

# From Tradition to Trend: Reimagining Han and Phulkari Embroidery in Contemporary Fashion

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## KEYWORDS

*Han embroidery;  
Culture;  
Women's apparel;  
Phulkari*

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## ABSTRACT

Embroidery is a skill passed down from generation to generation in every culture. Due to the influence of Western clothing, younger generations have lost interest in traditional embroidery in their quest for modernity. This paper aims to undertake a comparative analysis of Han embroidery and Phulkari embroidery to protect the heritage of both traditions. In this paper, we will study how the fusion of embroidery patterns of diverse cultures impacts women's apparel. This research will give a historical introduction, the significance and meaning of both cultures, and how they are presented in the twenty-first century compared to the past. This paper discusses the embroidery patterns, techniques, and stitch styles of both Han and Phulkari embroidery. Based on background discussion, this study will explain how several factors play significant roles in influencing women's clothing with different patterns of contemporary design. An intriguing aspect of research that focuses on the connection between these two distinct worlds is the cultural exchange regarding embroidery patterns. In addition, the study leaves room for the Middle Eastern youth of the future to take pride in their traditional attire and attempt to revive it in a more modern and fashionable.

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## Introduction

Clothing, fundamental to human existence alongside food and shelter, has evolved from a basic necessity to a significant cultural identifier. Prehistoric cave paintings from the Old Stone Age depict early clothing uses, now conveying a person's cultural background and historical context. The Oxford Dictionary defines "Culture" as the way of life of a group, including literature, religion, music, traditional attire, and practices (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). Advancements in communication have facilitated cultural exchanges, leading to innovative blends of conventional and modern styles. Tortora's 2010 study emphasizes this integration, documenting how traditional embroidery can complement modern fashion trends, meeting market demands while preserving cultural heritage (Whiten, Hinde, Laland, & Stringer, 2011) (Sewell, 2004). This fusion aims to inspire young designers to explore and honor their

cultural roots. Culture manifests through material products and the human spirit, creating a symbolic relationship between understanding and expression.

### Intangible cultural heritage:

The concept of intangible cultural heritage is crucial for preserving traditional cultural expressions that are deeply embedded in people's lives. Unlike tangible heritage, which includes physical artifacts and monuments, intangible cultural heritage encompasses human skills, experiences, and the spirit that gives life to these traditions. This heritage includes traditional songs, dances, rituals, and oral traditions, all of which reflect a community's history, beliefs, and values. Its fluid and formless nature allows it to evolve and adapt over time, while still maintaining its essence (Maskiell, 1999).

Intangible cultural heritage is closely tied to national character and aesthetic habits, often

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best represented through live performances. It relies on people—their voices, images, and performance skills—serving as a cultural chain that ensures continuity. This heritage is considered the "living soul" of humanity, embodying the priceless memory of a nation's traditional culture and carrying a unique national spirit, cultural consciousness, and imagination (Gupta, Mehta, & Science, 2014; Saini & Apparel Designing, 2013).

Preserving intangible cultural heritage is essential for safeguarding the authenticity of traditional culture and maintaining cultural diversity. It promotes social cohesion, fosters a sense of belonging, and strengthens community resilience. In Chinese philosophy, the preservation of this heritage is vital for maintaining social harmony, stability, and national pride, as it safeguards the collective memory and identity of the Chinese people (R. Kaur, Gupta, & Sciences, 2014; Sawant, Guru, Kulkarni, Yadav, & Arts, 2023).

### **Back to Tradition**

The traditional arts, crafts, and cultures of nations are widely recognized globally. The study of these cultural patterns has become crucial in modern design, helping to re-interpret the relationship between humans and nature. Art design aesthetics are closely tied to social and economic status, with tradition evolving in response to various influences. Recently, social and cultural changes have been reflected in embroidery, which now represents not just patterns but also life, fashion, and emotion (M. Kaur, 2021; Malik & Science, 2011; Sethi, 2015).

The author explores the cultural exchange between Chinese Han embroidery and Pakistan's Phulkari, highlighting the significance of such research in the modern world. In the rapidly changing 21st century, the fashion industry often draws inspiration from nature and history. By integrating traditional embroidery into modern design, the author aims to inspire designers to

think creatively, especially for the young consumer market, using stitches, patterns, and color in innovative ways (S. Chen & Zhang, 2018; Ramratan, Kumar, & Choudhary).

### **Chinese Traditional Han embroidery**

China's cultural values harmony, benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, and piety—are deeply ingrained in the nation's identity (Rasika, 2024). The author explores how Chinese traditional culture, particularly embroidery, can be integrated with contemporary culture. Han Embroidery, a regional art form with Hubei characteristics, boasts a rich history but was often overlooked until it was recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage in 2008. This art form combines various regional embroidery methods, creating a unique system with lively, imaginative expressions, especially in its dragon, phoenix, and tiger patterns (G. K. Gundev, 2024; P. J. A. J. o. M. Kaur, 2011). Despite its popularity, Han Embroidery faces challenges in adapting to modern industry. This article highlights the importance of preserving its essence while incorporating it into modern fashion (Wang, 2023).

### **Phulkari-traditional embroidery in Pakistan**

Embroidery is a form of art that can enhance the beauty of any fabric. Phulkari, a traditional craft of Punjab, is a perfect example of how embroidery can add life and vibrancy to plain fabrics. The word 'Phulkari' is derived from the Punjabi words 'Phul' meaning flower and 'Kari' meaning work, which collectively means flower work (X. Chen, Rusli, Zur, & Bai, 2025). This exquisite craft is primarily practiced by peasant women who use it to decorate their shawls and veils. What inspires the author to choose Phulkari is the unique use of the darning stitch, done entirely from the back, which gives it a distinctive look (Zhang, 2021). This traditional craft has been passed down from generation to generation, adapting to new conditions and evolving, thus

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becoming of positive ethnographical value. Phulkari embroidery is a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of Punjab and its people. It is a testament to the skill and creativity of the women who have been practicing this art form for centuries (Yang & Yi, 2024). The vibrant colors and intricate designs of phulkari have caught the attention of people across the world, making it a popular choice for fashion designers and enthusiasts alike. In today's modern world, where traditional crafts are often overlooked, it is important to recognize and preserve such cultural treasures as Phulkari. By doing so, we not only honor our rich heritage but also create opportunities for future generations to learn and appreciate this priceless art form (Ni & Hongguang, 2015).

