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WOLFFLIN'S CONCEPT OF STYLE AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHIKAN EMBROIDERY

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ABSTRACT

Chikan embroidery holds significance owing to its royal patronage and origin that is discussed in the paper. The scholarship also points out striking similarities between the motifs used in *chikan* embroidery and those used on Mughal architecture. A comparative analysis of the two motifs (*chikan* motif and Mughal Architectural motif), is done in the first half of the paper by using Wolfflin's concept of National style as a methodology which also helps in tracing *chikan's* origin and royal patronage. While studying and researching on the *Lucknawi Chikan Sari* from the Losee Collection, it has been concluded by data analysis that floral *Chikan* motifs used on the *sari* in question bear a striking resemblance to the architectural decorations in relief or embossed motifs, and the Mosaic tile decorations visible on the Mughal monuments in India that were built during the 16th and following centuries. In order to prove this notion it is essential to do a detailed analysis of *chikan* embroidery by tracing its historical reconstruction, origin, similarity and comparison with decorative Mughal architectural motifs by applying the compare and contrast principles of Wolfflin. There is currently no existing scholarship, which uses Wolfflin's compare and contrast principles and concept of style as a methodology in order to do a comparative analysis of the floral motifs used in *Chikan* embroidery and the relief and embossed decorative motifs and mosaic tile decorations used on Mughal Architecture from 16th century onwards. Thus, this comparison and association will be discussed in detail for the first time in this paper. The close association between these two motifs is proven by using Wolfflin's concept of National style as a methodology to do an in-depth analysis of the two discussed motifs. Wolfflin's scholarship on National Style aids in tracing *chikan* embroidery's origin and patronage. The second half of the paper uses Wolfflin's concept of Individual Style and Period Style as a methodology to do a technical analysis of the *chikan* embroidery from the Lucknow region also referred to as *Lucknawi chikan* embroidery. This part of the paper discusses, as well as compares the differences and changes in the style of *Lucknawi chikan* embroidery and stitches used in various periods from the 1950's through the 21st century in the craft of *chikan* from Lucknow region.

Keywords: Chikan embroidery, *Lucknawi Chikan Sari*, Mosaic tile decorations, Relief and Embossed decorative motif, Wolfflin's concept of Style.

INDIAN EMBROIDERY

Embroidery, an aesthetic expression, rendered with patient labor, is an art described as "painting by needle". Embroidery is often used on everyday objects like table cloths, garments, and cushion covers, bed sheets among others in order to glorify and beautify them. Various types of embroidery stitches are used globally. But Indian embroidery holds its significance as today, practically all known embroidery stitches employed anywhere in the world are used in India (Ladha, 2008).

Indian embroidery is inspired by nature and the products of various regions reflect the colors of the flora and fauna of that particular area. Indian embroidery is usually done on cotton, silk, net, hessian, velvet and leather among others. The designs in Indian embroideries are rendered depending on the texture and design of the fabric and the stitch. The dot, circle, square, triangle and various permutations and combinations of these are amalgamated to make up the design in particular embroidery. Religious motifs such as *gopurams*, *tulsi* plant, and temple doorway among others are equally popular. Enriching the fabrics with the use of precious stones, metals, beads and mica or beads, gold

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or silver thread as embellishments has also been a popular practice in Indian embroidery (Ladha, 2008). Currently, *Kantha* embroidery, Kashmiri work, *Zardosi* embroidery, *phulkari* and *Kasauti* work, *Chikan* work among others are some of the embroidery that is practiced in various regions of India. However, *chikan* embroidery holds significance among the discussed lot owing to its royal patronage and origin that is discussed in the paper. The scholarship also points out the striking similarities between the motifs used in the *chikan* embroidery and those used on Mughal architecture.



Figure 1. Mughal Architectural motif which is used extensively on Chikan garments.

Source: 'Classic Chikan,' *WE Graphic Designers*. (1990).

The close association between these two motifs is proven in the first half of the paper by using Wolfflin's concept of National style as a methodology to do an in-depth analysis of the two discussed motifs. Wolfflin's scholarship on National Style aids in tracing *chikan* embroidery's origin and patronage. The second half of the paper uses Wolfflin's concept of Individual Style and Period Style as a methodology, to do a technical analysis of the Lucknow *chikan* embroidery. This part of the paper discusses as well as compares the differences and changes in the style of Lucknow *chikan* embroidery and stitches used in various eras from 1950's-60's, 1970's-80's and 1990's to the era of 2000's and onwards in the craft of *chikan* from Lucknow region.

CHIKAN EMBROIDERY:

As of today, *chikan* work is concentrated to the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India, and is centered at the cities of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh and Gaya in Bihar (Ladha, 2008). *Chikan* work practiced in the Lucknow region is believed to have been practiced at the royal

courts of Oudh (currently known as Lucknow) during the late 18th and 19th century.



Figure 2. Man's garment with Chikan work (19th century, Lucknow).

Source: 'India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow,' *Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (2011).

Chikan embroidery is done with white cotton on a fine white muslin base using a variety of stitches minutely worked together with knotted stitches resulting in designs with raised surfaces. The creation of 'jali' or the net effect is one of its specialties (Ladha, 2008). It is usually this stitch that aids in distinguishing the craft from other embroideries practiced in India. The "jali" holds significance as it also bears a close resemblance to the *jalis* created on the Mughal architectural buildings. This aspect has been discussed at length later.



Figure 3. A detailed image of Jaalis from Tomb of Itmad-Ud- Daulah (Mughal Monument built in Jahangir's era).

Source: Indiatraveldestinations.com. (Travel and Tourism website).

Various scholars have identified and defined *chikan* embroidery in a different manner. However, the most apt definition of *chikan* today would be, "any cotton embroidered cloth that comes from Lucknow." Its Lucknow origin is the strongest and the simplest element in its definition, since *Chikan* includes garments

– both Indian and Western in style- and table linens, a range of stitches, articles created entirely white thread and some using color, as well as handwork and machine work (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

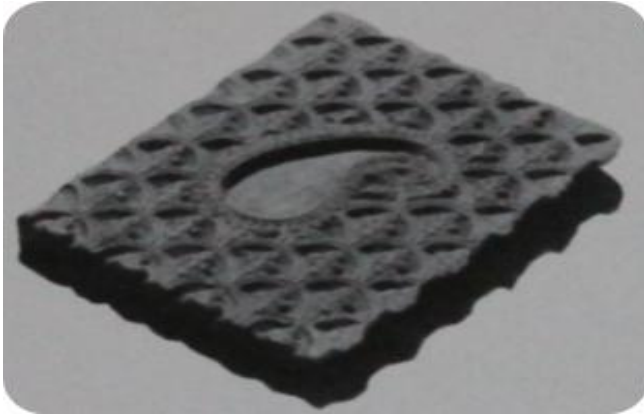


Figure 4. Jaali stitch impression, on a chikan block.
Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).



