



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH CRAFTS

UNESCO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THAAP



Amo Mai



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Under ONE UN JP "Promotion of Cultural  
Industries for Poverty Alleviation in  
District Bahawalpur & Disaster Mitigation through  
Promoting Alternate Income Opportunities in  
Dingarh, Cholistan Desert"





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## CONTEXT

Bahawalpur District, carved out from the erstwhile State of Bahawalpur (1782-1954) is the land made famous by the region's premier Sufi saint, the philosopher-poet Khawja Ghulam Fareed (1845–1901). It has within its boundaries the Sufi abode of Uch Sharif with its exquisite architectural remains of the Sultanate period (1526-1857 CE) and the Bibi Jawandi tomb complex, now on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List as well as the vast desert of Cholistan, the *Rohi*, the abode of the nomadic tribes some of whom trace their origins to the Hakra-Indus Civilization. The antiquity of this region remains undisputed for it is home of the Hakra-Indus civilization (3500-1500 BCE) and the custodian of the archeological sites of which 412 have been identified, 370 are in Bahawalpur district. The latter day series of forts, in the Cholistan desert epitomized by Fort Derawar represent the desert heritage of the medieval period. The district is dotted with archeological remains such as the Buddhist remains at Sui Vehar, the numerous *Tulls* (towers) and the exquisite palaces, public buildings and mosques built by the erstwhile Abbasi Nawabs of the Bahawalpur *Riasyat*.

This is also the land of extreme contrasts, the fertile agricultural belt irrigated by the now dying Sutlej River and the canal systems juxtapose the vast arid desert area where cattle herders roam the desert in constant search of water. It is also a land dominated by a feudal system where wealth is amassed in a few and abject poverty is the lot of many. Yet the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the communities of the district is legendary, resonating its historic past. The oral traditions of poetry, music and dance, storytelling, medical knowledge, myths, customs and rites as well as craft making are unique to the region. Traditional wisdom prevails, while the snake charmers still roam the streets of Yazman, the *Ak* plant continues to provide the cure for snake bites! The district's three distinct cultural zones represented by the Sufi spiritual and material traditions emanating from Uch Sharif; the Cholistan desert with its folk narratives and lifestyle propagated through the poetry of Khawja Ghulam Fareed who made the desert his abode for eighteen years and the Abbasi courts permeates the cultural ethos of the entire South Punjab region.



*"But what tongue shall tell the glory of it,  
the perpetual strength of it,  
and sublimity of its lonely desolation!  
And who shall paint the splendor of its light."  
Khawja Ghulam Fareed*

Jhok Fareed, Cholistan Desert



The UNESCO Project “Promoting Cultural Industries for Poverty Alleviation in District Bahawalpur and Disaster Mitigation through promoting alternate income opportunities for Dingarh communities Cholistan” was implemented over six months (May-Nov 2012) in selected villages in the hinterland of Bahawalpur City and in the remote settlements of the desert. The Project addressed the craft making skills of the communities and focused on providing opportunities for income enhancement. The village communities are the inheritors of age old and diverse traditions of craft making; ranging from palm leaf work, embroidery, *ralli*-making, *chunri* (tie and dye), *falasi* (rug) weaving, jewelry making, *khusa*-making (leather shoes), carpet weaving, pit-loom weaving, earthenware pottery, camel skin and others. Many of these are exclusively practiced by women. The Project was implemented in two villages on the outskirts of Bahawalpur City and with the Dingarh Community of the *Rohi*.

Embedded in the vast desert of Cholistan is the Village of Dingarh in what is known as Lesser Cholistan. With the ruins of Dingarh Fort looming above the people try and eke out a livelihood from the meager resources of this harsh desert. Their main occupation is cattle herding and the community is nomadic. At one time there were about 300 households but now there are just a handful of families residing at Dingarh village. The Sheikh community living here is small, most of the houses are locked and people have moved elsewhere in search of water for their cattle and themselves. There are the Laar tribe people, the Deendars, who are the new converts to Islam but were formerly of the Mengwal tribe; the Qazis and Charhaus/Parwars but most are not in the village anymore. The Deendars and the Parwars are the artisans of the Village, but work and orders are limited and most have given up their

traditional work. The women however continue to embellish their clothes with exquisite embroidery in the vibrant colors of the desert and prepare *rallis* for covering their beds and floor, but despondency prevails and the feeling of isolation dominates their discourse. The village is deserted and people have moved out to their allotted lands on the fringes. They will return once the monsoons come and bring with it water, the lifeline for the communities. People are still reeling from the drought of 2000-2002 and remember the losses that they suffered. The loss of cattle was substantial and as cattle herders this was devastating for it remains their main source of livelihood.

The tribes know not from where they arrived but like all Cholistani people are keen to affirm this arid drought prone area as their home. They talk about the lack of water and they speak with nostalgia about a time when they hear the desert was green. The Hakra River (the Sarasvati of antiquity) stays on in their collective memory and in their songs and folklore. A river which dried up 3500 years ago taking with it the ancient civilization of the Hakra-Indus Valley, all that remains of this legendary times are the unprotected archeological sites of which 412 have been identified and the oral traditions encapsulated in the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the communities. Thus along with the Mengwal and Bheel tribes who trace their roots to the ancient Hakra-Indus Valley civilization, the tribes of Dingarh narrate the beauty of the desert and the harsh living conditions, encapsulating its treasures in their poems and songs.

Dingarh fort is amongst the series of forts built along the Hakra River, at intervals of about 29 kms, as a line of defense against attacks from the States of Rajasthan, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. Most of these forts were built on earlier forts although the extant remains date back to the 18 CE.