### **Significance of Phulkari**

Phulkari is often only analyzed in terms of colors, stitches, and shapes of motifs. The phulkari embroidery itself is a modified, relatively simple darning stitch interspersed with several other stitches in a minor role. Most importantly, the stitch is done almost completely from the reverse of the cloth. Each stitch is painstakingly counted along the warp and weft of the khaddar to create the design on the right side of the fabric (M. Lee, 2019). Any tiny mistake, therefore, skews the overall balance. Phulkari is an embroidery style that is known for its vibrant colors and intricate motifs. However, this beautiful craft is not just about appearances - it is a testament to the skill and precision of the artisans who created it. The stitch used in phulkari embroidery is a modified darning stitch, which is deceptively simple in appearance but requires meticulous attention to detail (Zhong & Ye, 2017). Each stitch is counted along the warp and weft of the khaddar cloth, and any mistake can throw off the balance of the entire piece.

### **Significance of Topic**

The fusion of traditional cultural embroidery with modern fashion design is increasingly popular, highlighting the unique value of cultural elements. While technology can't replicate the emotional depth of traditional techniques, these elements enrich fashion, drawing attention from both designers and consumers (Fangchao, Qian, Yifan, & Computing, 2024; Yunxia & Dan, 2023). As global awareness grows, integrating national costume elements with contemporary styles becomes crucial. Motifs, integral to cultural designs, blend traditional and modern aspects, as seen in China's 'Han' and Pakistan's 'Phulkari'. This crossover creates unique, captivating aesthetics that honor diverse cultural heritages.

### **Research Content**

The content of this research aims to find ways to promote and preserve cultural values and traditions through the application of modern dress designs inspired by contemporary patterns from two diverse regional embroideries: Han embroidery and phulkari. This whole discussion and research approach is to define traditional embroidery carrying the legacy of our cultures. This research will give the idea of how traditional patterns are chosen as a research object to achieve the purpose of inheritance and protection, promotion, and innovation, to enhance its development in decoration to give the perspective of modern design (Gao).

### **Garment category to be designed**

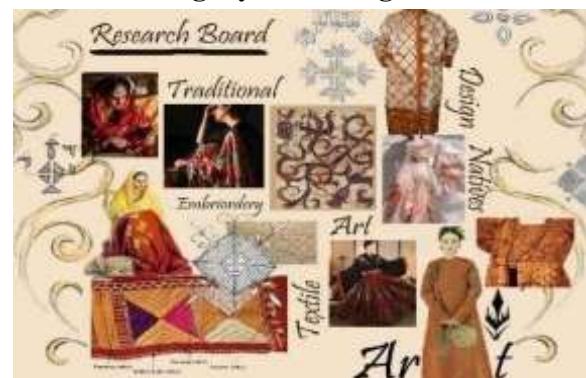


Fig. 1.1 Cultural trend shown through research board

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The collection features colorful women's dresses with contemporary designs, blending formal and casual wear. Tailored from cotton candy pastels, the dresses incorporate various hand stitches and minimalistic embellishments. This approach ensures adaptability for different occasions. The design integrates modern trends with cultural inspiration, aiming to preserve traditional techniques while innovating new patterns for women's party wear. The research focuses on merging traditional embroidery with contemporary cuts, showcasing the evolving beauty of culturally inspired fashion (Li, 2024).

### **The Aims and objective of the study**

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- Detailed study of the Chinese traditional Han embroidery in contrast with Phulkari.
- Understand the women's costume with the focus of traditional embroidery.
- Compare and analyze the corresponding influence of Chinese and Pakistani cultural embroidery on women's dress.
- To explore various techniques for designing
- Contemporary patterns that will be used to develop valuable fashion dresses.
- To gain a more conceptual understanding of how every individual (entrepreneurs, designers, professors, and consumers) responds to their conception and interpretation of the cultural value of Han embroidery and phulkari.
- To assess the cultural diversity in modern fashion.
- Promoting new motifs for innovation.
- Re-thinking the way fashion is by inspiring cultural patterns and embroidery techniques.

### **Background Study and Literature Review**

Culture encompasses the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts of a group or society. It evolves and is passed down through

generations, shaping our worldview and interactions. Culture influences identity, innovation, health, and environmental sustainability. However, it is dynamic and varies within societies. Some argue that culture will become a critical competitive asset in the global economy. Kimbell and Perry (2001) describe design as understanding the processes that change the built environment, and globalization has expanded artistic and design expressions through cultural interactions. Traditional textile patterns reflect a nation's identity and contribute to preserving ethnic heritage (Hyun & Bae, 2007).

The 2010 Creative Economy Report emphasized creativity's importance in job creation, innovation, trade, and cultural diversity for a sustainable future [30]. Cultural routes foster contemporary artistic creativity by connecting people across continents, as noted by Fiore and Kimpel (1997). Embroidery, a unique artistic expression with a long history, exemplifies such creativity. Embroidery techniques are diverse and intricate, used worldwide to embellish textiles for decorative and communicative purposes. Today, famous fashion designers use embroidery to enhance their creations, catalyzing new fashion trends. Embroidery is a source of national pride, contributing to economies and employment opportunities (Saxena & Amjad, 2025).

Embroidery is a decorative art that stitches ornamental designs on fabric or other materials using threads or yarn. Success in embroidery requires learning basic stitches and selecting appropriate designs, colors, and fabrics. It can reflect wealth, social status, and ethnic identity through its colors, textures, and designs. Traditional materials used in embroidery include cotton, wool, silk, or Zari, a metallic thread. While some techniques are universal, like the running stitch, others are culturally specific, such as Indian mirror work or Japanese silk

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embroidery (G. K. M. S. Gundev, 2023; Saxena, Amjad, & Design, 2025).

