CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS
AND
DISCUSSION
An attempt has been made to present a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data collected and generated in the field. As the quantitative data was collected through interview schedules and the qualitative data was generated through interview guides, focus group discussions and open discussions with the Thathera, the Kasera and the key respondents.

The Thathera are metal workers who beat the flat discs of different metals into various shapes of products for utilitarian as well as decorative purposes. However, the Kasera are traders who deal in the outside market and sell those finished products. They are instrumental in obtaining orders from local as well as distant markets.

The gradual dissolution of the cultural entities of a people impacts greatly upon the life and living of a number of communities that are at the very core and even at the periphery of the change. Several factors were observed to exert significant impact upon the set of circumstances being faced by the ‘Thathera’ and which were rapidly taking them towards a point of no return for their rare and beautiful craft of working with brass, copper and bronze. The paradigm shift was a subtle harbinger of a renewed situation that could lead to the survival and substance of this fast dwindling craft.

4.1 Demographic Profiles of the Thathera of Jandiala Guru

4.1.1 Caste Affiliations of the Thathera

The Thathera of Jandiala Guru belonged to the Khatri caste group and various sub-castes or gotra namely- Malhotra, Suri, Vig, Anand, Uppal, and Vidhavan. Throughout the research, during the data generation in the field, these respondents claimed to be of Khatri caste group. However, it was reported from other sources (office of Municipal Corporation, and ration depots) that few of them fall under O.B.C. group and they are claiming quota at various places for their benefit. The exact number and names for those respondents falling under the O.B.C. group could not collected.
4.1.2 Educational Status

Studying the level of educational qualifications attained by the sample population (The Thethera) it can be seen in Figure 4.1 that while 30 per cent respondents had studied up to the Primary level, a significant proportion of the sample, i.e. 28 per cent had studied up to the Middle level. However, there were 22 per cent respondents reported to being totally illiterate.

Figure 4.1: Educational Qualifications of the Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>39 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>54 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Middle level</td>
<td>50 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>24 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Senior Secondary</td>
<td>9 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Percentages are shown in bracket)

Thus, it can be summarized that most of the metal workers were either illiterate or had education only up to the preliminary levels. Therefore, while they were experts in their chosen field they were not very educated.

4.1.3 Marital Responsibilities

Regarding the age at marriage it was found that majority of the respondents, 38 per cent were married when they were in the age group range of 21 to 23 years old, 24 per cent married between 24 to 26 years and 22 per cent were in the age group of 18 to 22 years at the time of their marriage. Therefore, it is clear from Figure 4.2 that most of the respondents were married by the time they had attained the age of 25 years. They were bearing the responsibility of providing for their family at an early age. Once this responsibility had been thrust on them, they were honour bound to work
hard and take on the maximum job work to be able to take care of the needs of their families.

**Figure 4.2: Age at Marriage**

![Age at Marriage Chart]

### 4.1.4 Place of Origin and Place of Work

Among the Thathera participants in the research, 40 per cent belonged to Amritsar and 16 per cent belonged to Taran Taran. Among those who traced their origins from Pakistan, 17 per cent were from Lahore and 7 per cent reportedly hailed from Gujranwala. Collectively 20% of the respondents were migrated to Jandiala Guru from many other places like Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Muktsar, Nawashaher, Fazlika and Fatehbad as shown in Figure 4.3.

Thus, while the maximum number of them were living in or proximity to Jandiala Guru i.e. either in Amritsar, Lahore or Gujranwala. While those coming from other parts of Punjab were also from nearby **bazar** (e.g. Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar etc). The Jandiala Guru Thathera centre for hand-
beaten metal craft had come to be established as the main centre for this particular craft. This became necessary after India’s Independence in 1947 and then after the reorganization of States in 1966. The place of origin is a significant indicator of the design influences that have merged together to form the typical output of the shapes, sizes, designs and creation of specific products at Jandiala Guru. This was also a significant indicator that determined how soon the Thathera took on the responsibility of a family and worked hard in his field.

**Figure 4.3: Place of Origin**

4.1.5 Household Size

Household size was another push factor that exerted influence on the survival of the craft. 53 per cent of the Thathera had 4 to 6 members and 20 per cent had 7 to 9 members in their household (Figure 4.3).

Therefore, to summarize, it was observed that the larger the household size, the greater the binders on the Thathera to provide for all the necessities
of life. They worked harder extensively but even then could not sustain themselves on the meager earning they were able to take up.

Figure 4.4: Household Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>No. of Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 TO 3</td>
<td>48 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 TO 6</td>
<td>95 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 TO 9</td>
<td>37 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Percentages are shown in bracket)

4.1.6 Number of Dependents

To understand the challenges faced by the Thathera it was necessary to understand the various factors playing on their everyday existence. The number of dependents each Thathera had to take care of was seen to be a relevant pull factor that provoked the Thathera to earn a specific minimal amount every day. There were as many 37 per cent respondents who reported to have up to 3 dependents on them. However, 24 per cent and 22 per cent had up to 2 and 4 dependents on them respectively (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Number of Dependents in a Family
4.1.7 Initiation of Work

The financial burden on the Thathera families due to their poor economic status and the huge orders from different areas of the country forced their children to start working in this field at the very early age of life.

**Figure 4.6: Age at Initiation of Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Age at Initiation of work</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 to 9</td>
<td>51 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 to 13</td>
<td>67 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14 to 17</td>
<td>33 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 to 21</td>
<td>18 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22 to 25</td>
<td>8 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26 to 29</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Percentages are shown in bracket)

It is clear from Figure 4.6 that 83 per cent of the Thathera (S. No. 1, 2 and 3 in Figure 4.6) had started working in this field before they turned 18 years of their age. While only 10 per cent were within age group of 18 to 21 years and 7% were in the age group 22 to 26 years of their age when they joined working as Thathera while taking up the occupation of hand beaten metal craftsmen at Jandiala Guru’s Thathera bazaar locality.

The respondents started learning and working in this metal work at the very early age of their lives. Thus, there is clear association between their dropping out of the school at the very early age and the early initiation of the work as shown above in Figure 4.6. At that time, there was huge market and demand for these non-ferrous metal utensils, from all over the country. In an order to complete the work at hand, the Thathera at that time needed more manpower and this in turn forced them to put their children in the same line at a very tender age of their lives (Figure 4.6).

4.1.8 Present Age at Work

When the respondents were asked about their current age, 21 per cent of them reported that they belonged to the age group of 50 to 54 years old.
About 19 per cent belonged to the age group of 45 to 49 years old while a somewhat smaller category i.e. 11 per cent reportedly comprised the each age group of 40 to 44 years and 55 to 59 years old age groups. Relatively smaller category of respondents i.e. 10 per cent belonged to the age group of 35 – 39 year olds.

Thus, from the Figure 4.7, it can be derived that most of the Thathera who were currently active and working in the hand-beaten metalware industry were mostly within 40 to 59 years of their age. However, the younger (25 to 34 years) and older counterparts (70 years and above) of the Thathera are very less, contributing 6% and 8% respectively. Most of the Thathera were continuing to work regularly in the field were actually middle-aged men, beyond their prime. Very few of their sons were entering the field to continue the survival of the craft.

**Figure 4.7: Present Age at Work**
4.1.9 Per day Earnings of the Thathera

For majority of the Thathera their earnings directly impacted upon their lifestyle and existence to a large extent. This was a major push factor that influenced the decision of the Thathera to continue or discontinue work on the craft. From the Figure 4.8, it can be seen that 69 per cent of the respondents were earning only up to Rs. 150 per day while many of them could not even earn up to this level. While only 8 per cent of them were able to earn Rs. 200 or above on a daily basis.

Figure 4.8: Per-Day Income of the Thathera Respondents

To summarise, it can be said that at the lower side, some Thathera were taking in just Rs. 100/- per day. Observing the cost of living in Jandiala Guru, the earning of Rs. 100/- per day and the number of dependents on these respondents had brought to light the fact that the Thathera were having a tough time and could barely make both ends meet. Due to their poor economic condition, they are not even able to provide the basic facilities to their children.
4.1.10 Diversification into Other Occupations

The changing times were another push factor that was wielding a significant influence on how long the Thathera was willing to continue in his chosen skill set and occupation. Several of their offspring had opted out of the family business to work elsewhere.

**Figure 4.9 Diversification into Other Occupation**

With poor economic conditions, large household size, and more number of dependents on them, these Thathera opted to work in other areas. They started working in aluminium work, as an electrician, scrap work and cycle repair work in addition to working as a Thathera that was not paying enough. This is clearly shown in Figure 4.9.

Thus, the diversification in work has already begun to set in this area, which portends ill for the craft. If the skill set is not transferred from hand to hand and from generation to generation, as it had been doing in its heyday, there is little possibility of the craft surviving under these circumstances. The parameters of the paradigm shift have been set in motion with this significant step in the dissolution.
4.2 Demographic Profile of the Kasera Respondents

4.2.1 Caste Distribution

The castes found among the Kasera are mostly the business castes or the *Vaishyas* and the warrior caste of the *Kashtriyas*. This seems most apt also because it was probably the warriors who utilised the hand-beaten metal variety probably because of the warriors' caste making their own weapons like swords, daggers and scimitars. While the vaishya caste commands respect in the market as they have been handling the commerce of the region since centuries.

*Figure 4.10: Caste Distribution of the Kasera Respondents*

![Caste Distribution Chart]

The Jains are a highly specialised group of businessmen who live by a particular code of conduct that is strictly adhered to among all. The business ethics of the Baniya community are also a model not existent elsewhere in the world. They live by certain principles that enable them to have an equitable development of the business as well as upkeep of the family and homestead. This is another reason that caste distribution is an important indicator of the dissolution and onset of change in a particular rural industrial setting like the Kasera of Jandiala Guru. Seasonal businessmen have the inherent talent of simultaneously studying trends, forecasting, adapting and even changing the
business tactics when there is decline or slump in the market. The Kasera became aware of the futility of their ways and developed other means of earning a living. This was chiefly the reason that they chose to diversify to other allied or totally different businesses (Figure 4.10).

4.2.2 Educational Status of the Kasera Respondents

Among the Kasera, the greater proportion i.e. 24% and 26% of respondents had studied up to the matriculation level and senior secondary level respectively, while the respondents in the totally illiterate category represents only 8% of the total respondents as compared to 22% in the case of the Thathera (Figure 4.11).

![Figure 4.11: Educational Status of the Kasera](image)

4.2.3 Present Age at Work

The data on present age at work of the Kasera (Figure 4.12) shows that there are young as well as the old people doing this work and from this data it can be clearly seen that the younger generation is following up the
work being carried out by their parents. They usually joined the already running family business.

**Figure 4.12: The Age of the Respondents Currently Working**

![Bar chart showing the age distribution of respondents currently working.]

