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Re-fashioning the traditional manipuri *Phanek* with *Phulkari* embroidery

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Abstract
The present study was conducted to re-fashion the hand woven Manipuri *phanek* with *phulkari* embroidery. Ten traditional Manipuri *phaneks* were selected and fifteen *phulkari* motifs were chosen according to their suitability for being used on the *phaneks*. A total of ten *phulkari* designs were developed using different motifs and colour combination on computer using COREL DRAW X8. Three different colour combinations for each design were developed and the design given the highest weighted mean score for design placement and highest modal frequency for colour combination by a panel of ten judges were selected. Thus, five best designs were finalised for preparing *phulkari* embroidered *phaneks*. The *phaneks* were prepared by embroidering *phulkari* motifs with *pat* thread in different colours according to the designs finalised. For studying the consumer acceptance of prepared *phaneks*, a questionnaire was prepared to record the preferences of the eighty college going students, forty from Punjab and forty from Manipur. The consumers preferred *phanek* P1 for suitability of combination of motif, *phanek* P2 for colour combination and *phanek* P3 for uniqueness of design, wokmanship of embroidery and overall appearance. *Phanek* P1 was the most preferred from the respondents of both the states of Punjab and Manipur. Cost evaluation was done by adding thirty percent profit to cost price and selling price was calculated. Majority of the respondents found the selling price as appropriate. Hence, *phulkari* embroidered *phaneks* hold a good commercial potential as these were highly acceptable to the consumers and also economically viable.

Keywords: Embroidery, motif, *phanek, phulkari,* traditional

Introduction
The craft of decorating the fabric with threads, wires or leather with a help of a needle is known as embroidery. Hand embroidery has fascinated mankind for centuries. Embroidery is a beautiful work done on a variety of fabrics which make them more attractive (Naik and Phadke 1994) [4]. One such embroidery is *phulkari*. It is a traditional craft that blooms from the land of five rivers – Punjab. *Phulkari* literally means flower work practiced by the peasant women for decorating their shawls and veils. This priceless craft enjoys vibrancy in colours and sophistication through skilful execution of stitches (Das 1992) [1]. Apart from traditional embroideries, India has a rich and diverse weaving tradition too. A variety of fabric is produced on different kind of handlooms. The crafts are woven with culture and spiritual beliefs of the natives of Manipur since time immemorial. The *phanek* is a traditional costume worn by Meitei women of Manipur which is worn like a sarong. It typically measures 1.75m in length and 1.30m in breadth. *Phaneks* are hand woven on loin looms using cotton, silk and other synthetic fibres. They have horizontal stripes or solid colour which is called *Mayek Naibi.* The ends are embellished with embroidery (Devi 1998) [2].
Textile craft is one of the most ancient human technologies, playing a crucial role in societies world-wide throughout our past. Traditional textile crafts in India carry their own cultural, social and emotive baggage, with designs, colours and motifs, each having their own significance, and different communities each having their own skill in techniques and styles. So adapting these traditions to contemporary urban markets and global consumers has its own risks and challenges. It requires sensitivity and awareness – creating trust and partnership between craftsperson and designer. The fusion of the motifs and techniques of two traditional crafts can create an innovative and exquisite textile product which will not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also add variety to the traditional textile products market.

Moreover, this will help in preserving the rich crafts and also open new avenues for the designers working in the field of textile designing.

Methodology

Selection of traditional *phaneks*

The traditional *phaneks* were collected from primary sources such as handloom showrooms and weaver's centres of Manipur. Ten different *phaneks* belonging to different clans of *Meitei* women of Manipur were selected.

Collection and selection of different *phulkari* motifs

The *phulkari* embroidery motifs were collected from various secondary sources such as books, magazines, reports and internet. A total of fifteen *phulkari* motifs were collected depending upon their suitability for designing the *phaneks*.

Development of designs for *phaneks* with *phulkari* embroidery

Total ten designs were developed using different *phulkari* motifs on *phaneks* using COREL DRAW X8. Three different colour combinations were developed for each *phanek* design.

Selection of designs

Ten designs were developed in thirty different colour combinations. The prepared designs were shown to a panel of ten judges comprising of faculty members from the Department of Apparel and Textile Science and Family Resource Management, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The judges were asked to give their preferences for the placement of design on the *phaneks* and the best colour combination for each designed *phanek.* Based upon their judgement, five best *phanek*s designs were selected for preparation of embroidered *phaneks.*

Preparation of the embroidered *phaneks*

Different wooden blocks were made for each design. The block designs were then transferred to the *phaneks*. According to the designs, some motifs were embroidered on the border and some above the border which were proportionately placed all over the *phanek*s. Embroidery was done on the designed floral, geometric and leave shapes *phulkari* motifs using different colour *pat* threads according to the selected colour combinations.

