6. Introduction

There is perhaps no feature of Indian Art that manifests so great a diversity nor so many points of interest as that of wood work. No aspect of Indian Art can have so much to teach the student as that of wood work.¹

Wood Carving is one of the marvellous crafts of Kashmir. When a commoner looks on a Wood Carved article, he losts in an imaginative world by thinking that whether really these are the human hands and mind which work together to create such an artistic creation. The designs are developed free-hand by Kashmiri artisans. These artistic designs have become an important field of intellectual property which accords protection to them in domestic as well as international markets. In contemporary period, these creations are traced to their origin as they are intimately associated with a particular place and are protected as Geographical Indications against unscrupulous traders who come to produce worthless imitations of these crafts. At the same time GIs give the consumers the proper value of their money which they spend for purchasing these articles.

Walnut Wood Carving has a dark grain structure which adds to the aesthetic sense of the viewers and consumers. It is a registered GI. It was filed for registration as GI under Application Number 182. The application was filed by the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar which is a Registered Society under the Jammu and Kashmir Societies Registration Act, 1998.²

6.1. Proof of Origin with Historical Reference

Wood crafts related to architecture began to flourish during the period of King Ananta(1028-1063) when he moved his royal palace to the left bank between

2 Registration Number 4332 S/2003.
Purshyar and the present Kutkol canal and these edifices are described by the 11th century poet Bilhana in his Vikramanka Devacharitam.¹

There was most definitely a tradition of temple and house construction in ancient Kashmir pre-dating even the Buddhist period, made entirely of perishable wood. The wood worker held an important place in the society and was respected for his profession in ancient Kashmir. It appears that the Hindu Kashmiri mason of old had his rebirth in the Muslim carpenter of later day rule.⁴

A. Alberuni mentions a wooden idol of Sarada (goddess) in inner Kashmir, which was much venerated and frequented by pilgrims.⁵

The ancient wood craft of Kashmir evolved into a new Muslim style starting from the 14th century with the sultanate rule in Kashmir and consolidating itself towards the Mughal period of the 17th century. It is best seen in the wooden architecture of Srinagar. It is architecture of mosques and khanqhas, shrines and ziarats.

The prevalent sculpting skills were adapted to decorative reliefs and calligraphic inscriptions in and around the mosques and tombs. Mohammad Murad and his younger brother Mohsin wrote most of the inscriptions during the days of the Mughals.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, ruler of Kashmir for fifty years devoted himself to embellishing Kashmir with buildings. It was in his reign that Kashmir became a city, which it has remained to this day.⁶ In Kashmir, one meets with all those arts and crafts which are, in most cities uncommon, such as stone-polishing, stone-cutting, bottle-making, window-cutting (tabdan turash), gold beating, etc. In the whole of Mavara-un-Nahr, except in Samarkand and Bokhara, these

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are nowhere to be met with, while in Kashmir they are even abundant. This is all due to Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.

The wood work of the Muslim period bears an eloquent proof to the fact that this art received a great stimulus under the Sultans of Kashmir. While all Hindu buildings are of stone, the mosques of the medieval period are mostly of wood. Some of the important religious places of Srinagar such as the Khanqah-I Mu’alla and the shrine of Sheikh Hamza Mukhdum Kashmiri are models of carpenter’s craft.

Walnut Wood Carving got a definite boost with newer designs in furniture and decorative items during the Mughal period though they are built primarily in brick with surface treatments and embellishments done in finely dressed limestone; where the stones and masons were imported from India and the carvers were local. The mosque of Akhund Mullah Shah was built of a beautiful grey limestone by Dara Shikoh in 1649 A.D. and has stone carved lattices, like other Mughal monuments in Agra and Delhi. The A-In-I-Akbari mentions the interest that Mughal Emperor Akbar had in wood arts and lists more than 72 different kinds of wood in the emperor’s store.7

The details of walnut tree cultivation and its products and uses are described in fair detail by C. E. Bates in 1890.8

“The wood of walnut, when old, is hard and dark. It is used for cabinet work (mainly furniture), papier machie boxes and gunstocks.”

Commenting on Kashmir Wood Carvings as exhibited in Indian Art Exhibition in Delhi, 1903, George Watt and Percy Brown observed in their “Arts and Crafts of India” as:

“The woodwork of Kashmir (modern realistic work) today seems to have been originated by a European suggestion given some 8 or 10 years ago. By some

persons the style is admired, by others regarded as superfluous and burdensome, through the undercutting rendering the walnut wood dull and unfeeling which no realism and skill can overcome”.

They further mentioned that the articles shown were the screens, tables and picture frames produced by Jabbar Khan, Habib Joo, Lassoo, Subhana, Khizra and other wood carvers and dealers in Srinagar. They further added:

“Perhaps one of the most surprising features of the exhibition may be said to have been avidity with which every bit of this modern Kashmir woodwork was purchased.”

The modern type of Wood Carving is the legacy of the Dogra rule. Carving was done in different articles of furniture of daily use during this period. Dr. A. Mitra, one of the famous ministers of Maharaja Pratap Singh is reported to have arranged an exhibition of all Kashmir arts and crafts in the Government Museum. This action of the able minister gave an impetus to the Wood Carving industry. Maharaja Pratap Singh presented a wood carved gate and frontage of the Kashmir camp to King George V on the eve of the coronation Durbar held at Delhi. This monument of Kashmir art presented to the English King served to advertise the Wood Carving of Srinagar among the British aristocracy. Besides, the visitors to Kashmir also patronised this art. Further, richer classes, both within the State and outside extended their patronage to Wood Carving. As a result of this patronage, the famous Kashmiri artisans of the period like Ustad Sultan Muhammad Buda evolved new designs. During the Dogra rule in Kashmir the Wood Carving industry received a fillip. This is testified by the Census of 1921 which speaks of about 50 factories of wood-work in Srinagar. These factories were of three kinds. viz. carving, mostly of walnut wood, pinjira or lattice work and panelling in various designs.

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6.2. Definition of Goods and Classification

Walnut Wood Carving products include goods of utilitarian and decorative nature that are made of walnut wood and further embellished with hand carving of traditional designs and motifs by traditional carvers (naqash) from Kashmir. The utilitarian objects range from both large-sized items of furniture to smaller accessories related to home or personal use. e.g., tables, desks, dining tables, wardrobes, T.V. cabinets, chairs, sofas etc. The decorative items include carved panels and shields, spoons, knives and forks, sculptures, models of houseboats etc. which are mostly used for their decorative value as display objects and wall accessories.

The craft of Wood Carving falls within the definition of “goods” in the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.\(^{11}\) It falls within the purview of Class 20 of the Fourth Schedule to the GI Act.\(^ {12}\)

6.3. Specifications

a. It is made of walnut wood from Kashmir and therefore the relevant details of species and family apply.

b. It is made of cultivated variety of walnut wood like wantu dun and kakazi walnut trees and not wild trees.

c. It is made of walnut wood taken from the base and trunk of the tree and not the branches.

d. It is made of walnut wood that has been seasoned well.

e. It has embellishment of hand carving done by Kashmiri carvers or Naqash.

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\(^{11}\) GI Act, 1999, Section 2\((1)(f)\) of the Act defines “goods” as any agricultural, natural or manufactured goods or any goods of handicraft or of industry and includes food stuff. Walnut Wood Carving comes within goods of handicraft.

