CHAPTER-III
THE HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH
III. The Handloom Industry in Himachal Pradesh

The state of Himachal Pradesh is distinct from other states because of its distinct geographical profile. The Handloom Industry in Himachal Pradesh is an age old industry and needs to be understood in the backdrop of its unique geographical and historical profile which is given below, briefly.

3.1 Profile of Himachal Pradesh

Geography

Himachal Pradesh, spread over 55,673 sq. km. is bordered by Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Punjab on west and south-west, Haryana on south, Uttaranchal on south-east and by Tibet on the east. It is a mountainous region, known for the natural beauty of its forests, rivers, valleys, hills and dales and is rich in natural resources.

The state is located in altitudes ranging from 450 meters to 6500 meters above sea level. It is veiled from the plains by the Shivalik range of mountains. (Shivalik literally means the tresses of Lord Shiva). There is a general increase in elevation from west to east and from south to north. The physiographic divisions from south to north are (1) The outer Himalayas or the Shivaliks (2) The lesser Himalayas or the central zone (3) The great Himalayan and Zaskar or the northern zone.

The Shivaliks consist of lower hills (about 600mtrs above sea level). These hills are composed of highly unconsolidated deposits which cause a high rate of erosion and deforestation.
The lesser Himalayas are marked by a gradual elevation towards the Dhauladhar and the Pir Panjal ranges. The rise is more abrupt in the Shimla hills, to the south of which is the high peak of Chur-Chandni (3647mtrs). North of river Sutlej, the rise is gradual.

The Kangra valley is a longitudinal trough at the foot of the Dhauladhar range. Dhauladhar which means the 'White Peak' has a mean elevation of about 4550 meters. It has an abrupt rise of 3600mtrs above the Kangra valley. The largest of the lesser Himalayan ranges, the Pir Panjal, branches off from the greater Himalayan range near the bank of the river Sutlej. Numerous glaciers exist and several passes lie across Pir Panjal. The Rohtang Pass (4800mtrs) is one of them.

The great Himalayan range (5000 - 6000 meters) runs along the eastern boundary and is cut across by the Sutlej. Some of the famous passes in this range are Kangla (5248mtrs), Bara Lacha(4512mtrs), Parang (5548mtrs) and Pin Parbati (4802mtrs).

The Zaskar range is the eastern most range and separates Kinnaur and Spiti from Tibet. It has peaks rising over 6500mtrs, Shilla (7026mtrs) and Riwo Phargyul (6791mtrs) are the highest among its peaks. There are many glaciers or Shigri (local name) over the Zaskar and the great Himalayan ranges.

Himachal has a rich flora and fauna. Forests cover about 38% of the area. Several varieties of vegetation from the Himalayan meadows and high altitude birch and down to the tropical shrub and bamboo forests of the low foot hills are found here. It has a variety of wild life too.
Himachal has 49 cities and towns. The smallest town is Naina Devi and the largest is Shimla with a population of about 6,17,404. Urban population is only 7.5% of the total population. Most of the people live in rural habitations varying in size from isolated hamlets to conglomerated settlements.

History

The region of Himachal Pradesh was called 'Deva Bhoomi' (the land of the gods). From the early period of its history it was inhabited by tribes like the Koilis, Halis, Dagis, Dhaugris, Dasa, Khasas, Kinnars and Kirats. The Aryan influence in India dates to the period before the Rigveda. Sankar Varma, the king of Kashmir exercised his influence over regions of Himachal Pradesh in about 883 AD. This region witnessed the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1009AD, who during that period invaded and looted the wealth from the temples in the North of India. In about 1043AD the Rajputs ruled over this territory. Known for its vibrant and exquisite natural scenery it received the royal patronage of the Mughal rulers who erected several works of art as an appreciation of this land. In 1773 AD the Rajputs under Sansar Chand possessed this region, till the attack by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1804 which crushed the Rajput power here. The Gurkhas who migrated from Nepal captured this area and devastated it. In about the early 19th century the British exercised their influence and annexed the areas of Shimla after the Gurkha War of 1815-16. It became a centrally administered territory in 1948 with the integration of 31 hill states and received additional regions added to it in 1966.
The State of Himachal Pradesh has an area of 55,673 sq. km. and a population of 6.08 million. There are 12 districts, 77 blocks and 20118 villages. The State has population density of 109 per sq. km. (as against the national average of 312). The decadal growth rate of the state is 17.54% (against 21.54% for the country) and the population of the state is growing at a slower rate than the national rate.

Some Facts at a Glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Formed on</th>
<th>25-01-1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>55,673 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area under forest</td>
<td>43043 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Districts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest City</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latitude</td>
<td>30° 22' 40&quot; N to 33° 12' 40&quot; N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitude</td>
<td>75° 45' 55&quot; E to 79° 04' 20&quot; E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altitude</td>
<td>350 meter to 6975 meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (2001)</td>
<td>6,077,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male population</td>
<td>3,087,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female population</td>
<td>2,989,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Density</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>968 females per 1000 males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate (2001)</td>
<td>77.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>Rs. 10942 [2000-01]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Hindu (90%), Buddhist, Sikh, Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State language(s)</td>
<td>Hindi &amp; Pahri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time zone</td>
<td>IST (UTC+5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Max 30°C (summer); min - 4°C (winter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rainfall</td>
<td>1469 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lok Sabha seats</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajya Sabha seat</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly seats</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Districts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in the table above the state of Himachal Pradesh has 12 districts. Of these 12 districts the concentration of weavers is more in the districts of Kullu, Mandi, Kangra and Kinnaur.


Himachal Pradesh is a treasure house of ancient art and craft which gives an insight into the rich traditions of art and craft in the state however it has not been able to make a mark on the national scene. The climate of the state makes it suitable for sheep and goat rearing, this caters to the requirement of woollen clothes of the people of the state. To meet the requirement of warm clothes the people started to learn the art of weaving, gradually wool weaving evolved into a fascinating craft as weavers passed down the techniques over generations. Weaving became not only a means of economic survival but a means of self expression and brought meaning to the lives of the weavers.

The actual origins of the craft of weaving are not recorded in history but we do know that it is of a very ancient origin. The state was producing wool and had trade relations with Tibet. The following lines taken from ‘Western Tibet and British Border Lands’ by Charles A. Sherring will substantiate the fact “the grazing grounds extend for untold miles to the east of the Mansarover lake and along the Sonpo or Brahmaputra river and also to the north of the Kailas mountains and to a certain extent with diminished fertility to the west of the holy lakes, but there is no question that Mansarover is the spot around which the whole of the wool trade of western Tibet centres. Whether the wool goes to Ladakh or Nepal to Simla or to Kumaon the whole practically comes from this part and the country to the east and in every question relating to the further extension of the trade this
principal fact must not be forgotten". The availability of wool in abundance made weaving a household activity. Commenting on the flourishing activity Jasleen Dhamija writes "The empress Mumtaj Mahal is credited with having discovered the art of wool weaving in Himachal Pradesh in the 17th century. An expedition to the hill areas returned with fabrics woven with intricate designs for the queen who was so impressed by the texture and their designs that she gave them royal patronage which elevated their products to the same level as the fine woollens from Kashmir and Turkistan.

Most households in the cold areas own at least one pit loom and both men and women have acquired the skill of weaving. Weaving is generally done in the winter months when the people are confined indoors and all other activities such as horticulture and tourism have been completed for the year. People from different castes are engaged in weaving, which has become a household industry in the state. Over the years the demand for woollen shawls kept increasing and a separate class of professional weavers emerged, most of them belonged to the scheduled castes. Earlier professional weavers were Brahmins in Chhatrarli, Muslims in Kilar in Chamba district, Rajputs in Mandi and Mahasu districts, the Chamars or leather workers in Kinnaur and the Kolis or Doomnas in other parts of the state.

Due to the perishable nature of the material, very old specimens of woollen fabrics have not survived, nor is there any historical or archaeological evidence. But references to them, especially to woollen wraps, can be heard in pahari folk songs.

The Punjab District Gazetteers and accounts of European travellers mention that Kashmiri shawl weavers settled at Nurpur, Kangra and Shimla
were producing their own kind of pashima shawls. They had fled Kashmir in 1846 when Raja Gulab Singh levied taxes on them.

J.B. Fraser, a British officer travelling in Bushahr state the present day Kinnaur around 1815 mentions that good quality of wool was available in plenty in the kingdom and better quality wool was imported from Bhutan. A Moravian missionary, Schreve introduced a hand operated loom brought from Europe at the end of the 19th century and trained the Kinnauries to weave blankets. Around 1914-1915 the Salvation Army set up weaving training centre at Chini, which is modern day Kalpa where they taught the local weavers to use modern techniques. At the centre the trainees were taught by master weavers who had been trained at the Ludhiana branch of the missionary unit.

Wool played a very crucial role in the feudalistic economy of the princely states of the western Himalayan region bordering Tibet since early days. The rulers of different kingdoms and principalities of the region had been fighting each other to gain supremacy over the trade imports of the central Asian and western Tibetan commodities among which wool was rated the highest. The finest quality of wool has been available in the trans Himalayan steppes spread over Central Asia. People from different castes are engaged in weaving, which has become a household industry in the state. Wild species of Trans Himalayan mountain sheep and goat known as Shapo, Argali, Bharai etc have a coat of fine hair and a layer of fleece beneath the rough outer hair to keep them warm during the severe cold weather. These animals rub their bodies against shrubs and rocks and in the process leave behind a fine layer of fleece. Shepherds collect this fleece and sell it to the merchants. Tibetan shepherd dogs also have excellent fleece. This fleece
also known as tush or pashmina was used to manufacture excellent quality Kashmiri shawls.

The bulk of raw material meeting the requirements of the wool based industry in Kashmir Kullu Bushahr and other parts comes from the second grade fleece obtained from the underbelly of the domestic goats and wild animals in Ladakh, Spiti and other parts of the Trans Himalayan snow desert.

In order to meet the demand of the industry each kingdom had been trying to procure as much wool as possible to cater to the need of the domestic industry, in those times it was only Kashmir where the raw material was converted into the finished product namely shawls. The Lahaulis sold off a major part of their import to customers from the Punjab plains making hefty profits in the bargain.

To ensure adequate import of wool and other commodities the Indian principalities had been competing with each other and they would often enter Tibet in escorted groups to get as much raw material as possible.

The wool based textile industry in Kashmir was way ahead of the one in Bushshr, the locals could hardly consume the Tibetan wool specially in Kinnaur because this region had its own production of wool. Fine quality wool imported from across the border was exported for profits along with local surplus.

The British government of India was aware of the strategic and commercial importance of the border kingdom in the western Himalayan region while conferring ruler ship on Raja Mahender Singh (1815-1850) under the British rulers put a condition that the state shall make available
begaar (compulsory labour) for the construction of roads in the kingdom to ensure free flow of imports from Tibet. As a result, while up to 1818 there were hardly any foot tracks available in the kingdom, new stretches of roads were laid out and so wool fleece and other commodities started reaching Rampur by road. According to Alexander Gerard3 ‘The Koonawurees also find in it to their advantage to extend their commerce in wool, and have lately been improving some of the most frequented roads through their country. This last year I noticed several places that were formerly scarcely practicable for travellers, which have been repaired so as to be passable with some difficulty by loaded sheep, several of which were brought in Rampur in 1820. a few of them were lost by tumbling down precipices, but the people told me that they intended to make roads better, although they would require much time and frequent repair, from being destroyed by frequent felling rocks.’

In order to encourage export of shawl wool to the British territory and then onward to England, a government agency was established in Kotgarh in 1820 but this arrangement could not last for a long time due to the non cooperative attitude of the local people.

J D Cunningham4 during his sojourn to Bushahr in 1840s collected some valuable data regarding important trade activities and furnished a report to the British government. Taking cognizance of his report the government revoked the transit duty in 1849 in order to encourage inter border trade between Tibet and Bushahr. This encouraged more trade and more wool started reaching the markets in Bushahr, thus the wool based cottage industry in the entire state was benefited. In Kinnaur, the wool-based handicrafts developed so much that those formed a class by themselves.
Colourful Kinnauri blankets, gudmas, mufflers and other textile items flooded the Bushahri markets.

