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HANDICRAFT SURVEY REPORT

PLASTIC INLAY IN WOOD

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CENSUS OF INDIA 1981

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FOREWORD

The Indian handicrafts are known the world over for their rich variety, grace, elegance and skilled craftsmanship. Nevertheless, a number of handicrafts because of their stiff competition with factory made products, non-availability of raw materials, exhorbitant increase in the manufacturing cost, lack of proper marketing facilities for finished products or due to a variety of other reasons have either become extinct or have reached the moribund stage. After independence, however, a number of schemes were introduced by different government agencies for their growth and development but still this sudden impetus has helped only a few crafts to flourish and thereby become spinners of foreign exchange for the country.

Despite the unique position being enjoyed by the handicrafts especially in the realm of national economy, the general awareness among the people in the country about our crafts and craftsmen had been deplorably poor. Nothing was practically known about the commodities produced, techniques employed for the manufacture of different objects, raw materials used, their availability, methods adopted for the sale of finished products etc. An attempt was therefore, made in connecton with the 1961 Census to study about 150 crafts from different parts of the country with a view to provide basic information on those crafts which were selected for the study.

At the 1971 Census, the study on handicrafts was not taken up but this was again revived in connection with the 1981 Census. There has been, however, some difference between the studies taken up in connection with the Censuses of 1961 and 1981. While the 1961 studies have covered both rural and urban crafts, the 1981 studies have focussed their attention only on traditional rural based crafts. That apart, the 1981 studies besides touching upon those aspects which were covered under the 1961 series, have laid emphasis on matters that are vital for the revival of rural crafts and thereby for the rejuvenation of the economy of the region particularly the villages. This is in consonance with the policy of the government to give due importance to the rural sector with focus on employment intensive strategy of development in which next to agriculture, the small scale industries and handicrafts play a significant role.

The formats required for undertaking the study were formulated by Dr. K.P. Ittaman under the able guidance of Dr. N.G. Nag, the then Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies Division. Dr. Ittaman who succeded Dr. Nag as Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies Division co-ordinated the studies undertaken in different States/Union Territories by the Directorate of Census Operations. The reports received from the Directorates were examined by Shri M.K. Jain, Senior Research Officer with the help of Smt. Suman Prashar, Assistant Director of Census Operations and the staff working under them. I am grateful to all of them for organising this study.

The present report is the outcome of a study undertaken on Plastic Inlay in Wood by the Directorate of Census Operations, Punjab. I have immense pleasure in acknowledging the services rendered by Shri J.C. Kalra and Shri R.K. Bhatia, Joint Director and Deputy Director respectively and their colleagues in the Census Directorate for bringing out this publication.

V.S. Verma
Registrar General, India

New Delhi
31st January, 1989

PREFACE

The study of plastic inlay in wood has its uniqueness in manufacturing deluxe articles of decoration of day to day use in houses. Now even people of middle income group can afford the plastic inlaid articles in comparison to ivory inlaid ones which are now of antique importance. Despite its important artefacts, nothing concrete is known regarding raw material, its availability, techniques and tools employed in manufacture and so on and so forth. The craft has a scope to offer employment to more workers, but general awakening of the people about the craft is lacking. It is both a traditional and rural based craft fulfilling the criteria of selection. Guided by these factors, Census Organisation endeavoured to conduct a study of the craft more with a diagnostic view in mind so as to understand the problems and upheavals in the way of craftsmen and to suggest the ways and means to promote it so as to spread its network to other villages and open up avenues of employment.

The study was conducted in two villages, Buthgarh and Bassi Gulam Hussain in the hinterland of Hoshiarpur district during middle of 1988. The craftsmen in these villages were predominantly traditional inlay workers and the work is performed entirely by males. Traditional rural inlay workers were scarcely available elsewhere. The phase of disturbed conditions, incommensurate monetary returns, exhorbitant rise in price and paucity of raw material, hold of middlemen and imposition of sales tax are the main hurdles in the progress of the craft. The craftsmen clamour for new orientations modelled on these diagnostic barriers.

The data for this study was collected in four types of schedules viz; A, B, C and D. Schedule-A was sent to number of organisations/offices within and outside the state to collect basic information about the craft; but nothing useful was forthcoming despite repeated efforts. Schedule-B termed as village schedule sought to collect various types of data on selected villages; Schedule-C was termed as household schedule which collected information from households practising the craft in the villages and Schedule-D was canvassed amongst households who had since abandoned the craft to ascertain their attitudes about the craft and its bearing on their cultural matrix though not in totality.

Photographic illustrations and sketches of tools etc. have been incorporated in the monograph to elaborate the techniques and certain stages of processes involved in manufacture of inlay craft. Certain designs and inlaid patterns on objects prevalent in these villages are seen in the plates included therein which give a realistic picture of the craft.

The Social Studies Division of the office of the Registrar General, India offered useful suggestions to improve the draft report, which were followed accordingly. More households of traditional rural inlay workers could not be traced. I am thankful to Dr. K.P. Ittaman, Deputy Registrar General (Social Studies) for guidance and Shri M.K. Jain, Senior Research Officer and his team of officers for scrutiny and valuable comments/suggestions which made the monograph see the light of the day.

Shri Charan Singh, Investigator, assisted by Shri Paras Ram, Investigator, Shri Malkit Singh, S.A., R.P. Pathak, A.C. conducted the field work with zeal and perseverance and tenacity when conditions were disturbed and risky in the State. Shri Charan Singh prepared the draft of the monograph. S/Shri Malkit Singh, S.A., and R.P. Pathak, A.C. prepared the tables going into the study. The photographs were taken by Shri R.K. Bhatia, Deputy Director of Census Operations, Punjab and the whole of enquiry and drafting has been carried out under his guidance and he edited the same. Shri M.L. Sharma, Assistant Director has also gone through the manuscript. The cover design and illustration were finally prepared by Shri Jagjit Singh, Draftsman.

Shri Ashok Kumar, L.D.C. typed out the draft of the report and Shri Harcharan Singh Sudan painstakingly looked to the printing of monograph. I thank them all.

J.C. Kalra
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Chandigarh
7th April, 1989

CHAPTER – I

HISTORY OF ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFT

History and Origin

Plastic inlay in wood is the handicraft very much in line with ivory work and can be said to be an off shoot of the latter. As far as history of ivory work is concerned, it is very ancient one. With the passage of time due to high cost of elephant tusk the artisans particularly in Punjab have transferred to the work of inlaying plastic and *Kinnow* wood material in wood. The ivory is termed by many as *"Chitta Sona"* (white gold) and it is kept with all the care and safety. In many parts of India ivory work is still carried out. Evidence of existence of ivory work is available in Harappan culture in North Western India. Specimens available from the various sites go to suggest that the craft flourished even in pre-Harappan period. The various pieces were of the sort as stopper, casket, hairpins, combs, dice, pots, needles, bangles, pendant, human figures, ear-reel, ear ornament, bed legs, mirror handles, arrow heads, seals, sword handle, walking stick handles, dagger, knife, bands, plaques, panels, rings, figure of Buddha, plaque showing dancing female etc. etc. These articles were particularly in the reach of Rajas/Maharajas or the rich. Later on, inlaid objects as doors, fan, card case, jewellery case, chair, scent case, chessboard, scenes depicting elephant loaded with guns, images of *Durga*, Kali palanquin bearers, Hindu priests, screens, *peedahs* (low chairs), table tops, pen cases, panels, trays, teapoys, inlaid mirror frames, *chapati rollers*, toys, *palki* (throne), writing cases, *rehals* (book stand), toy boat, miniature paintings etc. etc. In ivory work various techniques have been found to be employed from time to time and they are as, cutting with saw, incision, filling of incised portion, incision and engraving, incision and pressing with pointed rods, turnning on lathe, colouring with lac, inlay in ivory itself, carving by chisels, inlaying with ivory now plastic *kalamkari* (making miniature paintings). There have been numberless techniques and objects; but here we are concerned with inlay of plastic in wood. Lest is should deter us from our main topic attention is being focussed more on plastic inlay in wood industry. The plastic inlay in wood in Punjab is carried out at few places in Hoshiarpur. Ivory or plastic inlay industry has almost come to a halt in Amritsar and Jalandhar, where there are more remunerative avenues of employment. Elsewhere ivory inlay in wood along with plastic inlay in wood is found in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The ivory work of Jaipur, Udaipur, Mysore is well known over the world. The change of material from ivory to plastic sheets is significant one as it has helped for continuation of the craft. The use of plastic is quite extensive in our day to day life as well. It has replaced many articles of daily use already made from glass, wood, metal or porcelain. The use of plastic material for inlay industry can be attributed to the fact that it looks attractive, shining, inexpensive and unbreakable. The plastic consists mainly of polymers basically an inert substance. During manufacturing of plastic objects some adhesives are added too. Medically the plastic material in a general way is unhygienic and unsafe for storing edibles. Plastic sheets when swan or come in contact with heat give out strong unpleasant odour.

Inlay in technical sense is the technique of inserting pieces of one material over the surface of another for decoration. This ornamentation usually consists of geometrical or floral patterns. The small pieces are inserted into the incised cavities made for them on the flat surface. Inlaying may be of different categories viz; one metal into another, pieces of precious stones into surface of other stone. *Galai (incising and filling) is the main* technique of inlaying wood of different colours as well as ivory or plastic upon a chocolate brown background surface. This study pertains to this category of inlaying which has been named as inlay of plastic in wood.

It has been evolved basically from the art of *Lakkar Khunai* (wood carving) and approximates to two centuries ago when inlaying in wood started in the state. Wood and stone carving industry was prevalent since Vedic period. The remains of Buddhist *stupas* (monasteries) and gates and walls of Mohammedan mousoleums reveal that stone carving was prevalent in those days. The doors and pillars of stone were decorated by carving varieties of scenic designs. Similarly wood carving was

magnificently done in the districts of Multan and Lahore (Pakistan) and Amritsar, Sangrur, Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar. The artisans in these districts were renowned for this type of work. The artistic *Chaukhats* (door frames) and door panes are typical examples of this art we come across at some places in old houses. The carving work on doors was thought to welcome the coming guest. Sufficient literature is also available on this art. But these days this type of artistic carving is a thing of the past. However, about two dozen ivory/bone and wood carving manufacturers/exporters are still dealing in the craft in Hoshiarpur.

It was reported that inlay work started initially with ivory during last century. The high cost of the tusk and its scarce supply hindered this work and consequently the artisans switched over to acrylic plastic sheet inlaying which is convenient to set in cavities and gives a shining outlook. Availability of plastic sheets has also led to saving of time and even semi-skilled workers have been considerably facilitated by this ready made material. Apart from ivory and plastic sheets, the black inner core of *tahli* or *sheesham* (Dalbergia Sissu), ebony, Sandal wood, tamarind (Tamarindes indica), mahagony are the other main raw materials needed for the craft. Logs of about a century old *sheesham* tree are thought to be ideal for inlay work.

Due to inadequate records, it is a bit difficult to present actual period and history of origin of this craft. But it was reported confidently by the informants that the art of inlaying was first pursued by Mohammedans. Specimens of such decorations we come across on some musical instruments especially *Sarangi, Tanpura, Sitar and Veena* and *Penjini* (outer axel supporter) of old chariots being inlaid with brass on *sheesham* wood. Information as to the origin of the craft has been collected from local craftsmen, who to a considerable extent, reveal the knowledge of its genesis in the state. The versions of the informants in the villages of Bassi Gulam Hussain and Buthgarh in the hinterland of Hoshiarpur are reproduced here.

According to informants in Bassi Gulam Hussain, there were good carvers of wood in the village some more than two centuries ago. Originally *Tarashia Kitta* or *Khudai/Khunai* (wood carving) was importantly pursued in the village. This work progressed well and intricate designs were carved in wood. The artisans were proficient in making old designs and decorative motifs representing varied scenes of countryside and other objects which represented an attractive and aesthetic look. This village is also known for its past musicians quite at home in classical music. In those days a *sitar* having inlay of ivory was brought by *Nawab* (feudatory) of Hoshiarpur which was a specimen piece of the art. Two wood carvers whose names were given as *Kana* and *Bannu* went to the town and saw that *sitar* and their curiosity was inflamed to start inlay of ivory in wood. They in due course succeeded in this attempt and adopted this craft and since then their descendants in this village have been pursuing this craft but from ivory inlay they have switched on the plastic inlay due to heavy cost and non-availability of tusk which is principally a transfer of skill.

In village Buthgarh, the craft was brought in different way. It was reported that in 19th Century one Rala Ram belonging to carpenter group went to Delhi and learnt the art of carving and he first started preparing decorative and carved *Khrawan* (wooden foot wear) and later on started ivory inlay work. Rala Ram passed on the skill first to Munshi Ram under his own guidance in the village Buthgarh and these two are said to be pioneers in the craft. Arjan Das got the training in the craft from his father Rala Ram. Further one Arjan Singh son of Mela Ram learnt this craft from Munshi Ram as well as from his mother's brother in Singriwala village in the district. Onwards these three persons transmitted this art of inlay in wood to other craftsmen in the community. Later on one Uttam Singh got the training both from Rala Ram and Munshi Ram. Similarly Gopi Ram and Bhagat Singh, sons of Palla Singh got the training in this art from Munshi Ram. Previously they used to do lacquer work by turning wood on lathe. Here it was Rala Ram who first diffused the craft in the village. Gopi Ram and Bhagat Singh in their 80's and 90's were still alive (at the time of survey) and their sons, grand sons are pursuing the occupation even today. At the initial stages there was hardly any wide market and they depended only on few visitors and town patrons for selling their products. In majority of cases this craft is pursued by workers of Ramgarhia caste; but this is scarcely a monopoly of the caste. It was functioning fairly well in pre-partition days and continued so upto 1960 even though, many a proficient Muslim artisans migrated to Pakistan in 1947.

The imposition of sales tax and restrictions on foreign visitors/customers to the state as also the high cost of material and malpractices of middle-men have hit the craft largely as the informants report. The ivory work in state flourished upto the early part of 20th century and Amritsar was said to be the biggest market for this product. Artefacts bearing ivory inlay were primarily disposed of at Amritsar and occasionally at Malerkotla. After partition many a artisans have left the craft as the monetary returns are not commensurate with the labour and input cost.

Inlaid artefacts of surveyed villages of Hoshiarpur have been adjudged as articles of creativity and utility and have a bearing on cultural trait of Punjab. These are not only aesthetic, but are long lasting as well. Artisans of surveyed villages can boast of having won state and national awards in this craft. The stages of process involved in plastic in lay are : making of planks, cutting of templates or stencils, cutting of plastic/ivory locally called *masala* (plastic smithereens), marking contours with stencils, chasing or making cavities/furrows for smithereens, inlaying of *masala* with glue, smoothing the inlaid surface with plane blade, finishing, rubbing with zero sand paper, polishing, rubbing with rag. *Kalamkari*, involves etching and engraving with sharp needle and then filling with coloured paste etc.

Craft Centres

The craft centres outside the state are found in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The inlay articles of Mysore city are known for expertise craftsmanship. There ivory and plastic inlay is primarily done on rose and sandal wood in contrast to *Sheesham* wood in Punjab. Within the state the craft is mainly concentrated in few villages in districts of Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar. We have, however, endeavoured to study the craft as a rural based traditional craft, so its concentration in the villages alone was examined. The main villages are Buthgarh, Bassi Gulam Hussain, Adamwal, which are situated within a radius of 10 km. of Hoshiarpur town. A paltry few households were reported to pursue the craft in adjoining villages, namely, Adampur, Singriwala, Pur Hiran, Manderan and Kathar where the craft is more or less in a moribund stage. Previously the transactions were directly between the rich buyers and artists irrespective of customers being local or foreigners. With passage of time middle-men emerged on the scene and came to hold a complete control. The price of ivory shot up and there also appeared a risk to extinction of elephant life particularly tuskers and the country had to pass "Wild Life (protection) Act, 1972. Under the provision of the enactment traders were required to keep account of transactions dealing in ivory. Due to the high prices and difficulties in maintenance of accounts both the traders and artisans got unhappy, so at many places they have abandoned the craft. Whosoever are doing it, follow it halfheartedly. In Rajasthan, Jaipur, Udaipur, Nathdwara, and in Karnataka-Mysore are the important centres dealing in ivory work, but they face acute shortage of this material. The craft is also reported to be carried out in neighbouring country Burma where tusk is easily available to the artisans.

Communities Associated

Previously Muslims artisans pursued this craft vigorously in Jalandhar, Amritsar and to some extent in Malerkotla. They were a sort of Muslim carpenters doing the *Khunai* (wood carving) and *galai* (inlaying) and *Sangtrashi* (stone cutting and engraving). The craft involves a lot of carpentry job in its process as well, and consequently the same carpenters have been more inclined to choose this craft. It is an indoor work and no stigma of social disability is associated with it. It is considered to be a clean occupation involving a high degree of artistic skill, taste and patience. During the survey in the two villages we came across 22 households of Lohar/Tarkhan caste who were doing the plastic inlay work from which 12 reported to profess Hindu religion and 10 professed Sikh religion being an endogamous social grouping. Three households of Adi Dharmi scheduled caste group were also pursuing this craft. A solitary household of Saini caste had also adopted this craft as his occupation, in order to augment the family income and thus the total 26 households forming the sample and following the craft are accounted for. Six households were such who have now abandoned the job, and of these 4 belonged to Lohar caste one each to Ravidasi and Adi Dharmi scheduled castes. Out of those households following the craft, 22 returned it as their traditional occupation and from households who have abandoned it 4 also reported it as their traditional occupation. In general parlance those Lohars/Tarkhans professing Sikhism, are familarly known by the generic name "Ramgarhia" and those

professing Hinduism are known by "Dhiman". The traditional inlay workers are addressed as "mistri ji" by other members of the society and the plastic inlay is still labelled as "*Hathi dant ka kam*" (ivory work) by the members of the society though the ivory is a thing of the past now. They have preserved a few specimens of ivory work with them, which undoubtedly required proficiency in the skill. It is also worth noting here that in Rajasthan in the towns of Jaipur, Udaipur and Nathdwara mainly *Jangad* and *Gaur Brahmans* pursue the ivory work but due to high cost price their pursuit has also been hit hard. In Mysore city Muslim artisans still pursue ivory and plastic inlay work; but they are also facing the same difficulty in the way of their craft on the same grounds. Some other non-traditional groups have adopted the crafts compelled by circumstances, i.e., "necessity is the mother of invention". They have adopted this craft to augment the family income by indoor work. The traditional artisans tend to adopt some other occupations as the material is getting costlier and they being skilled, hardly get the matching returns for the labour input.

Working Force

The data relating to inlay of plastic craft exclusively, is scarcely available in the state. The workers engaged in this craft are therefore confined to the survey data only. This monograph is based on the data collected from the two villages viz., Bassi Gulam Hussain and Buthgarh, located in the vicinity of Hoshiarpur town. As per 1981 Census, these villages have 2,358 and 577 persons respectively and the corresponding number of main workers are 686 males and 22 females in Bassi Gulam Hussain and 146 males and 2 females in Buthgarh. Majority of workers in these villages were recorded to follow agricultural pursuits (cultivation and agricultural labour) and also as "other workers". As many as 17 males and one female in Bassi and 21 males in Buthgarh are recorded to be engaged in 'household industry manufacturing processing and servicing'. This inlay craft engages only a small chunk of workers here.

All the 26 households forming the sample were studied for the present monograph. These sampled households constitute a population of 144 comprising 79 males and 65 females from whom only 44 males are recorded to be workers. Only one child aged 13 years is also recorded to be doing this work. Previously children from the age of 10 onwards were made to learn and render help in the job. All the persons doing the inlay work are invariably males. Usually inlay job is done manually from start to finish in all the establishments. The job is not very strenuous. The raw material is procured from local dealers in the nearby town and finished goods marketed through them at Hoshiarpur. In a way they are at the mercy of local dealers. The artisans usually work on all days of the week. The work starts from 8.30 AM to 1.00 PM and again from 2.00 PM to 6.00 PM. The Dhiman and Ramgarhia sections of the Lohar/Tarkhan community mainly pursue the craft under study. Castewise break up of the workers engaged in plastic inlay in the two villages is furnished below :-

Name of Caste/ Community	Total Population	No. of workers
Lohar/Tarkhan	129	39
Adi Dharmi	11	4
Saini	4	1
Total :	144	44

From the statement it is evident that castes traditionally associated with wood work are primarily engaged as the inlayers of plastic in wood. Persons of some other castes also make efforts to pursue the craft, because it is a highly skilled job pursued by a socially prestigious caste group and so also adds to social prestige of its pursuers. It may be noted here that in village Adamwal adjacent to Bassi Gulam Hussain over a dozen households had adopted plastic inlay in wood but they are not traditional workers. Further, as many as 24 workers are in the age-group 15-34 years and 13 in age-group 35-59 years, 6 in elderly age-group of 60 and above, and one is a child below the age of 14 years. Some traditional workers have disassociated from the craft as the work is not much flourishing these days because of low monetary returns for such a deluxe craft. Compartmentalisation of economy is taking place. People like those pursuits from which they can earn more money. The craft is suffering from stagnation. These days it is not actually fitting in the economic structure as the craft is highly skilled job requiring advanced technology. The exquisite skills and marvels of this workmanship are scarcely compensated and valued in terms of money and consequently the craft is suffering to considerable

extent and for this reason it is being pursued by a fewer persons. In contrast an ordinary carpenter or a mason earns more than an inlay worker inspite of the fact that the latter is highly skilled. We come across only a few *Karkhanas* (workshops) dealing in the craft. The artisans who had amassed some money bit by bit were running their *Karkhanas* in which some hired artisans are also employed on wage basis.

Craft Objects and their Value

A variety of articles or objects are manufactured by the artisans in these villages. Among the main products are : decorative table top (elliptical, square and polygonal), jewellery and fancy boxes, chessboards, necktie boxes, bangle boxes, decorative chairs, *peedahs* (low chairs), paper weights, ash trays, fruit and coffee trays, screens, wall plates, panels representing Omer Khayam, Heer Ranjha, Sohani Mahiwal, Sassi Punnu, Laila Majnu, Christ, Taj Mahal, Golden Temple, teapoys, *Chakla Velna* (*chapati* rollers), powder bowls, toys, *palkis,* inlaid door ways, writing cases, *rehals* (book stand), racks, writing desks, card cases, mirror backs. In addition to inlay of plastic in wood, *Kalamkari* (etching by needle) on plastic plates is also done. Pieces of *Kalamkari* technology are specially found in Bassi Gulam Hussain. The legend depicting swimming over tides by Sohani (legendary female heroine) across river Chenab to meet her paramour Mahiwal on other bank is a piece of exquisite skill in *Kalamkari*. Some artisans in these villages have been honoured with the state and national awards in the craft. They have the pride of winning *tammar pattar* (bronze insignias) and enjoy pension on getting the award. Many other scenes on objects either in inlaid from or etched ones are Radha Krishna, Lakshmi, Sarswati, Durga, Kali as well as gypsy girl, water lady, flowers, landscape, butterflies, snakes, lions, lizards, Anarkali, dancing girl, parrot, geese, palanquin, breasted ladies, ploughman, tortoise, sensual types of women, shephards grazing sheep, national leaders, festoons, creepers, chains, geometrical and polygonal figures and other floral designs. The objects or artefacts have their own uniqueness of use mainly for decorative purposes. The significance is apparent from name, design or pattern prepared. The marketing and Service Extension Centre of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) functioning at Hoshiarpur was contacted for collecting information regarding approximate quantity of products and their approximate value in rupees, which is furnished below along with the main purpose for which the articles are used.

	Different objects of the craft	Main purpose for which used	Approximate money value
1.	Table tops (different sizes and designs	Daily use	As per 1980-81 craft notes on Handicrafts of Punjab, production approximated to Rs. 30 lakhs. Whereas production capacity was 75 lakhs.
2.	Trays (different sizes)	Show pieces	
3.	Boxes (different sizes and types of boxes)	To keep Jewellery and bangles etc.	
4.	Dressing Tables (various sizes)	Daily use	
5.	Screens	Office use and show pieces	At the time of Survey the production was estimated to be Rs. 45 lakhs.
6.	Chessboards, toys	Playing games	
7.	Wall plates	Show pieces	

It was reported that production can be increased provided the present craftsmen are fully engaged and trainees are also absorbed. However, as reported by the artisans in the villages the craft is not progressing as a consequence of low monetary returns, imposition of sales tax, high cost of material and ban on foreign customers to visit Punjab state due to disturbed conditions. The craft otherwise has got a tremendous potentiality to absorb more workers and is liable to strengthen its position in export market if diversified designs are developed and artefacts are made by using highly seasoned wood being resistant to heat, water and other seasonal hazards.

Channels of Disposal

The articles prepared by the village artisan manufacturers are disposed of through local shopkeepers, the middle-men. The articles prepared by them pass on to these suppliers/ exporters who derive main benefit in the business. The middle-men or agents provide the artisan the material in the form of *sheesham* wood, and plastic etc. and take back the finished article(s) or accessories and pay them the labour charges alone. The artisans rarely sell their articles directly and there is neither any government agency nor any cooperative society to purchase their products and do the transaction. These artisans are usually bonded with their shopkeepers.

There are about 8 establishments or firms which deal as "manufacturer exporters" and are located in Dabbi-bazaar, Sheesh Mahal Bazaar, Railway Road, Sutehri Road, Model Town, Old Tanda Road. They have got some hired labour as well. These establishments were believed to have disposed of articles approximating to Rupees 25 Lakhs during the year 1985-86.

There are reported 11 establishments which deal as "manufacturer suppliers" 6 of these are located in places as, Dabbi Bazaar, Sheesh Mahal Bazaar, Sarafan Bazaar, Sutehri Road and Tahli Street in Hoshiarpur town itself, whereas 4 of these establishments are in village Buthgarh and one in Bassi Gulam Hussain. These establishments dealt in inlay products approximating to rupees three lakhs during 1985-86. They function as manufacturers and suppliers of the inlay products for their onward disposal outside the state and outside the country.

