

FARSI WEAVING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE FARASI WEAVERS

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Abstract

Farasi weaving from animal wool is a traditional craft in the southern part of Sindh surviving from decades. This craft is being practiced in District Badin only. Quite a few families are involved in this business at scattered locations. Unfortunately this craft having potential of business has never been encouraged and promoted to that level. The people who are involved in the craft have learned the techniques and skills from their forefathers. It has been observed in this study that the skills could not have survived had the families not been involved in the business. This study is based on the field survey of the Bagheli the only village for the craft, interviewing 18 people. This is a small village in district Badin, about 20 Km south of district head quarter and 140 Km from in the east of Karachi. Personally administrating questionnaires in 10 people directly involved in the craft. People of 18-61 age group were involved in this whole business. The process of Farasi from taking the animal hair to finishing the product was also recorded by using the cameras. Since this craft is not found in any other part of the Sindh province.

However, this study is the representative of the population involved in the business.

This study comprehends the Farasi weaving methods, techniques, including the description, photographs of all the equipments involved and the complete process from inception to completion, a piece ready for market

Farasi Weaving Method From Animal Wool In Badin Sindh Introduction

Farasi is a traditional product of Sindh made of natural wool with natural. Mainly the weaving of Farasi has been done in district Badin, Sindh. Traditional Khes Is a fabric woven in lower Sindh which also requires a detailed study. Machine Loam Is used for this purpose Both manual and machine weaving are possible. Weaving machines are known as looms.

The loom began as a simple wooden frame and evolved into the highly advanced electrical weaving equipment of today. Although hand weaving is still used today, weaving has evolved into a mechanised technique.

Generally this job is done by women in their houses. Khaddi units are made locally with wood and are detachable easily. These units are established in the houses of women and on each unit two craftswomen can work. There is no any mechanized system introduced in this craft yet .This study suggests that this craft is mainly done by women in their houses in addition to their routine tasks. These women spent between 6-8 hours daily for weaving Farasi of good design. There is limited number of women who can only prepare a well designed Farasi whereas majority of women can make simple Farasi. These Farasi are used usually for bed layers for their own purpose. Buyers who know this craft can get these products on orders. A quality Farasi of 8x4 ft suggested by this study is evidence in questionnaires completed

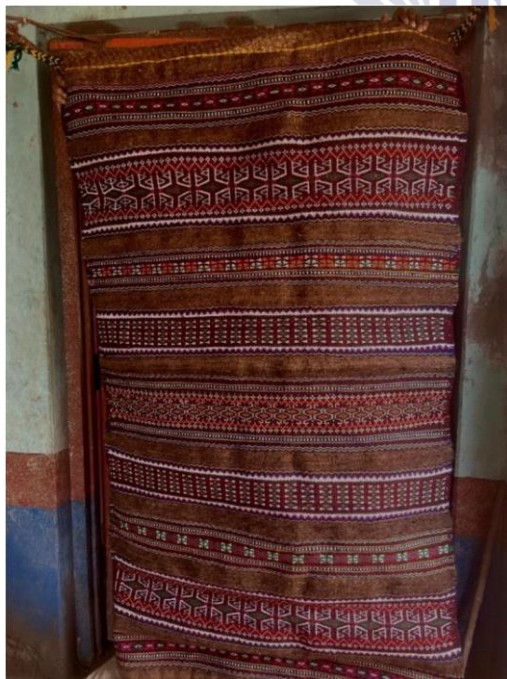
in a three months time. For a simple design time may be decreased to 15 days per Farasi.



simple farasi



well designed farasi



Well designed farasi



Well designed farasi

There is no formal way of transferring learning knowledge by the craftswomen to young

generation. Young people do not get involved in developing / polishing their learning skills due to

less return. Only few designs of the Farasi are learned by the women and they can prepare other designs only if a colorful sketch is provided to them. This brilliant craft with historical background is struggling for survival. People attached with this craft are replacing this skill with other derogatory businesses. There are two main reasons for this situation; (a) lack of marketing skills and (b) lack of skills to meet the current market demand. Various interventions have been made from different corners to boost and uplift this craft in different times. But the general complaint is that these interventions have been initiated for a time being and there was no any mechanism developed to capacitate the local

artisan so that they can continue this profession as a profitable business by meeting the market demands.