Cunningham had also suggested construction of improved road link to the western Tibetan wool-marts from the Indian mainland, so that more and more bales of quality wool and fleece could be imported from Tibet to Bushahr and then to the other centres in the country. Accordingly, in 1850 A.D., a wool Road from the western Tibetan border to Shimla which, came to be known as the Hindustan Tibet Road, was completed and the caravans of Tibetan ponies, goats and sheep laden with wool and other commodities could safely reach Bushahr mandis from Tibet, and the goods further transported to the Indian markets. Thus while the ‘Silk Road’ is by far the most famous network of trade routes connecting China, Central Asia and India, the Wool Road was also a significant trade route which connected the plains of the Punjab in India to Tibet, Central Asia and China.

Due to unfavourable political conditions and unreasonable taxation on the wool/shawl industry in Kashmir in the second half of the 19th century, hundreds of famished and harassed skilled weavers left their homes to seek safer havens elsewhere including places like Chamba, Kangra and Shimla etc. in Himachal Pradesh. Most of these places came to be associated with ‘Kashmiri’ shawls with silky softness, texture and refinement of the genuine Kashmiri product. It was those fugitive Kashmiri weavers, who introduced Kashmiri technique, art of weaving and needle-work in Chamba and Nurpur area of Himachal Pradesh which, under the native traditional influences, developed into hybrid versions.

With the brisk import of quality wool from Tibet, the Pashmina shawl industry in Rampur and elsewhere in Bushahr flourished. The woolen
product of Rampur called Rampuri Chaddar was famous for its silky smoothness and warmth. Besides, good quality pattus were also being hand-woven there. The villages of Sunam and Kanum of Kinnaur had earned the reputation of producing thick, white and fleecy gudmas.

Far removed from the Kashmir-Bushahr rivalry in the inter-border wool-trade with Tibet, the princely state of Kullu had been importing wool, sheep and goats from Yarkand and Tibet from the earliest times through Lahaul without attracting attention of either of the two major contenders. The reason for that smooth sailing was that the wool and other commodities from Ladakh and other destinations in Tibet were brought to Kullu by the wandering Khampa and Bhot nomads, who bartered them with the Indian merchandise at the Patseo fair held on the right bank of Bhaga river in Lahaul, from where the wool was transported to Kullu. Secondly, the Lahaulas had free access to Ladakh and other places in Tibet. Reputed as born traders, these people have been very shrewd businessmen. They have been importing wool from the high land region of Ladakh and other places, and exporting it to the traders from the Indian plains, among which, the agents of Dhariwal mills of Amritsar are also mentioned.

It is thus amply clear that wool has remained a bone of contention among the Indian states bordering Tibet in the Western Himalayan region. Each of them tried to influence the Trans-Himalayan kingdoms and Tibet in different manners mainly to divert outflow of Tibetan wool to their respective territories because, it had been a source of income to them in various manners. The British also started to participate in the wool trade and cast their stakes in it in a shrewd and diplomatic manner. They used wool as a political weapon to manoeuvre events in their favour.
Apart from the politics and economics of the wool trade, weaving activity prospered and flourished in the higher regions of the state due to the climatic conditions and easy availability of wool. The weaving traditions of the weavers of Kinnaur and Kullu have a long and intertwined history and their shawls have become quite famous in India over the years.

Traditionally, in the upper areas of Himachal, on an average at least one person in every rural household weaves for the domestic requirement of the family. Weaving is an integral part of their lives and is treated just like any other day to day activity for the household. It is done by both men and women; the skill of weaving is generally-passed down from generation to generation.

3.3. Organisation of the Handlooms Industry in Himachal Pradesh

The way handloom weavers operate all over the State is not uniform. They work under different modes and methods. Organisation of weavers is divided into three categories:

- Primary Weaver Cooperative Societies.
- Master Weavers.
- Individuals and independent owners.

I. Primary Weaver Cooperative Societies

Weavers Co-operatives were formed in the 1950's to relieve the weavers from the clutches of the master weavers. Master Weavers used to hire weavers and made them work long hours. The wages paid were meagre and the weavers were dependent on the master weaver for their livelihood. There are about 273 weaver's co-operatives in the State. These societies have been formed with the specific purpose of handloom weaving. Each society has a share capital subscribed to by all the members. The main
activity of the PWCS is to procure yarn and supply it to the weavers and then collect the finished product from the weavers who weave in their own homes and send it to the showroom for sale.

2. Master Weavers

At times the master weavers do not do any weaving activity themselves. Some of the master weavers do not own looms instead they procure orders from traders, then purchase yarn and give it to the weavers to weave and then give the finished product to the trader. Wages are paid to these workers. The other type of master weavers own a shed and a loom and hire workers to weave out the orders received. Weavers again receive wages for the work done by them.

3. Merits and Limitations of Working under the Cooperative fold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merits for the Weavers</th>
<th>Limitations for the Weavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weavers get certain privileges and facilities from the government. In particular, pension scheme is available to the weavers.</td>
<td>It is not possible to take policy decisions by single members as management is not controlled by a single individual like master weaver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit is distributed among the members as dividend and/or bonus.</td>
<td>Weavers are supposed to do pre-loom preparation work by themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very small amount as share is invested on the part of the members.</td>
<td>Poor quality of yarn is supplied by the concerned agencies at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular increase of wage is assured per year.</td>
<td>Large advances for unforeseen expenses are not provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing is arranged for their products by the government</td>
<td>Job security is not assured in this sector. So, life of the weavers depends upon the procurement of their products by the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on new designs is given and stipend is also paid for the training.</td>
<td>Due to mismanagement of the societies, some societies are loss making. As a result, the weavers who are members of the society face economic hardship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the cooperative societies are registered bodies, weavers can rely on its functions. These societies will not switch over to some other forms of business.

In general, productivity is lower because of lack of continual supply of yarn.

### Merits and Limitations of Working under Master Weavers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merits for the Weavers</th>
<th>Limitations for the Weavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no need for paying share capital to master weavers.</td>
<td>Profit is not divided among the members. The proprietor can enjoy the benefits of the hard work of the weavers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advances for unforeseen expenses are usually provided by the master weaver.</td>
<td>Master weavers are acutely conscious of their profits; the weavers can not expect any share in the profits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no delay in the payment of wages.</td>
<td>No welfare schemes are provided to the weavers by the master weaver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is possible to introduce new marketable design immediately because of the management is controlled by a single person.</td>
<td>No amount is spent on training and up gradation of skills to the weavers. Weavers have to learn themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good quality of yarn is supplied to the weavers from the private mills at competitive prices.</td>
<td>There is no old-age pension scheme available to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed yarn is supplied to weavers, there is no need to do pre-loom work.</td>
<td>Wages and employment fluctuate according to the demand of products in the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master weavers look after the marketing.</td>
<td>There is no forum available to express their views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity is higher because of continual supply of yarn.</td>
<td>Weavers depend on master weavers for their livelihood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(3) Individual or Independent Owners.

This is the smallest group in the handloom industry. An independent weaver is one who weaves the cloth himself or by members of his family. He owns one to four looms and purchases yarn to be used for weaving. The finished products are sold in the market through his own effort. Sometimes they procure order from some traders and weave for them. They get paid based on piece rate system. Very few of the weavers would fall in this category.

Over the past few years it has been noticed that the majority of the weaving population was over 40 years of age. The younger generation is not showing any inclination towards taking up weaving as an occupation. Some have become traders of handloom products or started working for powerlooms where the work is not as tiring and remuneration is much more. Girls however are more likely to join the family occupation and are involved in preloom/post loom activities, men or the other hand usually leave their homes and traditional occupations in search of greener pastures so that they can earn enough to support their families while women continue to weave on the handlooms. By doing so women can continue to look after their homes and families and do weaving in their spare time to supplement the family income. Typically in a family which is engaged in weaving the man does the weaving while the woman does the pre loom operations.
3.4. Technology used in the Handloom Industry

According to Soundarpandian the Handloom industry is a rural cottage industry. The efforts at improvement of machinery for the handloom industry have been oriented to improve the productivity of machines and labour without sacrificing traditional labour involvement. This is also necessary to sustain the employment generating potential of this industry. The technology used by the woollen handloom industry is very basic and traditional. The advantages of using basic hand held and operated looms are that they do not use electricity. They provide employment as they are manually operated. These looms are not very expensive and the weavers do not need to make a big financial investment to buy a loom.

The drawbacks of these looms are:

- Poor productivity
- High cost of production
- High price
- Poor wages

The Basic Tool-handloom and its Types:

The process of weaving primarily constitutes interlacement of two sets of threads viz. warp and weft and the equipment which operates this interlacement is called 'loom'. The handloom is made up of a stick or wooden frame for weaving but more often it is defined as a frame for weaving equipped with some wooden devices. It is distinguished from that of powerloom on the basis of the source of power used for weaving. It is generally classified either on the basis of the raw materials used. The loom
structure, it's laying position on ground or place of its origin. However, the looms which were popular in olden days are called traditional looms.

In ancient days, there were many types of looms such as free warp loom, warping loom, box-frame free warp loom, warp weighted loom, vertical-warp loom, horizontal-warp loom, table loom, card and frame loom, bow loom, crossed stick loom, mat loom, hole-board loom, stand warp loom, back-strap loom etc. which were used in different places during different times.

In India, various types of looms are traditionally in practice. However, the types of handloom used particularly during the present century, is highly notable. They can be noted on the nature of cloth produced or the places of their origin. They are generally named as pit loom, frame loom, Manipuri loom, Rajasthani loom, Kashmiri loom etc. Very recently, automatic and semi automatic jacquard looms and mechanical jacquard looms are becoming popular in India.

Though the methods employed in making handloom fabric are simple, the results are rather extraordinary. Human involvement and artistic ingenuity creates products which are unique and aesthetically delightful.

The following types of looms are used in India:

- Primitive looms
- Pit Looms
- Frame Looms
- Semi Automatic Looms
1. **Primitive Looms:**

The term 'Primitive' merely indicates that the structure of these looms and the process employed in their working, though outmoded, have remained unchanged for generations. These primitive looms still exist in some parts of the country. The primitive looms are mostly simple in structure, the weft being threaded by hand for interlacing the warp ends. They do not have heavy frames of permanent fixtures and are easily portable. These looms are capable of producing a wide range of varieties and designs, difficult to replicate even on the most modern looms. Other primitive looms include tribal looms, vertical looms, newar looms, tape looms etc. These looms are not used in Himachal Pradesh.

2. **Pit Looms:**

Pit looms are frame looms set up with a pit on the ground for the weaver to do the pedalling on this type of loom the weaver does the pedalling using his legs and uses his hands to pull strings. These looms are still very popular and are a low cost option. Pit looms are the most widely used handlooms in India. These are of two types. Till the advent of the fly shuttle, invented in England during the eighteenth century, throw shuttle pit looms were predominant. In even today, the finest varieties of fabrics, known for their beautiful designs and textures, are produced on throw shuttle pit looms. As the name implies, the looms stand over a pit and the process of picking is done by throwing the shuttle across the sley by hand.

The fly shuttle pit looms is the most popular hand operated loom in the country. Its popularity is due to its productivity being 3 or 4 times more than that of an ordinary throw shuttle loom. It has all the advantages of a throw shuttle pit loom, but is unable to produce intricate extra weft figured
patterns. In combination with dobbies and jacquards, a wide variety of intricate designs can be produced on fly shuttle pit looms.

The strength of the handloom industry today can largely be attributed to the introduction of the fly shuttle in pit looms. In this loom, the sley carries a race board and two shuttle boxes, one either side, with a picker propelled by means of strings. In some of these looms, improved appliances, jacquards and dobbies are attached to increase the scope of designing, to improve the quality of cloth and to enhance the productivity.

3. **Frame looms:**

Frame Looms are set up above the ground level. There are two parapet walls on either side and the weaver sits in the middle. The walls are used to hold the loom frames and the accessories. On this loom too like the pit loom the weaver has to use his feet for pedalling and hands for pulling threads. These looms are more expensive than pit looms mainly because of the cost of construction of the walls. The advantage being that there is no need to dig pits. Frame looms have certain advantages they have in weaving designed varieties with more than two treadles. These are also helpful in weaving fabric requiring mass production. Frame looms are employed for weaving fine count fabrics with extra warp and cross border designs, dress materials, striped and check materials, jacquard fabrics, and furnishing.

4. **Semi-automatic Looms:**

Semi-automatic looms are now becoming popular in some weaving centre in the country. Only a limited range of fabrics can be manufactured on these semi-automatic looms. These looms are operated by human effort
by pedalling with legs or by moving the sley by hand. The Chittaranjan loom, the Hattersley pedal loom, the Madanpura loom, the Banarasi semi-automatic loom are some typical examples of this type of loom. Although productivity of these looms is considerable higher than that of traditional looms, their versatility is limited.