Similarly ten establishments are reported to be manufacturers of the inlay products or accessories thereof. These were scattered in the hinterland villages, viz., Bassi Gulam Hussain, Buthgarh, Adamwal and in some places in town as well. The proportion of products manufactured by them is estimated to be over two lakhs of rupees. The establishments in the villages are cottage industries type. A large majority say 80% of artisans in villages work on "Petty Theka" (small contact) with dealers. The raw material is procured from local dealers and finished goods are marketed through them who send these to other dealers at various places in the country. The artisans reported that about 80 per cent of the products are sold by the dealers outside the country, 15 per cent outside the state but within the country whereas about 5 per cent of the products only are sold within the state. The direct sale by the manufacturing artisans is insignificant as local demand for these artefacts is negligible. The outside dealers purchase the articles from local dealers in the town. The artisans, however, make the articles if an order is booked with them. About 20% of the artisans in the villages are quite independent and arrange the procurement of material and sale of the products themselves, and these are such artisans who can afford the expenditure from their own pockets in the first instance.

Terms and Transactions with Artisans

Majority of the artisans get the raw material in the form of *Sheesham* wood, plastic sheets, glue/*fevicol*, nails, hinges, screws, etc. from the local dealers at Hoshiarpur with whom they have the contract to supply the inlaid products. The artisans occasionally get some advance money as well which is adjusted towards labour charges afterwards. The finished products are as per the designs prescribed by the dealers, allowing minor variation and wastage involved therein. The imposition of 7 per cent state sales tax and 4 per cent central sales tax is charged on handicraft goods which is quite irksome to the craftsmen. In contrast the craftsmen emphatically contend that such wood craft objects are exempted from taxes in the neighbouring states of Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh where sales tax is actually imposed on mechanically prepared goods. This handicraft is just like a cottage industry and is labour intensive in which electric power is rarely used. The imposition of sales tax is thought to be

a burden on the artisan and hence unjustified. The abolition of sales tax on the handicraft products needs to be taken up immediately by the government.

Usually, the cost of material for an article constitutes 30-40 per cent of its sale price and the labour charges correspondingly range from 60-70 per cent. Thus, cost of labour has an edge over the cost of material. Cost price in respect of 30 cms. diameter round teapoy/table with three elephant type legs and floral design inlaid thereon was estimated as given below :-

Cost of Material	Rs.	
Sheesham Wood	15.00	45
Plastic Sheet	25.00	
Sandpaper, screws, etc.	5.00	

Labour	Rs.	
Carpentry	5.00	85
Cutting and inlaying	35.00	
Polishing	13.00	
Preparing and fixing of legs	32.00	
Total	130.00	

The ratio of cost of material and labour approximates to 45 : 85. It is also subjected to sales taxes as mentioned above. Similarly, labour and material cost for some other articles were also inquired at the time of survey, which is given below :-

	Name of article/object	Size	Usual price	Ratio of amount towards Material	Labour
1.	*Shingar daan* (bangle box) Having inner bangle stand, valvet bottom	Width 8" Length 12" Height 4.50"	300-350	30	70
2.	Jewellery Box	Width 5" Length 8" Height 2.25"	65-70	30	70
3.	Pencil Tray	Width 3.5" Length 9.50" Height 1"	20	30	70
4.	Table top - Design as *Bhabiri Sitara* (Butterfly and Star), floral	12" Diameter	120	30	70
5.	Table Top *Bhabiri Sitara* (Butterfly and Star) or Floral or Elephant scene black shade design	15" Diameter	150	30	70
6.	Table top design as above	20" Diameter	250	30	70

All dimensional measurements are followed in inches and are given so with a historic perspective in view. For conversion the reader may multiply by 2.54 to make centimeters The transactions between artisans and dealers in the town are settled in accordance with above principle with minor variations, and adjustments made accordingly. The prices of material have gone up and so have daily wages of labourers during recent past. The artisans allege that their average daily wages fall even below Rs. 25 per day so they sometime feel discouraged to continue this craft. They also expressed their grouse that their craftsmanship is not graded properly and adequately, and consequently they are thinking to alienate their children from the craft. Furthermore, they also reported that they seldom get the payment in lumpsum, rather it is got in piecemeal pattern. Handicraft marketing extension centre at Hoshiarpur is trying to create a linkage between artisans and marketing agencies/exporters. Punjab Small Scale Industries and Export Corporation is taking part in this venture to purchase articles directly from artisans. This is an encouraging step to increase the production and ameliorate the lot of the artisans. These artisans do only inlay work

on plain surfaces, and rarely do carving. The screens on which they do inlay work, are initially carved by others and are supplied by dealers. According to them the dealers get the carved objects from Saharanpur (U.P.) for further inlaying of plastic. The dealers in this way have to negotiate with several parties involved in the transaction. There has hardly been accumulation of unsold stocks of the objects of inlaid work. There is a firm demand for the objects but production lags behind due to shortage of skilled workers/artisans.

Agencies Engaged in Development of Craft

With a view to promoting handicraft, 'Khadi and Village Industries Board', 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission', 'Small Scale Industries and Export Corporation' are established by the Government. For monitoring production the Boards/Commissions/Corporation have a provision to lend a hand in promoting and encouraging this handicraft as it comes broadly under carpentry. The Board/Commission helps in the venture by advancing certain loans at the rate of 4% interest to the enterpreneur after envaluating the scope of industry and its capacity to undertake the venture. For marketing the artefacts the artisans have to explore themselves. Practically, there is hardly any, who approached these organisations for financial help.

Corporation besides helping the artisans, helps the small industrialists and exporters as well. It plays its role to procure and distribute raw material, setting up industrial focal points, offering assistance in marketing of artefacts, identifying needs of the artisans, introducing new innovations in technology as power driven tools for cutting, sawing, planing of wood and also seasoning of wood through solar energy etc. The craft of inlay in wood finds significant place in the programme of Development Commissioner, Handicrafts which has set up a marketing and service extension wing at Hoshiarpur. It endeavours to analyse, solve the hurdles in the way of crafts and suggests to increase the product. The artisans are, however, only marginally satisfied by the work of various agencies. They have to depend on their own efforts and the product whatsoever, looms largely on their own initiative. They have to arrange their own tools, workshop, designs, procurement of material from dealers. The art of inlay is passed on from master craftsmen to their pupils in a traditional way, though an industrial institute is also reported to be functioning at Hoshiarpur. These are actually the master craftsmen who teach the art to their pupils and make them proficient in the craft. Despite the dissatisfaction with developmental activities the artisans were pursuing the craft as their traditional work though complaining against imposition of sales taxes and diminished returns and scarcity of fine *sheesham* wood and increase in cost of their relevant material. A solar wood seasoning and rural marketing centre at Jalandhar Road, Hoshiarpur is functioning to help provide seasoned wood and other material such as plastic sheets, flint paper, glue, mansion and urethane polish etc. Seasoned *sheesham* wood is suitable for plastic inlay. The artisans opined that the supply of this stuff be ensured to them at reasonable rates. They have an innate urge to pursue the craft but the earnings through so skilful an art are incommensurate with labour involved and consequently the number of artisans is decreasing steadily.

Co-operative Societies Associated with the Craft

The artisans have not so far formed any association or union to run its affairs jointly for the common good of the artisans. The lack of cooperative body or forum leaves them in the lurch and they are left to solve their problems individually. Also they can't make their voice heard at higher levels and thus remain devoid of benefits of bargaining. There is also no cooperative emporium where they may be able to sell their artefacts. Undoubtedly they do feel the need to establish a cooperative society but the element of art rivalry enters in and leg pulling starts as they report. They are aware that the cooperative body can run the affairs in a desired manner, but they are callous in this matter and the things are as they have been in the past. It is surmised that once a few leading artisans venture to constitute such body, it will successfully regulate the production and remove many bottlenecks in the way of craft.

Training Centres

A training institute for imparting inlay instructions is functioning at Red Road, Kachcha Toba, Hoshiarpur since late 50s. Between 12-20 students having passed a minimum middle standard are admitted in this institute annually. They are paid a monthly stipend of Rs. 80/- per student. The duration of the course is one year.

After undergoing the trade test in the institute the students have to further undergo apprenticeship course with some reputed establishment or master artisans who are preferably the national award winners. During that interval of about 2 years they get Rs. 150/- p.m. as stipend. It is this apprenticeship training in private establishments that makes them master the skill of the trade. The work is not as strenuous as manual labour. The skill is acquired by continuous practice and guidance. The institute definitely fosters an interest and also promotes a taste for varied designs and craftsmanship. The course of study broadly constitutes drawing, painting, modelling, wood carving, ivory carving, inlaying, engraving, enamelling, carpentry, cabinet making and polishing etc. etc. The student depending only on institute have not been reported successful unless they take training from craftsmen.

Private teachers may adopt a pupil for teaching him the craft art without any inhibition on grounds of caste. But it was reported by master craftsmen that children of traditional craftsmen are very quick to learn the art as compared to those belonging to other castes. They, however, have also taught many students belonging to Scheduled Caste and several of them have acquired the skill upto the desired level. The details of learning process are dealt with in Chapter III.

This monograph is a study of village household traditional craft. The training aspect is more limited to master craftsmen and it is the experience which helps in acquiring the skill. The artisans have no problem in teaching the skill. The craft actually needs to be patronised by the government. It has a potential for offering employment to a sizeable number of persons and improving their living conditions once the intervening bottlenecks are removed and will help in restricting urbanward migration from rural areas.

For relevant information on the craft, various organisations both of state and Union Government were approached through schedule-A but only the Marketing and Service Extension Centre of the office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) at Hoshiarpur could supply a few slices of information on the craft and hence the monograph is based on the premises we collected through our own field survey during the middle of 1988.

CHAPTER – II

CRAFTSMEN IN THEIR RURAL SETTING

General Particulars of Villages - Location and Amenities

As stated earlier the inlay of plastic in wood is carried out in few villages only. Except the villages namely, Buthgarh and Bassi Gulam Hussain the other villages had fewer workers in them who were more of non-traditional type. So, for the purpose of present study the above mentioned two villages were selected where 13 households each were found to be engaged in this craft primarily constituting traditional workers. Both these villages fall in Tahsil Hoshiarpur of the same district. These villages also reveal the terrain, cultural pattern and socio-economic set-up which is very much similar to other parts of rural Punjab. The soil is sandy and the landscape is interspaced by frequent seasonal nullahs. These villages lie in a radius of 10 kms. from Hoshiarpur town in its hinterland and are about 12 kms. apart from each other lying in the magnetic meridian, Bassi Gulam Hussain being towards north of Hoshiarpur and Buthgarh towards south and these three are almost collinear. The plastic inlay work here is basically identical and the materials, tools and techniques employed are the same and social bonds amongst the workers also exist. The salient features of the villages including locational particulars and amenities available are given individually as follows.

Village Buthgarh

Buthgarh village is situated at a distance of 7 kms. from Hoshiarpur town towards south, the total area being 165 hectares constituting 98 hectares under irrigation and 67 hectares as *barani* (rainfed) with no forest land. Here consolidation of holding took place in 1955-56. To reach the village the link road branches off from Chhauni Kalan towards the south west and one comes across a seasonal nullah before entering the village area. The village is bound by Bajwara village in north, Bohan village in south, Nangal Shahidan village towards east and Shergarh towards west. The village is easily approachable by link road. The land is plain and climate is temperate as for the state. The rains set in the month of June/July and continue till end of September when the nullahs are in spate, during the rainy days. Occasional winter rains are also experienced in the months of December to February.

For law and order, the village falls under the jurisdiction of Hoshiarpur Sadar Police Station. The NES block at Hoshiarpur operates for developmental activities in the hinterland villages. A local panchayat functions in the village. The village has the facility of being served by local bus and few tempos also ply between Hoshiarpur and Buthgarh. It is also connected by link road to neighbouring villages. Primary school is also run in the village, however, for pursuing middle standard education, the children have to go to the neighbouring village Bohan where middle school functions. Facilities for higher education at high school and degree level exist at Hoshiarpur. Postal facilities are available at a distance of 3 kms. at Ram Nagar Colony Camp, however, telephone facility is locally available. The nearest railway station, medical and banking facilities are available at Hoshiarpur. Drinking water facility is by hand pumps. It is worth noting here that the village has two habitats the old and the new. The new habitat has extended beyond the red line *abadi* (inhabitation) and it is partly situated in agricultural land of Bohan village. The village is now inhabited on the land belonging to Bohan village as well as that of Buthgarh. A religious shrine where now a days a *gurdwara sahib* is situated is said to commemorate the memory of an old *sadhu* (ascetic) which was his *kutia* (hermit) previously. A temple of deity -*Lakhdata* is also situated in old habitat of the village in the Harijan *basti* (habitat). The Harijans reside towards one side of the village.

Bassi Gulam Hussain

This is an old village which is situated about 5 kms. from Hoshiarpur town, towards its north approachable partly by *pucca* and *kachcha* road. The village is situated at the right bank towards west of wide *choe* (nullah) descending from the foothills as it flows. The south-eastern area of the village is mostly sandy bed of the nullah which sometimes causes havoc to the adjoining

agricultural land in rainy season, whereas towards west of the village the land is quite fertile and plain. The total area of the village is 627 hectares constituting 394 hectares under irrigation and 233 hectares as unirrigated and dependent on rain for cultivation, whereas area under forest is nil. The area under irrigation is, however, subject to change. These figures are as per village *Patwari's* record at the time of survey. The irrigation is done by tubewells. On the northern side lie the villages Thathal and Kotla Maruf Ghaunspur and Adamwal whereas on the south lies Bassi Purani village. On the west lies village Kotla Maruf-Jhari and Bahaderpur. On the east it is bounded by villages Sherpur and Satial. The village under study is quite old. It had several Muslim households before partition. It was known for its musicians and singers in classical songs. The village habitat is spread over 7 hectares having a population of 3,558 comprising 440 households as per 1981 Census. As many as 444 males and 384 females comprised the scheduled caste population.

The tahsil and district headquarters are at Hoshiarpur and for law and order maintenance the village comes under the jurisdiction of Hoshiarpur Sadar Police Station at Hoshiarpur. For education a high school having the primary and middle wings also is available locally whereas for degree education, the students have to avail the facility at Hoshiarpur. A sub-post office functions in the village but telephone and banking facilities are available at Hoshiarpur. A local dispensary caters to health and medical services to the residents of the village. For sale of agricultural produce, the people go to Hoshiarpur. Things of daily consumption are locally available. Some villagers own vehicles such as cars, motorcycles/scooters and tractors. Televisions sets are also seen installed in several houses.

Demographic Aspects of the villages

The basic data on demographic aspects of both the villages under study for the years 1971 and 1981 is given in table II.1 below:-

TABLE II.1

Distribution of population by sex, number of households, scheduled castes and area of the village at 1971 and 1981 Censuses

Name of village (HB No.)	Area in hectares	Number of households		Population				Scheduled Castes			
				1971		1981		1971		1981	
		1971	1981	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Buthgarh (347)	165	101	97	297	271	300	277	125	98	117	107
Bassi Gulam Hussain (362)	634	427	440	1,095	1,009	1,235	1,123	336	320	444	384

The population figures reveal that there has been insignificant increase in village Buthgarh which might have been due to counting of some of its households in village Bohan in whose land they have constructed residential houses. In village Bassi Gulam Hussain the increase in population is about 12 per cent. Some members of scheduled caste community from village Buthgarh have gone to Chandigarh and other towns in pursuit of employment, so their population is constant whereas in Bassi Gulam Hussain it has recorded an increase of about 20 per cent. Other salient demographic indicators such as growth rate, sex ratio, average household by size of population are represented in the table II.2 ahead.

TABLE II.2

Distribution of population by sex ratio, growth rate and household size as per 1971 and 1981 Censuses

Name of village		Growth rate	Sex Ratio		Average household size	
			1971	1981	1971	1981
1		2	3	4	5	6
1.	Buthgarh	1.58	895	923	5.62	5.95
2.	Bassi Gulam Hussain	12.07	921	909	4.93	5.36

The sex ratio being 923 females per 1000 males as per 1981 Census for the village Buthgarh which slightly exceeds the sex ratio for the district which is 915 females for 1000 males. This is perhaps due to migration of some male workers to other towns as a result of occupational push, whereas in Bassi Gulam Hussain it is slightly below the district average due to immigration of some male labourers to the village for agricultural pursuits etc. On the whole the deviation from the district average in both the villages is of small magnitude due to natural factors.

The data on literacy and working force in the two villages is furnished in Table II.3 as follows:-

TABLE II.3

Distribution of population by percentage of literacy and working force participation and by category-wise classification

Name of village		Literacy		Labour force participation	Main workers (1981)						Marginal workers
		1971	1981	1981	Total main workers		Culti-vators	Agricul-tural labou-rers	Households Industry, Manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs	Other workers	
					M	F					
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Buthgarh	50.00	49.91	25.56	146	2	52	21	21	54	—
2.	Bassi Gulam Hussain	48.57	57.21	30.03	686	22	238	204	18	248	2

From the above table it is seen that as in respect of population the percentage of literacy in Buthgarh village has remained almost static which nearly equals the literacy rate of the district (50.09) at 1981 Census whereas for Bassi Gulam Hussain the literacy percentage exceeds that of the district average. It has, however, shown an appreciable increase over the previous decade. However, as compared to the literacy rate of 40.88 per cent of the district at 1971 Census, both the villages had excelled at that time. Both the villages are ahead in literacy percentage as compared to the literacy in the state, i.e., 40.80 per cent at 1981 Census. Both the villages were also fairly ahead in literacy percentage of state (33.67) at 1971 Census. Further the working force in Buthgarh and Bassi Gulam Hussain constituted 25.65 per cent and 30.03 per cent respectively whereas for the district and state the corresponding percentages are 26.39 and 29.35 respectively indicating that the district is slightly lagging behind in work participation because many a workers from the villages here have gone outside the district for occupational pursuits. Agricultural workers and "other workers" constitute the major segment of working force.

Socio-economic Composition

A peep was also made into the socio-economic structure of the villages which was based on discussions with local elites and a general consensus was reached thereon. The information collected vide schedule 'B' pertaining to communities, their numerical strength and corresponding number of households is given below in table II.4.

TABLE II.4

Distribution of castes/communities by number of households, population by sex in villages under study

Sl. No.	Name of community/caste	Name of village by number of households and population											
		Buthgarh				Bassi Gulam Hussain				Total			
		House-holds	P	M	F	House-holds	P	M	F	House-holds	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	Adi Dharmi (SC)	70	314	160	154	180	792	410	382	250	1106	570	536
2.	Saini	16	101	54	47	120	710	370	340	136	811	424	387
3.	Balmiki/Chura (SC)	–	–	–	–	70	450	240	210	70	450	240	210
4.	Ghumhar	–	–	–	–	70	419	219	200	70	419	219	200
5.	Tarkhan/Lohar	15	102	52	50	25	155	80	75	40	257	132	125
6.	Brahman	–	–	–	–	20	135	72	63	20	135	72	63
7.	Jat	14	86	46	40	2	12	7	5	16	98	53	45
8.	Ravidasi/Chamar (SC)	12	78	42	36	–	–	–	–	12	78	42	36
9.	Khatri (Arora)	–	–	–	–	10	58	28	30	10	58	28	30
10.	Sunar (Goldsmith)	–	–	–	–	4	29	18	11	4	29	18	11
11.	Jhewar	1	9	5	4	1	5	2	3	2	14	7	7
12.	Rajput	–	–	–	–	2	11	5	6	2	11	5	6
13.	Bodhi	–	–	–	–	2	9	5	4	2	9	5	4
14.	Mirasi (Muslim)	–	–	–	–	1	7	3	4	1	7	3	4
15.	Nai	–	–	–	–	1	6	3	3	1	6	3	3
	Total	128	690	359	331	508	2,798	1,462	1,336	636	3,488	1,821	1,667

The villages are multiethnic as is clear from the above table. The village Bassi Gulam Hussain is bigger than Buthgarh both in terms of population and area. In both the villages separately as well a jointly Adi Dharmi Scheduled Caste precipitates as the first and most dominant social grouping. Next comes the Saini caste group followed again by scheduled caste group Balmiki/Chura. Then comes the Ghumar caste which usually deals in trade and commerce. They are well to do and old inhabitants of the village. Fifth in rank comes Tarkhan/Lohar caste group which deals in work of plastic inlay in wood. These are traditional workers, though few members of other castes in a non-traditional way also do this craft work. Village Bassi Gulam Hussain is more multiethnic than Buthgarh where members of 14 castes/communities are found residing. Members belonging to other groups – Brahman, Jat and Ravidasi etc. are smaller in number.

The settlement pattern reveals that the houses of craftsmen are unevenly scattered in the village without any special planning or design. It is seen that the scheduled caste households are usually found inhabited on lower and outer fringe of the villages. The houses of other so called *swarana* caste are spread in a mixed pattern. Out

of total 636 households as many as 180 were reported to profess Sikh religion, and they usually belong to Jat, Saini, Ramgarhia section of Tarkhan/Lohar, Ravidasi (S.C.), Jhewar caste, and the rest profess Hindu religion with only a couple of households professing Islam. The percentage of households professing Hindu religion goes over 70. The stigma of social disability has diminished and the people are aware that practice of untouchability is a congnizable offence under the law. Social distance between different social groups has shrunk. The villagers from these villages returned Punjabi as their mother tongue.

Traditional/Non-Traditional Occupations

With the availability of infrastructural facilities the villagers fairly come in contact with outside world. The outside influence is affecting all members of the society. The job of inlay in wood is highly skilled one requiring high cost and time. It is still followed by traditional workers as any Tom,Dick and Harry is unable to learn it efficiently and quickly. Being forced by circumstances the traditional craftsmen are sticking to it, at the same time they have shifted from ivory inlay to plastic inlay as a result of vertical occupational mobility, but they have started thinking to put their children in other occupations where from suitable income may accrue. They were found to be doing the work as they have the love to keep the craft alive. Those who have left the craft for better income hardly suffer from any social degradation or jolt. The craftsmen reported that there is demand for the inlaid artefacts, but number of workers is steadily decreasing as there has started a shift to other fields. Now the caste boundaries are tending to be flexible and occupation is tending towards a delinkage from it. It is the high income or wealth which adds to social status. The occupational pursuits of the village communities as ascertained after a consensus reached in group discussion with local elders is given in the table II.5 below :-

TABLE II.5

Distribution of households of different castes/communities by broad occupational pursuit

Sl. No.	Caste/Community	Total No. of house-holds	No. of households of different castes/communities by occupation						
			Culti-vation	Trade or commerce	In craft as car-penter black-smith Plastic inlay in wood etc.	Agricul-tural and other labour	Bunai (weaving)	Service	Other miscella-neous occupa-tions
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Adi Dharmi (SC)	250	–	–	–	180	70	–	–
2.	Saini	136	136	–	–	–	–	–	–
3.	Ghumhar	70	–	70	–	–	–	–	–
4.	Balmiki/Chura (SC)	70	–	–	–	70	–	–	–
5.	Tarkhan/Lohar	40	–	–	40	–	–	–	–
6.	Brahman	20	–	10	–	–	–	10	–
7.	Jat	16	16	–	–	–	–	–	–
8.	Ravidasi/Chamar (SC)	12	–	–	–	12	–	–	–
9.	Khatri (Arora)	10	9	1	–	–	–	–	–
10.	Sunar (Goldsmith)	4	–	–	4	–	–	–	–
11.	Rajput	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
12.	Bodhi	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
13.	Jhewar	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
14.	Nai	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
15.	Mirasi (Muslim)	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
	Total	636	163	81	44	267	70	10	1

From the total 636 households 163 reported cultivation as their traditional occuption. They mainly belong to Jat, Saini, Khatri and Rajput communities. Households of Ghumhar, Brahman and Khatri pursue trade and commerce activities. Households of Tarkhan/Lohar and Sunar communities are traditionally inlay workers and ornament makers respectively. Members from Adi Dharmi, Ravidasi/Chamar, Balmiki/Chura scheduled castes and couple of households belonging to Bodhi, Jhewar and Nai castes returned agricultural labour as their activity. Sizeable number of households of Adi Dharmi were also engaged in weaving cloth whereas Brahman households were engaged in services as well. A Mirasi household was traditionally a musician. The economy of the villages is primarily agro based.

Thirteen households each belonging to Tarkhan/Lohar community in the two villages were engaged in plastic inlay craft. The break up of these 26 households is given in Table II.6 as follow :-

TABLE II.6

Distribution of population of selected households by sex, ethnic group and workers in the selected villages

Sl. No.	Name of Caste/ Community	Total No. of selected households	Total Population	Villages indicating No. of households and their population by sex						Total workers	
				Buthgarh			Bassi Gulam Hussain				
				Households	M	F	Households	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Lohar/Tarkhan	22	129	10	37	37	12	34	21	39	–
2.	Adi Dharmi	3	11	2	3	3	1	3	2	4	–
3.	Saini	1	4	1	2	2	–	–	–	1	–
	Total	26	144	13	42	42	13	37	23	44	–

From total 79 males, 44 males constitute the working force whereas none of the females in these 26 households is recorded to be engaged in gainful activity. A bulk of craftsmen (39) belong to Tarkhan/Lohar community. The data pertaining to both workers and non-workers by age group in selected households is furnished in table II.7 below :-

TABLE II.7

Distribution of workers and non-workers classified by sex and broad age groups

Age group	Total Population			Workers			Non-workers		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0-14	47	26	21	1	1	–	46	25	21
15-34	59	31	28	24	24	–	35	7	28
35-59	25	13	12	13	13	–	12	–	12
60 and above	13	9	4	6	6	–	7	3	4
All ages	144	79	65	44	44	–	100	35	65

Only one worker below 14 years was the case of child labour. He is yet a learner and there are total 43 male workers of age group (15 and above). The working force indicated a decline with the onset of old age (60 and above). In the same context the distribution of workers with reference to traditional and present day occupation, age structure is given in table II.8 as follows :-

TABLE II.8

Distribution of workers classified by age group as well as traditional and present occupation

Traditional Occupation	Workers by age group and presently engaged in														Total	
	Traditional occupation (inlay work)						Service		Repair of sewing machine		Plastic inlay in wood					
	15-34		35-59		60+		15-34		60+		15-34		35-59			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Plastic inlay work in wood	20	–	12	–	5	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	38	–
2. Cultivation	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–
3. Bunai (weaving)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	2	–
4. Agricultural labour	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	2	–
Total	20	–	12	–	5	–	1	–	1	–	3	–	1	–	43*	–

*One is a male worker under 14 years and he is traditional craft worker.

