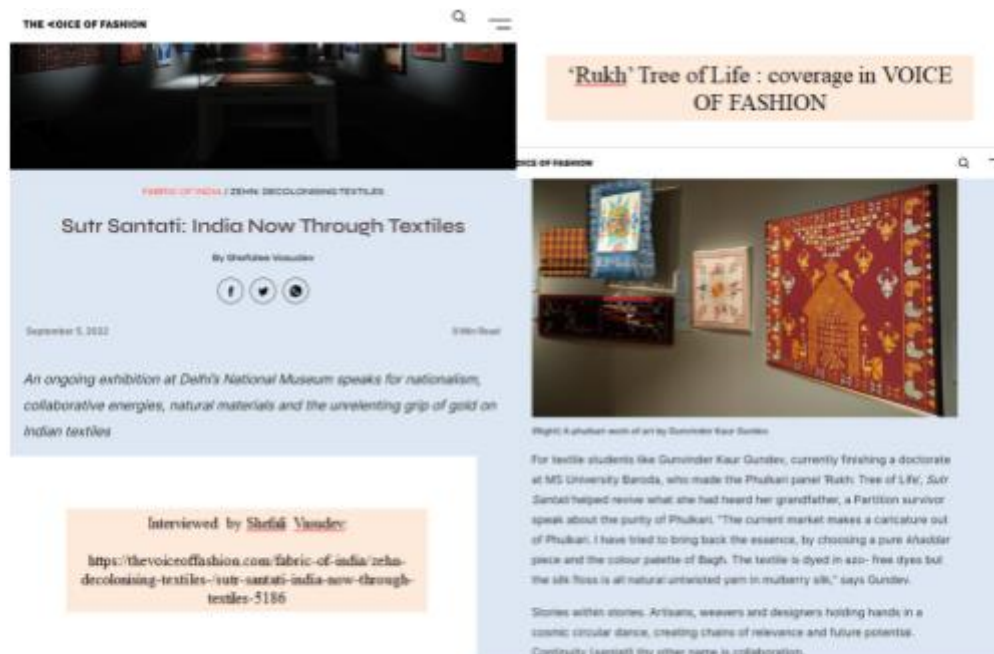


Plate 4.139: Interview of the researcher by Shefali Vasudev for Voice of Fashion  
Source:<https://thevoiceoffashion.com/fabric-of-india/zehn-decolonising-textiles-sutr-santati-india-now-through-textiles-5186>

The researcher's collection was appreciated by a wide audience including the designer and couturier Manish Malhotra, in conversation with him he shared how it was difficult for him to find artisans who embroidered phulkari with the authentic technique. He was encouraged and congratulated to achieve and produce a fine art piece for the exhibition.



Plate 4.140: Interview of the researcher by Pooja Singh for Mint Lounge Newspaper  
Source: <https://lifestyle.livemint.com/amp/fashion/trends/celebrating-india-s-textile-heritage-111662640744324.html>

The Sutr Santati Exhibition is a traveling exhibition and presently the researcher's art piece will be showcased along with other art pieces at Museums Victoria-Melbourne Museum, Melbourne Australia.



Plate 4.141: Snapshot of a post by Melbourne Museum, Australia  
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cqm1U1KNOSu/>

#### d. Crafts Council Telangana- Exhibition and Display of Research Collection

Crafts Council of Telangana (CCT) works towards reviving and curating traditional handicrafts from Telangana. CCT every year nominates distinguished crafts persons from regions across Indian and Telangana, and presents them appreciation awards in various categories on National and State Level.

The researcher was invited to the Crafts Council of Telangana for receiving the ‘Kalanjali Award of Excellence in Textiles’ under ‘Sanmaan 2023’, the present year. The award was presented based on a selection of *Surt Santati* piece that was displayed at the National Museum. The presented award was a National Level award. It was the first time CCT had selected a PhD Scholar for the award, by looking at the effort of reviving the craft and to inspire other research scholars to take the present study as a base model for research and documentation of various other crafts. CCT also provided space to display the research pieces at its CCT-Spaces that has an exhibition area for craftspeople. All 12 awardees of awards from various categories displayed and exhibited their items for three days.



