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LANGUISHING CRAFT



GHESO PAINTING ON CAMEL LEATHER / USTA KAAM, Bikaner, Rajasthan



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About the place

The Arravalli range is an outstanding geographical feature of Rajasthan that divides Rajasthan in two regions. The east of Arravalli is marked by its plateau and rivers and forests while the west is marked by an arid desert land that stretches from the north of Rann of Kutch, passing the western Rajasthan to some portions of Punjab. The climate is extreme in summers and winters and rainfall is minimal. Bikaner is small town on this stretch of Thar Desert with all the modern day facilities of banking, public transportation and postal services and railway. The railways have been introduced into Bikaner by Maharaja Ganga Singh and his name in the history of railways is always acknowledged and remembered by the locals.











About Usta Kaam/ Gesso work on camel leather

Usta kaam on camel leather/Gesso work demonstrates clearly the ingenuity of the craftsperson, their adaptability to a changing clientele, their deep understanding of material and how changing times affect the craftsperson's ability to survive.

The Usta art is an almost half a millennium years old art form that was brought to India from Persia during the reign of the Mughals. Its move to Bikaner from the Mughal court occurred during the reign of Emperor Akbar when Raja Rai Singh, then the Raja of Bikaner, brought 4 to 5 Usta artist families to Bikaner to live and work there. Usta art is an amalgam of two forms of decoration – manoti, also called munabhati, which is the basic embossing done on the flat surface and its combination with naqqashi which is the painting on the manoti.

The traditional work of the Usta artists was architectural embellishment executed in a jewel like manner befitting the most royal of residences. While Usta kaam on camel leather has its roots in the adaptability of the Usta artists to their clients, who with the advent of the British and during Colonial rule resulted in the diversification of their art form to its application on camel hide. The products made included saddles for camels and horses, water carriers and other decorative items like photo frames, vases, mirror frames, boxes of all sizes etc. products usable in India and exportable back to Britain.

The Usta art was first initiated on architecture as it is











evident from the Anup Mahal of the Junagarh fort in Bikaner. There has been detailed mention of Anup Mahal in George Watt's book "Indian Art at Delhi 1903" where the gold work on wall has been recognised as Usta kaam - gesso work. The Junagarh fort has been adorned by Gesso work at many places. The Gesso work or Usta work was only done on walls and rooms in building and palaces of which Junagarh Fort is the best example but with the advent of Britishers the diversification in the art was introduced. The reason argued was the export of art of Usta in easier way would be through creating camel skin flasks, vases etc.

Bikaner located in the Thar dessert region of Rajasthan where the camel was a major source of transportation and livelihood, an indispensable part of everyday life, with its hide also used for a multitude of uses. The versatility of the Usta artists can be seen here in the transfer of their work of Manoti on walls and in architectural detailing on to its miniaturization and adaptation on to flasks, bottles, lampshades which were made out of camel hide and decorated with Usta painting art for royalty and the colonial masters during the British Raj.







Design Vocabulary, colour palette, product range

The designs vocabulary is huge and demonstrates the versatility of the Usat artists. From geometric patterns, floral, birds, animals to miniature like paintings; with borders and special patterning to fit the silhouette of the products, the range is extensive.

There is a flow in the pattern and a complete balance is created in the whole object. The design seems to be inspired from the architectural forms and transferred onto a paper with pen in a miniaturised form to suit the reduced size of the canvas available to the artist. The design is traced from the paper to object that is to be decorated. All the designs on butter paper are then stored which can be used again on new objects.

Many times the products are made to order as per the buyers demand. The product range includes vases, flask made of camel skin, wooden ornamented frames, mirror frames, lamp bases and lamp shades, a range of differently sized boxes and other contemporary products. Evidently there have also been changes in the products as now more contemporary products like frames; lamp shapes are visible in the market. The designs are less intricate and more widely spaced.

The base camel hide is easily available in Bikaner as it is one of the three places in India which has its own breed of camels. The other camel breeds are Jaisalmeri and Kutchhi. The camel skin is very easily available.











The colours used are jewel like, resplendent and typically Indian – ruby red, emerald green, sapphire blue and of course the ubiquitous gold.

After Independence and with British rule by-gone the art received a setback. The demand for the product is still there but very low thus making the artisans to shift the other work. Most of the Usta artists as discussed earlier are back to decorating the walls with hardly few people doing the camel skin work. Of 150 families of Usta community only 4-5 families are still doing the camel skin work which was also confirmed by the dapgar who makes the mould for the Usta's.







About the Usta Artists

Usta artists are till date living and working in the Usta Mohalla in Bikaner, a settlement that was named with their coming to Bikaner about 500 years ago. At present a about a 150 families are residing in the Mohalla, but only 4 or 5 are still doing the gesso work on camel skin, while the remaining Usta artists are mostly working on architectural decoration in buildings all over India and the world.

It is evident that the craft community and the other related communities are closely linked to each other in the same way as earlier. The raw material is easily available in the local market while waraq, one of the requirements for the art, is procured from Jaipur.

The craft is family based occupation that has been in the Usta community since many centuries. It is gender specific and all the work is divided among the men and women. The designing and marketing of the product is handled by men and various ancillary works are handled by women. Though everyone in the family has knowledge of all things but they stick to the work assigned to them. After discussions with the craftsmen it was found that younger generation do not find any interest in the craft due to lower returns on the highly painstaking work. Application of waraq is a very tedious process where the artisan sometime has to control his breath to avoid the waraq to fly away.

Another interesting thing that came during the visit was that every Usta artisan does the craft as a side business











along with mainstream professional activities. The craftsmen Ajmal Hussain Usta also runs a business of car number plates along with Usta work. The craftsman Hanif Usta is a teacher in a college along with which he continues the family craft.

The entire usta community lives together they were placed in Bikaner in usto ka mohalla, although the whole community lives together each family works separately. They manage their businesses independently within their families. All the usta artists have a mainstream profession along which they carry on their ancestral Usta art. Some are working in government services, some have taken other kinds of businesses and many of them are in professional job fields like law, teaching etc.

Every family has its own working capacities; some have workshops other than home while many work from home.

One of the craftsmen has a shop in market from where he sells his product along with his other business of Car number plates. During the visit many of the artisans have been out of town to various places for work on building like hotels, homes etc. With discussion with the families of craftsmen it was found that most of the Usta artists are working on the buildings and there are only few artisans who are actually working on the camel hide skin.

Ajmal Hassan Usta's brother is a lawyer by profession and does not show interest in continuing the family work.

Their major concern was the levels of corruption in government and how every time when they applied







for National Award they were not selected. They also don't wish to sell products through a middle channel seeming they are aware of the exploitation. They wish to do business directly with the consumers. Ajmal Usta and his father had once opened a website but they do not feel happy in doing business through website. They wish to do business in a traditional way. They also do not take large amounts of orders as there are fewer family members are in the business. They don't have workers assigned from outside the community. The work is done within the family. Ajmal Hussain Usta has also received a state award for Camel hide Usta arts.











About the Process

Usta work come under a famous school of painting of which in the past Rukn-Ud-Din and Ali Raza were the masters and the present generations of Usta artists have descended from them. There are more masters of the art whose names were not available. It took form of two types of decoration; manoti or munabhati, which is the embossed work, combined with naqqashi which is the painting on the embossing. Manoti work is the famous artistic work that also happens to be more expensive as it required much more patience and time. Manoti paste is built by a special preparation mostly of glue and other binding materials. On the binder gold leaf is applied and finally varnishing is done to give it a smooth shiny texture. The design directory is vast and includes vines, borders, floral, with birds and animals,.

The tradition has been orally transferred from generation to generation. The artist starts learning the craft from very early age and mostly there is one teacher or guide with whom the apprentice works till he is fully qualified.

About Warak

Waraq is a key ingredient in the Usta artists portfolio.

Extremely fine Gold and silver leaf sheets are known as '*warak*'. The sheets are made by beating small pieces of silver and gold that have been placed between sheets of fine leather. Warak is made at various centers around India. Jaipur is one of the largest warak -making centers; here the warak is made by the *pannigar* community.











Warak has a number of uses, both silver and gold foil are said to have medicinal properties and are used extensively in ayurveda. Silver foil is used to decorate food such as *mithai* and *burfi*.