The table reveals that out of 38 traditional inlay workers one is presently engaged in service as drawing teacher in a school whereas 37 were continuing presently the traditional occupation of inlay work. Three from agricultural pursuits as their traditional occupation have shifted presently to this craft work. Two persons traditionally being bunkars (weavers) have also shifted to the inlay work in wood. Members of other castes have come over to this occupation as it is perennial and prestigious too. Of the 43 workers in the age group 15 onwards, 24 are in the group 15-34, 13 are in the age group 35-59 and 6 are in the elderly group of 60 and above years. Persons belonging to so called lower castes tend to adopt the craft whereas traditional craftsmen tend to deviate from it, i.e., a moderately horizontal occupational mobility is seen.

Occupational Diversification

Diversity of occupation which is regarded as a *sine qua non* of progress is not markedly found among the craftsmen in these villages. Diversification is found only in two households in the sample having their workers absorbed in two or more different occupations at a time. Usually the households with better economic and educational level have a tendency to deviate from one occupation to another and it is with a purpose of more earning. The pattern of occupational diversity as compiled from the field data is furnished below in table II.9.

TABLE II.9

Distribution of households by diversified occupation

Sl.No.	Description of occupational diversity	No. of households	Nature of combination	Workers
1	2	3	4	5
1.	No occupational diversity	24	Single	38
2.	Plastic inlay worker, Mechanic sewing machines	1	Double	2
3.	Plastic inlay worker, service	1	Double	4
	Total	26	–	44

It is seen that inlay work was the dominant occupation in the 26 households. Two different occupations are met only in two households. If the worker(s) in a household follow the same occupation as the head of the household it is indicative of no occupational diversity.

Settlement Pattern

The houses of craftsmen are scattered in the village habitation of both the villages. Their houses hardly have any difference as compared to houses of other communities. It was seen that the houses in Buthgarh were comparatively newly built with spacious courtyards in front and there was no congestion, however, in Bassi Gulam Hussain some of the houses were rather old and congested too. In the settlement pattern many of the houses of craftsmen are distant apart but the social cohesion and bond of fraternity is stronger. It is seen that scheduled caste houses are towards outer side of the villages and in a manner appear segregated. The lay out of the villages scarcely has any planned design. In Bassi Gulam Hussain many houses are double storeyed and some craftsmen do the work even at first floor whereas in Buthgarh all the workers do their job at ground floor. On social ladder, Brahman caste is thought to occupy upper strata of the society followed by Jat, Rajput, Khatri, Saini, Tarkhan/Lohar, Sunar, Ghumhar, almost occupying the same social strata. They are followed by Jhewar, Nai without any stigma of social disability. Inter-commensal relations exist between these groups. These days social status is turning to be function of economic status. However, some old norms still persist though in feeble form as Balmiki/Chura, Ravidasi, Adi Dharmi communities are inhabited a bit distant apart from the so called clean castes. The stigma of social disability is, however, weakening, with economic transformation. With anonymity of a caste group the element of social disability is lost in social mist. It was the fore-knowledge about one's caste group which played the main part in the social matrix. With constitutional provision, untouchability is punishable offence. In these villages the Lohar/Tarkhan craftsmen professing Hindu religion regard themselves as Dhiman Brahman the descendants of *Vishwkarma* (the celestial god of technology). He is regarded the architect of universe. He is held in veneration by descendants. The artisans whether Dhiman or Ramgarhia constitute an endogamous group with prestigious place in social set up of the village.

Demographic Profile of Craftsmen Households

As already discussed the data pertains to 26 sampled households practising the inlay work having a population of 144 persons comprising 79 males and 65 females thereby giving a sex ratio, of 823 females per 1000 males. The low sex ratio is attributed to outmigration of some persons to towns for occupational pursuits. Thirty three males and 34 females were recorded to be married, 3 males and 4 females were recorded as widowed and none was recorded as "divorces or separated" or of unspecified marital status.

Amongst the sampled population 64.47 per cent were recorded as literates whereas for the two villages joint literacy works out to 55.84 per cent as per 1981 Census figures. It is evident that the sampled population is advanced in respect of

literacy over the literacy of two villages jointly and it is still higher than the literacy of the district (50.09) and that of the state ≤ 40.86 as per 1981 Census. The population of the village is competing well in sphere of education.

The distribution of workers and non-workers by sex and educational level is given in following table II.10.

TABLE II.10

Distribution of workers and non-workers by sex and educational level

Educational Level	Total		Workers		Non-workers	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Illiterate	19	27	4	–	15	27
2. Primary or Junior Basic	35	19	20	–	15	19
3. Middle	11	9	8	–	3	9
4. Matriculation or Higher Secondary	13	10	11	–	2	10
5. Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	1	–	1	–	–	–
Total	79	65	44	–	35	65

Amongst the workers and non-workers the percentage of literacy approximates to 91 and 58 respectively. "Primary or Junior Basic" is the dominant educational level. There is considerable dropping out after the primary level of education. The number of drop-outs increase further after matriculation or higher secondary level. None was returned to have attained "graduate and above" level of education. Education indicates a good start, but a poor end at higher level of education.

The distribution of households by religion, community, mother tongue, sex and educational level of head of household is furnished in table II.11 below :-

TABLE II.11

Distribution of households by religion, caste/community, mother tongue, sex and educational level of head of household

Religion	Caste/Community	Mother-tongue of head of household				Educational level			
		Punjabi	Hindi	M	F	Illiterate	Primary or Junior Basic	Middle	Matriculation or Higher Secondary
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Hindu	Lohar/Tarkhan	13	–	13	–	1	7	3	2
	Saini	1	–	1	–	–	1	–	–
	Adi Dharmi (SC)	2	–	2	–	–	2	–	–
2. Sikh	Lohar/Tarkhan	9	–	9	–	2	6	–	1
	Adi Dharmi (SC)	1	–	1	–	–	–	1	–
	Total	26	–	26	–	3	16	4	3

From 26 heads of households 16 reported to profess Hindu religion whereas 10 reported to profess Sikh religion. Out of 26 heads of households 22 belong to Tarkhan/Lohar caste group, 3 to Adi Dharmi Scheduled Caste and one to Saini caste. All returned "Punjabi" as their mother tongue. All heads were invariably males. None of the heads of households studied beyond matriculation or higher secondary level. The composition of selected households by age, sex of head of household and number of members is furnished in table below :-

TABLE II.12

Distribution of households by age, sex of head of household and number of member(s)

Age group of head of household	Head of household by sex		Number of households having member(s)								
	M	F	Single	2	3	4	5	6-7	8-9	10-12	13 and above
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Below 20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
20-29	6	–	1	–	–	1	3	1	–	–	–
30-39	9	–	–	–	2	–	2	3	2	–	–
40-49	3	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	–
50-59	3	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	1	–
60 and above	5	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2	1	–
Total	26	–	1	–	3	2	7	6	5	2	–

The composition of households by number of member(s) in them is clear from the table. Main concentration of head of households is in younger segment falling in age group 20-39. Half of households were such where composition of members in them varied from 5-7.

The composition of households by nature of relationship of member(s) to head of the household is furnished in table II.13 as follows :-

TABLE II.13

Distribution of households by nature of relation of member(s) to head of household and number of members

Sl. No.	Nature of relation of member(s) to head of household	Number of Households	Number of Members
1.	Self	1	1
2.	Self, Spouse	–	–
3.	Self, spouse, unmarried sons and daughters	14	64
4.	Self, spouse, married son and son's wife, with or without unmarried sons/daughters (unmarried son's son, son's daughter)	4	35
5.	Self, (male) unmarried sons/daughters/widowed mother	1	6
6.	Self, married brother, brother's wife, sister and widowed mother	1	6
7.	Self, spouse, mother, father and unmarried brother	1	5
8.	Self, spouse, unmarried sons/daughters, father and mother	1	7
9.	Self, spouse, unmarried brother and widowed mother	1	5
10.	Self, spouse, married son/son's wife, unmarried sons/daughters and widowed father, widowed father's brother	2	15
	Total	26	144

Of these 26 craftsmen households, 14 are nuclear type of families comprising 64 members, 4 are vertically extended families, comprising 35 members. The other types of households are solitary few. These days large joint families find it difficult to have a common kitchen. After marriage the son usually arranges for independent living.

The study of place of birth of the heads of households reveals that all were born in the village.

Non-practising households – Deviation from craft

Three households each of the villages were such who had left the craft. Previously, these households practised the craft. The data for 6 households is compiled jointly and an attempt is made to analyse the same here. The break up of population of the 6 households by age, sex and marital status reveals that 6 males and 12 females in age group 0-24 and one male in age group 45-54 are recorded as "never married". In the age group 20-69, seven males and females each are enjoying the married life which account for the total 14 males and 19 females in these 6 households. None was recorded divorced/separated and widowed.

All the 6 heads of households who have abandoned the craft are males, 4 belonging to Tarkhan/Lohar caste and one each to Adi Dharmi and Ravidasi scheduled castes. Three households of Tarkhan/Lohar and one of Adi Dharmi profess Hindu religion whereas one each of Tarkhan/Lohar and Ravidasi profess Sikh religion. Of the six heads of households, one each was "illiterate", "primary or junior basic" 3 were middle pass and one had studied upto "matriculation or higher secondary". Composition of these six households by number of members revealed that one household each had single, three, five members whereas 2 had 6-7 members and solitary household had 10-12 members. Age structure of these heads indicated that one each was in the age group 20-29, 30-39, 50-59 and (60 and above) and two were in age group 40-49. The distribution of population in these households by age, sex and educational level is furnished in table II.14 below :-

TABLE II.14

Distribution of population by age, sex and educational level

Age group	Total Population			Illiterate		Primary or Junior Basic		Middle		Matriculation or Higher Secondary	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
0-4	3	1	2	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
5-9	3	1	2	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
10-14	4	2	2	–	–	1	2	1	–	–	–
15-19	6	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	3
20-24	4	2	2	–	–	1	1	1	–	–	1
25-34	3	1	2	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	–
35 and above	10	6	4	2	2	1	2	2	–	1	–
All ages	33	14	19	4	7	3	6	5	2	2	4

The above table is self explanatory and indicates that two thirds of their population is literate. It is also apparent that they had not sent their children to school till the age of 9 years.

The distribution of 6 households by nature of relationship of member(s) to head of households is also examined and same is furnished in table II.15 as follows :-

TABLE II.15

Distribution of households by nature of relationship of member(s) to head of household and number of members

Sl.No.	Nature of relationship of member(s) to head of households	Number of Households	Number of Members
1	2	3	4
1.	Self	1	1
2.	Self, spouse	–	–
3.	Self, spouse, unmarried sons/daughters	4	21
4.	Self, spouse, married brother, brother's wife, unmarried brother's sons/ daughters, father, mother and unmarried sister.	1	11
	Total	6	33

There were 4 nuclear families in these households. One is single man household and another one an extended family.

All the six heads of households were non-migrant to these villages, i.e., they are mainly in the village since their very birth. By occupational background, it was ascertained that 4 households of Tarkhan/Lohar caste traditionally practised ivory and plastic inlay work and one household each of Ravidasi and Adi Dharmi are traditionally *bunkars* (weavers).

Working Force

Out of 14 males and 19 females only 9 males were recorded as workers, i.e., working force approximates to 27.27 per cent. Three male workers were in the age group 15-34, 5 in the age group 35-59 and one in age group (60 and above). Child labour and female labour is conspicuous by its absence. Two of the workers were illiterate, two had studied upto primary standard, 4 were middle pass and one worker had studied upto matriculation standard.

A peep into the data of workers by traditional occupation and present occupation by age group showed that from 5 persons being traditionally inlay workers one in the age group 15-34 is working as carpenter, another one in age group 35-59 is working as hydraulic mechanic. One each being in the age group 35-59 is engaged in repair of agricultural implements and mason, the fifth one being over 60 is again a carpenter. Similarly, from 4 workers returning weaving as their traditional occupation one each in age group 15-34 and 35-59 is engaged in same occupation (weaving) and one each in these age groups engaged in "service". The occupational mobility is not that perceptible as it requires opportunity and capacity to do other work. The change from inlay work to carpentry is a sort of gliding on same channel which can again be taken back easily. The reasons for change of occupation whatsoever were also probed during the rapid survey. From the seven persons deviating from traditional occupation 5 gave "less earning as compared to labour input" as the main reason whereas 2 gave "malafide intention and vagaries" of the middlemen.

Growth and development of craft

From the account given in last chapter it is seen that before partition the craft was pursued in Amritsar, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur in Punjab. In those days many Muslim inlay workers were engaged in it. With scarcity of ivory and migration of Muslim inlay workers to Pakistan the craft suffered a set back. There has been reported shortage of adequate old *Sheesham* wood of fine texture and straight streaks. Inadequate marketing channel and imposition of sales taxes also hampers the craft work. As reported by inlay workers it is the middleman who pockets actual benefit and they are at their mercy, because the monetary returns are not commensurate with the labour involved in the craft. The cost of material and tools has gone up and skilled inlay worker can't compete with an ordinary carpenter or daily wage worker. This discouragement has compelled them to think other avenues for their children. Facilities in the form of cooperative societies or training-cum-production centres are also non existent in these villages. Tarkhan/Lohar caste group households in these villages are mainly associated with the craft in traditional manner but these days some scheduled caste households have also taken up this craft to augment their household income but all are unhappy as the returns are meagre. If remedial measures in the light of above obstacles are taken only then the craft can progress. The growth of the craft is linked with abatement of disturbed condition in the state, finding exact equivalents for labour input, ensuring regular supply of material *Sheesham* wood, and hardware etc. preferably patronised by government or government sponsored agency, safeguarding from middlemen and abolishing the state and central taxes on inlaid articles. For proper growth and development of the craft, a sympathetic consideration for its re-orientation is needed.

CHAPTER – III

PROCESS OF LEARNING

Learning and Acquirement of Skill

Inlay is the technique or skill by which a surface is decorated of beautified by setting in pieces of other material. This ornamentation consists of numerous designs by setting *masala* (smithereens) into the design incised or carved on flat surface. The basic material required is in the form of *Sheesham* wood, Kinnow wood, ebony, ivory, acrylic plastic sheet, carpenter's glue/ *fevicol*, polish, beewax, nails hinges, screws, sandpaper etc. Numerous tools of carpentry like *Tesa or Bahola* (adze), saw, coping saw, fret saw, hammer, scrapper, marking tools stencil, chisels, punch, vice, lathe, round saw, circular saw, drill, brace, file, screwdriver, compass for drawing circle, *raang* (compass) for drawing elliptical or ovaloid, shapes, jig saw, *randa* (surface plane), mortiser, grinding machine, whetstone, *Chaursi* (flat chisel) *khees/khatkashi* (gauge), measuring rod, *gunia* (trisquare), *sohan* (rasp), flat file, roundfile, *takora* (triangular file) *akwai* (anvil), pliers, line scale for drawing parallel lines, forceps, etc. as shown in plates 2, 3 and 4 and figure-1 ahead are commonly used in an inlay craft. Briefly the technique involves stages of process like making of planks, cutting of templates, cutting of *masala* (smithereens) of plastic, stencilling, marking contours, preparation of furrows, ditches/cavities by chasing with chisels, inlaying of *masala* in these furrows/ditches/cavities, application of *marammat* (paste of wood dust and glue), drying the surface, smoothing the inlaid surface by plane blade, rubbing with zero sand paper, lac polishing rubbing with rags, attaching the fixtures as legs, hinges, bolts and then packing. *Kalamkari* (penmanship) involves engraving on plastic sheet pieces and then filling by paint prepared by mixing *mansion* polish, black soot, or the required chemical colour and glue. The superfluous material is rubbed off to make the design distinctly visible from invisible and unwanted is weeded out. Here drawing and engraving is the fundamental faculty of worker requiring mature imagination and intuition. The craft involves a variety of intricate and complex designs which only craftsmen of considerable experience and insight can prepare. The inlay craft has remained the work of proficient artisans and the skill has been transmitting from father to son or from *ustad* (teacher) to the pupil or from some craftsman to his kinsmen. In majority of cases it is followed by Tarkhan/Lohar community who have been reported to learn it rapidly and have the ability to understand the job and several of them have the credit of winning state and national awards. According to them it is a life long learning and there is no end to it. It has a vast field as far as designs are concerned.

Learning of the skill is a trifold phenomena. It has three focal points, i.e., the *ustad* (teacher), pupil and the craft. The teacher brings the pupil and craft together. The essential part of teacher is to communicate his skill to his pupil and so also is essential for the pupil to assimilate what the teacher manipulates before him till he becomes capable of doing it for himself and this is crux of all learning. The teacher is a helper and pathfinder in making pupil establish his close bond with the craft. The learning, in principle followed by practice leads to attainment of the skill. The pupil is infused to select suitable response to situation before him and conquer difficulties faced by him. The teacher prepares him to handle the job independently in life and such preparation is the acquisition of skill.

Psychologically mind has the power of conservation or retention, a fundamental pre-requisite for learning the skill and by virtue of this attribute the past is retained. As in other fields here also the adolescent boys are receptive to learn the skill of carpentry and inlay of plastic in wood.

The basic step in this craft starts from cutting, sawing and planing of wood followed by inlay of plastic in it. Primarily it involves the process of selection of right response, through "trial and error". By trials the pupil strives to find the right response. The right response followed by appropriate practice is the main theme of learning. "For example, we have a boy who wants make a stool. He has to learn how to use a plane. He makes an attempt with the blade in one position. This is his response to the situation which requires that a board be smoothed. He finds that he has the blade

too far down. Then he moves it higher up. This is a new response. Again the result is not satisfactory. So he moves the blade into a new position and now finds that the result is satisfactory. The next time he comes to plane a piece of board, he does not have to make three responses. He at once puts the blade in right position. He has learnt where to put it. Thus his learning has been a matter of selection of the response to the situation which gives the best results. At first perhaps he cannot get the blade into the right position without a good deal of trouble. After doing it several times he learns to do it without trouble. Thus after selecting right response, practice completes his learning in that particular matter". [1]

Similarly "trial and error" in use of other numerous tools enables him to select correct response and necessary practice makes the learner assimilate its handling. Use of one tool has close association with other tools. With exercise he acquires manipulative skill. There are certain factors in this sort of pragmatic learning. The hereditary endowment of the child has its own part to play. The inherited instinctive tendencies of child as his native intelligence affect the rate of learning. An intelligent child learns more than a dull or deficient one. Bodily state or physical condition of the child also affects the learning process. Physical weakness and chronic illness hampers the learning process. The guidance of the teacher by way of providing the pupil a right kind of stimulus helps him to learn the skill rightly. The teacher guides him in right use of tools whether plane, saw, chisel, stencil or hammer. The teacher also remains conscious about emotional conditions of his pupils. He guards against the feeling of insecurity and inferiority. Teacher's praise and approbation for good work builds confidence, self reliance and hope amongst his pupils. Sometimes he also finds faults and corrects them without rebuking or sarcasting or creating fear in the mind of the pupil. Errors are corrected in the spirit of play, which has a heightening effect on the boy. By repeated exercise the boy is innoculated against error. In the day to day work the comprehension of the pupil is also tested thoroughly till the selection of responses becomes automatic and habitual with him. The variety of different difficult designs are prepared by way of stencils available with craftsmen.

If the teacher goes too far in fault finding, the child's learning may suffer which proves pedagogically unsound and the pupil is likely to play truant and ultimately alienate from his learning which is disastrous.

Through more and more practice and doing miscellaneous jobs requiring variety of skill the pupil acquires familiarity with the skill and it becomes a part of his mental stock and leads to competency and perfection in the craft.

Selection of *Ustad* (instructor) and Imparting of Instruction

Most probably an old master craftsman of matured competency and distinguished career in the field of craft is chosen as the *Ustad* for acquiring the skill. His sense of vocation and expertise in the trade is the cardinal qualification which usually speaks of him. Before accepting a boy for imparting training in the skill, the teacher also considers his ability to understand, vividess and interest in the craft and enthusiasm to stick to the craft. Once the relationship between the teacher and the pupil is established the teacher strives with full might to be scrupulously just in imparting the skill. This teacher - taught bond is established by offering a turban by the pupil to the teacher as per tradition and bows before him by humble act of touching his feet and by virtue of this ceremony the pupil recognises him as his *Ustad* (teacher) a path-finder to whom he promises complete submission and unswerving obedience without an iota of opposition. The teacher wishes for blessings of *Vishwkarma* (celestial god of technology) deity of Hindu pantheon. The pupil is exempt from any payment of fees for learning the skill rather the teacher gives him some pocket money allowance. There is scarcely any inhibition in accepting the pupil belonging to a particular caste group. By virtue of respect of the teacher, he is addressed by the prestigious terms "Chachaji" or "Bhaia ji" usually determined by age and is equated with paternal agnates. The training period lasts from 2 to 4 years so that he may be adequately trained to do the work independently. *Ustad* also manages for tools and material to be used during training. After attending the training and helping his teacher in work for about one year, the teacher out

1 Ryburn W.M."The Principles of Teaching" O.U.P. 1949 p-129.

of courtesy pays him some amount say Rs. 100/- or so on monthly basis. The more the period he spends under the instruction of teacher the more knowledge of the skill he attains. When the pupil gets confidence to do the craft work with fair degree of success he is allowed to set up his own workshop and the teacher rarely makes any demand on him. At the time of start of work, he invites his teacher who helps him to bring his work on footing in initial stages.

Learning by Doing

In acquiring the skill in any handicraft more period is devoted towards practical doing than oral instruction. The training starts from selecting and testing the wood. The suitability of wood for inlay is tested by its texture and seasoning. It needs to be free from knots and should preferably be inner black with straight *dharis* (streaks) in its texture. The wood which is inert to action of dampness and heat is treated to be suitable one. The black inner core of old uprooted *Tahli/Sheesham* is used in Hoshiarpur, but its availability is posing a problem. The pupil is taught to saw wood from logs or flat planks into standard sized, boards and rafters. The pupil is made to learn the art of sharpening instruments like *tesa* (adze), saw, chisel and plane blade. For sawing and planing of boards the teacher imparts instruction. The pupil finds responses and then concentrates on them. Particular action as smoothing by plane is repeated and the pupil learns to smooth the board in right way. Along with this work he is also taught to cut from the plastic sheet the pieces of appropriate designs to be inlaid on wood surface. This requires sufficient precision and accurate use of fret saw and coping saw after gripping the plastic pieces in the jaws of vice. It was seen that *masala* (smithereens) of the size resembling rice grains and its thin strips are cut from the plastic sheet. Similarly thin pieces from *Kinnow* or ebony wood are also cut for inlaying. The pupil learns by "trial and error" and at occasions some material is wasted as well. By continuous instruction and guidance of the teacher the pupil is motivated and his interest is constantly flared up. A purpose or incentive is set before him and he strives to achieve that goal. Guided by this goal the pupil sticks tenaciously to his job and selects best responses. He goes on doing something practical. He succeeds in cutting smithereens as instructed after some drill in this work. He is now able to compare and contrast and acquires ability to judge and correct errors and weed out the unfit pieces himself. If he thinks his practical action has gone wrong, he makes fresh selection and attempts again. The teacher's guidance and instruction is always available. The accurate responses which solve the problems are established. The exercise goes on under the supervision of teacher. The boy in due course becomes capable of cutting the plastic pieces of various designs independently without any difficulty or loading his mind. The sense of "purpose" has to be installed in the mind of the pupil lest he should be discouraged to leave the job half done or even undone. Mainly he is to be prepared to do the job single handed.

The next important task in the anatomy of inlay is drawing of designs on wood. The boy is first imparted training in very simple and rudimentary designs. Following the aforesaid principle the pupil again selects best responses and by repeated efforts he acquires the skill of accurate drawing of design on wooden surface. The sharper and distinct the design the more beautiful will be the inlay pattern. The drawing of designs is also facilitated by means of set of stencils which can be used even by less competent workers. The drawing is marked on wood by means of marker or iron pencil or dividers. After marking of design on the wood surface the next important process or step involves the carving of congruent cavities or furrows for smithereens and strips cut from plastic sheet or ebony wood. This process requires fairly accurate chiselmanship, the demonstration for which is imparted by the teacher first on some piece of waste wood. This is very crucial and delicate process in the art of inlay. Here considerable practice is needed beforehand. If something is wrongly carved it incurs a loss and results in wastage of material and leads to difficulty and poor work. The maxims "look and draw" and "conform the piece and carve" are to be strictly followed. For exactness and elegance the matching between cut out piece of plastic and the cavity seat for it is strictly followed and no deviation is permissible. At this stage the worker has to remain conscious about delicacy of process. Very specific sharp *nihanis* (chisels) of different size are used as required by the job in hand. These have to be regularly sharpened. The cavities are carved by striking the chisels at various angles by means of small hammer, sometimes a mallet is also used

instead of hammer.

