

Carpet Handicraft Industry in Kashmir: An Overview

Ishfaq Majeed

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002, Uttar Pradesh.

Abstract

Kashmir is famous throughout the world of his wonderful nature as well as outstanding for its handicraft sector. Carpet, Shawls, Paper machie, Wood carving, Namdha and so forth are the major crafts of the handicraft sector in the Kashmir valley. The Kashmiri Hand Knotted carpet has a very prominent place in handicrafts because of its unique design, quality and durability. The Carpet Industry has remained a key economic activity in the production and has a great contribution towards exports from the handicraft sector in Kashmir. Kashmir has remained an industrially backward state due to lack of investment from the private sector, remoteness and poor connectivity, shallow markets, poor infrastructure, and most importantly a law and order situation. Carpet industry suits in the Kashmir as it is more labor intensive and less capital intensive, consequently having scope for employment generation on a large scale. It is providing employment to both literate and illiterate people in rural, urban and tribal areas. The carpet industry acts as a secondary source of income for the farmers who remain unemployed during the winters. Both men and women are dependent on the carpet industry in Kashmir for their subsistence. The Government plays an important role to uplift the carpet industry by providing various schemes and programmes. The present study focuses on to analyze the production, export and growth rate of carpet handicraft in Kashmir, steps involved in the carpet manufacturing process, the challenges of the carpet industry in Kashmir and the role of the government in promoting the handicraft sector will also be discussed before concluding the paper.

Keywords: Handicrafts, Carpet Industry, Production, Export, Employment, Government schemes.

Introduction

Handicrafts are a distinctive feature of a specific culture or community through local craft skills and material. India is a country with diversity in terms of traditions and culture and also the heart of handicraft products. Handicraft products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand tools. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian,

aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant¹. According to SRUTI report, artisans are people, whose craft items or products having both utilitarian and decorative value, using their traditional tools or implements and hands for manufacturing. The handicraft sector is economically very vital from the point of the high proportion of value addition, low capital investment and high capacity for export and foreign exchange earnings. Abraham emphasizing on the great value of the arts and crafts writes that "The world of art and craft is as valuable as the world of science, philosophy or ethics. Like art, crafts reflects the state of human society through the individual craft treasures like art's, give us a glimpse into the core and kernel of the collective mind and societies through the mirror of the individual mind that created them" (Abraham, 1964: 2). In India handicraft sector is playing a key role in the economic development of the country. Government of India has taken several important steps to encourage and preserve handicraft sector because of its cultural and other peculiarities. In India labor is abundant and capital is scarce, the argument for handicraft industry is very strong. Handicraft can be set up anywhere in the country and thus can help in eliminating the regional disparities. In India, handicraft production is a major form of employment next to agriculture and constitutes a significant part of the export economy (Shah, 2016: 258).

Profile of Handicraft Industry in J&K

The Jammu and Kashmir is well-known throughout the world for its beauty, climate and craftsman skills. The handicraft activities in Kashmir valley are famous throughout the world because of their quality, art and design. The handicraft industry holds a substantial share in the overall production and export of the state. The traditional handicraft occupations are one of the sources of livelihood for the number of rural and tribal people even urban people in the era of globalization. The traditional handicrafts and other goods are famous throughout the world and many Kashmiri people directly or indirectly are related to these handicraft occupations for their income. The Climate of the valley is vital as in winters most people find these traditional handicraft occupations quite suitable to generate their income. The handicraft occupations act as both primary as well as a secondary source of income in Kashmir. These handicraft occupations are a part of our culture and play an important role in introducing the material culture richness of our culture to others. These occupations are of vital importance as cultural heritage. The Handicrafts sector provides employment to nearly *about 3.50 lakh persons in the state. The total production of handicraft goods in Jammu and Kashmir in 2013-14 is 2017.82 (Rs in crore), in 2014-15 is 2175.00, in 2015 -16 is 2234.15 and in 2016-17 is 2650.00. The total export of handicrafts in Jammu and Kashmir is 1695.65 (Rs in crore) in 2013-14, in 2014-15 are*

¹ Definition of artisanal products adopted by the UNESCO/ITC Symposium, Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification - Manila, Philippines, 1997:6

1287.04, in 2015 -16 are 1059.41 and in 2016-17 is 1151.12². Handicrafts sector has an important role to play in the development of the state. Lack of the large scale industries in the State, handicrafts, has remained a key economic activity since centuries. The Production and sales of handicrafts have increased significantly during the last two decades. The major chunk of foreign exchange earnings of the State comes from this sector. Crafts like shawls, crewels, chain stitch, wood carving, shawls, and carpets hold a significant share in the overall production and export of the state (Bhat, F. A & Yasmin, E, 2013).

