

# The prevalent market trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The investigation was carried out to make *phulkari* embroidery more versatile for the contemporary trends in *Kurtis* and enhance its market potential. The prevailing market trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* studied through a market survey of twenty showrooms of Patiala selected through purposive sampling technique apprised the investigator regarding the availability of *Phulkari* embroidered ready-made (75.00 %) and semi-stitched *Kurtis* (100.00%) and *Kurti* yardage (90.00%) in the market which lacked in the style factor of cultural fusion to which young girls are highly receptive. Cotton polyester was found to be most popular for hand embroidered semi-stitched and *Kurti* yardage (90.00%). Cool colours (100.00%) were most popular for embroidery threads in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* followed by neutral colours. Stiff and soft textures were available in all the retail outlets for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*. Even during these days ‘pat’ thread is most popularly used followed by twisted silk threads. A-Line silhouette in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* was available at 100.00 per cent retail outlets, followed by tubular silhouette (95.00%). All showrooms offered *Kurtis* embellished with binding and ribbons, whereas 75.00 per cent each retail outlets possessed *Kurtis* with mirror or pearl work and braids.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Design features, *Kurti*, *Phulkari*, Market, Materials

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The word *Phulkari* is a composite term of two Sanskrit words *Phul* (flower) and *karya* (to do) and thus, means “to do flower work,” (Khurshid, 1992). When applied to folk embroidery, it stands for the ancient craft of embroidering flower designs with pure silk floss on a *Chaddar* (women’s shawl) of plain rough hand woven pure cotton cloth, called *Khaddar* (*Khadi*). More recently, however, *Khaddar* is prepared on power-looms and available locally and in all major city markets. Although *Phulkari* is called a folk art of Punjab - the home of *Phulkari* (Khurshid, 1992 and Maskiell, 1999). The Indian *Kurtis* have made an appearance in domestic and global markets with unprecedented visibility over the last few years. Mass production of *Kurtis* has revolutionized the women wear market. The term *Kurti*, in the present context, is used for loosely fitted upper garment of women. It may be worn with either an Indian or western lower garment such as *Salwar* (loosely fitted lower garment of *Punjabi* women), *Leggings* or jeans. Girls generally, wear a scarf or stole over *Kurtis* which not only provides comfort but also, contributes

in making the dresses look elegant and exquisite. Indian embroidered *Kurtis*, *Lucknowi Kurtis*, sequins and *Kundan* (type of embellishments) *Kurtis* are very popular forms of dress with Indian females. The versatile use of this garment has made these very popular among the college-going girls not only in India but also in western culture for the last few years (Anonymous, 2010).

The study of prevalent market trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* was undertaken to facilitate product development for diversifying the traditional *Phulkari* embroidery of Punjab. The investigation was carried out with the below mentioned objectives.

## Objectives :

- To study the type of *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* available in the market.
- To explore the prevailing trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* with respect to the type of fabrics, threads, design features and colour combinations.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

Market survey was conducted in Patiala city since it is the most important retail and wholesale market in Punjab for *Phulkari* embroidered products. An inventory sheet was prepared to record the prevailing trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*. Twenty retail outlets selling *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* were selected from Adaalat Bazaar and Tripurhi by using purposive sampling technique. The information regarding prevailing trends in silhouettes, fabrics, motifs and design features, colour combinations and embellishments, etc. used for various *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* was recorded using inventory sheet. The data were analysed by calculating frequencies and percentages. Also, *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* were documented photographically.

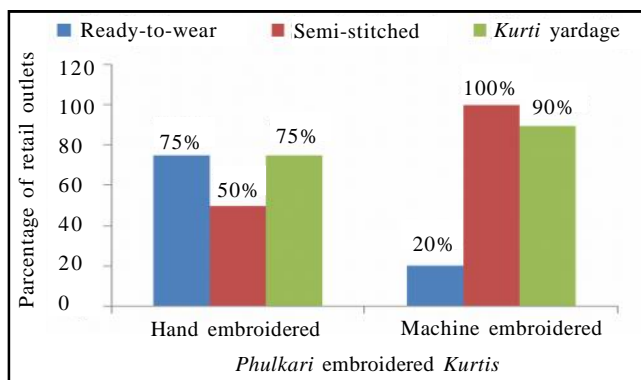
**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Exploring the market trends in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* enables the designers to analyse the styles that have already been offered to the customers and status of their acceptance. The information regarding trends in design elements sharpens the imagination and taste for the innovations in creatively designed products. The awareness about what already is being accepted by consumers today helps to make projections for future trends. Ultimately so designed products would have more chances of winning consumer acceptance.