Cattle Herders on way to Dingarh, Cholistan Desert





Fort Dingarh, Cholistan Desert

The extant Bijnot Fort in Deep Cholistani is the oldest built in 757 CE. Dingarh fort is thought to have been built in the 18th century on an earlier fort. Attributed to Fazal Elahi Khan Halani, a Daupauta chief, it is said that the bricks from the Pattan Minara were used for its rebuilding. The Pattan Minara is thought to be the remains of a Buddhist monastery built during the Mauryan period in about 250 BCE and is located about 8 km from Rahim Yar Khan. The fort is now in ruins, denuded of the brick cover and the mud core exposed to the vagrancies of nature. There is a booster tower placed in the center and the wells outside, the *raison d'être* for its location have all dried up. Rainwater harvesting was an age-old tradition and all tribes would make a *toba* (water pond) to collect the rainwater. The traditional *tobas* at Dingarh are no more but a new one has been made nearby by the Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR). They claim it is of better design and larger than the traditional *toba*. Water from it is pumped into a well close to the village for people to collect water for their daily needs. The filtration plant installed a few years ago is also no more in use because of the problems of



Allu Bhagat with his group

availability of fuel and the perpetual thefts of the metal parts. While the work by PCRWR, the Forest Department, the Cholistan Development Authority and the National Rural Support Program in constructing rainwater harvesting ponds is commendable; the loss of control on this essential water resource is fraught with disaster. Surprisingly, none of these agencies have taken into account the traditional systems of water management and sharing practiced by the Cholistan tribes since time immemorial. As a result the Dingarh community bemoans the loss of control saying “the *Toba* is not ours...it now belongs to the government”. Without adequate water, living in their ancestral abode in the shadows of the Dingarh Fort is hard and without adequate supply of food living on *roti* (leavened bread) and milk, waiting for the monsoons when mushrooms will sprout in the village seems a long wait.

We arranged two workshops in the village for the women embellishes who kept talking of water throughout, berating us that if help was to be given then let the water problem be



Fort Derawar

solved. We spoke of an alternate livelihood through crafts and they spoke of the harsh life that they lead with little time for the perceived additional labor and a new responsibility. In the first workshop there were 22 women belonging to the Sheikh community but the workshop had to be organized in two batches because of some quarrel amongst them. In the next workshop there were only five women, the rest of the families had moved out to better locations and we were told the rest would also be forced to leave shortly because of the perennial water problem. We could not understand that with water brimming in the *toba* how come people felt so deprived. However, we decided that we should seek out the Dingarh community in their alternate locations which brought us to DB 80.

DB 80 is about 1.5 hours driving distance from Bahawalpur through a road which soon disappears into a dirt road. This was considerably better than the 4.5 hours' drive through the unkempt desert tracks to reach Dingarh village. We found the community here no better off than their previous location. This was land that had been allotted to them by the government under what is termed as the arable zone of Cholistan desert. There was a canal nearby but it had dried up and the *toba*, managed and controlled by the community was a great source of pride. There was still the fear that if the monsoons do not bring rain, the *toba* will dry up and they will be forced to go to another tribe's *toba*. This is a normal practice in the desert based on age old customs of sharing this essential resource and people may be forced to stay in the new location till such time that there is water in the *toba* and when it dries up they along with the resident



Bibi Jawindi Complex, Uch Sharif,

community will move out to the next *toba*. People were hoping for a good monsoon and better times.

There were no schools and no health facilities at DB 80 and nothing growing in the farmland. There was no electricity either. However because of the proximity to the city and better access some of the men had jobs in the city and daily a donkey cart would arrive with vegetables. Some of the boys were taken to a nearby school about 8 km away and they had hope for the future. Girls of course had no access to education. The women at DB 80 were proud of their craft work which was proudly exhibited and Amo Mai was declared by all as the *ustad*. Along with the *Ustad* we started our work in earnest. The only major interruption was the harvest season for which the women would travel considerable distances to pick cotton which paid well. About Rs 500 a day could be earned by the more efficient and earnings from craft work were no competition!

The other two villages at a distance of about 30 km from Bahawalpur are BC 33 Sardar Wali and the proximate BC 33 Tibbi Sadiqabad. BC 33 Sardar Wali is now a flourishing center of the pit-loom craft. We had already implemented an earlier Project here and established a UNESCO-THAAP Center at the Workshop of *Ustad* Nadeem. The village was the traditional center of the pit-loom industry but when we arrived here most people had given up hand weaving and had turned to other jobs mainly daily wage labor which could give them a steady income. Painstakingly over several capacity building workshops and mentoring we had





managed to create a group of 12 weavers who were happy to go back to their ancestral work as weavers. Fortunately *Ustad* Nadeem still remembered some of the old techniques and with the help of THAAP designers and trainers some more skills were learnt and challenges were posed but more needed to be done. Thus it was decided that the Project should attempt at getting more of the lineage weavers back into the trade and recreate BC 33 Sardar Wali as the center of the pit-loom industry to regain the earlier status.

Chak BC 33 Sardar Wali is a relatively new settlement which dates back to Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto's period (1971-76) when the Bahawal Canal (BC) was constructed and the desert area brought under the arable land. It is 33 km from Bahawalpur and 7 km from the market town of Dera Bukka and 12km from the Lal Soharana National Park. The majority Deendar, Khumar (potters) Dareeya and Deeth communities have shifted twice in recent years. They were originally located in a village adjacent to the historic Tharagarh Fort along the Sutlej River, which is about 3 km north of BC 33 and moved to Khushi-Muhammad Da Khu (1.5 km from BC33) when their village was destroyed due to floods. The mound with the remnants of the fort can still be seen as well as some mud structures of the village but there is no trace of their later abode. Since the village is close to the River Sutlej, the land is fertile and around the villages farmland has been developed to grow the common crops of the area such as cotton, wheat, fodder etc. as well as date palms and mango trees.