\(^{12}\) Class 20 inter alia deals with furniture, mirrors, picture frames, goods (not included in other Classes) of wood.
f. It has embellishment of hand carving depicting traditional designs and motifs of Kashmir using traditional methods.

g. It has embellishment of hand carving that follows undercut, raised, engraved, jalli and daga kil styles of Kashmiri Wood Carving.

6.4. Designs

The Kashmiri craftsmen while following traditional designs also possesses a special talent for design adaptation. The School of Designs at Srinagar has produced a number of designs of simple and functional items. Articles made from walnut now include a vast range of utilitarian and decorative items, from small bowls to large bedsteads, cigarette boxes, candle holders to cupboards and cabinets. There are 527 designs of Wood Carving.¹³

Some of the traditional designs are:

6.4.1. Gul Tarah (Flower Motif): This design uses various flowers in a stylised version. The flowers may be represented individually, as bouquet or in the form of a plant with branches. Some of the common flower motifs are rose, gullal, iris (susan), sumbul, daffodil (yambirzal), jasmine, lotus (Pamposh), lotus fruit (pambach), sunflower (gul-i-aftab).

6.4.2. Mavi Dhar (Fruit bearing trees): This design mostly employs the depiction of fruits like apple, pear, walnut etc. with or without the tree.

6.4.3. Dach Tarah (Grape motif): One of the most popular motif in Wood Carving depicting grapes along with the leaves and vine.

6.4.4. Badam Tarah (Almond motif): The almond motif is rendered in this design in a stylised manner similar to that employed in shawls.

6.4.5. Bhoni Tarah (Chinar motif): This design is based on the chinar leaf pattern and is one of the most popular motifs being employed in the market.

6.4.6. Janavar ti Jandhar Tarah (Animal and Animate motif): This design depicts various birds, animals and aquatic animal species found in Kashmir.

¹³ CRAFT, Supra note 10, at 3.
These include bulbul, parrot, hoopoe, dove, pigeon, myna, sparrow, crow, duck, lion, deer, horse, goat etc.

6.4.7. Jungle Tarah (Jungle Scenes): This design is a refinement on the Janvar Tarah and includes the depiction of the surrounding physical landscape like the mountain, pine trees, streams etc.

6.4.8. Harfi Dhar: This design is based on carving of Arabic, Persian or Kashmiri verses.

6.4.9. Scenery Dhar (Landscape): This design is based on general landscape and seems to have developed from a stylised depiction of the famous gardens of Kashmir with flowers, trees, terraces, water channels etc.

![Walnut Wood Door Panel with intricate undercut Carving of Dragon Motif, Floral and Animal Motifs (Jungle Tarah)](image)

1. Lotus (*Pamposh*)
2. Grapes (*Dach pan*)
3. Iris (*Sosan*)
4. Maple Chinar
5. Rose

**Source:** Craft Development Institute, Srinagar
6.5. Styles

In today’s contemporary market, Kashmiri Walnut Wood Carving is recognisable because of colour and tone of the material (walnut) and its combination with local craftsmanship depicting certain established motifs in a highly intricate and miniaturised form in the traditional established styles. The Kashmir Walnut Wood carving is practised in five main styles:

**6.5.1. Undercut (Khokerdar):** This type of carving is highly reflective of the traditional stone carving skills involved in the making of sculptures. The overall effect tends towards three-dimensional depiction of various motifs and several layers of carving. Edges tend to be rounded off. Straight, sharp edges are usually avoided. This type of carving is usually carried out in panels and is a favourite with many established craftsmen (Wastas). The scenes mostly depicted are complex arrangements of floral and animal motifs, generally called *jungle kaam or posh kaam*.

**6.5.2. Open or Lattice work (Jallidhar, Shabokdhar):** This type of carving is a favourite with artisans working on screens and employs beautiful see-through jalli work. *Chinar leaf* motif is also employed especially in items of furniture like the back of chair. This work is also known as cut work or see-through.

**6.5.3. Raised Carving (Vaboraveth):** In this style a single motif is carved in relief, thus standing out from the rest of the surrounding flat surface. This work is also known as deep carving and the pattern mostly employed in this form of carving comprises the dragon or lotus motif.

**6.5.4. Engraved Carving (Padri):** Usually this type of work comprises single layer of carving in highly repetitive and intricate pattern.

**6.5.5. Shallow or Plain Carving (Sadikaam):** This type of carving is normally employed all over a large flat surface. One version of plain carving known as gilti is achieved only by the use of nails (*sumba and daga kil*) for making various marks. This is also practiced mostly in sculptural kind of work. The marks can be in the nature of isolated lines placed randomly on the object or diagonal lines contained within a specific border.
Styles of Carving

1. Undercut (Khokerdar)
2. Open or Lattice work (Jallidhar, Shabokdhar)
3. Raised Carving (Vaboraveth)
4. Engraved Carving (Padri)
5. Shallow or Plain Carving (Sadikaam)

Source: Craft Development Institute, Srinagar
6.6. Geographical Area

Though a popular occupation in the entire valley, Walnut Wood Carving is practised mostly in the districts of Srinagar, Anantnag and Budgam.

The best quality walnut wood is obtained from Shopian and Anantnag areas of the valley.\(^{14}\) The below given map shows the areas in the valley of Kashmir where wood carving is carried out as a profession and exclusive source of earning livelihood.

![Map of Kashmir showing areas of Walnut Wood Carving](image)

6.7. Method of Production

Traditional Walnut Wood Carving in Kashmir is a highly specialised craft industry with streamlined stages of production, each performed by specialised artisans. The walnut wood is bought from registered merchants and cut into planks of varied thickness before it is naturally seasoned for a minimum of 2 years. It is subsequently made into an object by the carpenter (najar) before being embellished extensively with hand carving by the master craftsman (naqashi). The final stage is of standing and polishing that is done by roshangar.

The main part is considered to be the carving process which is what essentially increases the value of the product and is unique to the region.

6.8. Uniqueness

The wood used in the products is derived from the walnut tree, a member of the Juglandaceae family known by the botanical name Juglans regia. The tree is locally known as dhoon kul (Kashmiri) or akhrot ka pedh (Urdu). The common name by which the tree is recognised internationally is either as European Walnut, Persian Walnut or Carpathian Walnut. The Kashmiri Walnut is differentiated from the American walnut wood (Black Walnut) by relative lightness of its colour. The Walnut wood is considered the best wood for carvings.\(^\text{15}\)

The wood of walnut known as dhoon laker is classified as a tough hardwood of medium density with moderate bending and crushing strengths and low stiffness. Walnut wood does not easily wrap or shrink or splinter and is light in proportion to its strength. The wood is known for its workability and turns,

\(^{15}\) Civil Services Chronicle, Artistic Hands Always Striving for Excellence, 108 (April 2012).
sands and carves well. For the artisan, the colour, grain and sheen of walnut wood are unique. The wood is hard and durable. Its close grain and even texture facilitates fine and detailed carving work.¹⁶

The walnut is of four varieties; categorised on the basis of the fruit the tree bears namely Khanak or Zangul, Wantu, Dunu and Kakazi. Wantu, Dunu and Kakazi are cultivated while Khanak is found in the wild. The wood of Khanak is less strong than the cultivated varieties. It lacks grain and is not used for Wood Carving.