Carpet Handicraft Industry of Kashmir

The Kashmir is known as paradise on earth not only for its beautiful nature but also prominent for its handicrafts like embroidery, shawls, crewels, wood work, paper mache, carpets etc. The carpet industry of Kashmir occupies an important place in handicrafts and a matter of pride for India. The carpet of Kashmir is well-known for its uniqueness of being handmade and hand knotted not tufted. Carpets in the historical backdrop of Kashmir go back to the time of the renowned Sufi Saint, Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamdani in (1341-1385 AD) of Persia. When he came to Kashmir, he carried alongside him religion of Islam and exceptionally talented craftsmen and laid the base for the cottage industry in the Kashmir. During the time of Zain-Ul-Abidin (Budshah) 1420-1470 A.D, carpets from Kashmir started winning a fame and it has been witnessed as a great epoch in the history of carpets in Kashmir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin has brought carpet weavers from Persia and central Asia into Kashmir & to train local Inhabitants³. Since then carpet heritages continued and got encouragement and patronage of different rulers, visitors to the valley, thus the skill passing on from generation to another. There was a major setback of this industry after the reign of Zain-Ul- Abidin and the carpet weaving was revived only during the Mughal period under the rule of Jahangir in the 17th century. During the period of Afghan and Sikh rule in Kashmir the carpet industry and other crafts faced the major crisis. In the exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London the handmade beautiful Mughal carpet from Kashmir displayed and highly appreciated by the Europeans during the mid-18th century. Since then the carpet weavers of Kashmir have started to tailor the carpet according to the taste of the western culture. However, the industry once again faced the setback during the world recession in 1902 and the partition of India also affected the market of the carpet both at the national and the international level. Soon the full-fledged Handicraft Department established in 1972-73 in Jammu and Kashmir the carpet centers established in the valley resulted in the income generation of the weavers and also steps were taken to encourage this on a commercial

² Digest of statistics, (2016-17), Directorate of Statistics and Economic planning, J&k Govt.

³ <http://www.heritagehandicraft.com/carpets.html>

platform. Slowly the process of carpet weaving was shifted to rural areas as a small scale industry and training programs were introduced for the betterment of the weaver's skills. The artisans in Kashmir give the specialized touch to carpet products in the valley and giving them a unique quality of their own. The Hand-Knotted Kashmiri Carpets are woven by all locales of Kashmir, specifically - Srinagar, Anantnag, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Budgam, Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian, Baramulla and Kupwara. The concentration of weavers differs from village to village. The weavers prevalently weave in the solace of their homes. The raw material, designs in the shape of Taleem papers (coded guidelines for weaving) and wages are given to them on a piece rate basis.

Carpets are well known in Kashmir and are locally known as '*Kalin*'. '*Taleem*' is actually a weaver's alphabet for carpet weaving. The Taleem papers are long, narrow pieces of brown colored with interminable rows, curves and hieroglyphs. The design is organized in a graphical manner with every square standing in a knot and the whole design based on it. The person who designs, weaves and dyes the carpet is called Nakaash, Kalimba and Rangur respectively in Kashmir. The designs which are usually found on Kashmiri carpet are flowers, trees, animals and other motifs motivated by the natural beauty of Kashmir. The important feature of the Kashmiri carpet is that they are always hand knotted. The yarn used normally is silk and wool.

Carpet Weaving is the important craft activity of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This activity provides employment to a large number of people and substantially contributes to the exports of the state. Each kind of carpet has its own tradition, design and significance catering to different needs of customers. The Kashmiri Carpet can be used for several purposes like covering for the floor, bedding, wall hanging, etc. The total value of carpet products depending upon the knots/square inch, design, size and the material used. They have developed unique competitiveness in the respective categories. The carpet 200 knots to 900 knots/square inch both in silk and wool yarn have achieved such excellence ranks a very high quality and durable. Carpets like 18x18 or 20x20 knots/square inch are commonly made in Kashmir. However, some fine silk carpets in different sizes have been made with a density of knots 3600 knots/square inch but these are exceptional displays of skill and mainly made for exhibition or museum. Eventually, the more knots/square inch, greater the value and durability of the carpet. The price of the Kashmiri carpet is quite high because of the amount of work and the time it has taken in manufacturing.

Objectives and Methodology of the study

- To analyze the production, export and growth rate of carpet handicraft in Kashmir.
- To study the steps involved in the carpet manufacturing process in Kashmir.
- To study the challenges of carpet industry in Kashmir.
- To study the government policies for the promotion of the handicraft sector in Kashmir.

The present study is purely based on secondary sources of data. An extensive literature survey has been done. Secondary data include both quantitative and qualitative is collected from different sources, including books, Reports, research papers, newspapers, magazines, and websites is used for the purpose of study.