Plate 4.142: Researcher's Award Announcement on Crafts Council Telangana Instagram handle  
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/craftscounciloft/>

The research products were appreciated and very well received by the audience. The researcher's objective on finding a niche market was fulfilled at the exhibition. The visitors were keen to customize the products in various other products and various other styles. The products also got a huge coverage on the local news channel and



newspaper in regional language. Some visitors also witnessed the exhibition because it was covered in the media a day before the event.



Plate 4.143: Researcher's coverage in the regional news papers

The researcher also got an opportunity to meet Mrs. Jaya Jaitley (Awarded with Life Time Achievement Award) and Designer Gaurang Shah at the display of the crafts, the feedback received from both of them was encouraging and motivating.



Plate 1.144: Researcher with Gaurang Shah and Mrs. Jaya Jaitley

#### 4.6 Filming a documentary of the craft and its motifs, to create awareness about its importance and rich heritage

India is renowned for having a wide range of cultures and traditions that have been distinguished by the origin of ceremonial performance. The legends that have been passed down from generation to generation are conveyed via the relics of India. Although the breadth of Indian culture cannot be fully conveyed through art and craft, a significant portion of it has been preserved effectively through a variety of indigenous forms and influences. Different types of art, such as architecture, handicraft, painting, and sculpture, offer a window into the knowledge, traditions, and way of life of a given state across time.

Punjab likewise has many times expressed its art and craft in the form of poetry. As discussed before, a group of women sat '*trinjan*' together in the afternoons and sang while they embroidered phulkari. There are songs related to various events in a woman's life and they all depict the phulkari embroidery. The bride's phulkari was embroidered while singing the '*suhag*' songs. '*Suhag*' represents the items that define a blessed married life. The '*suhag*' items include jewelry, clothes and garments, makeup items etc. These songs are usually about the changing life of a woman from being a girl to a woman of marriageable age. The groom's family while preparing *vari da bagh* for the daughter in law sang '*ghori*' songs. '*Ghori*' can be literally translated to a female horse. The groom goes on a horse back from home to perform a wedding ceremony. Songs commonly sung with phulkari as the subject for weddings are as below.

*Latthe di chaddar,*  
*Utte saleti rang mayiya*  
*Avo samne avo samne*  
*Kolo di russ k na lang mayiya*  
The fabric of cotton,  
embroidered with muddy white/grey colour O my dear  
reveal yourself  
Don't go with a sad face (Song sung by Surinder Kaur)



*O Tutaa Thale Beithte*  
*Kaseeda Khad Di*  
*Goorey Goorey Haatha Ch*  
*Shunari Door Ni*  
*Pavey Phulkari Utte Bhel Bootiya*  
*Mitra Dey Chadre Te Pavey Moorni*  
 O dear! You are sitting under berry tree  
 and are embroidering  
 You have golden thread in your hands  
 embroidering phulkari with a vine motif  
 Put peacocks on your male friend's fabric (song sung by Gippy Garewal)

*Main Kadna Dilli darwaza,*  
*Pachian di lia de lagori*  
 I will embroider the Delhi gate,  
 Oh, get me twenty-five worth yarn (Pal, 1955)

*Phul kadhia je pherwan, phul kadhia je tori da*  
*Tori da ki rang solahiya, range soahiya gori da*  
*Husn gori da cho cho painda jeon makhion makhiari da*  
*Main gori ae kajla paiya dadha rang phulkari da.*  
 I embroidered a flower; I embroidered a ladies finger flower,  
 O'fair one your bloom is incomparable, what is a 'ladies finger flower?'  
 Your beauty overflows like honey dripping from the honeycomb,  
 Your kohl eyes flash beauty like the  
 Gay colours in your phulkari (A Love Song) (Pal, 1955)

Above discussed songs are the best examples of use of media for preserving the value of craft. Since the textile was traditionally used for ritualistic events for a married woman, it also had an emotional connection with the folk songs that has remained intact. The researcher was inspired by this mode of communications and way to preserve the value of the craft.