5. **Jacquard Looms**

Jacquard Looms are modified pit looms. They have some additional fittings at the top to hold the design cards. These design cards have been made from card board or plastic and can be used to make several designs.

**Tools and Equipments:**

1. Tools used in preparation of the warp
2. Tools used in spinning the yarn
3. Loom and its parts
4. Other accessories

Brief description of each is given below:-

1. **Tools used in preparation of the warp**

   (i) **Spool rack:** It is a big wooden rack-shaped frame fitted with metal bars. It can hold up to hundred reels of warp threads at a time and with this device a number of threads can be warped. From spool rack, the threads are guided to the warping mill or warp roller. This tool is mostly used in government training centres.

   (ii) **Warping Drum:** It is a wooden warping mill having a big skeleton reel fixed horizontally on a large wooden stand on which the central axle revolves. On every horizontal shaft, which forms the skeleton
reel, a number of smooth upright pegs are placed 5 centimeters apart. As the setting of the pegs divides the whole reel into several sections, so the machine is known as sectional warp roller.

(iii) **Warping Board:** Its frame is rectangular in shape. It is made of four strong pieces of wood having holes on the upper surfaces in which wooden pegs usually 2.5 centimeters in diameter and 15 cms. to 22cms. long are filled.

(iv) **Warping Mill:** It is a revolving loom accessory made of four vertical pieces of wood connected with a central rod which revolves on a pivot fixed in the centre of the base of the wooden stand. Two adjustable cross pieces are fastened to the upright shafts on which pegs are fitted. These pegs make crosses. It has been designed to make long warp and is used in government weaving centres only.

2. **Tools used in spinning the yarn**

(i) **Carders:** These are pairs of rectangular pieces of wood having handles used for carding of raw wool. On the inner concave surfaces of these carders, a piece of leather is fixed which is studded with bent pieces of strong steel or copper wires facing the handles. These wires are used for cleaning wool and in the process irregular pieces of matted and balled up wool are separated and fibres get straightened. In Kinnaur, this is called phalshat.

(ii) **Hand spindle:** It is an about 25 cms. long piece of bamboo and a wooden whorl. The bamboo piece serves the purpose of a spindle. A circular disc known as whorl is fixed about 5 cms above the lower end and helps in balancing the rotating spindle. The hand spindle is used for
spinning the yarn particularly in the higher regions of the state. In Kinnaur, this is called pang or pangach and in other places takli.

(iii) **Wheel Spindle:** It has a wheel driven spindle which is used for spinning and winding of bobbins. It is a big wooden wheel, which is about 10 cms. to 15 cms. thick and has a diameter of about 68 cms. It is hung tightly with an axle in between the two shafts. The shafts are fitted vertically on a 'l' shaped base which helps the rotating wheels move freely. There is a handle fixed to the long wooden axle. Three small shafts are fixed vertically at the other narrow end of the base. A belt of strong cotton string is tied over the circumference of the wheel and is passed through the hole of the central shaft and over the spindle. When the wheel is put in motion, the belt over it makes the spindle twist. The wheel is operated with right hand and the wool is fed to the spindle with left hand to spin and wind the thread into a cone on the spindle. Its common name is charkha.

(iv) **Thernu:** Its shape is like a 'takli' with the exception that it is slightly bigger and has a creeping groove turning to the right at the top of the spindle. The groove serves as a notch and helps the rotating spindled to hang freely by the twisted thread. Instead of this creeping groove some thermus are just provided with a crochet hook. While using it the spinner can use the hands freely. Usually the tool is used for twisting the two ply spun yarn. Thernu is called kyumpang or karu in Kinnaur.

(v) **Taknosha:** It is just a small bowl and the hand spindle is rotated therein with convenience. It is either made of wood or clay. Even a metal bowl or a hollow piece of glass can also be used for this purpose.
3. Looms and their parts

(i) **Cloth beam or Cloth roller**: It is about 10 cms. thick long roller on which cloth is wound while weaving. The length of the roller is about one metre but it varies depending upon the size of the loom. The ends of the roller are fitted in the cut provided in the two posts stuck deep in the ground a few feet apart. The weaver sits in between the two parts. The two round holes are made at the right end of the roller and these cross each other in the centre. The holes are guided with an iron rod and serve as a ratchet wheel fitted in the fly shuttle loom. An iron bar of about 45 cms. length is passed through the hole which prevents the backward movement of the roller and holds the warp threads firmly at correct tension. Simultaneously it also works as a rotator for winding the cloth. The cloth beam is called by different names. In Kinnaur, this is called musli, in Rampur *torthi*, in Killar *rallu*, in Bharmour *belnu*, in Bilaspur *tareli* and in other areas this is known as *toor*.

(ii) **Batten or beater**: It is a wooden frame into which reeds are fitted. The width of the upper shaft is about 15 cms. to 20 cms. while that of the lower shaft is about 75 centimeters with thickness of about 1.7 cms. The entire frame is suspended with two strings from a horizontal stick which is tied to the ceiling. This enables the batten to hang freely and is pushed backward and forward while weaving. Weavers prepare this frame themselves or get it made by the village carpenters. Commonly this is called hathri or hathu. In Kinnaur, this is called thaksha.
Reed: It is a long piece of smooth wood having thickness of 15 X 20 cms. The steel wire reeds are also used. The reeds having different number of dents per centimetre are available from the market. The dent is defined as the space between the two strips. The size of the reed is according to the number of dents or spaces per centimetre. The number of dents or spaces is normally 5, 10, 12, 16 or 20 to 25 cms. For producing cloth of finer quality, reeds having more dents per centimetre are used. The reed is dented with weft yarn before fitting into the batten cap so as to beat the weft yarn to the fill of the cloth. This also keeps the warp threads firmly in position. In Kinnaur, it is called so or pee while in other places it is known as rachh or kanghi.

Healds or Heddles: These consist of twin leashes. The healds used in pitloom are different in composition from those used in the fly shuttle looms. For fly-shuttle looms the healds are purchased from the market. The two upper and bottom bars carrying string leashes are fitted in a separate heddle frame. The upper side of the frame is connected with heddle horses and the lower with lams. String leashes have three loops. One is tied up to the top bar and the other to the bottom bar whereas the third loop is made in the middle of two loops through which the warp threads are passed. The healds used in the pit loom are usually made by the weavers themselves. For preparing string leashes two loops are made which cross each other in the middle and are tied tightly to the top and bottom bars in a regular set of knots. At the time of passing a warp thread through the healds, each warp end is first passes through the lower loop and then through the upper loop. In this way, the threads are kept apart from each other and
are adjusted well by the movements to form the shed for the weft thread. The number of healds used in loom depends upon the weave and the design to be woven. Generally four healds are used. Healds are called jak or ja in Kinnaur and rue in some other parts of the Pradesh. Heddle bars are called shanathi.

(v) **Heddle Horses:** These are four or six pieces of bamboo or wood having various designs from which heddle bars are suspended in a certain set order. The heddle horses have a length of 25 to 30 cms., and are tied to heddle frames in case of fly shuttle looms whereas in case of pit-loom its length is about 20 cms. It is generally made of 'nagal' wood and is either straight or 'V' shaped. On each end of the heddle horse, a circular groove is made and a cord is tied to it to link the heddle bars. A similar groove is also made in the centre of heddle horses where 20 cms long cord is tied for linking two of them to a small piece of wood which is again tied with a string to the horizontal bar near the ceiling. In Kinnaur heddle horses are called pyadodenga or pyad. In the rest of the places, the well known word is chiri or charki or kutni.

(vi) **Lams:** These are long sticks below each heald and hang parallel with cords from the heddle bars. When the paddles are pressed, these bars move upward and downward in regular turns and thus healds work. Actually healds, heddle horses pully, lams and pedals are so interconnected that when the pedals are pressed, the rest of the parts get into motion automatically. Lams are made of wood and rarely of bamboo. In Kinnaur, these are called tema or khyustog and in other places, taraju.
(vii) **Pedal or treadles:** These are wooden levers which are worked by feet. There are four pedals which are used in pairs. For weaving a specific texture, even six or eight pedals can be used. Normally these are fitted from behind close to the bottom of the weaver's pit. The pedals are attached to lams depending upon the weaver's convenience and the design and texture of the cloth to be woven. The width of the pedal is about 7 cms. and length varies between 30 to 38 cms. These are prepared by weavers or carpenters, and are called by different names such as temshing in Kinnaur and latai, panjari or pwaloo in other places.

(viii) **Warp beam:** This beam is fitted horizontally on two pegs behind the loom and is comparatively thinner. The tension of the warp thread is controlled by the beam. It is generally prepared by a carpenter. In Kinnaur, it is called Thalsing while in some of the other parts agal or belnu or pandels.

(ix) **Central Beam:** It is used for keeping the warp threads slightly raised in the middle. It also keeps the threads apart and in correct order. The size of the beam is almost equal to the size of the cloth or warp roller. This is called kharaf.

(x) **Temple:** It is a flat wooden shaft with sharp point on both ends and is invariably fixed according to the width of the cloth. It also helps in keeping the width of the cloth uniform. After weaving about 15 cms. of cloth, the shaft is released from its place and fixed near the warp threads. The shaft is commonly called panak, daslethi, tunja and cherkha
4. **Other Accessories:**

(i) **Shuttle:** It is a wooden structure which is used for passing the weft thread from left to right and vice versa through the shed made by the warp threads. The shuttle has two or three shapes. The common shuttle used by the villagers is shaped like a boat and the other shuttle is a simple round piece of wood or bamboo. The length of the shuttle is about 25 cms. There is a metallic spindle fitted into the cavity of the boat shaped shuttle on which a cylindrical bobbin carrying weft thread revolves. The shuttles are made by carpenters. There is a rectangular shaped groove made in the central part of the slat of wood and the two ends are shaped smooth and pointed. A spindle is fixed with a hinge in the required place. Two small eyelets are provided on one side of the shuttle and through one of the eyelets the ends of the weft thread wound round the bobbin are passed through the fingers. The shuttle is taken near the mouth by the weaver and the thread is drawn in between his / her lips by inhaling air. In the other type of shuttles, a small eyelet is provided on the side near the opening. The hollow portion of the shuttle filled with weft yarn is passed through the eyelet from inside and is taken out through lips or teeth.

(ii) **Sticks:** About a dozen sticks half to one meter long and about one centimeter thick are used for warping and for the weft yarn coils in the cylinder shaped shuttles are used. The sticks are normally made of ‘nagal’ wood. The winding of the weft on the sticks is done in such a way that each time the thread comes one above the other in various loops and thus prevented from getting entangled. The weft yarn filled in the stick is emptied into the hollow shuttle and it comes out of the
same in a regular flow. For laying warp threads around the peg, warping threads are used.

(iii) **Bobbins**: The bobbins are hollow cylinders generally made of 'nagal' wood. The smaller bobbins about 15 cms in length, are used in boat shaped shuttles while the larger ones of about 20 cms are used as pirn for preparing warp thread around the warping sticks. Weft yarn is wound around the smaller bobbins and then inserted into the spindle of the shuttle. There is an eyelet provided on the side of the shuttle for releasing the thread from the bobbin smoothly. The warp threads are wound around the large bobbins. There is a long stick with metal spindles at one end and filled up spools are inserted into it. The warp thread is laid around the pegs by alternating the winding track and thus the thread is released smoothly from pirns or spools.

(iv) **Bobbin winder**: It has a spindle on which bobbins are inserted for winding thread over it. It is driven by hand. In villages the spinning wheel generally serves the purpose of a bobbin winder. Bobbin is put into the spindle fixed to the spinning wheel. When the wheel moves, the bobbin over the spindle revolves. The bobbins are fed by hank stand called 'charkhi'. It is commonly called charkha.

(v) **'Charkhi' or hank stand**: It is made of bamboo sticks and revolves freely on a pivot. For filling up bobbins the cage revolves on an axle and thus thread is released and fed to the bobbin.

(vi) **Reed hook**: It is about 15 cms. long metal needle and has a small hook at one end. This needle is quite thin and passes through the dents of the reed for drawing warp ends from the back to the front. The local name is karosia or khuraki.