Figure 5. Shawl with extensive chikan work, early 19th century

Source: 'India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow', *Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (2011).

It is an arduous task to discern the exact meaning of the word *Chikan* as there is certainly no consensus as to what exactly the term, "*Chikan*" means. Some attribute it to be a Bengali word meaning, "Very nice things" while others such as a Lucknow Magazine had translated it as "fine" in 1988 (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Others have also termed it as a Persian word meaning- "to put in bold relief." Scholars like Sheila Paine has given a range of Persian possibilities which might convey the meaning of *Chikan*, from the 1651 Burton's classical dictionary definition of "kind of embroidery with gold thread quilting", to "embroidery in various kinds of silk on garments and other items," in later dictionaries (Paine, 1989). She also writes of Richardson's 1806

Persian/English dictionary terms *chikan/chikin* "a kind of cloth worked with the needle in flowers." Finally she notes that *chikan* has a possible linguistic connection to the physical barriers of purdah through the Persian word for "a blind" (*chick/chiq*) (Paine, 1989). Adding on to these classifications, the Britishers classified the stitch as a "satin stitch or a "buttonholing," and so on (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Nevertheless, the vast range of embroidered textiles to which the word "*chikan*" has been applied in the literature undoubtedly contributes to the difficulty in settling upon its meanings.

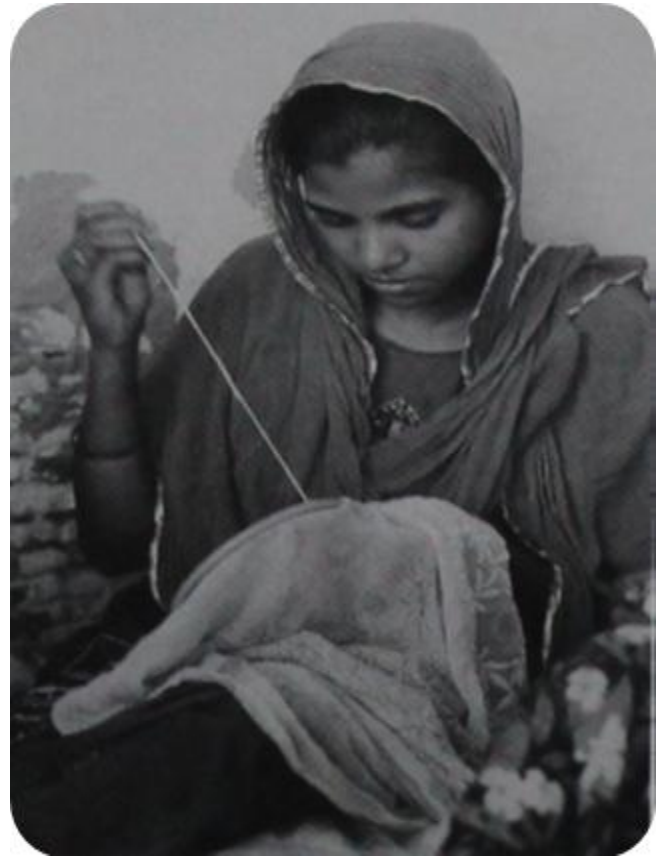


Figure 6. A young *chikan* embroider.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

LUCKNAWICHIKAN SARI AND DECORATIVE MOTIFS ON MUGHAL MONUMENTS

Scholars have been defining and classifying *Chikan* for innumerable years. Their efforts span several changes in the kind of embroidery being produced and the conditions in which it was produced. Nevertheless, no scholarship has ever pointed out the similarity between the floral *chikan* motifs and the relief or embossed decorative motifs found on the Mughal monuments of 16th century and those created in the following centuries.

While studying and researching on the *Lucknawi Chikan Sari* from the Losee Collection, it has been concluded by data analysis that the floral *Chikan* motifs used on the *sari* in question and in general bear a striking resemblance to the relief and embossed decorative motifs and mosaic tile decorations, visible on the Mughal monuments in India.



Figure 7. Other Mughal Architectural Floral Motifs, which are frequently used on chikan saris.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

Ensemble of light green crepe with black embroidery and silver beads Short sleeve top with hook and eye closure at center front. Floral embroidery and beading. Sari with matching embroidery/beading. Courtesy of Joy Losee Collection, University of North Texas Denton.

In order to prove this notion, it is necessary to do *chikan's* historical reconstruction, trace its origin and point out its similarity with the relief and embossed decorative motifs and mosaic tile decorations on Mughal monuments by doing a comparative analysis of the two discussed motifs (floral *chikan* motif and relief and embossed decorative motifs along with the mosaic tile decorations). This comparative analysis is done by using

Wolfflin's concept of style and his compare and contrast principles.



Figure 8. Lucknawi Chikan Sari from Losee Collection

Description: Indian Sari 2 Pieces

Interestingly, there is no existing scholarship which does a compare and contrast of the *Chikan* embroidery, by applying the compare and contrast principles of Wolfflin.

However, two contemporary fashion designers, Abu Jaani & Sandeep Khosla (Jani & Khosla, 1990) do point out the similarities between the *Chikan* patterns and the architectural motifs seen all over the Mughal buildings.



Figure 9. A contemporary Chikan sari from the collection of Abu & Sandeep with the floral chikan motifs which are inspired by the Mughal monuments.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', WE Graphic Designers (1990).

The designer duo, Abu & Sandeep (1990) have been working in the medium of *Chikan* from the last twenty five years (late 1980's) and are credited with its revival in India in a unique and innovative way.

They have their production centre or *Karkhaana* (workshop) in the neighboring Kakori Village on the outskirts of Lucknow, where a large team of dedicated *Chikan* embroiders create the *Chikan* garments designed by the designer duo (Jani & Khosla, 1990).



Figure 10. A fashionable salwar suit with chikan embroidery from the collection of Abu & Sandeep.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', WE Graphic Designers (1990).



Figure 11. Female chikan embroiders working in the Chikan karkhaana (workshop) of Abu & Sandeep.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', WE Graphic Designers (1990).

The designers being the only people to state that the *Chikan* patterns reflect the Mughal tradition as the floral sprays, petals, leaves, tendrils, dominant flower heads resemble the floral motifs used on the *jaalis*, the edges of windows and doors, the carvings and motifs on their pillars and walls, the bejeweled patterns on the ceilings and floors of the Mughal buildings (Jani & Khosla, 1990).