Chinese culture is deeply rooted in self-confidence, considered the "blood of the nation" and the "spiritual home of the people" (Shen & Vitkovska, 2018). China's cultural spirit is characterized by empathy, humanity, integrity, justice, and harmony, developed over a long history. The 18th CPC National Congress emphasized the importance of cultural awareness and self-confidence in building a socialist cultural power. National cultural power depends on self-confidence, driven by belief in cultural values and innovation (Zhou, 2017).

Wei & Futing (2008) stress that a nation must possess comprehensive national power and preserve its cultural heritage to maintain independence in globalization. Traditional culture, revered for its longevity and uniqueness, must be embraced to reinforce national power. Rong (2013) discusses how traditional Chinese elements in modern art enhance visual and aesthetic experiences through metaphors, symbols, and associations (M. Kaur, 2021; P. J. A. J. o. M. Kaur, 2011).

Research on Han embroidery focuses on preserving and sustaining this intangible cultural heritage through living inheritance methods. Liu (2022) suggests incorporating memory theory to promote spontaneous and conscious cultural inheritance among ethnic minorities. Eichler Jessika (2021) emphasizes the role of cultural bearers in transmitting intangible cultural heritage, which constantly evolves to meet societal needs. Yun (2020) highlights the continued relevance of traditional Chinese patterns in modern society and their application in cultural and creative products (Gupta et al., 2014; P. J. A. J. o. M. Kaur, 2011; Rasika, 2024).

Chen (2018) emphasizes the importance of preserving Han embroidery and educating individuals on this intangible cultural heritage.

The relationship between research centers and universities plays a crucial role in preserving, inheriting, and innovating Han embroidery. Chen (2019) describes Han embroidery as a delicate, refined art form, showcasing its national pride and extravagant quality.

In Gong's (2008) work, the increasing application of traditional Chinese costume elements in the global fashion industry is discussed. This has been observed in the introduction of traditional Chinese cultural elements by many international brands, as well as in the apparel design of China, which has incorporated traditional costume culture style. The upgraded version of robes has even become part of the permanent collection at the British Albert Museum. As a result, in recent years, traditional costume culture elements from China have garnered significant attention worldwide, adding artistic value to the design of modern costumes while also reflecting the artistic value of traditional costumes.



Fig. 2.1 Traditional Costume Culture Elements from China

Hen (2016) explores how traditional Chinese folk embroidery, a key part of China's intangible cultural heritage, can innovate modern garment design. This approach addresses modern fashion's limitations while catering to desires for visual uniqueness and personalization. The study analyzes integrating traditional Chinese

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embroidery with contemporary fashion to enhance its global appeal.

Kaur & Gupta (2014) discuss the challenges faced by Traditional Phulkari embroidery due to commercialization. Despite this, efforts by NGOs and the government to revive and promote the art have created employment for rural women. Traditionally a personal and meaningful practice in Punjab, Phulkari is now primarily profit-driven, though traditional methods are still valued. Revival efforts, including special programs and exhibitions, have alleviated poverty among women and gained international recognition (Deep).

Rampa (1995) highlights Phulkari's evolution from a personal expression of beauty and grace to a significant Punjabi heritage symbol. While commercialization has spread its cultural impact globally, it has also led to a decline in traditional practices.

International Designers collection inspired by Chinese traditional Han embroidery

Han embroidery has attracted the attention of many international designers in recent years, who have incorporated the art form into their collections. Here are some examples of designers who have worked with Han embroidery:

Chanel: French fashion house Chanel has also worked with Chinese embroidery artists to incorporate Han embroidery into their collections. The designs feature delicate floral motifs and intricate stitching, creating a fusion of Chinese and French styles.

Vivienne Tam: Chinese American designer Vivienne Tam has long been known for her use of Chinese motifs in her designs, including Han embroidery. Tam's collections often feature bold and colorful embroidery

designs, creating a modern interpretation of traditional Chinese art.

Mary Katran Tzou: Greek fashion designer Mary Katran Tzou has also worked with Han embroidery, incorporating the traditional technique into her vibrant and eclectic designs. Han embroidery has long been a source of inspiration for Chinese designers, who have incorporated the art form into their collections in a variety of ways.



Fig. 2.2 Mary Katran Tzou incorporating the traditional technique in Han embroidery.

Han embroidery-inspired collections by Chinese designers

Laurence Xu: Chinese fashion designer Laurence Xu has also incorporated Han embroidery into his collections, creating a fusion of Chinese and Western styles. Xu's designs often feature traditional Han embroidery motifs, such as dragons and phoenixes, but with a modern twist. The result is a collection that is both timeless and contemporary.

Zhang Na: Chinese designer Zhang Na is known for her use of bold colors and patterns, often inspired by traditional Chinese art and culture. Her collections often feature Han embroidery, which she incorporates into her designs in unexpected ways. Zhang Na's unique approach to Han embroidery has helped to bring the art form to a new generation of fashion enthusiasts.

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Guo Pei: Chinese designer Guo Pei is known for her extravagant and opulent designs, which often feature intricate embroidery and embellishments. Many of her collections have been inspired by Chinese art and culture, including Han embroidery. Guo Pei's designs showcase the beauty and richness of traditional Chinese art, while incorporating modern elements to create a unique and contemporary look.