Assessment of commercial viability of the prepared *phaneks*

The commercial viability of the prepared *phaneks* was assessed by taking the response from a sample of eighty college going students in the age group of 18 to 27 years. The students were from the College of Community Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana and G.P. Women's College, Imphal. A questionnaire was constructed to study the preferences of the respondents for the prepared *phaneks*. The cost price for each *phaneks* was calculated by considering the cost of raw materials used and labour involved. The selling price was calculated adding thirty percent profit to the cost price.

Results and Discussion

The data pertaining to the present study was coded, tabulated, analyzed and the results are presented under following subheads:

Evaluation of the design of *phaneks* developed with *phulkari* motifs

Various scores were obtained after taking the preferences from ten judges. Out of ten developed designs, five developed designs and colour combinations with highest frequency of *phaneks* were selected. The results are furnished in table 1 from where it is evident that the highest WMS (8.2) was assigned rank I (DP1), second highest WMS (7.4) was assigned rank II (DP9) and DP6, DP3 and DP8 scored ranks III, IV and V rank with WMS of 7.2, 7.0 and 6.1 respectively. For colour combinations, DP1 (A), DP9 (C), DP6 (A), DP3 (B) and DP8 (A) gained highest frequencies and were allotted first rank from each category.

Table 1: Preferences of judges for embroidery placements and colour combinations (n=10)

Design No.	WMS	Rank	Colour Combination	Frequency
DP1	8.2	I	A	7
			B	2
			C	1
DP2	2.5	X	A	7
			B	1
			C	2
DP3	7.0	IV	A	2
			B	8
			C	0
DP4	3.0	IX	A	3
			B	4
			C	3
DP5	4.3	VII	A	4
			B	3
			C	3
DP6	7.0	III	A	7
			B	1
			C	2
DP7	3.9	VIII	A	6
			B	0
			C	4
DP8	6.1	V	A	6
			B	3
			C	1
DP9	7.4	II	A	2
			B	2
			C	6
DP10	5.2	VI	A	1
			B	5
			C	4

Preparation of *Phaneks* using selected designs

After the evaluation by the judges, five best designs were used for preparing the embroidered *phaneks.* From the prepared wooden blocks, the selected designs were transferred to the *phaneks* in order to give clarity while doing embroidery. The *phaneks* were then embroidered using different coloured *pat* threads.

Details of the developed *Phaneks*

1. *Phanek* DP1: The colour scheme of the *Chinphi phanek* consists of blue and red colours arranged in regular patterns which give an excellent shade. The traditional version of this *Chinphi phanek* has no embroidered border. It was woven in silk and was customized into a contemporary form by embroidering floral and geometrical *phulkari* motifs on the border which was embroidered using light and dark yellow coloured *pat* thread with darn stitch to compliment the background colour of the *phanek* i.e. red and blue. The embroidery was done on the border and above the border the floral motifs were placed repeatedly (Figure1).

Fig 1: *Phanek* DP1

2. *Phanek* DP3: The colour scheme of *Thambal Machu*, has lotus pink on the top follow by a line of maroon which is again followed by a line of black colour. The *phanek* was woven with synthetic yarns and designs were created on the border of the *Thambal Machu phanek* with embroidered floral, leaves and geometrical *phulkari* motifs. The small geometrical motifs were also placed randomly above the border to give aesthetic appeal to the *phanek*. Darn stitch was used for the embroidery using red, pink, green, lavender and blue coloured *pat* threads (Figure 2).

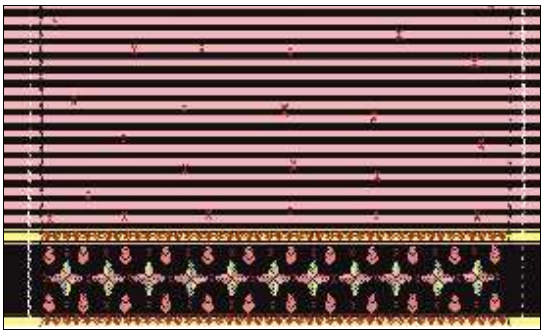

Fig 2: *Phanek* DP3

3. *Phanek* DP6: This *Hangam Machu phanek* has yellow and black striped combination with black border which was woven with silk yarns. The whole body of the *phanek* was decorated with repeated pattern of striped combination with the matching rows of colours. The border design was made with variation of leaf *phulkari* motif and the pattern was repeatedly embroidered with darn stitch using green, light yellow and rust coloured *pat* thread (Figure 3).