### 4.2.4 Number of Dependents in a Family

The family units of the Kasera respondents were also big as the same trend was seen in the Thathera families. But as the Kasera are comparatively and financially stronger than the Thathera so they could sustain the expenses of their family members easily.

**Figure 4.13: No. of Dependents in a Family**

![Bar chart showing the number of dependents.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UPTO 2</td>
<td>7(14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPTO 3</td>
<td>13(26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPTO 4</td>
<td>19(38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPTO 5</td>
<td>11(22%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the Kasera, as seen in Figure 4.13, the greater proportions i.e. 24% and 26% of respondents had studied up to the matriculation level and senior secondary level respectively, while the respondents in the totally illiterate category represents only 8% of the total respondents as compare to 22% in the case of the Thathera.

### 4.2.5 Average Income of the Kasera

The Kasera usually worked on shops, at stalls during exhibitions and also during festivals they set up their wares in various places. Their daily earnings were on an average between three hundred to four hundred rupees (Figure 4.14). These were their personal earnings from the entire sale of the day. On some of the days, like during the festival season, the sale escalates to manifolds. During those days, the daily earning goes up by almost 3 to 4 times of the sale, i.e. Rs 1200 – 1600 per day.

![Figure 4.14: Showing the Average Per Day Income of the Kasera](image)

#### 4.2.6 Diversification of the Kasera into Other Occupations

For this particular indicator the percentage cannot be calculated because all traders had not diversified to the other occupation. Out of total of 50 traders only 25 had diversified to other occupations and these have been
mentioned in the Figure 4.15. The Kasera recognized the need for diversification into other fields much before the Thathera even came to understand the fact. This was primarily because of the greater exposure of the Kasera to other markets. They could assess the differences creeping into the traditional markets as well as the changed trends of demand generation in the modern market. With the advent of technology over the world had created gaps in the need for the different products being used since ages and the requirement for newer products. Therefore, while the large number of the Kasera who changed their occupations went in for dealing in scrap, there were a significant number who took on the occupation of dealing in steel utensils as well as sale of aluminium utensils. A small number of respondents i.e. 3 decided to leave their inherited line of work totally and decided to set up units of manufacturing of aluminium utensils. The Kasera who diversified into the manufacturing of aluminium utensils said that they had realised that a large proportion of labour migrating to Punjab. They were agricultural labour, construction labour as well as industrial labour in the factories in and around Amritsar as well as in surrounding areas. These utensils have to be hardy but cost effective. Therefore, the metal of choice for such utensils is aluminium.

**Figure 4.15: Showing the Diversification of the Kasera into Different Occupations**

![Pie chart showing diversification of Kasera into different occupations](chart.png)
Thus to summarise, the options taken by the Kasera to diversify from a particular metal to another metal while keeping in mind the socio-economic changed needs and life styles of the larger population was the basis that set in motion the paradigm shift. In fact, this diversification proved to be a vital indicator of the process of dissolution of an age-old craft on the one hand and the emergence of market forces initiated processes of commerce and fiscal stability on the other. Interestingly, at one point in the usage of aluminium utensils was considered derogatory among the elite and upper classes. Yet these demarcations had blurred with the passage of time.

4.2.7 Place of Origin

It was necessary to look at the place of origin of the Kasera to be able to understand their cohesiveness in utilising business terms and conditions as well as principles of the market used by the craftsmen. The place of origin also demarcated the socio-economic patterns that impacted upon the day-to-day lives of the Kasera. Similarly, the Kasera claimed to have originated from a region within a 500 kms. radius. Almost 50% of the Kasera were of erstwhile western Punjab that lay in Pakistan and rest 50% claimed to have originated in eastern Punjab or Indian part of Punjab as mentioned in the Figure 4.16. Many of the Kasera had migrated from Lahore and Gujranwala during the exodus following the Partition of India after Independence in 1947.

**Figure 4.16: Showing the Places of Origin of the Kasera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Places</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>11 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jandiala Guru</td>
<td>14 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>15 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>10 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Percentages are shown in bracket)
4.3 Process and Steps in Making Final Product from Raw Material

4.3.1. Melting of Raw Material (From Different Sources) in the Furnaces and Making of Ingots

As we know, the process of making any product depends upon the availability of raw material. So in this hand-beaten metal craft also, the process of making a utensil begins from the availability of scrap—the basal raw material. Therefore, the first and foremost need is the availability of raw material in any form/source (scrap, wires, pieces of metal as raw material) to be processed for melting and making solid round ingots from that material. The raw material comes through old utensils collected by the Kasera and the Thathera, in the form of scrap collected through different sources—by scrap dealers, personally by the Kasera and the Thathera. As the price of the metal increases day by day and the less availability of raw material had always been a problem for them, they (both the Kasera and the Thathera) kept collecting raw material in any form or shape or through any source. Although there are small Bhathis (furnaces) in almost every Thathera unit, but in general, the processing and the melting of the raw material is done in large foundries, held by the Kasera. If these Thathera melt their own material and make their ingots, they are still dependent on the Kasera as these red hot ingots need to pass through rolling machines to convert them into flat discs. Further, largely, the holding of scrap or raw material lies with the Kasera, as they are economically much more sound than the Thathera. At this stage, it is decided that from which metal ingots are to be made. Suppose if there is requirement of copper utensils then, ingots are made from copper raw material and if brass utensils are required then the alloys of different metal are made by mixing the appropriate proportion of the different metals, like e.g. copper and tin in a fixed ratio for making brass ingots.
As shown in the Pictures 4.1 and 4.2, the raw material is melted, in the specific containers in furnaces at very high temperature, to make ingots (Picture 4.3) from that raw material. The size and weight of the metal ingots depends upon the weight of the raw material processed in each individual container meant for making ingots in the furnace.

4.3.2. Making Flat Discs from These Ingots with the Help of Rolling Machines

The next step here is then the making of flat discs from these metal ingots. These red hot metal ingots are passed and pressed few times through rolling machines, being manipulated manually, to give them the shape of flat discs of desired dimensions, as shown in the Pictures 4.4 and 4.5. For larger size or heavier utensils one needs large/heavy flat discs. So the weight or size of the utensil to be made is largely dependent upon the size of the flat discs that in turn is dependent upon the weight of the metal ingots.

4.3.3. Distribution of these Flat Discs to the Thathera

These flat discs are then distributed to the Thathera as per their skill and speciality. As the Kasera take orders from with and outside the local market, they are the decision makers in deciding the kind of utensils to be made by the Thathera. These flat discs are given to them on the basis of their weight. The reasons for this are:

- The Thathera are paid per kilogram of the final utensil made by them.

- As this non-ferous metal is too expensive, the Kasera do not want to waste their metal. So the same/similar weight of utensil, with respect to the weight of the flat discs, is expected from them.

4.3.4. Giving Shape to these Flat Discs

- The next step in the process is giving shape to these flat discs. They beat these flat discs with the help of chaursa (mallet). The details of
these different tool types are discussed later in this chapter. As in this process of giving shape to the utensils is done with the help of hammer and only by hands, the Thathera need great strength in doing this task. Some large size utensils take a time period of a day or two to complete the process, so these Thathera work continuously for making them. In this process, there is no role of any kind of machinery. The entire process from here onwards is done by the Thathera with the help of their hands and their simple tool like hammer as shown in Picture 4.6. It can be clearly seen that in the process of giving shape to these utensils/objects, the Thathera need to utilise almost every part of his body.

- In order to understand this step of giving shape to the flat discs, it is important to note that the different parts of the utensils are made separately and then they are joined together to make a one piece.

- As seen in the Pictures 4.7 and 4.8, the flat disc is beaten up to give shape to the bottom part of the utensil, and similarly in this same way another flat disc is beaten to make the upper portion of the utensils and then different portions of the utensil are riveted or galvanized together.

4.3.5. Process of Joining the Different Portions of the Utensil

- After giving the shape to different potions of the utensil, they are riveted together again by beating. The size of the different parts of the utensils are made in such a way that one end of the part gets fit into the other end of the different part. Further, the gaps are filled with the joint made up of metal specifically meant for this purpose and they are heated as shown in the Picture 4.9.
Picture 4.1: Large Furnace at Foundry

Picture 4.2: Small Furnace in the Thathera Unit

Picture 4.3: Red-Hot Metal Ingots
Picture 4.4: Rolling Machine to Press the Ingots Manual in to Various Diameters

Picture 4.5: Flat Discs Made from Ingots on the Rolling Press Machine
Picture 4.6: The Thathera beating flat disc into the desired shape with gentle and hard tapering strokes of wooden mallet
Picture 4.7: Flat disc changing shape gradually to become the final utensil by beating them with mallets

Picture 4.8: Different parts of the utensil

Picture 4.9: Process of joining the different parts together on a minor furnace at the Thathera unit
4.3.6. Cleaning and Washing of these Utensils

After these different parts are joined together and the final shape has been given to the utensil, they are cleaned and washed with the help of flint and mild acid wash alternatively. The process is shown in the Pictures 4.10 and 4.11. There is no special measure or protection being used for his hands by the Thathera as they wash those utensils with mild acid.

4.3.7. Making Patterns on these Utensils

After these utensils are cleaned and polished, they are again beaten with specialized hammers for transferring specific patterns on it. Simple dotted patterns or rich concentric circles all over the utensil is mostly preferred in most of the utensils. Depicted in the Pictures 4.12 and 4.13.

Then those finished products/utensils are given back to the Kasera, who gave them flat discs to make the desired product and who are actually the owner of these final finished products. Finally, these finished utensils are packed and sent to different markets and areas as per the orders.

The Thathera are paid the labour as per kilogram of the final product. Only few of the Thathera have capacity to buy raw material and make their own orders but they get difficulty in selling them in the market. So almost all of them are making products on order, which they get from the Kasera. The products are in sold in local markets in district; state; and in different parts of the country and to some extent they export them as well. There are certain traditional markets that have a set demand for the hand-beaten metal products or utensils. Even the utensils demanded were of traditional shape and usage. Some of the pre-ordained goods are repeatedly required like the ‘Gangaur’- a huge curved vessel for storage of grains or even water and even the highly ornate covered dishes of Leh- Ladakh and other areas of Himachal Pradesh.
By and large these utensils belong to the Kasera because they make ingots and flat discs in their foundries and in turn these are given to the Thathera to make the desired final product. The Thathera are paid labour on a pre-settled exchange rate worked out mutually per kilogram of the final product. Only a few of the Thathera have the capacity to buy raw materials and make their own utensils on the basis of the orders but in case of surplus they face great difficulty in selling them in the market. So almost all of them make products on orders, which they get through the Kasera. The products are sold in local markets at the district, state, and national level. To some extent, several of their products are sent for export as well.