After carving of cavities comes the process of filling in and setting the plastic designs into them with the help of *fevicol*/glue and then striking gently with a light hammer. The plastic pieces have to be ducked tight in cavities perpendicularly so that these are in level with the uncarved wood surface. With this, major part of the work is thought to be completed giving satisfaction to the inlay worker. After this next step is to give finishing touch to the artefact. The recesses or redundant cavities are filled by smearing the surface by a paste prepared from *sheesham* saw dust, country shellac and glue. The so smeared artefact is dried in sun. The superfluous or extra paste is scraped by means of a sharp blade of plane and the requisite design become visible from invisible. The surface is then rubbed with zero sandpaper for perfect smoothing. Sometimes shading is also done if required by particular design. After this, there is the final finishing step of buffing and polishing of the surface and then rubbing with rags or cotton waste. Sometimes the dealers take the unpolished artefacts and they polish them at the time of sale as situation requires.

This process is assimilated by the pupil by repeated drill. An accurate observation via his eyes, other senses and dexterity of fingers is essential for learning the skill stepwise. At the same time some techniques are followed by copying things prepared by other craftsmen or prevalent elsewhere by "trial and error".

Imitation also plays important role in present craft culture. The need of any skill also plays its respective role in learning process. Forced by need the individual strives to adopt a particular step or process for any cultural innovation. The handicraft is efficiently learnt by the people if it serves their needs in a particular situation.

Concluding, certain laws of learning are automatically followed in the learning process, but if a teacher has fore knowledge about this, his work can become easier. Firstly the boy is to be made ready or prepared to learn. Secondly learning is facilitated by maturity of the boy i.e. he can learn certain things at certain stages or periods which has to be kept in view. Thirdly it is required to make him purpose conscious to learn. Fourthly there is needed necessary exercise or drill in the process. Fifthly the teacher needs to infuse in the pupil a feeling of satisfaction because he is curious to learn those things which give him satisfaction and ignore those which bring annoyance. Sixthly his knowledge gained is to be associated with the earlier knowledge the pupil possesses which may be by way of similarity, contrast, contiguity etc. Seventhly the learner remembers those things well which he has learnt recently or has done frequently which is known as law of recency. Next, the pupil psychologically tries to ape his teacher and other craftsmen which he comes in contact and this serves him as a source of multiple learning. The teacher has to keep in mind that this concomitant learning by pupil should be such which may help him to become an ideal and mannered citizen.

It was reported by noted craftsmen that a boy of normal intelligence from his early teens has to spend 3-4 years continuously under the guidance of his *Ustad* to acquire the adequate skill though there is no hard and fast time limit. It was also reported that certain craftsmen have not attained the optimum standard even after doing the job for 7-8 years. Very few have achieved complete mastery over the subject. The learner being capable of doing simple work after learning from his kin or *Ustad* is treated as worker. For competency more period many have to spend. Those who undergo training in institute at *Kachcha Tobha*, Red Road Hoshiarpur have to further undergo apprenticeship with some competent craftsmen for a couple of years so as to attain proficiency to work independently. The relation between teacher and taught is usually cordial and life long. The training period passes in frank and sympathetic atmosphere observing all the common courtesies. The nature of imparting training is functionally the same irrespective of relationship whether the learner is son, brother, son's son, or pupil from unrelated household.

A probe was made regarding persons engaged in the craft by relationship with the head, period engaged in it and the kin who imparted the skill. Out of total 42 craftsmen doing inlay work *26* were heads of households, *14* were the sons, and 2 were the brothers of the heads of households. From 26 heads of households 19 acquired the skill from father, one from brother, 2 from father's brother, and 4 from *Ustad* (teacher). From 14 sons of heads doing the craft 13 again acquired the skill from father and one from father's brother. The two related as brothers to heads doing the craft

acquired the skill from brother. Further, out of 42 workers 6 each were engaged in it for less than 5 years, and 5-9 years, 14 for a duration of 10-19 years and the remaining 16 were doing the job for 20 and more years. It is seen that transmission of skill has remained more from father to son and also more within the community and number of workers were numerically more in the period decade ago.

Mode of Acquiring Skill

Further, an inquiry was conducted regarding time spent and kind of remuneration received while learning the skill. Out of 42 workers, 6 spent a period of 6 months to one year and 36 spent 2 years and above for acquiring the workable skill. Regarding remuneration, out of 42 workers, 37 had learnt the skill in obligatory manner without getting any monetary emoluments whereas 5 got the remuneration ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per month. Out of these 5 workers, 4 got the training from *Ustad* and one acquired it from his father's brother. It was reported that the apprenticeship ended in an affectionate manner. The learner is rarely afraid of wasting some pieces of wood or *masala* (smithereens) cut from plastic sheets. The teacher is aware of the capability of learner and so assigns the job(s) which he can do without difficulty. If the teacher sometimes happens to be harsh or rebukes the pupil it is taken leniently as it is for cultivating confidence and guard against mistake in future but he never peppers the pupil. The teacher and the taught accomplish the work with a spirit of game. The teacher is always approachable by his pupil and the continuous association leads the task of learning to a success. Very few also happened to be unintelligent to grasp the skill to the optimum and thus lack neatness and precision in their work. Only the pupils doing neat and tidy work compete for getting awards. Work of standard and craftsmanship can be sent for such competitions. Specific terms and conditions are rarely laid for imparting and acquiring the skill. The workers assessed their way of acquiring and imparting skill to be fairly adequate and are contented with same. They are least satisfied with the training a pupil gets from the training institute at Red Road, Hoshiarpur. The quality of training received from the institute has to be supplemented by an expert craftsman with whom the student works for a couple of years. He has to be trained in practical work ab-initio. Such students are sometimes sponsored by the institute and during apprenticeship monetary stipend is also arranged by employing authorities. Previously, imparting of instruction in the craft was limited to own community members; but these days such inhibition is dying out. In recent times some Adi Dharmi Scheduled Caste boys have been trained by traditional craftsmen belonging to Tarkhan/Lohar caste. At the same time they, however, prefer to impart training to boys belonging to kin group and according to them they are quick and intelligent to learn by virtue of hereditary endowments. They regard themselves to belong to twice born caste and descendants of *Vishwkarma* (celestial artist) and so are reluctant to receive the training from members belonging to castes thought to be lower in social status. The communities are so conditioned by age old social norms and customs. Craft rivalry is found to exist, but all have the appreciation for neat and outstanding work irrespective of caste/community. Further light on learning of technique and functioning of the craft is cast by the biographical sketches recorded during the rapid survey.

Case I

A master craftsman named Atma Ram son of late Munshi Ram was contacted in village Buthgarh. At the time of survey he was on the wrong side of 75 and belongs to Lohar caste of Matharu clan group. He is addressed as "mistry ji" by other people of the village. He was born in this village. His grand father dealt in manufacture and repair of agricultural implements of the village zemindars. His father Munshi Ram previously attending to carpentry and blacksmithy work, learnt the inlaying of ivory in wood from Rala Ram, a co-villager who had about a century ago learnt the ivory inlay skill from a carver and inlayer at Delhi.He used to prepare wooden foot wear and handles of walking stick. He was thus a pioneer in this handicraft in this village. Another contemporary of A.R. Mr. Bhagat Singh also learnt the craft skill from M.R. He started learning the craft at the tender age of ten. In the beginning he used to prepare decorative handles of walking sticks from horns of vain stag. In those days elephant tusk was available and inlay work was done with ivory. His father imparted instructions in ivory cutting, sawing and then carving on wood the cavity as per the size of pieces to be implanted or inlaid. He was a renowned inlay worker in the region as well as *Pandit* (learned) expert in preparation of horoscopes and almanacs, which Atma Ram could not learn. As reported by him, ivory work is more

difficult than plastic inlay as the former requires an insight of the craftsman for judging texture and *dharis* (streaks) of the ivory. To pave his way for more competency and exactness he further underwent training under the expertise guidance of Gopi Ram another expert in inlay work. His younger brother Daulat Singh is also well versed in the trade who also acquired the skill from his father Munshi Ram. He has established his separate workshop in the same village. His vividness and interest in learning made his skill more perfect and prominent and he became able to conquer formidable difficulties smoothly. By continuous practice in the craft, the skill became a habit with him and his innate intuition helped him further towards perfection and greater heights. In 1958 he also worked in a foreign concern at Nagpur (Maharashtra) doing inlay work. Then he came back to native village and due to high cost of tusk he switched over to plastic inlay which in his opinion is easier than ivory inlay. By virtue of his fifty years experience he has developed a remarkable sense of perception in sketching, designing, cutting of *masala* (smithereens), carving and then inlaying in wood. In the absence of ivory he has mastered the skill in plastic inlaying with equal felicity. He competed for winning National Award in handicraft and participated by exhibiting his artefact in Indian Trade Fair exhibition at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi towards late seventies and was consequently honoured with National Award and since then he is getting a pension of Rs. 300/- P.M. He got *Tamar Patter* (Bronze plate) for his excellence in the craft. In the year 1978-79 he was honoured with first prize in appreciation of inlay work by state government. His work has been duly recognised by the government. Despite his being old in age he still maintains his interest in the craft and wishes if some more young boys learn the skill from him as he has already trained several persons. He has his own workshop managed by his son in the village. Manufacturing of inlaid table tops and screens is his main work. The tools are partly prepared by them and partly purchased from market. The foreign tools are preferred over the country tools.

He has got two sons and one daughter who are married. One son has left the job and joined government service. According to him the marketing channel of artefacts is faulty because the middleman gets the lions share from the labour put in by craftsman. Secondly, the grading of the manufactured artefacts is biased. According to him imposition of sales tax is a burden on these craftsmen and it should be abolished and terms of sale should be direct between craftsmen and purchasers. Moreover, it is a craft, but the rates of electric consumption are charged on the pattern of commercial establishments. The returns are not commensurate with labour input. For these reasons the craft is suffering and is resulting in shortage of competent workers. Demand is there for the artefacts, but competent workers are lacking due to less wages as reported by A.R. The outside customer is hesitant to visit the state due to disturbance and hence the craft is suffering.

Case II

Pritam Singh son of Uttam Singh, a next door neighbour of Atma Ram was contacted in village Buthgarh who also deals in plastic inlay work. He also belongs to Lohar caste and Matharu clan group. At the time of survey he was aged 50 years. After studying upto 6th class he left the studies. Alongwith attending to the repair of agricultural implements and other wood work, he learnt the skill of ivory and plastic inlay from Daulat Singh, a master craftsman of Buthgarh. His father Uttam Singh was also an expert in inlay of ivory. Uttam Singh had further learnt the skill from Arjun Singh, son of Mela Ram of village Singriwala who was also a pioneer in ivory inlay work, i.e., the skill sprang in the house from paternal mother's side. He reported that due to little educational qualification he had to adopt this craft as an occupation. Initially he used to help his father in sawing and planing of wood and smoothing with sandpaper the inlaid articles. He learnt testing the suitable wood for inlaying. Brownish black *sheesham* wood without knot and having straight streaks is preferred. Next he learnt sawing and planing of board by plane along with sharpening of tools for proper smoothing. Then he acquired the skill in use of coping and fret saws and marking of designs on wood surface by the marking pencil and *khees* (gauge) and gradually learnt the skill of cutting requisite pieces from ivory and plastic to be inlaid on wood surface. Accurate *Khudai* (carving) was the next step which he mastered with continuous drill in the process. Finally, he learnt the inlaying of *masala* (smithereens) in carved cavities and plastic strips in carved furrows on wood surface. He prepares decorative table tops by inlaying different designs such as geometrical, floral, polygonal, creepers, *Janjiri* (chain) and *guldasta* (tree of paradise), etc. Polygonal, round,

and elliptical decorative table tops are the main items of production by Pritam Singh. He can prepare inlaid artefacts depending on placement of orders. His work has been adjudged to be of high calibre. He got state award during 1975 from Hon'ble Chief Minister of Punjab and cash prize of Rs. 500/- for being adjudged a master craftsman. Despite all this, he is unsatisfied with this job as it is not as lucrative as it should actually be. In this context he narrated that a couple of years back he prepared an inlaid decorative table top which was purchased by "M/s. K.L.B.L. Dabbi Bazar, Hoshiarpur for Rs. 150/- only, which was later on sold to Punjab Government Emporium for Rs. 2500/-. It is thus astonishing how the price multiplies after the artefact passes from the hands of its manufacturer. According to him the middleman makes the profit and the manufacturer is the loser.

He has visited Calicut, Delhi, Saharanpur to attend exhibitions by displaying his artefacts as sponsored by government at state expenditure. He reported that his own prepared articles were sold like hot cakes and more demands were made. This gave him better monetary returns; but it was later thwarted by vested interests of middlemen who feel jealous of such practice. Non-availability of sales tax registration, number is a great hurdle in disposing of their artefacts straightaway and all the inlay workers are unhappy with imposition of sales tax on their artefacts. He has 2 sons and one daughter. He has established his own workshop in the village. He has love for the craft; and is training his son in the same craft under compulsion as avenues of getting regular employment elsewhere are also meagre. According to him, circumstances are not suitable for the progress of the craft as skilled workers are unable to compete even with daily wage labourer in earning. Pitching high standards and hopes in this craft fetches low returns and consequently, they are losing interest in putting their progeny in the same occupation. The craft has great export potential if products of diversified designs are manufactured and the wages of craftsmen are compensated in relation to the skilled workers in government departments.

Case III

Devinder Pal son of Ved Parkash was contacted in village Bassi Gulam Hussain. He was born in August, 1957 in the same village. He also belongs to Lohar caste and Plaha clan group. After attending the school upto 7th class he left the studies and from his early teens he started learning the handicraft, under the guidance of his father who was also a traditional craft worker in inlaying and *kalamkari* (penmanship). In the beginning he started from wood work and then specialised in *kalamkari* , i.e., making scenes of different hues and elegance on plastic plates by iron pencils of different sharp edges. He has intuitive ability to prepare attractive scenes by engraving and painting, and making them quite distinct and vivid from the background. He has developed a craze for this type of work through experience and innate urge. He started learning from simple scenes to complex ones. By insight he started preparing even abstract scenes from the known ones, which are thought provoking to the onlooker. His artistic and aesthetic learning is apparent from the scenes he engraved on plastic plates. He is expecting the same level of skill as his father had attained. In 1981-82, he competed for state award of master craftsmen and won the second prize from the Department of Industries, Punjab through the Director of Institute of Designs at Chandigarh. He reports that he was hopeful to get the first prize, but the method of gradation or judgement of artefacts in his opinion was faulty as his *kalamkari* art was judged along with other plastic and brass inlaid items of superfine quality which is a bit different field. According to him it should have been adjudged in comparison to figure work. He got married in 1982 at Phagwara and has got two sons. He has 4 brothers and 3 sisters. His brother Sham Sunder also does the same work. He takes pride in saying that his father had won state award in 1971 for preparing the scene of film *Nagan* on table top a copy of which is preserved in the house. He has been honoured thrice, once by first prize award and twice by second prize awards. Other scenes of figure work prepared by him are : Sohani while swimming to meet her parmour Mahiwal on other bank of Chenab, Heer Ranjha, Sassi Punnu, Omar Khayam, Tansen, Mary, Jesus Christ, Sikh Gurus, The Taj, Radha Krishna, Sita Rama, Shiva Parvati, Ganesh Lakshmi and other motifs from Ramayana and Mahabharta. His father prepared the scene of Tansen at sitar, being gazed by young woman with sweet dish in her hand. Wall panels exhibiting different scenes are prepared. For painting, chemical colour is mixed with glue and *mansion* polish. The thick paste is filled in the engraved cavities and then superfluous is rubbed off. He intends to increase the craft, but financial bottlenecks hamper his planning and progress of

his occupation. He reported that he sold an article of *Kalamkari* to the Cottage Industries Corporation a private agency, for Rs. 1500/- the price of which was fixed at Rs. 2200/- by award judging agency, which caused humiliation and discouragement to him and he made up his mind not to participate in any competition. Now a days he sticks to his work at home which is his primary source of livelihood. He works on contract basis with dealers at Hoshiarpur. He also reported that an article prepared by his father was sold it to local dealer for Rs. 3,000/- which was further sold to a dealer in Delhi for Rs. 5,000/- who further sold it to a dealer in Bombay for Rs. 10,000/-. The price of same article rose to Rs. 17,000/- when it was sold abroad. It is how the middleman makes the profit.

Case IV

Another expert and national award winner is Mr. Sukhdayal son of Ganesh Dass of village Bassi Gulam Hussain. He was born in the year 1914 and studied upto primary standard. He is able to read and write simple Urdu. He reported that his father's father named Darsu Ram also practised the ivory work which was followed by his father. Thus the craft is being transmitted from father to son and as per his knowledge the ivory work which has now been switched on the plastic is being done in this village for the last two centuries or so. His two sons are also doing the same craft who were imparted the skill by Sukhdayal himself and both are married. He has been a renowned and an expert craftsman in this area and in his life time has trained several workers particularly of Piplanwala village.

He started to learn the skill since onset of his adolescence under the able guidance and supervision of his father. He learnt the technique of sawing, cutting and planing of ivory. In the beginning he used to prepare buttons of ivory for shirt sleeves as well as decorative combs and handles of walking sticks. Then he learnt cutting of smithereens from elephant tusk for inlay in *sheesham* wood. In due course with continuous practice and through power of imitation and guidance of father learnt planing of wooden boards, and then carving of designs followed by inlaying work and then finishing. He reported that bones and horns were also used in certain cases, but the work of ivory is very difficult which the craftsman has to do very carefully first identifying the *resha* (thread lines in the ivory) and then cutting or planing it accordingly, to achieve smoothness and avoid cracking. For distinguishing between bone and ivory, it is reported that former gives an obnoxious smell while it is being sawn. Secondly the bone gives a feeling touch similar to growth of fresh hair on unshaven chin the next day, whereas ivory is smooth and softer to touch and knotless too. Due to heavy cost of tusk, it is being replaced by plastic which even an incompetent worker can handle. He has preserved a photographic frame inlaid with ivory by his father's father Darsu Ram as a memorial. This piece of craftsmanship has not disfigured till today.

For national award he presented a rectangular plastic inlaid table in 1973 for which he was adjudged the master craftsman with the honour of national award in 1974. He was awarded the relevant certificate and *Tamar pattar* (bronze plate) in appreciation of artistry and since then he is also getting a pension of Rs. 300 per month. He says that the artefacts prepared by these craftsmen are purchased by very rich households and ordinary people can't afford. The work is honourable but due to less wages in this craft, many of their craftsmen are turning to other pursuits. A couple of households were reported to do the work in Adamwal, Piplanwala, Pur Hiran and Manderan. Now due to old age he renders little help to his sons who have established their workshop in the village inlaying different sized table tops, chairs, wall plaques, book shelves, wall brackets, trivets, chessboards and curtain screens as asked by dealers. Copper and brass inlay work is also done if desired by customer or dealer. The seasoned *sheesham* wood is got from the dealers in the town. For repair and procurement of tools the craftsmen visit the town. Now whole work is done by inlaying plastic. He still takes interest in transmitting the skill to any willing learner. P.N. a local boy was reported to be a new entrant to his establishment to learn the craft. The variety of designs is remembered by means of stencils as well as through memory. If needed hired workers are kept for accomplishing time-bound jobs. He has been found to be thorough and quite scholastic in this skill and has made his sons equally competent in this craft.

CHAPTER – IV

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

Place of Work

The working of the craft has been seen to be the men's occupation and it is carried out partly under the roof and in the courtyard as well. The sawn wooden planks/boards, plastic sheets and allied material is procured from the town. Usually the seasoned or old dried wooden planks are provided by the concerned dealers/suppliers in Hoshiarpur. For carrying out inlay work, usually rooms of sizes 3x3 meters to 5x5 meters both on ground floor or on first floor are used depending on the availability of space to a particular establishment. In village Buthgarh the workshop premises were spacious and well furnished as compared to those in Bassi Gulam Hussain. A single man workshop can be run in a smaller space say in a room of dimension 2x4 metres. In initial stages while sawing or planing the boards assistance of second person may be required.

A glance into the data relating to households and persons engaged in craft revealed that 12 heads of households had their place of work in the part of dwelling house whereas 14 had separate workshops owned by them engaging separately 3 and 13 additional persons in them, from which its transpires that 15 of the total 42 plastic inlay workers were doing the craft in part of the dwellings of heads of households and 27 were doing in workshops owned by heads of households, and this accounts for the total 42 inlay worker. One worker each was engaged in service; and repair of sewing machines in premises owned by others. The craft was mainly confined to the village as far as these 42 workers are concerned. Out of the total 26 heads of households, one was doing it for the last 5-9 years, 9 were doing the craft for last 10-19 years and 16 were doing it for more than 20 years and all the heads as well as additional workers were males. Some of the inlay workers in Bassi Gulam Hussain were seen to be doing the work in shanty and dingy rooms. If more hygienic conditions are restored to them, it can boost the craft considerably.

An inquiry was made as to how far the place of work is from the house. Out of 42 workers 15 were doing it on the premises of their dwelling houses and 27 were doing it in workshops owned by heads of households a bit away from the dwelling houses and all these workshops were within one km. from their residence. Neither any sort of transport was required nor it was used by them to attend to their routine work. Further the break up of households classified by place of work and area occupied by the number of workers therein is furnished in the table IV.1 below :-

TABLE IV.1

Distribution of households classified by place of work, area occupied and number of persons working therein

Place of work	Number of house-holds (workers)	Number of households having approximate working area and number of workers					
		6-10 sq. meters		11-16 sq. meters		17-24 sq. meters	
		Single	2-5	Single	2-5	Single	2-5
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Part of Dwelling	12 (15)	3 (3)	– (–)	7 (7)	1 (2)	– (–)	1 (3)
Separate Workshop	14 (27)	3 (3)	– (–)	2 (2)	2 (4)	2 (2)	5 (16)
Total	26 (42)	6 (6)	– (–)	9 (9)	3 (6)	2 (2)	6 (19)

It is seen that 3 households each in "part of dwelling" and "separate workshop" comprising single worker in them have got occupied an area of 6-10 sq. meters. Nine households having single workers and 3 households having 2-5 workers occupy an area of 11-16 sq. meters. Again 2 households having single worker and 6 households having 2-5 workers in them occupy an approximate area of 17-24 sq. meters. None of the workers was found doing the work in space less than 6-10 sq. meters and groups of persons doing the work rarely exceeded five. The workers actually avail of the open space as well, in courtyard or backyard or roof of the house wherever it is available. The covered area for the smooth functioning of the craft throughout the year is observed to be insufficient. It was reported that they are unable to spend on arranging spaciously covered working area for the craft.

Problems pertaining to place of work

Further the views of the workers regarding the place of work and allied problems were also noted. The information collected is given in accompanying table IV.2 below:-

TABLE IV.2

Distribution of workers classified by area occupied and problems relating to place of work

Place of work	Number of workers	Area occupied and relevant problems faced by workers					
		6-10 sq.meters		11-16 sq.meters		17-24 sq.meters	
		Adequate	Lack of fresh air, light and electricity	Adequate	Problem	Adequate	Problem
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Part of Dwelling	15	3	–	9	–	3	–
Separate Workshop	27	1	2	6	–	18	–
Total	42	4	2	15	–	21	–

Out of the 42 inlay workers only two reported that the space measuring 6-10 sq. meters where they work suffers from the lack of the facility of electricity, fresh air, and sunlight whereas the remaining 40 workers felt their places of work as adequate with regard to such facilities. The floors of the places where the work is going on are partly *Pukka* and partly *Kachcha*. It was seen that the places of work are used for sleeping at night in majority of cases and wooden planks are also stored therein. The put forward their compulsion on economic grounds to make these places more adequate. They are quite conscious that better environment leads to efficacy and has a good effect on their health.

Purity and pollution

The craft is regarded a clean occupation and articles inlaid with ivory or plastic form the stuff of decoration in princely as well as houses of well to do people. These things do please the aristocrats. The deluxe artefacts are purchased by the people having deluxe houses and people of ordinary means seldom afford these luxury goods. The craftsmen are held in esteem due to their skill of high workmanship and elegance and they are treated as descendants of Vishwkarma (celestial architect) and equated with Swarna caste as Brahmans.

Nothing is observed to be contemptuous or polluting with the craft of ivory or plastic inlay in wood. The craft envisages the use of almost same tools as that of a carpenter, so the craft has primarily fallen to the lot of these craftsmen in a traditional way through circumstantial events with a slight variation from ordinary carpentry. Being known as Dhiman Brahmans they are held in upper rung of the society as far as their social status is concerned. Practically the craft has become a part of descent with these craft workers. The craft rarely impinges to disturb their social status prevailing in the society. In this technology, tools involved or the material used is rarely polluting. The social position of the caste group is traditionally determined irrespective of this craft. All the social groups have their pre-determined rights and obligations. Heads of thirteen households of Tarkhan/Lohar caste, one of Saini and two of Adi Dharmi (SC) belong to Hindu religion and 9 households of Tarkhan/Lohar and one of Adi Dharmi belonging to Sikh religion rarely reported any belief of pollution associated with the craft irrespective of their age group. They reported, that the inlaid artefacts are taken as the source of decoration for houses and it is one of the cleanest occupation requiring intelligence and insight of the inlay worker. Performance of any ceremony to ward off any pollutory belief or notion is rarely noticed among the craftsmen. However, they wish for *Vishwkarma's* blessings at the start of the work in the morning. Calendars of deity are seen hung in their workshops. The traditional craftsmen belonging to Tarkhan/Lohar community report either Dhiman or Ramgarhia sections and are held in upper rung of the society. At the same time the social status of other castes as Saini and Adi Dharmi (SC) remains unchanged in social scale as it is pre-determined.