Khes is another type of fabric woven in Sobbodero/ Ghambat, District Khairpar, Sindh.

Loam is a traditional machine made of wood used in Sindh for Farasi weaving Keeping in view the history of this craft, present alarming situation and future prospects that are positive for this profession; there is dire need to look on the topic in details and design a framework for the betterment of this craft so that once again it can get the position as a profitable business.





Historical perspective of Farasi

One of the oldest still practiced crafts in the world is weaving. Weaving has been practiced since the Neolithic period, around 12,000 years ago. The fundamental idea of weaving was used to interlace branches and twigs to make protective baskets, fences, and shelters even before the actual weaving method was found.

A historical handwoven textile craft, the Farasi weave is valued for its strength, aesthetic appeal, and significance in culture. Traditionally, handwoven floor coverings or blankets made of natural fibres like cotton or wool were referred to as "Farasi" (meaning "rug" or "floor mat" in several local languages).

The Farasi weave has long been an essential aspect of village life, having its roots in rural Sindh, Pakistan, as well as sections of Balochistan and Southern Punjab. Traditionally, local women employed techniques that were passed down verbally through families to weave it on horizontal or pit looms. These textiles, which were frequently produced as part of a bride's dowry, had symbolic and social value in addition to being useful home furnishings (such as carpets, bedding, or guest covers).

Farasi is a traditional craft having a long history extended over centuries all over the world. The history of Farasi weaving goes back to somewhere between 2000 to 1000 BC. It is thought that Farasi weaving originated in ancient Mesopotamia, the birthplace

of writing and other essentials of Western civilization. Amazingly, the oldest complete Farasi carbon dates back to about 600 BC. Also, amazingly it is very sophisticated, with the colors and a design that many people would be proud to display in their home today. Most complete Farasi we currently have are dated from the 17th century on, though older Farasi designs can be seen in the secular and religious paintings of medieval Europe as oriental Farasi were viewed by Europeans as prestige items worth preserving in the old paintings of the masters as props for prominent religious and secular figures.?

(<http://www.oldcarpet.com/>.

[L]

<http://www.farsinct.com/persianrug/history.html>(2)

Rugs and Farasi can be and have been made in all parts of the world. But the heart of the craft and the major carpet weaving areas are in that part of the old world stretching from Morocco in the west, then across Turkey, Iran (Old Persia), Afghanistan and the Turkish speaking areas of Central Asia (formerly in the USSR), with significant production in India and China. These areas have been the major producing area. (<http://www.therugs.com/glossary.asp>)(3)

Pakistan inherited the Farasi/ Rugs weaving from Iran and other Gulf states. Meanwhile, with the passage of time these products have emerged to be

purified, modified and appeared with different shapes, designs and color combinations. Despite of the intensive survey of literature and the interview and field survey it has not been possible to adequately record the date on which craft was introduced in the southern part of Sindh". http://www.oldecarpet.com/rug_glossary.htm (4) Farasi is traditionally the product introduced in Sindh through the immigrants from Baluchistan areas. Since the border between Iran and Baluchistan has been porous for centuries <http://www.farsinet.com/persianrug/history.html> <http://www.therugs.com/glossary.asp> http://www.oldecarpet.com/rug_glossary.htm

' Khareri ("5) is a simple Farasi (named in Sindhi) with no any extra color combine
With the promotion of this product at local level, they used to prepare in a huge quantity for selling and hence, this product has started to be a good source of Income for these migrant.
With the permanent settlement of these migrants in upper Sindh, they adopted making this product as a profession for their earning; Farasi is a major source of Income for these people in these days. They not only fulfill the need of local market but also, export best quality Farasi to other countries especially Japan.