The land owning agriculturist clans at BC 33 are the Arians and Rajputs while other ethnic and trade communities are Deendar (post-partition Hindu converts) Khumar (potters), Hans, Deeth, Sahav, Jhabeel, Deerya, Tharkhan (carpenters) and Baluch tribes. About 45% of the households are small landowners and derive their income through this source while the remaining are either artisans or daily wage earners. Nadeem and his clan belong to the Mengwal tribe which is one of the ancient tribes of the Cholistan desert. BC 33 Sardar Wali was at one time known for its handloom weaving craft. According to Master Artisan *Ustad* Nadeem there were about 80 highly skilled artisan households in the village and orders were plentiful but with the advent and availability of machine made fabric the demand for hand woven fabric dwindled. The weavers like Nadeem who survived did so because the Cholistan tribes continued to buy the shawls and *salaras* (welcoming *chaddars*) for their weddings. Shawls are made during the summer season and then sold for about Rs 1500 during the winter, while orders for *Khes* trickle throughout the year. Earnings were low for example Nadeem's family of

4 households managed to make about Rs 1800 net each in one month. The family supplemented their earnings through rearing cattle and own 4 buffaloes and 4 goats. Other sources included earnings through cotton picking and daily wage. Nadeem also performed the role of a cook and is often called upon to prepare the wedding and ceremonial feasts. Things are looking up now and his team now has 12 weavers at the Center established by the earlier UNESCO-THAAP Project. He tells us that his debt trap has been broken and they now have savings as well. He had gone for Umrah this year so it does seem life has got somewhat better for his extended family. One of his cousins, Hashim, who was earlier working with him, has been facilitated to set up his own UNESCO-THAAP weaving center. They are now linked to a new market and it seems the pit-loom at BC 33 Sardar Wali may thrive again and the village may get once again known as the Center of the pit-loom woven fabric again.

The Women Embellishers at BC 33 Tibi Sadiqabad are an active group of women some of whom were already working for market contractors when we arrived. These women embellishes are experts at *ar*, *sindhi*, *katcha*, *pucca tanka* and *shadow* work and some can also do the traditional *chabbis* and other straw work products. They complained of low wages and the lack of alternatives. BC 33 Tibi Sadiqabad is on the fringe on Sardar Wali and is the stronghold Bhatti tribe.

There is a Boy's School and a Girl's Middle School at BC 33 Sardar Wali, however no government health facilities. The government dispensary which was approved about 10 years back and land allocated was never built. The total number of house-sat Chak BC 33 is 500 which include those at Tibi Sadiqabad. The facilities at the Chak are available to the two villages. Bahawalpur district, this land of great antiquity bespeaks of a time long past which has left its indelible mark on the living culture of the Saraiki people. Embedded within the material remains of times long gone and the spiritual and philosophical teachings which prevail are the craft persons who are still privy to the skills and craft traditions of their ancestors. They continue to tease designs out of the simplest raw material, be it fabric, leather or the leaves of the date palm. Waste material whether it is the wheat stalks after the harvest or the old used cloth finds a new life with their creative impulse. The custodians of a living intangible cultural heritage, the communities of Bahawalpur district, continue to narrate their stories and sing the *kafis* of Khawja Ghulam Fareed juxtaposed with their folk songs and music. They continue with their age old medicinal practices and their social customs and rites, waiting for the days that they too will reap the benefits that a new world can offer them. They wait for their voice to be heard.

Text by SajidaHaiderVandal





## PROJECT

THAAP was commissioned to partner with UNESCO for the One UN JP Project “Promoting Cultural Industries for Poverty Alleviation in District Bahawalpur” in May, 2012 till November 2012. This Project is a continuation of the earlier Project, UNESCO-Dutch funded One UN JP of a similar nature which was implemented by THAAP during July 21-Dec 15 2011 in seven villages of District Bahawalpur (BC 33, Bheli, DNB 112, Abbass Nagar, Dera Bukka) with 229 artisans mainly women.

The current Project aims at building upon the previous work by strengthening the pit-loom weaving industry of BC 33 and establishing the women embellishes cluster with craftswomen from BC 33 and the surrounding villages to collaborate in preparing cultural products. Additionally, villages at Dingarh where the PCRWR project is underway were also to be linked to this endeavor to support the development of alternate means of livelihood thereby reduce stress on the limited water resources of the drought prone area.



## OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Objectives as per Project TORs	Achievements
Enhance the required skills among 100 artisans of district Bahawalpur for improved and innovative quality craft products	150
Train 6 Master Trainers in Pit-loom weaving and Embellished Textile	8 Ustads ( Master Trainers) and 6 Trainers in special stitches
Create market linkage and promote/assist in small enterprise development.	5 Small Enterprises Established
Establish at least two new craft training centers and strengthen existing center at BC 33.	4 New UNESCO-THAAP Centers Established
Facilitate alternate means of livelihood in the drought areas of Cholistan in consultation/collaboration with PCRWR	DB 80, Cholistan assisted in developing alternate means of livelihood

The Project focused on developing innovative products using the craft skills of the weavers and the embellishes. The final products prepared under the Project are displayed in the Exhibition. These are samples which can be reproduced on order.





## CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building and Training was a core concern of the Project and this was implemented over several training programs. The focus was to develop design abilities, color coordination and psychology, and patterns. The overall aim was to enable preparation of innovative products which would meet the requirements of the discerning contemporary market. Sustainability was a key concern because of the need to continuously innovate design and products to ensure a continuing demand. Training was carried out through the tested methodology of artisan-designer workshops and through mentoring of the artisans either in groups or individually. Basic management of Centers set up through the Project and marketing (costing and pricing) as well as time management was also carried out through the workshops.

Pit-loom Weaving required strengthening the design and technical skills of the weavers of the village of BC 33SardarWali. The weavers were trained in color psychology, graph plotting, dyeing yarn, and enhancing their repertoire by introducing new sophisticated patterns and techniques such as *Ikat*. Traditionally 2-shaft pit-loom were used for weaving plain fabric; this was mainly due to poverty, illiteracy, scarcity of raw materials, and lack of training. With the successful establishment of 4-shaft looms, floral and geometric patterns including herring bone, bird's nest, tweeds, plaids and bright stripes of *sussi* are now being produced. A new Center for Pit-loom weaving has been established under Master Trainer Ustad Hashim with 17 weavers. The growing success of the Pit-loom Centers is attracting more interest in weaving; inspiring artisans like Ramadan, a security guard at a local university, to return to his ancestral craft.