The wood derived from the root is mostly used for making smaller objects.

Most of the furniture products are made from the wood obtained from the trunk. This wood tends to be more straight grained with the swirls in the wood being more regular and fine than those of the root wood.

The colour of the wood before the application of polish tends towards grey with darker almost black lines in between. The appearance of the final product ranges from light brown to a tone in between brown and maroon based on the colour of the strain that is applied over it. In case the wood is not strained, the colour tends to lighten over a period of time.

**6.9. Kashmir Wood Carving is different from that of Saharanpur**

Many of the products made in Kashmir are also produced in Saharanpur (UP) and other regions in India. Besides being practised in Kashmir, Wood Carving is also done in other parts of India, as they share common historical influences. Infact, the Wood Carving in Saharanpur has been greatly influenced by the migration of Persian and Kashmiri crafts personnel and wood workers during the post-Mughal period (1817). What differentiates the Kashmir Walnut Wood products is the nature of the material, its inherent texture and also the

characteristic nature of the carving employed as an integral part of it. Saharanpur carving is done on Shisham wood, which has a darker colour than that of walnut and a different grain structure. The carving of Kashmiri walnut wood is more intricately done (also because of the workability in walnut as compared to Shisham), employing motifs depicting flora and fauna that are essentially unique to Kashmir. 17

Also unlike wood carvers in Saharanpur who make use of stencils or Khakas for drawing motif on the surface of the object, Kashmiri carvers are used to a free hand rendering of motifs and patterns learned over a period of time. When a Kashmiri Naqash is carving a circular pattern, he starts at one end and carves his way to the back to the same point but with perfect continuity in the motifs. This free hand rendering also provides space for individual artistic nuances even when depicting established motifs.

6.10. Production, Employment avenues and Export

In today’s contemporary market, Kashmiri Walnut Wood Carving is recognisable because of colour and tone of material (Walnut) and its combination with local craftsmanship depicting certain established motifs in a highly intricate and miniaturised form in the traditional established styles.

The traditional Walnut Wood Carved furniture enjoys a steady demand in the international market. The market value of the product depends upon the type of wood used and the quality of workmanship. Wood from the root of the walnut tree is more expensive than that of the trunks because of the more pronounced nature of its grains, presence of large number of swirls and its rich dark colour.

The quality of workmanship is determined by the intricacy and the depth of carving, clarity of detailing and the extent of the carved surface. For example, in case of floral motifs what is considered high quality carving is a clear

17 Farooq Ahmad Mir and Farhatul Ain, Legal Protection of Geographical Indications - A case study of Kashmiri Handicrafts, 15 J.I.P.R. 222 (May 2010).

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delineation of the leaf or flower edges, rounding of the branches or the tree trunks to give a three dimensional effect, fine quality of marks made by the *daga* or *sumba kil* which are used for detailing of a motif.

### Table 1: Employment Generation in Wood Carving

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment (₹ in Lakhs)</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** - Directorate of Handicrafts, Jammu and Kashmir

![Fig. 1: Employment Generation in Wood Carving](image-url)
Table 2: District wise/year wise position of Wood Carving Training Centres and Trainees trained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SrinagarTC</th>
<th>GanderbalTC</th>
<th>BudgamTC</th>
<th>AnantnagTC</th>
<th>KulgamTC</th>
<th>PulwamaTC</th>
<th>ShopianTC</th>
<th>BaramullaTC</th>
<th>BandiporaTC</th>
<th>KupwaraTC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
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<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>2010-11</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TC = Training Centres  
TT = Trainees Trained  
Source: - Directorate of Handicrafts, Jammu and Kashmir

Table 3: Number of Wood Carving Artisans Registered with Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Artisans</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>2005-06</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010- August 11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir
Table 4: Number of Wood Carving Artisans Registered with Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Artisans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
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<td>2006-07</td>
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<td>2007-08</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
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<td>2010- August11</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-04-2012 to 31-08-2012</td>
<td>0</td>
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Source: Assistant Director of Handicrafts, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir

Table 5: Number of Walnut Wood Carving Artisans and Units Registered with Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Anantnag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Artisans Registered</th>
<th>Number of Units Registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Till August 2011</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>07</td>
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</table>

Source: Assistant Director of Handicrafts, Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir
Table 6: Number of Wood Carving Units and Artisans Registered with Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Budgam Jammu and Kashmir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Units Registered</th>
<th>Number of Artisans Registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2012-Oct. 2012</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Source: Assistant Director of Handicrafts, Budgam, Jammu and Kashmir

Table 7: Year wise details of Walnut Wood Carving production

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production (in ₹ Crores)</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>33.59</td>
<td>31.50</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>17.35</td>
<td>17.35</td>
<td>62.27</td>
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</table>


Fig. 2: Year wise details of Walnut Wood Carving production
Table 8: Year wise details of export figures of Kashmiri Wood Carving

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export (in ₹ crores)</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>13.50</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>36.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1. Local Banks dealing in foreign exchange
2. Corporate Head Quarter, J&K Bank

Fig. 3: Year wise details of export figures of Kashmiri Wood Carving

6.11. Challenges to the Walnut Wood Carving

6.11.1. Value Perceptions and Competition

The glory of the craft has waned over a period of time and saw a decline with the introduction of RCC in construction works. The artisans slowly shifted to manufacture of other items or scaled down. Most of the artisans took to the carving of furniture items and manufacture of objects of decoration which were fancied by tourists visiting the valley and purchased as souvenirs and included houseboat models, shikara model, small table lamps and wall decoration. These items were purchased by lower middle class tourists and therefore the cost factor was of importance. Eventually with the increase in the cost of raw material, the manufacturers could not afford to make these items in walnut.
wood in lower middle class price bracket and therefore had to replace the walnut wood with the cheaper variety of wood such as ‘Zangul’ (local name).

There surfaced a strong competition from other manufacturers of wood ware from other parts of the country, not necessarily using walnut wood but producing better market oriented products. This has swayed a large segment of both domestic and export market. The competitors exist in both market segments and the extent is very strong. Within the country, the competition is offered by Saharanpur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar in Punjab, Jaipur, Jodhpur in Rajasthan, Bangalore, Mysore in Karnataka, Chennai, Kerala and Behrampur in West Bengal.

6.11.2. Unethical Practices

Unethical practices are common in this craft activity and these are carried out at production level as well as marketing level, perhaps to withstand competition because no support is available to the industry to survive or negate the stiff competition both at national as well as international levels.

At production level, because of restricted availability of the raw material, use of cheaper alternate variety of wood is resorted to.

Resorting to the unethical practices to sustain market forces is found to be easy way out notwithstanding the fact that in the long run it damages this centuries old industry.

6.11.3. Industry Structure

The activity comprises of carpenters, wood carvers, polishers, traders, exporters and retailers besides a link (middleman) who liaise between manufacturer and retailer/exporter.

The activity being complex, it is undertaken in small units comprising one or more carpenter, a few carvers and polisher depending upon the capacity of the unit holder. The chain ends with retailers/exporters who prefer to operate through ‘Wustkar’ (the unit holder in this case). There are, however, some
manufacturers like Cooperative Societies or unit holders who besides selling their products to retailers/exporters now and then organise direct selling by participating in exhibitions/expos etc.