Study objectives

- Following were the main objectives of the study:
- A. To study the historical perspective of the Farasi product
 - B. To study and document the existing traditional method of Farasi development
 - C. To study the issues and challenges facing the Farasi product

therefore it has not been possible to appropriately understand the time by which the migration in the business among the states was started. These migrants have had herds of sheep, goat, and camels with them and it was their general practice to use hair of their animals in making initially Khareri (usus) and improved to become Farasi. Farasis were being made by these migrants were generally for their personal/ domestic use.

<http://www.oldecarpet.com/>

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Study target area

This study has been conducted in Bagheli, a village famous for this craft since one and half century, holding a central position for this business in the area. This village is located at the distance of 10 Kms in the north of union council head quarter Kario Ganhwar, Taluka Golarchi District Badin. There are 11 experienced women artisan in the village that can make every type of Farasi designs once briefed effectively. Following are the group of ladies working in farasi making process Haleema , Shehrbano , Sona , Ruqaiyah , Allah Dini , Asat , Shali , Pari, Makh , Hajani , Hajani kheran . 5 of them are died only 6 are remaining now

Study Methodology

Case study method was adopted for this study. That included the visit of the village Bagheli, interviewing people involved in the craft, marketing and users. A questionnaire was devised and the full process was recorded.

The target village Bagheli has been visited frequently for this study. The complete process of Farasi development from getting thread of Camel and Sheep to finalizing and marketing the product was observed and studied.



Also, most of the activities have been done personally along with the artisan in order to understand the process effectively.

The target artisan that were involved in this profession directly or indirectly, has been interviewed and the information has been collected through various tools such as questionnaire/ interviews, focus group discussion, and group activity and etc.

The women artisans which were involved in the farasi making process refused to carry on this work further .

Existing Farasi Weaving Method

There is a traditional Farasi weaving method existing in this village from its startup with slight modifications. The operations before weaving such as hair taking, hair washing, soaking, beating and thread making are carried out by the male artisan especially old ones. Farasi weaving is done only by the women artisan. Two women (one expert and another as helper) works on a single unit.



Different apparatus/ equipments are used in the whole process. The details of these apparatus/ equipments are as follows,

Tools / Machinery / apparatus

- 1 Scissor hair for (commonly cutting known katar)A traditional Scissor Is used for hair cutting. This scissor is not used for any other purpose
- 2 Beating stick ;This stick is used to beat the newly taken wool for making it softy so that a fine fiber could be made
- 3 Wooden Clip for making Thread;A short piece of wood is used in making thread.
- 4 Dying pots ;A pot is used for mixing and boiling the solution of color. Before boiling the color mixture these colors are mixed in a separate pot.
- 5 Manual loam ;This loam is made of loam
- 6 Wooden pieces for spinning



Farasi products and their bi - products:

Crafts women can make Farasi with various designs. There are traditional designs being made from long period with traditional names as

Maseetirhi (Sps), AjabGuKJ5 exE), Gul Malook(so, USs) , Bangalo , Sayal ,Tarmari , Kuluha ,



Maseetirhi



Sayal



Tarmari



Bangalo



Gul malook



koluha



Tukro

Farasi Weaving Stages

Generally Farasi weaving encompasses following stages:

1. Hair taking from animals

Generally hairs are taken from;

- (1) Sheep
- (2) Goat
- (3) Camel

The animals are washed carefully before getting hairs in order to get softy and clean hairs. After drying up of the animal, hairs are being taken by special scissor called Kaatar (us)". This work is done by male members of community.

2. Hair washing and soaking

The taken hairs are washed for further process.

One of the concerns related to the quality wool is the irrigation water that is not much clean. The wool can be washed by the drinking water taken from hand pumps in the houses. The washed wool is soaked in the sun shine for further process.