Handicraft Objects and Designs

There is a considerable long range of items manufactured in these villages which are namely tables/teapoys, decorative *peedahs*, (low chairs), trivets, jewellery and fancy boxes of various sizes, chessboards, tea/coffee trays with intricate and complex decorations, paper weights, ash trays, panels and wall plates being elliptical, round and rectangular depicting designs especially Omar Khayam, gypsy girl, water lady, Radha Krishna, Golden temple, Lakshmi, Sarswati, landscape, butterflies, cobras, lions, Anarkali, human figures, dancing girl, parrot, geese, palanquins, Durga, Kali, religious ascetics, plough man sensual types of women, shephard grazing sheep, national leaders, elephants, females, *Anguri Vel* (grape creepers), caravan of camels, *Janjiri* (chains), peacock dance, country scenes, chirping birds, streamlets, and maidens with pitchers, festoons, bullock cart, Heer Ranjha, Sassi Punnu, Sohani Mahiwal, Laila Majanu, Shirin Farhad, Mary, Christ, Buddha, Ganesha, female figures representing *ragnis* like *Gauri, Todi*, Bhairvi, Ashawari, Malhari, Ramkali, Pahadi, etc. These designs are mostly copied. Other articles are mirror backs, central tables of sofa sets having round, rectangular, polygonal and oval tops with detachable or foldable elephant type legs, powder bowls, automatic cigarette cases, screen frames, writing cases, *rehals* (book stand), racks, card cases, toy boats, caskets, *chakla velna* (base and roller) for rolling *chapati*, dressing tables, advertisement motos, and several other articles of luxuries depicting figure work made to order. The inlaid articles in themselves are exquisite pieces of art in *sheesham* wood and intricacy of artistry of each piece determines its price. The costly articles are time consuming and are only made to order as their price is high. Usually articles as demanded by local dealers are manufactured on commercial scale for general sale in market. Some types of the above mentioned artefacts are indicated in photographic plates (17-23) appended ahead in this monograph.

The craftsmen tend to mix up various designs and forms together so as to fill up the whole space available. In such cases exposure of wood is lost. For such filling up of the space they argue that unless they fill it up, the artefact is not likely to be considered for state or national award. At the same time they argue that the inferior the wood, the more the filling up and in contrast the superior the wood the lesser the filling up of plastic pieces. With the total filling up of the space they say that even patches or blots on its surface are eclipsed or concealed from the eye. Introvertly, they are of the view that there should be sufficient exposure of the wood and the natural beauty of its texture so that inlay work may give an attractive look in comparison to its background. They also stated that there exist male and female among *sheesham* trees and the wood of latter has got fine grains and excels in beauty the wood of former. The craftsmen send their articles prepared by them in unfinished or semi-finished form which are finished and polished by the dealers in the market.

All heads of households reported that inlaid items are for daily use in homes and are also meant for decoration as well as source of aesthetic sense and feeling.

Quantum of Items Manufactured and Seasonal Variations

An inquiry was made regarding number of items manufactured in a month, impact of season as related to educational attainment of the head of household. Out of 26 heads of households 3 were illiterates, 16 had studied upto "Primary or Junior Basic" level, 4 had studied upto middle standard and 3 had attained "Matriculation or Higher Secondary" standard. The artisans could not give any concrete estimate regarding quantum of items manufactured in terms of their number or amount realised by them through their manufacturing. However on a broad basis, a single competent and skilled inlay worker toiling for all days is said to be capable of earning an amount ranging from 7-10 thousands rupees for the year. The artisans are unhappy with the earnings through this craft as it is not matching with the daily wage worker and secondly he is at the mercy of the dealer who seldom compensates him for due labour involved. He is sticking to the craft forlornly, the only temptation is that he is present at his house. For transactions he is in a sort of bonded situation. The artisan lacks substitute customer or market and dealer also lacks substitute artisan. This bond is a sort of reciprocal. Both are depending on each other. It was also revealed that one artisan sparingly by-passes his fellow artisan and so will desist from encroaching on manufacturing the items already being prepared by his fellow for a certain dealer i.e. their field of items has impermeable boundaries. If, at all any encroachment is done, it has not the implication of increase of labour returns for the same.

Further out of 26 heads of houses 11 reported winter season to be a better period suited for increase in production whereas 15 did not report any seasonal variation in production. It was reported that other things being equal it is one's skilfulness and resourcefulness which enhance the production. However it was agreed upon in a discussion that the manufacturers in village Buthgarh prepare more items in terms of their number and money value as compared to those in Bassi Gulam Hussain.

Raw Material

The blackish brown inner core of *sheesham* (Dalbergia Sissu) and acrylic plastic constitute the main raw materials used in this craft. The logs of old uprooted *sheesham* with diameter ranging 150-180 cms. are the usual and ideal requirement for the inlay industry. The wood which is completely dry and sawn a couple of years ago and seasoned by the seasoning plant is used. This wood is required to be free from knots. Other materials that are necessary are woods of different colour as ebony, *Kinnow* and glue/*fevicol*, beewax, hardware as nails, hinges, screws, deer horn, sandpaper, polish, mansion polish, lac and spirit etc. For inlay of copper, brass, their wires and plates are also needed by same workers.

Sheesham Wood

It is found in whole of Punjab (plate.1) but old trees of requisite thickness are lacking. Its innder core varies from brown to black. It has longitudinal streaks and is quite hard and fine grained and is safe from the attack of insects or termite. It is greasy and emits a particular odour. By polishing it emits a lustrous look. It is widely used for making life long artefacts, and so it is the main raw material in inlay craft practised by the artisans here. A cubic foot of this wood weighs from 25 to 35 kilograms. Its price varies from Rs.150 to Rs.160 per cubic foot depending upon colour, streaks texture and seasoning. The craft workers get the sawn planks of requisite dimensions from the dealers whom they supply the manufactured items afterwards. For example a sawn board of dimension 60 x 120 Cms. and 2.5 Cms. thickness costs rupees 130-140. Other varities of wood are ebony black, *kinnow* black, *Sandal* dark brown, tamarind blue grey. These are even costier than *sheesham* wood. Some other unknown species of wood may also find their use in the craft. The craftsmen secure the supply of wood depending upon their own selection or as desired by dealer. Teak wood is considered inferior and unsuited for inlay work. Slight variations in the price of wood exist from place to place. According to the craftsmen only *sheesham* wood is suited for inlay work for retaining the beauty of the craft. At the same time there is shortage of *sheesham* wood. So sufficient quantity of *sheesham* wood needs to be made available to them before it is exported outside the state.

Acrylic Plastic Sheets

In place of ivory, the craftsmen have totally switched on to the use of plastic and its use is preferred over ivory both in terms of beauty and its convenient handling over the former. It gives a better setting and lasting luster. Its sheets of different thickness are available in the market and cutting of designs from its sheets is less time consuming as compared to that of ivory. It is also available in different colours as desired by the craftsmen. The price of plastic sheets irrespective of colour but different thickness and sizes are available at the following rates as reported by the inlay workers:-

Length x Breadth	Thickness in mm.	Price in Rs.
90 x 60 Cms.	4 mm.	Rs. 150.00
"	3 mm.	Rs. 120.00
"	2 mm.	Rs. 105.00
"	1 mm.	Rs. 100.00
"	0.6 mm.	Rs. 50.00

Slight variations in the price of plastic sheets were reported by various craftsmen. Japanese plastic sheets are preferred over others. Brass sheets are available at Rs. 50 per Kg. whereas brass wire costs Rs.60/- per Kg. and copper is still costlier.

Glue/Fevicol

The traditional carpenter's glue is replaced by modern ready made "*Fevicol*" which is available in the market at Rs. 60/- per Kg. It is necessary for implanting pieces of plastic, ivory and wood to the inlay ground and other joints of the artefacts.

Polish

Polishing is seldom done by these artisans. However it is a desideratum for giving a lustrous look. Lac polish is used for this purpose, if desired. This serves as protective coating to the outer surface of artefact and imparts a shining look. It is prepared by mixing lac grains into spirit and then applied on cleansed surface.

Mansion Polish

It is the same polish which is used for shining the bodies of cars and other light vehicles and is available from the bazaar. Sometimes a chemical colour is mixed with it for shading in the engraved portions of the scenes cut in plastic plates or pieces. It is used for preparing coloured scenes.

Sandpaper

Sandpaper is used for smoothing the surface both before and after inlaying. Conventionally they vary with respect to their grains. Those having zero grade are the fine grained and give a fine smoothness. These are available in the market in the town.

Hardware

For this craft use of nails, screws, hinges, hasps, nuts, bolts, rings, handles etc. is necessary and these accessories are available in the market.

Consumption and Procurement of Material

The craftsmen take the wooden boards from the dealers, the rest of the material is purchased from the market in the town. They purchase the material in small quantities as they can't afford expenditure on larger quantities.They reported that wood seasoned by seasoning plant is better than raw wood procured otherwise as it can withstand the hazards of weather. The cost of material has gone higher but labour input which has not risen proportionally, so a corresponding increase in labour is felt essential.

The informants can hardly give estimate of average quantity of material used in month. They make different objects of varied sizes taking different durations of time. The same piece may take 4 days and sometimes even a month depending on the design of inlay, so the estimate of quantity of material seems difficult. They rarely keep any record of the material consumed. However it was reported by 11 heads of households that consumption is slightly more in winter season. The number of smaller articles like jewellery & bangle boxes, chessboard, plaques, wall penels, teapoys, trays etc. is more than broader inlaid table tops, screens, *peedahs* (low chairs) etc. The artefacts vary within a very wide range. The estimate of consumption of material would therefore be very rough and rather incalculable.

Regarding procurement of material, Hoshiarpur town is the main source.The requisite material is collected by the artisans from the dealers and shops in the town. Twenty three reported that horse cart or tempo is the main mode of transport whereas 3 reported that they carry the material either by cycle or by cycle rickshaw depending upon the weight of the material. Eight of the heads of households further reported that sometimes good quality *sheesham* wood is not available and if available it is not seasoned one and they do not work on damp or unseasoned wood lest it should bring disrepute to their craft. For the procurement of raw material the craftsmen have to arrange themselves and similarly the manufactured articles are taken to the dealing agents in the town by the craftsmen themselves. Thus more headache lies with the craftsman.

Tools/Equipment and Technique

The technique including inlaying ivory, plastic, bone, horn and woods of different varieties in *sheesham* wood can be described under the processes or stages of work as:-

1. Making of boards, planks
2. Tracing and stencilling on boards – marking of contours
3. Cutting of plastic and woods of different colours for inlay
4. *Khudai* or carving of cavities and furrows
5. Inlaying/setting of smithereens
6. Smearing with wooddust paste
7. Smoothing the inlaid surface
8. Engraving and *Kalamkari*
9. Fixing hinges/hasps and other accessories
10. Final finishing

Before giving an account of the technique or processes involved, it is appropriate to know about main tools. For carrying out the above mentioned processes or technique of inlaying a number of tools such as surface plane, saw, *chaursi* (chisel), hammer, sawing board, vice, brace, scraper, marking tools, *nihanis* (various types of chisels), engraving tool, coping saw, fret saw, foreceps, punch, round saw, drill,file, rasps, screw driver, compass for drawing circle, *raang* for drawing ellipse,mortiser, grinding machine, whetstone, gauge, measuring rod, anvil, pliers, *khees/khatkashi, jamur* (pinchers), trisquare, fork, scissors as seen in plates and figure-1 ahead are used. The tools are common to a carpenter and an inlay worker, so space would not permit to write about each here. A brief description of major tools exclusively used for inlay work would suffice before giving the stages/processes involved therein.

Coping Saw

This is used for cutting the designs on sheets of wood and plastic. To and fro movement of the blade cuts the sheets. It is used to cut plates of thickness 1-5 mm. Its blade is stronger than fret saw.

Fret Saw

It resembles coping saw. It has very thin blade which is used to cut very small patterns having sharp angles or curves. Twelve blades of this type of saw cost one rupee.

Vice

The vice is generally mounted on working bench of the carpenter. It is used for gripping sheets or other things to be cut, sawn, filed or rubbed. Sometimes many pieces of designs are cut together for symmetry.

Nihani (Chisel)

The tools is a sharp narrow mouthed chisel measuring 12-18 centimeters in length used for chasing cavities to set in smithereens. This is used for deepening the cavities. This has to be sharpened occasionally.

Rasp

With semi circular back, rasps of size ranging from 20 to 30 cms. are used for smoothing to surface.

Hammer

The most common tool weighing about 125

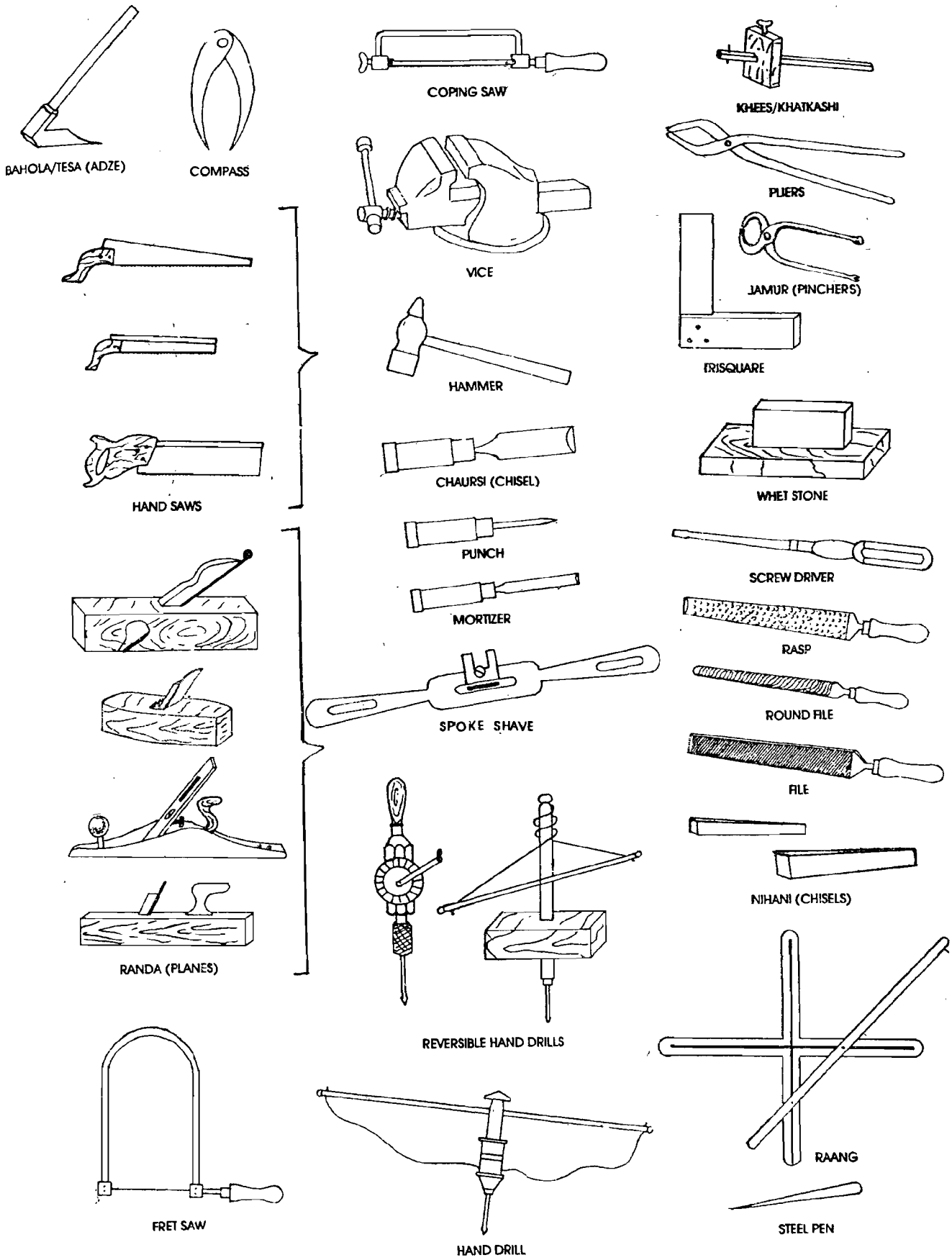


FIG 1 MAIN TOOLS USED FOR PLASTIC INLAY WORK

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gms is used for carving and embedding the smithereens into chased cavities by mild striking.

Marking Tool

A punch like tool with sharp pointed edge is used for inscribing on the surface to be chased for inlay pattern. The contours of the pattern are marked by this marker.

Chaursi

It is a chisel with wide mouthed cutting edge bevelled on one side. It is used for cutting the wood from the board to seat the inlay design. It is manipulated by hammer.

Forecеps

It is used for lifting tiny pieces of plastic smithereens to be implanted into the cavities carved for them.

Raang (Double centered compass)

It is a typical sort of compass whose marking arms moves over two prependicular axes to trace an ellipse over the surface of the board. The two centres have their loci on the two axes. The axes are first fixed on the board surface. The boundary of the ellipse is traced by moving arm of the *raang*.

Khees/Khatkashi

As the name signifies it is a straight wooden rod having a sliding whorl at one side and a sharp nail after it to serve as the marker or cutter. The mouth of the nail is sharpened. It is used for drawing lines, furrows and cutting plastic strips.

Scraper

This is the blade of surface plane and is used to scrape the dried and smeared superfluous wood dust from the surface of the board. It produces a smooth finish on the surface.

Kalamkari/Engraving Tools

The tools are sharp and pointed *Kalams* (Pencils) of steel for marking eyes, ears, nose, tail,mouth, hair etc. on designs of human, animal and plant figures. Its manipulation requires an artistic taste. All the above mentioned tools are invariably used by all the craftsmen irrespective of their educational standard.

Power Tools

For quick processing some electrically operated tools have been adopted by few craftsmen who can afford them. These are; band saw, circular saw, drilling machine, buffing machine, jig saw, lathe, planer, surface plane etc. If some more evolved tools for cutting of plastic, carving of cavities are devised so as to reduce manual labour it could give a fillip to the production. The saws, rasps, files, vice, blades are factory made and are purchased from hardware shops. The inlay tools, engraving tools and punchs are made by blacksmith locally or in the town.

The different stages involved in the mechanics of inlay are dealt with briefly in the following paras:-

1. Making of Planks/Boards

The logs of *sheesham* wood are sawn into planks. The sawing is done mechanically in the town by band saw. The size of the log determines the dimensions of the board. The sawn planks/board are subjected to seasoning or allowed to lie for years for natural seasoning. The bigger plank is cut to desired dimensions with handsaw. The common shape being either rectangle or square. When the plank is to be made oval shaped the superfluous wood is cut or sawn after marking the boundary of the ellipse by using *raang* compass. Round shape is given by compass in a similar manner. Polygonal shapes are given by means of cardboard proforma having the requisite base and angle of a polygon. The superfluous wood is again cut to achieve the desired shape. Polygonal figures are also done by first drawing the circle on the board and then dividing the circle into equal number of sectors and joining the points where the radii cut the circle. The artisans are aware of this geometry. The surface of the board is smoothed by planing. Woods of different colours are sawn into thin sheets by themselves. These are smoothed by planing till they acquire the same thickness as that of plastic sheet(s). Preparation of such thin lamina requires accurate manipulation of plane. This is the preparatory process done at the level of carpenter and then the board and thin wood sheets are ready for further work.

2. Tracing/Stencilling on Boards

Usually the designs to be inlaid are given by the dealers or designers, the stencils for several designs are also available with craftsmen which they have been inlaying for pretty long time. The design is outlined on a tracing paper or drawing paper. Then the design is traced in pencil by keeping a carbon paper in between the design and wood surface. The contours are then marked by the marker for carving out the design to desired depth. Cutting of templates is also followed by some workers. The design taken on transparent tracing paper is temporarily pasted on the cardboard and by means of sharp edged chisel or pair of scissors the template or stencil is cut. Sometimes many a component templates are cut to complete the desired design. This is a job of the craftsmen which requires consciousness and insight. With such stencils the design is traced on planed surface for further work of carving cavities and furrows.

3. Cutting of Plastic and Wood of Varied Colours

The stencils already cut are placed on sheets of plastic or thin lamina sheets of wood as per requirements of the design and outline boundaries are so marked with pencil or sharp marker. The sheet of wood or plastic is tightly gripped in the mouth of vice and the designed pieces are cut by means of coping saw or fret saw with thin blade as is convenient. The frictional heat produced during this operation results in omitting obnoxious odour when plastic sheet is sawn. To reduce friction and free sawing, the blade is frequently oiled. While sawing along sharp curves the blade is cautiously operated. The worker usually sits on the ground with vice gripping the piece of sheet before him. Sometimes a saw board is also used instead of vice for sawing the piece of design. A number of pieces as required are cut. The small smithereens resembling Commas, leaves, stars, circles, semi-circles, squares, triangles, parallelograms, etc. are cut from long plastic rods & strips so prepared for the purpose for the sake of exact symmetry and saving of time. After the big pieces of designs are cut the indentation or roughness is removed by using a smooth file. Similarly the bigger pieces occurring in plural in the design are first gripped together in the vice and then made symmetrical and congruent by using smooth file. Holes are cut by means of drill. The smaller pieces of smithereens are required in hundreds and thousands. The narrow long wires and strips are cut either by *Khees/Khatkashi* or by pair of scissors which are used for embedding in straight and carved furrows. This is delicate stage of work characterised by artistic beauty and excellence. This stage of work is acquired by repeated practice.

4. Khudai or Carving of Cavities and Furrows

The component parts of the design cut from plastic or their stencils are placed on the planed surface at appropriate place and then for clear impression of the design the boundaries are marked by gently striking the marking tool with a small hammer. The impression of design is also traced by means of carbon paper in several cases as convenient to the inlay worker and boundaries are made distinct by use of marker. The marked part conforming to the plastic design already cut is dug out by using *nihani* (chisel) and hammer. The wood is carved to a depth equal to the thickness of plastic piece which usually varies from 2 mm to 4 mm. The cavity is to accommodate the pieces in an airtight manner. Sufficient care is taken lest the worker should dig an oversized cavity. With the help of another suitable chisel the inlay worker makes the carved rough surface quite suitable to seat the piece of design into the ground. Similarly smooth furrows and arcs are also carved with chisels and suitable small saws. The cavities for small circular, rectangular, square, star shaped plastic pieces are carved by means of hand twisted flat mouthed drills. Like previous step, this stage also requires an experienced workmanship because oversized or too tight cavities may adversely affect the beauty of the designs. Close conformity between the piece of plastic design and cavities chased is the main criteria in this process of craft.

5. Inlaying

For implanting the design into the cavities a coating of glue of *fevicol* is given to the chased area of the board and the inlay design is stuck into the ground by gentle strokes of hammer (plate 9 ahead) till it is co-planer with wood surface. Complex and intricate designs may have to be embedded by the worker at different intervals of time. After all the pieces of inlay are stuck in ground, the engraver marks the ground contours matching the original design. Thin splinters of wood or narrow plastic wires are inlaid to complete the design wherever necessary.

6. Smearing with Wood Dust Paste

A paste is prepared from powdered *sheesham* wood dust and glue/*fevicol* which is smeared on the inlaid surface. The recesses or hungry spot if any left during the forementioned stage are duly filled up. The leeped surface is allowed to dry for hours in sun.

The superfluous material is scraped by sharp blade of a plane. The blade is kept in slanting position towards the worker and drawn with pressure towards him by both hands. The shining design appears beneath and recesses disappear.

7. Smoothing the Inlaid Surface

The inlaid design may show some indentations or roughness to touch and all pieces may not be quite co-planer. It needs a smooth finish. The rough surface is fully rasped or filed by the artisan to achieve evenness. The surface is further smoothed by scraping which is followed by rubbing with a fine grain sandpaper.

8. Engraving and Kalamkari

The sharp distinctive features and cuts as eyes, ears, nose, mouth, moustaches, hair, plumes and other requisite shades are essential before final finish. The job is done by expert engraver. Flower petals, buds, etc. are engraved. The engraving pencil is manipulated with care for an accurate and attractive get up. A great deal of *kalamkari* is done in village Bassi (G.H.) depicting varieties of scenes and designs already mentioned. The engravers here have to their credit the state awards. In the dots, furrows, grooves and shades etc. engraved on the surface, some chemical colour mixed with *mansion* polish is applied in moderate quantity. The colour sinks into these grooves or cavities and superfluous is rubbed off. This makes the features and shades natural, attractive as well as prominent.

9. Fixing of Accessories/Fixtures

The parts like legs of tables/teapoys, trivets and stands of mirror frames etc., are prepared by the artisans which are got fixed later on by the dealers in the market by means of nut and bolt arrangement made in the top of table and legs. For instance there is fixed wooden boundary of equal thickness beneath the table top which is locally called *Jhallar* (collar) and in this boundary are fixed as many nuts as the number of legs to rest on by carving cavities of equal size of the nuts. At the same time the relevant bolts are fixed at the apex of legs keeping the threaded portion outwards and their heads fixed inside the wood. The legs are tightened by this arrangement and can be detached when required. In case of fancy boxes, chessboards, standing mirrors, panels, etc. hinges are fixed.

10. Final Finishing

At the final stage when the artefact is to be exhibited in the emporia or sold to the customer, comes the process of final finishing. The craftsmen in these villages do this process only occasionally. This process is got done by the dealers in the town. For polishing, however, some quantity of beewax/*fevicol* and brown powdered soil are mixed and stirred well and this mixture is applied to the inlaid visible portion of the artefact and allowed to dry. After drying, it is rubbed with sand paper. Finally there is given a coating of lac polish mixed in spirit. It is then rubbed with rags for achieving lustrous surface. It is reported that wax polish is not resistant to the action of heat and dampness, so many customers would like to purchase unpolished or semi-polished goods. There is felt the need of exploring the replacement of wax polish with transparent polyurethane lacquering or some other suitable coating. Polished things sometime bring disrepute to the craft. The plastic is inert to the weather hazards.

Main Handicrafts Manufactured - Measures/Specifications

A large variety of objects as mentioned earlier in this chapter bearing numerous designs is manufactured in these villages. Main among which are table tops, teapoys, chessboard, screens, panels, fancy boxes, *peedahs*, dressing table, *chakla velna*, etc. A passing reference about the salient items is furnished here as space hardly permits to give minute details about all.