Overall, the process from start to finish is virtually in the hands of the Thathera. The commercial end of the process is in the hand of the Kasera. Besides these two, there are a number of other stakeholders like the dealers in scrap, vendors of scrap, individual collectors of old dishes and metal wares who pick up selected pieces and send the rest for melting. At the purchase end, are of course, wholesalers, retailers, merchants, tourists and corporate. The most valuable asset is the individual buyer who picks up the products for personal needs like solemnizing marriage, ritual requirements or even personal household use.

The study made by Swarup (1957) also authenticated the view of the present study. Swarup mentioned “the skill and subtlety of the craftsmanship of our artisans who display great delicacy and ingenuity in chasing, ornamenting and engraving of patterns on various metals have been richly admired in the highest terms everywhere in the world. Metal crafts, is indeed, not only one the most ancient but also one of the most developed crafts in India”.

Overall the allure of the hand-beaten metal craft remains undiminished only awareness needs to be generated on its virtues and values to generate renewed interest in the craft.
Picture 4.10: Cleaning of utensil with mild acid - no special protection is used

Picture 4.11: Cleaning and polishing with flint paper till metal shines
4.12: The Thathera making concentric patterns on a utensil

4.13: The Thathera shows the circular patterned utensil—(Parat or shallow dish for kneading dough)

4.14: Final finished products stacked for transportation to the Kasera or nearby retail outlet
Figure 4.17: Flow Chart of Hand-Beaten Metal workers Product Fabrication
4.4 Skill Set of the Thathera

The Thathera of Jandiala Guru have survived over the years while other similar business outlets in other places in Punjab like Batala, etc, have died down or diversified due to firstly, fall in market value of the goods, secondly due to the unavailability of quality scrap and thirdly due to the market fluctuation in the metal prices too has scared these utensil manufacturers.

The Thathera or hand beaten metal workers have specialized themselves into parat makers, deg makers etc. It is not binding that the one who makes a `parat` cannot make a `deg` or a `patila` but it is convenient for the present situation that this system segregation be adhered to so that any orders received can be speedily taken care of. All the Thathera are aware of the ratios in which the various metals are made e.g. bronze and brass are alloys of tin, copper and zinc. Almost all of them have worked with the various metals and there is no restriction on the kind of metal that the Thathera may work with.

There is, nevertheless a demarcation among the metal workers in steel and aluminium. Few of the Thathera group who work in brass have taken up work with the aluminium workers but their associates look down upon them because most of the aluminium labour has come from UP and Bihar and they think it beneath their dignity to work with them or under their supervision and guidance.

The markets of Moradabad (U.P.), Jagadhri (Haryana) and other places have more of machine made utensils unlike Jandiala Guru where all the brass, bronze, copper utensils are hand-made only. It is only the aluminium vessels being made here that are machine-made. The business of aluminium vessels making is fast replacing the work of the Thathera probably because of prohibitive labour costs.
Utensils made by the Thathera (of which they still retain the ability and skills for manufacturing) are given in Figure 4.18 and are shown in Pictures 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22.

**Figure 4.18: Utensils Made by the Thathera**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Local name</th>
<th>English equivalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Channa</td>
<td>Small flat bowl usually for drinking water in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ChayaPatar</td>
<td>Small bowl for giving oil in alms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Deghbara</td>
<td>Large rounded container for making large quantities of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Degor</td>
<td>Large, round-bottomed dish for cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Degchi</td>
<td>Small, round-bottomed dish for cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>DelhikiTokni</td>
<td>Brass vessel that has wide mouth that tapers to a narrow neck and a round bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Devgarh</td>
<td>Flat heavy tray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Diva</td>
<td>Lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>DudhKaDohna</td>
<td>Large milk container with large rounded bottom and used for Milking and Distribution of milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Duggi</td>
<td>The hollow base of a tabla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Gadwa</td>
<td>Small, Round bottomed pot for drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Gaggar</td>
<td>Large Round based, short neck, open mouthed container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ghanta</td>
<td>Gong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Ghanti</td>
<td>Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Guldasta</td>
<td>Flower Vase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Karahi</td>
<td>Gridle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Kouli</td>
<td>Small flat Bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Mathurakitokni</td>
<td>Narrower mouth than that of the <em>Delhi ki Tokni</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Mattian</td>
<td>Large utensil for storing water, basically made by the Thathera migrated from Lahore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Moradabadi Kalsi</td>
<td>Circular water pot without a base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Parat</td>
<td>Wide Platter with high sides used for kneading dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Patila</td>
<td>Flat bottomed, high walled utensil for storing liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Punjabi Parat</td>
<td>Very large wide based Platter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Ranjan</td>
<td>Brass utensil with curved lid basically used in Leh- Ladakh and many of them called these utensils by the name of momo because momos are made in them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Rewari Parat</td>
<td>Flat opened dish for kneading dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Surahi</td>
<td>Urn with narrow long neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Tabla</td>
<td>Musical percussion Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Teli</td>
<td>Narrow oil bearing vessel with thin spout for pouring oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Thal</td>
<td>Large Plate with upturned edges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Thali</td>
<td>Plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>U.P. ka Gang Sagar</td>
<td>Large Urn for containing water, popular in U.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Valtohi</td>
<td>Large copper utensil for storing vessel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact the utensils made by the Thathera were used in the 'rite de passage' that from the very birth to death of an individual, there are specific utensils used by them at specific point of time and these utensils are made up of brass, copper or even bronze.
Analysis and Discussion

Picture 4.15: Brass milk urn used to distribute milk (*Dhud da dohna*)

Picture 4.16: Copper Milk Urn (*Dhud da dohna*)
Analysis and Discussion

Picture 4.17: Copper Degor

Picture 4.18: Copper Diya (Lamp)  Picture 4.19: Thaal (large plate)
Picture 4.20: Parat

Picture 4.21: Patila

Picture 4.22: Gaggar
The skill set of the Thathera is not only limited to the utensils and products listed here. Given the opportunity to work and experiment with the flat discs of metal to make different new products, they can engage their creative mind in making different innovative products. This can be clearly seen with the help of a case study of one of the Thathera, named Ajit Singh aged 64 years. He had been working in this line from past 50 years. He can make anything with his hand and his simple tools like wooden and iron mallet. Despite the fact that his family does not support him in his work, He kept on experiment with metal sheets during the past few recent years.

“I remember once I was very sad for my economic conditions. I had no money for food as well. I went to sell scrap material collected over the years. I was being paid very less for that and I did not sell that. However, I gave it to the foundry owner and took metal sheets in return for that. I was thinking to make something very useful and beautiful so that people cannot stop themselves for buying those products. One day I made pressure cooker of brass metal for my family and it took me 10-12 days at that time to complete one piece. People started appreciating it and I got few orders for that. I kept on improving design with each piece of work and now I can make one pressure cooker totally with my hand and my tools in just two days. I am getting orders from few other places but I have no money to buy raw material and make more such products. No one gives us money in advance for this work. My son also knows this work but over the years and with weak economic base, He lost his interest in this work and is working as an electrician now. He does not support me in either ways now. I can work for any number of hours and I can do anything to save my work but I need help and support from my family members and government institutions. I want to set up my own unit where I can make many such utensils and give employment to some of my other Thathera brothers”.

Analysis and Discussion
Analysis and Discussion

Picture 4.23: Pressure Cooker made up of Brass
4.5 Different Tools Used by the Thathera for Making Utensil

Various tools used by these Thathera in their hand-beaten metal work for making different kinds of utensils are shown in pictures. It was an objective to photo document the tool types of the Thathera for the clear understanding of the process.

Picture 4.24: *Phawda* (Wooden Mallet): For making Brass utensils

Picture 4.25: *Chaur Mekh – Upar rakh ke maanne se chamak ati hai*. (Anvil used to rest the utensil and pound with a mallet to give a shine at specific places)
Picture 4.26: Chaursa (Iron mallet used for grinding the utensil and giving it a shine)

Picture 4.27: Chaursa (Smaller sized iron mallet used for giving shape to the utensils)
Picture 4.28: Tesî (Scapper used for giving shape to the edges or corners of the utensils and for cutting wood to be used for various purposes)

Picture 4.29: Niyali- Bartan seedha karne ke liye (the scrapper for straightening the dents on utensils)
Picture 4.30: *Chaursa* (Stocky mallet meant for beating the flat discs into curvatures)

Picture 4.31: *Chaursa- bartan seedha karne ke liye* (Scraper used for straightening the utensil)
Picture 4.32: *Kateera* (Metal cutter used for cutting flat discs or sheets etc.)

Picture 4.33: *Jeebhi* (Tongued anvil for rounding off the rough edges)
Picture 4.34: *Retti-plane krne ke liye* (Hack saw blade used like a file to plane the surface)

Picture 4.35: *Khatta* (Pestle used as a platform for holding utensils which are placed and given shape by beating and rotating to various positions)
Picture 4.36: *Bhatthi* (Small furnace which is used for heating purpose and for joint work. There is one in each Thathera unit)

Picture 4.37: *Khalwaad* (Rest awl- it is a positioning tool for holding the large utensils as it is being shaped)
4.6 Summary of Views Presented by the Thathera Regarding their Work Experience, and Various Issues Faced by them and General Attitude of People Regarding these Utensils (Name of the Respondents have been Changed)

Focus Group Discussion 1

- Almost all the respondents complained about the unavailability of raw material. This is the main reason that they are not able to make their own products and sell in the market on their own. They have no direct control on these final finished products. They have to rely on the Kasera for getting orders. It is the Kasera who has a hold on the raw material and furnaces. They claimed that they had a quota of military gunmetal shells, which they used to obtain especially on reserved price.

- They claimed that the income tax officials set up their tents in this area during the peak season. "When we have some orders from outside market, we make our own utensils and sell them directly in the outside market, the tax officers take our utensils into their possession. But if we pay tax on these items we cannot save anything.

- The Kasera do not give us full money for the work we do.

  "wo huemin har baar kam paise dete hain. Wo chahte hain ki hum unki minntein krte rhen aur unke chakar lgate rhen" (The Kasera expect the Thathera to be totally dependent upon them. They expect the Thathera to be always begging them for work and keep going to their outlets.)

- People have forgotten the value of copper and brass. They have started using steel, aluminium and other material utensils. That is also why they are getting so many health problems.

  "Logon ko cheejo ki pehchan nhi rhi kya sahi hai kya galt hai" (People have lost the sense to discern what is right and what is wrong.)

Focus Group Discussion 2

- The rise in the cost of raw material has lead to the decline in our work. The availability of cheaper alternatives in the market- like aluminium, steel and
other materials has forced them to stop using our hand-beaten metal products.

- Five of the respondents said that the maintenance of these brass and copper utensils is to some extent difficult. Therefore, the ladies do not prefer to use them. So they tend to increasingly rely on melamine and steel products.
- Some people think these utensils as old traditional products. They do not want to keep these products in their homes, as they have been outdated.
- The rising cost of raw materials in turn affects the final price of the finished products. People do not want to spend too much on the utensils.
- We face stiff competition from outside market where these products are machine made and their quality is not at par with the quality of our products. People do not see the quality they just see the price and they buy it.