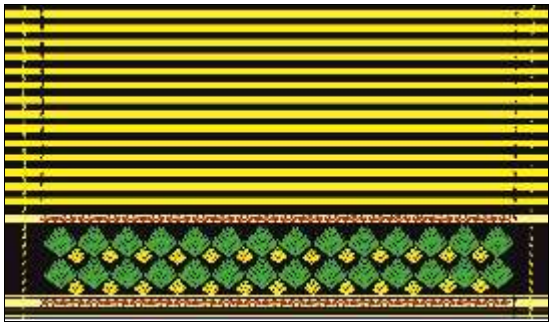

Fig 3: *Phanek* DP6

4. *Phanek* DP8: *Kumjingbi phanek* has a colour scheme of dominant black colour alternately intervened by very narrow lines of white colour. This *panek* was woven with synthetic yarns and the border design was created with floral, leaves and geometrical *phulkari* motifs. The border of the *Kumjingbi phanek* was embroidered using pink, yellow, light and dark green coloured *pat* threads with darn stitch (Figure 4).

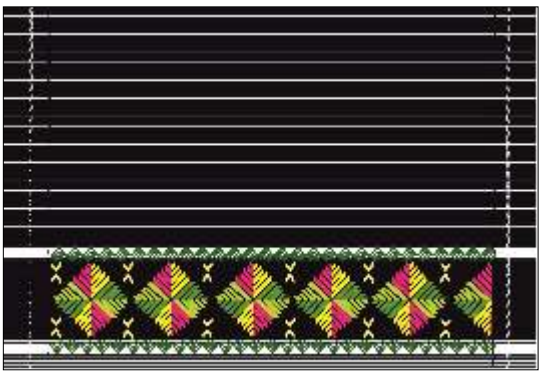

Fig 4: *Phanek* DP8

5. *Phanek* DP9: Traditionally this *phanek* was woven in silk floss, but in the present study, *Phige phanek*, was made from synthetic fibres. The *Phige phanek* used in this research consists of a colour combination of magneta pink and black colour stripes which are arranged in regular pattern. The *phanek* was designed using leaves and geometrical *phulkari* motifs. Orange, green and pink coloured *pat* thread were used employing darn and herring bone stitches for embroidering the border of the *phanek* (Figure 5).

Fig 5: *Phanek* DP9

Preferences of consumers for developed *phaneks* with *phulkari* embroidery

The preferences of the developed *phaneks* were taken from 80 students i.e. 40 students from Punjab and 40 students from Manipur. For taking preferences, *phanek* DP8 was coded as *phanek* P1, DP6 as *phanek* P2, DP1 as *phanek* P3, DP3 as *phanek* P4 and DP9 as *phanek* P5 respectively.

Tables 2 shows the preferences given by the respondents on the basis of suitability of combination of motifs on the developed *phaneks* with *phulkari* embroidery.

Table 2: Preferences of respondents for suitability of combination of motifs (n=80)

Phaneks	**WMS**	**Rank**
P1 (DP8)	3.52	I
P2 (DP6)	3.31	II
P3 (DP1)	3.17	III
P4 (DP3)	2.36	V
P5 (DP9)	2.66	IV

The ranking of the *phaneks* revealed that *phanek* P1was ranked first with the WMS of 3.52 and *phanek* P4 having WMS of 2.36 was the least preferred in term of suitability of combination of motifs.

Table 3: Preferences of respondents for colour combination of the *phaneks* (n=80)

Phaneks	WMS	Rank
P1 (DP8)	3.36	II
P2 (DP6)	3.40	I
P3 (DP1)	3.00	III
P4 (DP3)	2.31	V
P5 (DP9)	2.82	IV

The preferences for the colour combination of the *paneks* is furnished in table 3 and it is evident that *phanek* P2 with weighted mean scores of 3.40 was the most preferred colour combination and given first rank and the least rank was obtained by *phanek* P4 with the WMS of 2.31.