Embellished Fabric work has shown a significant development in quality and productivity. As a result of the workshops at BC 33SardarWali and Tibi Sadiqabad, the craftswomen have shown a marked improvement in product development, quality control and





time management leading to increased earnings. Essential trainings have enhanced the women's understanding of designs and color coordination according to contemporary market demands. Trainings in *Sozenkari* (design tracing and transferring) have equipped the artisans with an important skill that will make them self-sufficient, saving time and money. The craftswomen who mostly worked in isolation in their homes have learned the benefits of working together in groups at their respective Centers. More women specializing in the same craft are working together thereby increasing efficiency and order placements.

The Center set up at BC 33 Tibi Sadiqabad specializes in *mukaish*, *sindhi tanka* and *ar* embroideries. Most of the craftswomen have been making embellished clothes for the Bahawalpur market and now have a potential access to other markets where their exquisite *mukaish* work will be in demand. A Center was established at DB 80 in light of the difficulties of setting up a center at Dingarh village. The women at DB 80 had no prior experience in working for the market. However, the artisans have expertise in *Ralli*-making, crochet, bead work and palm leaf crafts and were very keen on working in the Project and are currently making crochet baby blankets and Christmas tree decorations in beadwork. Further work needs to be done in the Cholistan villages to overcome the challenges posed due to isolation and because of being ignored in the development agenda.

Text by Sajida Haider Vandal & Shajia Azam





## PIT LOOM WEAVING

Pit Loom Weaving, an endangered traditional craft, is one of the oldest weaving techniques that have survived till today. It has been practiced in the region of South Punjab for thousands of years. We find traces of woven cloth on the pottery imprints of the ancient Hakara Civilization in the Cholistan Desert. Cotton, silk and woolen fabrics are made with exquisite design patterns with this unique technique. At present three different kinds of products i.e., *Khais*, (bedspread) Shawls and *khadi* fabric (plain and with lines and pattern border) are being prepared by the pit-loom weavers. The craftsman sits inside a pit in the ground and weaves on the loom set on the ground above the pit, thus it is locally referred to as " *toay wali khadi*".

Tana is the stretching of the thread on the floor in lengthwise direction by putting a nail and wrapping the thread around it. The other end of the thread is put through the wooden heddles of the pit-loom. This stage is also called *Rach* in the local language of the craftsman. The *Bana* or weft is the thread going in the width direction. The cloth is woven through the *bana* thread and all the intricate designs are created through the *bana* thread.

The cycle of preparing cloth on pit looms traditionally involved both men and women hence it is usually a family business. The women prepare the yarn on " *charkas*" (spinning wheels) and the *tana and bana* (wrap and weft) is mostly prepared by the men. The weaving is done both by women and men. A craftsman can create a shawl of three and a half yards length in 3 days. The fabric is woven in two *puth* meaning two parts. After both parts are complete they are sewn together with hand in a special hand stitch called *Machli Tanka*. Both *Khais* and Shawls are stitched from the middle with this traditional stitch to complete it.

The major issue in pit-loom industry is that it is being rapidly being replaced by the larger loom (*Amritsari / Kasuri*) where cloth of a wider width (1.25 yards) can be prepared which is more suitable for apparel and the factory produced fabric. The exquisite cloth prepared on pit-looms



is thus an endangered crafts and the traditional motifs are being forgotten. The art of pit-loom needs to be promoted by opening new avenues for the product, finding buyers and a market for this most finely made material and an exceptionally rare craft.

*With only a handful of weavers in the beginning, the Project has 40 weavers and two thriving Centers at BC 33 Sardar Wali in district Bahawalpur.*

Text by Aisha Asim Imdad



## RALLI MAKING

Ralli Making is a household name in the South Punjab region. It is one craft that has survived till the modern times without much changes. Most Cholistani people make and use *Rallis* in their daily lives. The craft is thought to have its origins in the need to strengthen old clothes which were stitched together with finely done running stitches for utilitarian household use and then eventually started being a treasured item for a variety of products, especially prepared for trousseau and special use.

The women of Cholistan make special *rallies* for their daughter's trousseau. They say that the day their daughter turns ten year old they start making the *rallies* for their dowry. Various kinds of *rallies* are created for different occasions in her married life, the most intricate being for the marriage day. Sons too get their share of *rallies* for their married life. These exquisite *rallies* have various stitches on them from Sindhi to Ar to mirror work to *Pucca-tanka*. The Patterns are extremely unique and have many lost myths and legends are hidden in them. A *Ralli* can have peacocks, camels, flowers, and many other birds and animals. These *rallies* are intensely bright in colors and embroidered patterns, which makes them distinctive and different from the usual patchwork *rallies*.

Most *Rallis* are one-off pieces and cannot be made again in the same way as it has so many different designs patterns embroidered on it. Very minute stitches are done in straight lines on all the *Ralli* used as bedspreads, floor covers, pouches, storage bags, camel saddle cloth and saddlebags and such other usages. The process is time consuming and painstaking and done by women in whatever time they can get from their daily toil. Applique work *rallies* with patchwork borders are also made.

These *rallies* are very versatile in their use for local people. If they are traveling they put it on the



ground to rest. If they feel cold in the cool desert night it can be used as a cover. If they are in the house they use them as bedspreads on their *charpais* (cots). In every way the colorful *rallies* bring brilliant color in their lives with a variety of bright yellows, reds, shocking pinks, bright greens, maroons and blacks.

Text by Aisha Asim Imdad





## AR

Ar embroidery resembles a fine chain stitch and derives its name from the hooked crochet type needle called the *Ar*, a finer version of an ancient cobbler's stitching tool. It is a centuries old embroidery tradition practiced by generations of artisans. The *Ar* is faster to use than the needle but has the same intricacy and can more easily incorporate other kinds of embellishments such as beads, sequins and *zari*; for this reason it is an often preferred tool for the craftswomen of rural South Punjab who have little time to spare from their daily chores of child rearing, housekeeping and farming to spend on embroidery. Young girls training under family elders or *ustads* find the *Ar* easier to learn because it even allows novices to produce acceptable work. It can be done individually using the standard embroidery frame or in a group on the *adda* (wooden cot-like frame). *Ar* embroidery is done all over South Punjab; however, the *Ar* work of the desert dwelling tribes of Cholistan is especially exquisite. These people live in unimaginably harsh conditions and the women bring joy into their lives through their vibrant embroidery. Many of the motifs and patterns used in *Ar* are geometrical and can also be found painted on the mud-plastered walls of their homes.