Figure 12. A contemporary Chikan sari created at the workshop of Abu & Sandeep.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

Abu & Sandeep's statement is useful but it possesses some shortcomings; it does not highlight a detailed comparison between *Chikan* floral motifs and architectural motifs on the Mughal buildings. It falls short of even proving the similarities between *Chikan* floral motif and the Mughal architectural motifs through the use of any compare-contrast study like that of Wolfflin or any other scholar. Additionally it excludes the usage and mention of relief and embossed decorative motifs or the mosaic tile decorations found on Mughal monuments, which bear a striking similarity to the *Chikan* floral motif used on the garment in discussion here.

WOLFFLIN'S CONCEPT OF STYLE AND CHIKAN EMBROIDERY (METHODOLOGY EXPLANATION):

Various art historians, such as EH. Gombrich, (1968) Mayer Shapiro (1965), David Summers (2003) and Theodor Adorno (1947) have contributed erudite studies in the domain of style and in the compare/contrast methods. However, Henrich Wolfflin's concept of the "Double Root of Style" (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950) is apt to do an in-depth analysis of the style and motif changes in the *Chikan* embroidery. It is

also essential in doing a compare and contrast study of the decorative motifs found on Mughal monuments and *Chikan* embroidery, since the two share similar floral motifs.

Wolfflin (1915) has discussed three types of styles- Individual Style, Period Style and National Style. A detailed discussion of Wolfflin's concept of three listed styles is essential as it helps in demonstrating the visible changes in the style and motifs used on the discussed object, the Lucknawi *ChikanSari* from Losee Collection. Additionally, a review of past literature on Lucknawi *Chikan* embroidery has been done in the article as it aids in providing a background to Wolfflin's compare and contrast principles and the methodology deployed in the paper.

Wolfflin's concept of Individual Style aids in an interpretation of the Individual specific techniques used by the *Chikan* embroiders in the era of 1950's-60's, 1970's-80's, 1980's-1990's and during the period of 1990's- 2000's and onwards. Secondly, the concept of Period Style enables us to understand the exact reasons for the preference of particular motifs and stitches and their increased and decreased usage in the *Chikan* embroidered *saris* of 1950's-60's, 1970's or those created after 1980's or later (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950). This aids in understanding the changes in the motif and style of the *Chikan* Embroidered *saris* of the above mentioned periods from 1950's- 1980's, 1980's-1990's and 1990's- 2000's and onwards. Lastly, Wolfflin's concept of National Style would help in an interpretation of the origin of the decorative motifs used in Mughal architecture and their usage on *Chikan* embroidered garments in the 16th century Mughal India. The concept of National Style would help in interpreting the evolution of *Chikan* which originated after a mixing of the European and Mughal culture. The concept of National Style illustrates the details about how different races and cultures mix to create a new style or the National Style (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950) and it is essential in an interpretation of the origin of *Chikan*. Notably, in order to understand the changes in motifs and style of the *Chikan* embroidery, it is essential to understand its origin.

Thus, in this manner the first half of the paper focuses on tracing an origin of the *Chikan* embroidery by using Wolfflin's concept of National Style as a methodology, to trace *Chikan*'s origin. And the second half of the paper uses Wolfflin's concept of Individual style and period style as a methodology to do a more technical analysis of the

various stitches, motifs and styles of the craft of *chikan* used on the Lucknawi *Chikansaris* from various eras.



Figure 13. A chikan block used to emboss designs on the garment.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

NATIONAL STYLE AND ORIGIN OF CHIKAN EMBROIDERY:

It is essential to trace *chikan* embroidery's origin before engaging in a technical analysis of the craft of *chikan* as its royal patronage and origin provides an explanation for several technical developments that took place in this craft or embroidery style as it evolved over the centuries. In this context, the evolution of *chikan* can be traced by using Wofflin's concept of National Style (1915). As defined by Wofflin, National Style is a formed over a spanned period of time i.e. when different times give birth to different art over a period. He adds that varied epoch and races interact often to create a National style. And general traits of a style ought to be considered before classifying a particular style as a National Style (Wofflin & Hottinger, 1950).

Likewise, this concept can be applied in doing a compare and contrast of decorative motifs used on Mughal Monuments with floral motifs on the *Chikan* embroidery. It can also be used to do a historical reconstruction of the usage and influence of Mughal decorative motifs on the *Chikan* Embroidery. Additionally this concept can also be used to trace *chikan's* evolution during Emperor Jahangir's reign in 16th century. The evolution of Mughal decorative motifs at Jahangir's court and its later usage on the *Chikan* garments designed by his wife, Empress Nur Jahan during that period were some of the significant incidents that led to an origin of this craft (Skelton & Tospdfield, 1982; Acidini, 2008). European craftsmen brought in the mosaic tile decoration

technique along with various other architectural designs and innovations to the Mughal Court in the late 16th century.

And Jahangir being a connoisseur of arts and architecture ordered an imitation of the European mosaic tile decorative motifs and some of the relief and embossed decorative motifs in his Mughal monuments (Acidini, 2008). Thus, the motif forms was imitated and reinterpreted in a native style, which was frequently used as an ornamental motif on the Mughal monuments. Based on these facts, an evolution of the mosaic tile and other relief and embossed decorative motifs used during Jahangir's reign and their simultaneous usage on the architectural Mughal buildings can be traced to 16th century. Additionally Nur-Jahan was the first patron and inventor of *chikan* embroidery (Skelton & Tospdfield, 1982, pp. 15-16, 30-31), &(Acidini, 2008, pp. 94-104). She was Emperor Jahangir's wife and was really inspired by the relief and embossed decorative motif, which was already being used in the decoration of the Mughal architectural buildings by her husband. Nur Jahan is credited with the invention of various kinds of textiles and thus copied the above mentioned architectural motif in her *chikan* embroidered garments. These discussions detail *chikan's* origin and highlight the reasons for a similarity between the decorative motifs from Mughal architecture and the floral *chikan* motif on the *Lucknawi Chikan sari* from the Losee collection. These facts also corroborate Abu & Sandeep's statement which asserts that the floral *Chikan motifs* on *Chikan* embroidered *saris* reflect the Mughal Traditions and are aptly similar to the decorative motifs that have been used on Mughal buildings (Jani & Khosla, 1990, pp. 4-5). It also supports the theory of compare and contrast and various similarities between the Mughal decorative motifs and floral *Chikan motifs*, proposed in the paper through the data analysis, since the discussed scholars have clearly mentioned a usage of the decorative Mughal architectural motif by Nur Jahan on her *Chikan* garments. This proves a similarity between the decorative motifs from Mughal Architecture and the floral *Chikan* motif used on the *Chikan* embroidered *saris*. It also highlights the significance and need for a comparative analysis between the two discussed motifs. Wollflin's principles of style also help to interpret the changes that took place in the original Mughal style after an influx of the European technique of mosaic tile

decorations and other innovations in the relief and embossed decorative motifs. Wollflin stated that: "...different times give birth to different art. Epoch and race often interact to create a National style" (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950).