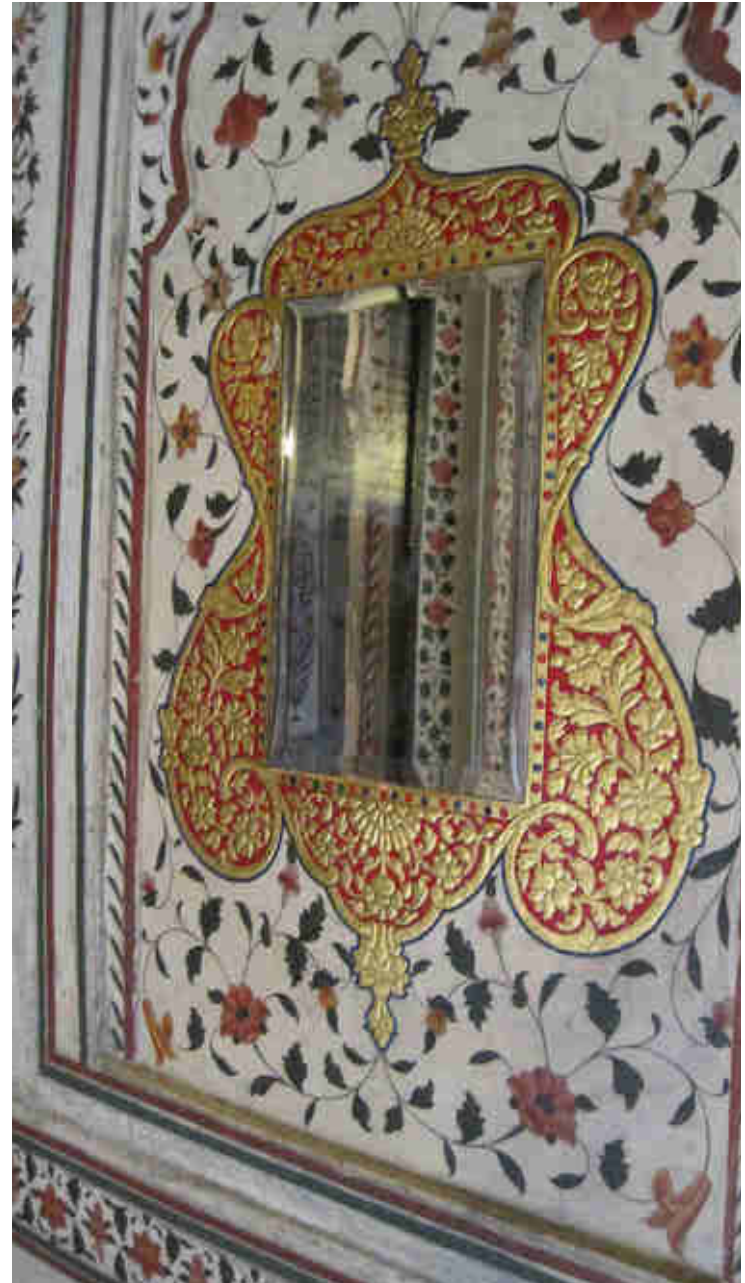
Both gold and silver *warak* are used extensively for decorative purposes. They are applied on statues and architectural details to provide ornamentation. Gold foil is hand ground into a fine paste to make *hathkari*, a kind of gold paint that is used in miniature painting.

Various grades of *warak* are available in the market. In Silver two varieties of *warak* are available the first is food grade and is made of pure silver, the second often used for ornamentation of furniture or architectural elements is made of 40% silver and 60% aluminum. This is generally slightly thicker than food grade *warak*.

Pure Gold *warak* is generally made out of 22 carat gold. Due to the extremely high cost of gold, pure *warak* is often made to order. In this case gold bars of 10gm each are bought by the customer and they oversee the process of pounding to ensure that no gold is lost. A low cost variety of gold *warak* is also available in the market containing only 2% gold and 98% brass this is primarily used for large architectural and ornamentation purposes.

The price of *warak* fluctuates on a daily basis with the fluctuations in the price of bullion in the international trade market

Gold *warak* is more commonly used in usta work than silver *warak*. Using Silver *warak* is not part of the traditional colour and design repertoire of the usta artisan. Gold















is preferred over Silver warak as Silver warak tarnishes and become black over time. The application of a water proof lacquer over the silver warak lacquer slows down the oxidation process and makes silver suitable for use.

Process of Making Waraq

1. Gold and Silver are available in 10 gm bars. The metal bar is drawn into a wire and the wire is flattened to form a strip about 2cm wide. The strip is cut into a 150 equal pieces about the size of a bus ticket – 2cm wide and 4cm long.
2. The pieces of gold or silver are placed at the center of a sheet of parchment and the sheets are placed one atop each other. Traditionally the pieces were placed between sheets of fine leather, however due to religious concerns in the recent past the leather has been replaced with sheets of imported paper. The bundle of sheets and silver pieces are placed inside a leather pouch.
3. The leather pouch is placed on a piece of smooth stone and beaten with a hammer. The pouch is rotated and moved constantly so that the metal piece has a consistent thickness. Beating silver *warak* takes between 2 to 4 hours. Gold *warak* needs to be beaten for 12 hours.
4. After the sheet has the required thickness, the bundle is removed from the leather pouch. The edges of the *warak* are trimmed and the sheets cut to size. The excess metal is collected for future use. The *warak* is transferred to sheets of butter







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श्रीअम्बे तबला स्टोर

हमारे यहाँ दोलक, तबला, नगाड़ा, खजरी, चिमठा, मंजीस, सरसोनीराम
तबलाकार का सामान नया व रिपेयरिंग किया जाता है।

गली नं. 18, मुक्ता प्रसाद रोड, रामपुरा बस्ती, लालगढ़, बीकानेर (राज.)

राठाड़ा सयाग टूर एंड ट्रवल

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उदयपुरवादी

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paper using a knife known as a *falwa*. During the transfer process a small, thin leather piece known as *bandi* is tied to the tip of index finger, this help in the transfer of the silver or gold *warak* and prevents the *warak* from sticking to the skin. The transfer is a very difficult process as the *warak* leaf is so thin it gets blown away by breadth and the transfer has to be done while the breadth is held. The papers containing the silver or gold leaf is folded in half for safety.



مَدَنِي فَيْضَل رَفِی



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Making of leather containers

The base of the art is the camel hide . A model of the leather container shape to be made is made in wood. The wooden model is cut in half and coated with a release agent such as oil or paint. Using clay and Plaster of Paris a two part mould is made of the container shape.

The mould is coated with a release agent and a mixture of Plaster of Paris 20%, *multani mitti* 40%, and *baloo rait* 40% is poured into it. After the mixture sets it is removed from the mould, this is used as an inner for forming the leather shape.

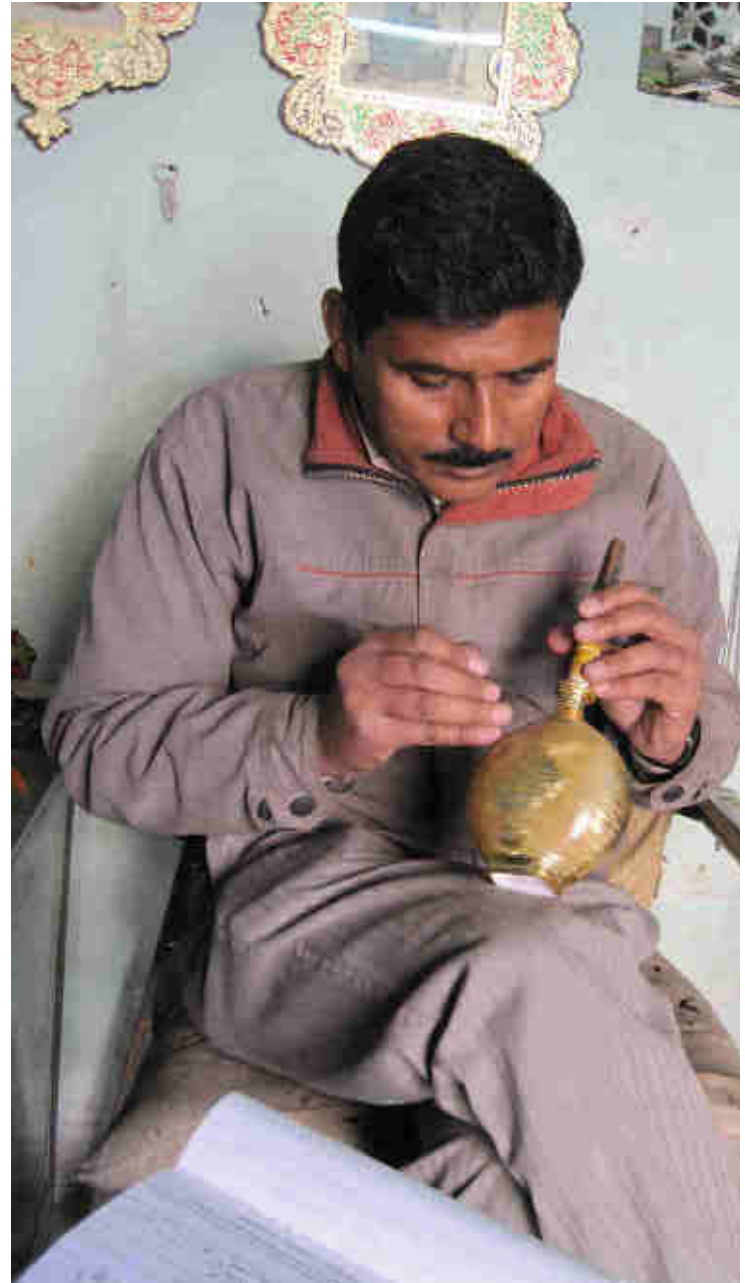
The mould can be used to create multiple pieces of the same design.