Production and Export of Carpet Industry in Kashmir

The Carpet industry in Kashmir has made a great contribution towards production, employment, and export of handicraft products and contributes to the economic development of the state. The production and export of carpet handicraft since 1990-91 to 2016-17 has been quite encouraging. The production of carpet handicraft in 1990-91 is 84.55 (Rs. in crore), in 2015-2016 is 709.15 and in 2016-17 is 821.50. The export of carpet handicrafts in Jammu and Kashmir in 1990-91 is 26.41 (Rs. in crore), in 2015-2016 is 293.29 and in 2016-17 is 369.81 and the total employment in Carpet industry in 1990-91 is 0.74 (in Lakh) and in 2016-17 is 1.11 (shown in Table 1). The main export markets for Kashmiri carpets are USA, UK, Germany, Canada and Australia. There is fluctuation in the growth rate of production and export of carpet handicrafts in Kashmir from 19974 to 2017 shown in Figure (1.2).

Table1

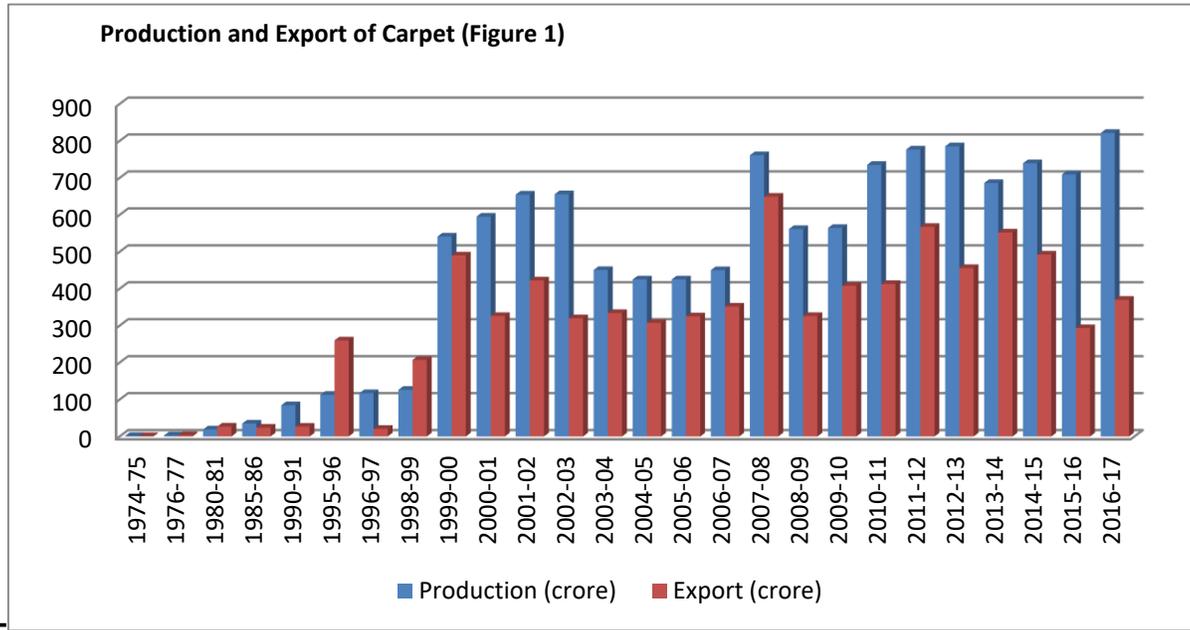
Production, Export, Employment and Growth rate of Carpet Handicraft in Kashmir

Year	Production (Crore)	Yearly Growth rate of production	Export (Crore)	Yearly Growth rate of Export	Employment (Lakh)
1974-75	1.38	-	1.06	-	0.64
1976-77	2.77	100.0	3.50	187.7	0.06
1980-81	19.04	587.4	26.80	778.7	0.47
1985-86	35.00	83.8	24.00	-10.4	0.62
1990-91	84.55	141.6	26.41	10.0	0.74
1995-96	112.60	33.2	260.00	884.5	0.79
1996-97	117.10	4.0	20.57	-92.1	0.07
1998-99	126.10	7.7	207.33	907.9	0.83
1999-00	541.00	329.0	489.90	136.3	0.889
2000-01	595.10	10.0	326.06	-33.4	0.915
2001-02	654.61	10.0	422.21	29.5	0.936
2002-03	655.71	0.2	320.00	-24.2	0.944
2003-04	450.53	-31.0	334.00	4.4	-
2004-05	425.00	-5.7	307.50	-7.9	-
2005-06	425.00	0.0	325.00	5.7	-
2006-07	450.00	5.9	351.50	8.2	-
2007-08	761.27	69.0	649.02	84.6	0.970
2008-09	561.27	-26.3	326.00	-49.8	-
2009-10	564.44	0.6	407.73	25.1	-
2010-11	735.10	30.2	412.45	1.20	-
2011-12	776.70	5.7	567.13	37.5	-
2012-13	785.44	1.1	455.86	-19.6	-
2013-14	686.05	-12.7	551.90	21.1	-
2014-15	739.50	7.8	492.18	-10.8	-