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(Vii) **Threading hook:** This hook is used for inserting warp ends through the eyelets of the healds. Those weavers who use old healds of two loops are not using this hook. In fact they wind the warp ends in their right hand fingers and put in each one through the loops of the healds according to the designs. The threading, hook is called *khurkhi*. The basic structure of the shawl is 2/2 twill woven on a straight or pointed drafting order. The surface texture could be as' follows: 1. Straight lifting plan woven on a straight drafting plan to give diagonal lines. 2. Pointed lifting plan woven on a straight drafting plan, to give a vertical zigzag. 3. Straight lifting plan woven on a pointed drafting plan, to give a horizontal wavy pattern. 4. Pointed lifting plan woven on a pointed drafting plan to give a diamond shaped structure.

The patterned border of the shawls is always woven in a basket weave with the dove-tailing or slit-tapestry techniques. The coloured graph of the design to be woven is used as a reference and the number of ends per design repeat is calculated. Cut lengths of the coloured acrylic wool threads are inserted in the warp in 2-3 ply's. The technique used to create the pattern is the interlacing or the 'dove-tailing' technique also referred to as the tapestry weave.

**'Lechha' and 'Notti':**

All the designs for the patterned border are plotted on an ordinary graph paper and can be broken up into small units/steps. The smallest unit of the graph i.e. one square represents the smallest design unit. In the local language, each square vertically represents the 'notti' and horizontally represents the 'Lechha'. In other words, the number of ends calculated per inch is denoted by the 'notti' while the number of picks calculated per square
is denoted by the 'lechha'. Since this square represents the smallest design unit or the minimum step in the patterning, each design can be enlarged (and made to look bolder) or reduced (and made to look delicate / small) depending upon the 'lechhas' and the 'nottis' calculated. When the design is woven in single proportion, each square is represented by one 'lechha' and one 'notti' (2 picks & 4 ends). When its proportions are doubled, each square is represented by two 'lechha' and two 'notti' (4 picks and 8 ends). When enlarged three times, each square is represented by three 'lechha' and three 'notti' (6 picks and 12 ends). A woven design on the product is the closest in size to the same design sketched on the graph when it is woven in double proportion. Hence most designs are woven in this proportion.

3.5. Raw Material Used

In Himachal Pradesh, cotton, wool and silk are used for weaving. However, the main raw material used for weaving is wool. Some people have started experimenting with blends of the above mentioned raw materials.

Cotton

Cotton products occupy only an insignificant part of the age-old and widely spread textile-based arts and crafts of the western Himalayan region. Nevertheless, some of the cotton-made products of the region have already acquired a worldwide reputation for their artistic excellence. The exquisite Chamba rumal is one of the finest examples of the artistic cotton fabrics of Himachal Pradesh. In no way less important, but least known and little appreciated, is the katawan work of the Kangra area. The ladies of this area
have been pursuing these traditional crafts meticulously in the seclusion of their homes as a leisure-time occupation.

The cotton-based textile activities of this region have largely remained confined to the outer sub-mountainous belt and the capital towns of the erstwhile hill kingdoms, where the people from Indian plains, have been settling from the ancient times. In the sub-mountainous region, the summer is relatively longer and the winters short and mild. The people have, therefore, been using cotton garments mostly throughout the year with only a sparse use of woollens during the winter days. In the past, the only woollen garment, that the people in the outer region used to wear, was a coarse handmade blanket, called kambala or pattu.

The people of Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and parts of Solan and Sirmaur districts in Himachal Pradesh, used to grow cotton (locally called narama) for their domestic consumption in the past. But it has now been replaced by other more remunerative crops, and on only very small and scattered patches of cotton fields can be seen in these districts.

There existed a state-sponsored popular activity of cotton-weaving in the erstwhile Kahloor state (modern Bilaspur district), when Anand Chand was the ruler. He was a staunch protagonist of khadi (hand-spun cotton cloth) and had introduced spinning as an essential subject in the schools, much before the khadi movement of Mahatma Gandhi picked up in this region. He himself wore khadi and encouraged others to do so. In fact, a state-sponsored khadi-based cottage industry also flourished in the erstwhile Kahloor state.

These days most of the cotton cloth in the state comes from the mills and markets located outside the state. Mostly the Khadi cloth woven in the
state meets the requirement of livery cloth being purchased by the various government departments and autonomous bodies. Besides, darris, bed sheets and khes are prepared locally from cotton yarn in the lower hill areas of the state. In addition, some weavers also take up weaving of Khaddar and similar types of cloth. Cotton, to some extent, is grown in the lower hills of the state, but the production is not sufficient to meet the local requirements. The Khadi and Village Industries Board purchases cotton from the various markets in adjoining areas of Punjab and Haryana and the yarn is also obtained through their own agencies.

It has also been observed that the cotton yarn is also purchased in small quantities from the adjoining business centers of Punjab like Ludhiana and Amritsar.

Some of the weavers living in Nahan, Paonta valley, Bilaspur and at a few other places near the plains carry out weaving on cotton. Some of them who prepare darees purchase spun yarn from outside the state. Few others prepare khes from the yarn of logar. Logar is a local name given to the cotton used up in quilts and mattresses. This used up cotton is spun coarsely and sheets are woven out of the yarn called -Khes. No patterns are made on these cotton products and they are generally plain woven.

Wool

Wool is the principal material used for weaving in the Pradesh, particularly in the upper regions of the state as they are rich in wool production. The production of wool in the Pradesh has shown tremendous improvement both in quality and quantity as a result of implementation of
various programmes under the plan schemes. The locally available wool is purchased by the consumers and traders from the shepherds visiting the lower areas during the winter months and thereafter the same is cleaned, spun and used for preparing patties, pattoos, shawls, mufflers, dohrus etc.

The different types of wool qualities available at present in Himachal Pradesh are:

**Local wool**

This is the wool obtained from sheep bred in Himachal Pradesh. Most of them are migratory. In summer, the sheep migrate from the villages in the lower plains to the higher up Himalayan pastures for grazing with the 'Gaddis' or local shepherds. During the winter months, the sheep are brought back to their villages in the lower Himalayas. These sheep are sheared twice a year during the autumn and spring seasons i.e. in the months of September and April. According to a popular belief, the very word 'gaddi' after which the people of this community are referred to as such is reported to have derived from a Sanskrit word 'gadi' which means sheep. The gaddis in Kangra District have migrated from Gadheran, a hilly tract in Chamba District, which also means habitat of sheep.

The association of the gaddis with the rearing of the sheep and goat is so close that they call the flock of sheep and goats ‘Dhan’ which means wealth. The status of a shepherd is known by the number of sheep and goats he possesses. With gaddis, sheep rearing is a way of life. Though recently a shift in their occupation from sheep rearing to agriculture has been witnessed yet their social and cultural life is still influenced by their profession. Their rituals and customs to a great extent have been influenced by sheep and goat. The attire is entirely of house spun woolen cloth, the
produce of their own sheep. They are the means of transport in hilly and arduous tracts. Goats are kept for their milk and are also sold to the butchers. They are frequently used for sacrificial purposes in religious ceremonies. Their skin is used as bags for carrying and storing grains. Sheep are kept chiefly for their wool and only a few are sold to butchers. Goat and sheep droppings are useful as manure. The cultivators give food to the gaddi shepherds and their dogs. They hold their animals on their fields. Sale of sheep and goat for slaughtering also fetches good returns. Many of their legends and songs are based on sheep and goats. We find mention of sheep and goats in their tales, worship and rituals.

The interiors of the western Himalayan region offer a most congenial environment for breeding and rearing varieties of indigenous, hybrid and exotic species of sheep and goats in its different terrains. These animals produce different qualities of fleece, varying from coarse goat hair in the outer temperate area to the superfine variety of fleece in the trans-Himalayan Chang-Thang plateau. The quality of fleece also depends upon the species of the animals. As a general rule, shearing, after the animal has wintered, produce softer fibers. The fineness and warmth of wool varies with the rise in the climatic conditions. In the temperate lower areas, the local sheep, which do not migrate, wear a thinner coat of long and coarse hair that yields a coarse variety of fleece called desar. The sheep obtained from the sheep in Churah area is known as palami or rajori, and the wool of Chamba is known as shiralee or thootu. The quality of wool, obtained from the sheep, broadly classified as the gaddi and the Bushahri, becomes finer towards the inner higher region, where humidity and temperature is low. The type of wool, obtained from the Kinnauri flock, is called byangi. The staple length of its
fibre is 5"-6". The **Byangi** Wool, imported from the Chinese Territory into Rampur by the Kinnauri and the Spitian traders for the British government, was considered to be extremely warm. The fleece obtained from the undercoat of the Kinnauri lamb (locally called the **chigoo**) is known as the **imboo**, and is considered to be superior to the **byangi** wool. The staple length of its fibre is 2"-4". Wool is also obtained from Cross' Bred sheep, which are a cross between local sheep and Merino. The quality of their wool is superior to the wool of the desi sheep - relatively finer in diameter and longer in staple length. Local wool is available in natural white, black, grey and brown colours. Owing to its rough texture and coarse quality, local wool is normally used for floor-coverings and blankets and for **pattus** and **dohrus** in some areas. The finer quality local wool is used for shawls.

**Australian Merino:**

Natural white wool-tops imported from Australia are cleaned, processed and spun at the spinning mills in Ludhiana, Amritsar, Panipat and Kullu etc. The fibre is soft and fine in quality. Most of the Kullu handloom products are made in this quality wool, dyed in various colours. At times, hand-spun merino wool may also be used for the weft in the case of the handspun variety of shawls.

Generally, the count of the yarn used for the body ranges from 2/44's to 2/50's. The count of the reed used may be 36's, 40's or 42's. Most commonly, a 2/48's warp is woven using a reed of 42's count - this is considered to be the ideal combination for weaving the ground fabric as well as the patterned border of the product.
Pashmina

It is a soft fleece derived from a central Asian species of the mountain goat, *Capra hircus*. This was popularly known in the west either as Pashmina (from Persian pashm) or cashmere, from the old spelling of Kashmir. The animal, locally called 'chigoo', is found in Tibet areas across the border, Kashmir and in Lahaul and Spiti. The raw Pashmina carries coarse thick hair in about half its original quality which is separated by sorting with combs. Traders sell Pashmina to the customers in the coarse form. Sorting of hair from the soft fleece is done by the consumers. In earlier times, Rampur used to be the trading centre for Pashmina and all other types of wool. Manufacturing of Pashmina fabrics was said to be the main trait of the villagers there. Lieut. Thomas Hutton mentions in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Part II.

'This place is therefore strictly speaking a manufacturing town, where those of its inhabitants who are not engaged in traveling with grain into Ludak and Chinese Territory, are employed in the manufacture of pashmeena chuddurs, which are made from the under wool of the Tartar goats, called by the people' pushm', whence the word 'pashmeena'. These chuddurs or shawls are sold according to their quality and texture from fourteen to twenty-five rupees each'.

Pashmina in its pure form after it is separated from the wool gives a very soft feel. Mostly this is available in white and grey colours and rarely in black colour. Being extremely flexible and elastic, the cloth made from it is wrinkle-resistant. Normally Pashmina is used for making shawls of various sizes and sometimes for coatings. Shawls woven from Pashmina are sheer and light, yet extremely warm. A Pashmina shawl has got double the
warmth of the woollen shawls. Due to their superior quality, these shawls are very expensive.

**Angora Wool**

This is the wool of the Angora rabbit, procured from the local Angora breeding farms. These rabbits are imported from Germany. Since they have a very high birth and death rate, they are bred for approximately two years and then sold off as meat. They are sheared once in every three months. Angora wool is extremely warm, soft and silky to touch. Owing to its fine quality, it is spun only on the 'takli' (i.e. the spindle). It is naturally found in white, brown, grey and black colours and may be dyed in the same colours as sheep wool. Owing to its fibrous nature it is extremely difficult to weave a 100% Angora wool. They are hence woven using merino for the warp and angora for the weft.

**Silk**

Silk is one of the main raw materials used for weaving in India but in Himachal Pradesh silk fibres are mostly produced in government silk weaving centers, of late; however people have started rearing silk worms. Silk is increasingly being used in combination with wool for weaving. Silk weaving has started to pick up gradually in the state due to the availability of fibre, craftsmanship and technology. In times to come silk weaving is likely to assume more importance as the climate of the state is suitable for mulberry plantation as well as rearing silkworms.