**Focus Group Discussion 3**

- The younger generation has not seen their parents using these brass and copper utensils so they do not know the value of these products. How can we force anyone to use them?
- We have no welfare scheme from any government body. We are not provided with any kind of help from anyone. We cannot even earn our basic livelihood from this work now. We are unable to survive on the rations provided to us.
- We do not have any other skills and therefore, we cannot start any other work for earning our living.
- Few respondents said that the steel and aluminium has bad effects on health and these in turn give birth to serious health hazards. Aluminium and steel gets mixed into our food which is not good for us. But we know eating in brass and copper utensils is always healthy and there are medical proofs in this regard. It has been mentioned in our *Purans* (ancient books) as well.
- The Kasera do not want us to grow. They keep us under them. They do not want to see us happy. They do not give us adequate orders. If they do,
they do not pay us properly. But we cannot say anything to them, if we speak against them then they will stop giving us orders for job work in the future.

Focus Group Discussion 4

- Earlier, people were using these products regularly at their homes but now they use them for specific purpose only and also when they give these products to their daughters at the time of their marriages.
- Mostly Jatt Sikh people prefer to buy these products at the time of Diwali, Dushehra, and other special days and during the marriage seasons.
- Almost all of the respondents said that they could make anything with their hand. “You just name it or just tell us which kind of product you want and we will make it”. But with the passage of time, as the orders kept on decreasing, each of us kept on restricting ourselves to make one or the other product so that each of us could receive order from the market.
- Respondents said that they were working 24 hours a day during the peak season. Even then they were not able to maintain the full order. And now the case is totally different. We always wait for the orders and the work so that we can get some money. Right now the position is almost hand to mouth.

4.7 Summarised Views of the Kasera Regarding the Issues and Current Situations (Name of the Respondents have been Changed)

Focus Group Discussion 1

- Respondents were of view that “the sharply increasing rates of utensils made of these metals like brass, copper and bronze had forced most customers to use utensils made of steel and aluminium. The other reason for the decline in our work is that people have stopped recognizing the value of these metals. Older people continue to purchase these brass and copper utensils. But we fear that the coming younger generation is not using these utensils”.
- “We face lots of problems regarding tax issues. Our work is a handicraft and as such must be exempted from tax, which can play a very important role in the survival of this work”.

“Earlier in the past we used to keep and sell only brass, copper and bronze utensils and the Jandiala Guru area was famous as it was well known for these products. But with the passage of time, and as per the market requirement, we had to bring the aluminium, steel and other products as well. Now in our shops more than 60% of the utensils are of steel and aluminium while our own products have receded to the background”.

Focus Group Discussion 2

- They were of the view that “if they were to get any kind of help from any government body or institution they were ready to take up any initiative to safeguard their skills and work”.
- “We must be provided the quota of raw material or scrap from government side”.
- “Our Thathera can make anything with their hands but due to decreasing size of orders and increasing financial burden they have, they cannot give good education to their children. And their children do not like this work. They work as a salesperson in any cloth shop, as a manual labour or as an electrician”.
- “We try to help these Thathera but if we give them more money, they spend their money in unnecessary things like alcohol and tobacco”.

Focus Group Discussion 3

- “We used to get orders from many different parts of the country. Our market was famous for such utensils. At the time of Diwali, which used to be our peak season time. During that time we used to open 24 hours a day. And we were not able to meet up the huge demand and fulfill the orders on time. At that time, the Thathera were working day and night”.
- “Maintenance cost of these utensils is slightly higher and maintenance is quite difficult and expensive as compared to the other utensils that are cheap and low on maintenance also. Therefore, people do not prefer to buy them these days”.

• “The weight of these utensils is more, they are unwieldy and cumbersome. Housewives do not want to buy these utensils, as they need lots of maintenance and space for storage”.

• “The younger generations of these artisans force their parents to stop making these utensils. They think that there is no future in this work, and the income from this work in also very less”.

• “People of other states like Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan still prefer to buy these utensils. We send our products to these different states. We have hardly any buyers in our area now”.

**Focus Group Discussion 4**

• “We are not able to afford the price of raw material. So we are forced to stock and sell the utensils made from aluminium and steel and other material that are comparatively cheaper and easy to maintain”.

• Two respondents mentioned that “the Thathera blame us of making more money out of the final product sold in the market. This is not true. Actually we also need money to buy and store raw material and we have to take loans many times to buy that raw material and then pay for the process as well as that to make the desired products. Then we have so many power heads like packing, travel, communications and even hospitality to our customers. All these expenses are not borne by the Thathera. It is our stringent policy and astute sense of business that we have survived till now. Without these measures this craft would have died a long time ago.”

• “We can help these Thathera in whatever way they say but the main problem is that once they have some extra money they start spending on unnecessary things. Most of them are addicted to alcohol or some substance abuse”.

• “We ask the younger generation to come in to this work but they do not like this work and they do not listen to us, instead they say us that we want our parents to stop working in this line”.

• “Our peak season in from Dushehra in September- October to February end. It is the festival season and in the north of India it is also the marriage season. During this time period we get good orders from the outside
market. Also due to the marriage and festival season people prefer to buy these utensils”.

- “Many old people still come to us and they want to buy these brass and copper utensils only and they pay the money for them as well. They do, however, always crib about the cost. The problem is with the younger generation; they do not want to use them”.

- “We cannot forget the boom time we had in the 1980s when we had so much work that we needed to recruit more and more manpower in our work but now the scenario has changed totally. We cannot sustain even the handful of people that are left cannot survive through this work”.

- “We try to give good education to our children so that they do not suffer as we did. The best thing to do is get a job. Here the security is that we know we have a fixed salary every month and its fixed and assured throughout the year but in our business its uncertain throughout the year. This is why we prefer our children to go in to the service sector”.

4.8 Summary of Transact Walk Interviews to Know the Views Regarding these Non-Ferrous Hand-Beaten Utensils (Name of the Respondents have been Changed)

- **Rupinder Kaur (female, aged 39 years and educated up to 12th class)** said that “despite living here for 15 years, she never bought brass utensils. These utensils are very expensive as compared to the utensils made of steel and aluminium. The maintenance of these utensils is very difficult and expensive. They are heavier than their aluminium or steel counterparts of similar size and shape”.

- **Ramesh Kumar (Male, aged 59 years, educated up to 10th class)** was of view that “our parents always preferred to buy brass and copper utensils. They always advised several healthy benefits of cooking in these utensils. We are living here since long and we always bought these utensils from the Jandiala Guru. It is like an investment, like we invest in gold. We buy utensils, we use them for years and we sell them in the market in the form of scrap and even then we get a good price for these utensils. The reason is that the price of these metals has always increased
with the passage of time and it will keep on increasing. The best part is that this metal is again recycled and used by melting in the furnaces.

“pittal ik tra da sona hai. Agar kde paise di jarurat pe jave ta asi ina nu vech ke ache paise kma sakde haan” (Brass in like gold, if we need money at any time we can sell them and get good amount from them).

Our children did not like these utensils they tell us that we are old people still using old utensils. But I remember one incidence, we went to one of the restaurants and the food we were served was in non-ferrous metal utensils. Our children really liked that and they insisted to buy such kind of utensils for our home”.

- **Paramjit Singh (Male, aged 45 years and educated up to 12th class)** said, “I have been living in this area since my childhood. My father was also living here. I am using “dudh da dohna” made up of copper. We are into milking business. I personally feel that milk in such containers can be kept for long duration. I sincerely feel that the use of plastic containers, which incidentally are used by many these days, tend to affect the quality of the milk. And we cannot keep milk for long time in those plastic containers. The reason for the preference of plastic containers these days is that they are very much cheaper as compared to these metal containers. We have other brass utensils at our home. Dal (lentils) or sabji (vegetables) made in these utensils has very different good taste”.

- **Kuldeep Kaur (Female, aged 35 years and educated up to 8th class)** said that the cheap price and easy availability of Teflon, Tupperware products have forced us to use these products instead of the earlier used metal utensils. Comparatively aluminium utensils are less costly. We have sold our old utensils (brass and copper) in the form of scrap. We were not using them so we thought to sell them. We earned good money as the rates have gone up. Our children have not seen these utensils at home (though they see them in the market).

- **Kavita Jain (Female, aged 25 years, educated up to post graduation)** said “I have seen my grandmother using these utensils but the thing is that they need extra care to maintain in comparison to the other options
available in the market. I like the looks of melamine, bone china and many other varieties available in the market, which can be used anywhere and anyhow. I always take out the melamine dishes set whenever guests come. The other main reason is that these days we have microwaves in our homes so we cannot use these utensils in the microwave. The price is the main factor. These utensils are more expensive than other products like that of aluminium, steel and other materials.

“jad 500 rs vich 3 bartan aa sakde han tan asi kyo jada paise lga ke ik e khridiye.” (When we can buy 3 utensils in Rs. 500 then why should we spend more on these utensils and buy only one at same price). The newer types of utensils are good for gifting purposes. The brass and copper dishes are too old fashioned.”

- Harish Kumar (Male, age 35 years and educated up to 12th class) “We have forgotten our values and traditions. People are going in the wrong direction. We had very good market in these utensils but this steel and aluminium has destroyed everything. My father used to tell me the stories that sometimes they worked overnight to complete the orders. But now they rarely get any work. Due to the lack of work, these artisans are under pressure and they are not able to earn the basic livelihood for their family members. They are unable to make both ends meet. Many of them, due to the pressure, have started drinking alcohol. During the day time when do not get any work and when they are frustrated they start drinking alcohol from early morning itself. I would like to use such utensils at my home but my wife does not want to use them. After all, it is she, who has to see and handle the kitchen, so I cannot force her to use them”.

- Gurdeep Kaur (Male, age 22 years and graduated) “I like utensils made of glass and melamine. They are more beautiful. It is a modern world so why should we stick to old ideas and practices, which have outlived their utility. I want to keep some products made of brass only as showpiece but for utilitarian purpose I like other products. The large utensils of brass and copper were very old and my grandmother sold them but my parents bought other options in the market. One of the main reasons is that they
are heavy and the price is too high (as told by my parents), though I have never purchased any utensil so far on my own.”

- **Daljit kaur (Female, age 59 years and had education up to 10th class)**
  “I like the brass utensils to make *dal* (lentils) or *sabji* (vegetables). The taste of the food changes when we make it in aluminium or steel utensils. We have been using the brass utensil since very long. They are very good. We have traditional ‘*chullahs*’ or stoves at our home and on these we make anything in brass utensils, which makes the taste of the food very unique and tasty. I would definitely advice my children to use these traditional utensils instead of utensils made up of aluminium or the steel ones. No doubt the price of such utensils is high but the difference is their long lasting functionality and durability. They are more durable as compared to the other utensils.