Likewise the origin and innovations in Mughal decorative motifs (used on Mughal architecture), can be traced to an influence of the European artists on the local craftsmen at Jahangir's court. (Skelton & Tospdfield, 1982; Acidini, 2008). These versions are also supported by scholars like Skelton and Acidini whose literature has studied the influence of European arts on Mughal arts during the 16th century. The European and Mughal interaction created the developed National style of the later Mughal period frequently imitated the European mosaic tile decorations and other relief and embossed decorative technique as decorative motifs on the Mughal monuments (Jani & Khosla, 1990; Giusti, 2006). Although the concept of Nation was not prevalent during the Mughal period, yet Wolfflin's principles of National Style can be used to interpret the National Style prevalent in the Mughal Empire during Jahangir's reign. Wolfflin highlights the historical and national characteristics in context of style and states, "There are peculiarities of national Imagination which remain constant throughout all change. For instance Italy always possessed a stronger instinct for the plane than the Germanic North, where it was inherent to highlight the depths in painting" (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950).

Based on Wolfflin's discussed premise of National Style, the paper proposes that the entire Mughal Empire adhered to the same National style of the mosaic style and other innovative relief and embossed decoration on the Mughal Architectural buildings as prescribed by their Mughal Emperor. Thus an amalgamation of the European and Mughal style resulted in the developed National Style of the later Mughal period. Mosaic style decoration and other relief and embossed decorations in this style have been widely used in several Jahangiri monuments like Akbar's tomb at Sikandra and Tomb of Itimad-Ud-Daula.

The decorative relief and embossed Mughal motifs on textiles were used for the first time by Nurj ahan, who is credited with chikan embroidery's evolution and replication of decorative relief and embossed architectural motifs on her textiles (Mukherjee, 2001). She commissioned several Mughal lady embroiders in her household, to do the chikan embroidery designed by

her (Welch, 1986). This adheres to the facts stated by Skelton and Topsfield and Acidini, as discussed earlier in the paper. It also supports paper's argument concerning a compare and contrast between the Mughal architectural motifs and the floral chikan motif.

Some other notable factors ought to be considered before doing chikan's historical reconstruction and its comparative analysis with the Mughal decorative motifs (used on Mughal monuments). This includes a study of the relief and embossed decorative motifs in used Aurangzeb's monuments (Chaghatai, 1972). The Mughal monuments from Aurangzeb's era are crudely made and lack the fine qualities of the earlier Mughal periods like that of 16th century. This can be attributed to Aurangzeb's staunch religious outlook owing to which he was not a great patron for artists and craftsmen at the court. Unlike his predecessors he only built a few monuments during his rule and rarely encouraged any development of new styles of arts and crafts. Due to this, the arts declined in Aurangzeb's reign and artists and Chikan craftsmen sought refuge in the court of Nawab Asaf-Al-Daula, (ruler of Lucknow) in 17th century. In contrast to Aurangzeb, Asaf- Al- Daula was a patron of arts and architecture and promoted and developed the Chikan embroidery extensively (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).



Figure 14. Nawab Asaf - Al - Daula (1775-97), patron of chikan, Lucknow.

Source: 'India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow', Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2011).

The craft of chicken flourished and developed in Lucknow during 1750-1880 under the patronage of

Nawab Asaf-Al-Daula and other patrons of Lucknow. (Crill, 2011; Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Various factors led to the origin of the *Chikan* motif and its development in the Lucknow region. One of these factors was an influence of the Mughal architectural motifs. After this influence of the Mughal architectural motifs, the *chikan* embroidery was promoted and further developed in Lucknow region during 17th century.

This reconstruction and compare contrast can be interpreted by applying Wofflin's second concept of National Style where arts of different times give birth to different arts and epoch and races interact to create a National Style. Based on Wofflin's concept of National Style, the paper proposes that the *Chikan* motif became a national style of the Lucknow region under Asaf-Al-Daula in 1750-1880 as well as after an influence of the European mosaic tile decorations and other relief and embossed decorative motifs in Jahangir's reign (16th century).



Figure 15. Mughal Architectural motif used on Chikan garments.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

A lot of *Chikan* craftsmen had migrated to Lucknow after a deterioration and lack of patronage of Arts during Aurangzeb's era. These craftsmen were supported at other places in Northern India, particularly Lucknow. They enjoyed the patronage of Nawab Asaf-Al-Daula who developed the craft of *Chikan* during his rule (Crill, 2011). It is from then on that *Chikan* became an exclusive handicraft of the Lucknow and has flourished since then in the Lucknow region (Crill, 2011).



Figure 16. Shawl with Chikan work (detail) early 19th century. It has a morphed Royal Fish motif, usually visible on the Mughal Monuments.

Source: 'India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow', *Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (2011).



Figure 17. Mahi -ye maratib" or royal fish motif (fish of dignity) associated with the Nawabs of Lucknow was awarded only to the Mughal's highest ranking military commanders. It began to be used extensively on the *Chikan* embroidery in Lucknow during the early 19th century.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

Thus, Wofflin's concept of National Style is essential in tracing *Chikan* embroidery's origin as it illustrates how

various cultures and races mix together to create a National style- and the *chikan* embroidery was created after a mixing of European and Mughal cultures during the 16th century.

INDIVIDUAL STYLE: Notably, Wolfflin's concept of Individual style and Period Style is equally significant as it helps in doing a technical and comparative analysis of *chikan* embroidery used on the Lucknawi *Chikan sari* from different eras.

Wolfflin describes this concept as: "Individual Style is an expression of the individual temperament of an artist. Some of the key features visible in the artwork, like an artist's specific technique, his defined treatment of medium, material, subject matter, proportions, and forms, volumes of figures, treatment of anatomy, light and color which aid in distinguishing his work from another fellow artist. The specific treatment of the same subject matter by two different artists also aids in differentiating between their works" (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950).

These distinguishing factors embody the concept of Individual style cited by Wollflin, who had applied the above listed features in distinguishing between the works of two artists: Bonticelli and Lorenzo. Wollflin had distinguished between the female nudes drawn by the discussed artists (Bonticelli and Lorezo), on the basis of the difference in the stature and volume of their figures, curves of their arm, among others. Wolfflin's concept had proved how these characteristics formed the essential character of the Individual styles of discussed artists and also reflected their individual temperament. (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950).