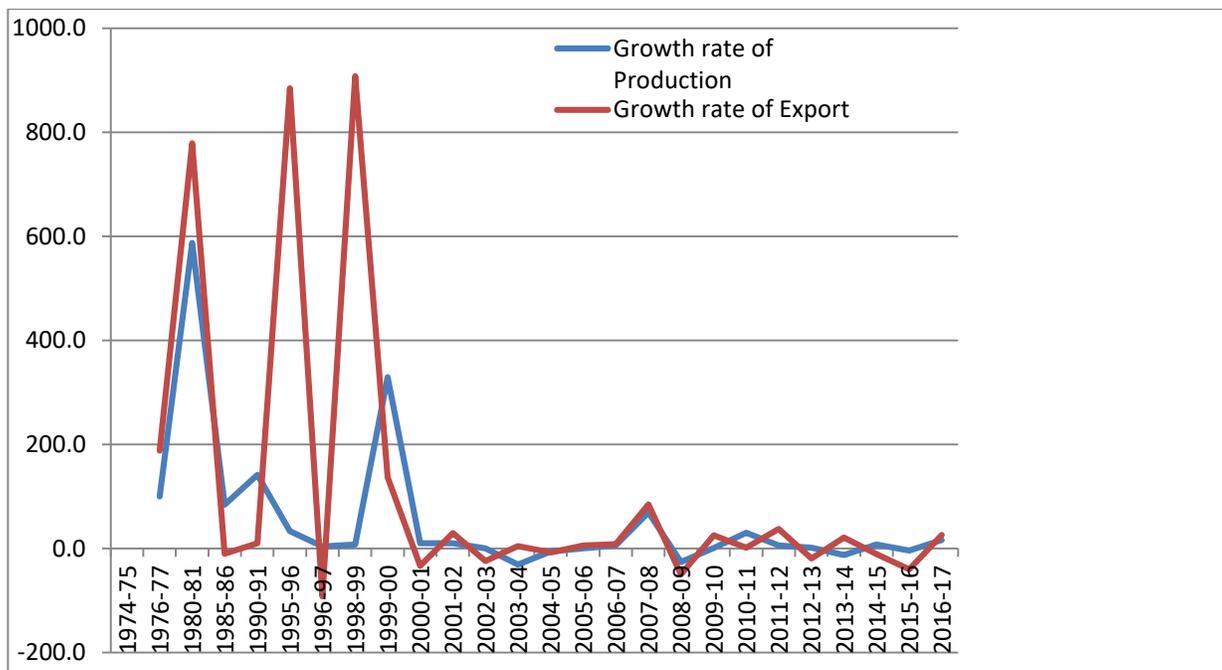
2015-16	709.15	-4.1	293.29	-40.4	-
2016-17	821.50	15.8	369.81	26.1	1.11
Total	11835.91		7970.76		

Source: Digest of statistics (2016-17), Growth Rate=

current year-previous year/previous year x 100, (-) = not available



Growth Rate of Production and Export of Carpet Handicraft (Figure 1.2)



Carpet Handicraft Units and Employment in various Districts of Kashmir

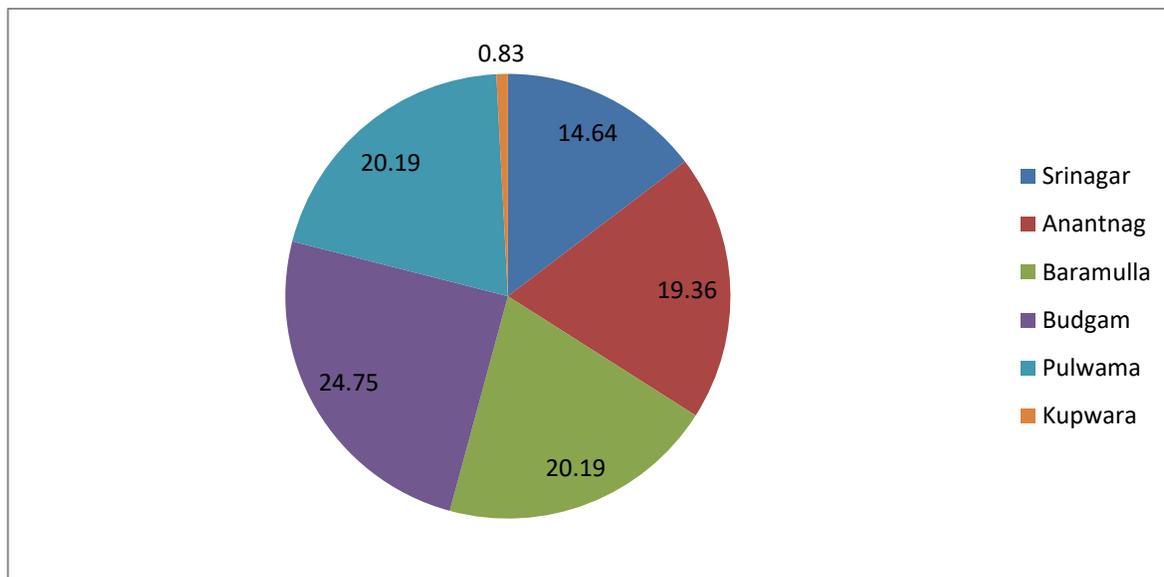
The Carpet industry has a strong base for employment generation in Kashmir. A large chunk of the population of Kashmir is based on this industry for their livelihood. The total number of carpet handicraft units and employment in Kashmir is 25610 and 74329 respectively in 1988-89 shown in Table 2. The District Budgam is having a large number of carpet units and employment in Carpet industry while Kupwara is having the lowest number of carpet units and employment.

