

Abstract

Art and craft enthusiasts are increasingly drawn to the traditional handicrafts of rural India. The ancient arts and crafts of Punjab are many, and phulkari embroidery is one of them and is well-known around the world for its grace and beauty. The women of Punjab employed themselves in the traditional style of phulkari to decorate their own clothing, such as shawls, stoles, and other items. Punjabi females' lives have traditionally revolved around phulkari. It was more akin to a priceless, sentimental present intended for important family celebrations, such as receiving a new baby or giving a gift to the daughter at her wedding.

Only women used to prepare the fabric for embroidery before creating lovely designs to be worn on different occasions. They made a significant contribution to the creation of phulkari shawls in many shapes. The original versions of phulkari were exceptional and distinctive because, unlike the modern ones, they were not connected to any economic motive. Phulkari used to be made with floral themes, geometrical designs, and intricate outlines of flora and wildlife. These moving motifs served as a metaphor. Due to a number of socio economic issues, the real phulkari heritage has begun to disappear in modern Punjab.

The struggle between conventions and modern technology has not stayed unnoticed in Phulkari in the twenty-first century. The embroiderer's personal demands are no longer the only reason it is practiced nowadays. Mechanization of mass manufacturing has brought about financial gains, with cost and time savings taking precedence. The folk art has lost the same qualities that formerly made it desirable, such as themes that cater to individual tastes rather than the vogue and its capacity to convey the feelings of the embroiderer. The endeavours by several stakeholders to rehabilitate the ancient art are motivated by this decline.

After creating a number of new goods of widespread appeal, it has, however, recently regained favour in the commercial sector, mostly via changes in method and design. The power, beauty, and artistry that are luring customers are the cause of this new fame. The current study provides a thorough examination of the themes, patterns, and methods used in traditional phulkari embroidery.

There are in total five chapters in the thesis. It provides an overview of the research into the beginnings and development of phulkari needlework. The study looks at earlier research in the area of interest and gives information on the equipment, method, and materials used in traditional phulkari needlework.

Through Self Help Groups, the traditional skill of phulkari embroidery has experienced enormous development and offers many people the chance to find jobs and generate sustainable livelihood. An analysis has been done of the most recent themes, tools, techniques, and fashions in contemporary phulkari embroidery. With particular reference to the rural and urban areas of Patiala, the socioeconomic profile of the craftsmen engaged in phulkari embroidery is critically explored, and modern themes, trends, and technique are also discussed.

A detailed documentation of the designs, patterns and motifs has been done and based on the same an attempt to revive the motifs on contemporary collections has been done. The research has been analyzed using qualitative and quantitative based on the responses of the respondents. The statements are hypothetically tested to derive association between the socioeconomic background, educational qualification, number of years of experience against the awareness of the craft, identification of the craft amongst other crafts and inclination towards buying a phulkari crafted product as a contemporary or heirloom piece. The collection was designed and displayed at exhibition to understand the market acceptability of the collection.

Through the aforementioned analysis, it was shown that, although being well-known, phulkari craft has a great deal of untapped potential, particularly when it comes to themes and hues. To produce an aesthetically pleasing end result with the ability to fulfill a variety of purposes, the theme vocabulary has to be spread and the training needs to be carried out in a methodical manner. It is essential to move ahead because of the relationship between culture, tradition, and being a major source of income for many women in Punjab.