The inner created is used by the *dabkar* - leather artisan as a mould to create the leather shape over.

The *dabkar* (leather artisan) procures untreated and raw camel leather directly from the camel owners on the natural death of a camel.

The hair is peeled of from the camel skin using a *rampi*. The leather is made into smooth sheets using a *paati*. The leather is skinned from both sides till it becomes of a uniform thickness.

Meethi seeds are ground by hand and mixed with water to form a paste. This paste is applied on the leather and









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it is placed in the sun to cure it. The paste needs to be made fresh everyday as it gets spoilt very easily.

After the leather has been cured, it is cut in shape according to the shape of the final object to be made.

The leather is formed around the plaster and sand shape using the meethi seed paste. In the areas where the leather overlaps, both layers of leather are peeled to make them thinner so that the final shape has a consistent leather thickness.

The shape made is dried till it hardens. The leather container is handed over by the dabkar to the usta artisan.

The usta artisan gently hits the leather container filled with the plaster and sand mould. This causes the sand mould to crumble. The broken pieces of the plaster are removed from the mouth of the container. This is done till the container is completely empty and only the hardened leather shell remains.







Wood Based Usta kaam

Besides leather usta work is commonly done today on wood, the artisan gets the object to be decorated such as a photo frame or mirror frame made by a carpenter in wooden board.

Laying the pattern

The usta artisan has a collection of traditional patterns that are a part of their standard repertoire. These designs are drawn on gateway paper and the tiny holes are made along the outlines of the designs.

The chosen pattern is placed on the leather container or wooden board and a cloth pouch containing chalk powder is rubbed against it. The powder goes through the small holes in the paper and leaves an impression of the outline on the base.

The pattern is then outlined with white paint.











Minnoti Work

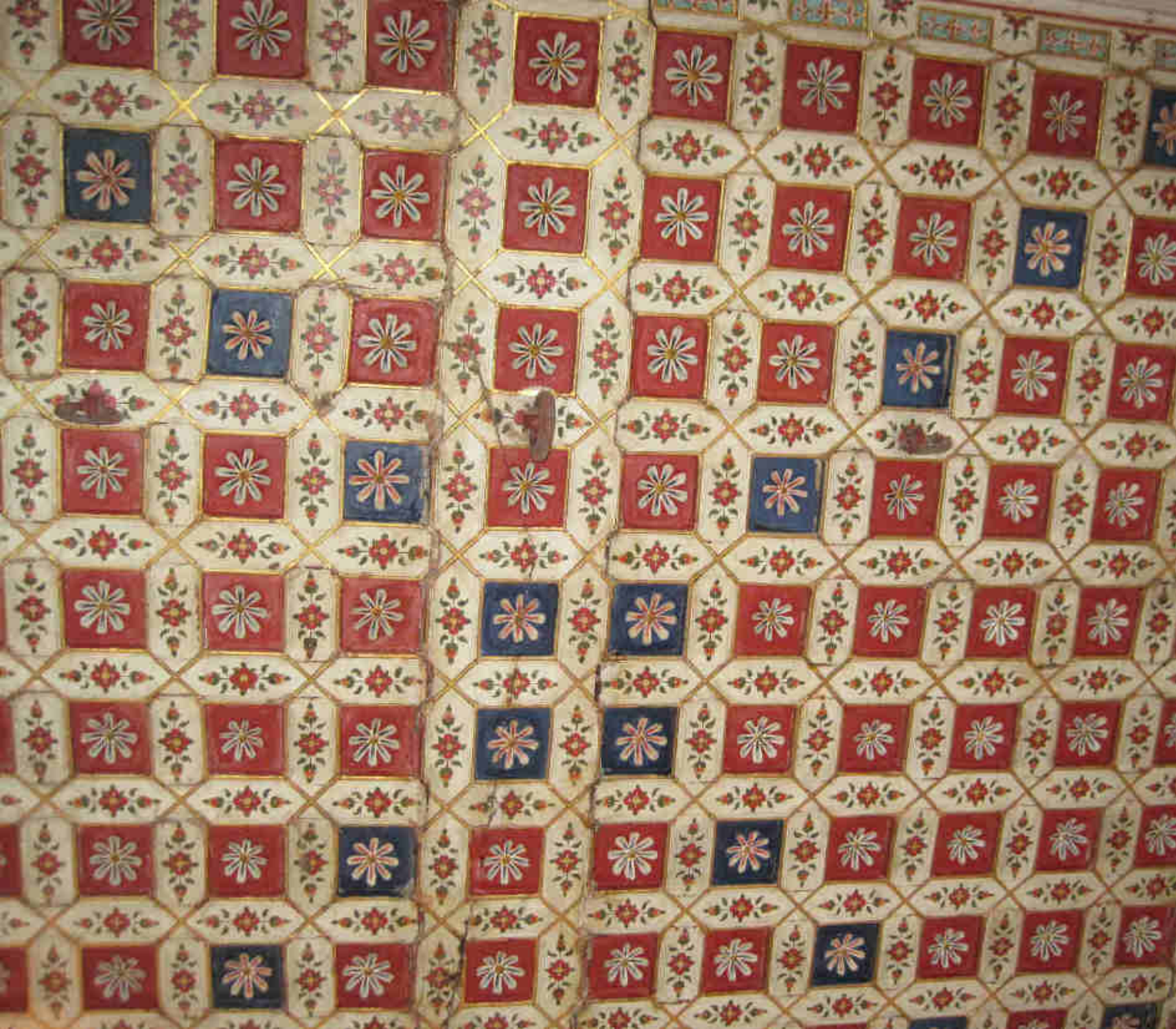
Traditionally the Usta Artisans used a mixture called *minnoti*. This is made by powdering old ceramic water pots (*ghadas*) into a fine sand and mixing it with 2% *sareesh glue*, 2 % *neela tota* – a poison, 2% *babul ka gond* – a glue and a little water. This forms a thick water based paste that on drying becomes hard.

The *minnoti* mixture is painted onto the raised portion of the design with a paintbrush. It dries to form a patterned relief on the surface of the leather vessel. The raised minnoti pattern is covered with white paint.

Today instead of using the *minnoti* mixture a paste is made by mixing together commercially available white primer with white enamel paint and chalk powder. This is easier to make, use easily available raw materials and is not affected by moisture or insects.

This mixture is painted on to the pattern drawn to create raised portions where required instead of the minnoti mixture.











The Process of Naqqashi

The entire area where the usta work is to come is painted over with white enamel paint.

Mixing yellow enamel paint, linseed oil and clear varnish makes a mixture called *bat*. This is painted over the areas where the gold foil is to be put. An hour after the painting of the base surface when the mixture has partially dried the warak is applied to the surface.

A sheet of *warak* along with backing paper is placed on the sticky surface, *warak* side down. The sheet is pressed down gently with the fingers, pressing the *warak* into the contours formed by the pattern. After the *warak* adheres to the *bat* mixture the backing sheet is gently lifted of leaving the *warak* on the object. Any gaps in the gold surface are filled by pasting small pieces of *warak* in the same manner.

After the *warak* and *bat* mixture have completely dried the outlines of the patterns are traced with black paint.

The background areas are filled in with artist oil paints. The colours most commonly used are red, green dark blue and black. Earlier the artisan used to make his own paints using natural minerals, this is no longer done due to the difficulty and expense.

After the colours have dried the entire surface is covered with a layer of varnish, to give it shine.