The community of wood carvers as well as carpenters do not have a recognised association, union or representative agency. There are no self help groups in wood carving industry.

6.11.4. Wage fixation

The major cause of concern for artisans is low wages and the artisans living standards at present wage structure is below average which constrains them to abandon the activity or supplement it with the aid of some other activity.

6.11.5. Lack of Assistance

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI), a non-governmental agency has made no significant contribution in areas related to production processes, welfare and beneficial schemes. It has been receiving assistance from State and Central Governments for promotion of crafts in international markets and increase exports.

Financial institutions are very choosy and strict in granting loans and advances to artisans fearing that the recovery may be difficult or impossible. The amount provided is very scanty and not of much use for the artisans. The interest rate also is a deterrent for an average artisan whose return and income does not permit high cost of finance.

6.11.6. Design

The designs are of great importance not only in respect of motif but the shape, size, utility etc. but unfortunately there has not been enough of design input to improve the craft.
Considering the fact that market acceptability of this very high ended product is related to design and quality, the design component is beyond the reach of the manufacturer.

Designers like weavers have remained a part of this craft as a family inheritance and the art has been passed on in a family. However, the number has reduced in recent times. Earlier there used to be a large number of designers. There is a need to train new designers and upgrade the skills of existing designers.

6.11.7. Polishing and Finishing

In various climatic conditions, the wood has a tendency to warp and therefore, appropriate seasoning of wood is highly required. Besides treatment for water resistance and moth resistance is necessary.

Presently ordinary polish is used which provides lusture temporarily and wanes over a period of time. This needs improvement.

6.11.8. Raw Material

Raw material is a very important component. It is scarce and subject to cumbersome regulations. Besides there is no statistical information as to how much of this raw material resource is available and how long it will sustain. New plantation is not a regular and conscious effort especially when the tree has to grow enough for use which may take a decade. We need to critically examine this resource and channelise its sale through a wood seasoning plant instead of open auction so that seasoned wood becomes available to the industry easily and thus quality is neither compromised nor left to chance.

Although seasoning facility had been set up at Nowshehra CFC but experience has shown that this is not being used either by raw material dealers or unit holders. The raw material dealer bid at the auction, move the log to band saw, saw it and sell it to unit holders who put it to use as it is.
It would be appropriate that the raw wood is sourced by the CFC, seasoned and sold to unit holders. Furthermore, it is necessary that plantation is organised to sustain the availability of this resource.

6.11.9. Value Chain

The value chain of wood craft industry is very fluid and inconsistent. The value chain misses out on some important input requirements which would enhance market acceptability.

The value chain analysis shows:

1. An artisan does not have a control on quality of raw material because a unit holder cannot bid at auction unless he is a large scale manufacturer and has enough working capital available.

2. A small manufacturer buys a small quantity of raw material which he cannot get seasoned because the seasoning plant requires a certain minimum quantity per charge to run the plant.

3. Cost addition at various levels in the value chain which contribute to the final market price are based on assumptions because the unit holder does not have a mechanism in place to determine the output of various activities.

4. There is no mechanism to account for the cost of wastage if this wastage is either used in making some other object or sold as wood.

5. Supply chain management has propensity towards giving in to competition and compromise.

6. No tendency exists in the supply chain to be self reliant in inputs and thereby control processes and costs.

6.12. Khatambandh

*Khatambandh* is one of the art forms of Kashmir. It is an art of ceiling-making by fitting small pieces of wood into each other in geometrical patterns. There is
no doubt that this manufactured good originating from this region is resultant of a unique combination of the geo-climatic conditions and socio-cultural history of the region.

Kashmiri *Khatambandh* is a registered GI. It was filed for registration as GI under Application Number 204. The application was filed by the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar which is a Registered Society under the Jammu and Kashmir Societies Registration Act, 1998.\(^\text{18}\)

### 6.12.1. Definition of goods and classification

*Khatambandh* comprises of a locally grown raw material as well as an indigenous process and related practices that are unique to the said region. i.e., specific raw materials and the production method used in the manufacture of *Khatambandh* are both originating in parts of the Kashmir region.

The *Khatambandh* craft falls within the definition of ‘goods’ in the GI Act, 1999.\(^\text{19}\)

For the purpose of the registration of a GI or as an authorised user, goods shall be classified in the manner specified in the Fourth Schedule to the GI Act, 1999. The craft *Khatambandh* falls within the purview of Class 20 of the Fourth Schedule.\(^\text{20}\)

### 6.12.2. Khatambandh-GI Definition

*Khatambandh* is one of the oldest known wooden craft manufactures of Kashmir. It is a special kind of traditional panelling with little pieces of wood that is both aesthetic and cost effective. Each piece of wood is prepared, intricately carved and then fitted together to form intricate geometrical designs with a definite mathematical foundation. Further, the fitting of all the small wooden pieces is done without using nails or glue so that it can be assembled and re-assembled again somewhere else down to the last component. The word

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\(^{18}\) Registration Number 4332 S/2003.

\(^{19}\) Section 2(1)(f), see supra note 11.

\(^{20}\) Class 20, see supra note 12.
Khatam is an Arabic word, which means ‘patch’ and band is a Persian word meaning ‘lock’.21 This combination of Arabic and Persian words is the most accurate translation of the word ‘Khatambandh’ literally meaning ‘locking the patches’.

The other local definition of the term Khatambandh is that it is a Persian word and its meaning is related to the method of the craft. ‘Khat’ is drawing lines and ‘band’ is one scale, pronounced as ‘Khat-m-band’. The band or scale here refers to the most essential ‘kannat’ or a master ruler which has all the markings needed to make a particular pattern. According to this definition, the literal meaning would be ‘drawing lines from the kannat’.

Both these definitions capture the two most crucial operations, one at the start and another at the end, for producing Khatambandh that renders it unique. Both these operations continue to be made entirely by hand even today while many of the other processes have been mechanised for the last twenty years.

6.12.3. Proof of Origin with Historical Reference

There are different stories as far as the origin of Khatambandh in Kashmir is concerned. The technique of Khatambandh can be traced back to Arab times and subsequently came to parts of Central Asia with the Islamic conversions during the Timur period but seemed to have been referred by different names. The Turkish doors, windows and pulpits use a similar technique but called by another name “Kundekari”.22

It is believed to have come to Kashmir during the Sultanate rule. Since there is absolutely no evidence of wood work made of many small pieces mentioned prior to the 14th century, this is assumed to be most likely, though Kashmir was renowned for carving skills and amazing construction of wooden houseboats and massive deities even before that.

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22 http://www.kundekari.com
Some have credited the introduction of *Khatambandh* in Kashmir to Mirza Hyder Tughlaq, a military general who captured Kashmir during early Mughal times in 1541. Mirza was a Turkic speaking Prince. The second version is linked to the coming of Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (R.A.) and his 700 disciples into Kashmir in 1373 A.D. of whom the large number of Sufi saints were artists, calligraphers, masons, metal engravers, embroidery artisans and carpenters. The last reference seems most plausible as it also corresponds with the artisans own stories of their ancestors.

*Khatambandh* is also said to have been introduced in Kashmir by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin during 1423-1470 when he invited artisans from Central Asia to settle in Kashmir and upgrade the traditional crafts here. Since there is no mention of this in his detailed chronicles, it is more likely that he improved *Khatambandh* in Kashmir rather than being part of its origin in Kashmir.