Although, Wolfflin has not discussed any embroidery motifs in his concept of Individual style yet his principles concerning a distinction between the works of an individual artist from that of another fellow artist on the basis of specific technique, material usage, color, and the specific treatment of the same subject matter can be applied to distinguish between the *Chikan* embroidered *saris* created by *Chikan* embroiders in the contemporary era after 1980's and the previous era of 1950's-1970's.

Clare M Wilkinson Weber (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999) and the fashion designers, Abu Jani & Sandeep Khosla (Jani & Khosla, 1990) also demonstrate a change in the style and motifs of the *Chikan* embroidered *saris* created during the two above mentioned era's i.e. 1950-1970's and after 1980's onwards. These scholars discuss and demonstrate a change in the *chikan* embroidered *saris*

by way of changes in the usage of medium (the thread color used for embroidery), material (the cloth used for embroidery) and technique (usage of stitches). This is similar to Wolfflin's distinction between the works of two individual artists on the basis of specific technique, material usage, color and treatment of same subject matter. Hence, the apparent changes in the *Chikan* embroidered *saris*, based on Wolfflin's principles have been- a change in the usage of material (in the creation of *Chikansaris*) from the silk or *tussar* and cotton in the era of 1950's-1970's and later on a preference for the usage of georgette and more of cotton during the contemporary era of 1980's and onwards.



Figure 18. Contemporary Chikan sari after 1980's from the collection of Abu Jani & Sandeep Khosla (fashion designers) credited with the revival of chikan.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

The Lucknawi *Chikansari* from Losee collection has *chikan* floral motifs scattered unevenly all over it (figure 8). These motifs are embroidered in black thread and stand out over the pastel green color *sari* made in georgette material. The border area of the *sari* has dense closely embroidered *Chikan* floral motifs. The georgette *Chikan Saris* like the one in discussion is a result of new style which was an innovation of fashion designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla in 1987. This new style was in contrast to the earlier usage of cotton material in the *Chikan Saris*. In this context, Jani and Khosla add: "When we started

twenty-five years ago, it was all really haphazard. No one was doing Chikan. It had all died out. They were doing them in stamps in blocks but it wasn't done like it was before" (Tse, 2012).

But the designer duo wanted to bring out a new innovation in this ancient technique so they had to seek out older women whose mothers and grandmothers had passed on the *Chikan* embroidery tradition and skills to them (Tse, 2012).

The designers had encountered a lot of resistance from these traditional embroiders when they informed them about their wishes of coming out with a new *chikan* collection using the georgette material. They had to face the unyielding attitude of the traditional embroiders who were still wary of their idea of using a new technique and a new a completely different material of georgette in *Chikan* garments. Owing to these difficulties, the designer duo could come out with their first new collection only after two and a half years. Their collection was striking and demonstrated a usage of new techniques that had never been attempted before in the craft of *chikan*. This information is essential as it provides a historical backdrop of the usage of the georgette material in the discussed, *Lucknawi Chikan Sari*. Notably the discussion also provides a viewpoint concerning the first change in the style of the *Lucknawi Chikan sari* via the usage of the georgette material in 1987. This usage of new material was in contrast to the earlier usage of cotton material in the making of *Lucknawi chikan saris*. At that time cotton was the only fabric that was used to make *Lucknawi chikan saris*. Earlier Tussar or silk material was used in the *chikan saris* of highest qualities, but not anymore" (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

Wolfflin's principle of distinction between the works of two artists on the basis of technique and specific treatment of same subject matter can also be applied to distinguish between the works of Individual *Chikan* embroidered *saris* created by two separate craftsmen during the periods of 1950's- 1970's, 1970's- 1980's and onwards. This distinction is done on the basis of the techniques used by the craftsmen in these different eras. Contemporary *Chikan* saris created in 1980's onwards use lesser *Chikan* stitches (about 2-5) in their motifs in contrast to the *Chikan* embroidered *saris* which use more stitches (about 10-30) in each motif (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).



Figure 19. A Contemporary Chikan sari.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers*(1990).

A detailed discussion on numerous *chikan* stitches used in the making of floral motifs on the *Chikan sari* in discussion here, and their comparative analysis with the types of stitches used on the similar saris during 1960's - 80's also highlights visible style and motif changes in the *Lucknaw chikansari* over passing years. The style and motif changes in these garments are recognized on the basis of preferred technique used by individual *chikan* embroiders during the two discussed periods. Weber's literature is helpful in doing this comparative analysis as it describes various types of *Chikan* stitches and their usage over the discussed *Lucknawi Chikan saris* from various periods (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

It can be concluded that the scattered floral motifs visible all over the *sari* have been embroidered using the *chikan* stitch- *tepci*(recognizable by a large quantity of stitches distributed all over the garment and usually used to make such floral motifs on the *sari*-) while the closely embroidered floral motifs in the border area have been created using the commercial *murri* work which includes about four to six stitches like *golmurri*, *lambimurri*, *phanda*, and possibly *jora*, *kauri*, and *kil*. In earlier *chikan* garments from 1950's-60's or those created before these periods, about 32 different stitches were used collectively in contrast to the contemporary *chikan* garments from the late 80's when only about 6-8

stitches are used on the *saris*. In a way this hints at a deterioration of the skill set by a reduction in the number of stitches used on the *chikan* saris. Thus, a change in the *chikan* floral motifs via a reduction in the number of *chikan* stitches to create those motifs on the *chikan* saris have led to a deterioration in the skill set of the craft of contemporary *Chikan* created after the late 1980's (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

Weber's literature does not discuss any style based historian while distinguishing between the style and embroidered *chikan* works of individual *chikan* embroiders from the contemporary era after 1970's or earlier (1950's-60's), when embroiders created authentic *chikan saris*. However, this scholar's modes of distinction between the *chikan* embroidered *saris* of two periods (1950's-1970's or after 1980's and onwards), and the various changes in the motifs and style brought in by the individual *chikan* embroiders of the two discussed periods (stated in the discussed literature), is similar to Wolfflin's mode of distinction between the works of individual artists on the basis of technique, material, medium, color and treatment of subject matter. Following a similar distinctive mode as Wolfflin; Weber's literature also uses these three criteria of technique and treatment of subject matter, (as used in Wolfflin's literature to distinguish between the works of various artists) for judging the quality of the *chikan* embroidery through: minuteness, number of stitches, and clarity. In this respect, Weber informs: ".....the minute and an increased number of stitches contribute substantially to the achievement of evenness and regularity in a *chikan* embroidered sari" (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

