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## The Poetry Created By Threads-Chamba Rumal

Preeti Sharma

Assistant Professor

Department of Fashion design

Chandigarh school of Business

Ruchi

Department of Fashion design

Chandigarh school of business

### Abstract

India is a fertile ground for the development of several enthralling arts and crafts styles. Himachal Pradesh's hill state has a history of different art methods, with the townships of Guler, Basohli, Kangra, Chamba, and Mandi serving as the primary art schools. It has many more art forms to its credit including magnificent pictorial art of murals and miniatures, but the scenic Chamba Rumal stands out. This needle art is so near to the Pahadi miniatures and murals in its vivacity, vividness, and accuracy that it appears to be their copy on fabric. It is also known as "Needle Painting" due to the similarities. This folk art was often done on household items such as Rumal (Coverlet), Cap (joji), Hand Fan, Choli (blouse), and so on. Among these, Rumal was given a particular position in the world and became known as 'Chamba Rumal.' With royal support, the peasant essence of this art gained a new depth as a classical genre. The method was borrowed from folk art, while the themes were from Pahadi paintings.

Key words:- Chamba rumal,Folk art,Embroidery

### Introduction

The Himachal Pradesh high station of Chamba, where it has been practiced for generations, gives the Chamba Rumal its name. It is one of the oldest ancient tourist locations in the state, with the first records of the area dating back to the second century BC. Although the area is well-known for its history, architecture, and scenery, the local people are also well-known for their arts and crafts, particularly the little Pahari paintings. Since its alleged inception in the area in the 17th century, the Pahari school of painting has had royal patronage. Although small Pahari paintings are the type most frequently associated with the word, the term also refers to paintings and murals. The Chamba Rumals' exquisite embroidery, which incorporates tiny art, is also a product of the art movement. Chamba Rumals are often fashioned from cloth that is cut into squares or rectangles of various sizes. Experts in miniature art generally draw the base art, which is distinguished by its delicate lines. After the artwork is finished, the cloth is painstakingly stitched with embroidery, which is typically done by women. In the Chamba region, there are two streams of needlework. The first is an illustration of folk art, which has straightforward motifs with vivid colours and uneven stitching. The second stream is the traditional style, often known as "dorukha tanka." It is crafted with delicate lines of challenging double-

running stitches (long & short stitch), attractive, soft colours, and a harmonious composition. Using this method, the fabric's reverse side is created with a mirror image pattern. While the classical style of embroidery was developed by the elite class and heavily influenced by Pahadi paintings, the folk style was created by women in rural households and used to embellish everyday items like caps, cholis (blouses), hand held fans, cushion covers, gomukhis (rosary pouches), rumal, and chaupar. The folk style, which was popular for a very long period, was greatly influenced by the mannerism of "Pahadi" paintings. The folk needlework style was transformed by expert craftsmen, leading to the development of the classical embroidered style.

## History

The Chamba Rumal is a type of hand needlework that has its roots in the Chamba Valley, a prosperous mountainous region of North India in the 18th and early 20th centuries. It has also been referred to as "Paintings in Embroidery" since the topic is comparable to those produced on miniature paintings. In the 17th century, Chamba Rumal needlework was performed by queens and women of royal families for bridal dowries, significant presents, and ceremonial covers. In the Royal households, it was customary for the relatives of the bride and groom to exchange gifts as a sign of goodwill. The art gradually spread outside the palace boundaries as local craftspeople, particularly women, started to practise it. A Chumba Rumal is said to have been stitched in the 16th century by Bebe Nanki, the sister of the Sikh spiritual leader Guru Nanak, and it is now on display at the Hoshiarpur shrine in the state. In 1883, Raja Gopal Singh sent the British a Chamba Rumal that was embroidered with a scene from the Mahabharata. This excellent example of this needlework was eventually donated to the Victoria & Albert Museum's collection in London.

The Pahadi paintings had such a strong impact on the Chamba Rumal that, in addition to the Chamba School, the Guler, Kangra, Basohali, Jammu, Nurpur, and Mandi art schools' influences can also be observed on these Rumals. There are several examples that demonstrate the impact of these Pahadi paintings on the Rumals that may be found in numerous museums and private collections.

These Rumals have scenes from several well-known tales, rites, and mythical topics, just like Pahadi paintings do. On the Chamba Rumal, themes related to Lord Krishna's life, tales from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata Purana, settings of romance and dressing, and representations of many facets of love from the Nayak-Nayika and Rag-Ragini subjects were extremely skillfully embroidered. Additionally, several other image collections and public sights were also used as themes.

The following examples make it clear how influential Pahadi paintings were on these Rumals. Although the Rumals come in a variety of shapes and sizes, Pahari Painting is the motif embroidered on them. While some examples involve narration of an occurrence or tale, others have a single topic. We detect single, numerous, as well as tale narrative elements on the Rumals, which is an interesting observation given that all the Rumals do not follow the same pattern.