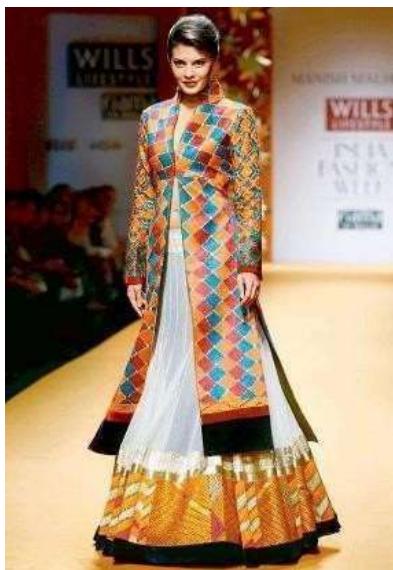


Fig. 2.3 Guo Pei

Denghao: Chinese fashion brand Denghao has made Han embroidery a central element of their designs, creating collections that showcase the beauty and intricacy of the art form. Their designs often feature traditional motifs and patterns, but with a modern twist. Denghao's use of Han embroidery has helped to promote the art form and to introduce it to a wider audience.

These are just a few examples of designers who have worked with Han embroidery. There are many others who have also incorporated this technique into their designs, and who continue to explore and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of China (R. Kaur, Gupta, & Design, 2015).

### **International Designers work on Phulkari**

There have been many designers who have incorporated Phulkari embroidery into their designs over the years. Here are some examples of designers who have worked with Phulkari embroidery: Manish Malhotra: Manish Malhotra is a prominent Indian fashion designer who has incorporated Phulkari embroidery into his designs. He is known for his intricate and ornate designs that often feature traditional Indian textiles and embroidery techniques.

Fig. 2.4 Phulkari embroidery

Sabyasachi Mukherjee: Sabyasachi Mukherjee is another well-known Indian fashion designer who has worked with Phulkari embroidery. His designs often feature a blend of traditional and modern elements, and he is known for his intricate and detailed embroidery work.



Fig. 2.5 Phulkari embroidery

Ritu Kumar: Ritu Kumar is a veteran Indian fashion designer who has been working with traditional Indian textiles and embroidery techniques for several decades. She has incorporated Phulkari embroidery into many of her designs and is known for her ability to combine traditional and contemporary styles.

Tarun Tahiliani: Tarun Tahiliani is a prominent Indian fashion designer who has worked with a variety of traditional Indian

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textiles and embroidery techniques, including Phulkari embroidery. His designs often feature a fusion of traditional and modern elements.

**Bibi Russell:** Bibi Russell is a Bangladeshi fashion designer who has worked extensively with traditional textiles and embroidery techniques from Bangladesh, India, and other parts of Asia. She has incorporated Phulkari embroidery into many of her designs and is known for her commitment to promoting traditional crafts and textiles (Neelam Saini, Krishna Khambra, Singh, & Saroj Yadav, 2014).

These are just a few examples of designers who have worked with Phulkari embroidery. Many others have also incorporated this technique into their designs, both in South Asia and around the world.

List of Pakistani designer designer's working on Phulkari

**Nomi Ansari:** Nomi Ansari is a popular Pakistani fashion designer who has worked extensively with traditional textiles and embroidery techniques from Pakistan and other parts of South Asia. He has incorporated Phulkari

embroidery into many of his designs and is known for his vibrant and colorful creations.

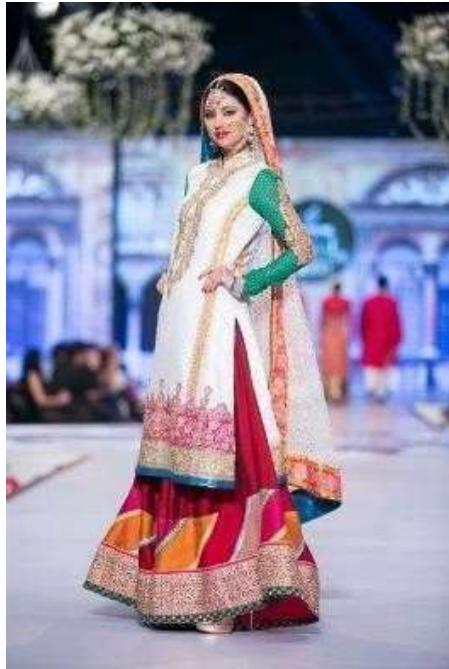
Fig. 2.6 Phulkari embroidery

**Sana Safinaz:** Sana Safinaz is another prominent Pakistani fashion designer who has worked with Phulkari embroidery. Their designs often feature a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles, and they are known for their intricate and ornate embroidery work.

**Maria B:** Maria B is a well-known Pakistani fashion designer who has incorporated Phulkari embroidery into many of her designs. Her designs often feature a blend of traditional and modern elements, and she is known for her intricate embroidery work.

**Sania Maskatiya:** Sania Maskatiya is a Pakistani fashion designer who has worked with a variety of traditional textiles and embroidery techniques, including Phulkari embroidery. Her designs often feature a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles, and she is known for her intricate and ornate embroidery work.

**Farida Hasan:** Farida Hasan is a Pakistani fashion designer who has worked with a variety of traditional textiles and embroidery techniques, including Phulkari embroidery. Her designs often feature a blend of traditional and modern elements, and she is known for her use of vibrant colors and intricate embroidery work.



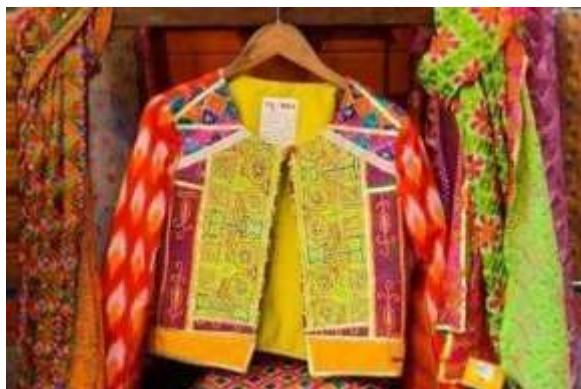


Fig. 2.7 Embroidery techniques including Phulkari embroidery.

These are just a few examples of Pakistani designers who have worked with Phulkari embroidery. Many others have also incorporated this technique into their designs, and continue to promote and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan and South Asia.