Text by Shajia Azam

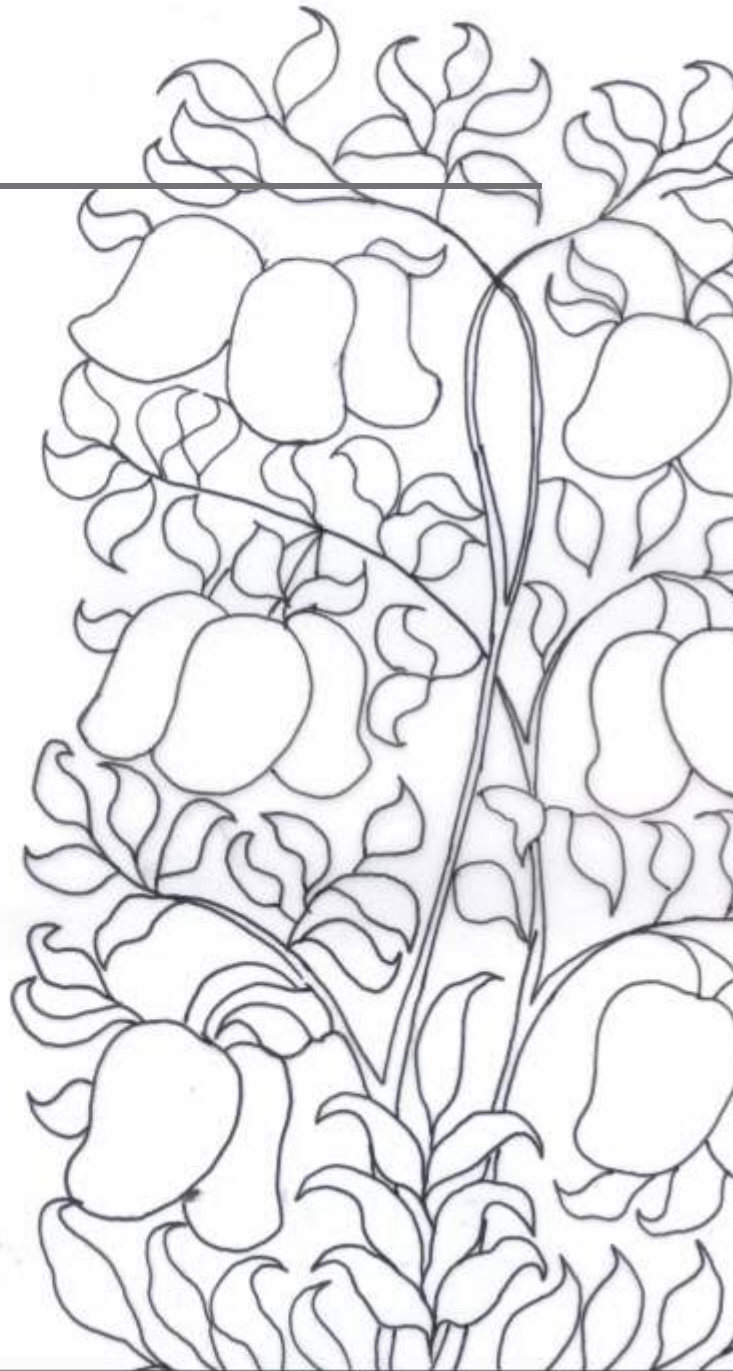




## SOZANKARI

*Sozenkari* is the traditional method of tracing and transferring patterns onto fabric. Centuries ago designs were directly drawn on fabric using quills and water soluble inks but In *Sozenkari*, the designs are copied on tracing paper, pin-pricked along the outline of the pattern; a cloth/cotton wool piece is dabbed in a *Neel* (indigo) and turpentine mixture and applied over the pierced outline leaving an indigo pattern on the fabric. Although many of the craftswomen of South Punjab can do adequate *Sozenkari*, they often lack the accuracy that is crucial for the finesse of the pattern resulting in poor quality of work; therefore, majority of the women depend on professional tracers in the bazaars that charge high prices. Project training by specialists were carried out and aimed at identifying a few artisans to be trained as *Sozenkari* experts. Furthermore, the training specialists have introduced the more durable X-ray sheet to replace tracing paper for greater efficiency.

Text by Shajia Azam





## THE CRAFT PERSONS

Nur Khatoon moved into the *Deendar* community of weavers at BC 33 at her marriage to Jan Muhammad. Her *Meaka* (*maternal family*) were weavers too and she had learnt how to spin yarn on the spinning wheel when she was a little girl. This came in handy for she could continue to prepare the yarn in her new home. The family was making *chaddars* in cotton and cotton silk mix. The more popular ones which sold well were the ones done in hand spun cotton (*suttar*) and *pesham* (*sheep wool*). Nur Khatoon had 6 sons and 1 daughter; all of her sons followed the family trade. Four of her sons are married and her daughter has gone to her new homes carrying with her the knowledge of hand spun cotton and wool on a charka. Nur Khatoon continues to make the yarn for the men to weave but there is not much work anymore. Nadeem, her first born son was the only one to keep weaving diligently and selling his beautiful *chaddar* and *salaras* to the rich landlords in the area but most of his work was for the Cholistani tribes. Some of their clansmen were living in the remote parts of the Cholistan desert and introduced their work. When an order was large enough some of the work was sub-contracted to the weavers in the villages of Cholistan but there was not sufficient work to support the numerous weavers at Sardar Wali. Most gave up working. The UNESCO-THAAP Project was a blessing. Nadeem was finally able to fulfill his dream of a proper work center with weavers working under him and *shagirds* (students) and continue with the family trade. He brought his brothers and cousins back into the trade and now have a thriving business.