Weber also narrates an example to substantiate the claim of judging a *chikan* embroidered *sari* on the basis of the number of stitches used in the creation of *chikan* motifs. The scholar states: "The usual contemporary usage of one to "two" surface stitches in a *bakhya* embroidered patti (leaf) is not considered good. Meanwhile, a usage of up to ten to thirty stitches in the creation of a single patti or leaf is considered good and this mode and style was followed in the creation of *chikan* embroidered saris during the period of 1960's-1970's" (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

In the case of the *sari* in discussion (*chikan sari* from Joy Losee collection) just two- three stitches have been used in the creation of *patti* or leaves in contrast to the earlier usage of about 10-30 stitches. A *jaali* stitch is another type of stitch where the sheer number of needle strokes

is important in judging its quality, for lesser the number of stitches produced than for the apparent absence of holes in these motifs. For instance each *phul* (flower) in the *jaali* work of a good quality *chikan* embroidered *saris* about 30 to 100 years old should have at least as many as one hundred holes, in contrast to the contemporary market *chikan saris* from the periods of 1980's and onwards which have just 20 holes in the *jaali* work (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).



Figure 20. A contemporary *Chikan sari* created after 1980's with *Jaali* and *Bakhya* work.

Source: 'Classic *Chikan*', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

The discussed *sari* from the Losee collection has less than twenty holes in the *jaali* work on it (figure 8) which hints towards a deterioration in the skill set of the contemporary *chikan* embroiders. The *Jaali* work forms an essential part of the good high quality *chikan* embroidery and very often a garment is not considered authentic *chikan* work if the *jaali* work is missing in it (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

The good embroidered *chikan saris* of the 1950's-1960's or those created prior to these periods were densely embroidered as the sparseness and vast unembroidered areas was considered an understatement in the skill set of the embroiders (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Likewise, the current *sari* in discussion (from Losee collection) has a lot of sparse unembroidered areas, where the floral motifs are scattered unevenly over the garment (figure 8). This demonstrates deterioration in the skill set of contemporary *chikan* embroidery used on the *saris* of current era like the one in discussion here, due to changes in the embroidery style, motif placement and

patterns. Thus, the quantity of embroidery is an important indicator of quality in the case of *Chikan saris*. This information is useful in doing an analysis of the changed floral motifs over the course of time from 1950's or earlier to the current era and trace the reasons for a deterioration in the skill set of *chikan* embroiders. Various reasons can be attributed for skill deterioration like a remarkable change in style and motif and specifically the usage of lesser stitches and motifs on the sparsely embroidered contemporary *chikan saris* created after 1980's. This style and usage is in contrast to the earlier usage of more motifs and stitches on the densely embroidered *chikan saris* from the periods of 1950's-1970's. While doing this analysis, Weber's literature uses Wolfflin's concept of distinction between the works of an artist on the basis of their individual technique. Thus, a comparative analysis of embroidery techniques of two individual *chikan* embroiders from 1950's-1970's and those during the period of 1980's and onwards can be done using Wolfflin's concept of Individual Style, as it aids in interpreting and noticing the stylistic and motif changes in the *chikan* embroidered *sari* created during various periods.

Moreover Wolfflin's concept of distinction between the works of two individual artists can also be applied to study a change in the style and motif of the *chikan* embroidered *sari*. This mode of distinction has also been seen in Weber's literature, which highlights a change of medium through the usage of colored thread and white thread for *chikan* embroidery by *chikan* embroiders during the periods of (1980's and onwards) and 1950's-1970's (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). The real and authentic *chikan saris* were made with white thread on white cloth. Highly skilled embroiders of today disapprove the use of color in the base material or thread (used in embroidery). The earlier *chikan saris* in the 1950's- 70' in cotton material were usually made in white embroidery on the white cloth. (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). The colored base cloth is commonly found in market *chikan* work sold in the shops, but the current use of colored threads in the decade of 2000's is more unusual on the *chikan saris* as they were usually used on the *chikan* suits (*salwar Kameez*) in the early 1990's. This demonstrates another change in the style of the *Lucknawi chikan sari*. Additionally this discussion is notable as it illustrates a significant stylistic change in the *chikan* embroidered *saris* created after 1970's. This change is the usage of color base cloth and colored

thread embroidery in the creation of *chikan saris* during this period.

CLEARNESS AND UNCLEARNESS:

Apart from this, Wolfflin's principle of the treatment of same subject matter in a specific manner by two individual artists can also be a distinguishing factor between their works. Likewise, the treatment of same floral motifs in the *chikan* embroidery by craftsmen of contemporary period and the previous decades can also be used to distinguish between their works. In this context, the minuteness and clarity can also be a factor in judging the quality of *chikan* embroidery rendered on the *sari*. The attribute for these is that minute and clean embroidery denotes that an embroiderer's hand is *saff*(clean) and thus making an explicit connection between an embroiderer's control of her hands and the quality of her work. "Any superior embroidery is clean and clear", informs Weber (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Moreover, the quality of workmanship is directly related to the minuteness, number and clarity of stitches. Encountered together, these attributes define a piece of work as *Mahin* (fine, thin) as opposed to *mota*(thick, coarse). The term *mota* is used to address coarse and thick, (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). This notion can be concluded by adding that contemporary *chikan saris* created after 1980's and onwards prefer a usage of coarse and crude embroidery in contrast to fine embroidery which was used in the earlier period of 1950's-1970's (Wilkinson-Weber, September 2004). Such crude and coarse *Bakhya* embroidery generally used in the current *chikan* embroideries is also noticeable in the discussed *sari* (*one from the Losee Collection*). The *Bakhya* and commercial *Murri* work are crude work and can be categorized or addressed as the *mota* work. Such type of *Mota* (coarse) work is in contrast to the *mahin* (thin, fine) embroidery as seen in the fine *murri* work stitch, which was commonly used in *Chikan saris* of earlier era (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Thus, in theoretical approach to an observation of the appropriate contrast of *mota* and *patla* in the choice of stitches by a *chikan* embroider's distinguishes a fine embroider, and a highly skilled craft from a crudely stitched and embroidered *chikan* garment. A distinction of the *Mota*(thick and coarse) and *Patla* (fine, thin and clear) stitches illustrates the deterioration in the style and motif of *chikan* embroidered *saris* of the discussed periods owing to a lack of clarity in the embroidered motif (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).



Figure 21. A contemporary Chikan sari with Jaali and Bakhya work.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers*(1990).