Table Tops/Teapoys

Table tops of different geometrical shapes as rectangular, round, elliptical, polygonal are

made in different sizes with floral inlaid designs and elephant type inlaid legs. A round table/teapoy of 30-45 cms. diameter costs Rs. 120-175. An elliptical table of size 50 x 90 cms. costs Rs. 450-475, which serves as central piece of sofa set. The height of such table is 45 cms. and for bigger tables it may exceed even 60 cms. This is an important item of inlay craft. These artefacts vary in very wide range. Rectangular table tops of sizes 100-150 cms. are also prepared. These are all in single piece. The prices vary depending upon the design. The smaller sized ones are also called teapoys.

Chessboards

Chessboards are available in square form with its one side measuring from 40X60 cms. with alternate inlaid square pieces of plastic and *kinnow* wood having 32 each. It is made foldable by fixing two hinges at the centre. Its price varies from Rs. 40-150.

Screens

The screen consists of 4 different panes each measuring 180 x 45 cms. thus size of complete screens comes to 180x180 cms. The carving work is done at Saharanpur (U.P.). These four panes after inlay are joined by means of hinges. The total price ranges from Rs.4,000-6,000 depending upon design inlaid.

Panels

Panels of different geometrical shapes as round, elliptical, rectangular are decorated by inlay or *Kalamkari* or both. Round panels vary from 20-30 cms. Elliptical panels vary from 15x10 cms. to 20x30 cms. etc. Various designs as mentioned in previous paras are engraved on them. These are made of both wood and plastic together, as well as plastic alone. At the back of the panel is notched a cavity for hanging. Its price range is quite wide depending on the design inscribed on it.

Fancy Boxes

Boxes usually of rectangular shapes of sizes 20x12x8 cms. to 30x20x12 cms. or as desired by customers are manufactured. Both the lower and upper parts of box constitute five pieces. Usually, first a box completely sealed from all the six sides is prepared from six pieces. Then it is sawn into two parts, the smaller one serves as lid of the box and is joined by hinges. Except the bottom and back of the box, other sides are inlaid with plastic. A lock or hasp is fixed in the front of the lid. The price of the box is based as per workmanship involved. An inlaid jewellery box of size 20x12x8 cms. ranges from Rs. 60-70. A decoratively inlaid box with inner glass bangle stand and velvet bottom costs Rs. 300-350.

Peedahs (Low chairs)

These are the low arm chairs having he height of the legs equal to the seat height of sofa sets. The legs and arms are made roung shaped by turning on lathe. Inlay work is done on the front legs, arms and back. A *dunlop* cushion is placed for sitting. The price varies from Rs. 125-155 for single seat piece.

Dressing Table

The central mirror frame has inlaid work and the drawers on either side and in centre are also inlaid with plastic. Its price ranges from Rs. 1,500-1,800.

Chakla Velna

It consists of a wooden roller of 8 cms. diameter in the middle and handles on either side as well as circular or polygonal base for rolling *chapatis*. Both the parts are inlaid with plastic. Round shape is given by turning on lathe. Its price varies from Rs. 25-40.

The price for all the articles are based on the quality and intricacy of workmanship. However, dealers have got price lists approximately applying to various articles which are easily marketable. Here the prices mentioned are just approximate guide. The construction and designs of various articles are apparent from plates (17-23) appended in following pages.

Equipment, Designs, Related Myths and Chronology

All the tools already listed with special reference to those used by craftsmen have been briefly described in foregoing paras and the pictorial views of the equipment and relevant tools along with internal views of a few workshops of craftsmen are given in the accompanying plates. Illustrations of a few cardinal tools are also appended. The aforesaid designs are usually provided by the dealers and the inlay worker can easily copy them. Twenty two heads of households comprising 38 workers in them reported that they

have been inlaying these designs traditionally for the last twenty or more years and they are quite familiar with them whereas 4 heads of households being single workers in them reported that they have been inlaying such designs for last ten or more years and the specimen designs are provided by middlemen dealers in the town, i.e., they have acquired the design in non-traditional way. It was reported that designs are mostly copied from the exquisite wood carvings on old buildings in and around Hoshiarpur and thus they have strived to keep the traditional designs alive. Other designs like Taj, Charminar, etc., they candidly reported to have borrowed through imitation and suggestion and it is a sort of diffusion of designs from one place to another. There is also observed a tendency among the craftsmen to mix various forms of designs so as to fill up the space available by which sometimes the beauty of inlay work is manifestly sacrificed. This is usually done with the intention that only with such filling up of the space they may be able to compete for state or national award. They sparingly exaggerate that they can follow any complicated design shown to them. The craftsmen belonging to different communities showed ignorance about particular myths or legends associated with all the designs except historical background about a few of them as the love of high glory between Heer Ranjha, Sassi Punnu, Shirin Farhad, Laila Majnu etc. They have started copying designs of modern tastes as given on advertisement calendars. Broadly the designs of floral patterns, human and animal figures, hunting scenes, birds, landscapes motifs and other figure work, are prevalent. The inlay worker while busy with an exquisite and intricate pattern requires extra special patience and perseverance lest there should occur an undesirable blot on his work by some wrong carving or inlaying.



Plate. 1 : Old *Sheesham* trees—a pride of craftsmen

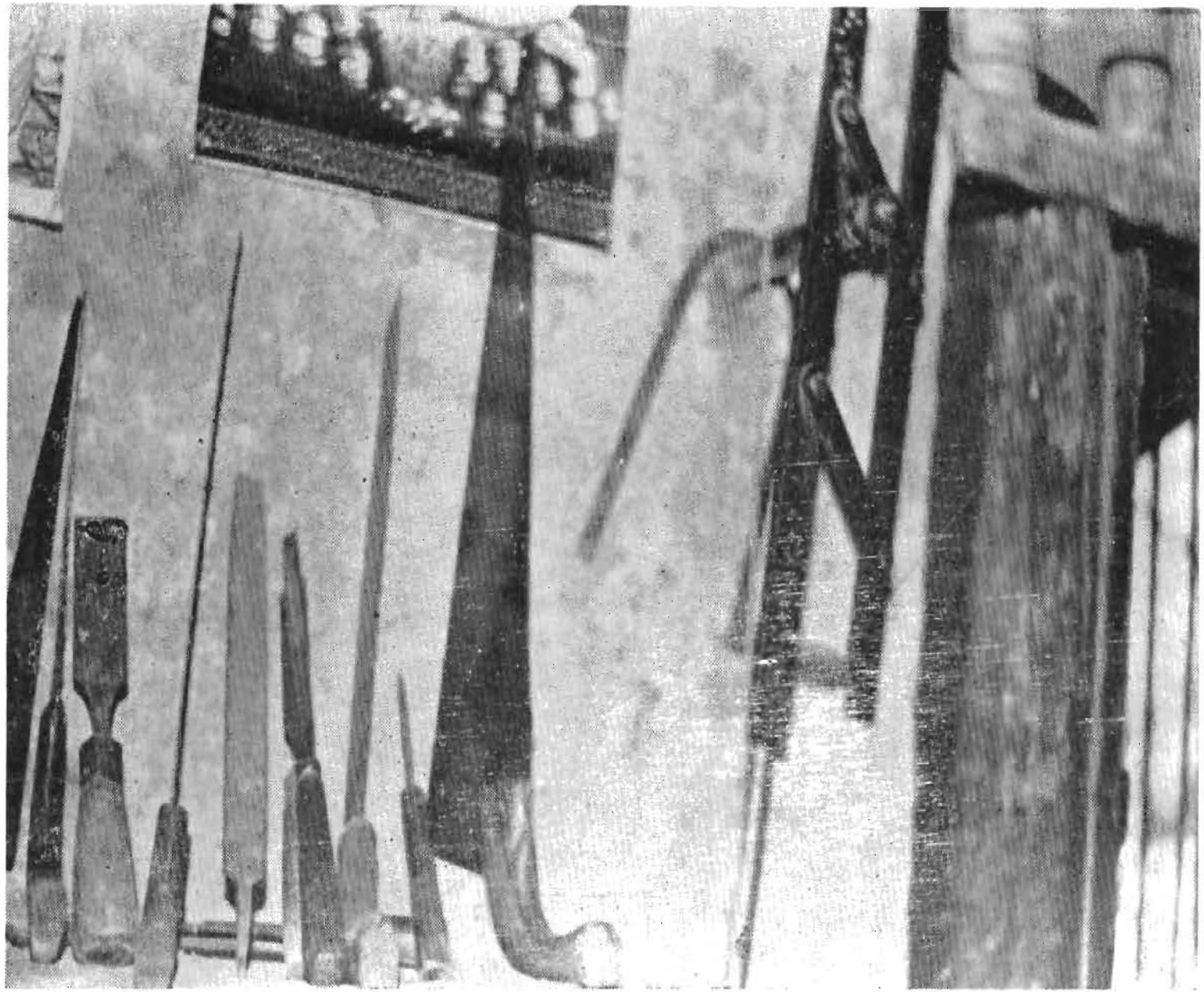


Plate. 2 : Variety of tools required for preparing inlay articles—hand saws, file and chisels etc,

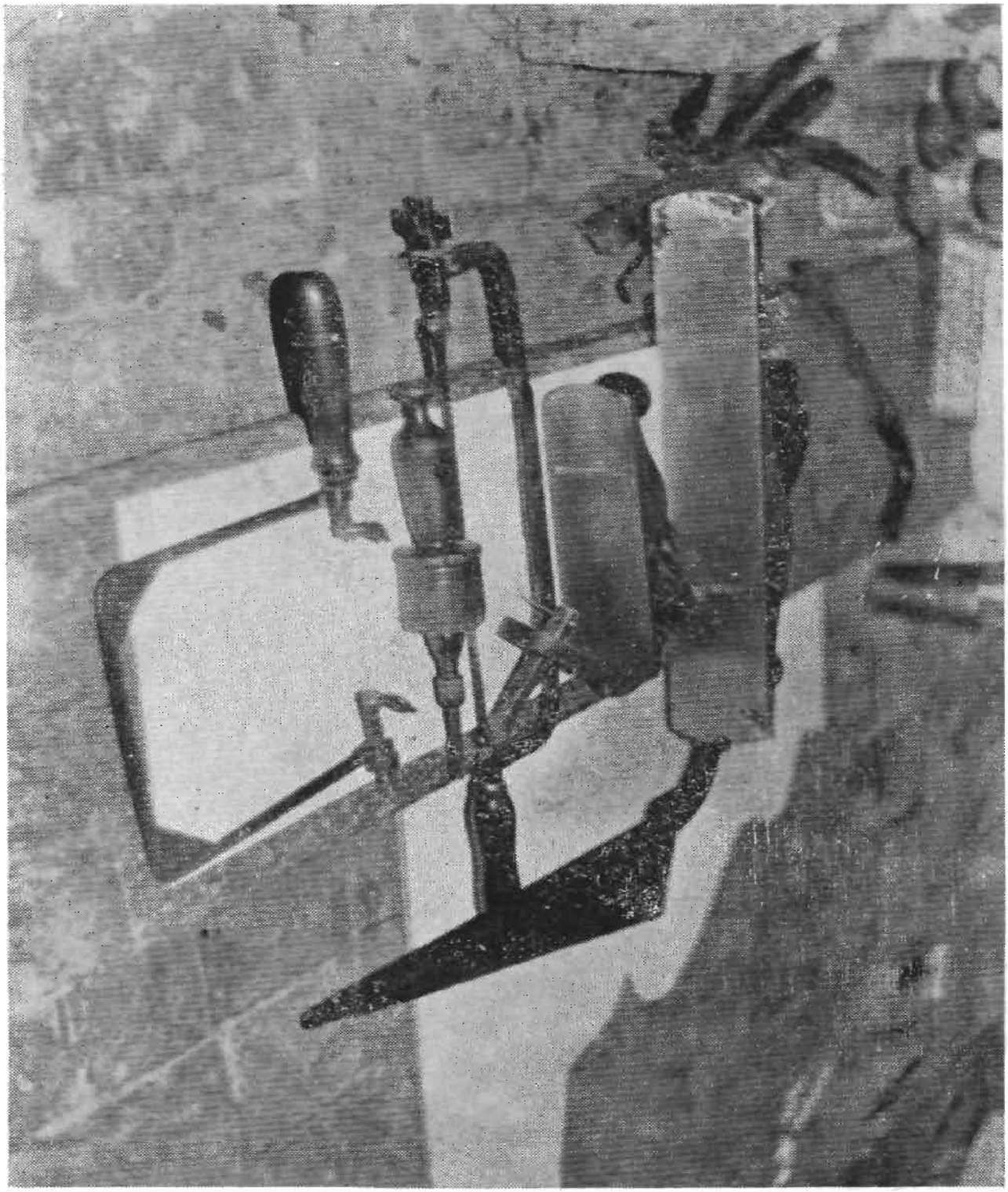


Plate. 3 : Variety of tools required for preparing inlay articles— planes, hand saw, coping saw, *Khatkashi*, hand drill and fret saw

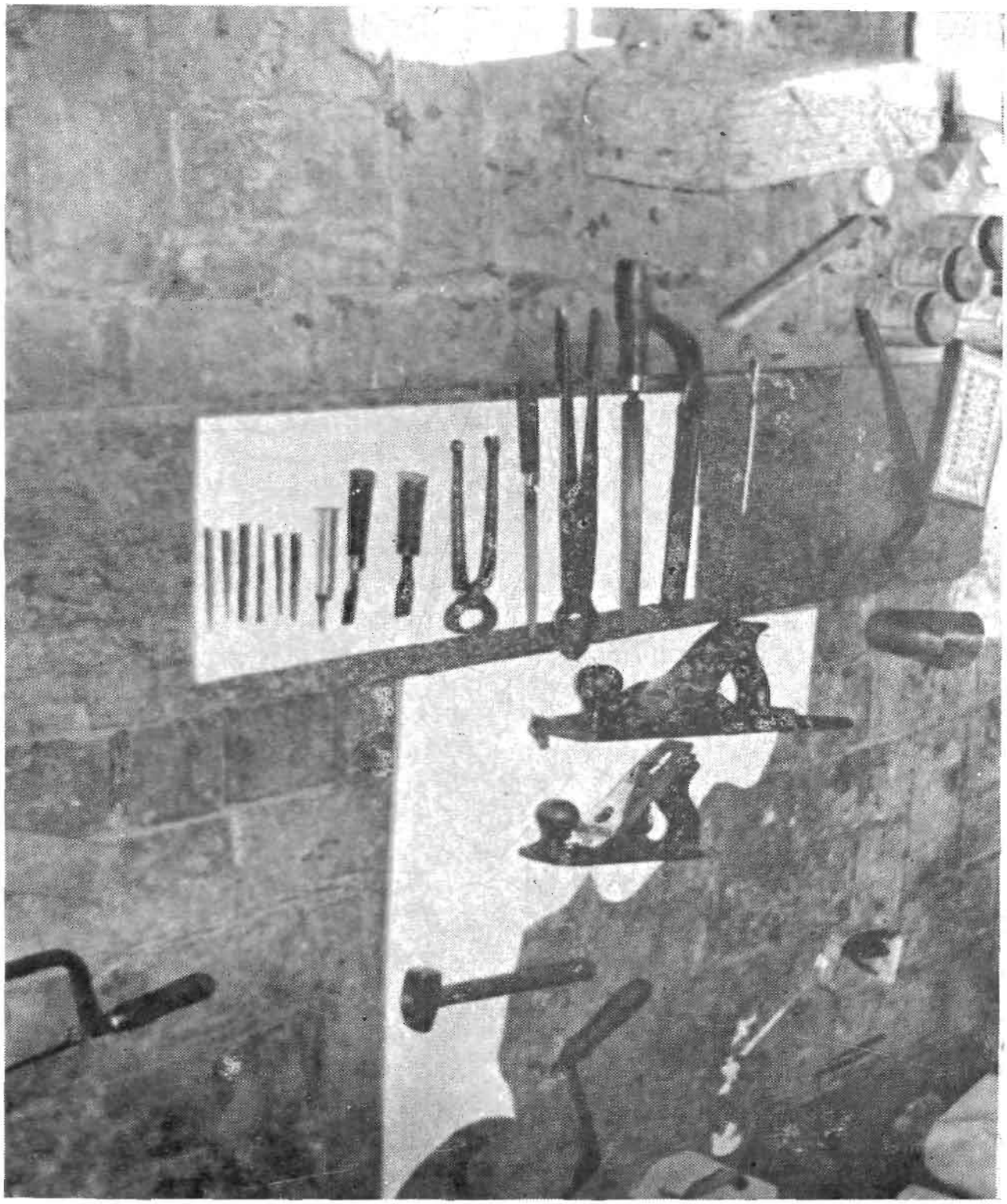


Plate. 4 : Variety of tools required for preparing inlay articles—small *nihanis* (chisels), *Chaursi* (bevelled cutting edge chisel), Jamur (extracting pinchers) file, pliers, hand saw, planes, hammer and fret saw

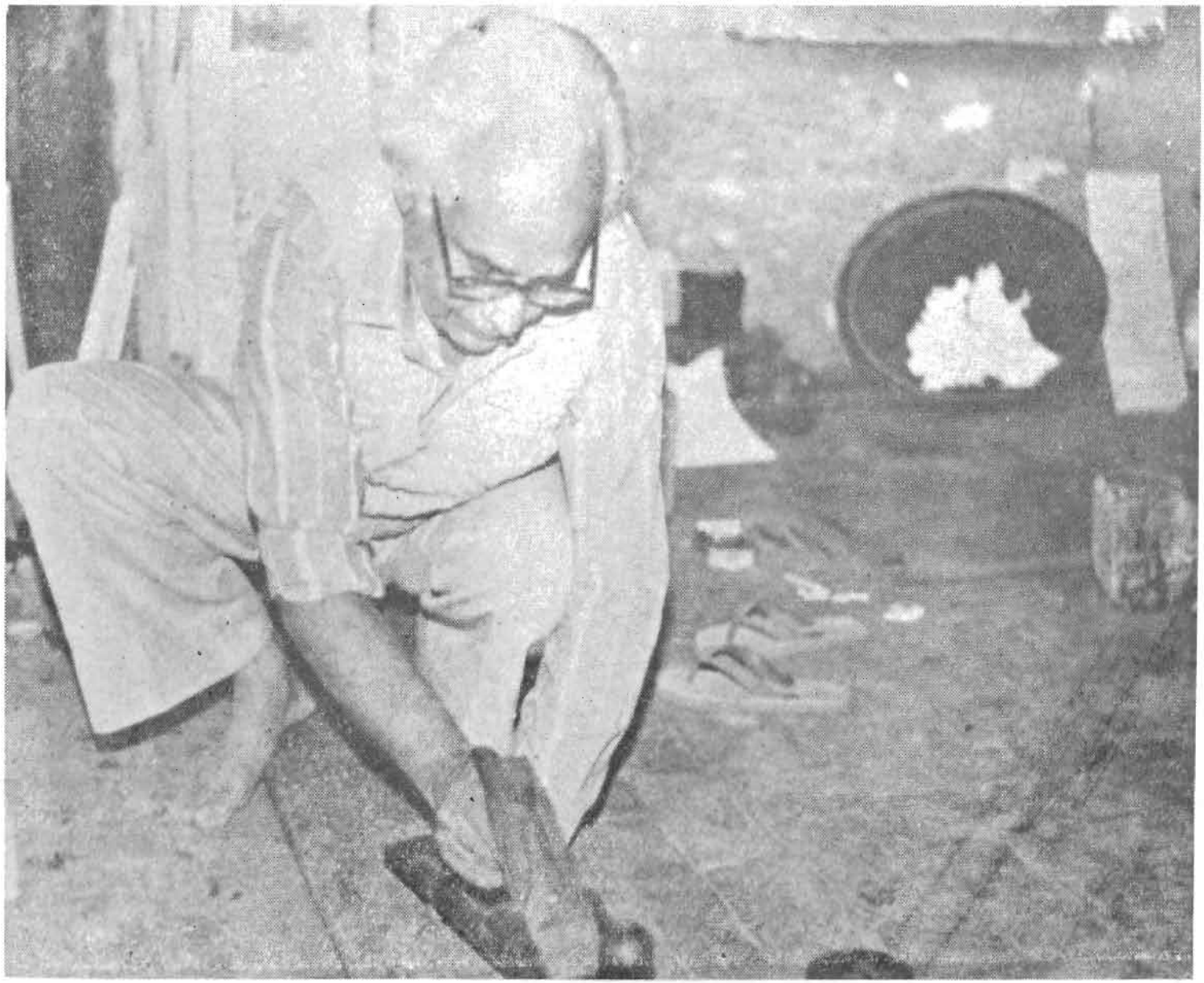


Plate. 5 : An artist planing the wooden board

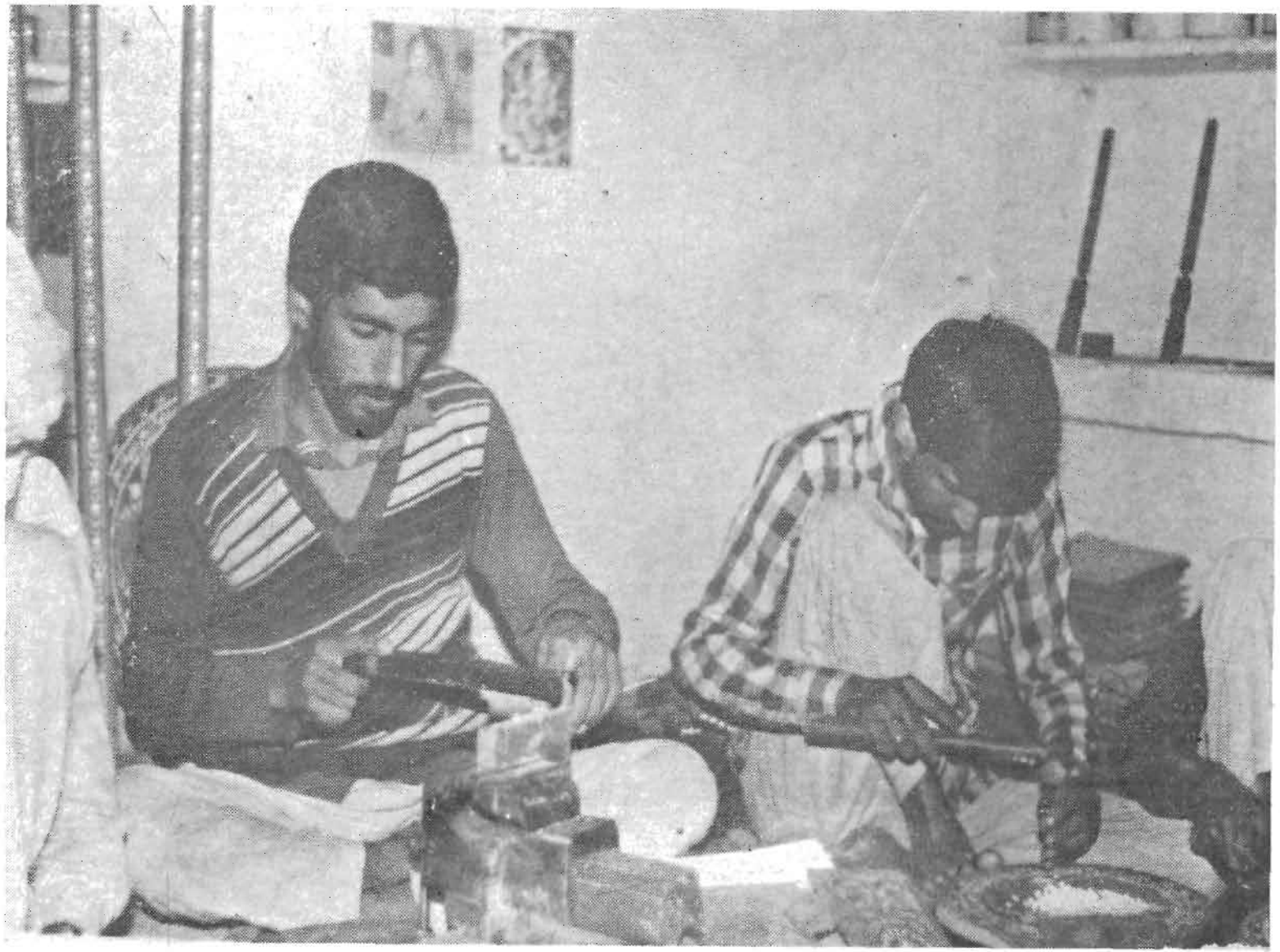


Plate. 8 : An artist cutting symmetrical smithereens from plastic splinter with hand saw using requisite mould gripped in vice and another one is carving cavity for inlaying pieces to make the design