Ustad Nadeem explains that “I have five brothers and one sister; one of my brothers is working as an embroidery craftsman in Oman and another is in Saudi

Arabia. Two brothers are in the pit-loom business and the youngest is still studying. Since childhood I wanted to become a weaver but my parents wanted me to get an education. But I just didn't feel like studying! It was my paternal grandmother who recognized my passion and convinced my father to teach me saying “Nadeem is very intelligent and must be taught his ancestral craft. I guess my father couldn't say no to his mother! I left school in the 7th grade and started my apprenticeship with the family elders. I found success from the start. I began work with just two looms and things took off from there. I started working with THAAP in 2010 and participated in various training. I learned about new designs and color schemes that have been extremely beneficial to my craft. I started getting more orders from private clients and local markets. Today my woven goods are being bought nationally and I've begun exporting to international markets in Qatar and Saudi Arabia.”

Nadeem and his mother Nur Khatoon helped set up the Embellished Center at Sardar Wali. Many women here could embroider but none had gone beyond preparing embroidered garments for themselves or their family. Occasionally there were orders from the village families but they had not as yet experienced working for even the market contractors. There were, however, *ustads* such as Nasreen Mai and Ameeran Bibi who could make the most exquisite work and had a lot of young girls who had learnt the craft from them. In the words of Nasreen Mai “ When you people



Ustad Nadeem



Ustad Nasreen Mai



came into our lives you opened up a new world for us; we like to really work on the fabric made by Ustad Nadeem...it is harder because the fabric is thick but we know that this work will really sell. We think having the Sadiqabad women working with us is really good. They know the market better and we can take their help to sell our work”

Ustad Hashim who started his work with Ustad Nadeem, has branched on his own and now has his own *UNESCO-THAAP Hashim Pit Loom Center* at BC 33 Sardar Wali. Ustad Hashim is a cousin of Ustad Nadeem. His family originally belonged to Yazman but moved to BC 33 about 10 years ago. He comes from a lineage of weavers. His grandfather was an acknowledged *Ustad* and the mantle passed on to his father. Now Hashim too is an *ustad* in this group of excellent weavers. His father and mother prepare the yarn on the spinning wheel (charkha) now and the brothers and cousins at the Center weave the cloth. According to Ustad Hashim, “At first it was just my father and I who did all the weaving but since last year my brothers have joined us”. This is an achievement of the UNESCO-THAAP Project. In the words of Ustad Hashim “There is more work in the winters and in the summers we build our stock. We are able to earn a decent income. Working with THAAP has helped us a lot. I have received training in design development and color coordination that has helped my craft. I hope to further increase our business in the future. In addition to weaving, I handle all aspects of the business.”

Amo Mai, the Ustad at DB 80 has much to lament. She lives in a really hostile environment of the desert. With water a perpetual problem and no electricity, the day



Ustad Hashim



light hours are spent in fetching water and on household chores while in the evenings the women get together for their story telling sessions. Some of the women remember the stories from the old days and the songs and poetry which helps while the long hours of the winter evenings. Amo Mai has her ancestral house at Village Dingarh and in some months she moves back there with her family. In Amo Mai's words “The desert is our home....there is non-imaginable freedom in the vastness of the desert, the monsoons are the best time for us....ofcourse if there is a good rain, our *maal* (cattle) is happy and so are we”. And goes on “We have never thought of earning money from our embroidery work...sometimes we make *chabbis* (straw and wheat stalk platters), the material is supplied to us and we have an arrangement where we get to keep half the *chabbis* that we make. Sometimes we make gifts for our men, my daughter made this really nice decoration, a *nazaar bhato* (object to ward off the evil eye) when my brother bought a new tractor he gave her a goat as a reward...you can see it on his tractor. We have liked making the products...some were a real challenge...like the small balls covered with beads...I still can't understand why they can't use *gharas* (pitchers) for their decoration, that is something I can easily do...I am an expert”. Amo Mai belongs to the Sheikh tribe and was allotted the land at DB 80 in 1960. The land comes under the arable area of Cholistan, however there is no water in the irrigation canal and the land lies barren, the *toba* is drying up and Amo Mai and her community fear that soon the family will be forced to move unless the monsoons bring in lots of rain to make the mushrooms sprout and the fields are green again.



Ustad Amo Mai

Text by Sajida Haider Vandal & Shajia Azam





## CRAFT CENTERS

Five UNESCO-THAAP Centers have been established during the course of the Project. These Centers are established in the homes of the Master Craftsmen. While the Pit-loom Centers are the workshops where the craftsmen work together to prepare the fabric from the yarn produced by their womenfolk or purchased from the Multan market and are equipped with 6 pit-loom each, the Embellished Textile Centers are used mainly as the venue for training and mentoring by the Master Craftswomen. A hundred and fifty artisans with 8 Master Trainers are now available at the five Centers. As can be seen from the Table on Livelihood Generated the Cholistan Center at DB 80 needs more inputs to enhance the earning capacity of the women embellishes.

S.N	Name of Center	Number of Craft persons	Master Trainers
1	UNESCO-THAAP BC 33 Nadeem Handloom Center	23	Muhammad Nadeem , Muhammad Ranjha
2	UNESCO-THAAP BC 33 Hashim Handloom Center	17	Muhamamd Hashim, Muhammad Qasim
3	UNESCO-THAAP BC 33 Sardar Wali Center for Embellished Textiles	47	Nasreen Mai, Ameeran Bibi
4	UNESCO-THAAP Tibbi Sadiqabab Center of Embellished Textiles	32	Nasreen Bibi, Mumtaz Mai
5	UNESCO-THAAP Dingarh Center DB 80, Embellished Textile	31	Amo Mai, Noreen Bibi
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>8</b>