Interestingly, this concept can be related to Wolfflin's concept of Clearness and Unclearness (Absolute and Relative Clearness) stated in the scholar's literature on style where he states that, "Every age required of its art that it should be clear, and to call a representation unclear has always implied a criticism."

Wolfflin adds that the notion of clearness in the qualitative sense helped to distinguish between the art of Classics and the primitives. "While, the Classic Art aimed at revealing the motive in absolute clarity, the purpose of the Baroque is not to be unclear, but to make clarity look like an accidental by-product," cites Wolfflin (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950). Moreover the concept of Clarity was not present from the beginning but it had gradually to be achieved (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950). Similarly, the concept of Clarity and unclarity in the case of *Chikan* embroidery was not present from the beginning, but developed gradually over the years through the changes in the appearance of the *Chikan* stitches in the thick and thinly embroidered stitches used in the floral motifs during the periods of 1950's-1980's and onwards. Thus, a comparative analysis of the stitches used (during the discussed periods) in the creation of *Chikan* floral motifs on Lucknawi *chikan sari* is done using Wolfflin's concept of clarity (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950) as it aids in interpreting the changes in the motif and style of the *Chikan* embroidered saris.

Wolfflin's clarity principles state: "Every form has certain modes of appearance in which highest degree of distinctness resides. The first of these involves that it should be visible down to its minutest details," cites Wolfflin (Wolfflin & Hottinger, 1950).

Likewise *Chikan* embroidery done by the early embroiders in the 1950's-60's aimed to achieve a fine work and stitch and an absolute clarity in contrast to the later coarse thickly embroidered stitches and *Chikan* work created by the embroiders during the period of 1980's and onwards.

Additionally, Wolfflin's concept of Individual Style (1915); that reflects the individual temperament of an artist can also be applied to do a stylistic analysis of various *Chikan* motifs and observe the manner in which they form an Individual expression of the style of the Lucknawi *Chikan* embroiders.



Figure 22. Various types of stitches- Bakhya, Murri, and Jaali work in a contemporary Chikan garment.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

A stylistic analysis of Lucknawi *Chikan* embroiders could lead to an identification of some of the *Chikan* motifs like *Jaali*, *bakhiya*, *murri*, *tepci*, *phanda* and more as the

exclusive motifs used only by the *Chikan* embroiders in Lucknow. These motifs are used collectively in the *Chikan* garments manufactured by embroiders in Lucknow and thus reflect the individual style of those *Lucknawi* craftsmen.

In this respect, the skill set and techniques of the various *Chikan* embroiders and their sociological backdrop can also be identified with the help of these *Chikan* motifs. "Most embroiders often know only one stitch which they execute skillfully in the garment", cites Weber (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999).

Usually all garments are embroidered by a varied set of embroiders who contribute collectively in various stages towards its completion. For instance, the *Bakhya* motif is a ubiquitous form/motif which uses only one stitch. This motif bears a close resemblance to the western herringbone stitch, usually embroidered on the reverse side of a garment (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). An ideal *Bakhya* would show loosely applied stitches devoid of any opaque area on the right side of the garment with stitches rarely touching each other. This skillset can be mastered easily and is often considered to be coarse and crude motif done by the low-skilled villagers. It can be completed quickly (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). In contrast to this, *Murristitch* requires a slightly higher skill set and includes four and six stitches which can be distinguished easily. This motif is embroidered by the city embroiders. *Phandawork* is made in villages and just includes one knot-like stitch. *Tepci* is done by villagers and city-dwellers and is identified by numerous stitches distributed all over the garment, often a *sari*. It is done with a thin thread and looks like a running stitch. *Jaali* is visible alongside *bakhya* and *murri* in a *Chikan* garment but is done by separate craftsmen. This motif involves the usage of a specialized needle from *bakhya* and *murri*. One can see a lot of garments featuring the standalone *bakhya* work but most *Chikan* garments feature a combination of these motifs. Generally, the *Chikan* embroidery is made in two separate production phases: first the rural embroiders do the *bakhya* work (motif) and then the urban embroiders finish the garment by adding the *jaali* work (motif) (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). Thus, this information aids in interpreting the individual style of the *Lucknawi Chikan* and the exclusive motifs used by them which help in understanding the key features of the *Chikan* embroidered garments and also aids in differentiating it from that of the other textile embroiders.



Figure 23. Female chikan embroiders working.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', WE Graphic Designers (1990).

An identification of various *Chikan* motifs also helps to interpret the differences in the various *Chikan* motifs, the skill set of their creators and their usage in the garments. Moreover, it creates an understanding of the production cycle of the *Chikan* motifs. Nevertheless, this distinction of *Chikan* motifs is similar to Wollflin's mode of distinguishing between the works and skill set of two individual artists through the treatment of their forms, volume of figures and more. Notably, a particular motif-*Bakhiya* is a more traditional *Chikan* motif embroidered by the old village craftsmen and is one of the earliest *Chikan* motifs used by the authentic Lucknawi *Chikan* embroiders which also expresses their traditional nature and ideas about the Lucknawi culture and heritage (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999). This in a way shows how a particular *Chikan* motif reflects the individual temperament of its creator. Thus it embodies the individual style of the Lucknawi *Chikan* embroiders.

Apart from the discussed *chikan* motifs like *Bakhiya*, *Murri* among others; there is other exclusive *Chikan* motifs as well that are frequently used in *chikan* embroidery. These exclusive *chikan* motifs have only been highlighted briefly in earlier discussions that focus mainly on the more prevalent and popular motifs like *bakhya* and *murri* among others in the contemporary *Chikan* garments. However, the briefly discussed additional motifs are *Kauri*, *mur-mora*, *chikan kighans* among others. Sheila Paine's literature provides more information on these other *chikan* motifs. (Paine, 1989). This literature further adheres to the concept of Individual style and the motifs used by the *Lucknawi*

Chikan embroiders and aids in an interpretation of these motifs through Wollflin's methodology. This information is also significant in tracing the evolution and changes in the various *Chikan* motifs and their increased and decreased usage with the passage of time.

CONCLUSION

Historiography is essential in laying down the groundwork for *Chikan*'s historical reconstruction, production cycle, and style and motif changes. While Wollflin's concept of National style aids in tracing *chikan* embroidery's origin during the 16th century Mughal India, it also aids in doing *chikan*'s comparative analysis with relief and embossed decorations and mosaic tile decorations along with the *Jali* motifs used in Mughal Architecture. The technique of mosaic tile decorations and new designs in relief and embossed decorative motifs were brought to the Mughal court in 16th century by the European Craftsmen. At that time Emperor Jahangir was ruling over India. He became fascinated by these European architectural designs and techniques and started using it in Mughal architecture that he commissioned during his reign. These facts have been highlighted by Topsfield, Acidini and Welch. Wollflin's concept of National style illustrates how a new national style was created after a mixing of two styles. This concept can be used to understand the origin of the National style during Jahangir's era, in which mosaic tile decorations and new designs in relief and embossed decorative motifs were used in the Mughal architecture. This motif had evolved in India, after mixing two styles- Mughal and European.