In the last 100 years, *Khatambandh* evolved as an important craft. Its use was promoted in all the public buildings and colonial residences in Kashmir and even exported to England as an aesthetic and effective insulation that was also a cheaper alternative for residents there. The delicate wood carving and fine *naqashi* embellishments of gold and mineral colours also decreased and instead a type of mullion work with glass and mica were used for windows, doors and *roshandaans*. During the late 19th century the houseboat owners gave a further impetus to this craft industry when all the houseboats for tourists were furnished with extensive Kashmir wood work.

### 6.12.4. Geographic Location of Practice/Production

The Geographic location for *Khatambandh* production is District Srinagar and particularly the areas of Safa-kadel and Idgah where there are presently around 150 artisan families practising *Khatambandh* for around 100 years now. They

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23 G. M. D. SUFI, *see supra* note 4, at 586.
claim that their ancestors learnt the technique from Central Asian artisans before the 16th century.  

The raw material that is generally used to make *Khatambandh* ceilings or panels is wood of either silver fir (Budloo) or Deodar (deodar) all of which grow in Kashmir valley at various altitudes mainly in District Anantnag and District Kupwara.

The map indicates the location of *Khatambandh* production and the areas where the raw material for *Khatambandh* production comes from in present times.

6.13. Description and Uniqueness

1. The basic technique consists of small flat pieces of wood inserted into grooven battens. These pieces are in geometric shapes like triangles, squares, pentagons, hexagons, octagons and multi-sided polygons like star shapes etc. The battens are the structural part of *Khatambandh*,

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24 Balwant Thakur, *see supra* note 21.
intersecting each other by the harved lap and bidder and mitter joints. As the battens and the pieces are alternatively fitted to each other, the panelling gradually builds like a jigsaw puzzle into a beautiful geometric pattern that is stunningly intricate. One of the most intricate and time consuming design is the Bara Murabba which has around 3750 pieces in a ceiling of 10ft×10ft size. The smallest piece is sometimes less than 40 mm or 1.5 inches.

2. It is partially handmade and extremely labour intensive. In spite of partial mechanisation that has helped in reducing time and therefore, the cost of making Khatambandh, it is still extremely labour intensive and time consuming. Therefore, it is expensive but long lasting. Khatambandh lasts for more than 100 years with very little maintenance and repair and gets a burnished sheen over time.

3. A panel of Khatambandh is formed of small wooden pieces that are held together by joints in such a way that there is no need for glue or nails to fit them together. Nails are used at certain distance to fix the panel onto the under-structure to prevent the whole ceiling from falling off, but the pieces themselves are held together with the help of three different types of joints which form the basic technique of Khatambandh. These joints are the mortise-tenon joint, halved lap and bridle joint and a third type of joint called the mitter joint; the first is how the pieces are held by the battens and the other two are the joints used in the battens.

4. The final product is detachable and reusable. The use of the joints enable the entire Khatambandh to be detached piece by piece and reused somewhere else again saving precious wood as well as human labour. This feature distinguishes Kashmiri Khatambandh from Irani Khatamkari which is not detachable.
5. Although *Khatambandh* in the form of wall panels exist from the 16th century, it became well known during the latter 19th century when the European travellers visited Kashmir and found this traditional system of making false ceilings that provide excellent insulation against the freezing cold as unique to Kashmir and did not exist anywhere else in India. The gap between the under-structure and the panelling pieces allows air to be trapped there providing an insulating to prevent heat loss.

6. *Khatambandh* also combines wood with other materials like glass, mica for making windows. This is called mullion work especially found in early 20th century buildings. Most *Khatambandh* has some value addition of hand carving. The old *Khatambandh* that is found in monuments are richly decorated with fine *naquashi* work where the wooden pieces are coated with Papier-Machie layer and painted in traditional Kashmiri motifs and even gold embellishments. The shrines of Dastagir Sahib or Naqshbandi have the finest examples of such *Khatambandh* work in Kashmir built.

7. The designs are many and repeat in geometric pattern. *Mouje, Panch Muraba, Muraba Badam, Shesh Gul, Chahr Gul, Pohul Girdan, Pohul Taruk, Dawazda Girdh, Hastubul* and *Barah Muraba* are some of the well known designs and there are more than 120 known designs. Designs are named after the shapes that are predominantly used in it.

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8. The kannat or master scale is used to produce all the components of one design. It contains all the coded information and calculations of that particular design, represented in the form of marking on a wooden batten and passed from one generation of artisans to another. It is looked upon with great reverence by the producers and artisans as the knowledge about Khatambandh craft given to them by their ancestors. A set of kannats are what is considered most necessary to set up a new karkhana.\footnote{Karkhanas are small units where craftsmen work. It consists of 5-15 workers, owned by Karkhanadar or manufacturer and supervised by a master craftsman.} Therefore, an artisan has to undergo several years of training under a master craftsman and learn all the stages of production before he
is given a set of basic *kannats* from his master craftsman to set up his own unit of production, if he so desires.

For the formation of *kannat* there is a separate elaborate process which involves a geometrical and mathematical calculation. The process has been kept a trade secret.\(^\text{27}\)

### 6.13.1. Method of Production

The process of manufacturing of *Khatambandh* starts from the time when the planks of wood reach the band saw for sawing into battens and planks of required size. The process is completed in different stages. It consists of sawing the plank, seasoning the battens and planks, making the master scale and master shapes, making *guz* from battens and finally assembling all the pieces to make a *Khatambandh* ceiling.

### 6.13.2. Sawing or *Cheerun*

The process of cutting the longitudinal planks of wood, *khanje*, into smaller planks and battens is very specific to producing *Khatambandh* as it requires wood of different sizes to be cut according to the product. Wider wooden planks of small thickness are required for the flat pieces called “*pache*” and thicker sections required for battens called “*guz*” in Kashmiri language.

On the band saw the *khanje* are first cut transversely into two equal halves. The rest of the cuts are vertical or along the grains radially which is called *rum-i-cheerun*, resulting in four triangular cross-section planks. These planks are of two types: a) triangular and b) with tetragonal cross-section. Both kinds of planks are collectively called as *bot-e* in Kashmiri.

The *bot-e* with triangular cross-section and tetragonal cross-section are cut in two different ways and results in two kinds of products. The former are cut into

thicker lengths of 4’-5’ and later made into battens. The latter are cut into thinner planks to get the pache.

While cutting the battens and planks, the outer bark is removed completely. The length of the battens and planks should be along the grains; otherwise it results in more labour and poor quality. The inner heart wood called gool in Kashmiri is removed by some of the artisans, but most of them use it. The process of sawing the bot-e wood into smaller usable planks and battens is called tukai. The wood in this form is now ready to be sent to the karkhana.

6.13.3. Seasoning or Hokhnawun

The seasoning is important and time consuming process. The guz are stacked in an open and airy place for 2-3 months before they are used. The flat pache are also kept in stacks or are spread on the floor in the months of June, July and August. The weather in these months is fairly hot and allows for quick seasoning.

6.13.4. Making the master scale and master shapes, kannat and andaz

The kannat contains all the coded information and calculations of that particular design represented in the form of markings and is passed on from one generation of artisans to another.