Since wool is the principal material used in weaving in the state, it is important to understand the process of wool-weaving, which goes through
3.6. Pre-Weaving Operations

According to Lalit (2001)\textsuperscript{7}. The wool goes through many preparatory processes before yarn can be produced for weaving.

A) Spinning

The wool is washed to remove dirt and waste from it. It is then sent for carding. The aim of carding is to get all the fibres laid out in the same direction and to remove any unevenness in the fibre. The carded wool is then drawn into a thread of requisite thickness after which it is plyed and given a twist to increase its strength. Two different methods are employed for spinning.

1) Mill Spinning:

All the machine-spun yarn used in the shawls is made in the mills of Ludhiana, Panipat, Amritsar or Kullu. Kullu has four or five spinning mills at present. The Dev Bhumi Spinning Mill is the oldest among them. Located at Shamshi, it supplies mill-spun Merino wool to almost all the weavers and co-operatives in and around Kullu district. The initial washing and combing of the imported merino wool tops is carried out at its main spinning plant in Ludhiana after which they are sent to Kullu. Yarn of all possible counts can be spun here as per specific requirements.

2) Hand-spinning:

Local wool procured from the shepherds and Merino wool imported from Australia can be handspun. The wool is washed and carded at the carding units and then supplied by weight to local spinners. These are traditional spinners who spin either on the spindle (i.e. 'Takli') or the
spinning wheel (i.e. 'Charkha') and possess a substantial amount of skill. Spinning and twisting of wool is carried out in the villages. The spinners are paid their wages depending upon the fineness of the yarn. The handspun yarn used for the weft in shawls ranges from 4's to 8's count.

The fibres of Pashmina and angora are very fine and can be spun only on the 'Takli'. Since the last few years, the spinning of Merino tops is also done on the mechanical 'New Model Charkha'. A recent introduction, it has caused a few spinners (who continue to weave on the spindle or the spinning wheel) to be unemployed. As this 'New Model charkha' is not always made available to all spinners, particularly to those in the interior villages, spinning there continues to be done on the spindle or spinning wheel. The production capacity of the 'New Model Charkha' is greater than the 'Takli' or 'Charkha' by 3-4 times. Due to this, the amount of yarn being hand-spun on the latter two has reduced substantially. A skilled spinner can spin about 100 grams of wool per day on the spindle or spinning wheel as opposed to 300-400 grams on the New Model Charkha. Hand-spinning as a means of livelihood has hence ceased to be economically viable and the families of many traditional spinners have taken to other occupations.

B) Dyeing:

1) Chemical Dyeing:

There is no dyeing unit in or around Kullu to cater to the needs of the local hand loom industry.

While a few weavers also do their own dyeing in the villages, most of the coloured yarn consumed is dyed at the various Dyeing plants in Ludhiana, Amritsar or Panipat. Each unit has its own shade-card and colour
range for both wool and acrylic. Some dyeing units have now come up in Kullu also in the recent past.

The chemical dyes commonly used are either Acid or Neolan dyes; the latter possesses greater fastness towards light, water, perspiration and rubbing.

(2) **Natural Dyeing:**

Some weavers in the interiors of Kullu, Chamba and Kinnaur still practice natural dyeing using vegetable dyes. Various roots, barks or seeds of walnut, manjistha, geru (madder), onion, pomegranate etc. may be used. Vegetable dyes give rise to an exotic range of muted colours in apricot, ochre, rust, brown, olive and many more. Different shade variations and tones of the same colour can be obtained by changing the proportions of the natural dyestuff or adding different chemicals such as copper sulphate or ferrous sulphate. For example, an entire range of rusts and browns can be obtained from geru and the outermost shell of a walnut respectively.

While traditionally handspun shawls were made with handspun yarn being used in warp and weft, these days the ground comprises of a millspun warp (in natural or muted colours) and a handspun weft, in white, grey or fawn colours. Pure merino wool dyed with natural vegetable dyes is used for the patterning giving rise to the most exquisite shawls in soft, subtle and muted colour combinations.

C) **Yarn for Patterning**

The coloured yarn used for the patterned borders is acrylic or pure wool of 2/32's count. It is procured from the local shops or directly from Ludhiana / Amritsar.
Traditionally, the yarn used for patterning was local wool dyed with vegetable or chemical dyes. A few decades ago, it was replaced by merino wool imported from other countries - the latter being finer and softer in quality.

With the advent of acrylic in the seventies, it virtually ousted the pure wool from patterning. A 100% man-made fibre, acrylic is available in the brightest of colours ranging from lime green to acid pink to florescent yellow. It is relatively cheaper and possesses a superior fastness towards light and washing. As a result, the present generation prefers it to pure wool. However, a small number of shawls, pattus and dohrus are still patterned with pure wool for those who specifically ask for it; older generation of local people, Delhi market, foreigners and a few tourists.

(D) Weaving

The weaving of shawls in the co-operatives, private units and other small scale industries is done on the fly-shuttle frame loom (reedspace 48”) with four shafts and four peddles. These are simple and uncomplicated looms with makeshift arrangements. They are produced from wood and metal by local carpenters. Their particulars are specified and they are also subsidized by the government.

However, a few individual weavers in villages and the interiors continue to weave on the age-old traditional pit-loom. It is the most popular type of loom in the region because of the reason that it can be installed mostly by the weaver himself anywhere at an isolated corner on the ground floor of his house. The frame of the loom is fixed on the floor with the heddles and the reed held in position by the suspenders from the roof. The pedals are fixed in a pit and the weaver works on the loom while sitting on
the floor itself with his feet resting on the pedals in the pit. The looms meant for weaving pattis are smaller in width, about half a metre wide.

Some of the weavers have moved over to the wooden throw-shuttle looms. This loom is basically similar to a pitloom except that it has the weaver sitting on a bench with his feet on the floor as opposed to the latter where the weaver sits on the floor with his legs inside a pit. Both these looms have a maximum of four shafts and four pedals. Normally, traditional products such as pattus, dohrus, pattis, blankets etc. for personal local consumption are woven on the pit loom and throw shuttle looms, while shawls for commercial marketing are almost woven on the fly shuttle frame loom.

3.7. Types of Weaves

Basic Weaves

Most common weaves employed by the weavers are plain weave and twill weave. The pattern of weave greatly depends upon the tying of the heddles; the order in which the heddle shafts are tied to the lams and pedals; and the order in which the pedals are operated to produce a design in the cloth. It is an arrangement of threads of yarn which produces a particular weave in the woven cloth.

Plain Weaves

It is a simplest form of weave. The design is prepared by interlacing of weft yarn with the warp yarns, in a sequence of one up and one down. The order is reversed for every subsequent weft thread. Normally this weave is employed by the weavers for preparing darees and also for a piece of cloth on which colour inlay work or patterns are introduced by using dollies of
colour threads. This weave pattern can very well be taken up on a two-heald loom. The warp threads are entered alternately in the healds which are raised and lowered one by one by means of two pedals. Particularly the weavers living in areas of Sirmaur, who are experts in making durees, invariably use pit looms with two healds. The same weave effect, which is also known as tabby weave, can be produced on a four heald loom. Here the threading of healds is done in a regular sequence viz., 1st thread in No.1 head, 2nd in No.2, 3rd in No.3 and 4th in No.4 and again 5th thread in No.1 heald, 6th in No.2 and so on. During weaving, alternate healds are raised or lowered in pairs in an order of 1 and 3; 2 and 4. For this purpose lams below the healds are tied up in a way that only two different sheds are formed by pressing a pair of pedals. The weave produces different effect if warp and weft threads are used of varying thicknesses. Normally in duree making warp threads are of finer yarn, thin and strong. But the weft threads are coarser and thick. In this weave warp threads are fully covered by the weft threads and the texture is called warp ribbed

Twill Weave

Twill weave is produced in the same way. The only difference is of interlacing of 2 up and 2 down warp threads, moving diagonally across the cloth in a regular sequence. Interlacing arrangement may be done over 1 and under 3 warp ends may be spaced in several other irregular groupings. For this type of weave, loom with four healds is invariably required.

Twill weave effects may be produced in a number of varying texture such as regular twills, pointed wavy twills, re-arranged twills, combined twills, broken twills or fancy twills, box weave, Diamond weave etc. But these different weaves are being employed only sparingly. So far as the
village weavers are concerned, regular twill weave is generally the only texture they produce on the various clothes they weave.

In the texture of regular twills a particular number of warp ends are lifted for each pick in a manner that the weft thread passes under and over the same number of ends. For the subsequent picks, the group of warp ends including the one end lifted during the previous pick should be lifted, in consecutive rotation. The texture produced this way gives an effect of a stair-step in the fabric. This weave is very popular among the traditional weavers living in villages.

Post Weaving

After the woollen fabric has been woven on the handloom, it needs to be finished. It is taken off the loom and all loose or protruding threads are manually clipped off. The warp threads at the two ends are knotted so as to prevent the fraying of the woven fabric. Simple overhand knots are commonly used. The product is then sent for finishing.

Finishing of shawls and men's chaddars:

There are no dry cleaning factories available locally in Kinnaur. However, Kullu valley now has a few such factories set up in the recent years. In Kinnaur, the shawls are simply washed in cold water and soap solution. Since they do not require a felted surface, the mild milling they are subjected to while washing is sufficient to soften the fabric. After washing these are not wrung but are opened and allowed to drip dry. When dry they are ironed with a heavy iron.

Finishing of pattus, dohrus, patties:

In the case of these products, a heavily felted surface is required. This
is achieved by foot-milling. The fabric is soaked in mild soapy solution in a wooden container. A person then stands inside the container and kneads it with his feet. Care has to be taken that every part of the fabric is kneaded with even pressure or else excessive shrinkage may occur. The fabric is milled till its woven structure becomes totally invisible and a felt is formed on its surface. (i.e. short fibres start protruding on its surface). Foot milling improves uniformity all over the piece and gives the fabric more body. Tweeds and Blankets are sent to the finishing units for Chemical milling.

Weavers:

There are basically three broad categories of weavers:

i) The traditional weavers belong to a community commonly known as the 'Jelahas'. A few of them claim to be the descendents of the great poet 'Kabir', who was a weaver. They are self-employed full-time weavers who work on their own looms at their respective homes. Normally, they weave traditional woollen products such as pattu, dohru, patti etc. for personal use and for the needs of the local community.

ii) Apart from those who are traditional weavers, there are some who weave part-time only for their own domestic requirements. There is no caste distinction among them and normally, these are the Brahmins or Rajputs. Each house has a small loom on which weaving is done at leisure or after doing a bit of farming or other jobs.

iii) There are also professional weavers who are employed in the shawl industry. They do not belong to traditional weaving community but
have acquired the skill of weaving after about a year's training. They may be trained either by their own friends or close relatives, who are master-weavers, or in the production cum training centres. They weave for commercial purposes. Their average monthly income may range from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 or even more. Since almost each and every family has its own piece of land, however small, weaving is generally not the only means of livelihood for the weavers. In most cases, their monthly income is supplemented by their earnings from farming or any other activity. In that sense, the economic condition of the weavers of Himachal Pradesh is relatively better than that of the weavers in the other parts of the country. They are almost always in a position to fulfill their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and even education.

3.8. Products Woven in the State.

The tradition of Wool weaving in Himachal Pradesh is of very ancient origin. On tracing its origin, this craft heritage reveals a very strong Central Asian influence. The people of Himachal, inhabiting areas right from Lahaul-Spiti to Kinnaur had contacts and trade relations with people of Indian plains as well as those of Western Tibet. This led to the growth of mutual cultural influence of Central Asian traditions on one hand and Hindu traditions on the other. The weaving activity of Himachal Pradesh is supposed to have originated in Kinnaur. In the later years, some of the weavers migrated to Kullu and settled there. Known as the 'Bushahras' they introduced the craft of weaving to the people of Kullu. Kullu, being a tourist destination enroute to Manali, the weaving activity that was originally practiced to cater to local needs gradually took a turn towards
commercialization. Soon it became a major industry that started catering to the demands of locals, tourists and neighbouring states. Today, this handloom industry plays a very vital role in the economy of Himachal Pradesh. It is concentrated in Kullu; there is significant activity in Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti, Chamba, Kangra and Mandi districts. The exquisite textiles of Himachal Pradesh are characterized by colourful geometrical borders woven in tapestry weave over a twill ground in natural shades of wool. Since centuries, the people of Himachal Pradesh have been known to weave shawls and chaddars.