Table 4: Preferences of respondents for uniqueness of design (n=80)

Phaneks	WMS	Rank
P1 (DP8)	3.22	II
P2 (DP6)	3.11	III
P3 (DP1)	3.41	I
P4 (DP3)	2.48	V
P5 (DP9)	2.72	IV

Unique designs make the products different from others and the designs has distinctiveness from the existing designs. In order to know the uniqueness of the designs, preferences were taken from the respondents which are shown in tables 4. *Phanek* P3 having the WMS of 3.41 was ranked first and *phanek* P4 with WMS of 2.48 was ranked last.

Table 5: Preferences of respondents for the workmanship of embroidery (n=80)

Phaneks	WMS	Rank
P1 (DP8)	3.02	III
P2 (DP6)	3.26	II
P3 (DP1)	3.45	I
P4 (DP3)	2.57	V
P5 (DP9)	2.68	IV

Table 5 depicts the preferences given by the respondents for the workmanship of the embroidery done on each *phanek*. Workmanship plays a very important role in selection of any product by the consumers. The first rank was given to *phanek* P3 having WMS of 3.45 whereas fifth rank was obtained by *phanek* P5 with WMS of 2.57.

Table 6: Preferences of respondents for overall appearance of the *phaneks* (n=80)

Phaneks	WMS	Rank
P1 (DP8)	3.11	III
P2 (DP6)	3.20	II
P3 (DP1)	3.22	I
P4 (DP3)	2.53	V
P5 (DP9)	2.92	IV

The data pertaining to preference of respondents for overall appearance of *phaneks* is furnished in table 6. The most preferred overall appearance was obtained by *phanek* P3 having WMS of 3.22. The last rank was given to *phanek* P4 with WMS of 2.53.

Assessment of commercial viability

An effort was made to investigate the commercial viability of the developed *phaneks*. Cost price of each *phanek* was calculated by adding the cost of raw materials and the cost of labour involved. The selling price was worked out by adding 30 percent profit to the cost price.

Table 7: Evaluation of the selling price of the developed *phaneks*

Phaneks	Cost Price (Rs)	Profit (30 percent)	Calculated Selling Price (Rs)	Average Selling Price (Rounded off)
P1 (DP8)	1500	450	1950	2000
P2 (DP6)	1800	540	2340	2300
P3 (DP1)	1800	540	2340	2300
P4 (DP3)	1600	480	2080	2100
P5 (DP9)	1500	450	1950	2000

Table 7 shows that after adding 30 percent profit to the cost price, the selling price of *phaneks* P1 and P5 was found to be Rs 2000 each. For *phanek* P4 the selling price was Rs 2100. The *phaneks* P2 and P3 had highest selling price because both were woven with silk yarns.

Opinion regarding the suitability of the price of the *phaneks*

Pricing is a key to the products success and to know the suitability of price of the developed *phaneks,* opinion was taken from the respondents.

Table 8: Opinion regarding the suitability of the price of the *phaneks* (n=80)

Phaneks	Selling price (Rs)	High		Appropriate		Low	
		f	%	f	%	F	%
P1 (DP8)	2000	12	15.00	60	75.00	8	10.00
P2 (DP6)	2300	16	20.00	60	75.00	4	5.00
P3 (DP1)	2300	33	41.25	45	56.25	2	2.50
P4 (DP3)	2100	12	15.00	60	75.00	8	10.00
P5 (DP9)	2000	8	10.00	62	77.50	10	12.5

The largest percentage of respondents i.e. 77.50 per cent found the price of *phanek* P5 to be appropriate. Majority of the respondents (75 percent) found the selling prices for *phaneks* P1, P2 and P4 as appropriate. On the other hand, 41.25 per cent of the respondents found that the selling price for *phanek* P3 as high and 20.00 percent of the respondents found that the selling price of *phanek* P2 was high.

Conclusion

The fusion of the motifs and techniques of two traditional crafts i.e. *phaneks* developed with *phulkari* embroidery created an innovative and exquisite textile products. This will also help in preserving the two rich crafts and open new avenues for the designers working in the field of textile designing. The high acceptability and profit margins of the developed *phaneks* with *phulkari* embroidery showed that these are commercially viable. Based on the colour combination, uniqueness of designs, quality of embroidery and overall impact profits can be earned from these developed articles. Hence, *phulkari* embroidered *phaneks* are highly acceptable to the consumers and hold a good commercial potential as these are economically viable.

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