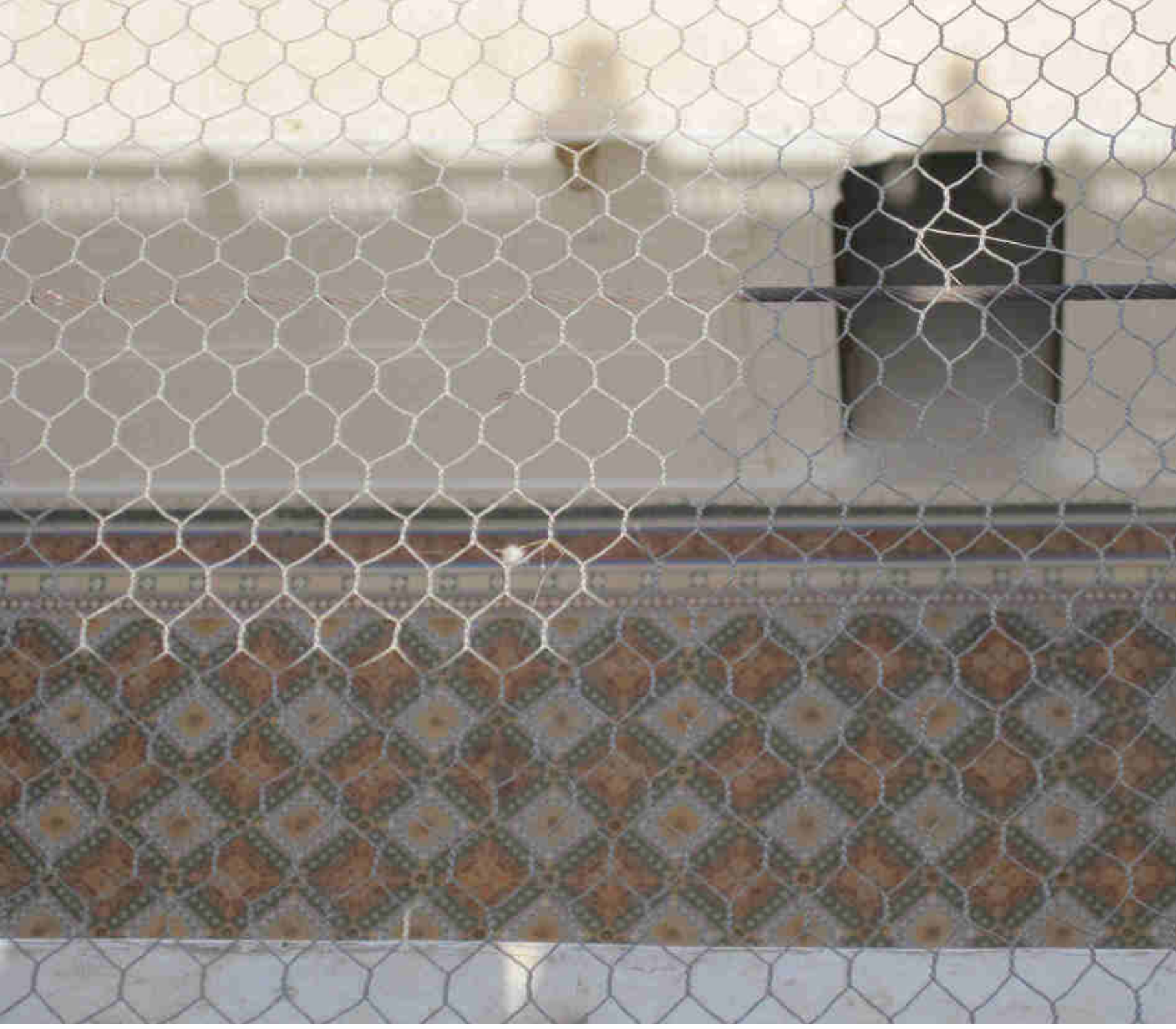




Current Situation

Swot Analysis

<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusivity; Usta community is residing only in Bikaner since ages and continuing the craft. • Very old art that is still present; 150 year old art • The art has been used on all most all forms of materials; wood, stone, leather etc and has the potential to be used in myriad forms yet now. 	<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few people are left that continue the work. • The associated community of Dabgars (who make dholaks) is also declining as only one person is left. • The art of Usta is not very well known and appreciated like many other arts of Rajasthan • No awareness about the schemes • Craftsmen have to apply approach to get awards or other government scheme
<p>Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few people are still doing their ancestral work • The whole community lives together • It can be diversified; due to the flexibility of the art itself • The craftsmen want to sell directly rather than sending their products to emporium or other networks 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Languishing • Younger generation is not interested in the craft



Infrastructure

The entire usta community lives together they were placed in Bikaner and now that area is known as usta ka mohalla. Although the whole community lives together each family works separately. They manage their businesses independently within their families. There is no cluster scheme applied here. All the usta artists have a mainstream profession along which they carry on their ancestral Usta art. Some are working in government services, some have taken other kinds of businesses and many of them are in professional job fields like law, teaching etc.

There has been no intervention from the Government's side. The princess Siddhi Kumari of Bikaner has though worked with the artisans a few times. Once she took one or two craftsmen to Mumbai for demonstrations and workshop. Since then there has been no such workshops held and mostly the craftsmen pursue the business independently. Every family has its own working capacities; some have workshops other than home while many work from home. There are no common facility centre and no raw material banks.

One of the craftsmen has a shop in market from where he sells his product along with his other business of Car number plates. During the visit many of the artisans have been out of town to various places for work on building like hotels, homes etc. With discussion with the families of craftsmen it was found that most of the Usta artists are working on the buildings and there are only few artisans who are actually working on the camel hide skin.







Government Schemes

According to the craftsmen there has been no visit from the government officials regarding any issues. They are not satisfied with the government policies and have not availed any of these one of the reasons being less awareness. One of the artisans once has applied for the National Award but could not get it. He reasoned out the whole system is corrupt and one has to give bribes to get the awards. So they don't try for any government related schemes. The craftsmen said money was sanctioned by the government but it never reached them and they only heard about it when the scandal was exposed in the news.

They also complained that there are so many problems while filling the forms; they have to give a proof of their skills at every level and there is too much of paperwork that takes a lot of time and energy. They would prefer doing their work rather than spending time in filling forms.

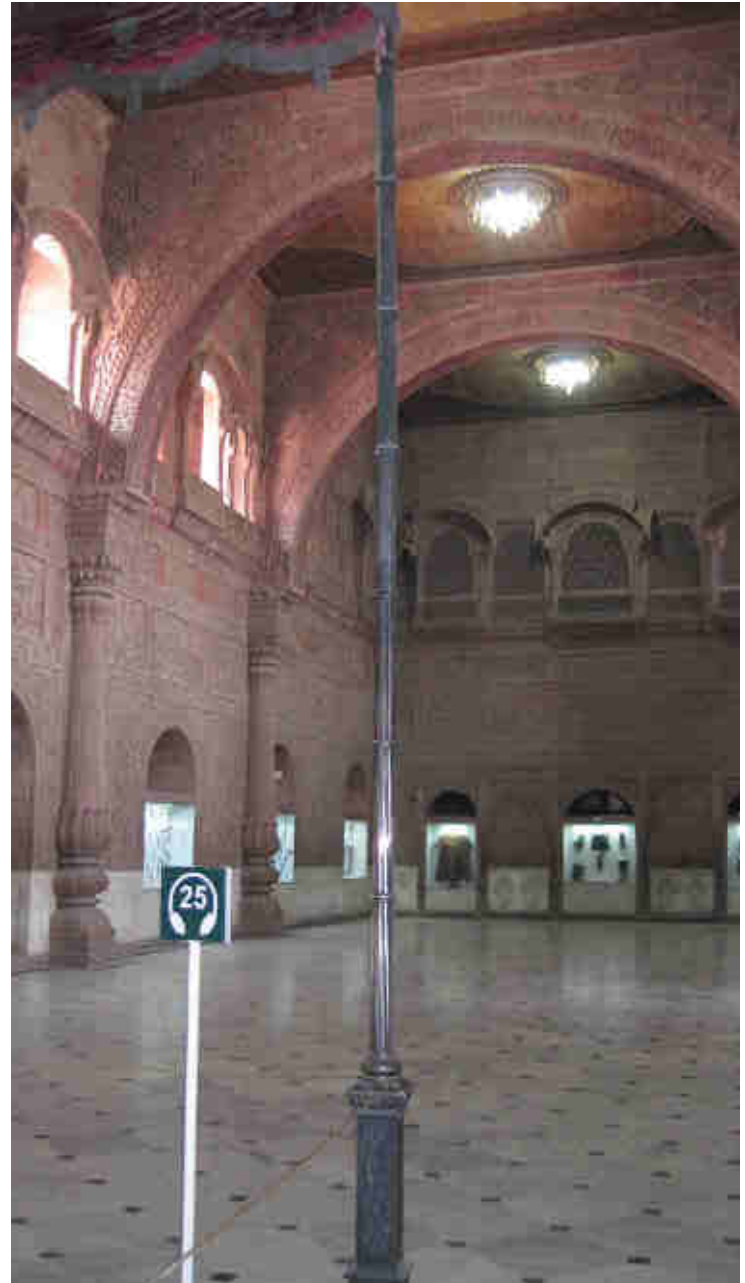
Local Organisations

There was no knowledge of any NGO's who work with the artisans closely or provide business. Most of the artisans are into architectural gesso work while very few only 4-5¹ are still creating Gesso work on camel hide.