The best-known woven product of Himachal Pradesh is the shawl, which is marked by a harmonious combination of colours and designs evolved over the centuries. It has earned a world-wide reputation for smoothness, fineness, warmth and high artistic quality. These shawls are known the world over under various generic schools like the Chamba, the Kulluvi and the Kinnauri shawls. Each of these shawl-weaving schools has a distinct colour preference and style of ornamentation of its own. Besides this broad stylistic classification, the Rampuri and the Rohru shawls of Shimla district have peculiarities of their own. But these varieties follow, to a large extent, Kinnauri characteristics. The shawls of Himachal Pradesh have unique characteristics which give the shawl the same look from both sides due its weaving, designing and colour combination. Insertion of more than one coloured thread in a single pick (cut weft) by hand during weaving with the reversible effect makes this fabric. It is not possible to get such an effect with any other kind of loom whether powerloom or any sophisticated loom. Shawls are available in a wide variety, ranging from the extremely fine to coarse. The material traditionally used for shawl-weaving was the fleece
obtained from the mountain-goat, **pashmina**, found in the higher reaches of Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti. This is the finest; most sought after variety of wool and is known as **byangi** in the pahari dialect and popularly known as **pashm**. Slightly inferior in quality but very soft to the touch is **imboo**, lamb's wool. Pashmina wool used to be imported from Ladakh and Tibet by Rampur traders. In his book *Trans-Himalaya*, Sven Hedin writes, 'About 16 Indian caravans in the year are said to fetch wool from Gertse and no doubt their profits are large. Like the pahari miniatures, the shawl of Himachal Pradesh also has a very great history. According to the **Majjhima Nikaya**, the Vahita country, which extended over a vast mountainous area now forming Jammu & Kashmir state and the north-western part of Himachal Pradesh, had a reputation of manufacturing **uahitika** i.e., the **loi** or the woollen chaddar. That age old reputation still holds good. In Bandipur and Shopian in Jammu & Kashmir and Kullu and Rampur in Himachal Pradesh, still high quality **Pashmina lois** are woven. But these are heavily priced, and a cheaper version of this fabric in **raffal** is manufactured for popular use. One of such **loi** was presented to Ananda, a close disciple of the Buddha, by King Prasenjit. This would indicate that there already existed a craft of weaving plain woollen fabrics-the vahitikas or the lois-in this region as early as 6th-5th century B.C. But no evidence of continuation of that tradition subsequently is known until the 14th century, when Sultan Qutab-ud-Din (1373-1389 AD.) is known to have nurtured and encouraged the craft of weaving in Kashmir. Nevertheless, mention about the use of unstitched garments, like **angaustra, katiustra, kamarband** etc., found in the classical Indian literature would suggest that a type of shawl was widely in use in India in those times also. The Persian word 'Shal' from which the English 'Shawl' is derived, originally denoted a class of woven fabric rather than a
particular article of dress. In traditional usage, shal could equally well apply
to a scarf, a turban, a mantle or even a coverlet. The distinguishing feature
being that the material was fine wool or some other kind of animal fleece.
The Italian traveller, Pietro Della Valle, writing in 1623, observed that
whereas in Persia, the scial or shawl was worn as a girdle, in India it was
more usually carried 'across the shoulders'. This statement of the Italian
traveler is significant for the fact that more than a century earlier, at least the
elitist use of the shawl had reached Italy. This fact, confirmed by
contemporary portraits, gives India some claim to be regarded as the true
home of the decorative shawl, in the sense in which it became known in
Europe: a loose enveloping shoulder-mantle woven, either partly or wholly,
in animal fleece. Worn in this way in India, the shawl was essentially a male
garment: its degree of fineness was traditionally accepted as a mark of
nobility. Although a garment so simple in shape and form undoubtedly has a
long history in the Near East, the finest shawls of the modern era are
synonymous with the name of Kashmir.

For centuries, the Rohtang pass has been an important trade route used
by pahari traders going to Tibet and Ladakh and bringing back pashmina
wool among other items. 'The British spent considerable resources
improving this track the wool trade was valuable and the British were
anxious to divert some of it towards British India rather than see it all
disappear to Kashmir'.

Rampur Bushahr, a small town located on the Hindustan-Tibet Road
and the erstwhile capital of the Bushahr rajas, has been famous for its
exquisite soft wool. The shawls woven here, known as Rampur chaddars,
are famous for their velvety softness and durability. They caught the fancy
of Lord and Lady Dufferin, who visited Kinnaur, and subsequently gained popular favour with the Europeans, as George Watt 10 writes, 'these shawls were appreciated for being 'softer, finer in texture, and woven with woollen warp and a s en for the most part pecially prepared silk, sometimes even cotton, weft. The wool used is, of course, the finest and purest pashm they are usually twilled or may have a damask pattern worked in the plain colour.'

Rampur Bushahr is also famous for its Lavi fair. The fair, as the past accounts run, took place twice in the months of Jyestha (June) and Kartika (November) which are suited to shearing of sheep, thus making available the wool in abundance. With the changing circumstances, the Lavi fair has come to be celebrated only once a year i.e. sometime in the month of November. The word lavi is derived from the word loe which in local parlance means a sheet of woollen cloth. Another meaning of lavi is shearing of the sheep.

It is difficult to say when and how this fair made a beginning but it can be understood that it cropped up out of sheer necessity of the area producing in abundance commodities like pashmina, pashmina-sheets, wool, woollen sheets, gudma, namda, carpets, dry fruits like chilgoza, walnuts, almonds and zeera. Apart from these commodities of common use, the Kinnauri ponies and dogs also come for sale, the latter known for their loyalty and dependence. The gaddis, the handsome tribe of the Himalayas, have them as watch-dogs for their herds of sheep. Next to shawls, the most important woollen product of Himachal Pradesh is the blanket. Although, these rate a step down in refinement and texture to the lois and shawls yet, these are the all-time and versatile wear of the people in this region, and are made use of in various ways. The people use them to wrap their bodies against rain and cold, when outdoor, and cover themselves while lying and
asleep. Women in the interiors use a blanket as a sort of sari. It is a rough and tough bed-sheet and bed-cover, and when nothing is available to pack a load, the blanket comes handy as a packing sheet. According to an age-old tradition, a woollen blanket is spread on the floor for the guests of honour to sit upon. It is a traditional way of according a 'red-carpet reception'. It is because of the diverse use of this fabric, that it is made in different measures, colour combinations and patterns by the people. Accordingly, there are different names for different kinds of blankets. The most common one is the pattu i.e. the blanket.

**Pattus:**

The pattus are generally woven in regular twill weave everywhere in a normal size of 2 metres by 1.50 metres. Mostly the second grade wool is needed for making blankets, the first grade being reserved for making lois and shawls.

The most common colour combination in pattu is khudrang black and white, for which requisite quantities of black and white yarns are textured in numerous ways. Either the warp-bulk is made of black yarn and the weft of white or the order may be reversed.

The Pattu is worn by women in and around the Kullu District. Its basic structure is a 2/2 twill or a diamond weave while the pattern is woven in basket weave. It is made from mill spun woollen yarn of natural or dyed colours. The pattus for everyday wear are plain or chequered with simple borders. The ones worn during festive occasions are ornately patterned with design motifs along the weft as well as the warp. Many times the pattus may have a red woven border called 'Khusti' running along the vertical edges along with eight to sixteen coloured warp ends near the selvedges so as to
make them more attractive. Since the last few years, however, there is a trend towards stitching a separate 'Khusti' or a patterned border at the selvedges of the Pattu -with the intention of reducing the labour involved and making it cost-effective, without reducing its visual appeal.

The pattu is draped around the body and secured at the shoulders with a pin locally referred to as the 'Bhumni'. A muffler or sash is then tied around the waist to hold it in place.

Pattu or blanket resembles a sari in as much as both are simple length of cloth. Pattu or blanket is wrapped to cover the entire body. Just like saris wearing of a pattu is also an art in itself. The study of the different parts of Himachal will show different styles in pattu weaving.

A pattu is worn round the year. In winter, the women may wear a blouse underneath but in summer they may do without it. The pattu in winter is wrapped to cover the trunk, the arms and the lower half of the body down below the knees. A single pin over the front and a cord-like belt round the waist are two things sufficient to support in a graceful manner the entire sheet on the body.

The Kinnaur ladies have folds of their shawl or pattu on their back while in Kullu these folds can be seen on the front. The Kullu belles pin both ends of their pattu just below the shoulders on the front with boomini, i.e; local broaches fitted with long silver chains - all a good example of fine craftsmanship. The pattu is tied around the waist with the help of cotton cord, or gachi - a piece of cloth. The brilliant coloured designs appear in front and make the costumes appear very lively and picturesque. When the ladies have to join a dance p'arty, they attire themselves in the best of pattus, each may cost as much as a thousand rupees.
**Dohru:**

Size (1.40 mtrs. by 3.6 mtrs.)

Dohru literally means a two-folded blanket, and essentially it is an extra large sized pattu, which is used in multifolds as quilt by the people in the interiors. In the interiors of Shimla district, it is known as a dhabali. Even in multifolds, a doharu is large enough to cover a whole family together under it, and protect it from the cold. In common parlance, what doshala is to shawl, doharu is to pattu. Given its size, it may be practically impossible to make such a large-sized fabric in one-piece on the traditional handloom. Therefore, its width is made up by stitching two or more pieces of equal length together. To manufacture this rough and tough fabric, coarse wool is spun into a thick cardage and a well twisted yarn is made. This fabric is so tough that it may last for generations.

The Dohru is worn by women in and around the Kinnaur District. It is draped like a sarong with pleats at the back and secured at the shoulders with a pin. The ground is a 2/2 twill woven in natural colours using locally available sheep wool or merino wool, while patterned designs are woven on both the borders.

*Dohrus* have a plain or chequered ground with a border that measures about 15 - 20cms on the lateral ends and are classified by the intricacy of the patterns on the borders. The border on more expensive dohrus is embellished with a variety of colourful and intricate patterns. They are generally woven in handspun wool from the local flat-tailed sheep or from yak tail-hair.
Some dohrus are also used in place of quilts. They are longer in length and are woven in coarser wool that has been spun into thick cordage.

The Dohru is tied at the waist with a *gachi*. While shawl gives an idea of a small length and width, *dhooru*, which literally means double, is a blanket big in size. Dhooru has a plain background in some colour but the outer fold, which appears on the back, bears a flower in some glowing colours. With dohru is combined a woollen shawl which is oblong in shape and is carried over the back with free sides on the front. This shawl has exquisite floral designs on it, especially on its borders.

Kinnauri women's shawls are known as *chhanli*. They measure 2 meters in length by 1 meter in width and have three lines of continuous motifs known as *phool*, interspersed with three lines of separated motifs, known as *taras*, running across each end of the shawl. The selvedge edges often have a 2" border running the length of the shawl on both sides. Lengchas are another type of shawl woven in a smaller size, about 1 meter by 1 meter, that have phools and taras all over the body. It is worn draped over the shoulders and fastened in the front by a brooch known as a digra.

**Pattis and Tweeds:**

(Size: $\frac{1}{2}$ mt - $\frac{3}{4}$ mt x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$-5 mts i.e one coat-length)

Local tweed made for coats, jackets or trousers is called patti. It is a tailored version of the pattu. Patti is made of a narrow width-measure of one *haath*, which means lesser than half a metre width, and in length of seven *haaths* (approximately three metres), which is a standard one coat length measure. While the width of a patti remains fixed at one *haath*, it may be as long as four times a standard coat-length.
The patti is a heavy twill fabric generally woven from two-fold handspun natural white or brown/ black wool or both. Sometimes, mill spun yarn may also be used. It is available in plain, stripe and check patterns. It is heavily milled into a well felted cloth making it impervious to snow, rain and wind. A patti is woven in the twill-weave and also in the close warp spacing.

Generally, woollen yarn used to manufacture a patti is khudrang monochromatic. But beautiful patties in herring-bone weave in black and white yarn is also produced in Kullu area. The other popular type of patti is lal-kohari. It is a plain patti made of fawn-coloured wool. Since fawn-coloured wool is rarely available, the lal-kohari patti is highly valued. A touch of rarity attached to the lal-kohari patti has given rise to imitation, and the white patties are artificially dyed in fawn colour and passed on as a khudrang product. But the grey patti of Kinnaur ranks at the top for its fine texture, smoothness, warmth and durability. There is a practice of washing patti in a potion made of raw minced 'arui', a kind of tuber vegetable and water in Sirmaur district. The patti is dipped in this potion and briskly rubbed. This treatment turns a patti into smooth, shiny and milk white fabric.