3. Wool Beating

After soaking the thread it goes to the process of beating. The thread is laid down on a clean place and beaten by a wooden thin stick. This stick of 2.5 ft is taken from local trees having flexible nature. It takes almost 2 to 3 hours to beat a quantity of thread (generally 5 Kg) sufficient for a single Farasi. This practice is done by both men and women.

4. Thread making (Spinning)

The old men of community are assigned for this work. The whole spinning process is done manually. One of the main factors that slow down the Farasi development is the slow way of thread spinning by old men because it takes huge time to make thread sufficient for any single Farasi. Generally one week is needed to make thread sufficient for a single Farasi of 4XB ft. Thread of different and mixed colors are made by the men. In this way the thread with some natural colors such as light brown, dark brown, black and mixed of these all are achieved. This thread is passed through dying when some other colors are needed.

5. Dying

Natural dyes were being used from a long time by the local people. But with the introduction of synthetic dyes in the market they are replacing the natural one. The basic reason of moving towards synthetic dyes is that it takes no more time to dye as it is in the natural dyes.

All Farasi were made using natural dyes (derived from plants) until the 1860s before the introduction of synthetic dyes from Europe. Early synthetic dyes were aggressively marketed by Europeans and the rug weaving locals bought them because they were cheap and did not require a lot of effort or time to process as did the natural dyes. The changeover was very rapid, but it is now discovered and realized that the synthetic dyes would easily bleed or fade. Chrome dyes were developed and marketed after 1918 and these seemed to solve the problem. But people would often see older Farasi made with the natural dyes and feel the warmth and depth of the color a superior. Farasi craftsmen and exporters are often try to "cut" the synthetic colors by giving Farasi a chemical "wash". Also, certain weaving centers are now making Farasi to traditional designs and using natural dyes after abandoning them for over 100 years. Farasi or a Rug which is made on hand loam and is colored using natural dyes are usually more expensive. The customer demand is increasing for hand woven Farasi and rugs. Generally the source of dye being used in the past was Lakh (5V):°

Lack was the main source as material for dye. Lakh is a product of Jujube tree in the form of gum. Once taken from tree, it was dried and grind in powder form. This powder was being used to prepare a solution of color by boiling. Lackh is mixed with Kirmichi (us) and boiled for a time, then mixed with Mehroon color provides a color which is being used commonly for Farasi in the village. Lakh is very short now days. More over, It takes more time to be prepared. Hence, people are using ready made colors which are available in the market easily.



Sao



kirmichi



Hira kas



Hydro

6. Weaving and design

Weaving is done by two craftswomen. A vertical weaving of exact measurement of Farasi is made which is called locally as Tana. Further weaving is being made by the artisan horizontally with using different colors according to their planned tunes and designs which is known as Bana. Bold The traditional Farasi weaving technique dwindled over time as machine-made goods became more widely available and reasonably priced. However, artisanal cooperatives, cultural preservation initiatives, and fashion designers

geometric designs, earthy and rustic hues, and a strong, flat texture define this weave, which is intended for heavy use on floors or in mud homes in rural areas. Farasi weaves are a representation of local identity and skill because each location and tribe frequently has unique motifs or colour schemes.

have been working to revive this craft in recent years.

As a result, Farasi cloth is now being used in contemporary accessories, bags, and cushions.

Existing Marketing system for Farasi:

The major breaker in the promotion of Farasi product is Its marketing. This product Is limited to fulfill the local market demand now days. Although, orders have been made from Japan many times and that were met in due time. There is dire need to devise an appropriate approach at national as well as international level. No any Institution so far has taken a serious initiative for the proper promotion and marketing of this product at international level.

Various interventions have been made such as Intervention of SMEDA / AHAN, and DevCon from time by time to promote this product!

. But these all were for the time being with activity based approach.

No doubt, there is much more potential in getting place in the international market for Farasi. But the need is to devise strategies for increasing the product and improving quality keeping in view the international market needs

At present Farasi are being made and sold only in the local area. On average 5 to 20 simple pieces are being sold per month in these days.