Table 2
District Wise Number of Carpet units and Employment in Kashmir during 1988-98

Districts	NO. of Units	Percentage of total units	Employment
Srinagar	3751	14.64	9959
Anantnag	4960	19.36	13782
Baramulla	5173	20.19	14796
Budgam	6341	24.75	18807
Pulwama	5171	20.19	16086
Kupwara	214	0.83	899
Total	25610	100	74329

Source: Digest of Statistics (2016-017), Percentage= number of units in district/ total number of units*100

Figure 2
Percentages of Total Carpet Units in Kashmir in 1988-89



Carpet Training Centres and Trainees Trained in Kashmir

The Massive Carpet Scheme was introduced in the J&K State in the year 1976 with the aim to extend the training program to both rural and urban areas in order to facilitate the job employment. During the year 1982 need was felt to improve the quality of carpets with the result advance training program started by the Handicraft Department. The total number of 40 training centres established under Massive Carpet Scheme 40 centres in Kashmir with an intake capacity of 25 trainees per centre. The Massive carpet training programme

has gone a long way in developing and promoting the carpet industry in the valley. Under the Mega Cluster Scheme, J&K Carpet handicrafts receive Rs. 81.02 crores and Rs. 33.51 crores sanctioned to train the 10 thousand artisans and to distribute 8000 better-quality looms. In J&K the total number of 52 carpet handicraft training centers established in which 386 trainers trained during 2015-16 and in 2016-17 also 52 carpet training centres established in which 665 trainers trained shown in Table 2. The training centres have been opened under the control of the Handicraft Department in Kashmir in different districts. The institution imparts six months' training and provides trainees with a stipend of Rs.700 & Rs.500 per month- to each trainee's in respect of advance and elementary training courses. The main thrust of these centres is the improvement and advancement in the weaver's skill and to maintain rather supplement the human resource required in the carpet industry.

Table 3
District Wise Number of carpet Training centres and Trainees Trained in 2015-16 and 2016-17

Year	District	Srinagar	Ganderbal	Budgam	Anantnag	Kulgam	Pulwama	Shopian	Baramulla	Bandipora	Kupwara	Total
2015-16	Training Centres	1	3	1	2	2	3	1	28	8	3	52
	Trainer Trained	0	0	0	35	0	13	0	280	15	43	386
2016-17	Training Centres	1	3	1	2	2	3	1	28	8	3	52
	Trainer Trained	0	58	0	29	44	32	24	400	37	41	665

Digest of statistics, (2016-2017)

The above Figures reflect the number of carpet training centres and trainees trained in various districts of Kashmir during 2015-16 and 2016-17. The Baramulla district having a maximum number (28) of carpet training centres in each year and trainers trained 280 in 2015-16 and 400 in 2016-17.