The importance of the master scale or kannat can be understood as a time reducing tool so that the calculations need not be done all over again every time that design is commissioned. The geometrical calculations required to accurately construct regular polygons like stars, octagons, pentagons and devise their peripheral dimensions and vertexes which are then distributed over several joineries of 45°, 60°, 90° and 120° with tools available in the 16th century would have been a quite time consuming process.

Farma or andaz is the name given to the master copy of the dil, a set of different polygonal shapes used in each design. Like the kannat, the first master set is made, based on calculations and these are replicated during production.
6.13.5. Making guz from battens

The guz is the structural part of the Khatambandh that joins each other and holds other components in its grooves. They are made in many numbers using a master scale- the kannat. The kannat is a long wooden batten with some marks on its one of the faces. The battens are marked and cut to make required joints according to the markings on the kannat. There is a separate kannat for each design. A particular kannat may be used in different designs and sometimes a single design may need two or more kannats.

The guz is formed of two parts viz., the upper part ‘lanja or land’ and the lower part called ‘pother’. Both of them are made by the same process except for a few variations. It is one of the most important stages of the production and requires both skill and precision. There are seven sub-steps involved in this process:

a) Paining or Rand diun;

b) Checking for uniform thickness or Khat-kash karun;

c) Making side grooves or Kurr diun;

d) Making the battens or Khat diun;

e) Making the cuts for joints or Khash diun;

f) Making the top grooves or Meena diun;

g) Removing the material to form the groove or Craph kadun and hiur kadun and

h) To separate or Alahida karun.

Regarding the khash kadun it is necessary to mention that there are alternate single and double cuts on any batten. The cuts are different for pother and land even when the markings are same. The components of two different shapes form the two parts of the lap and bridle joint later. The finished guz has almost trapazial cross-sectional view of the upper side with two shallow grooves
called *meena*. The *meena* side of the *guz* lies on the front view and is mainly decorative. But it also helps the artisans putting right their minor mistakes if any, while assembling.

After separation, the *land* is fitted into the *pother* and the process is called *jodun*. One *pother* can be joined to one, two or three *lanja* and vice versa depending on the number of joints in each. The joint thus formed is of lap and bridle type. There are several types of *guz* depending on the angle of the joint and the number of *pother* and *lanja* fitted together. There are almost seven or eight types of *guz* in *Khatambandh*. It is an important component of *Khatambandh* as it holds the rest of the components or polygonal chips inside its *kurr* and thus supports the whole ceiling and eliminates the necessity of using the nails or glue. It also enhances the beauty of the whole panel.

### 6.13.6. Preparing *dil* or polygonal shapes

The thin planks called *pache* from the band saw are cut into polygonal shapes that are fitted inside the groove of the *guz* to form *Khatambandh*. These shapes are marked and cut based on a master *farma* called *andaz*. The breadth of flat *pache* depends on the type and diameter of the polygonal *dil* which is to be cut from it. The *dil* is always geometrical in shape. The following sub-steps are involved in making them:

a) Marking the shape or *Andaz trawun*

b) Cutting or *Chatun*

c) Marking the borders or *Leiter-e-khash diun*

d) Thinning the edges to make the borders or *Newrawun*

e) Plaining or *Rand kadun*

f) Carving or *Naqashi*

For carving the polygons are sent to naqash or carver, who carves the *roi*, the central part of the *dil*. It is carved using different types of chisels called *nar-i-
wol, a 6” long nail called summa and a hammer called thapi. Both the guz and the dil are now ready for assembling.

6.13.7. Assembling or laagun

The ceiling is first fitted with wooden battens running across in a square grid called jaamp in Kashmiri. Several flat planks of wood are fixed on this jaamp to cover the ceiling completely. It forms the under structure or base for fixing the Khatambandh and of course necessary for insulation from the cold coming from outside through the roof. There is further gap between this under structure and the panelling pieces that allow air to be trapped thus providing a second insulating layer to prevent heat loss from the interiors.

A Khatambandh ceiling usually has two parts – a hashi, a border and a matan, the main body of the ceiling. The hashi has a standard design while the matan can be of any one of the 120 designs. They are separated from each other by a thin band of wood of around 2.5”-4”, running on all sides of the ceiling. These bands have grooves only on one side unlike normal guz and are called sar or ling. Sar is used in rectangular ceiling while lindi is used in circular ceiling and they are fitted with nails. Two layers of dil, usually right-angled pentagons and guz posh are fitted in a pentagonal design which completes the border hashi of the ceiling.

The next step starts with the main body and design. The first polygon is inserted into the groove of the sar in the border. Then a guz is fitted to the other side of the dil with the help of its groove and second dil is inserted on the other side of the first guz. This alternate arrangement of guz and dil is followed till one entire line is complete. It is then adjusted with a special tool to align perfectly. Subsequently, a second line of the flat shapes and guz is fitted both with each other and to the first line of polygons and guz without using any nails. The same process is followed till the whole ceiling is complete.
The technique involved in *Khatambandh* is an alternate arrangement of polygonal shapes or *dil* and grooved battens or *guz* in all the directions.

Since mechanisation has been introduced in most stages of production like cutting, grooving, planning etc. in the last 20 years, the initial stages of marking out the cuts with the *kannat* and final stage of assembling and fitting on site are the only stages that have remained critical to retaining the uniqueness of this craft. These stages need special attention and deserve to be protected as individually unique.

**Production process of Kashmiri Khatambandh**

1. Cutting tools include *Letir* (back saw), *Zamaber* (tenon saw) & *Tori*

1. Measuring tools: *Kannat*, *phat guz*, *Khat-khash*, *Khoor hut*

1. Carving tools: flat, pointed, u-shaped chisels, wooden mallet, perforated farma, *letir-hut*, *rickna*, oil container hammer

Source: Craft Development Institute, Srinagar
Chapter 6

Kashmiri Wood Work: A Legal Analysis From GI Perspective

1. Cutting logs (Khand) of fir wood on bandsaw into battens (guz) & planks (pache)
2. Battens (guz)
3. Planks (pache)

Seasoning (hoknawun) of battens & planks in natural sunlight

Stack of battens
Planning of battens with Jack planner

1. Making cuts on the battens with zamabar (tenon saw) kept on letir-hut
2. Making grooves with tenon saw
3. Top view, side & bottom view of a batten (guz patti)

Marking the battens with pencil by keeping kannat parallel on one side of the battens

1. Wooden planks are first marked with farma, i.e., a template made by the Khatambandh artisan

Source: Craft Development Institute, Srinagar
1. Artisans working at a Karkhana

1. For laying the tiles on the ceiling first zamp/rough is made with plyboard

1. Laying tiles on the rough or plyboard without using nails or glue
2. A finished ceiling

Source: Craft Development Institute, Srinagar

After getting an understanding of the working of the craft in the Saffa-Kadel and Idgah Clusters in Srinagar city, an initial phase involving meeting the artisans / unit holders working in the area was done. For this purpose a random sample of 100 artisans (50 from each area) based on job done, scale of investment, turnover and product lines etc. was chosen representing different areas of Safakadel and Idgah Clusters and data was collected with the help of questionnaires. During the second phase, meetings were arranged with the traders and various Business Development Service (BDS) providers working in the area. Investigation pertaining to existing government schemes functional in the area and the people benefiting from those schemes was done. The government organisations and the departments like Directorate of Handicrafts, Small Scale Industries Development Corporation (SICOP), State Industrial Development Corporation (SIDCO), were contacted and information on various aspects relevant to the clusters was collected through detailed interactions and discussions. Discussions with officials and people associated with the craft industry were held in order to clarify issues related to raw material, quality certification and production value.