The "Rasmandala" was the most popular and beloved topic for embroiderers. This Rumal which depicts a fascinating portion of Rasamandala's single scene, is kept in a private collection. Shown are Lord Krishna and a female Gopi. Two devotees tend to Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi as they sit in "Padmasana" in the center of the circle formed by the companions performing the Rasa (Group Dance). Below them, two cows are shown facing each other and calmly listening to the music being played by a musician sitting between them; the cows are likely spellbound and enraptured by the sweet music played by the musician. The scene's spacing, the characters' proportions, the placement of the banana trees, lotuses, and peacocks, among other details, are all masterfully planned. The themes are well rendered with a vibrant colour scheme. The Pahadi paintings' concept or subject is extremely similar to this one as well, as are the drapes covering Krishna and other dancing figures.

## Material:

Since it's typically unbleached for the raw look, hand spun thin fabric like Mulmal/Malmal or hand spun hand-woven khaddar is white or cream in colour. Untwisted silken floss in a range of colours is used as the thread and creates the illusion of smoothness and glossiness.

## Motifs

A typical image on chamba rumal samples shows a couple of dancing women circling a plantain tree. With the use of a needle and thread, the embroidery technique is referred to as a type of painting on cloth on which different topics are represented. Scenes from Indian mythology, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Ras Lila, Krishna Lila, Pahari paintings, hunting scenes, wedding scenes, and dice games are frequently shown motifs. Although Rasamandal was the Rumal's most well-known topic, other common topics included hunting, Nayika Bhed, the Shiva family, and the Mahabharata. The "Krishna Lila," like in the paintings, is a popular subject.

A variety of geometric and floral patterns, as well as scenes from battles, buildings, and hunting adventures, have been skillfully embroidered on fabric. In an antique Chamba rumal, Raslila. Deities are represented in the center area, particularly Lord Vishnu in his various guises. There are writings on certain objects. Additionally pictured were trees, birds, human people, and animals. The parrot, peacock, duck, and swan are examples of bird themes. Leaping horses and tigers are among the animal motifs. The cypress and plantain trees, which are twisted and loaded with blooms and fruits to indicate fertility, are among the tree motifs.



Ras mandal motif



Chamba rumal

Stitches used in Chamba rumal:

Do-rukha' – the double satin stitch

The do-rukha stitch was used to embroider the Chamba Rumal, which is a double - satin stitch that, as the name says, can be viewed from two (do) sides or perspectives (rukha). The stitch is continued both backward and forward and covers both sides of the material, resulting in a smooth, flat finish that resembles colours put into a miniature picture.

There are no apparent knots, and the embroidered rumal can be seen from both sides. As a result, it becomes reversible. To outline the figures, a basic stem stitch with black silk thread is utilized. Other stitches such as the cross stitch, buttonhole stitch, long and short stitch, herringbone stitch, and pattern darning were also employed on occasion.

Dandi Tanka the stem stitch

The outline in black thread is a distinct feature of the chamba rumal. After filling in the colorful threads in the figures and floral designs, they are eventually encircled with a fine line worked out in black thread, which appears to offer the strong effect found in pahari miniature painting.



Front and Back

Colors:

Chamba rumal is so colorful that a single sample of one hue cannot be seen. Earlier samples, on the other hand, were mostly blue. Green, orange, and yellow are some of the other hues. If a Lord Krishna pattern was employed, the torso was embroidered in blue, while the hands and feet were stitched in crimson or mauve (shades of red). Colors were picked for their diversity (they were never repeated) rather than their suitability.

The embroidery thread used is called "Do-rukha," which means "Double satin stitch," and it looks precisely the same on both sides. The work on both sides of the cloth is so intricate that it is impossible to discern the proper side from the wrong. When required, stem stitch is utilized, and buttonhole stitch is used to complete the edges.

The Role of Painter

The technique of Chamba rumal was a collaborative effort in which a pahari painter sketched the topics on a piece of fabric and women embroiderers worked on it with silken threads, resulting in the magnificent artwork rumal. The painter's brush was replaced by a delicate needle, cloth by handmade paper, and colorful threads by paints.

The Chamba rumal designs were never traced; instead, they were done in a swish without breaking the line. The Pahari Painters' hands were so skilled that they drew on the fabric with a brush in either black or sanguine colour. Drawing traces can be seen in certain rumals where the silky threads have peeled off.

Conclusion:

Rumal needlework was one-of-a-kind and precisely made, with a stunning range of stitches in technique and ornamental characteristics. The combination of darning and satin stitches was masterfully modified by artists to provide the trade unrivaled attributes. It was clear that these traits were essential to needlework and needed to be documented in order to restore the craft to its rightful place.

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