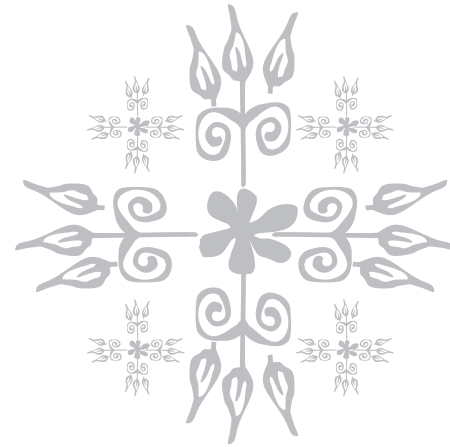
### LIVELIHOODS GENERATED

Villages	Craft	Micro enterprises/Home based business established		No. of Men & Women earning Regular income		Men & Women earning occasional basis		Total	Level of Income Per Month (PKR)			
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women		8000 & Above	5000 to 8000	2000 to 5000	Below 2000
BC 33 Sardar Wali	Pit-Loom	2		23				23				
BC 33 Sardar Wali	Pit-Loom	2		17				17				
BC 33 Sardar Wali	Embroidery (Ar, Sindhi Tanka etc) Mukesh, Gotta, Ralli		4		47		0	47				
BC 33 Tibi Sadiqabad	Embroidery (Ar, Sindhi Tanka etc) Mukesh, Gotta		4		32		0	32				
DB 80	Embroidery		1		1		30	31				
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>150</b>				



UNESCO-THAAP Nadeem Pit-loom Center District Bahawalpur  
Village 33 BC Sardar Wali UC: 4 BC

S#	Name of Craftperson	NIC Number	Contact Number	Pit-loom Woven Fabric
1	Muhammed Nadeem	31202-88337014-7	0345-8175633	●
2	Muhammed Ranjha	31205-4596576-9	0341-7296510	●
3	Muhammed Asif		0305-7598834	●
4	Muhammed Qasim	31202-9444042-3	0343-8751633	●
5	Talib Hussain	31202-9025809	0345-8175633	●
6	Muhammed Amjad		0301-6403709	●
7	Muhammed Imran		0343-7427339	●
8	Muhammed Amin	31202-8708849-9	0341-6266736	●
9	Muhammed Nawaz	31202-0305385-5	0321-7986153	●
10	Rahim Ali		0343-6619480	●
11	Dilshad Ahmed	31205-7346968-7	0343-6619480	●
12	Jumma Khan		0345-3397997	●
13	Asif Baqa		0304-8541614	●
14	Muhammed Arif	31205-5731624-9	0306-8031715	●
15	Muhammed Bilal	31202-9753197-9	0304-5508344	●
16	Muhammed Khalil	31202-0328972-7	0341-7296514	●
17	Abdul Rehman	31204-0651311-7	0342-7171558	●
18	Muhammed Ashiq	31202-1365238-7	0342-7171558	●
19	Allah Rakha	31202-0981316-5		●
20	Asif Ramzan		0324-7985633	●
21	Muhammed Abbas	31202-1458608-1	0341-7296513	●
22	Muhammed Akram	31205-1636497-9	0347-3419471	●
23	Muhammrd Javid	31202-7354653-7	0341-6265765	●



UNESCO-THAAP Hashim Pit-loom Center, District Bahawalpur  
Village 33 BC Sardar Wali  
UC: 4 BC

S#	Name of Craft person	NIC Number	Contact Number	Pit-loom Woven Fabric
1	Muhammad Hashim	31202-9418476-3	0343-8751633	●
2	Muhammad Qasim	31202-9444042-3		●
3	Muhammad Asif	31202-8249656-1	3476224138	●
4	Muhammad Bilal	31202-9753197-9	3045508344	●
5	Muhammad Jaleel			●
6	Muhammad Amjad			●
7	Muhammad Arshad			●
8	Muhammad Rafeeq	31202-9743738-1		●
9	Muhammad Zahoor			●
10	Ghulam Mustafa			●
11	Muhammad Ameen			●
12	Muhammad Nawaz	31202-0305385-5	3217986153	●
13	Muhammad Akram			●
14	Sana-ullaha			●
15	Muhammad Ramzan			●
16	Muhammad Nawaz	31202-06157663-3	3076675133	●
17	Muhammad Abbas	31202-1458608-1	3417296513	●



UNESCO-THAAP Hand Embellished Fabric Center, BC 33 Sardar Wali District Bahawalpur  
Village 33 BC Sardar Wali UC: 4 BC



Sl	Name of Craftperson	NIC Number	Contact Number	Type of Hand Embellished Stitch				Other ( Straw Work, Bead Work, Crochet etc)
				Ar	Shadow Work	Pucca Katcha Tanka	Gotta Work	
1	Rahim Bibi	31205-3283045-8	0345-8718890	●	●	●		●
2	Nasreen Mai	31205-3283045-8	0343-7007532	●	●	●		●
3	Tarzana Bibi			●				●
4	Shahana Nazir			●				●
5	Shehroz Mai		0343-7007532	●	●	●		●
6	Mirzi Mai	31202-6139480-8	0344-6836362	●			●	●
7	Saughran Bibi	31205-8923579-8	0341-6265764	●			●	●
8	Ameeran Bibi		0340-7227322	●			●	●
9	Sakeena Mai		0301-2957442	●			●	●
10	Sajda Hassan			●	●	●		●
11	Robra Mai			●				●
13	Parveen Bibi			●				●
14	Parveen Bibi	31202-5812562-2	0346-8166533	●				●
15	Nazira Bibi		0343-8748163	●			●	●
16	Naseem Bibi	31202-2976982-4	0341-8734557	●				●
17	Parveen Bibi	31205-0000119-8	0341-7296513	●	●	●		●
18	Culzar Bibi			●	●	●		●
19	Majeedra Mai			●				●