Western historical costumes have traditionally been a source of inspiration for designers worldwide, while Chinese historical styles have been relatively unexplored on the runway. Despite being a rich cultural heritage, Chinese costumes are not well-known. In search of novelty and diversity, integrating Chinese historical styles with modern designs presents an opportunity for new creations in the fashion industry.

### **Innovation of study**

Traditional embroidery techniques from diverse cultures, as explored in this research, highlight their potential for sustainability through localization and modernization. However, challenges persist due to outdated practices and limited knowledge exchange. This study addresses these issues by integrating Chinese Han embroidery techniques and Phulkari from Punjab, Pakistan, into contemporary fashion.

The research employs theories, data analysis, and methodologies to fuse these traditional techniques with modern fashion. Despite globalization, many traditional

techniques risk losing their identity due to limited exposure. This research counters that trend by creating a fashion collection that blends Chinese Han embroidery with Phulkari, using modern fabrics and stitches such as French knots, straight stitches, and satin stitches (Colovic, 2015; Islam et al., 2022).

The collection aims to bridge cultural gaps, presenting a unique fusion of Chinese and Pakistani heritage that appeals globally. By modernizing traditional techniques, this work promotes both cultures on an international stage. The innovation lies in transforming traditional embroidery into contemporary fashion, offering a fresh, experimental perspective that respects cultural values while embracing new trends.

### **Limitations**

While researching traditional embroidery in China and its use in modern fashion, a very limited amount of information exists about the embroidery techniques of handicrafts. Existing traditional work is also not combined with modernity. The author was confused about what the topic should be and how the author could

work on this topic and get information from authentic sources. And wanted to promote Pakistani culture as well as Chinese culture through its cultural richness in the form of embroidery but due to its high influence in history, the author wants to explore this culture. but was fettered to use available materials and handicraft techniques.

### **Methodology of Study**

Research methodology is a systematic plan to conduct research including experiments, surveys, participant observation, and secondary data. Among many research methods, this paper mainly uses theoretical information from the literature review method, image analysis method, comparative analysis method, field research

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method, and theoretical induction method for analysis.

**The literature review method:** read the relevant literature materials of traditional Chinese techniques, aesthetic and social value and summarize it, summarize them with clothing pattern, composition form, and decorative style of techniques, and conduct the theoretical foundation for the further study of the thesis.

**Image analysis method:** The images are mainly collected through the network books and field research related to the Chinese traditional techniques, art, and legend masterpieces, the pattern case analysis is deep by drawing that specific pattern from the article, to understand the techniques pattern composition, color, texture, art and so on.

**Comparative analysis method:** By selecting excellent design collection cases from the outstanding fashion designers of domestic and international platforms to carry out the analysis, and comparative study of domestic and foreign fashion designers using convertible clothing and traditional techniques as a traditional decoration in the clothing design of different design methods, distinguish its characteristics in the clothing design, so this method helps to carry out the re-design and innovation of post-decoration in building innovative style.

**Field research method:** Getting firsthand information is quite hard because all historical masterpieces are preserved in different countries but through the museum visit, one understands Chinese clothing, lifestyle, and the importance of traditional techniques, its real situation physically, through photographic sampling and other means, feel the decorative characteristics and aesthetic value of the decoration and summarize the examination.

**Theme and Inspiration:** The inspiration of research is the Traditional embroidery of two

diverse cultures, the Chu culture from China and the Punjab culture from Pakistan. The theme is **Abstract Imaginations of Cultures in Modern Fashion.**

The colors selected are the trendiest colors among the middle and upper classes in both countries. The collection will feature a basic color palette in soft cotton candy pastels' in tints and shades with the effects of traditional color 'red' used in both cultures using in several tints and shades.

The collection will feature unique contemporary patterns with modern embroidery stitches and approaches the Western cuts that complement the mood. A mood board is a color board of a collection. Red and its shades of color are used because it matters most to control certain emotions and spread positive energy to the environment. In both cultures red symbolizes happiness and prosperity. Both cultures embroideries love to express their emotion in embroidery using red. It is interesting to note that the Phoenix flower pattern and the color red are highly regarded and beloved by many people (McLoughlin, 2017).

### **Material Sourcing and Material Board**

The source of the material is the most demanding fabrics used for partywear these days are available in the local market, including raw silk and see-through fabrics. The fabrics and thread material are suitable for the theme. Available in the local market, before buying all the market was research to get suitable fabric that is used to make whole collection. Most of the clothes chosen were

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considered for embroidery so that patterns would give them a new look.



Fig. 3.1 Embroidery

### Thread Colors Stitches used in embroidery

Chinese tradition has profoundly influenced modern embroidery, introducing various stitches integral to contemporary practices. The French knot, a notable technique, creates small, raised

knots on fabric, adding texture and mimicking objects like flower buds. It is versatile and enhances many designs (Draper, 2030).

Another technique, the short and long stitch, alternates between short and long stitches to achieve a shaded effect, ideal for realistic textures such as feathers or fur. The satin stitch, also inspired by Chinese embroidery, provides a smooth, flat surface resembling satin, used for filling large areas with color or creating a solid fabric look.

The basic straight stitch, used for outlining shapes and creating texture, often forms delicate floral motifs in Chinese embroidery. The double running stitch, influenced by Phulkari embroidery, involves two parallel rows of running stitches connected by small stitches, adding subtle details for borders or outlines.

These stitches enrich modern embroidery, preserving and celebrating the cultural traditions from which they originated.