  “*asi ik war khrid ke bhul jaane haan ki paise lag gye, par steel atte aluminium de bartaan bohot jaldi badle painde hann*” (We buy the brass, copper utensils and forget about them. The other metal dishes like steel and aluminium have to be changed every now and then).

  Now the authority has changed at home. Earlier what old people decided was the final decision but now the time has changed. The children are the decision makers. The younger generation feels bad when we do not consider their opinion. Now children say that they are grown up enough and we have our own voice, to give our opinion, which was not the case in the earlier time. The decision taken by the parents was always final, but it is now the opinion of the children that rules the household decision”.

- **Sunita Rani (Female, age 40 years and educated up to 12th class)** said
  “I used them for years before and after my marriage. We had traditional *chullah* at home. Though it takes some more time to cook in these utensils but we like to make food in such utensils only because of the difference in taste of the food. With time the preferences changed and the newer younger generation liked and opted for other products available in the market. Recently I have bought the non-stick fry pan and *kadahi* (girdle)
made of aluminium. My husband insisted that I buy this aluminium one as it was much cheaper comparatively”.

- Arun Malhotra (Male, age 24 years and studied up to graduation) “We have plates, bowls, and glasses made of kansi (bronze). My family uses them but I do not like them personally. They are very old now and my mother does not want to change them because she had brought them at the time of her marriage. I like modern utensils made of different materials. I do not know the names but there is a really huge variety available in the market with different kind of designs. They are very decorative and appealing. When my friends come to my place I ask my mother not to use these utensils. We have some nice dishes sets in melamine, which we use. I have seen many people still using such products. Our milkman uses Dhud ka dohna, my grandmother still uses pittal di parat. My sister recently married and went to live in a nearby place and some of these utensils were given to her at the time of her marriage as well. After my marriage I will not use all of these utensils though only one or two as my father tells me that these utensils are very good to use. But the final decision will definitely be taken by my wife who is going to work in the kitchen and make the food”.

- Thus to summarise from the above discussions it has been found that the general trends of using these brass, copper and bronze utensils had been declining from last two decades and people are preferring other options available in the market like aluminium, steel, melamine, plastic, etc. which are comparatively cheaper and attractive too. It had been the trend among the younger generation that they want to use new material in the market and these non-ferrous hand-beaten metal utensils seemed old fashioned to them. The female found it difficult to manage with these heavy utensils and these need extra care according to them. However, comparatively the older counterparts in the male still prefer to use these utensils for their benefits.
4.9 Key Person Interviews of Opinion Leaders in Jandiala Guru

1. Interview of Chairman of Municipal Corporation Members

A special session of the Municipal Corporation was held and was convened in the form of a Focus Group Discussion to gather the views of those in power and understand their commitment towards the resurrection and propagation of the hand-beaten metal workers of Jandiala Guru.

Mr. Satish Kumar (name changed) is the Chairman of the committee, aged 60 years summed up his concern pertaining to the survival and sustenance of a large part of the economic scenario of Jandiala Guru. “I have been walking the streets of Thathera Bazaar even since I was child. From sun rise to sun set the hammering would go on like a cacophony. During the evening as the day drew to a close it would rise a crescendo. This was probably because everybody was working on a strict time schedule”.

“The municipal committee was aware of the decline of the hand-beaten metal craft and are willing to do all in their power to help bring about the revival. If there is any need for infrastructure inputs we will give the most appropriate site to attract the maximum tourists. If there is any need for approval of project and assurance of cooperation for any programme, we shall ensure it has permanent priority for all its forms and stages. Our committee is willing to apply to the government to help the Thathera bazaar craftsmen make a revival. There has been much encouragement among the Thathera community as well as general merchants and industrialists of Jandiala Guru. This is because of the efforts of the Department of Tourism, Punjab as well as Punjab Heritage Promotion Board based in Chandigarh. They have hired consultants and NGO called the Rural Environmental Enterprises Development Society (The REEDS) to frame a proposal to the UNESCO for the revival and propagation of this vital craft tradition that may be lost to time
in near future. It is a matter of great pride for each inhabitant of Jandiala Guru that it has been declared a “World Heritage Site” as a result of these efforts”.

2. Interview of Member of Municipal Corporation

Baljinder Singh (name changed) is 48 years and accountant in Municipal Corporation office:

“We are indeed very lucky to get such a wonderful opportunity. This is probably the very opportunity that every Thathera and Kasera of Jandiala has been paying for. After the ups and down faced by the hand-beaten metal craft community over the past few decades. It is only too apparent that we should ensure that

- Full potential of this unique and very wonderful opportunity is fully recognized.
- We must recognize our weak points like most of the currently working Thathera are merely leading a hand to mouth existence. They need to recognize the fact that their current status of illiteracy, distrust and suspicion of each other, certain bad habits like alcoholism and substance abuse besides the desperate situation of debts, poverty, bad relationships with their family and children are all factors that could stand in the way of their progress.
- They have to overcome this weakness and recognize their strengths. The fact that they are some of the last practitioners of a rare craft from of the world is enough to make them begin planning their revival.
- Without their active and full time involvement no intervention can be worked out between the UNESCO, Tourism Department, Consultants and experts besides a whole lot of new ideas and practices.
- They need to let go their inhibitions and contribute wholeheartedly with their ideas and practical inputs that could only come from their years of experience and generations of
working through a large number of challenging situations. Their inputs would be most useful and could help interventions make totally tailor made and rich for exploring the maximum tourist potential and garner profits for stakeholders at Jandiala Guru.

- It seems to be quite a challenging situation but we need to know how well equipped we are to deal with this.
- Many of the Kasera and the Thathera are looking forward to the changes that are envisaged but a large majority is still sceptical and disbelieving. They have almost given up. They are at a point where they have lost their self-esteem, their sense of pride and satisfaction in their handiwork. These last remnants of the hand-beaten metal craft have to help themselves before everybody else can.

3. Interview of the Head of the Kasera

Ajit Malhotra (name changed) is 52 years old and is Head of the Kasera committee, “I have seen the turbulent times and the boom times. I am aware of the several opportunities that we have all capitalized on. However, the past 15 years time has really been tough for all of us. The Kasera have greater interaction with the outside world than the Thathera. This exposure helps, as the Kasera keep an eye on the pulse of the business. We can see the emerging trends and by virtue of the observations and experiences of the market forces we attempt to mould ourselves and help the Thathera as well. The Thathera-Kasera continuum is eternal and interdependent. We cannot exist without each other. Others may try to drive a rift through us. These days we are all suffering the aftermath of the depression and the slump in demand but there is a steady flow of products even then. I do not think the Thathera bazaar will ever close down”.

“The new initiative of declaring of Jandiala Guru as a World Heritage Site is exciting indeed. Even those of us who had left the township in despair have returned to the fold. We no longer think of this Thathera bazaar as a closed shop. I truly understand the meaning of this meaning. When my son, who was studying for his MBA in Australia, heard this got very excited and
decided to even return to the family business. He seemed full of enthusiasm at the prospect of our site becoming a hub of tourism. I shared with my friends and they also began to understand the magnitude of this declaration only then”.

4. Key Person Interview

Baldev Vig (Name changed) is 47 years old and Head of the Thathera expressed and summarised his views as

“We have been working with the Kasera for decades. It is only recently that we have been pushed by circumstances to explore other avenues. We have not become independent of the Kasera. But when we opt for other line of work how can they help us. In fact, they have also been taking other options like trading in steel and aluminium and also setting up aluminium manufacturing units. We have heard about Jandiala Guru being declared as World Heritage Site by the UNESCO, but what are the implications for us? We have had many discussions among ourselves and with the Kasera as well as other people in the area. There is rampant confusion and in some areas disbelief and distrust. Towards this ends, there are several questions in the mind and heart of the Thathera:

Where will the tourists buy the materials? Will they go to the Kasera directly or will they come to us. And what is the concept of this ‘Living Museum’. Why are we being given so much encouragement? Will this really bring back the boomtown feeling we had several years earlier? Right now we barely exist from hand to mouth. Our children have already left the traditional occupation and are joining other businesses and learning other skills. Can we get back the respect and admiration we had in our hey-days. Will this be the door to progress for all our friends in Thathera community? How long will this project take to be implemented? When will we begin see the results? We have to feed our families every day. If we can see some light at the end of the tunnel only then can we have carry on otherwise we will shift to some other means of earning our daily needs. We have lost confidence and our self-
respect. We are poverty stricken and riddled with debts. We are all middle aged, neither too old to retire nor young enough to begin anew. This new ray of hope shown to us should live to our expectations. If this fails, we are at the point of no return”.

5. Interview of the Ex-Pradhan (head) of the Thathera

Tejpal Uppal (name changed) is 55 years old and is ex-pradhan of the Thathera.

“We think all this talk of improvement of our lot is simply words. These people came to us in 2009 and 2010 to ask us about the status of our hand-beaten metal craft. All of us went all out to give authentic information and genuine views. We were hopeful of getting some immediate relief. However, it has taken the government five years to get this place declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. We do not even know what does this mean. Everybody seemed very excited. We read in the newspaper and heard in the television also but what does it mean? Where will it take us? Will it finally translate into money earned and financial stability at some near point in time?

We have been fighting a losing battle since almost 20 years. We have tried everything and failed. We have become the laughing stock of our families and especially our children. We were once proud and self-sufficient. Now we are not even as useful as the ash of our furnace. “Even that ash is used to polish the utensils”.

Will there be work for our children? What will be the earning like? Are we going to be ‘dhehadidars’ (daily wagers) like now? Will the monopoly of the Kasera carry on?

We have the skills. We need work. This is a very simple equation. Our children are right to go in other occupations because there would be nothing to eat at home if they didn’t provide it. We are no longer the breadwinners of the family. We need the support and subsistence of their contribution to survive.
Summary of Key Person Interviews

The opinion leaders of the society tend to have a hold over the views of various members of the community or group. They have risen to such a level on the basis of their age, rank, accomplishments, qualifications, wealth, political power, hold over lives of other people or on a combination of several of the above factors. Their opinions carry weight among several members of society. The KPIs above a kaleidoscopic representation of the thoughts of the entire community.

Overall they are the impression and the ideas shared by the Thathera and the Kasera besides other stakeholders from among other units of the Thathera bazaar. Many of the views expressed conveyed the meaning of the aspirations, fears and the hope of not only the Thathera, but also the Kasera and other members of the community.

The above opinions also highlighted the fact that:

- There was too little trust in the government policies, which took long to fructify.

- There were far too many instances of failure for the Thathera to understand that this particular opportunity was what would turn their lives around.

- Despite having faced too much adversity at the hands of the circumstances, the people had not given up hope and were still on the lookout for an opportunity to ameliorate their lot.