Gachis:

Gachi is among the oldest woollen fabric of the indigenous people of the Western Himalayan region. It has been one of the most essential parts of the traditional costumes of the region. Worn around the waist as a kamarband or a waist-band by the men and women alike, gachi is a very functional outfit which not only keeps the hill people fit and erect even with a heavy load on their back, while climbing a steep mountain ascent but, also
provides space in its numerous folds for inserting daraat (a type of long-handled sickle) and other items of use.

Gachi is a narrow woollen or Pashmina fabric of not more than 30 centimetres width, which sometimes is double folded. But, it is long enough to be wrapped round the waist four-five times. The ends of gachi are ornamented with the colourful patterns, identical to the ones found on the shawls.

**Mufflers:**

Muffler, also known as *guluband*, is perhaps the latest introduction in a wide and colourful array of the woollen fabrics of the Himachal region. It never formed a part of the traditional wardrobe of the people in this region. In the interiors, where the icy-cold winds blow, not only the face or throat, but the entire body is required to be muffled, for which only pattu, and not a muffler, would serve the purpose. Use of muffler here is, therefore, more a fashionable outfit than a part of normal costume. Mufflers are made from Pashmina, wool and raffal yarn in a wide range of variety. Normally, it is a woven piece of fabric measuring about 30 centimeters in width and about 1.50 metres in length. These are plain as well as ornamented, with inlay work. The inlay work on the mufflers is generally the same as we find on the shawls. Sometimes the checkered and square patterns of the pattus are also replicated on them. Since a muffler is essentially a fashion fabric, its two ends are decorated tastefully and even the fringes are treated with interesting lace-work or netting.

**Gudma:**

Gudma is a large size woolen sheet, very warm and soft, used as a
covering on the bed, and is normally of 1.50 metres in width and 4 metres in length so that it can be double-folded to cover the whole body. The fabric is woven, in twill weave, but the weaving texture becomes completely invisible under the raised fibres of wool, which look like fur, after these are vigorously brushed for a long time.

Mostly the yarn used for making a gudma is of black or white colour. Sometimes stripes of red colour are also added on the borders. In Himachal Pradesh, Gudma is generally a product of Kinnaur and Spiti regions.

**Numdahs:**

Numdah is a piece of pressed felt, used as a bed-mattress. It is made out of the pure wool of the coarse variety or the wool-cotton mix. Unspun wool or wool-cotton mix is spread uniformly and evenly on the floor and rolled over gently. Later it is pressed under the feet for felting. The felted stuff is then milled, washed and dried.

Numdahs come in various shapes - circular, oval and rectangular - and in various sizes. It is in fact, not an indigenous product of the region, and is believed to have been introduced to Kashmir from Yarkand around the turn of the 19th century, where it has been in use as a floor covering and mattress. Numdahs are also made in Kullu. But this craft has not been able to catch up there. In fact, the numdah industry has to face competition with the industrial units in Punjab and Haryana where numdahs are made as a by-product of the woollen and cotton weaving industries.

**Khambroodar Cloth:**

A special type of woollen fabric is woven in the interiors of Shimla...
district and in Kinnaur. This cloth is used by the people for making a special kind of pyjama, known as the khambroodar pyjama which, in fact, is more of a gaiter than a pyjama. It is a patterned fabric, prepared from fine woollen or Pashmina yarn. Cloth for this pyjama is specially woven to a standard measure of 3.50 metres in length and about half a metre in width. About 30 to 50 centimetres wide portion at each end of this cloth is profusely ornamented with various coloured patterns, quite similar to the ones found on the Kinnauri and Rohru shawls. This ornamented portion forms the lower part of the pyjama below the knees Khambroodar pyjama worn by the folk-dancers, lends extra grace to their rhythmic movements.

**Woollen caps:**

Pahari cap is a round woollen cap, with an extra lappet running well over half of its circumference. This lappet, when folded upward, shows out an ornamental stripe. When unfolded, the ornamental stripe turns inside and the lappet covers the entire back portion of neck from ear to ear. In traditional usage, this lappet serves to protect the ears and back portion of neck from cold and, when folded upward, lends grace to the cap, with feathers, monal tuft and flowers tucked in it.

The pahari caps have four distinctive types - Kulluvi, Kinnauri, Bushahri and Lahuli. These types may be identified from the designs on their lappets and the manner in which these are worn. While the Kullu caps are only used by the males, the Kinnauri and Bushahri caps transgress the distinction of sex and are worn by the males and females alike. The Kulluvi caps carry a woven woollen stripe on the lappet on which colourful graphic patterns like tara, guddi and cyahiri etc., similar to the ones provided on the Kulluvi shawls, are woven. These stripes are prepared exclusively for this
purpose on the handlooms. The edges of the lappet are carefully trimmed and laced with a stripped cotton lining, called rnashroo.

Kullu is also known for its traditional kala-topa. It is made of pure black Pashmina or wool. The upper portion of this hat-like cap, covering the skull, remains semi-spherical, round which a projecting round ring is formed by the rolled up lower part. This topa is gradually going out of vogue and may only be seen worn by the folk-dancers on festive occasions.

The Bushahri and Kinnauri caps are just identical, the only difference being in the colour of stripe on the lappet. In the traditional Bushahri cap, the lappet is adorned with a stripe of velvet or shanil of parrot-green colour. In the Kinnauri cap, the lappet carries a velvet or shanil stripe of deep red or crimson colour. The woollen cap of Lahaul is quite similar to its cousin in Kullu, with the only difference that no extra treatment by way of ornamentation is provided on the lappet. It remains as plain as rest of the cap portion.

Woollen Carpets:

Made from indigenous wool, the woollen carpets are woven in the state in the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti and Kullu. They are generally in the sizes of 3 ft. X 6 ft. and 6 ft. X 9 ft. but smaller sizes are also available for prayer mats etc. They have a fine finishing process like levelling with big scissors and thereafter embossing the design patterns. Traditionally, Tibetan design patterns are being used on the carpets with motifs like birds, dragons etc. The carpets are woven on handlooms, which are different from the looms used for making shawls.
3.9. Weaving Traditions of Kullu

Kullu, the abode of many hundred gods and goddesses derives its name from 'Kulanthapitha', etymologically; it is composed of Kula-Anta-Pitha, the territory which marks the end of Kula- the socio-religious system of the mankind. Penelope Chetwode has translated it as 'End of the Habitable World', the title of her book on Kullu.

Sanctified by a countless number of Gods and Goddesses, the Kullu valley is also known as the 'Valley of the Gods'. It is a mile wide and over fifty miles in length. It tilts northwards from the old town of Mandi to the Rohtang Pass. In the olden times, it used to be an important trading centre on the great trade route to central Asia - to Tibet and China. With Tibet no longer a free country and travel to China restricted, Kullu today has lost its multinational character to a certain extent. For centuries, raw material such as wool and pashmina used to come from Tibet and Central Asia to feed cottage industry of Kullu tweeds, blankets and shawls. This industry received a setback, consequent upon the termination of Sino-India agreement on Trade in 1954. In June 1962, Indian citizens wishing to visit Tibet for pilgrimage or any other purpose were required to observe the formalities normally prescribed for travel from one country to another. This agreement has now been modified as Hindustan-Tibet road via Shipki La has been opened for trade between the two countries.

The age-old cottage industry based on wool and Pashmina was in shambles since the termination of Sino-India Agreement on trade. The state Government, therefore, decided to provide incentives to local artisans, such as bank loans, subsidies for the purchase of handlooms and raw material. As a result thousands of small scale handloom units, some of them in co-
operative sector, began to generate employment to thousands of workers. Kullu shawls and blankets in attractive designs soon became a booming cottage industry.

Kullu has been famous for its shawls with striking geometrical patterns and vibrant hues. Traditionally, two types of shawls were woven here: the pattu for women and the chadru for men. Both are much larger than the shawls used in the plains. The pattu is wrapped round the body over the kameri, a full-sleeved shirt, in such a way that it covers the trunk, arms and lower half of the body, dawn to the ankles. Both ends of the Pattu are brought over the shoulders and held in place with silver pins or skewers linked together with chains. A thick woollen string in tied tightly around the waist to keep the pattu in place. In and around Manali in Kullu district, which has been a thriving centre of the wool industry, elaborate large pattus are woven for weddings and festive occasions. These have broad borders running the length of the pattu and are still being woven in a variety of shades and patterns.

Mr. Karam Chand alias Swami Dayal, an Arya samaj activist and social worker of village Naggar, was the first man to introduce handlooms in Kullu. He started a small spinning and weaving unit in Sultanpur which he donated to Arya Samaj. The pioneers of Kullu shawl making were Sheru Ram of village Angu Dobhi and Ram Chand of Lag valley.

In the early 1920s, the Kullu shawl industry experienced a slump and would have become a forgotten craft if the government had not set up an Industrial Training School in Kullu district to train weavers. One talented trainee of this school, Thakur Ved Ram, contributed to the splendid heritage by introducing a variety of traditional designs after a long and careful study.
of old pattus. He is the leading spirit behind the Bhutti Weavers Cooperative Society, Bhuttico, the leading shawl weaver’s co-operative society in the valley. The society came up in 1944, with a membership of 12 workers and made amazing progress year by year under the presidency of late Thakur Ved Ram. At present it employs more than 500 weavers and produces a range of attractively designed shawls, acclaimed the world over.

It has been the tradition in both Kullu and Kinnaur to weave the base of the shawl in natural wool, which is either off-white, grey, fawn, dark brown or black. This custom, however, has been altered over time in response to the commercial market, so now many shawls are woven with a coloured ground.

**Traditional Weaving Patterns**

It is believed that weaving has been practiced in Himachal Pradesh for at least 5,000 years. It is said that the art of weaving decorative motifs on wool garments began in the Kinnauri village Sunnam, and that the craft came to Kinnaur from Tashkent, in Uzbekistan, via China and Tibet. The fact that Kinnauri weaving was influenced as a result of their location along this busy trade route is evident in many of their traditional motifs, such as the diwar-e-cheen (Great Wall of China):

The decorative designs executed on the shawls prepared at different places in Himachal Pradesh, excluding Chamba, which had strong Kashmiri influence on its shawl-weaving handicraft, are largely based on the squares and rectangles formed in various graph-like arrangements or in the chequered formation of different sizes and colour combinations. Various motifs, floral and figural designs and the intricate combinations of multicoloured compositions are woven by the arrangements of these squares.
and rectangles according to the aesthetic comprehension of the weaver. Normally, a weaver maintains notes of different designs in graphic form with details of counts of weaves etc. with him, which he would always refer to, when he is to execute a design. But most of those designs have become stereotyped by constant use through generations and a weaver often reproduces them out of memory.

Kinnauri designs were inspired by the weaver's surroundings, religion, traditions and philosophy of life. According to Dr. O.C. Handa ¹², Kinnauri shawls have a profound religious significance. Many of the motifs are or represent Buddhist religious symbols. Usually one colour is used predominately for the motifs in Kinnauri weaving, while other colours are used sparingly. Red is generally the predominant colour, which gives the Kinnauri products their trademark overall brick-red appearance. It is combined with yellow and blue, with smaller amounts of white and green. These colours symbolize the five elements and when the Buddhist motifs are executed in these five colours, they represent a "mystico-spiritual core". This combination represents a blend of spirituality, truth and transcendental wisdom that imparts a certain religious, as well as aesthetic value to the shawls, making them more akin to a mandala than merely a decorative piece of clothing. Bright Kinnauri palettes include: red, royal blue, orange, lemon yellow, green, white, black, and purple, while sober palettes include combinations of sky blue, mustard, coffee, golden brown, dark brown, olive green and maroon. However, the most common combination is the previously mentioned palette that contains the five religiously significant colours.

Kulluvis are known for their skills in the art of dyeing. Harcourt wrote in
In 1868 that "In Lahoul there are no dyers, the whole of the trade being in the Hands of the men from Kooloo, who occasionally pass through the valley In Kooloo a great variety of tints, are produced by the dyer's art. The most vivid blues, reds and yellows are to be met with everywhere, with the gradations from grey to burnt sienna, madder and black."