Design, colour palette and product issues

The designs are now relatively old fashioned and need to

¹ Reference as given by the craftsmen







be given a contemporary look.

Most of the product range continues to be vases, flask made of camel skin, wooden ornamented frames, lamp shades and also need a contemporary twist on an urgent basis.

The demand for the product is still there but very low thus making the artisans shift to other work, with hardly few people doing the camel skin painting. Of 150 families of Usta community only 4-5 families are still doing the camel skin work which was also confirmed by the daggar who makes the mould for the Usta's.

There are no appointed or hired designers as the designing is done by the community people themselves. There has been no design intervention aid given by the government.

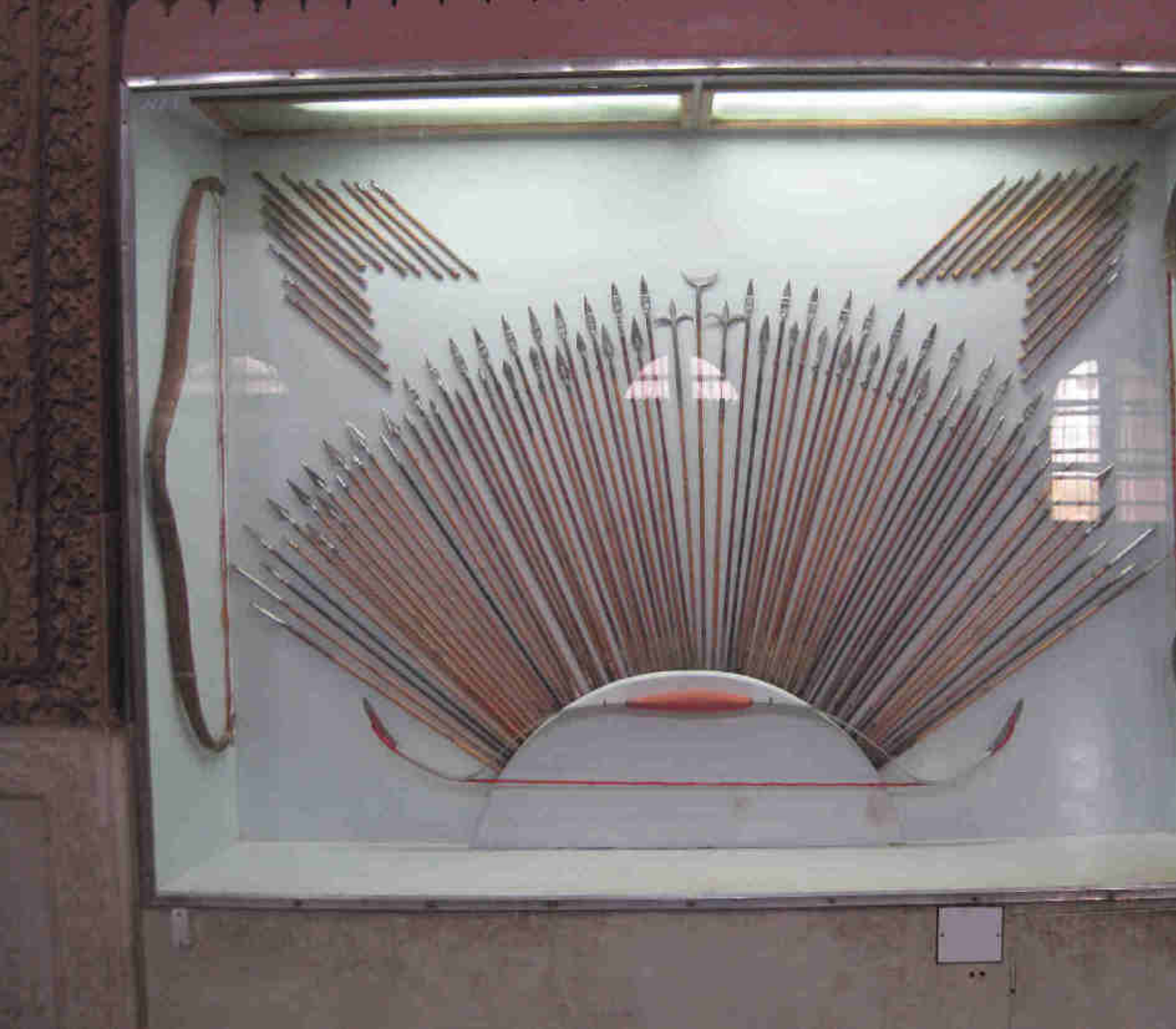
Market

The objects made today are mostly decorative objects and gift items. The price range of product widely varies depending upon the kind of work done. Minimum range might start from 1000/- to upto a few thousands and may go higher depending upon the quality and intricacy of work.

As the community does not work on the cluster based approach and each artist family works independently so they have different ways of marketing and promoting their art. As of presently they are not going to any Fairs and promotional melas. They are also not aware of any government schemes. They have not attended any training programs. They do not have extra work force for







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promotional activities as everything is handled within the family.

About government schemes

The artists are not at all happy with their situation with government. Their biggest concern is lack of awareness about the various policies and schemes that might be available. They also seem to be inhibited in the activities that involved government and wanted to keep the things unchanged. They have very little faith in the existing schemes. They also find the application system and paperwork required in availing government schemes very cumbersome.



Recommendations

Research and Development

Research and experimentation is needed on new and forgotten materials on which usta work can be done. Development of new base materials will expand the range of products that can be made using the usta technique and increase the product repertoire of the artisans.

Research and development is also needed on treatment and processing of the leather and process of making leather vessels used as a usta work base material. This will help expand the products available for usta work and also develop this unique process as an independent craft.

Base Material Diversification

Usta work can be done on a variety of different surfaces, including walls, leather, wood, marble and glass. Currently usta work is done primarily on walls, leather and wood. The range of products developed is narrow in scope. Design development of products using marble, glass and other suitable materials is needed.

Product Diversification

The products commonly produced by the usta artisans include photo and mirror frames out of wood, lamp shades and vessels out of leather. Product development to expand the range of products produced is necessary. There is the scope of producing boxes, bowls, containers and decorative objects for the home out of wood and marble.

Jewelry including bangles, brooches and pendants can also be developed using usta work.

The range of products made using moulded camel leather should be expanded. Currently a few designs of moulded vessels are made from camel hide. There is a need to increase the shapes and objects that can be made from this unique process. Development is required in the range of products made for the usta community as well as products that can be made independently by the leather artisan and not decorated using usta.

Design Development

The designs produced by the artisans are very traditional in nature, the motives, patterns and colour palette of the products are very similar to the historical designs found in old architectural structures such as the Junagarh fort. Design development is necessary to modify and expand the patterns and motifs used by the artisan so that the products have a wider appeal in a rapidly changing market.

Awareness and Marketing

A major problem faced by usta work is the lack of awareness and knowledge about the craft. While the craft is famous in Bikaner and known in some areas of Rajasthan consumers and craft retailers in other parts of the country do not know and have not seen usta work. A spreading of awareness about the craft through exhibitions, craft fairs, advertisements, and promotions is needed. This exposure will increase the demand for usta work.