- Several queries were directed to the latest innovative step that was to take place at the World Heritage Site encouraged by the UNESCO. They wanted information, as there was an observable lacuna of communication and education among the general public and the chief stakeholders in particular about what the future holds for them.
4.10 Emerge, Peak and Decline of the Hand-Beaten Metal Craft

After the Partition of India, many artisans and traders came from different areas to settle down in and around the areas of Amritsar. As Amritsar is on the border of two countries namely India- Pakistan, many of the Hindus and Sikhs came and settled down in the areas of the Amritsar and many Muslims from Amritsar and its surrounding area went back to Pakistan to settle there. They chose this area for settlement as they had good opportunity to excel in this business as the demand for these Brass and Copper utensils was large in many parts of the country and Jandiala Guru was one of the main producers of these utensils.

At that time, there was a boom in the market for the brass and Copper utensils as the availability of raw material was adequate and cheap from many sources. One of the sources of the metals was from the military; the spent shells of the bullets used by the military personnel were sold as scrap material to these artisans and the Kasera. Then these artisans used this material to make their own utensils. The order these artisans were getting for these brass and copper utensils was huge at that time due to the large demand generation for the same.

The girls were given these utensils at the time to their marriage by their parents. In some castes and agricultural feudal families, the number of brass, copper and bronze utensils to be given was prescribed. For example 51 dishes, 101 dishes, and sometimes 1001 dishes were to be given to the daughters at the time of marriage and such dishes used to be of these brass, copper and bronze metal. Even the particular vessels to be given were duly prescribed by the nuptial families.

These utensils were used to cook in the religious places like Gurudwaras and temples. The milkmen used these utensils, called dhud da dohna, which was made up of copper and brass, for milking at that time. They used to get orders from within the state and from many states in the country. This craft industry was one of the main metal industries of the state and country. In other areas like Batala, which was also amongst one of the main metal craft industries in Punjab, the units are not more working anymore. The
main important units in Punjab were in Jandiala Guru, Batala, Amritsar and Gurdaspur.

From the 1990s there was gradual decline in the metal craftwork in the area. The first and the prime reason for the same was the squeeze on the raw material. Suddenly the government initiated auctions were stopped and these artisans could not get the raw material to make and prepare their own goods. However, if auction was made at any point of time, then these artisans and small traders were not getting anything from there. Large traders took all the material available in the form of shells, etc. Thus these small traders and artisans were left with no other option than going in to other works and thus they started leaving their traditional metal craftwork. Thus traders (the Kasera) started diversified and the attrition of the Artisans (the Thathera) started giving another blow to the decline of this craft industry. Another reason was the influx of the aluminium and the steel that were available comparatively at cheaper prices than copper and brass. The aluminium utensil units largely employed labour from Bihar and U. P. The Kasera who diversified into this arena did so mostly in a supervisory capacity. This was another blow to the hand-beaten metal craft. At this point the hand-beaten metal craft industry began slowly started moving towards a downside till it was ultimately dying out and now these artisans are struggling for existence. Some of the case studies of the Thathera with respect to spread and decline of this particular hand-beaten metal craft are detailed below.

**Case Study 1**

Jagdish Singh (52 years) is educated up to the primary level. “Our work is going down day by day and we can say this craft will no longer be in practice in the coming few years. Our children do not prefer to come into this line. When they see us working for so long and our inability to earn even for our basic subsistence, they do not support us to work in the same line. But the main problem is that I do not have any other work and at this stage of my life I cannot learn to do any other work. Till 1984, we had very good time. We were working days and nights. Even till
early 2000s, we were able to earn good as we were getting orders, though through the Kasera by that time. But the rising cost of raw material has drastically affected the profit and survival margins of the Kasera and the Thathera, and people started looking for other alternatives like steel, aluminium and plastic. We have no support from any governmental agency for our work”.

Case Study 2

Paramjit Singh (47 years) is educated up to middle class. “I have been working in this line from last 40 years. Earlier we were living in Hoshiarpur and our economic condition was very bad. Keeping in view the opportunities available in this area, one of our relatives insisted us that we move here and we were able to earn enough to fulfil our needs. Jandiala Guru was a huge market for such utensils in this state till 1990s. People used to buy these brass and copper utensils in large quantities at that time, and the usage of aluminium and steel utensils were not so widespread. We were working for almost 18-19 hours a day and we were happy for this. But in the 1990s we started facing serious threat in our work. The increasing rate of raw material and influx of other metals into the market started giving us very serious threat. We were not able to afford and make our own utensils and we started getting orders through Kasera only”. At the end of his discussion, He smiled and said, “In fact when I was in primary school we had learnt the Hindi and Punjabi alphabets having the letter ‘th’ which was pictorially referred to denote a ‘Thathera’. However, these days no child would even recognise our work let alone know what a ‘Thathera’ is. Just like the letters of alphabet we will also be wiped off from the skills and crafts of this world

“pittal ik tra da sona hai ate aluminium te steel loha han. Tusi pittal nu vart ke thode saal baad v vech do achi kimat mil jandi
hai. Aluminium te steel bohot bimari lgande hann” (Brass is like a gold. We must buy it. You can take it as investment. You can use it for some time and then you can sell them and they will give you good money as its rate increases day by day. They are not useful and they have very bad effects on your body.)

Resale price of brass is very good and the life of these brass and copper utensils is very long. You can use it for many more years. We do not and we cannot afford to make our own utensils, which mean we make these product only on orders from traders or sometimes from customers. We get making charges as from Rs. 20-30/ kg. depending upon the utensil to be made. So we are paid according to the weight of the utensils. Suppose we have made 20 kg. utensils then we are paid Rs. 600 but from that we have to spend on coal, wood, on our tools and the metal needed to make joints in the utensils. Which means we have to spend almost about Rs. 250 from our own pocket.

Case Study 3

Hardev Singh, aged 48 years and working from last 39-40 years. “I was making my own utensils and sell them in different markets. Most of the people were using brass and copper utensils only and Jandiala Guru was a huge and renowned market for such utensils. People used to come and give us orders. We used to make them in large quantities. Ours was the biggest utensil or bartan market in Punjab. Till 1985 our products were in great demand and orders from different parts of the country were pouring in every day. By the 2000s, we were not able to hold and buy the raw material and as the Kasera were comparatively, financially stronger, they started controlling us. We were getting orders through them only. From 2004-09, I was literally forced out from our age- old traditional work and had to resort to collection and disposal of scrap. In the time
period of these 5 years I was devoted totally to collecting raw material and again in 2009, my friends and the Kasera persuaded me and I started making some utensils and on request I was getting small orders from the Kasera as well. The reason for my comeback in this field was that I did not know any other work and I was not able to forget the boom period in our work. I felt I was unfit for anything else. As many tourists come to the Holy city, Amritsar throughout the year, we try and go to exhibitions to show our products to the public. However, it is not possible to go to many different places due to financial constraints. The unawareness among the younger generation about these utensils is one of the main reasons for the decline of this work”.

Case Study 4

Harbhajan Singh is 55 years old and belongs to Khatri caste and his gotra is Soni. He is settled in Jandiala Guru since long. “In earlier times our family was in Multan and then we went to Patti and then came here. All the Thathera were living in Multan very long time ago. From there The Thathera diversified into many different areas like Jandiala Guru, Hoshiarpur, Batala, Phagwara, Jagadhri etc. We are into this work from last 40 years. My father was also doing this same work. He used to make jugs and was very well known for that. He used to make very fine quality and very beautiful jugs. Part of the jug was made by ‘dhla’ or metal casting i.e. the bottom part was being made by the dhla process but other portion was made by himself with the help of hand held tools. We make many things like religious symbols for example the Om, khanda, Trishul and many other things like the dome shaped gumbad or on the top of temples. We make Punjab police belt buckles also. These are made of brass and then they are polished with nickel at some other places. We make buckles for Amritsar, Majitha, Batala, Taran Tarn police”.

Analysis and Discussion
“Price of raw material is increasing day by day and we are not able to afford to make our own material now. When we started doing this work brass was Rs. 18/kg. And then after that time it started increasing continuously and our work started deteriorating by the day. Plastic, aluminium and steel utensils have affected us to a great extent. Earlier people were not able to cross through this street without putting fingers in their ears because of there being so much noise due to the work being done. We were not able to talk with anyone during daytime. We were continuously working and working. After 1984 or 1985 our work has seen a downward plummeting negative graph. We have lost everything after that time. The house we have and the shop we have were made before 1984. Otherwise it was not at all possible for us to make anything at this point of time. We cannot afford the fee of our children also. In Ganganagar, Rajasthan people still buy these utensils and there is demand of these utensils. They give these utensils to their daughters as well at the time of their marriage. In hilly areas also there is a great demand for these utensils. People buy these utensils and still use them on regular basis there. People in Ganganagar and Rajasthan usually give a gaggar (water pitcher) in dowry to their daughters at the time of their marriage. But now with time this trend is also on its way out”.

Case Study 5

Kirpal Singh is 52 years old. He is Khatri by caste and belongs to Anand gotra. He has studied up to the matriculation level. “We have a joint family. One of my sons is married and he is living with us. No one else in my family supports me in my work. They do not like this work. They feel ashamed of our work now. This is my main and only occupation. I cannot do any other work as I have been working in this line since my childhood and now I cannot even think to learn any new interest. My father taught me everything related to this work. He was very good at hand and
he could make many more things. Although I can make all those things, which my father was making, I have restricted myself to make few things only because of the demand in the present time. I make utensils on order only and I get my labor per kg. of material. I don’t make my own utensils and sell directly. We were making many different kinds of utensils in the past. Some of them are the brass bowl, plate, Dhakan, parat, kadahi. We were dealing in brass, copper and bronze. Now I am making only few things only like Parat and kadahi of brass. My father and I together experimented with many new things that could be made with the hand and we were really enjoying our work and we could easily earn our basic livelihood. People still prefer to buy these utensils but the high cost of these metals is not allowing them to buy and use these utensils. People have started buying steel and aluminium utensils, which are very bad for their health. Many old people are still investing in these utensils. They know the value of these utensils. They treat these utensils as investment. They use these utensils and sell after many years, which still prove profitable for them because they can easily get a price higher than they paid at the time of purchase of these utensils. Many Jatt community people still give these utensils to their daughters as a mandatory part of their marriage gifts. Earlier people from many different areas were coming directly to us and they were giving orders to us so we were well aware of the market and we knew about our customers. Many whole sellers and retailers were also giving us orders directly. At that time we were working day and night. With the passage of time, we had no control on the raw material and we were getting orders indirectly through the Kasera. One of the major challenges in our work is the raw material. Second main challenge is the Kasera who is now selling steel and aluminium and they are promoting these silver and steel utensils now. The main challenge is very less price for our work. The new young generation is not coming into this line and they don’t like this
work now. So this is also one of the biggest challenges to this industry. If we want to save this work in the future new young children must come into this work and they should learn different techniques to work. We can see that within coming few years there will be nobody adopting and doing this work. Over the years this work has declined. Government does not and didn’t help us in either way in our work to support and save this work. I do not go to other places to show my skills and art because we cannot afford to go out and spend money as many a times there is not even enough money to eat properly in the home and family environment”.