Kulluvi colour schemes are usually comprised of seven colours used in equal amounts. Colours traditionally used for borders include red, blue, green, yellow, pink, orange, white and sometimes black. Kullu patterns tend to be woven in much brighter colours than those used for Kinnauri motifs. The colour palette each tradition draws from is most likely a result of the yarns available when the tradition began. At the time that patterned borders began to appear in Kulluvi pattus, imported, mill-spun, brightly dyed, Japanese yarns were available in the Kullu valley. These brightly coloured yarns must have seemed quite spectacular to weavers accustomed to using vegetable dyed yarns and they probably were eager to weave their new product, the patterned pattus, in equally innovative colour schemes. In the long run, these bright colours turned out to be quite problematic though, and two relatively new trends have developed in Kulluvi weaving in response to these problems. The first problem is that many of the dyes that rendered such bright colours on wool are no longer produced, mostly because of the health risks they pose. The second problem is that although modern dyes can produce the same bright colours as their toxic predecessors, the brighter colours' tend to fade. Two responses to these problems began to emerge. Some, if not most, weavers started to use acrylic instead of wool yarn for the coloured borders. By using acrylic yarns, the weavers were able to retain their traditional colour schemes and did not have to worry about the product.
deteriorating after washing or fading over time. The other trend that developed was that weavers who did not wish to use acrylic yarns began to use wool yarns in more subdued shades and incorporated colours not used up to this time. In some cases, even the seven-colour format has been disregarded. Some weavers have even begun to weave traditional motifs in monochromatic colours rather than the traditional seven-colour palette. This change, in particular, has dramatically altered the look of Kullu shawls in the market today.

**Combination of Kinnauri and Kulluvi Weaving**

One can say that Kinnauri weaving is the predecessor of the style of weaving for which Kullu is famous. The Kinnauri style of weaving was first introduced to Kullu valley in the 1830s when weavers from Ropa village in Kinnaur fled to the Kullu valley to escape persecution by the local king. After migrating to the Kullu valley, these weavers continued their craft and were given incentives to teach their patterning techniques to the Kulluvi people. Decoration in Kulluvi weaving, prior to the arrival of the Kinnauris, was restricted to variations in twill weave, checks, and plaids. Their shawls and pattus were devoid of any kind of motifs. Border patterning, as well as the red selvedge border known as the khanni or khushti first appeared on pattus in the 1920s, about 93 years after the Kinnauris migrated to the Kullu Valley. The intricate patterns decorating the ends of the Kinnauri chhanli, lengcha and dohru were the source of inspiration for Kulluvi motifs. The bright, bold patterns for which Kulluvi shawls and pattus have become famous originated from Kinnauri motifs that were enlarged and simplified over time. Although the weaving techniques of Kinnaur and Kullu are almost identical, the bright, almost fluorescent colours and bold, graphic
style that have become the hallmark of Kullu weaving are definitely unique and separate from those of Kinnauri weaving.

Weavers of Kinnaur and other high altitude regions have great love for traditional designs and colour combinations of specific shades. For this reason, they insist on getting the traditional patterns on their shawls in the exact shades they prefer. Contrast and combination of colors given by the expert weavers in a band of similar motifs reflects varying shades.

The traditional weaving palettes / motifs used in the inlay work of the woven products of Himachal Pradesh can be divided into three categories, depending on their distinctiveness and peculiarities:

3.10. Weaving in Kinnaur and Shimla

In Kinnaur, Rampur and Rohru, the decorative designs are largely geometrical, executed in very soft and pleasing pastel shades. In these, reds, yellows and blues predominate, to bring about a very rich and warm overall effect of the brick-red colour. This effect is far more profound on the Kinnauri shawls than on the Rampuri and Rohru shawls. The essential differentiating factor between the shawls made in Kinnaur and the ones of Rampur and Rohru, is the choice of designs and their treatment. In the Kinnauri shawls, there is a juxtaposed and intricate use of the stylised Buddhist symbols and complex graphic patterns, consisting of hexagons (gyatongor tank) and squares (palpe) etc. These devices are so profusely executed on the borders, ends and the mainfield that an overall effect of nostalgic brick-red colour overwhelms the senses.

It is usual to find devices and motifs, what in the local parlance are
known as. The *chhabehin*, the *chhoktin*, the *dprje*, the *gau*, the *khabatibi*, the *tar-shul*, the *tapru*, the *yung-rung* etc. All these motifs are drawn from the Buddhist sources.

The preponderance of the Buddhist religious symbols, as the decorative devices on the Kinnauri shawls, would instinctively lead one to look into these forms, beyond the visual patterns, to something spiritual. The Kinnauri shawls have a profound religious significance. The Buddhist symbols executed in the five primary colours—white, yellow, red, green and blue—represent five elements viz., water, earth, fire, ether and air respectively. While all the five colours are used in the ornamentation, reds, yellows and blues usually dominate, with an overall effect of brick-red colour, signifying thereby a blend of spirituality, truth and transcendental wisdom. Thus, the combination or unification of these colours represents a mystico-spiritual core. The ornamentation on the Kinnauri shawl is, thus, more an elaboration of a mystic *mandala* than a visual decoration. In it the spirit of the Boddhisattvas pervades.

On the other hand, one finds a profusion of geometrical devices on the shawls of Rampur and Rohru areas. But the choice of colours in the shawls of all these places remains almost that of Kinnauri shawls i.e., the overall effect is of pleasing warm brick-red colour.

3.11. **Weaving in the Chamba region:**

The costumes of Chamba are quite exotic, colourful and divergent probably because this region remained secluded and remote for centuries and it was able to preserve its rich art and cultural heritage.

Many art historians like Hermann Goetz remarked that the costumes of the
gaddis were strikingly similar to the Indo-Scythian donor figures found in Kushana art of 2nd century B.C. The Gujjars of today are the remnants of the lost Gurjara-Pratihara Empire of 7th–8th century A.D. and their criss-cross embroidery techniques can be traced to the tribal folks of Baltis, Hunzas of Hindukush and kafiristan regions, from where once the Gurjara-barbarian hordes had descended on the crumbled Gupta Empire.

It is striking to note that the gaddis of Brahmour, Pangwalas of Pangi, and even Churahis of upper Churah, still use the bone-needles excavated in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa sites (1500 to 2000 B.C). The Gaddis of Brahmour still use a particular type of needle called sanans or bak-sua made from bones of sheep or goat. In the later Vedic period, cloth made from hemp is mentioned as san, probably the sanan is derived from the word san. The bak-sua or sanan is used in sewing thatch (broad or tape-shaped rope) and jaduta (long boots) made from goat’s hair. In the remote Pangi valley of Chamba, the long and sharp fangs of musk deer are also used for preparing needles called sanan. These needles are coarse and thick and are used for sewing the articles prepared from goat’s hair like thobi (mat) and rajud (flat tape-rope).

Chamba as a whole has a cold to extremely cold climate. Such a climate also played an important role in deciding the type of garments worn by its people. So its inhabitants mostly wear woollen dresses throughout the year. The woollen cloth is known as pattu in the Chamba region. The pattu is prepared from the wool obtained from sheep. The shawl weaving handicraft of Kashmir had deep influence over the neighbouring Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh where it proliferated with certain local peculiarities. Although the techniques like kani and rafugari have not so
skillfully and meticulously been pursued here, yet these techniques could be seen adapted to cater to the popular taste of the people by the Chamba weavers in their products. The Irawati weaving Industry of Chamba is one of such pioneering handicraft units.

In Chamba Shawls, the decorative designs are executed in brighter colours of contrasting shades. The decorative motifs used on them are mostly floral. Sometimes figural motifs have also been used on them incorporating stylized human, animal and bird figures. Being in close proximity with Kashmir, the Chamba weavers have been influenced by the shawl weaving and embroidery techniques of Kashmir. Evidences are also there to suggest that the weavers of Kashmir migrated to the neighbouring localities in the Kangra hills in the face of Afghan tyranny and rigorous exactions of Sikh rulers and found congenial working atmosphere at Chamba. Vigne notes that after 1830, he found that at Srinagar only six hundred shawl looms had remained in a place where many thousands of them rattled everyday. It may safely be assumed that the technique of those Kashmiri craftsmen was gainfully adopted by the Chamba weavers in the manufacturing of their shawls. Consequently, many motifs, mostly floral and figural, are not executed by weaving but embroidered afterwards by using woollen or silken threads by the Chamba weavers. No evidence of weaving shawls prior to that period in Chamba and other places in Himachal Pradesh is known although chaddars, pattus and anetles of woollen sheet fabrics were made by the people to meet their domestic requirements. Under the Kashmiri influence, the local weavers not only adopted their weaving techniques but also adopted some of the Kashmiri motifs, which they incorporated on their products by weaving or embroidery. Besides,
numerous local motifs and patterns were also evolved by them and these are still in use. Common designs of Chamba shawls are:

1. **Bhangolu**: This design incorporates bead-like circular motifs in multi-colour. Bhangolu, in local dialect, means a seed of hemp (*cannabis sativa*)

2. **Chashm**: incorporated in the Chamba shawls. In this design a stylized form resembling eye of 'bulbul' is depicted. It is a floral design executed in linear formation or in smaller motifs embroidered on the main field. *Buta* actually means a plant.

3. **Chiriya**: It is a stylized form of a bird, repeated on the ends of a shawl in different colours. Sometimes, this motif is repeated in linear form, one above the other.

4. **Ganesh**: It is a combination of multi-coloured squares forming a Ganesh-like graphic representation.

5. **Ghogtu**: It is a parallel arrangement of multi-coloured squares.

6. **Gulab**: It is a rose-like stylized design.

7. **Kainchi**: It literally means a pair of scissors, but on the shawl, it is a multi coloured pattern formed by the cross-formation of coloured squares, to represent a stylised form of a pair of scissors.

8. **Shape**: It is a contrasting colour pattern formed by 'T' motifs arranged in opposite direction i.e. one vertical 'T' followed by the other one, with upside down.

As stated earlier, the decorative designs in Chamba shawls are executed in very bright and contrasting colours. It is quite unlikely that the
Chamba shawl weavers ever used vegetable dyes for their yarn but they dyed it with the aniline dyes. This observation, however, does not hold good for the traditional fabrics which essentially were khudrang and the colour patterns, mostly linear or chequered, were formed by using yarn made of white and black fleece - separately. In fact, the natural colours of the fleece were responsible for the coloured patterns. In order to make the ends of woolen fabrics look beautiful and to ensure that the interwoven weft threads do not loosen or slip off, the warp-ends are grouped together, with four to eight strands in each group. The number of strands in a group may vary according to the thickness of warp-yarn and the quality of fabric. These groups are inter-knotted- one group with the other, adjoining to it-close to the woven ends of the fabric. The process of inter-knotting is repeated in three or four rows by altering the knotting arrangement, so that a net is formed at both the ends of fabric, making the fringes look charming.

Commercialization of traditional and local designs has led to the erosion of the charm for which the original woollen products of the state were recognised. 'Chamba' and 'Kulluvu' shawls may be seen produced far away from their traditional localities, in the commercial weaving units at Mandi, Nurpur and many other places, even in the industrial towns of Punjab like Ludhiana and Amritsar. The powerloom made products of Ludhiana and Amritsar have made great inroads in to the market of the Kullu shawls. It is said that the majority of Shawls being sold in the Kullu-Manali market in the name of Kullu shawls are powerloom shawls. As a matter of fact, some local entrepreneurs have now set up their powerloom units in the Kullu area itself to cater to the demand of the powerloom made shawls. These products are copies of the original products. These duplicates
may look better finished and their size better suited for the international clientele with appealing modernistic colour schemes and designs. Yet these modern products are not comparable to the original traditional products.

Nevertheless, in places far away from commercial influence, traditional techniques are still being practised. Keeping in view the change in the tastes of the consumers and marketing potential available, both in the domestic market as well as outside, an effort has also been made in the recent years, through Govt. sponsored projects and schemes, to diversify into new product ranges of handloom products, not necessarily based on traditional designs, but incorporating modern motifs or otherwise available on machine made products. Such products include ladies suits, cushion covers, woollen bed sheets, throws etc. But such efforts at developing new product ranges are few and far between and lack an integrated approach.

Thus to conclude we can say that the handloom industry in the state is an ancient one. The weavers use traditional techniques and processes for weaving. The raw material is mostly available locally. The designs have passed down from generation to generation, but of late due to government intervention the weavers have got limited access to premier institutes of design such as National Institute of Fashion Technology and National Institute of Design. With this weavers can hope to use innovative techniques and designs in keeping with changing consumer preferences.
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