### Table 3.2 Stitches used in embroidery

No. Han embroidery, Han Stitches, Phulkari, Stitches

1	Satin stitch (Rou Xian)		Satin Stitch (Patia): 
2	Straight stitch (J Xian)		Holbein Stitch (Daming Stitch) (Bakhia): 
3	Stem stitch (Gan Xian)		Chain Stitch (Ghunhat): 
4	French knot (Fagong Xian):		Stem Stitch (Daaman): 
5	Fishbone stitch (Yu Gou Xian):		Double Running Stitch (Til Patra): 
6	Couching stitch (Diao Xian):		Herringbone Stitch (Veechhi): 
7	Peking knot (Jing Xian)		Buttonhole Stitch (Kauri): 

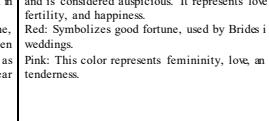
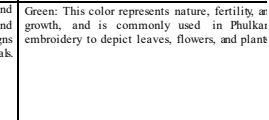
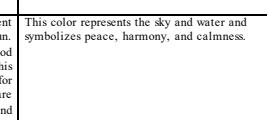
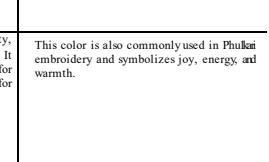
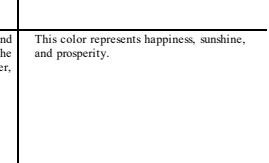
### Color of embroidery

While both Han embroidery and Phulkari embroidery are rich in color, the dominant colors and their meanings differ between the two styles. Overall, the colors used in Han embroidery are symbolic and often have cultural significance. They are used to convey specific meanings and to create a certain mood or atmosphere in a design. Likewise, Phulkari embroidery is known for its vibrant and bold use of colors. The main colors used in the design collection are pastel hues according to the color palette. The same colors used in the palette required soft tones, as today's generation loves to wear minimalistic tones with chic styles. In addition to these colors, white is also used to create contrast and highlight certain areas of the design. Overall, the use of color in Phulkari embroidery is an important aspect of the craft and is used to convey specific meanings and emotions.

Han and Phulkari embroidery both use color symbolically but with differing meanings. Red in Han embroidery signifies good fortune and wealth, while in Phulkari, it represents love and fertility. Blue in Han symbolizes the sky, and

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in Phulkari, it stands for peace. Yellow in Han denotes power, while in Phulkari, it represents happiness. Both styles employ these colors to convey emotions and respect traditional hues, with contemporary designs often incorporating minimalist red tones inspired by both traditions.

Color	Han Embroidery	Phulkari
Red	 <p>This is the most important color in Chinese culture and is often used in Han embroidery. Red symbolizes good fortune, happiness, and wealth. It is often used for festive occasions, such as weddings and New Year celebrations.</p>	 <p>This is a dominant color in Phulkari embroidery and is considered auspicious. It represents love, fertility, and happiness. Red: Symbolizes good fortune, used by Brides in weddings. Pink: This color represents femininity, love, and tenderness.</p>
Green	 <p>This color represents nature and symbolizes growth, harmony, and balance. It is often used in designs featuring plants, trees, and animals.</p>	 <p>Green: This color represents nature, fertility, and growth, and is commonly used in Phulkari embroidery to depict leaves, flowers, and plants.</p>
Orange	 <p>Orange is often used to represent the warmth and vitality of the sun. It is also believed to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits. This makes it a popular choice for embroidery designs that are intended to bring good fortune and happiness.</p>	 <p>This color represents the sky and water and symbolizes peace, harmony, and calmness.</p>
White	 <p>This color represents purity, innocence, and new beginnings. It is often used in designs for children's clothing or designs for weddings.</p>	 <p>This color is also commonly used in Phulkari embroidery and symbolizes joy, energy, and warmth.</p>
Yellow	 <p>This color symbolizes royalty and is often associated with the emperor. It represents power, prestige, and prosperity.</p>	 <p>This color represents happiness, sunshine, and prosperity.</p>

## Patterns Development

While searching for the motifs of both cultures, the author finds each motif valuable. So, taking inspiration from traditional patterns, the first step is the drawing of some motifs.

(a) (b)

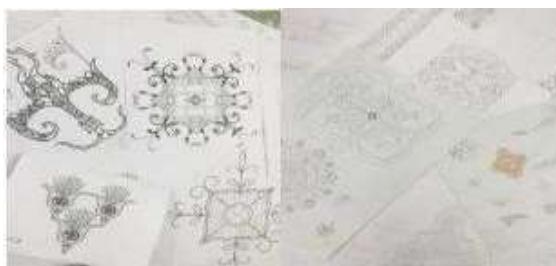


Fig. 3.4 Hand Draw Patterns

## Digital Patterns

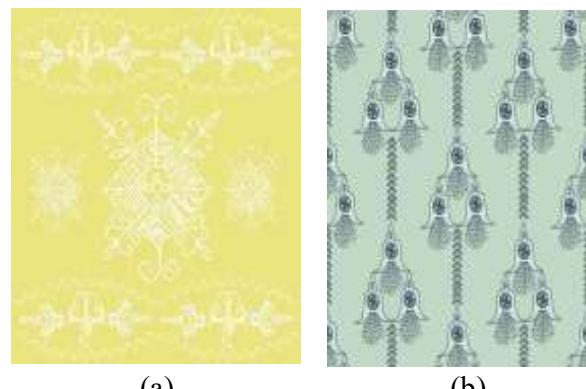
The next step in the design process is designing patterns and checking colors based on a color palette. The patterns are composed in a minimalist approach to maintain a sense of modernity, without incorporating traditional colors at the earliest stage. These patterns are composed of considering the position



Fig. 3.5 Digital Contemporary Patterns by using cultural elements

## Final design selection

The collection will consist of 2 sets. To proceed, 2 designs were selected below.



The cultural fusion of Phulkari and Han embroidery highlights their rich heritage and traditional hand techniques. The focus on the 'Phoenix-Flower' pattern, symbolizing peace and good wishes, aims to revive and respect these crafts. This study seeks to modernize embroidery,

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ensuring it remains relevant and accessible while preserving its cultural significance.