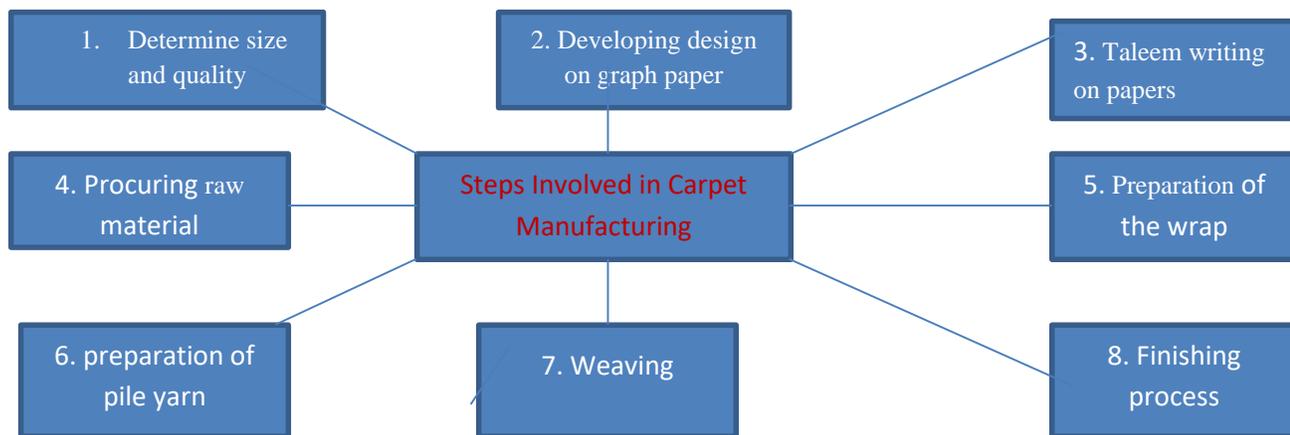
Steps involved in weaving a Kashmiri Hand-Knotted Carpet

Weaving a Hand Knotted Kashmiri Carpet is a tedious and time consuming activity which includes a number of processes. For making carpet it has to go through various processes like designing, dyeing, weaving, washing, finishing and packing⁴. Each process must be completed with the proper attention, as the result of the final item relies upon the ideal execution of each of these processes. Each process is done by various individuals, skilled workers, master craftsmen and specialists in their field. The loom (locally known as Kalbaaf Waan) is used in Kashmiri carpet weaving is composed of two horizontal wooden beams, between which the wrap threads are stretched,

⁴ <http://www.jkhandicrafts.com/products-kashmiri-carpets.html>

one beam in front of the weaver and the second behind the first. Very simple tools are used to thread the knots. The weaving begins by taking the dyed pile yarn from hanging yarn balls and knotting the same around the wrap threads as per Taleem script after the knot is tied the weaver cuts the yarn with a flick of a hooked knife (locally called khood), a wooden or metal comb used to push knots and weft tightly together (panje in local language), and a pair of short scissors to cut the pile (locally called dukaier) of the carpet once it is finished. Carpet is not made by one person. It is made with the help of many skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled workers. The procedure of creation of specific carpets having rather complicated structures has been known to continue for significant periods of time, here and there up to 3 years based on size and quality. The different processes involved in carpet manufacturing shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Challenges of Carpet Industry in Kashmir

Since adoption of the New Economic Policy in 1991, Indian society has experienced a lot of changes in different spheres. The world has compressed into a small unit because of the information and communication technology. It has affected all the sectors of the economy. In a market economy, emphasis is given to the consumption pattern of the people. In Dipankar Gupta's opinion, if the customers want a product, it must be available, even if the social costs are higher (Gupta, 2000: 78). The artisans in the handicraft industry face the new challenge of making products with new designs at lower costs to meet the needs of consumers in the era of globalization is yet to be built up. According to Sachar Committee Report 2006, regardless of the economic advancement in India one can find that artisans in India have to tolerate the burden of competition started by liberalization. Liberalization resulted in the displacement of artisans who have lost their employment by competitive import items. Typically artisans are engaged in the unorganized sector, which hardly enjoys security of any type and consequently the adverse impact of liberalization on them⁵.

⁵ A Sachar Committee report on 'Social, Economic and Educational status of the Muslim community of India' in 2006, p-20

In the global era, however the hand knotted carpets of Kashmir is going global and increasing demand for it. The increasing opportunity for Hand Knotted Kashmiri carpet in the global market is witnessed when the export of Kashmiri carpet crossed to Rs 260.00 crores in 1995-96 which was only Rs. 24.00 crores during the year 1985 -86. During the globalization phase, the demand for Kashmiri carpet increased due to growth in world tourism. Despite export success, the demand for the carpet in the domestic market is not satisfactory. The dramatic shift in consumer choices from artisanal products to machine made manufactures adversely affected the demand of Kashmiri carpet, which consequently affects the employment in this sector.