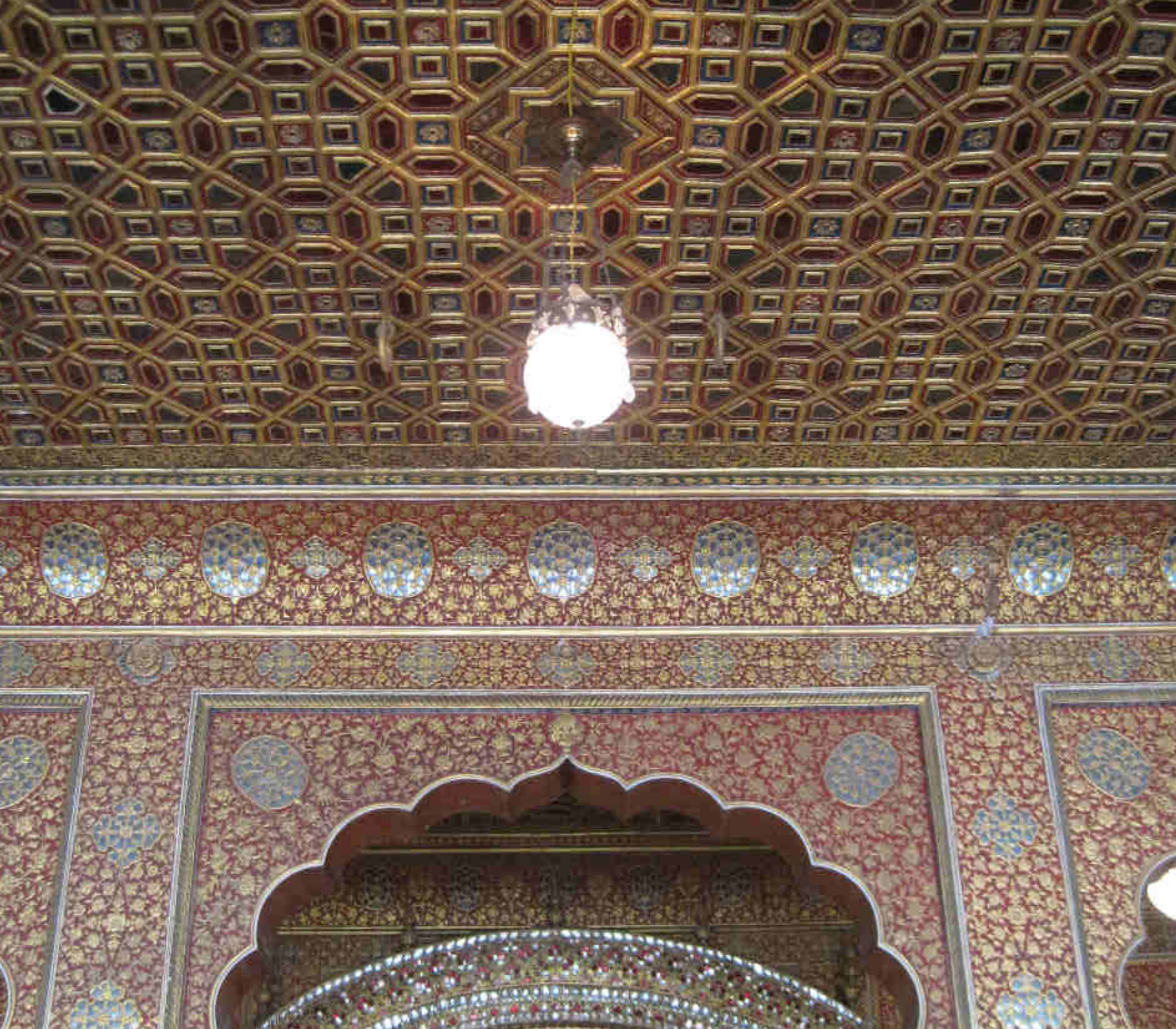












Many usta artisans do usta work on a part time basis and practice other professions simultaneously. The reason for this is the lack of continuous demand for usta products. Many of the younger generation are not interested in working in a profession in which there is no stable work or income.

Marketing and promotion initiatives will help increase the demand for usta work and help produce a steady demand for products. Participation in Fairs, melas and exhibitions will help bridge the gap between the artisans and consumers. This will also attract the younger generation back to usta work.

Training

Training of interested young artisans is required not only in technique and process but also in entrepreneurial skills, training in marketing, product development and design development.

Training of leather artisans

Training is required to teach interested artisans the craft of making vessels and objects out of camel hide leather. Currently only one family in Bikaner has the skills and knowledge of how to make vessels out of camel hide. Without training of new artisans this process will be lost.

Awards

The artists are excellent and need recognition for their work

Government Schemes

Artisan cards, insurance etc are critical needs. Invitation to melas and exhibitions. Design development, product development are urgently required as is marketing and promotion help.













بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Artisan Contact List

Ajmal Hussain Usta (Usta Artist)- One of the person who is working with camel hide skin.

Usta Golden Arts

Shop No- 4

Near Lakhansir House

Behind Railway Station

Mobile: 9413467471

Rajkumar Pawar (Caste-Dapgar) Works on camel skin and make the initial structure of usta bottles.

Rampura Basti

Gali no.- 17

Lalgarh, Bikaner

Mobile: 9251379270, 9829369155

Ashuram Tablevala (Caste- Dapgar) Deals in musical instrument like dhol and nagada.

Javed Ahmed. Usta Artist

Usta ka mohalla

Mobile: 9352649378

Research Methodology

Diagnostic Study on Languishing Craft leading to specific recommendations for its safeguarding

Structured and Non-Structured Questionnaire

The manner in which the assessment was conducted was with a structured and non-structured questionnaire that suited the requirement/uniqueness of context and place specific issues of each languishing craft. This template allowed for an analysis within the context and needs of each languishing craft within the overall objectives. The unstructured questions adopted is broad, clearly and prescriptive to allow the capturing of a picture of a craft that is in urgent need of safeguarding or otherwise.

The long list of open ended questions/areas to be tackled will be on:

Terms of Reference

1. To identify the number of craft persons, their names, and address
2. To study the problem faced by the artisans individually and the group as a whole, in practicing the craft.
3. To study the interest of the artisans in continuing the craft tradition
4. To study the main bottle necks and the difficult areas

which an artisans encounters in practicing the craft

5. To study and gather information whether the craft languishing is also practiced in the vicinity of the area or outside it
6. To study and analyze required intervention of the Government viz. a viz. different scheme under implementation for development of the handicrafts sector.
7. To study and suggest measure of revival of the languishing craft beyond the ambit of Govt. schemes.

Documentation Template

About the craft centre

PART I

- Area name
- Cluster size
- Map
- Topography (*especially presence of local water bodies*)
- Geography (*particularly to understand problems relating to infrastructure, the provision of services, isolation from markets*)
- Environmental conditions (*in particular, are there negative impacts from the effect of climate change, for instance, more regular droughts, and does this affect the cluster?*)

- Climate (*especially its impact of production cycles, availability of resources, or on sales*)
- Transport links/Accessibility of cluster viz. road, railway etc (*Nearest bus station, railhead, frequency of vehicles*)
- Facilities available in area (*courier, postal services, medical service, stores where materials required are available, other sources, retail venues*)
- Gender (*How is the work activity divided between the genders. Are the activities inter-changeable? Or are there gender norm, which restrict this, does this affect production? If women are producers, what are their domestic arrangements*)
- Age: *Is activity/role also dependant on age of worker?*
Probe
- History - How was the craft initiated in this region? By whom? At what time?

(For e.g. the Mughal miniature painting traditional was formally initiated by Emperor Humayun who on his return from exile in Persia, brought with him 2 masters from the Persian court. Early Mughal miniatures therefore share many characteristics as well as content of Persian miniatures and it was not until the reign of Akbar, who actively encouraged the inclusion of regional elements that a truly Mughal style was developed)

- What patronage did the craft enjoy in the past (if any)
- What art/ architectural/ performing arts traditions

exist locally? Have any of these influences the craft in any respect? Do they share any motifs, symbolism, ritual usage?

- Does the pattern or design represent status, age, gender, community etc? If so, identify the design, and its meaning.
- Is it predominantly a craft cluster? What other occupations exist in the area? Are these linked in any way to the craft?

(For e.g. the lacware tradition of Ettikopaka exists only because tribals journeying to the South carrying lac to be sold to the jewellers of Tamil Nadu used to pause at this location and would barter some of their product in exchange for food)

- Is the tradition oral? Do craftspeople have access to documentation of their own traditions? Does documentation exist – if yes – whose hands is it in?
- Number of practicing artists/ households *(Obviously, a census like mapping is not possible but it would be very helpful if we could get a sense of how many practitioners exist even if the numbers are mere estimates hazarded by the craftspersons)*

PART II

- Are there any DCH centres or other associated government or semi-government institutions in the region eg MPHSN or Rajasthan State Organisation?
- Are the craftspersons working with/for any NGOs in

the region? Which NGOs/ SHGs/ cooperatives are active in the area?