**Types of *Phulkari* embroidered *kurtis* sold in retail outlets :**

*Kurtis* are mass produced in standard sizes or custom tailored according to the measurements. For custom tailored *Kurtis*, one may opt for semi-stitched ones or embroidered *Kurti* yardage. It was observed that semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage were available in the market for both winter and summer seasons.

All the twenty retail outlets were found to be selling machine embroidered semi-stitched *Kurtis*. Ready-To-Wear (RTW) machine embroidered *Kurtis* were available in only 20.00 per cent retail outlets, whereas hand embroidered ready-made *Kurtis* were available in 75.00 per cent retail outlets (Fig. 1). Hand and machine embroidered *Kurti* yardage was available in 75.00 and 90.00 per cent retail outlets, respectively. *Phulkari* machine embroidered semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage were most popularly sold.



**Fig. 1 : Types of *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* sold in retail outlets**

**Trends in fibres used for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* in retail outlets :**

Fabric composition of apparel with respect to the type of fibres governs the cost, quality, comfort, service and the care it would demand. The data related to the fibre content of fabrics for *Phulkari* embroidered *kurtis* in the market revealed that all the retail outlets were selling semi-stitched machine embroidered *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage made from cotton, while 80.00 per cent showrooms sold semi-stitched hand embroidered *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage too, made from cotton. Machine embroidered *Kurti* yardage in linen was available at

**Table 1 : Type of fibres popularly used for *phulkari* embroidered *kurtis* in retail outlets (n=20)\***

<i>Kurtis</i>	Type of fibres											
	Cotton		Silk		Linen		Rayon		Blend			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Cotton viscose f %	Cotton polyester f %		
<b>Ready-to-wear (RTW)</b>												
Hand embroidered	2	10.00	2	10.00	5	25.00	–	–	–	–	2	10.00
Machine embroidered	2	10.00	2	10.00	10	50.00	–	–	–	–	2	10.00
<b>Semi- stitched</b>												
Hand embroidered	16	80.00	17	85.00	16	80.00	5	25.00	10	50.00	18	90.00
Machine embroidered	20	100.00	20	100.00	17	85.00	10	50.00	17	85.00	19	95.00
<b><i>Kurti</i> yardage</b>												
Hand embroidered	16	80.00	10	50.00	14	70.00	7	35.00	16	80.00	18	90.00
Machine embroidered	20	100.00	10	50.00	20	100.00	10	50.00	14	70.00	17	85.00

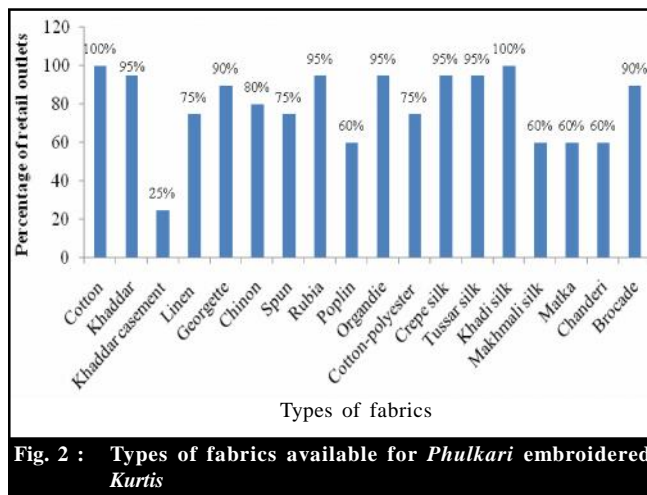
f-frequency \*Multiple responses

all the retail outlets. Cotton polyester was found be most popular for hand embroidered semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage (90.00%). Machine embroidered RTW *Kurtis* were available in only 10.00 per cent retail outlets (Table 1). Linen was more popularly used for machine embroidered ready-made *Kurtis* (50.00%) than by hand embroidered RTW (25.00%) *Kurtis* in linen. Rayon was the least used for hand embroidered semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage.

It is quite apparent from the data that machine embroidered semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage in silk was available at all retail outlets. Use of cotton/polyester for *Kurtis* has increased for last many years due to low cost, easy care properties and durability. Even on being poor conductor of heat and non-absorbent. This fabric can be worn comfortably due to artificial cooling system in most homes.

**Types of fabrics available for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* :**

The data pertaining to the type of fabrics used for any dress largely decides about its suitability for the occasion. Cotton and *Khadi* silk fabrics were found be most popularly available (100.00%) at the retail outlets (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2 :** Types of fabrics available for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*

*Khaddar*, rubia, organdy, crepe and *Tussar* silk were available for semi-stitched *Kurtis* and *Kurti* yardage in equal percentage of retail outlets (95.00% each), while *Georgette* and brocade were used for *Kurti* yardage in 90.00 per cent retail outlets. Besides, chinon (80.00%), spun, cotton polyester, linen (75.00% each); poplin, *Makhmali* silk, *Matka*, *Chanderi* silk (60.00% each) were available for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*. *Khaddar* casement (25.00%) was least used for the *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*.