In the present global world the universalization of machine made low cost and superior quality consumer goods, the Kashmiri handicraft industry in general and Kashmiri carpet industry in particular is facing enormous problems. There is tough competition in the global market by the carpets from other countries like China, Turkey and Belgium. The domestic market of Kashmiri carpet also decreased by 20% due to competition from Agra, Jaipur, and Amritsar and Bhadohi carpet belts. The Competition is in the terms of the cost, time in meeting the deadlines, design, pattern and quality. The damage to Kashmiri carpet industry is affecting the livelihood of people engaged with this industry. The carpet industry in Kashmir is dying a slow death. The weavers who have been engaged in manufacturing of carpet from generations are shifting towards the other occupations on account of low profit involved in carpet weaving. The United Nations report suggests that in India, since the past three decades the number of artisans has declined by at least 30% and many of these artisans are joining the rank of casual workers and other vulnerable jobs in the informal economy (Sankaran, 2018: 23). In view of the insufficient economic returns enjoyed by artisans in the carpet industry in the past, this industry is decayed and declined as the master craftsmen of this activity were reluctant to pass on their skills and expertise to their children. The artisans in the carpet industry have become increasingly dependent on middlemen who pay wages to the artisans on piece rate bases. The government's step to create cooperatives has not become much successful. There are over 25 lakh craftsmen in India, mostly in the villages who are not used to interaction with buyers and don't have the necessary skills to safeguard their own interests (Jena, 2007). The Carpet industry of Kashmir is a crucial economic contributor to the state and to the country as well. However, the industry is facing a lot of challenges due to the intervention of modern machinery and also increased competition from various countries (Hafiz, 2016). Artisans believe that crafts were declining in their ability to generate steady, sustainable and respectable livelihoods due to a lack of institutional support for a long time. The second generation of artisan family particularly the educated ones are also not interested in taking these traditional occupations; by seeing the parents struggle to find the market and fair price for their products, the curriculum in the schools does not include lessons regarding the importance of craft and these occupations are regarded as old aged and traditional, artisans are excluded for being from lower castes, which further discourages new

generation from joining the family occupation⁶. Artisans are now in dilemma whether they should leave their occupation of weaving or continue it. There are a number of cases where artisans have left their traditional skilled occupation and now engaged in different occupations like selling goods on road sides, wall painting, shop keeping, etc. which doesn't require much skill (Parvaiz, 2017).

Little evidence was found of institutional support being provided to the carpet industry in Kashmir by the Government of the State. This reflects on the weak position of individuals who are involved in this sector and also the government's approach to this sector as a low priority or focus area, despite its vast potential. No doubt, the Govt. has taken some steps for improving the condition of artisans, but on ground level remains unsuccessful. The handicraft in Kashmir is characterized both by a relatively small scale of production and remain in the unregistered informal sector and lack of access to financial and other inputs. Out of 4 lakh artisans in the valley only 1.67 lakh artisans registered with Jammu and Kashmir Handicraft Department. 2.33 lakh artisans continue to be unregistered and as a result, do not receive any benefit from different government schemes.⁷ IGSSS began with functional literacy centers, motivation, animation, and formation of weavers groups. Later, it organized programs to capacitate the weavers' knowledge of the carpet industry and to improve their working conditions. It also provided high quality looms. Major hurdles expressed were: lack of cooperation (33%), lack of investment (20.9%), lack of market linkages (20%), lack of interest (18.6%), and lack of access to the government schemes (8.8%), and 24.7% of the respondents stated other reasons.⁸

Other bottlenecks of Carpet Industry

The problems faced by the carpet industry may be put into two major categories:

1) Macro-level problems

The macro-level problems include: insufficient infra-structural facilities, insufficient credit facilities, non-availability of better quality yarn at reasonable prices, lack of facilities for product innovation and development, rising prices of yarn and subsequent rise in carpet prices, increasing competition from machine made products, lack of awareness about Kashmiri carpets in the minds of final consumers, lack of publicity and public relations in foreign markets and lack of foreign market intelligence, poor governmental planning, negligence by central and state governments and inadequate census data about carpet industry units and number of artisans.

2) Micro-level problems

⁶ A report by DASRA 'Crafting A livelihood: building sustainability for Indian artisans' 2013

⁷ Article published in Greater Kashmir '2.33 lakh unregistered artisans unable to get benefits from govt. schemes' by Saqib Malik, Feb. 9, 2018

⁸ Joseph Xavier SJ *Transcending conflicts: voices from the valley*; A study of IGSSS's Decadal Engagement in Kashmir

The micro-level/unit level problems are: Lack of working capital, lack of delivery schedule and timing, low education level, low wages and highly unorganized, lack of production and financial planning, inadequate infrastructure and technological obsolescence and exploitation of carpet weavers by middlemen.

Evaluation of Governmental Policies and Programmes in Handcraft Sector

Handicraft has got an important place in our constitution; the development and promotion of crafts are the responsibility of the respective state government. Special consideration is being paid to guarantee that a large number of artisans get the advantage of all developmental schemes. The Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts has implemented, the number of schemes for promotion and development of the handicraft sector shown in Table 4. The Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) plays a catalyst role in connecting international buyers with Indian carpet exporters by creating various sourcing opportunities in India and other countries. CEPC also plays a key role in Skill development, market promotion, establishing key carpet production centres and latest innovation in the carpet industry.