During the same period, the relief and embossed decorative motifs and the *jaali* motif in Mughal architecture inspired the various floral motifs and particularly the "*Jaali motif*" in the Lucknawi *Chikan* embroidery. The *jaali* motif bears a striking similarity to the *jaalis* or the architectural patterns and designs of the windows (also addressed as *jaalis*) in Mughal monuments. The paper demonstrates that Nur Jahan, the Mughal empress was *Chikan*'s first patron and authorized the Mughal court embroiders to copy the relief and embossed Mughal architectural motifs on the garments. These facts have been discussed through the scholarships of Mukherjee, Topsfield, Acidini and Jani and Khosla.

Additionally, the paper illustrates that Wollflin's concept of Individual and Period style can be used as a methodology to do a comparative analysis of the changes

in the style and *Chikan* motifs of the Lucknawi *Chikan saris* from the era of 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's onwards. There had been a change in the usage of the medium (the thread color used for embroidery), material (the cloth used for embroidery) and technique (usage of stitches) during the above listed periods as discussed in detail through a review of past scholarship. Earlier *Chikan saris* were created using silk or tussar in 1950's to 1960's but that gave way to cotton in 1970's and eventually to a preference for the usage of georgette material while creating the Lucknawi *Chikan* embroidered saris from late 1980's onwards. The designer duo Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla were the first ones to start using the georgette material in the creation of the *Lucknawi Chikan saris* in 1987. These facts have been highlighted through Jani and Khosla's scholarship. Other stylistic changes in the craft of *Chikan* embroidery over a span of various years have also been discussed in the paper through a review of past scholarship. This review and analysis demonstrate that the changes in craft of *chikan* include a usage of lesser *chikan* stitches (about 2-5) in the creation of motifs in Lucknawi *Chikan saris* created in 1980's and onwards. This is in contrast to the *Chikan* embroidered *saris* from 1970's that use more stitches (about 10-30) in each motif. In a similar context the *Lucknawi chikan saris* from 1950's -60's used about 32 different stitches in the creation of a *chikan* motif on a *Lucknawi sari*. Thus, it hints at a deterioration of skill set by a reduction in the number of stitches used on the *chikan saris*. On the whole, this mode of technical distinction between the *chikan* embroidered *saris* of three different eras- 1950's-60's, 70's-80's and 1980's onwards is similar to Wollflin's distinction between the works of individual artists on the basis of technique, material, medium, color and treatment of subject matter. The paper also uses these three criteria of technique and treatment of subject matter, for judging the quality of the *chikan* embroidery through: minuteness, number of stitches and clarity. It cites that minute and an increased number of stitches contribute substantially to the achievement of evenness and regularity in a *chikan* embroidered *sari*.

The Lucknawi *Chikan saris* also underwent a change of medium in the various eras. The *saris* from 1950's-1970 were usually made in white embroidery on the white cloth. From 1990's the colored threads were being used in the *chikan* embroidered garments but mostly on salwar suits and rarely on *saris*. It is mostly after 2000's

onwards that colored thread and colored base began to be used on *Lucknawi chikan* embroidered *saris*. Minuteness and clarity can also be a factor in judging the quality of the *chikan* embroidery on the *sari*. In this context minuteness can be judged by the number and quality of stitches. The paper proves that these attributes together define a piece of work as *Mahin* (thin, fine) as opposed to *mota* (thick, coarse). The *Bakhya* stitch used in the craft of *chikan* is an example of *Mota* or inferior quality work whereas the *Murri* stitch used in the craft of *chikan* denotes *mahin* or superior quality fine work.

During 1950's to 70's the *chikan saris* had more fine stitches which have now reduced to a minimal level since 1980's onwards. Now it is rare to find the *Murri* stitches in the Lucknawi *chikan saris* which mostly have thick coarse embroidery or the *Bakhya* stitches on them. This illustrates the deterioration in the style and motif of Lucknawi *Chikan* embroidered *saris* during the four discussed decades.



Figure 24. Pechni stitch impression on a Chikan block.

Source: 'Classic Chikan', *WE Graphic Designers* (1990).

During 1950's to 70's the *chikan saris* had more fine stitches which have now reduced to a minimal level since 1980's onwards. Now it is rare to find the *Murri* stitches in the Lucknawi *chikan saris* which mostly have thick coarse embroidery or the *Bakhya* stitches on them. This illustrates the deterioration in the style and motif of Lucknawi *Chikan* embroidered *saris* during the four discussed decades.

The paper's technical analysis of the Lucknawi *Chikan saris* on the basis of minuteness, number and clarity of stitches can be related to Wolfflin's concept of Clearness and Unclearness (Absolute and Relative Clearness) stated in his scholarship on style. Wolfflin states in his clarity principles that every form has certain modes of appearance in which highest degree of distinctness resides. The first of these involves that it should be visible down to its minutest details. Likewise the early Lucknawi *chikan* embroiders in 1950's-70's aimed to achieve a fine work, stitch and absolute clarity in contrast to the later coarse thickly embroidered stitches and *chikan* work of the later embroiders from 1980's and onwards.

Wolfflin states that the concept of clarity never existed originally but it had to be gradually achieved. Similarly, the concept of clarity and unclarity was not present from the beginning in the case of *chikan* embroidery but developed gradually over a span of several years. This change occurred through an evolution and development that took place in the appearance of the floral motifs, rendered through thick and thinly embroidered stitches on the Lucknawi *Chikan saris* from 1950's- 2000's onwards. Thus, in this manner Wolfflin's concept of clarity in the above discussed period aids in understanding and analyzing the various changes in the motif and style of the *chikan* embroidered *saris*. Additionally Wolfflin's compare and contrast principles and his concept of Individual Style and Personal Style contribute in doing a technical analysis of the *Chikan* embroidered *saris*. Equally significant is Wolfflin's concept of National Style as it helps in tracing *Chikan* embroidery's origin and royal patronage. Henceforth Wolfflin's Compare and Contrast principles can be used as a methodology to do *Chikan* embroidery's historical reconstruction, trace its origin and royal patronage and evaluate its various stitches and other aspects of this popular embroidery from Lucknow.

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