**Availability of colour scheme in threads and base fabric colour for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* :**

Colour is observed first of all the other elements of design and rules customers’ choice to a great extent. The data in

Table 2 indicated that cool colours (100.00%) were most popular for embroidery threads in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* followed by neutral colours. Cool as well as neutral colours (100% each) for base fabric were used followed by warm colours (95.00%). Base fabric for traditional *Phulkaris* used to be brick-red coloured embroidered with combination of warm and cool colours like off-white, indigo, madder, saffron yellow and brown (Rizvi, 2006).

**Table 2 :** Colour scheme used in threads and base fabric colour for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* (n=20)\*

Colour scheme	Threads		Base fabric	
	f	%	f	%
Cool	20	100.00	20	100.00
Warm	18	90.00	19	95.00
Neutral	19	95.00	20	100.00

f-frequency \* Multiple responses

**Types of colours and textures available in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurti* designs :**

Tints were hardly used in traditional *Phulkaris*. Pure and bright colours were most frequently used in *Phulkaris*. The data related to availability of colours used in designing of *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* indicated that primary colours (red, yellow, blue) in pure form as well as tints were available at all showrooms followed by shades of primary colours in 75.00 per cent showrooms (Table 3). The secondary colours were more applied in tints (95.00%) followed by pure (90.00%) and shades (80.00%). Neutral colours were applied in various tones in all designs.

**Table 3 :** Availability of colours in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurti* designs (n=20)\*

Colours	Tints		Pure		Shades	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Primary colours	20	100.00	20	100.00	15	75.00
Secondary colours	19	95.00	18	90.00	16	80.00
Tertiary colours	18	90.00	20	100.00	20	100.00
Neutral colours	20	100.00	20	100.00	20	100.00

f-frequency \*Multiple responses

Stiff and soft textures were available in all the retail outlets for *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* followed by smooth texture (95.00%). Coarse, rough and dull textures (5.00% each) were least available.

**Type of threads used in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* :**

Traditionally, two types of embroidery threads were used for *Phulkaris*- untwisted silk floss called ‘*Pat*’ and cotton thread in black and white colours named ‘*Bandi*.’ Even during these days *pat* is most popularly used (100.00% retail outlets) followed by twisted silk threads (95.00% retail outlets). Acrylic yarns were used on *Dupattas* instead of *Kurtis* in 90.00 per cent retail outlets (Fig. 3).

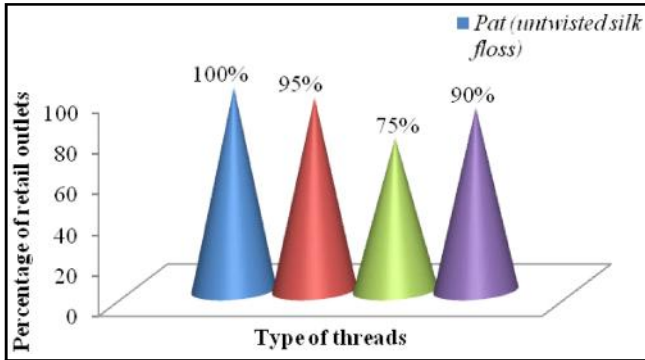


Fig. 3 : Type of threads used in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis

**Availability of motifs and designs for Phulkari embroidered Kurtis :**

Each design is unique because of typical motifs, or subject matter, the arrangement or layout of motifs and the style of rendering the colours. All these are the essentials to create a design (Chawla, 2012). The data regarding the availability of motifs in the market revealed that floral and foliage motifs and, geometrical shapes like lines (vertical, horizontal and diagonal), rectangles, triangles, squares, hexagon and rhombus on semi-stitched and Kurtis yardage were most popularly available in all retail outlets (Table 4).

**Table 4 : Motifs popularly used for Phulkari embroidered Kurtis (n=20)\***

Motifs	Retail outlets	
	f	%
Geometrical	20	100.00
Floral and foliage	20	100.00
Birds	20	100.00
Miscellaneous	4	20.00

f-frequency \*Multiple responses

Only 20.00 per cent retail outlets possessed machine embroidered semi stitched Kurtis with miscellaneous motifs of rolling pin (Velna). Among the bird motifs only peacock motif (100.00%) was available in Kurtis.