Table 4
Schemes for Artisans and Handicraft Sector

Schemes	Objectives
Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Yojana (AHVY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development of Handicrafts • Mobilization of artisans into self-help groups or cooperative societies
Market Support and Export Promotion Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access of artisans to various markets and market channels • Awareness among people about crafts through organizing market events such as exhibitions, national handicraft fairs • Publicity through electronic and print media • Financial support to state handicrafts corporations and NGOs for opening new Emporia
Design and Technology Upgradation Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial help for the supply of tools, safety equipment's etc. • Design and technology development workshop
Human Resource Development Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicraft training programs through established institutions, for example, Guru Shishya Parampara • Transfer skills to new trainees • Promote the skills of existing as well as new craftsmen
Research and Development scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth analysis of some aspects and problems of handicrafts and artisans. • Formulation of policies and evaluation of the existing policies
Mega Cluster Handicraft Development Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote the infrastructure and production of clusters

	which has remained unorganized and are unable to cope with the modernization and technological development
Bima Yojana for Handicraft Artisans (AABY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides life insurance protection to the handicraft artisans in the age group of 18-60 years
Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana (RGSSBY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the financial help to the artisans to access best healthcare facilities. This scheme also covers the other three members of the artisan family
Artisan Credit Card Scheme (ACCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide easy and soft credit to the artisans involved in various handicraft activities to start their own independent business. Under this Scheme the Government pays 10% interest subsidy on loans up to Rs.1.00 lacs for a period of 5 years.

Despite of these Central Schemes, the Integrated Development Package for J &K for providing financial support for taking up specific programmes in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. For Jammu and Kashmir total amount of Rs. 55 lakh sanctioned for Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Yojana (AHVY) programme for five sub-schemes and 24 intervention schemes, which provided support to 2800 artisans⁹. Since 1965 to 2015, 8 Shilp Guru Awards, 37 National Awards and 51 National Merit Certificates received by J&K artisans for outstanding performance in handicraft sector. The biggest problem while implementing the developmental schemes is the lack of proper knowledge of handicraft units and number of artisans. Now a complete census of the artisan is needed for proper statistics, which enable the government to plan the appropriate intervention.

Policies and Suggestions

- The Carpet should be manufactured in accordance to the new styles and designs.
- Government should come forward to assist the Carpet weavers through financial services, business development services and incentive packages to promote their access and compete in global market/production systems.
- Low wage is the factor responsible for low performance of carpet Industry. Hence the best policy is to provide better remuneration to the carpet weavers more than other manual workers as well as provide incentives to motivate them.
- Provide the better facilities and quality raw material at affordable prices to the artisans.
- Time to time evaluation and monitoring of the Governmental schemes and programmes.
- Keeping a check on the markets and make it more formalized and controlled.
- There should be a separate trademark for the hand knotted Kashmiri carpet.

⁹ Working Group Report on Handicrafts for 12th Five Year Plan by Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India

Conclusion

The Hand Knotted Kashmiri Carpet is unique in its design, quality and durability. With the advent of the globalization, factory system, rapid urbanization etc. the carpet industry facing a tough competition from foreign companies and carpet weavers lost their foothold in the village economy. In spite of the increasing impact of globalization, modernization and mechanization, the hand-made Kashmiri carpet continues to receive world-wide praise. The carpet industry occupies a vital position in the economy of Kashmir. Having highest rate of unemployment, craft activities are best suited to the Kashmir valley as these activities need more labor and less capital, consequently having opportunity for employment generation at large scale. Seeing the overall situation and performance of the carpet industry in the Kashmir, the position is not well off. The Government is unable to frame sound policies for improving the carpet industry and conditions of carpet weavers and left them with a hand to mouth situation and are bound to leave their traditional skilled occupation.

References

- Abraham, T. M. (1964). *Handicrafts in India*. New Delhi: Graphics Colombia.
- Bhat, F. A & Yasmin, E. (2013). An Evaluation of Handicraft Sector of J&K - A Case Study of District Budgam. *European Academic Journal*, 367-381.
- Gupta, D. (2000). *Mistaken Modernity*. New Delhi: Harper Collins.
- Hafiz, S.M., Ashraf, S. I., & Imaan,A. (2016). Paradigm Shift in the Carpet Craft by Skill Upgradation and Capacity Building Training Programs with special Reference to the State of Jammu and Kashmir . *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 1222-1226.
- Jena, P.k. (2007). Orissan Handicrafts in the Age of Globalisation: Challenges and Opportunities. Orissa Review
- Sankaran, P.N. (2018). *Artisans of India: Towards Inclusive Development*. New Delhi: Serial Publications
- Shah, M. R. (2016). An Assessment of Handicraf Sector of J&K with Special Reference to Central Kashmir. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*.
- SRUTI. (1995). *India's Artisans: A Status Report*. New Delhi: Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiative.
- Paravaiz, A. (2017). Damage to Kashmiri Handicrafts is affecting livelihoods, retrieved from <https://www.villagesquare.indamage-kashmiri-handicrafts-affecting-livelihoods>