While conducting the empirical survey following facts came to fore:

There are only fourteen practitioners of Khatambandh listed as per the State Handicrafts Department.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Khatambandh Artisans Registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>02</td>
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<td>2007-08</td>
<td>06</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Assistant Directorate Handicrafts, Srinagar

However, this does not present the true picture. The figures as per the J&K Khatambandh Ceiling Carpenters Union are provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Khatambandh Artisans registered with the Union</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>350-400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly about 300 Khatambandh artisans are registered with the office of the Development Commissioner Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles Government of India, Marketing and Service Extension Centre, Srinagar.
Costing at a glance

- Total number of Units = 80-85
- Average number of Artisans per Unit = 5
- Average number of working days per year = 300
- Average output per Artisan per day = 6 sq. feet
- Total annual output = 6×85×5×300 = 7,65000 sq. feet
- Average cost of Khatambandh per sq. feet = Rupees 140
- Total annual turnover = 765000×140 = Rupees 10,710000

(Prepared on the basis of the survey conducted by the researcher)

6.15. Issues Related to Khatambandh Artisans

6.15.1. Availability of raw material

The manufacturers/unit holders complain about the ever shortage of raw material. According to them the State Forest Department through its SFC depots distribute about 10 quintals of raw material per artisan through the All Kashmir Khatambandh Ceiling Carpenters Union. This raw material is distributed among the artisans usually during the months of December-January out of the fire wood reserved for Hamams of Masjids and as such is of very low quality. Thus for about 10 months around the year the unit holders are left at the mercy of private wood suppliers. The government rate for fir (budul) is rupees 450 per quintal while same is offered by the private suppliers for about rupees 950 per quintal. This drastically increases their input costs that, in turn hit their margins and increase the cost of Khatambandh and as such shrinking their market.

6.15.2. Unit/Plot of land

The unit holders complain of a step-motherly treatment by various government agencies like the District Industrial Corporation (DIC). The unit holders
demand that their industry be treated at par with the other industries of the State. Unit holders have been demanding units in the industrial areas or a plot of land where they could take their units to. Nearly all artisan traders run their units from their homes and as such their customers come to meet them in their homes. They are of the view that their privacy gets disturbed as their family members including their womenfolk also roam around. Khatambandh as an art involves a lot of labour and that too varied labour. Therefore, lot of space is required. This would have resulted in more and more artisans being involved in this art and would have been a source of sustainable development for a lot of unemployed youth of the valley.

6.15.3. Exploitation by middlemen

The unit holders allege that the traders or the contractors often exploit them and take government far granted. They often bid for high end designs in government institutions like Barah-taaz (Rupees 450 per feet) while install low end designs like pahel gardaan (Rupees 160 per feet) and mouj design (Rupees 160 per feet). They in turn pay Rupees 140 per feet to artisans per day.

6.15.4. Problems caused by police and forest officials in the movement of Khatambandh material

The unit holders allege that the forest officials and J&K police often hamper the movement of their Khatambandh related material (finished) on the pretext that the raw material used has been procured from the black market. They extract hefty amount of money from the artisans / unit holders. According to the artisans this is the sole biggest reason that hampers the popularity of Khatambandh outside Kashmir as artisans are always hesitant to move Khatambandh-related material not only outside but also within the limits of the city.
6.15.5. Ill-informed and un-informed artisans

The artisans working in various units of Khatambandh are the most ill informed and un-informed in the whole handicraft sector of the state. They have no idea about the various handicraft related schemes and various insurance policies of the State and the Central Governments. Rarely does an artisan possess an artisan card and when he does it, it mostly lies with the wousta (unit holder) or the union. In fact we have not come across any artisan possessing an artisan credit card. Not even a single artisan that we have interviewed is insured obviously due to lack of information in this regard.

6.15.6. No investments in new designs and new installation formulae

There is such a huge demand for existing traditional products that the artisans rarely feel the need to experiment and try new designs. This may prove to be a big roadblock in the growth of this industry in future. The most complex process in the art of Khatambandh is the installation process. It is the complexity of the installation process that has been the main hurdle in taking this craft to far off places. Unfortunately not enough time and money has been spent to simplify this process as this would have greatly promoted this craft.

6.15.7. Najar Monopoly

The najar family that brought this craft from Bijbehara area of Kashmir about 70 years ago consider themselves as the divine custodians of this art. In fact till about the 1990’s the najars had a virtual stranglehold over this craft. It was not due to any free will but owing to huge demand that the najars opened this craft slightly to others. Nearly all the office bearers of All Kashmir Ceiling Carpenters Union are najars and they have created barriers for others from entering this field. This has been the greatest impediment towards the flourishing of this craft like other handicrafts.

The Supreme Court in *T.N. Godavarman v. Union of India* \(^{28}\) (popularly known as Forest Conservation case) has redefined the scope of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, suspending tree felling across the entire country and sought to radically re-orient the licensing and functioning of forest-based industries. In this process the court has gone far beyond its traditional role as the interpreter of law and assumed the role of policy maker and administrator. Till 1996, the Forest Conservation Act was assumed to apply to reserved forests. The Supreme Court held that the Act applies to all forests regardless of their legal status or ownership. It also redefined “non-forest purposes” to include not just mining but also operation of sawmills. The Court laid down:

“The word “forest” must be understood according to its dictionary meaning. This description covers all statutorily recognised forests, whether designated as reserved, protected or otherwise for the purpose of section 2(i) of the Forest Conservation Act. The term “forest land” occurring in the Act will not only include “forest” as understood in the dictionary sense, but also any area recorded as forest in the Govt. record irrespective of the ownership. The provisions enacted in the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 for the conservation of forests and the matters connected therewith must apply clearly to all forests so understood irrespective of the ownership and classification thereof."

In view of the meaning of the word “forest” in the Act, it is obvious that prior approval of the Central Government is required for any non-forest activity within the area of any “forest”. Under the Act, all on-going activity within any forest in any State throughout the country, without the prior approval of the Central Government, must cease forthwith. It is, therefore, clear that running of sawmills and mining of any mineral are non-forest purposes and are therefore, not permissible without prior approval of the Central Government.”

\(^{30}\) *AIR 1997 SC 1228.*
To equate sawmills with mining, is really extreme. All this has created huge hurdles for new *Khatambandh* unit holders as after 2001, the District Industrial Centre has refused to register new unit holders.

**6.15.9. Lack of Awareness Regarding Marketing**

The various government agencies entrusted with marketing and creating awareness about the various arts and crafts like J&K Arts Emporium, KCCI, SIDCO, SICOP, JK Handicrafts Department have shown no interest in taking this art outside State.

**6.15.10. Non-availability of timely Finance**

The timely finance is not available to new unit holders and budding entrepreneurs in this field. Although the government in general and the J&K Bank in particular do have some financial schemes like the *Khatambandh* Scheme but they have remained only on paper. The paper work and other formalities like mortgage and a public servant as a guarantor are so stringent that artisans are rarely in a position to utilise their services.