4.9.6 Case Study 6

Manjit Singh is 48 years old, Khatri by caste and belongs to Vig gotra He is educated up to the 5th class. While their place of origin is Lahore in Pakistan, his birthplace is Amritsar. I am in this line of work from the last 35-37 years.

I make my own utensils and make them on orders as well. I make utensils, which are sent to Leh-Ladakh and other hilly areas. During off season when roads to Leh-Ladakh are closed, I keep on making my own utensils and keep on storing them and when in summers the roads are opened these utensils are sent to these difficult areas. Mostly I make Ranjan. Many Tibetans and many people living in hilly areas are using these utensils. They use it for different purposes. They make meat in these ranjans, which according to them is very good when made in copper or brass ranjans. Sometimes we call this utensil as momo also because momos are made in these utensils. It is made with both copper and brass. For ranjans made of copper there is one very fine sheet of copper with which it is made. This sheet is available from Jagadhri market. It is very fine sheet and is made with machine. It has equal width from each side and is shining. As I have no contacts in outside market and I have no
registered firm so customers don’t believe me and I have to sell these utensils to traders in Jandiala Guru and then they make profit by selling it at higher prices. Even today Muslim people use brass and copper utensils. They use almost everything made of these metals. Once I went to Srinagar, I saw Muslims were using bowl and glass of copper only and all their utensils were made up of copper and brass. The utensil, which they use to wash hands in, was also made of copper. Their plates were very large and were made with copper. But Hindu ladies have stopped the use of brass and copper because they find it difficult to clean them. Even my wife sometimes asks me to bring steel utensils but I do not allow them and we still use brass and copper in our household. It has tremendous health benefits. I left doing this work for 5 years from 2004-2009. I was not getting any work that time. I was frustrated and I left this work. I started my scrap business. But then again I started getting work and people were asking me to do work. And now I am working in my choice. Jatt Sikh people still use these parats of brass for kneading and they also give these parats to their daughters at the time of their marriage.

My father was living in Lahore and was doing same work there. I have also learnt such things from him. My father used to make one large sized copper decorated piece like very large pot, which is named as mattian. The main reason for that is the unique and different design that we can make on these pots. Now only I make such pieces in this area and that too on demand. I have also kept one in my house. The main thing is that the unique designs made of stars and other things, which resemble half moon, seen at Muslim places. The ranjans and mattian are made by me only in this area. I am the single and dedicated maker of these two particular utensils (Pictures 4.38 and 4.39).
Picture 4.38: Brass Ranjan

Picture 4.39: Mattian made of Copper
### Figure 4.19: Chronological Chart Depicting Decline in the Hand-Beaten Metal Craft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Up to 1950s</strong></td>
<td>Post-Partition settlement of different Artisans and the resettlement of traders groups and Establishing the markets Exploring scrap resources after the world war II, and the Indo-Pak conflicts in 1966 and 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid 1960s to Early 1990s</strong></td>
<td>Boom time for the market Easy access to raw material High profit percentages against selling price Large number of craftsmen taking to the craft Influence of other allied business Socio-political upheaval in Punjab creating social unrest conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From 1990s to 1995</strong></td>
<td>Gradual decline of the work Squeeze on raw material Attrition among the younger Thathera Diversification among the Kasera towards other occupations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From 1995 to 2000</strong></td>
<td>Almost shut down Influx of the aluminium and steel Craftsmen dying slow death due to decline of markets for their products Globalisation brought in cheaper and more attractive as well as durable utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From 2000 to Present</strong></td>
<td>Struggling for existence Languishing art and handicraft forms Lack of support from government or other agencies. Vilification among the craftsmen Unhealthy and stifling competition among the Thathera Cost prohibitive production cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.11 Markets and Demands in the Past and the Present

However, while earlier people used to purchase a significantly larger copper or brass utensil, they are these days turning to steal and aluminium in the rural areas and to melamine and ceramics or even reinforced glass. This changing trend has dealt a tremendous blow to the handicraft of making utensils by hand.

In the past time, the demand for these Brass and Copper utensils was in many parts of the country as shown in Figure 4.20.

**Figure 4.20: Areas of Demand for these Utensils**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Batala</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abohar</td>
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<td>Fazilka</td>
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<td>Malwa</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>TaranTaran</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Ganga Nagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Lahaul-Spiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>Jagadhri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>Leh-Ladakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>U.P.</td>
<td>Moradabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis and Discussion

Map 4.1: Showing Market Demands in the Past in Different Parts of the Country

Map 4.2: Showing Market Demand in the Past in Different Parts of the State
The kinds of utensils the Thathera can fabricate are many and varied. These days there is very little demand therefore they have become restricted to the manufacture of a select range of items like ‘parat’, ‘patila’ and ‘deg’.

In U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan some of the large sized storage vessels like ‘degbara’ and ‘gaggar’ are still being demanded. They are given as a part of the dowry at marriages of daughters, but this trend too is on the decline and there is little demand probably because the options available are many and varied. Light weight steel and aluminium vessels, no matter what their size, are given preference over the heavier copper, brass and bronze metal products. Thus, they are made only to order.

4.11.1 Prevalent Demand

In the present day and age also, however, there continues to be a traditional demand for certain utensils that are a cultural necessity in the any particular area. Some of the traditional markets that still continue to be the main markets today for the products of the Thathera are:

- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Some areas of Punjab
- Jammu Kashmir

4.12 Functional Place of these Utensils

For ghuti to new born:

Small copper or bronze spoon used to contain a syrup of honey and water which is fed to the new born child in the Hindu tradition.

Henna thaal

The bridal leaving her natal home immerses her hand in a large brass plate of Henna and leaves her marks on the door of her parents home.
**Vermillion thaal**

This is a large copper or bronze plate that has a paste of vermillion and water. The newly married bride steps in to this *thaal* and then steps on a white sheet as she enters her nuptial home. This signifies her entrance to be auspicious like the Goddess Laxmi (Goddess of wealth stepping in)

**Gangaur for storing water and other materials**

Huge round copper pot that stored drinking water for royalty as copper was said to impart strength and improve immunity.

**Ranjan – brass steamer for making momos.**

Steamer used traditionally for steaming momos. Its presence is seen in extreme areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and even eastern India like Gangtok.

**Mattian- water container from Lahore**

This was a narrow necked, flat stomach vessel made to ensure water remained cool. These vessels were flattened so that they could be carried on horseback or camel back.

**Gangajali**

It was a bras vessel with a lid. It had a thin spout. Usually *Gangajal* or waters of the Ganga River were stored in this. It was usually the last worldly thing used by anybody before passing on. The person lying on the death bed was given a few drops of *gangajal* from this.

**Degs**

Larger wide moulded shallow dishes to carry sweetmeats.

**Ganga-Jamuna- large water urn**

This was usually a copper vessel used for the storage and transportation of large quantities of water over greater distances.
Hamam- large water tub for bathing: Usually a copper or bronze container in which water was stored for washing and bathing purpose.

Diva- lamp

Brass lamps in which mustard oil or even clarified butter was used to give light. Ritually lamp is a lit ceremoniously before puja or prayers and even before journey.

Samovaar- narrow neck kettle

This is a fall back to the Mughali art form. It is a carved and decorated vessel for holding beverages. In some areas it has been known to contain herbal concoctions suitable in chest congestion.

Surahi- for neti in yoga

This brass vessel has a long straight spout for injecting a thin stream of water directly into the nostrils. This is an essential part of the yogic exercise.

4.13 Various Factors that Impacted Upon Dissolution of the Craft

4.13.1 Raw Material

- The main sources of the raw material for these Thathera and the Kasera are through scrap materials collected from various centres meant for this purpose, from scrap dealers, usually in the form of old utensils, which people give to the Kasera in return for the opportunity to buy new utensils.

- Earlier these traders and artisans could avail themselves of the fixed quota given by the military authorities for spent gunmetal shells through auction. However, they, now claim that they are not able to get that quota for various reasons. It has been withdrawn permanently. This in turn has resulted in the increased price of raw material, which are gradually escalating.

- Sometimes, these Kasera had option to buy raw material through various sources but the lack of financial resources and infrastructural facilities does not allow them to invest in large quantities. They do not have the
holding capacity of more than 20 tons and for these reasons they are unable to successfully bid for larger sized tenders.

- People can give orders for fabricating particular utensils directly to the Thathera and a few may even purchase the raw material and fulfill the order but a larger proportion of the Thathera have to take the Kasera into confidence so that they can obtain the necessary support in purchase of the raw material. With this arrangement, the Kasera also help the Thathera to obtain whatever other inputs are required for the job at hand like coal for the furnace, zinc for the joints and even polish for the finishing of the entire lot of job work. On the other hand, however, the Kasera have the holding capacity for stocking scrap, raw material and finished goods. They have strong networking with major markets and they are also skilled business people unlike a large proportion of the Thathera.

- The work of the Thathera suffered a massive blow when the official sources did not give scrap required for extracting the required metals. The demand had been for 5 tonnes per month costing about Rs. 11-12 lacs.

- Earlier the Army Ordinance depots were giving spent or destroyed bullets till 1995 at a nominal rate of Rs. 25/- per kg. But now only the big buyers pick up the larger consignments. According to a changed rule small lots were banned and the army began disposing of this quota to large agencies that had the requisite holding capacity for picking up the entire lot. The Thathera and the Kasera of Jandiala Guru lost out. Also there was a quota of the Punjab Government on coal, which was available for them at comparatively cheaper rates. However, now the rate of coal had gone up. It is rising higher and higher. There is no government control rate for the Thathera. (Goyal and Sinha 2015).

4.13.2 Less Demand

The kinds of utensils the Thathera can fabricate are many and varied. These days there is very little demand therefore they have become restricted to the manufacture of a select range of items like ‘parat’, ‘patila’ and ‘deg’.

- In UP and Bihar as also in Rajasthan some of the large sized storage vessels like ‘degbara’ and ‘gaggar’ are still being demanded. They are
given as a part of the dowry at marriages of daughters, but this trend too is on the decline and demand is gradually dwindling. Thus, they are made only to order. At present prices the rate at an average for a big utensil would be minimum Rs. 16000/- to 20,000/- depending upon the metal and weight category selected. The labour for making such a vessel remains much the same, which is a pittance as compared to the kind of profit the Kasera make, or even what the retailer earns on the vessel.