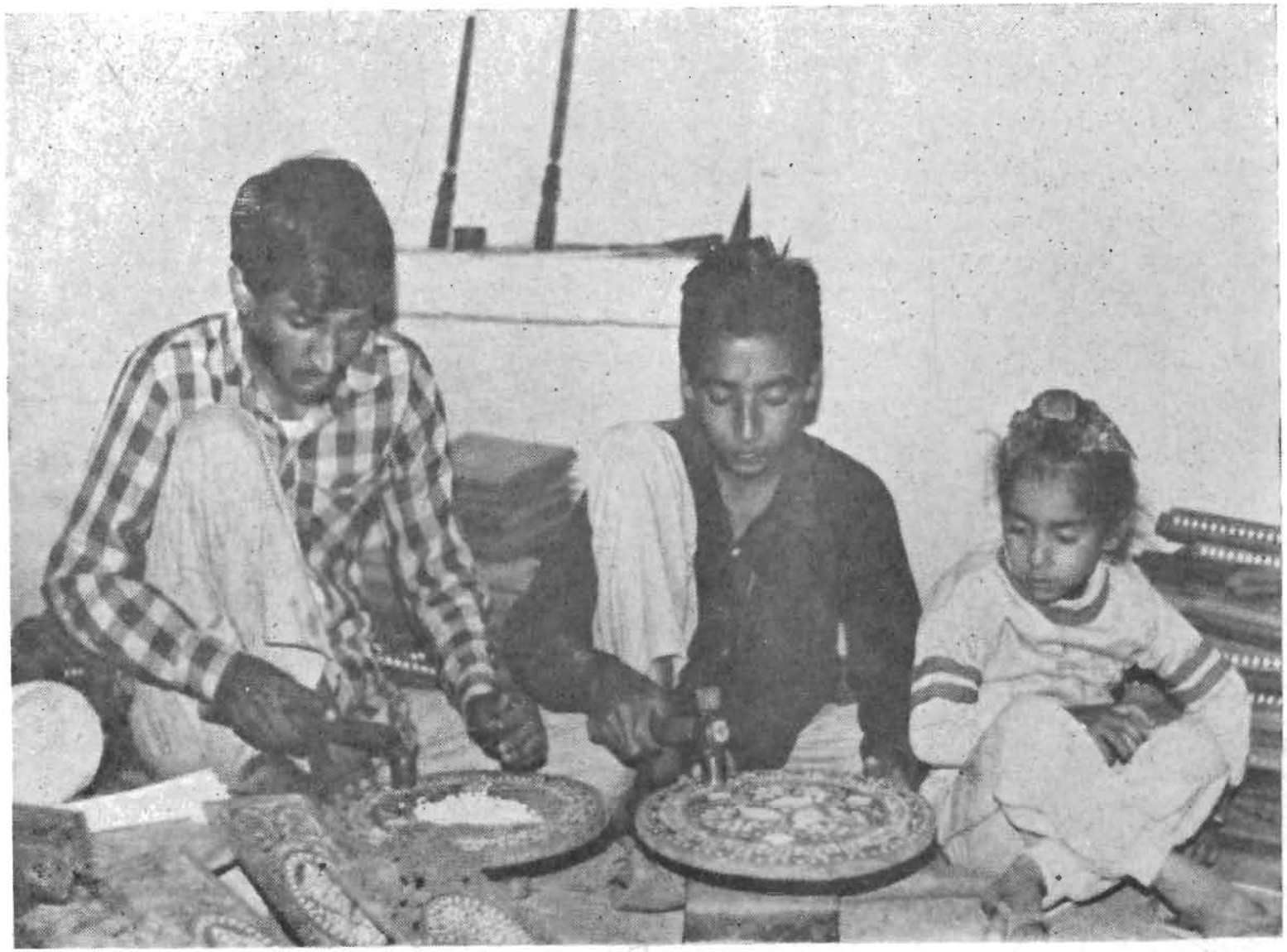


Plate. 9 : Artist driving the cut design of plastic into the cavities by gentle tapping with hammer for preparing round table tops

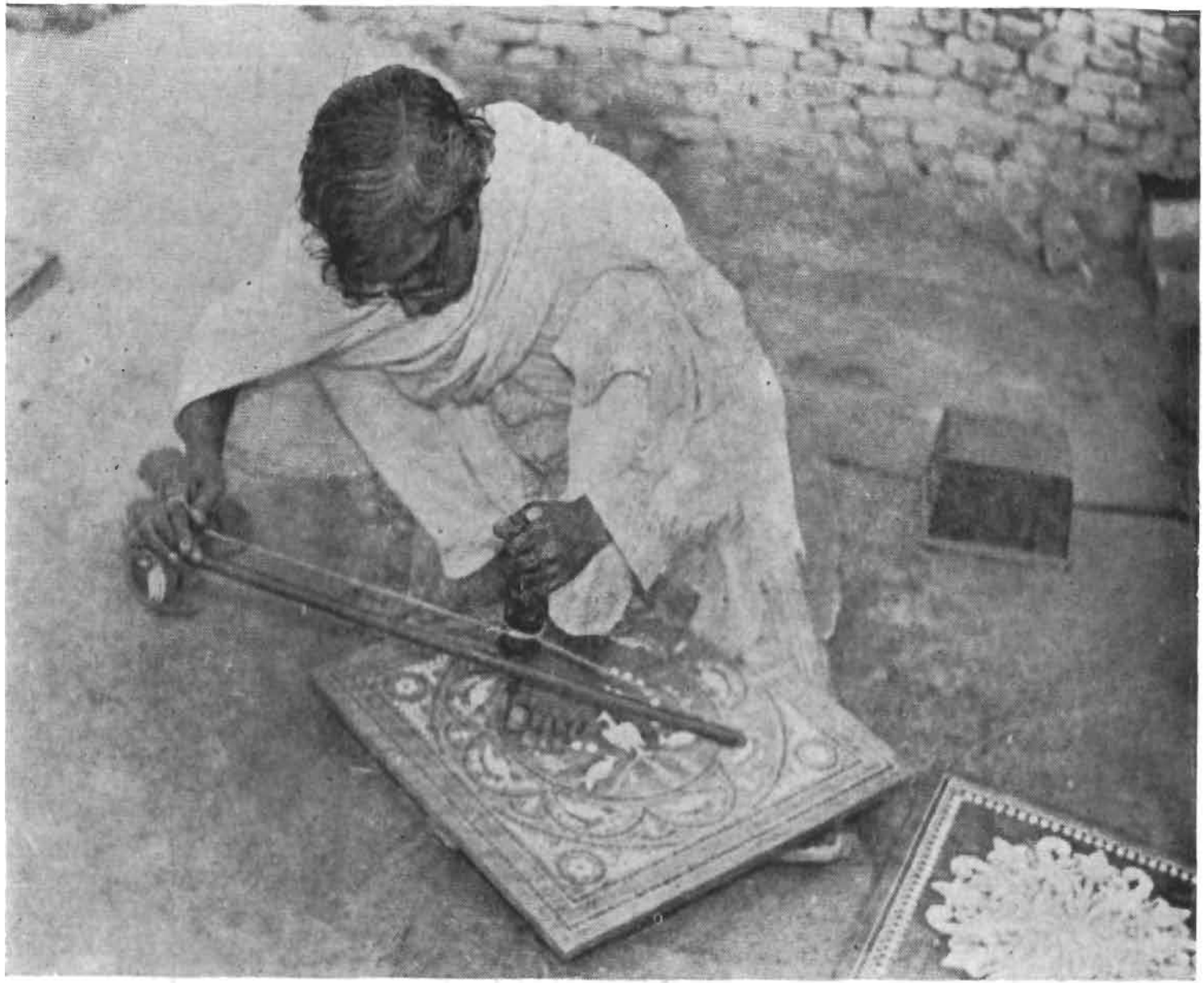


Plate. 10 : Craftsman cutting cavities by hand drill for driving plastic pieces to prepare design on rectangular table top

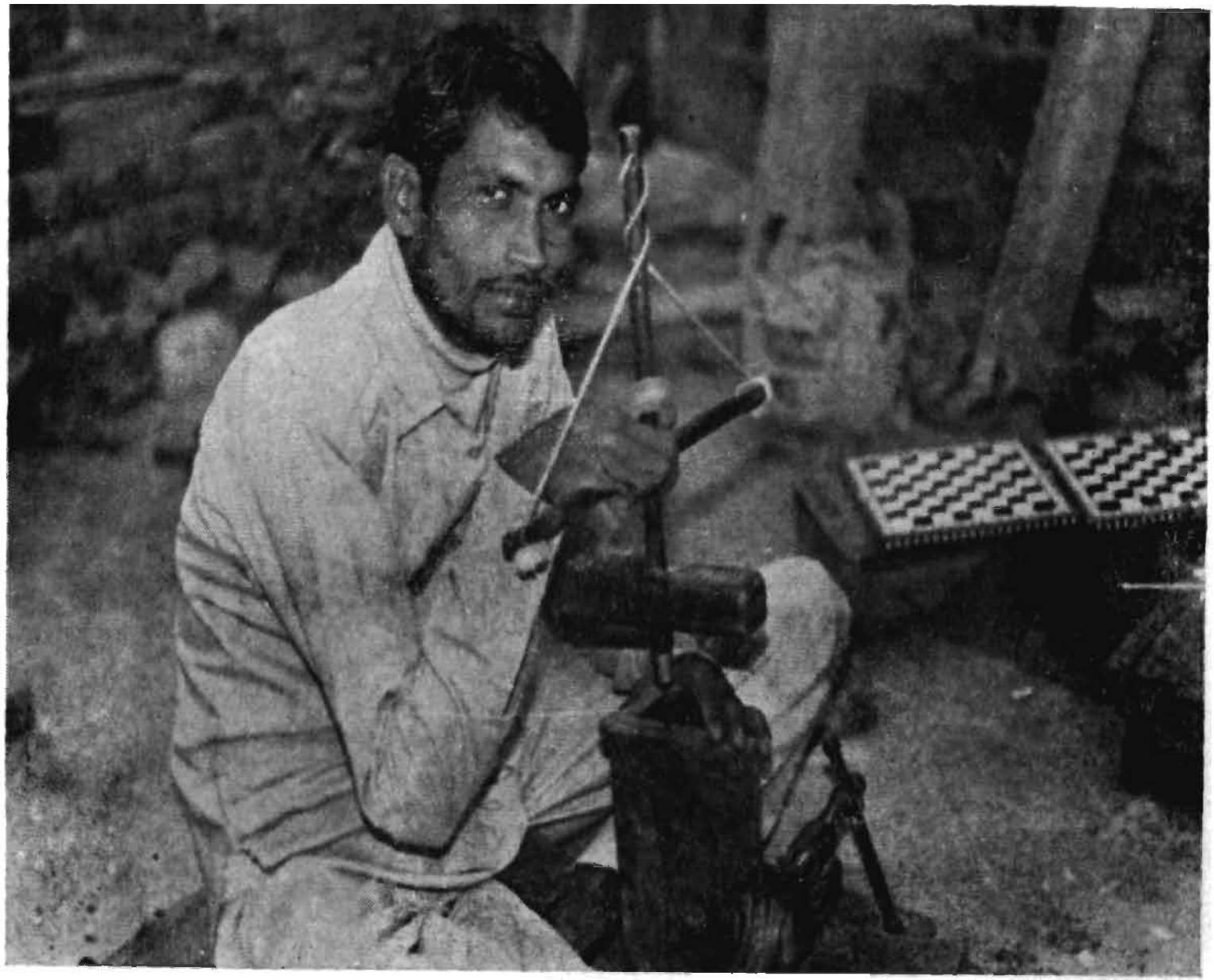


Plate. II : An artist cutting cavities by reversible hand drill for driving plastic pieces into the side walls of chessboard. Inlaid chessboards are seen in the background



Plate. 12 : A craftsman using power drill recently introduced for cutting small round cavities for inlaying plastic pieces



Plate. 13 : A craftsman applying glue/fevicol for embedding the inlaid design in square table top

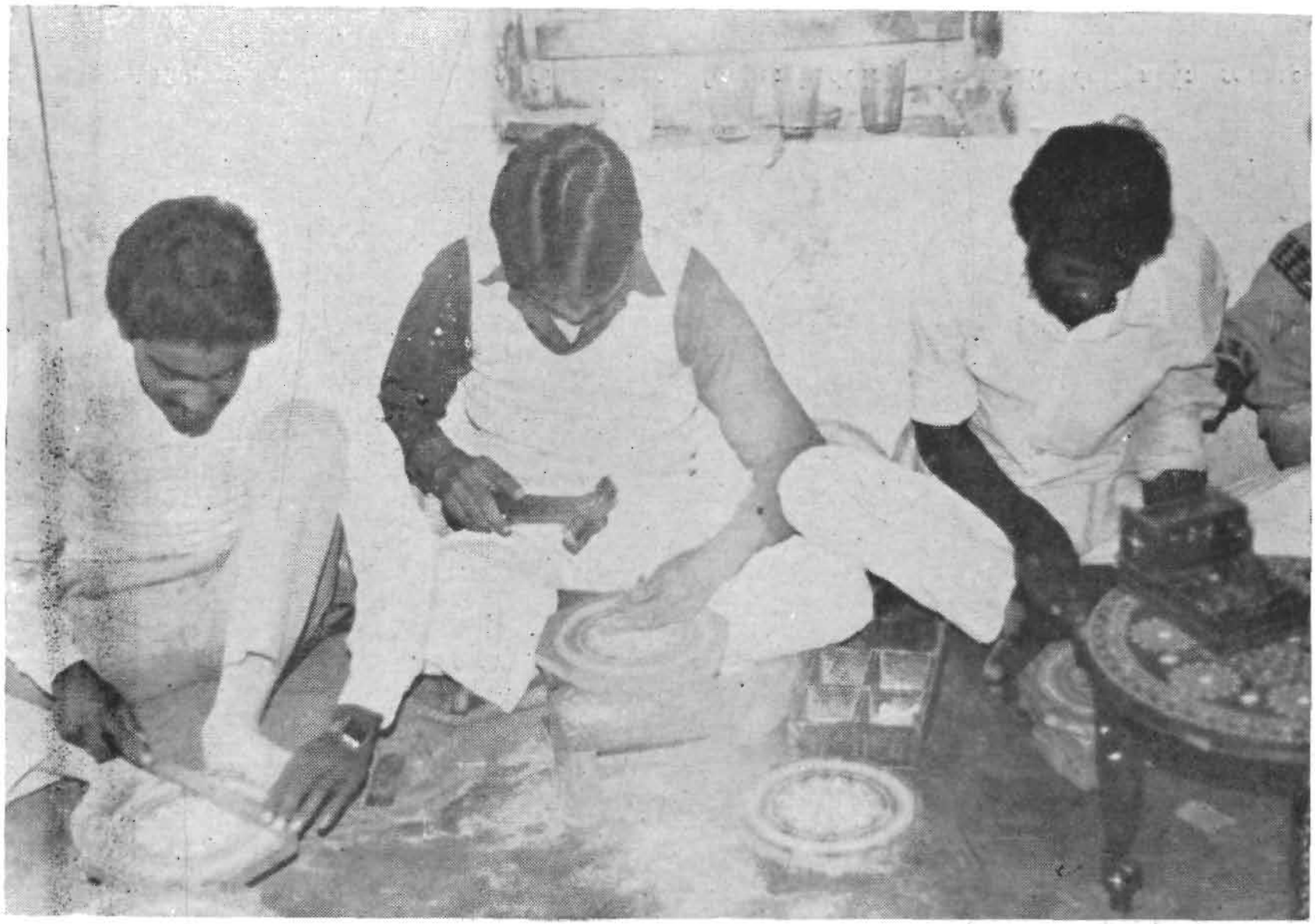


Plate. 14 : Craftsmen cutting cavities by small chisel on the top of the *Chakla* (base of rolling *Chapatis*). Rasping of inlaid surface is also seen



Plate. 15 : The design reappears clear after scrapping the smeared inlaid surface of lid of drawer and recesses are filled



Plate. 16 : An artist busy in *Kalamkari* (engraving by pointed iron pen) featuring a scene on plastic plate

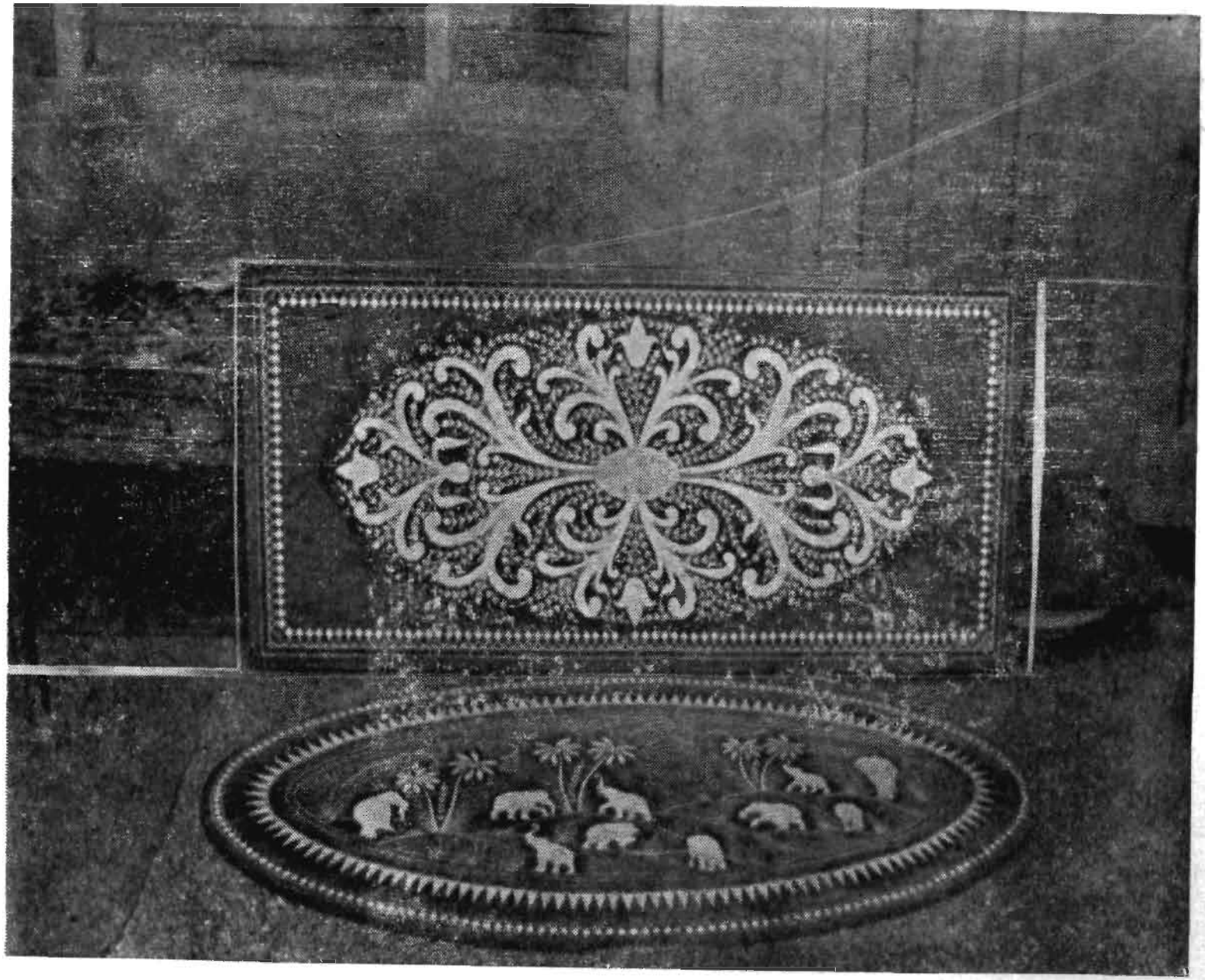


Plate. 17 : Finished rectangular and elliptical inlaid table tops with floral and elephant designs

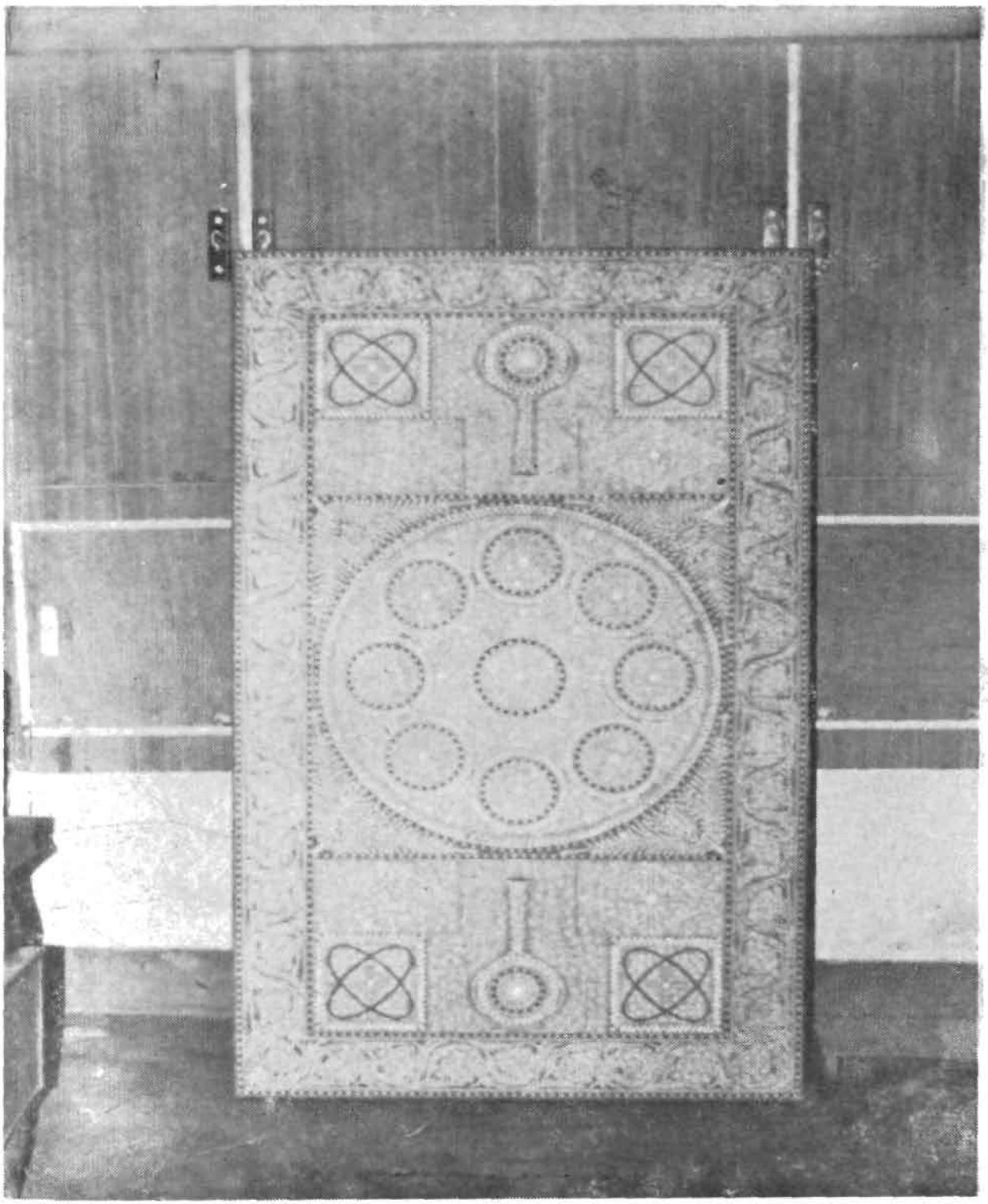


Plate. 18 : A finished rectangular inlaid table top with intricate floral design.