**6.15.11. Issues faced by Traders**

**6.15.11.1. Non-recognition by the State Government**

The craft of *Khatambandh* has still not been recognised by the Department of Industry and Commerce. Thus its real demand and scope is not easy to comprehend and as such traders are not in a position to plan in advance and strategise. The various government policies vis-a-vis *Khatambandh* as compared to other wood-based industries are vague and not clear. The import export policies, the taxation policy etc. are still not clear and are open to wide range of interpretations.

**6.15.11.2. Non availability of raw material**

Unlike the artisans, the traders issue is the easy availability of raw material throughout the year. The only source of raw material for the traders are the
auctions by the State Forest Corporation (SFC) conducted mostly in summers and that too when dried and fallen trees are available. The traders who get orders in bulk have to wait for a long time for want of raw material. As their orders get delayed, this results in huge business losses.

6.15.11.3. Lacklustre attitude of the various State departments

The government departments and agencies like Handicrafts Department, Jammu and Kashmir (Sales and Export) Corporation Limited and the School of Designs with a clear mandate for the promotion of various crafts have done little or nothing for the promotion of this craft outside the State. The outlets of Jammu and Kashmir (S&E) Corporation don’t carry *Khatambandh* while the School of Designs don’t work on *Khatambandh* under one pretext or other. The Department of Handicrafts has not till date done any research, study or a market survey to look out for the opportunities for this craft. No investor would like to invest in a market that is uncertain and there is no sure way of calculating the future returns on investments. The various government departments are under an impression that the industry is in a great health and the artisans are earning huge profits and as such the industry needs no support from any quarter.

6.15.11.4. Vague government policies

The craft of *Khatambandh* as an industry has for long been in the State of infancy even in its native State of Jammu and Kashmir. The laws and procedures with regard to this craft are still not clear to the various stakeholders like the Excise Department, Federation Chamber of Industries, the State Forest Department, and Forest Protection Force. The various traders and exporters who have tried to take this craft outside the State are frequently harassed in the name of service tax. As compared to other crafts it is a turnkey job and involves the process of installation.
6.16. Pinjira (Lattice Work)

Amongst all the wood crafts, one of the skillful and artistic works is lattice work locally called Pinjira, Zaile Pinjira, Pinjira Kaarey (Jalli Screen). This is one of the oldest wood craft in Kashmir.

History of this wooden art has been in Kashmir from ancient times and is of controversial nature. Some people traced its history from 11th century, during the period of Harsha, as quoted by Pandit Kalhana in his Rajtarangni. Raja Harsha built his huge twelve storied palace and decorated it with all kinds of wooden art. But another school of thought believes that Shahmeri Sultans first created and introduced it in their architecture. Another group of thought believes that Mughlas introduced and promoted this art in Kashmir. Historical events depict that this creative art was initially introduced in Muslim religious places and still exists in almost all Muslim shrines and Muslim relic places, with splendid and impressive designs of intricate lattice work. Latter it was adapted in common constructions for interior decorations of rich people. In this way this magnificent art was sustained for centuries in the valley.\(^\text{29}\)

Bernier, who visited Kashmir in the reign of Aurangzeb, makes a special mention of the latticed window shutters and doors, and the houses of kings and nobles which screened from view the beautiful ladies of their harem. Many other travelers like Moorcraft, Vigne and Hugel testify to the delicate workmanship of the Pinjira carpenter.\(^\text{30}\)

Pinjira work is still common in old Kashmiri houses. Pasted together with thick hand-made oily paper Pinjira panels shut off the chilly blast of winter air but let in sufficient light through the translucent oily paper. During spring, the window shutters are thoroughly washed and their paper covering rubbed off.

Pinjira work also figures frequently in the romantic folklore of Kashmir. To quote a Kashmiri verse “ Zaile Pinjray tile nazar trav, Bali asimi Tamblav”

\(^{30}\) D.N. SARAF, see supra note 9, at 107.
(“Bestow upon me just a mere glance from behind the Pinjira, Oh idol of beauty, do not tease me unnecessarily”).31

6.16.1. Definition and Classification

Zaile Pinjira is wooden lattice work, where strips of wood or small carved pieces of wood chipped from logs of deodar or walnut woods are interwoven with designed meshes for windows, balcony shutters, door panels, ventilators, roshan dan and other necessary air and light gaps etc. Zaile means net and Pinjira means a screen, net or cage. Lattice, an attractive art of carpentry, is also called wooden grill work or window wooden grills.

Pinjira craft falls within the purview of Class 20 of the Fourth Schedule to the GI Act, 1999.32

6.16.2. Geographical Location

This craft is mostly practiced in District Srinagar and Anantnag. The specific areas in Srinagar are Safa Kadel, Hawal and Rambagh.

The raw material that is generally used to make Pinjira is Deodar which grows in Kashmir valley at various altitudes, mainly in District Anantnag 33.73°N, 75.15°E and District Kupwara 34°02’N, 74° 16´E. The best quality wood used in Pinjira making is the middle portion of stem leaving 6´ each from the lower or root part and apical part as well.

6.16.3. Designs

Lattice designs are made from desired thin pieces of wood that are chipped from the huge logs of wood and then skillfully carved and woven into multiple designs in a geometric pattern to display it beautifully. No adhesive or nails are used as binding material, instead these are held together with the pressure they exert on each other and by certain chips, which are dove-tailed together with the frame.

31 Ibid.
32 Class 20, see supra note 12.
Many designs are popular, the most favourite being those of the rising sun and cobwebs. The best kind of Pinjira work was known by the Kashmiri names of posh kandur, chahar khana, sada kandur, shash-tez, shash sitara, shash-pahlu, dwazdah-sar, shekh-sar, juj-jari, shirin and tota shash-tez. The uses to which the pinjira was put were many and varied. Windows, doors, railings, ventilators, ornamental partitions and screens were all done in Pinjira work.

Source: Internet
6.16.4. Uniqueness

- Pattern from geometrical inspirations tessellated through complex traditional mathematical formulas which cannot be copied even by a computer CAD program.\(^\text{33}\)

- The craft is also unique to Kashmir as its tradition is inherited amongst the family members only and is not taught outside the family.

- Islamic patterns depicting meanings through abstract symbolism uncommon anywhere else.

- Material, Kashmiri deodar which is used in making Pinjira is available only in certain parts of Kashmir and grows under specific climatic conditions. To grow such varieties of deodar specific terrain is also important.

- Traditionally made Pinjira can only be done with the detailed knowledge of joineries typical to this craft which has to be applied to different designs in different ways.

- Traditionally Pinjira work does not use any glue or nail and the strength come from the precision work of the artisans which is one of the most unique part of the craft.

- Uniqueness also lies in the fact that it was used mainly as jallis of partitions for women area and made of locally available wood of Kashmir.

6.16.5. Present Scenario

The present generation is totally unaware about this grandeur skill, that decorated the palaces of kings, homes of common masses and was exported to other foreign countries, but now this art has almost disappeared; all old ruined

\(^\text{33}\) CAD refers to Computer Aided Design and Drafting. It involves the use of computer technology for the process of design and design documentation.
buildings, shrines, are dismantled and rebuilt on the modern technology with concrete cement and iron as material. Very few old houses in the districts of Srinagar, Budgam, Pulwama and Anantnag exhibit a pathetic view. The valuable artistic windows and ventilator panes in deserted condition are still hanging from their old designed hinges pathetically.