- How far is the nearest government support institution?
- Which NGOs are active in this area? This is critical as they could be long term monitoring partners
- How frequently do officers from government support institutions visit? Probe
- In order to assess and understand the local situation, please provide a brief SWOT analysis about the strengths; weaknesses, and threats to the cluster.

About the tools

- What tools are used? Where are they sourced from? How much do they cost? *(Do keep an eye out for innovations made by the craftspeople such as the bicycle pump operated dye sprayer invented by a craftsperson in Kucchh to facilitate even staining of large bolts of fabric)*
- If they are made by the craftspersons themselves, how is this done?
- What are they called locally (please use vernacular terms and include translations for same)
- Include all tools used (like dye pots, printing beds, tables etc in case of printing). Specify materials, prices, measurement, frequency of purchase
- Question access to government funds/schemes for purchase of tools/dye vats etc

About the raw materials

- What is the base material used? Does it differ for different products
- Where are they sourced from? By whom? How much do they cost?
- Are raw materials readily available? If not, what are the challenges faced in accessing the material?
- In what quantity is it purchased. What are the minimums
- How are materials stored?
- If the material is produced locally, which community produces it?
- Have there been any changes in the material used? Where was it sourced from earlier
- What prompted the change? Does market demand for cheaper products result in substitution with cheaper raw materials?
- How has it impacted the form/style/ product?
- Can raw materials be purchased on credit? If yes from whom and at what interest rate?
- Is there a collective procurement of materials or is it done individually?
- In case of challenges, what do the craftsmen themselves recommend to improve the situation?

About the process

Note the entire production process, step by step, with a live demonstration, writing down any actions, and, or explanations, including time frames for each step.

- Describe in detail the process followed in step-by-step manner with photographs for each stage.
- Describe the primary work area and preparations, along with the amount of time taken in each step.
- Note the desired output of each step – consistency/ colour/texture/volume; and warning signs that the process is going wrong.
- At each stage, crosscheck the sequences of the production process.
- Are there any specific stages in the technique or combinations of techniques that definitively characterise this particular tradition?
- What special skills are required to make the product? Does everyone in the cluster possess the skills and expertise for making it?
- Have there been any innovations in technique? Describe.
- What are the wastes associated with the process? How are they disposed of?
- Have any value additions been made to the product?
- Who have the traditional designs, motifs/layouts changed? Is the master craftsman responsible? Are designs skills passed on by particular community

members? *Note, that this may be informal, for example, through oral traditions.*

- What is the traditional vocabulary for designs (please give local names)? Which is the oldest known design? What designs are associated with rituals?
- Are designs readily adapted? What designs are favoured now? Who introduced them?

About infrastructure

- Does the cluster have electricity? For how many hours in the day? If not, why is electricity not available? Are there alternative options for power, if so, what are they? Do they have generators?
- What about water supply? Taalabs/tanks/water source
- In case of dyeing textiles, where are they washed, dyed, dried?
- Existence of health and safety standards and measures. If none, exist are they required? *(For e.g. are the workshops well illuminated? Ask them about their health; list any health problems, along with symptoms. List potential chemical, toxic, electrical, heat, noise, and, or ergonomic hazards.*
- Are there any health centres near by?
- Eco-friendly techniques or materials for treating raw material, craft process, and/or disposal of wastes/by-products
- Where do the workers live? If in a housing-cum-

work shed – please describe. Include information on toilets.

- If they live away from the workshop area, how do they commute to work and how long does it take to commute?
- Is there a computer, with access to internet Information Communication Technology (ICT) available? Are there the knowledge and expertise to use computers? If so, is there an email address for the cluster, with a nominated person who has the skills to receive and send emails?
- Do they have a Common Facility Centre? If yes – get all details
- Do the children go to school?
- Is there a showroom where visitors or clients can see the textiles produced?
- Specify requirements for the cluster to improve quality of life

About the design, colour palette and product range

- What were the traditional products made with this craft?
- Does the product range being created today differ?
- If so, in what way?
- What has caused these changes?

- Who was the customer for the traditional product?
- Are there any specific prints, colours, motifs associated with the community, in other words, its unique design traditions?
- Describe motifs, both traditional and non traditional, abstract, and figurative etc.
- Do they have any documentation? Or is everything oral?
- What is the symbolism associated with the motifs used?
- Were the products produced/ used on specific occasions such as weddings, deaths, rituals, festivals etc?
- Have these been repurposed with changes in the markets catered to?
- Who is the customer for the current product?
- How did the craftsman reach this new market segment?
- Do the craftsmen produce any products for their own/ local use?
- Provide a list of products, along with photographs and descriptions (including texture, quality, feel, colour, price, look, sizes).
- Probe prices
- Is there a product development cycle that the cluster follows?
- Does the cluster actively design new products?
- Who designs the products? Are designers hired? Are artists open to working with designers?
- Is there a quality check? What are the benchmarks used by the cluster for measuring quality?
- Is the product designed with awareness for environmental concerns, human safety, health, comfort, and product performance?
- Do products contain information on the material content of the product along with care instructions?
- Do products have a product identification system that is simple and easy to understand?
- What is distinct about the product? What is its Unique Selling Proposition (USP)?
- Probe design development intervention by Govt and others
- Is there a cluster designer appointed? If yes, probe

About production

- What is the cycle of production? For instance, is it seasonal? How has this changed from the method of original production, if at all?
- Where does production take place? In the housing cum work shed, in a karkhana, at a Common Facility Centre/ at the Coop? Specify

- Is each step of the production completed in one central location, or are there multiple locations?
- Describe the artist's workplace. Describe the general conditions.
- What is the production capacity of a cluster/craftsperson/ karkhana? What is considered a large order? What is the minimum order quantity to be produced for the order to be economically viable?
- What is the total quantity of production in a year? What is the profit margin? How much of this is reinvested in the business?
- Can consistency in quality of output be assured, especially if large production orders are received?
- Are there technological interventions that could be done improve productivity? This could take place at any stage of the production process.
- Does the community face competition from the organized/mass production by manufacturing centres? How has this impacted their business?
- Has any Government scheme helped to improve production?
- Any training programs been organized to improve production?

About the craftspersons

To develop an understanding of the challenges,

problems, constraints and parameters within which the craftspersons operate a selection of them should be interviewed.

- Is the craft the traditional occupation of the craftspersons family or is it a relatively newly acquired skill? If new, when was this occupation taken up and why?
- If it was the traditional occupation, trace the family history through a tree and explore any mythical/folklore connects that explain their arrival/settlement in the region or their initiation into the craft. Are they linked to similar craft communities in other parts of the country?
- Have any trained craftsmen /community members left their tradition? Reason why
- What are some of the problems that they face which impacts the survival of the craft, for instance, access to markets, or raw materials, etc?
- What are the reasons for the languishing craft traditions, and successes and failures in revival?
- Training (*How did the individual learn the trade? Who did they apprentice with? How long did the process take?*)
- Are there requirements for skill levels, training, and, or development?
- Personal questions (*What are their hopes and aspirations? Do they pay income tax? Do they own mobile phones? Do they have insurance? What is their level of education? Do they have bank*

accounts? How many members in their family? How many are earning members? How many are employed in the same profession? What are some of the difficulties that you face in the village? Can improvements, and or, the revival of crafts help to solve any of these problems?)

- Labour related an issue (*Who is hired? How is selection undertaken? How many non-artists such as the women and children of the household are involved in subsidiary aspects of the process? Is there a hierarchy amongst the workers in the cluster? What is this based on? Does the organizational structure mimic indigenous systems*)
- Social structure (*Does gender play a role in the craft? How does caste feature in the hierarchy of the workshop? What caste are the owners and the workers? Is it a diverse population/group that partakes in the craft activities? Traditionally, what caste did the owners and workers belong to? Has there been a change in the same? What is the change due to?*)
- Wages (*What are the working hours? How many days a week are the workers expected to come to work/ or they work? How many holidays? What happens in the event a worker falls ill? What wages are paid to the various hierarchies of workers? What are the average monthly earnings of a craftsperson? Does this increase with seniority, and are there opportunities for income growth? Are the subsidiary workers such as the women and children of the household given any remuneration? Do they receive daily/weekly/ monthly wages? Are wages received in cash? Is there*

any incentive system?)