World in the present day is running on clicks and upward swipes, it was important to combine these two to achieve maximum effectiveness of the concept of storytelling through a song or a graphic. On investigating further in the secondary sources of videos and

documentaries it was found that they also have now become evidence of events, facts and revolutionary events. Keeping the same in mind a documentary was filmed about the history of the craft and with the process of embroidering phulkari as it was done traditionally.

Craft plays a major role in associating with Indian and regional culture. In India people witness various stories that revolve around traditional crafts, and many may also be a part of it. Each craft has its story and it speaks volumes through its construction and design language. It narrates stories of craft, how it was made - who made it- why it has been made these stories should be documented and preserved and shared with generations through craft documentaries. Below discussed are the aspects that were considered while narrowing it down to filming a documentary.

- **Preserving cultural heritage:** For thousands of years, crafts have been an essential component of human culture. A community's cultural history includes a variety of crafts that have been handed down through the generations. Making a documentary can aid in preserving a craft's methods and customs that could otherwise be forgotten over time.
- **Awareness:** Craft documentaries have the power to draw attention to significant situations and subjects that may not receive adequate coverage in the media. They can educate individuals about social, political, and environmental issues related to crafts and aid in their understanding of challenging concepts. This can assist in promoting a clearer knowledge and the value of handcrafted goods and its traditional methods of production as well as help raise awareness and admiration for the skill.

Craft documentaries can encourage people to engage in a craft themselves or to appreciate its complexity and beauty by displaying the skills and procedures required.

- **Educating:** By offering in-depth knowledge on craft subjects or issues, documentaries can be a useful educational tool for the students, craft lovers, design experts, educators and for the people who are curious about the history and tradition of places and people . They can provide knowledge about various cultures, historical occurrences, scientific advancements, and more.
- **Inspiration:** Craft documentaries can inspire people to act and to bring about positive change in their communities or in their own lives. By shaping the old crafts

with modern techniques. They may encourage people to adopt environmentally friendly and sustainable behavior.

- **Promote critical thinking:** These AVs can help in encouraging critical thinking and can make viewers reevaluate their presumptions. These craft related documentaries help viewers provide different perspectives on this craft and encourage viewers to consider multiple viewpoints.
- **Provides entertainment:** A fun approach to learn about a craft and its rich heritage is through documentaries, which can be both entertaining and interesting. Making an emotional connection with the audience through storytelling and visual aids will help the audience comprehend craft and its roots better.
- **Promoting the craft:** A documentary is an effective marketing tool for a certain trade or the artists who make it. Documentary can serve to boost the market for the trade and support the livelihoods of those who practice it by showcasing the talent and artistry of the craftspeople.

In general, craft documentaries will be a potent tool for enlightening, motivating, and alerting viewers about significant craft and its heritage. They offer a distinctive point of view on the world and inspire viewers to reflect and act upon.

It helps in preserving, sharing knowledge which will educate people and will promote the craft among its practitioners.

Documenting these craft in the form of craft documentaries can prove preserving their repertoire, language and tradition. These craft revival stories captured and narrated will assist in spreading awareness among the younger generations and for the generations to come and bringing craft back to life.

There are many forgotten and invisible crafts stories in India and across the world which need close attention and should be framed bit by bit in frames that narrate stories. The philosophy and crafts culture go together with elegance, value, identity, aesthetics and sustainability.

Indian crafts are a rich source of our tradition and roots. These celebrated textile crafts of India are making differences in the lives of craft practitioners and craft admirers. One should look at crafts beyond artwork. This dramatic celebration of Indian textile crafts demands a proper digital documentation in the form of documentaries which will help in preserving these crafts for the years and generations to come.

**Link to the Documentary:** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WQwSUodVFZAbkbwDFoRWqVv-JAh9583G/view?usp=sharing>

#### 4.6 a. Designing a label and sustainable packaging

As discussed above about the importance of filming a documentary with a central idea of creating awareness it was also noted that assisting the product with a label designed details of the craft story and wash and care label was also crucial. With the changing world the importance of recyclable and sustainable packaging is a major aspect in commercial space. Therefore a conscious choice of materials would be considered for the packaging of the product. Below is the designed label to be tagged with the product.



Plate 4.145: Designed label for the developed collection



4.146: Inspiration for the sustainable packaging

Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/155303887504432422/>, <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/498562621264737488/>