The male artisans get orders and make arrangements to fulfill them. The purchasing of

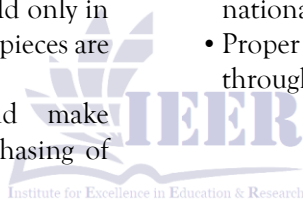
raw material and selling of products is done by male members of the bear.

Issues and Challenges facing Farasi:

The sustainability of Farasi is on stake with the reasons that there is tangible gap between product design, color combination and size demanded in the international markets. People of the area are developing the Farasi with specific size and designs keeping in view the local demand only while they have not any idea about national as well as international markets. There could be brilliant future of this product if one can think and plan to work for its development on long term basis.

The areas that need special focus are;

- Capacity building of local craftswomen in different color combinations, designs, and sizes and shapes.
- Equip the related people with entrepreneur skills.
- Linkages development of the local people with national and international markets.
- Proper publicity and promotion of the product through various channels/ sources.



Result and Discussions:

This section tends to describe the results of the research conducted in the respective village and discussion. The data has been collected by questionnaire. Results achieved are discussed below: 1.

Working Experience

#	Age group	% of Male	% of female	Experience	Sources of skills
				years	population %
	10 - 25	0.00	10.00	10	13.00
	26 - 50	20.00	40.00	30	37.00
	51 - 75	0.00	30.00	40	50.00

Table No. 01 shows that target male artisan that were active in this business were of the age between 26 to 50. This shows also, that new blood is most far from this profession due to various factors.

It also illustrates that majority of the women artisan (30% of the target sample) falls under the age group between 51 to 75. This situation indicates that the old ones of the family are continuing this profession because of their inherited one, while new generation is not involved largely. This situation opens the door for policy makers related authorities to think and work for the protection and sustainability of this profession as this is the old one profession of Sindh.

About 50% of women artisan have working experience of less than 40 to 50 years.

This shows that more of the artisan in village involved in this business have huge working experience. While 50% have experience between 10 to 30 years. The artisan under this experience could be a target group to build their capacity in modern trends and designs to make this a profitable one.

100% of the target group has responded that they have learned and inherited this profession from their elders/ parents. This shows that people of this community have a system to sustain and transfer this profession to their generation. There Is dire need to work further to enhance this process.

2. Earning from this profession

Sources of skills			Income per month (Rs.)			Marketing	National / International
parents	schools	other	<1000	1000-5000	6000	Domestic	
100%	0%	0%	10%	70%	20%	100%	0%

Most of the artisan (70%) add to their families about Rs. 1000 to 5000 in a month from this profession. From this table it can be predicted that if, this profession further enhanced in modern lines then it could be a good business for these masses

The table also shows that 50% artisan have sold Farasi products under 100 numbers and remaining have sold above 100 numbers with average price Rs. 3000. While, 50% have sold bi products under 100 numbers with average price Rs 500 in a year.

As marketing was the crucial issue identified during research. Marketing had direct effect on this profession. The total Farasi and bi products developed in the village being sold in local market in the area, within province and within country from time to time. While no any effort had been

taken so far to promote this product at international level. Some of foreign business personnel had visited the village and purchased a limited quantity of Farasi.

Most of the Farasi is being sold locally in these days. The channels of selling these products are local market and brokers. These brokers sell these products within province and country.

3. Skills Assement (Knowledge about various Farasi products and bi products)

As there was only limited knowledge and operations pertaining in the development of Farasi product and the whole families are involved from a long time in this business, all the artisan have enough knowledge about the products being developed In the village.

4: Skills Assessment (approximate number of products made and sold by the artisan per annum)

Number of products developed	Number of Bi products and sold in a year		developed and sold in a year	
	Above 100	under 100	Above 100	
Under 100	20%	24%	24%	
Frequency 32%				

This table shows that 32% artisan have sold farasi products under 100 numbers and remaining 20% have sold above 100 numbers with average price Ra, 3000.

White, 24% have sold bi products under 100 numbers 24% above 100 with average price R\$ 500.