### **Traditional colors**

To create modern dresses using traditional embroidery techniques, integrate various threads and fabrics to form specific patterns. By modifying and abstracting traditional styles, you can design unique pieces. Han and Phulkari embroidery, known for their vivid designs and color use, offer inspiration. Han embroidery employs bright, multicolor patterns and occasionally gold or silver threads for contrast and stage visibility. Modern adaptations involve merging these traditional patterns with contemporary design concepts. This process includes extracting and processing traditional motifs to develop abstract shapes that blend cultural elements, creating innovative, cross-cultural fashion designs that honor heritage while meeting modern aesthetic needs.

### **Use of Cultural hand stitches**

Cultural hand stitches were modified and fused stitches to add more charm and textures, satin and simple straight stitches, darning stitches, and French knots emerged to get more artistic effect in embroidery. These knots are used to create a more three-dimensional effect which will be a point of excitement in fashion collection.

### **Survey Results**

Embroidery, a rich and intricate art form, has always been a significant aspect of cultural identity and expression. Among the various embroidery traditions across the globe, Han embroidery from China and Phulkari from Pakistan's Punjab region stand out for their historical significance and vibrant designs. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the fusion of these traditional forms in modern fashion, creating a unique blend that honors cultural heritage while appealing to contemporary aesthetics. This study aims to

explore the trends, patterns, and insights derived from a survey focused on the fusion of Han and Phulkari embroidery in modern fashion (Kabir, Sultana, & Ali, 2018).

The survey, which gathered responses from 151 participants, provides a comprehensive overview of the familiarity, importance, and influence of these embroidery styles. A key finding is that a significant majority of respondents, 57%, are familiar with both Han and Phulkari embroidery. This familiarity underscores the global reach and recognition of these cultural art forms. Interestingly, Phulkari is more well-known than Han embroidery, with 23.2% of participants indicating familiarity with the former compared to 12.6% with the latter. This could be attributed to the widespread diaspora of the Punjabi community and the vibrant, easily recognizable nature of Phulkari patterns. However, a small portion of respondents, 7.3%, are unfamiliar with either form, highlighting an area where more cultural education could be beneficial.

The importance of traditional embroidery in women's costumes is another crucial aspect explored in the survey. A resounding 58.3% of respondents consider traditional embroidery to be very important, while 33.8% find it somewhat important. This indicates a strong appreciation for the role that embroidery plays in adding cultural depth and personal identity to women's attire. The minimal percentage (6.6%) of respondents who do not consider traditional embroidery important suggests that, while modern fashion trends often favor minimalism and simplicity, there is still a deep-rooted appreciation for intricate, handcrafted details that have been passed down through generations.

When it comes to the cultural influence of embroidery on women's dress, the survey reveals that 51% of participants believe both Han and Phulkari embroidery equally influence women's fashion. This balance suggests a growing

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acceptance and integration of cross-cultural designs in contemporary fashion. However, Phulkari holds a slightly higher influence, with 26.5% of respondents favoring it over Han embroidery, which is favored by 18.5%. This could be due to the more accessible nature of Phulkari, both geographically and culturally, in regions outside of China.

The survey also delves into the specific elements of Han and Phulkari embroidery that are most influential in modern fashion. For Han embroidery, the color green, symbolizing harmony, is identified as the most influential, with 50.3% of respondents choosing it. This preference for green could reflect a modern shift towards designs that emphasize balance, peace, and sustainability. Red, symbolizing good fortune, follows with 25.8%, while yellow, representing royalty, is significant for 19.9%. These choices highlight how traditional symbolism continues to resonate in modern design, influencing color choices in fashion collections.

Phulkari embroidery, on the other hand, is deeply rooted in the cultural practices of Punjabi women. The survey indicates that pink, symbolizing femininity, is the most significant color in Phulkari embroidery for Punjabi women's dresses, with 39.7% of respondents choosing it. Red, representing love and fortune, is also highly significant, with 31.8% of respondents favoring it. Green, associated with growth, is preferred by 23.8%, while gold, symbolizing wealth, is less significant at 4%. These preferences reflect the traditional values and emotions associated with these colors, which continue to hold sway in contemporary fashion.

The survey also explores preferences for traditional embroidery techniques. The Short and Long Stitch technique is the most preferred, with 43% of respondents favoring it. This technique, known for its versatility and depth, is popular in both Han and Phulkari embroidery. The French

Knot technique, preferred by 31.8%, is another popular choice, known for adding texture and dimension to the designs. These preferences suggest that while modern fashion embraces new technologies and techniques, there is still a strong affinity for traditional methods that offer a unique, handcrafted quality to garments.

The relevance of traditional techniques in contemporary fashion is a topic of much debate, but the survey results show that they remain highly relevant. With 45% of respondents considering traditional techniques very relevant and another 45% finding them somewhat relevant, it is clear that these time-honored methods continue to play a vital role in modern fashion. This relevance is further emphasized by the belief that designers value traditional embroidery the most, as indicated by 43.7% of respondents. Consumers, too, place high value on these techniques, with 32.5% agreeing, reflecting a growing trend towards personalized, culturally enriched fashion choices.

One of the most striking insights from the survey is the overwhelming agreement that traditional embroidery can enhance cultural diversity in modern fashion. A majority of 55.6% strongly agree with this statement, while 24.5% agree, suggesting a broad consensus on the cultural importance of embroidery. This sentiment aligns with the global trend towards embracing diversity and multiculturalism in the fashion industry, where traditional techniques and motifs are increasingly seen as valuable resources for creating unique, culturally resonant designs.

When considering how the color symbolism in Han and Phulkari embroidery should be adapted for modern fashion, 49.7% of respondents believe that traditional meanings should be maintained. This preference for preserving cultural heritage reflects a desire to honor and respect the origins of these art forms. However, 31.1% of respondents support

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reinterpreting these symbols for modern aesthetics, indicating a willingness to innovate while staying rooted in tradition.

Finally, the survey highlights the best ways to preserve traditional embroidery in modern fashion. Educating new designers is seen as the most effective method, with 55.6% of respondents favoring this approach.