- Tradition and revitalization. (*What are the rituals and ceremonies associated with the making of the craft product? What, if any, are necessary rituals when preparing the product? Who conducts the ritual, who participates, and what is the meaning? What are the meanings of the rituals, and are these rituals laid out in texts? Are the rituals informal or elaborate? Are they passed on verbally, as an intangible cultural expression, or are they laid out in texts? Describe, and if possible, record the ritual.*
- Have any craftspeople in their cluster received awards? From whom and when? If Yes, probe further - including if it has helped the community (in Pethapur we found that it had divided the community) If no, probe

About the market for the craft

- Who does the craft caters to? (*Local/ domestic/ international markets or retail/ export/commission work*)
- If the market for the crafts is a combination of various segments, are different techniques/styles/products favoured by specific segments?
- List the top selling products
- How are the various segments reached by the craftspersons (*local haats, bazaars, melas, state handicrafts centres, DCH, trade fairs etc*)?

- How is pricing done and by whom? Are basic principles and objectives of pricing and costing understood?
- Are legal contracts sought before work is begun? Are artists aware of indemnity clauses, and the impact of delays in delivery, and, or faulty quality products?
- Is there a phased payment plan? How is the karkhana paid? How is money then disbursed to the various employees?
- Access to communication - *Do they have mobiles? Phones? Emails? How are clearances from clients/ orders negotiated and sought?*
- Have the craftspersons explored or heard of E-commerce?
- Have they attended trade shows/ national melas/ handicraft expos? How did they secure their participation in the same?
- Has the woven product always been traded? What were the traditional trading communities? Has this changed?
- Any direct marketing?
- Is marketing and sales handled by the cluster agent? Is there an intermediary, such as a trader, or a middle man, who is part of the supply chain, and responsible for sales? Is the trader paying a fair wage to the artist?
- What, if any, is the indigenous system in place?
- What steps are in place to identify and explore new markets- for instance, is there a strategy for seeking out new product niches?
- Does the cluster have a marketing plan, and knowledge about product production, position, and promotion?
- Is there an analysis of product sales? Are product lines that do not sell discontinued? What happens to excess stock that does not sell?
- Does the cluster have a brand? If not, why, and would they consider creating a brand?
- Are the artists cognizant of market and buyer expectations? Do they know how to package and label a product for display and shipping, with skills to process orders and dispatch them?
- Do marketing materials, product and price sheets exist? Are there clear terms and conditions, with policies on minimum order quantities, production timelines, along with goods and services tax that can be passed onto buyers?
- Are packaging materials readily available that are safe, environmentally sound, and cost effective?
- Does the cluster possess the necessary resources (staff and financial) to undertake marketing, and promotion efforts? Have market studies, market intelligence, marketing and sales promotions been conducted? If so, analyse these, and identify gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities.
- Are they aware about government marketing and promotional programs?

- Does the cluster have a government approved certification seal to guarantee authenticity, such as the Silk Mark or Handloom Mark? If not, why?
- Do they participate in sales and marketing training? What are the kind of capacity building, skills, and expertise that need to be part of a market readiness training program?
- Government is laying a great deal of stress on Marketing, through Melas etc. Has this had any impact on the community? Probe

About finance/credit issues

- Who gives credit to the craftspeople when they require it?
- Who do the craftspersons /karkhana bank with?
- How hard was it to open an account with them?
- How far is the bank located?
- How easy is it to get loans?
- Is collateral required?
- What are loans usually taken for? Probe
- What are some of the obstacles they have faced in receiving loans?
- Is there a local money lender? What are his terms for loans?
- Are there microfinance or micro-credit schemes that are available to craftspeople? If so, what has been

their experience of working through these financial networks?

- Have they availed of any government scheme for credit access?
- If yes, what has the credit been availed for?

About copyright issues

- GI *(Is there an awareness about the government's GI policy? Is there an attempt at securing GI? If so, by whom and how?)*
- Copyright/ IPR/plagiarism

(Craftspersons copying motifs seen in catalogues of design firms, factory owners or screen printers copying block print designs and mass-producing it. How do the craftspersons understand the concept of design rights? For e.g. a block maker in Pethapur mentioned he shows prospective customers a book containing prints of every block he had ever made, and if the customer liked any of them he would make subtle modifications in the form and produce the block but never duplicate a design)

- Have there been workshops or training conducted about IP? Would the artists attend a workshop about IP and associated issues?
- Have any designs or products been licensed for copyright?
- Are there efforts to safeguard traditional cultural

expressions?

About DC (H) and other Govt agencies

- What has been the experience of dealing with DC (H)? Have they found it difficult, time-consuming, and complex? Have there been complaints about the administrative complexity, and procedural requirements in dealing with DC (H)?
- What schemes, if any, State or Central have they had access to? What has their experience been? Details please.
- Do they have an artisan card?
- If yes, how did they get it?
- If no, why don't they have one? Do they know what it is?
- If yes, has it helped?
- Have the craftspersons participated in any government sponsored/ organised programmes/ events such as melas, expos, trade fairs etc?
- What were these oriented towards? (*For e.g., marketing, design development, workshop schemes, technical up-gradation, product diversification*)
- If yes, have these helped them in any way?
- Have they received recognition for their skills?
- If yes, was it a state or national award? When was it

received?

- How did they come to know of it?
- Did they receive any assistance in the application procedure?
- Has receiving the award impacted their business in any way?
- If no, do they wish to apply?
- Do they know how to go about doing the same?
- Do they know of medical/ retirement plans available under DC (H) schemes?
- Who is the contact person at DC (H)?
- What would they like from DC (H)?
- Please meet the local emporium (e.g. Co-optex, APCO, Mrignayani for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthali for Rajasthan etc) to find out where they buy from, what quantities the source, how are purchases made and delivered, who designs the objects etc. What are the problems faced by the emporia in sourcing products – quality control, sizing, delivery, timelines etc
- Meet the Resident Commissioner of state for assistance and information
- Visit the DC (H) extension service office in the region
- Try to critically assess the implementation of Govt Schemes with reference to its efficacy to fulfil the objectives of the scheme. To identify gaps and shortfalls in the scheme's content and implementation

and to suggest improvements.

- To assess the extent to which the interventions are general across-the board rather than being implemented as tailor-made scheme
- To list the measurable outcomes, such as empowerment of artists, credit linkages, product range diversification, marketing etc. and assess the impact of the scheme with respect to those deliverables.
- Comparison of the impact of the scheme within the clusters and those who fall out of the cluster.
- To assess the effectiveness of the monitoring system and to suggest ways for improvement
- To evaluate the efficacy of the schemes in bringing about a sustained transformation in the livelihood of the craftspeople.

Schedule Of Data/Information Collection For Study

STAGE I

Hiring of resource persons

As per requirements the resource team will be contracted along with photographers.

Secondary data collection prior to fieldwork: Its Study and Analysis

As the craft to be studied is languishing, with the numbers being very limited of the practitioners, the first step after taking on competent personnel would be to collect secondary data._

- Obtain and study reports on the current status through focal points - Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) office, publications, libraries, experts, other civil society organisations etc.
- Thorough study and familiarization of existing documents. Information collated together, examined and sorted. Research and familiarization with the relevant issues concerning the craftspersons and also the supply chain, local institutions etc

Development of the fieldwork plan

The fieldwork plan will include

- The number and make-up of the team
- Planning of visits to each centre by experts and technical persons
- Pre-departure briefing/training of team
- Establish contact with the craftspersons, NGO's, etc

STAGE II

Selection of key informants for coverage and assessment

Given the constraints within each craft, all craftsperson will be contacted, as far as possible.

Primary Datacollection Schedule

A Qualitative methodology will be followed to complement the review of secondary data. Research teams will use a combination of individual key informant interviews, group key informant interviews, observation and other techniques to collect the information. Information will be gathered from a wide range of sources and triangulated: this includes secondary data and data from key informants, community group interviews. Interviewees' privacy will be safeguarded. i.e. Personal information (e.g., names) will be only recorded with consent, and such information will not be shared outside of the team unless necessary.

- Contact with other specialist's, researchers, government officials, institutions, NGO's.
- Research oral tradition, design directory, and get their views on issues, requirements and how they are being addressed within the Schemes. Discuss with the officials and State Government, what problems are they facing.
- Collection of secondary data on site at Cluster
- Understand the local situation.
- Geographically – to understand problems relating to why the craft is languishing.
- List of local institutions
- Access to and linkages for access to raw material, credit market.
- Study the technology and process

- Study Design vocabularies and assistance
- Any other issues

STAGE III

At the Cluster contextualise information, consolidate data and analyse it.

Concerns about information quality, reliability and gaps to be included.

Data analysis.

Preparation of final report as per the Terms of Reference

Report presented in a print and in electronic format