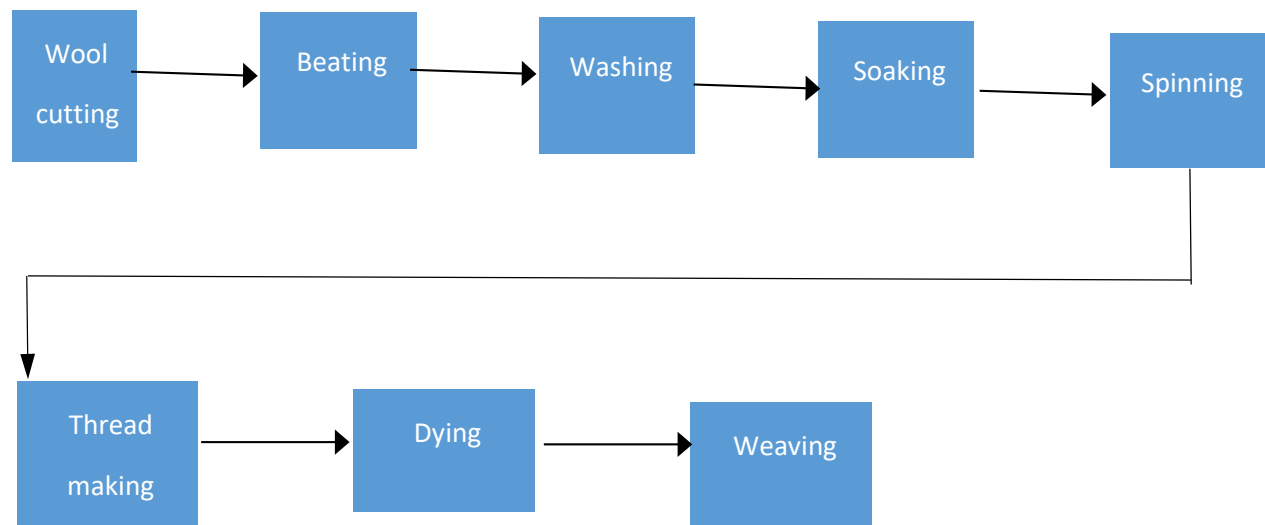


Fig: Linear diagram of process:

8. Issues/ challenges facing Farasi:

	Market not accessible	High prices of raw material / low price of product	More time consuming business	No knowledge and skills to meet current market demand + Machines
%	44%	12%	32%	12%

As there are quite a few challenges being faced by Farasi business in these days.

Most of them have limited access to market, high prices of raw material and low prices of products, more time consumption in developing any single Farasi and very limited knowledge and skills to meet current market demand.

On asking about needs/ requirements for sustainability of Farasi business, majority of the artisan were of the view that there is dire need to help in developing linkages with markets, entrepreneur skills training to the new learners, modern machines/ looms for time saving and provision of soft loans for continuing this business.

The women artisans also mentioned that their new generation is not involved in this farasi making process because of less revenue and no facilities available .

Conclusion:

Farasi Weaving is a traditional craft exists in District Badin, Sindh. Farasi has track record and a history of its existence (from 600 BC). Traditionally Farasi is being made on a hand loom by especially women artisan. Farasi is made by animal wool with natural dyes. Between 26 - 50 years of age group is involved in this business. However, the young generation has limited interest due to low market demand and less good

earning. Almost all the artisan involved in this business have sufficient knowledge about traditional Farasi making techniques and processes. The reason for the decreasing value of this product in these days is the changing market demand. The existing Farasi does not meet the

Future suggestions

All the students of textile department from all the universities in Sindh should involve in this farasi making process . In addition to this Government can also set incubation center for these craftwomen so that Sindh's Heritage can be preserved .

market demand. And the other reason is lack of proper marketing mechanism. There is dire need to work; on one hand to build the capacity of local artisan in modern designs and color mixing and, on the other hand approaching and searching market for Farasi.

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- [3] <http://www.therugs.com/glossary.asp>
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