**Placement of motifs in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis :**

All the retail outlets used Phulkari all over pattern for front and centre panel of Kurtis. Phulkari embroidery on the yokes of the Kurtis was available in 75.00 per cent of retail outlets, while 65.00 per cent of the outlets preferred Phulkari embroidery on the neckline and sleeves of the Kurtis. Phulkari motifs on slits and hem were available in 40.00 per cent retail outlets. Only 5.00 per cent of retail outlets preferred just necklines for Phulkari embroidery (Table 5).

**Availability of silhouettes in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis :**

A- Line silhouette in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis was

**Table 5 : Placement of motifs in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis (n=20)\***

Placements of motifs	Retail outlets	
	f	%
All over	20	100.00
Centre panel	20	100.00
Neckline	1	5.00
Yoke	15	75.00
Neckline and sleeves	13	65.00
Slits and hem	8	40.00

f-frequency \*Multiple responses

available at 100.00 per cent retail outlets, followed by tubular silhouette (95.00%). Both V-Line and U-Line were available at 25 per cent retail outlets (Table 6).

**Table 6 : Availability of silhouettes in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis (n=20)\***

Type of silhouettes	Retail outlets	
	f	%
A-Line	20	100.00
Tubular	19	95.00
V-Line	5	25.00
U- Line	5	25.00

f-frequency \*Multiple responses

**Availability of necklines in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis :**

The data in Table 7 revealed the availability of neck lines in Phulkari embroidered semi-stitched Kurtis. Square, round, V-shape, U-shape necklines were available at all retail outlets. Least percentage of the showrooms had Kurtis with keyhole and halter necklines (25.00% each).

**Table 7 : Availability of necklines in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis (n=20)\***

Type of necklines	Retail outlets	
	f	%
Square	20	100.00
Round	20	100.00
V- shape	20	100.00
Halter neckline	5	25.00
Keyhole	5	25.00
U- shape	20	100.00

f-frequency \*Multiple responses

**Availability of collars in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis :**

It was observed from data in Table 8 that 100.00 per cent

**Table 8 : Availability of collars in Phulkari embroidered Kurtis (n=20)\***

Type of collars	Retail outlets	
	f	%
Band	20	100.00
Shawl	8	40.00
Flat collar	10	50.00

f- frequency \*Multiple responses

retail outlets offered band collars in semi-stitched *Kurtis*. Least percentage of showrooms (40.00%) possessed *Kurtis* with shawl collars.

**Preferred length in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* :**

The data pertaining to the preferred length in semi-stitched *Kurtis* indicated that only 25.00 per cent retail outlets were offering short and long length *Kurtis*, while medium length was available at all the retail outlets (Fig. 4).

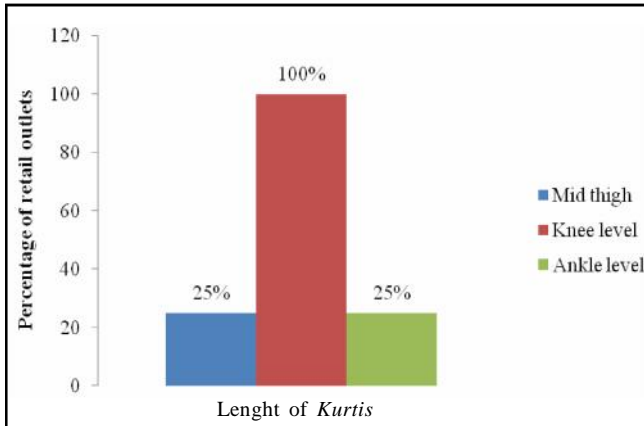


Fig. 4 : Preferred lengths in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*

**Availability of embellishments in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis*:**

The data related to embellishments such as lace, *Dori*, mirrors, binding used in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* have been furnished in Table 9. The highest percentage of showrooms, *i.e.* 100.00 per cent, offered *Kurtis* embellished with binding and ribbons, whereas 75.00 per cent retail outlets possessed *Kurtis* with mirror or pearl work and braids. Also, 50.00 and 20.00 per cent retail outlets had used laces and beads, respectively.

**Conclusion :**

It was concluded that *Kurtis* lacked in the style as far as

**Table 9 : Availability of embellishments in *Phulkari* embroidered *Kurtis* (n=20)\***

Embellishments	Retail outlets	
	f	%
Pearls	15	75.00
Mirror	15	75.00
Buttons	10	50.00
Braids	15	75.00
Laces	10	50.00
Beads	4	20.00
Binding	20	100.00
Ribbons	20	100.00

f-frequency \*Multiple response

Indo-western fusion was concerned. A large number of bird and animal motifs used in traditional *Phulkaris* could not be seen in the *kurtis*. Thus, there is need to design Indo-western *Kurtis* with *Phulkari* embroidery.

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