Survey Question	Key Findings	Percentage/Insight
Familiarity with Embroidery	Familiar with both Han and Phulkari	57%
	Familiar with Phulkari only	23.2%
	Familiar with Han only	12.6%
	Neither familiar	7.3%
Importance of Traditional Embroidery in Women's Costumes	Very important	58.3%
	Somewhat important	33.8%
	Not important	6.6%
Influence of Embroidery on Women's Dress	Both Han and Phulkari equally influence	51%
	Phulkari more influential	26.5%
	Han more influential	18.5%
Influence of Han Embroidery in Modern Chinese Fashion	Green (harmony) most influential	50.3%
	Red (good fortune)	25.8%
	Yellow (royalty)	19.9%
Significant Color in Phulkari Embroidery for Punjabi Women's Dress	Pink (femininity) most significant	39.7%
	Red (love and fortune)	31.9%
	Green (growth)	23.8%
	Gold (wealth)	4%
Preferred Traditional Embroidery Technique	Short and Long Stitch most preferred	43%
	French Knot	31.8%
	Straight Stitch	17.2%
Relevance of Traditional Techniques in Contemporary Fashion	Very relevant	45%
	Somewhat relevant	45%
	Not relevant	9.9%
Group that Values Traditional Embroidery the Most	Designers	43.7%
	Consumers	32.5%
	Cultural historians	17.9%
Enhancing Cultural Diversity through Traditional Embroidery	Strongly agree	55.6%
	Agree	24.5%
	Neutral	11.3%
	Disagree	8.6%
Adapting Color Symbolism in Modern Fashion	Maintain traditional meanings	49.7%
	Reinterpret for modern aesthetics	31.1%
	Use purely for aesthetic value	19.2%
Best Way to Preserve Traditional Embroidery in Modern Fashion	Educating new designers	55.6%
	Incorporating it into high-end fashion	24.5%

This emphasis on education suggests that the future of traditional embroidery lies in the hands of the next generation of designers, who must be equipped with the skills and knowledge to carry these techniques forward. Incorporating traditional embroidery into high-end fashion is also a popular approach, supported by 24.5% of respondents, reflecting the growing trend of luxury fashion houses drawing inspiration from traditional crafts.

In conclusion, the fusion of Han and Phulkari embroidery in modern fashion

represents a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. The survey results underscore the enduring significance of these cultural art forms and their potential to enhance contemporary fashion with rich, symbolic meanings and intricate craftsmanship. As the fashion industry continues to evolve, the preservation and integration of traditional embroidery will play a crucial role in shaping a more diverse and culturally inclusive future (K.-H. J. T. K. F. Lee & Journal, 2009; Nevinson, 1939).

## Recommendations and Results

### Results and Analysis

- Similar meaning colors used for motif design. A similar technique to another, French knot in main used that makes customers of both cultures attached longer when they will get all in one feature with the latest trend...
- Lead toward Cultural exchange and relationship...
- The combination of diverse traditional techniques adds more durability and creative textures to clothes, which are interesting points for viewers in contemporary fashion...
- Fusion of traditional techniques gives different effects in fashion. As French knot and satin stitch work together are long lasting than separately composed...
- Advantage for customers, make them more comfortable and other emotionally thoughtful about garments. Give them an idea to make their own way to style their garments using traditional techniques in modern fashion...
- Transfer knowledge and values of past generations to the next generation by embracing fashion...
- Promote Chinese traditional techniques and craftsmanship as well as Pakistan cultural embroidery...

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- Exchange cultures and traditional values without speech through fashion and unite diverse cultures a single platform...
- Open up to world advantages of traditional embroidery techniques methods in modern fashion...
- Traditional methods are suitable to modern fashion...
- The capability to launch a successful economical project in field of fashion industry through creating benefits from traditional techniques. That will cater for a new market and make new opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

- Use traditional embroidery in large scale industrialized manners to keep pace with the latest trend's development taking into thought preserving valued roots and originality.
- Establishment of dedicated factories to craft fashion and its complements near to rural areas.
- Encouraging craftsmanship and scientific studies which goal to discovery of the features of popular invention and make benefit of it in humanity's development. It would take place manipulations and collecting samples of traditional heritage, studying and displaying collected samples to make improvements from it in fashion and other fields of life
- More studies should be made to explore the history of traditional Chinese costume and their adaptative and inspirational usage.
- Conduct more intensive historical research relative to Cultural fashion.

### **Conclusion**

Traditional embroidery patterns have long embodied formal beauty in clothing design. However, as fashion and aesthetics evolve, there

is a growing need for innovation in embroidery patterns. Techniques such as Phulkari and Han embroidery are invaluable cultural heritages that should be both preserved and adapted. These traditional methods inspire designers and foster cultural exchange between countries. By blending conventional practices with modern advancements, the preservation and development of traditional art and cultural heritage are both advanced.

The integration of traditional motifs and patterns into contemporary women's dress designs results in unique and innovative products that appeal to the modern fashion market. This fusion not only highlights the cultural significance of embroidery techniques but also influences future fashion trends by offering fresh perspectives. Incorporating these traditional techniques into modern silhouettes preserves the art form's heritage while adding a distinctive flair to contemporary designs.

This cultural fusion serves as a bridge between past and present, showcasing the beauty and intricacy of traditional embroidery to a broader audience. The application of unique patterns and motifs from Phulkari and Han embroidery on women's party dresses has become a notable trend. These designs stand out in the fashion industry, reflecting cultural heritage while embracing modern elements. The result is a stunning, elegant dress that marries tradition with innovation, making it ideal for formal occasions. Such designs not only enhance the dress's aesthetic appeal but also promote cultural appreciation and exchange, enriching the fashion market with a blend of historical and contemporary influences.

### **Limitations**

Searching for authentic information on Han embroidery and learning about traditional culture was quite challenging. Working from another country, it doesn't seem easy to research the roots

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of Chinese culture in its true form. Online data availability is not enough. Also, for phulkari, although it's my culture, the author finds it hard to meet the artisans of Phulkari and see their original work. With time, the traditional Phulkari is losing significance as replaced by machines today.

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