4.13.3 Various Effects of Working Condition

4.13.3.1 Physiological Effects

Health is another area requiring attention, as almost all the Kasera and the Thathera working with metals are prone to:

- Severe breathing problems
- Skin problems
- Calloused hands
- Hang nails
- Eye ailments
- Hearing problem
- Muscular dystrophy
- Paralysis and early onset of arthritis
- T. B. from mild stage to extreme terminal stage

Almost all of them have hearing problems at relatively early ages. There is no community coverage of health or any other form of insurance to provide them succor in their old or sickly days. The various other problems experienced by these Thathera pertain to posture and exposure to heat. Throughout the day, they work in the small working unit where coal and wood are burning because they are required at various stages throughout the process of making the utensil. Many of them face the problem of musculo-skeletal disorder (Picture 40). In the process of making utensils from flat discs, these Thathera use the various kinds of hammers, meant for different specific purpose, for beating the flat discs and giving proper shape to the utensils.
This in turn requires greater strength by them. Many of these Thathera reported the problem of joint pain in the hands and knee.

![Respondent showing the Musculo-Skeletal Disorder in his Hand Due to the Work](image)

**Picture 4.40: Respondent showing the Musculo-Skeletal Disorder in his Hand Due to the Work**

### 4.13.3.2 Psychological Effects:

- In addition to these physiological effects there are various psychological effects being faced by these Thathera. Some of these issues are related to the debt and social stigma from the other members in the society. Others pertain to their habituation to various forms of substance abuse.
- Ownership of the shops by the Thathera is about 50% - most of those who have their own shops maintain their living quarters behind or above the shops. The remaining 50% belong to the Kasera and they have given them to the Thathera for work and also as living quarters. Some charge a minimal rent while others are living there gratis. The Thathera are paid necessary making charges per vessel: the ownership of raw material as also the foundry rests entirely with the Kasera as also the sizeable profit. There are two foundries but only one function at a time. Thus, the Thathera are one step away from being bonded labour for the Kasera. They are virtually dependent on them for life, the orders as well as the means of fulfilling them. Many of them are also laboring under long-standing debts. The Thathera acknowledged that their lifeline runs in the palms of the Kasera. In good times, there was healthy symbiotic
relationship but at the onset of unfavoured conditions there was distrust and a general feeling of being disgruntled, which was actually emanating from the disgruntled and dissatisfied situation regarding sustenance of a livelihood they had been dependent on.

- The plight of the Thathera is aggravated because there is a rigidly strong control the Kasera exercises over the Thathera and there are many who are indebted to them for loans they have taken for marriages of their children, repair of their living cum working units, for any disease or outbreak in the family, and at the time of any ritual in the family, etc. As the condition of their living-cum-working unit is very bad because it was built very long back in the time and most of them are of the Kachcha house type so they need to repair them very frequently.

- The Kasera give the Thathera making charges per kilo of metal worked upon in a day. The rates differ from metal to metal and the rates are different also for the utensil being shaped, so for the parat, it is as low as Rs12/- per kg and for a large copper degh, it may go up to as much as Rs 40/- per kg. Many of the Thathera say they are able to finish a large utensil within a day but the Kasera ensure that they are not given the requisite raw material to complete the utensil so that it carries over to the next day. In this manner the Thathera is always beholder to the Kasera and many times cannot work independently even if he has the necessary and required means at hand.

- Besides the Kasera, they take loans from many other sources like from banks and from commission agents. But the problem is that they have to pay high rate of interest against the loan amount. Which becomes an additional burden on them. They are already working of past debt when more are piled on them.

- One of the other issues faced by them is that after working in this particular work for so many years, they cannot do anything else for their survival. They have no other skill sets and feel they will not be able to learn newer ways of livelihood except common labour.
• The desperation at lack of satisfactory work, adequate compensation and rising cost of survival has driven many good men to alcohol and an abyss of debts, poverty and hopelessness. This is also one of the main reasons for many good men being laid off their livelihoods. They loose respect in their community and even in their respective families.

• Problems from the tax department are the proverbial last straw on the camel’s back for the Thathera. Their peak session starts from Diwali and ends in February. During this period there are many festivals and marriages in Punjab. Sales Tax is exorbitant and during peak season and at the time of festival seasons like Diwali, the tax people set up a tent within the bazaar and immediately swoop down on anybody making a big sale. Only few of the Thathera have access to raw material and they make their own utensils. They send them to different areas and to the customers from many different areas. But these tax personnel keep an eye on who is sending these products to be delivered and they check the bills. Many of them do not have even the bill books and PAN numbers. The seasonal work and the less orders together with the problems faced from these tax personnel are issues that impacted severely upon the financial soundness and security of the Thathera. Their main crib is that theirs is the handicraft industry then why is it not being considered as such by the tax people. If all other handicraft sectors are exempted from tax, then why not the hand-beaten metal industry of Jandiala Guru. On the other hand, the kaseras too are suffering from taxation regimes like VAT, removal of subsidy on coal and scrap and increased labour costs to say nothing of the escalating cost of living and the newer pressures of lifestyle expectations.

4.13.4 Lack of Financial as Well as Moral Support from within the Family

The social stigma faced by these Thathera from other members in the society as well as from within the family is one among the several psychological effects being faced by them. One of the respondents even claimed that He could not even approach his wife and children for moral support. We work manually throughout the day with different kinds of hammers and other tools, and as we have to use mild acid and flint papers for
cleaning purposes, the skin of our hands become very bad. So our families tell us directly that we should not touch them.

“*din bhar kam karn to baad bhi asi apne bachyan nu te wife nu touch nhi kar sakde. Oh kende han ki tohade hath both khrab ho chuke han*”

(We work all day and at the end when we wish to enjoy with our children we are avoided by them as they complain that hands are dirty and deformed) (Picture 4.41).

![Picture 4.41: Respondent showing the Condition of his Hand after his Work](image)

The offspring does not support them in their work in any possible ways. They prefer to move out of the family unit after their marriage and many of them have migrated to different places for work.

### 4.13.5 Sale of the Alternate Material

The rising cost and the inadequate availability of raw material of these non-ferrous metals led the Kasera to sell utensils made up of alternate material like of aluminium, steel and other materials. Few of those Kasera have started making these alternate material utensils but here the problem is for the Thathera. They have to face much more greater loss due to this. Though people are still using brass and copper utensils during ceremonies and rituals where they are needed, the rising cost of the finished utensil, has
forced customers to buy the alternate material in comparison to the brass and copper utensils on daily basis and in general use. There are various other cheaper alternate materials available in the market like melamine, bone china, plastic, aluminium, steel, silver, Tupperware, etc. which have effected the work of this metal craft to the great extent.

4.13.6 The Foundry

The foundry has its own specific issues and concerns which also severely impact upon the status of the crafts as well as the craftsmen and other stakeholders. There are two foundries in the Thathera bazaar and they operate alternatively. During this heyday, the Thathera had reported that both foundries worked full time but, these days, however, only one foundry was available at any given time. In fact it worked on three days of the week.

Both foundries had a huge furnace for taking the ingots to red-hot temperatures. With the rising cost of coal, firewood, kerosene and diesel all fuel for the foundry was coming at a premium. This was one of the reasons that the foundry personnel had made strict timetables and scheduled for the working of the foundry. A blackboard hanging there gives details of the lots coming there in, the ingots weight and quantities, and the discs being pressed. The blackboard gave an interesting feature. The Kasera who gave the ingots and the Thathera who were further allocated the discs for job were also recorded on that. Thus, even if the Thathera just went to the foundry, he would know if there was work available for him or not.

While the pressing of the flat discs is manual, solid iron machines required tremendous muscle power. The six to eight men working on the press were a permanent feature and rarely left their post. They were afraid that if they were to be absent for even a day they might end up loosing their job. This is the state of affairs where no man is secure in his job. All are worried and strained at the thought of loosing their last anchor to earn a sustainable livelihood. The foundry could not think of investing in any modern equipment because they were afraid of the fact that any newer innovation
would tax their already dwindling resources and may not bring out the required results in the hand-beaten metal craft industry.

‘Dhanteras’ is a festival that comes just a few days before Diwali and has almost every household in both the urban and rural areas buying some major utensil for the homestead. It is considered auspicious to buy a utensil on this day. However, while earlier people used to purchase a significantly larger copper or brass utensil, they are these days turning to steal and aluminium in the rural areas and to melamine and ceramics or even reinforced glass and crystal in the urban areas. These changing trends have dealt a tremendous blow to the handicraft of making utensils by hand.

Some of the major reasons for the diminished demand of the metal crafts are enumerated as follows:

i. The emergence of new and more functional utensils and popularity among various sections of society.

ii. Glassware and melamine emerged as the newer materials used to form the utensils.

iii. Among traditional households steel and aluminium utensils have replaced the brass copper and bronze utensils of earlier times.

iv. The rising cost of metal ware was prohibitive for the common man who was ultimately forced to adopt the cheaper alternatives available and easily accessible to him.

v. Durability, ease of maintenance and cost effectiveness all promoted the alternatives to brass, copper and bronze ware.

Therefore, over the years there has been lesser and lesser demand generation for the products crafted by the metal craftsman of Jandiala Guru. They are continuing to eke out an existence of sorts but are unable to find the
way to survival and lucrative livelihood by following their old ways of past (Goyal and Sinha 2015).

4.13.7 Diversification into other Occupation

With the rise of the cost of living day by day and due to the less orders received in their own area of work (hand-beaten metal craft), many of the Thathera have started diversifying into other areas of work like electrician work, cycle repair, scrap work, aluminium wok, as a salesman in any shop, etc. The older order of Thathera exists but they are unwilling to initiate the newer order or the younger generation into the profession. The older craftsmen are proud of their skills but do not feel that future generations would take up this occupation. Most of their dependants are working as salesmen in cloth shops or electric and electronic shops. A few of them are even working as daily wagers or common labour.

The Kasera do not have much incentive to carry on manufacturing the traditional vessels, and many prefer to trade in steel and aluminium vessels, where demands and profits are higher. This leads to further unemployment and impoverishment of the Thathera. At one point of time they were not selling aluminium and steel utensils but now they are promoting their market in steel and aluminium utensils being made by machines at various places. Few of them are being made at Jandiala Guru as well. This can be clearly seen in the Picture 42.
4.13.8 Increasing Financial Burden

The family units of the Thathera are large and more number of family members are dependent on the income of these artisans. In addition to this, amidst very limited work in a month and less money being paid to them they are unable to return the loans they have taken from the Kasera, money lenders or from bank. Many of them are under debt. However, their small earnings, if any, are spent in giving interest of the loans they have taken from any source.

4.13.9 Unawareness about Various Government Schemes

As discussed earlier in this chapter and as shown in the Figure 4.1, most of the Thathera are either totally uneducated or are very less educated. Their media interaction is almost zero. Some of them cannot even read newspaper. So they are not aware of many schemes being run by many government agencies to promote handicraft via self-help groups; small, medium and micro enterprises development.