20	Pathani Mai	31202-1797740-4		●	●	●		●
21	Muktiyar Mai	31202-5745268-4		●	●	●		●
22	Zarina Bibi			●				●
23	Samina Bibi			●				●
24	Kalzoom mai	31202-5309488-6		●	●	●		●
25	Khanran Mai	31202-7644700-4		●		●		●
26	Gulnaz Bibi			●	●	●		●
27	Mehmaz Bibi			●				●
28	Sultan Mai	31202-9704912-2		●		●		●
29	Atta Biji	31202-3208270-8		●		●		●
30	Muktiyar Mai	31202-7751773-0		●		●		●
31	Mafia Bibi	31202-6312952-0		●		●		●
32	Zarina Bibi	31202-3443321-0		●				●
33	Fatima Bibi	31202-5813462-8						●
34	Sajida Parveen			●				●
35	Naseem Bibi	31202-6630373-6		●				●
36	Karwar Bibi	31202-8337289-4	0343-7048105	●				●
37	Zohran Bibi	31202-2784894-0		●				●
38	Sakeena Bibi			●	●	●		●
39	Wazeeran Bibi			●	●	●		●
40	Uzma Bibi			●				●
41	Shabnam			●	●	●		●
42	Shahmim Mai			●				●
43	Nasreen Mai	31202-8037289-4		●	●	●		●
44	Basharan Mai			●				●
45	Hajira Mai		0342-771558	●	●	●		●



UNESCO-THAAP EMBELLISHED FABRIC CENTER, TIBI SADIQABAD  
 District Bahawalpur  
 Village 33 BC, Tibi Sadiqabad UC: 4 BC

S#	Name of Craftperson	NIC Number	Contact Number	Type of Hand Embellished Stitch							Other (Straw Work, Bead Work, Crotchet)	
				Ar	Pucca Tanka	Katcha Tanka	Sindhi Tanka	Shadow Work	Ribbon Work	Mukesh		Gotta Work
1	Haseena Bibi	31202-4720972-8	0306-7333005	●	●		●			●		●
2	Safia Bibi	31202-5535976-2	0308-3617515	●	●	●	●	●		●		●
3	Rafia Bibi	31202-8548993-6	0308-3617515	●			●			●		●
4	Kaneez Bibi	31202-7421127-0	0308-3617515	●	●		●			●		●
5	Nazeer Bibi	31202-5381388-8	0331-3970071	●		●		●				●
6	Kalsoom Mai		0346-8783972	●					●			●
7	Tasleem Bibi	31202-3572945-6	0331-3970071	●					●			●
8	Ruqiya Bibi		0346-8783972	●	●	●		●				●
9	Aza Bibi		0346-8783972	●		●	●	●		●		●
10	Sumeera Bibi		0346-8783972	●			●			●		●
11	Rabia Bibi		0308-3617515	●			●			●		●
12	Gukhan Bibi		0308-3617515	●			●			●		●
13	Baranwan Bibi		0341-7284531	●		●				●		●
14	Nasreen Mai	31202-3834354-2	0307-6465887	●	●				●			●
15	Nasreen Bibi		0341-7284531	●	●				●			●



16	Shahzia Bibi		0308-3617515	●	●							●
17	Hameed Mai		0306-7333005	●	●							●
18	Hajran Mai		0341-7284531	●	●							●
19	Nasreen Rustam		0306-7333005	●	●		●	●	●		●	●
20	Kalsoom Bibi		0306-7333006	●			●					●
21	Ansar Bibi		0308-3617515	●	●			●				●
22	Attah Ehali	31204-04423309-4	0308-3617516	●	●			●				●
23	Bakhtu Mai	31202-1677699-2	0346-8783972	●	●			●		●		●
24	Rukhsana Bibi		0346-8783972	●			●			●	●	●
25	Ameer Mai		0346-8783972	●			●			●	●	●
26	Kousar Mai		0346-8783972	●			●			●	●	●
27	Mumtaz Mai		0346-8783972	●	●			●		●	●	●
28	Riaz Mai		0346-8783972	●	●			●		●	●	●
29	Mukhtiyar Mai		0346-8783972	●						●	●	●
30	Rahim Mai		0346-8783972	●						●	●	●
31	Sumeera Mai		0346-8783972	●						●	●	●
32	Zahra Mai		0346-8783972	●						●	●	●



Name of Craftperson	NIC Number	Contact Number	Crafts (Mark X) In embroidery write name of stitches				
			Ar	Moti-Sitara	Gotta Work	Ralli	Others (Beadwork, Crochet, Straw work)
Haleema Bibi	31205-599819-8		●	●		●	●
Mumtaz Bibi	31205-1599821-6		●	●			●
Pathani Mai	31205-1599820-2		●	●			●
Qaim Khatoon	31205-2913680-2		●	●		●	●
Parveen Bibi	31205-2417412-0		●	●		●	●
Aamoon Khtoon	31205-6311443-2		●	●	●	●	●
Naziran Mai			●	●	●		●
Mehnaz Mai			●	●	●		●
Shahzad Bibi	31205-6565717-4		●	●	●		●
Allah Wasai	31205-4605819-0		●	●		●	●
Atta Bibi	31205-9605729-2		●	●		●	●
Amiran Bibi	31205-9148556-6		●	●			●
Kousar Bibi	31205-4354447-2		●	●	●		●
Sakeena Bibi	31205-2464403-4		●	●			●
Manzooran Bibi	31205-0588752-6		●	●			●
Jumoo Mai			●	●			●
Malookan Bibi			●	●			●
Azra Bibi			●	●			●
Fazalan bibi	31205-1600826-4		●	●			●
Parveen bibi			●	●			●
Allah Joyai	31205-655737-0		●	●		●	●
Shahnaz Bibi	31205-0501848-0		●	●		●	●
Lalu Mai			●	●			●
Parveen Bibi			●	●			●
Shahnaz Bibi			●	●			●
Mumtaz Bibi			●	●			●
Sughran Bibi			●	●			●
Noreen Bibi			●	●			●
Asma Bibi			●	●			●
Najma Bibi			●	●			●

UNESCO-THAAP CRAFT CENTER, DB 80, DINGARH District Bahawalpur

Village Chak 80 DB UC: Dingarh



Chandan Haar (Antique)  
Collection of Sajida Vandal



Kangan



Hassee



Karrayan



Kopay (nosering)



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**Sajida Haider Vandal**  
November 2012

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2. Aisha Imdad Principal Designer & Trainer
3. S hajia Azam Designer & Trainer
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SERENA HOTELS



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