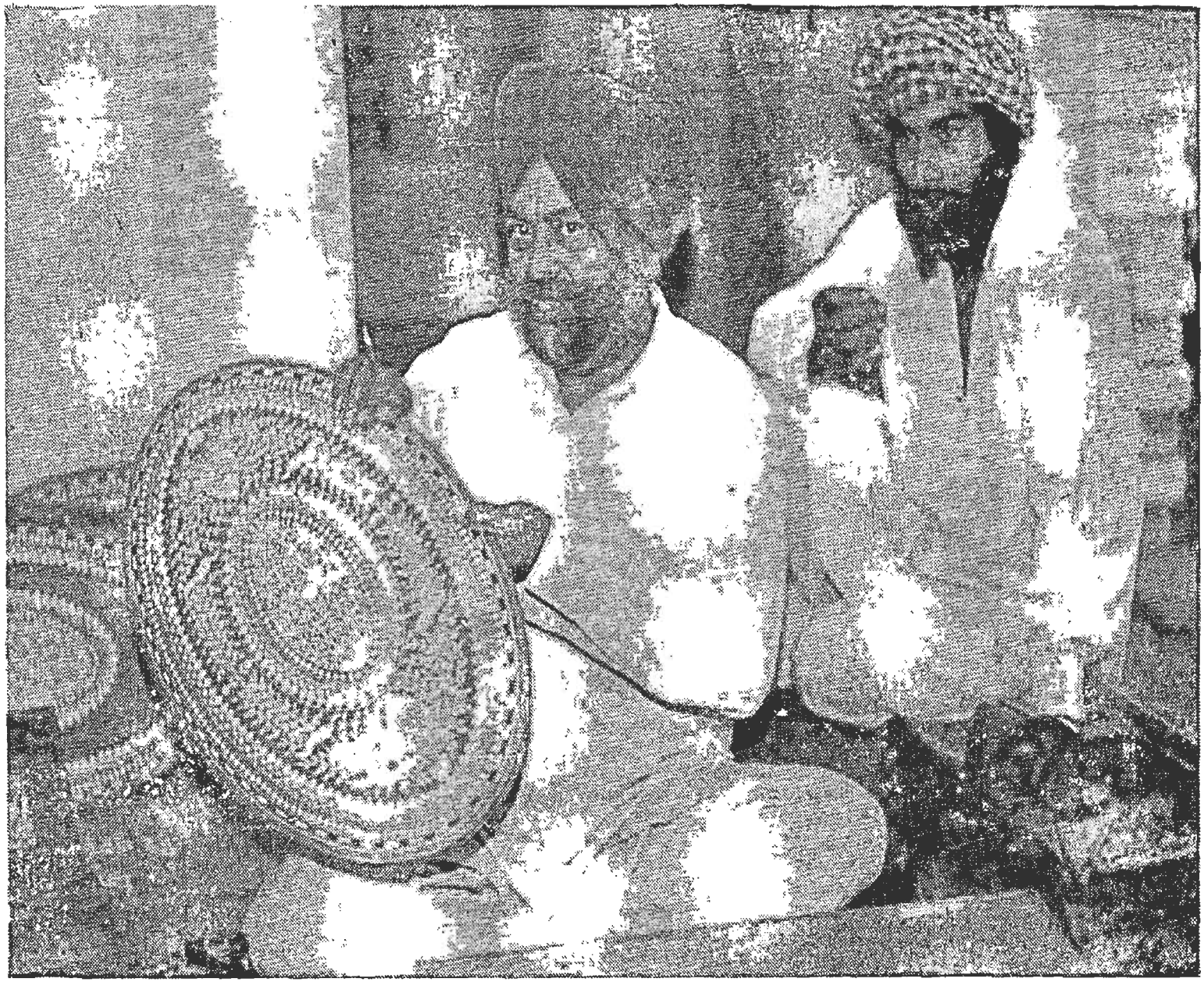


Plate. 19 : Elliptical inlaid table top with complete filling up of the surface

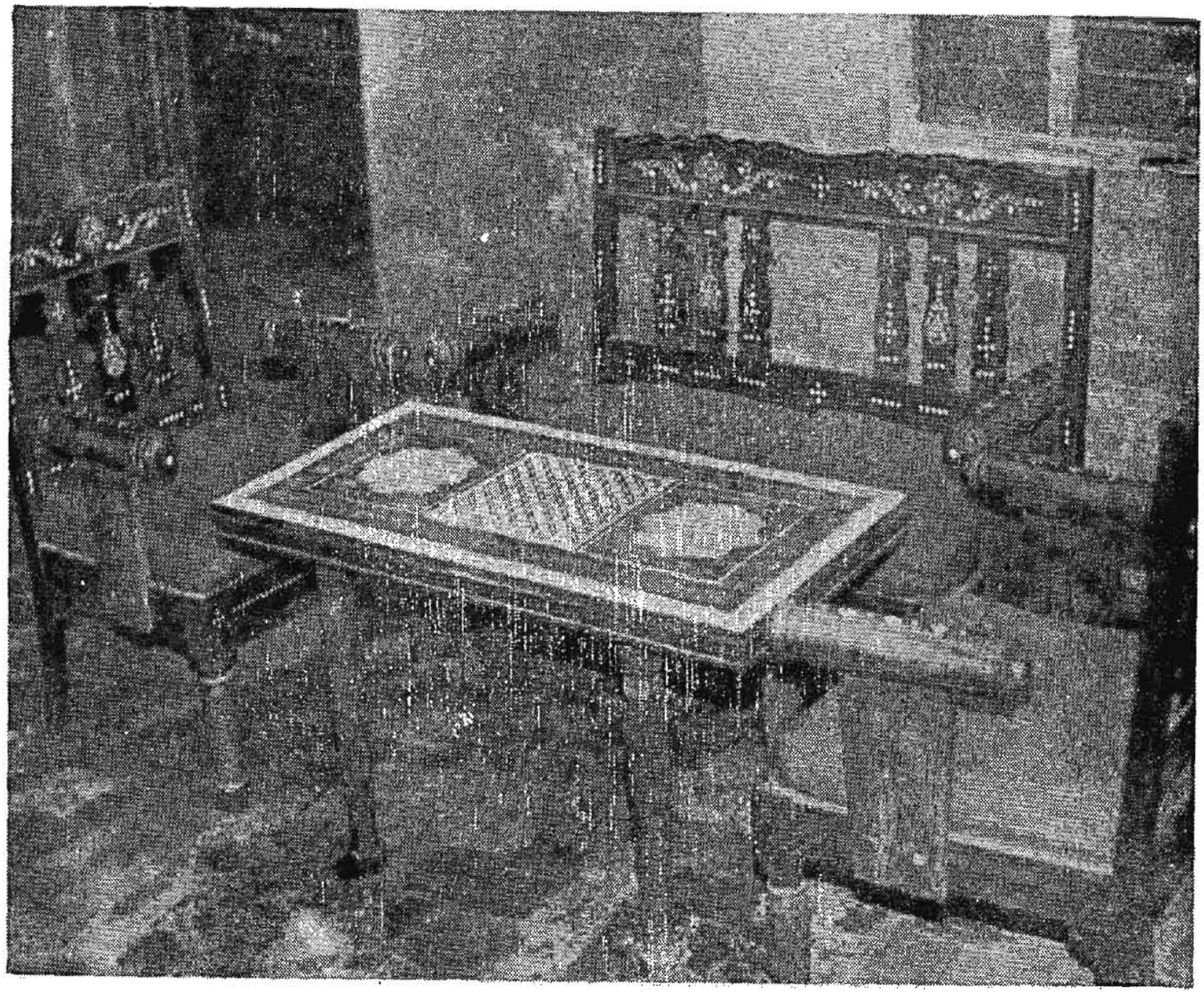


Plate. 20 ; *Peedah* set (Low chairs) with central table inlaid with plastic

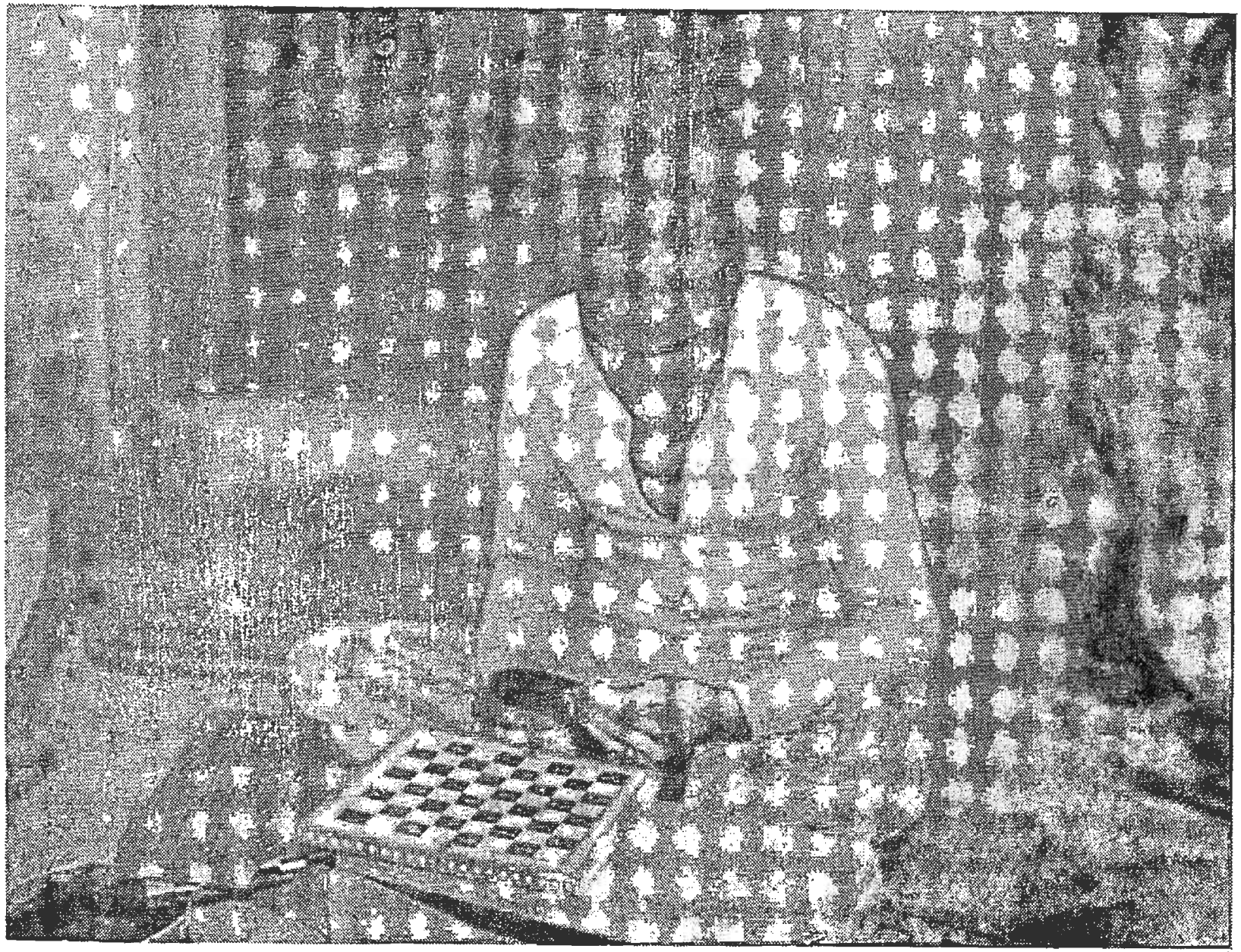


Plate. 21 : Chessboard in semi-finished form

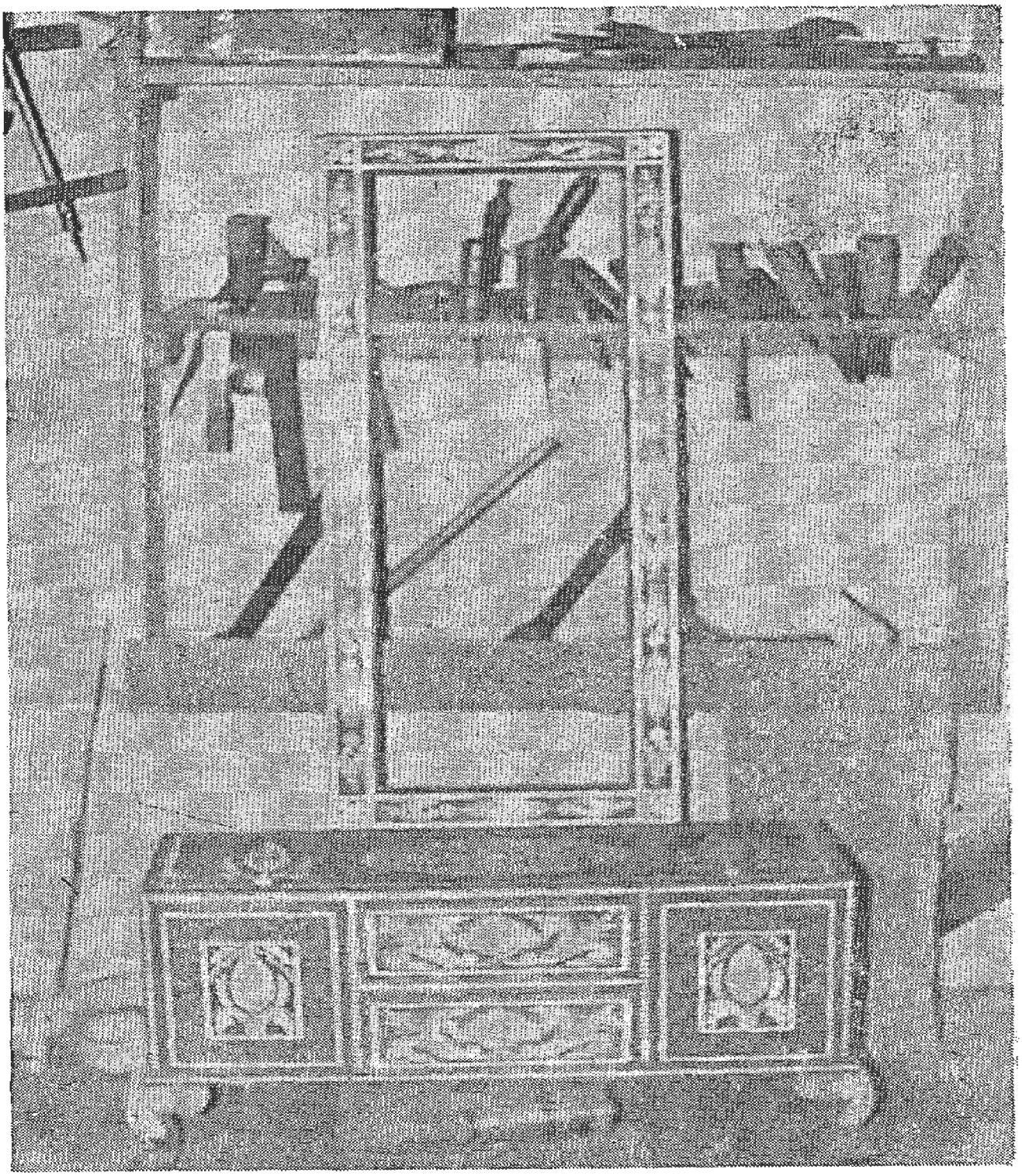


Plate. 22 : Dressing table with inlail floral designs in semi-finished condition. The tools are also visible in background

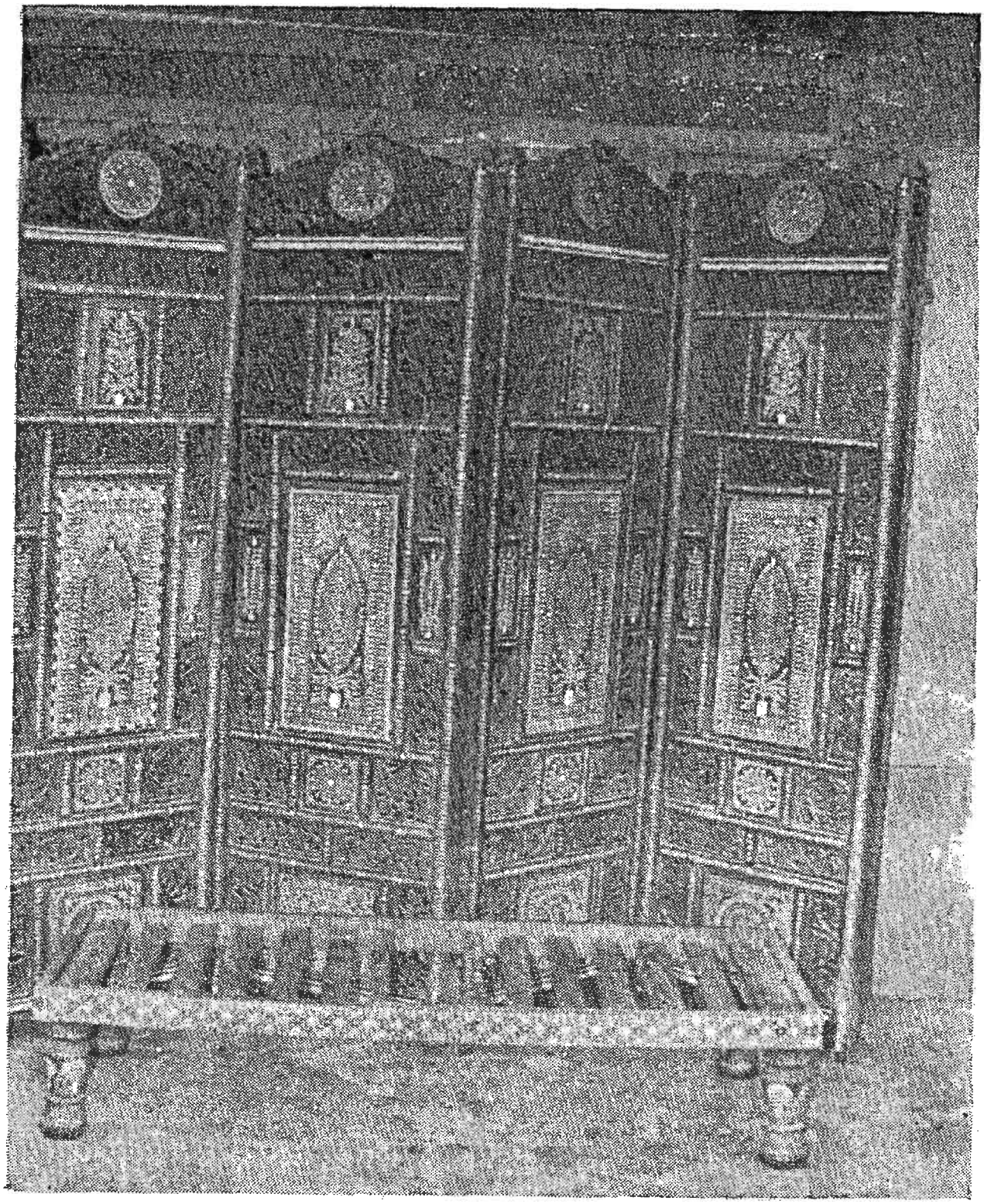


Plate. 23 : Office screen having four carved and plastic inlaid panes decorated with floral designs and a bench in front.

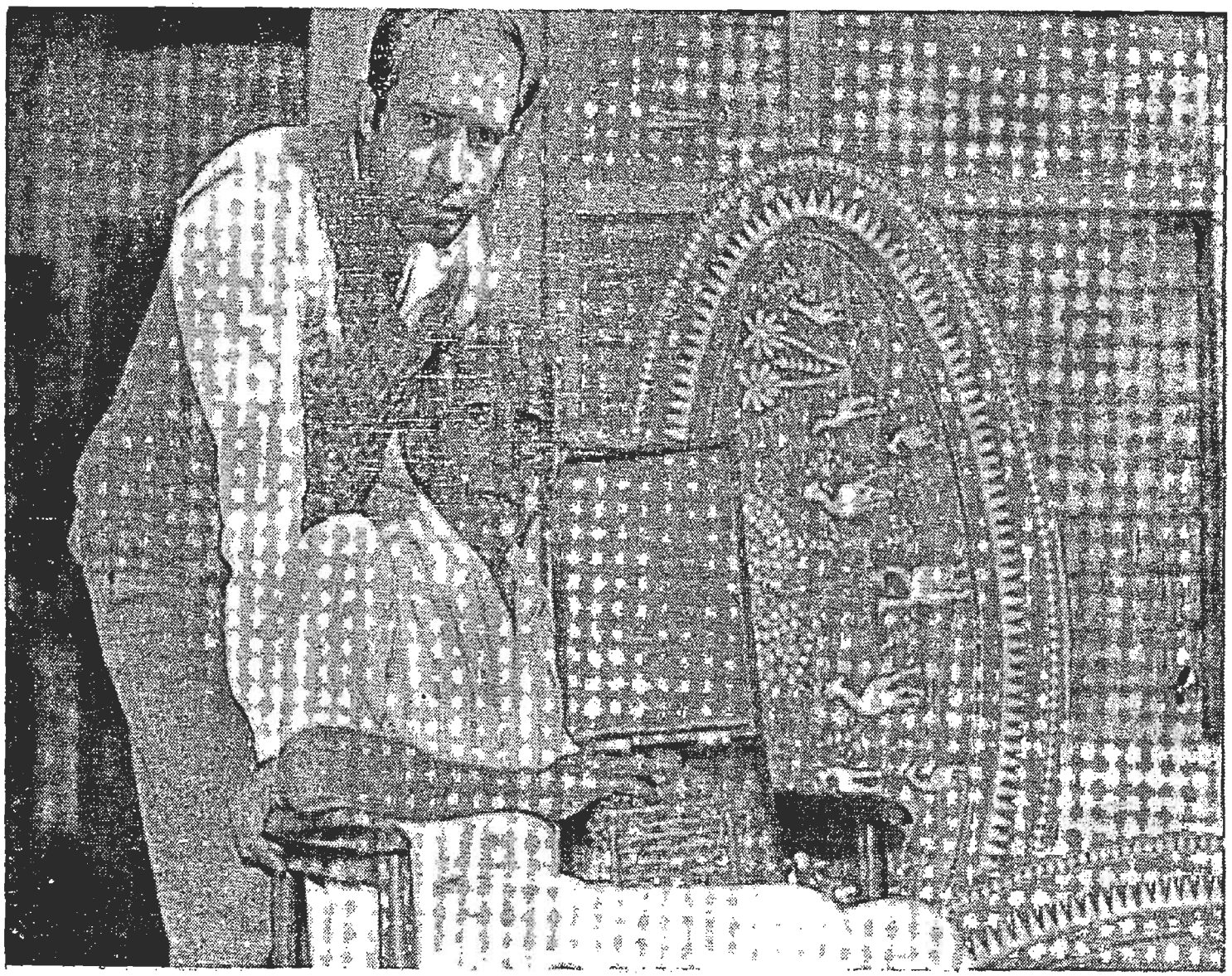


Plate. 24 : Sukhdayal an old master craftsman. He was honoured with National Award for inlay craft in 1977. He holds the *Tammar Pattar*. His son at his back is also proficient in this work

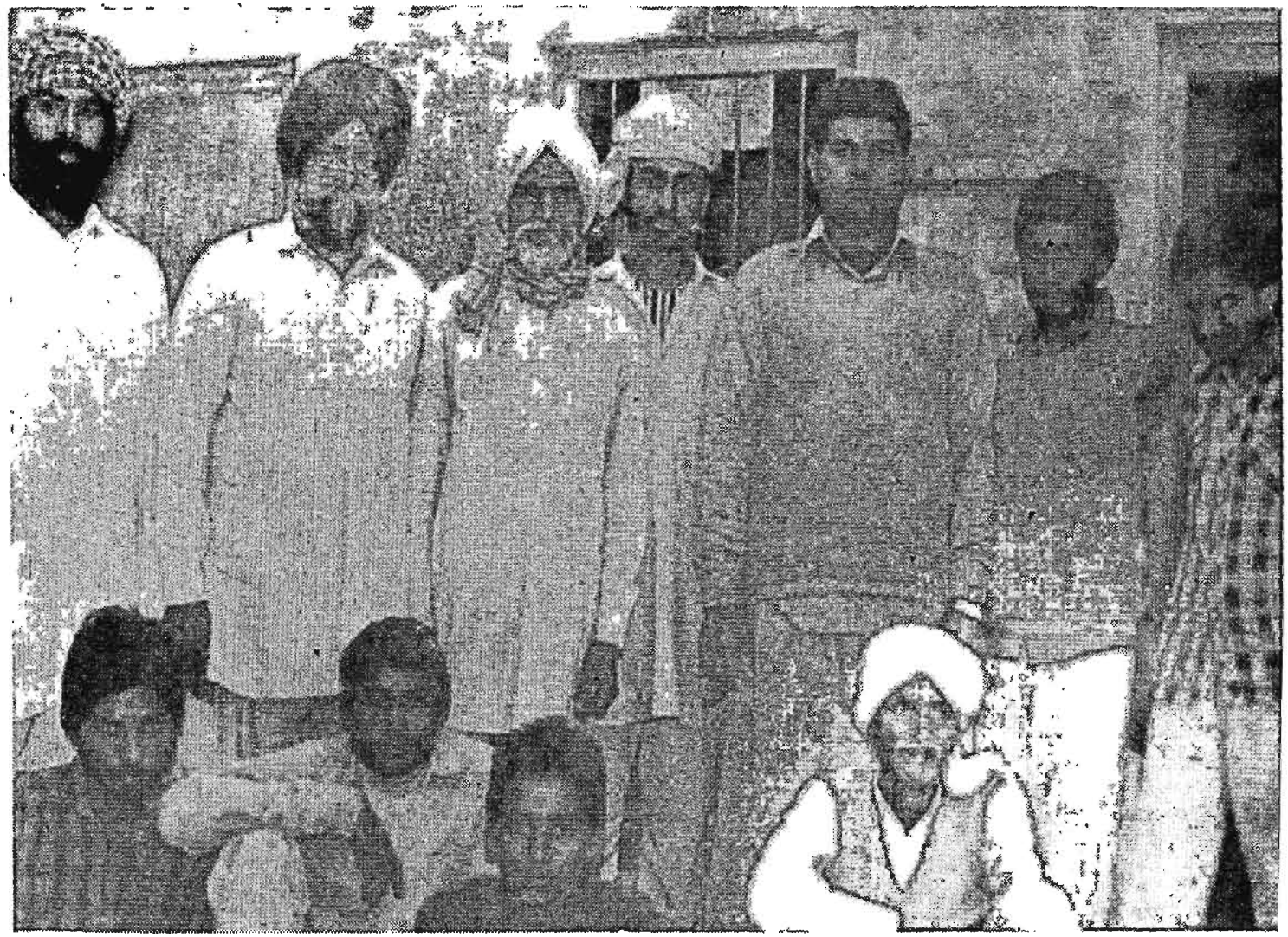


Plate. 25 : A group of inlay workers of Buthgarh village. The first from right in sitting row is Shri Atma Ram, an old master craftsman who has the pride of winning National Award in 1979

CHAPTER – V

MARKETING

Channels

The inlay articles in unpolished and semifinished conditions are usually supplied to the agent dealers at Hoshiarpur, who deal in onward sale from their show rooms to cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and various other centres in the country. Outside market is warmer than within the state. Local sale in the villages is reported insignificant. The dealers report that outside sale is more and they primarily depend on their outside recognised customers. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission is also reported to have introduced sale of inlaid articles in the emporia run by it.

Recently "Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation Ltd." has also reported to have taken initiative to make purchases of inlaid articles from a few artisans. Such steps would indeed boost the sale/supply of the artefacts and open up new marketing channels. The organisation is reported to have identified various crafts and noted the addresses of the artisans in various districts of the state. There is about a dozen of establishments dealing in the trade of plastic inlaid articles in Hoshiarpur. Except a few of these who also have their own small manufacturing and assembling wings to partly fulfil their demands all the rest procure the articles prepared largely from their respective craftsmen and manufacturing units in these villages. As a rough estimate about 80% of the products are manufactured in the hinterland villages surrounding Hoshiarpur. There is quite a limited field for direct disposal of articles by the craftsmen, as the articles are expensive and beyond the capacity of ordinary buyers. The craftsmen sparingly have an open field for marketing their articles, so they have started thinking to augment the household income by other pursuits, but till such pursuits precipitate, they continue clinging to the vocation forlornly. There is felt an urgent need to ameliorate the craft as far as production and suitable marketing is concerned. Suitable remedial measures need to be taken so as to provide necessary incentive to these skilled workers, lest the craft should fade away with passage of time. The demand from outside centres is reported to be encouraging.

As noted at the time of survey the important establishments dealing in the trade of inlaid articles are as given below :–

Sl. No.	Name of Manufacturers/Suppliers and Exporters	Nature of work	Address
1.	M/s Dhani Ram Puran Chand	Manufacturing/Exporting	Dabbi Bazar, Hoshiarpur
2.	M/s Kanhaya Lal Brij Lal	- do -	- do -
3.	M/s Gift Museum	- do -	- do -
4.	M/s New Matharu Ivory Art	Manufacturing/Supplying	- do -
5.	M/s Jain Decoratives	- do -	- do -
6.	M/s Cottage Industries Corp.	Manufacturing/Exporting	Railway Road, Hoshiarpur
7.	M/s Vishwkarma Ivory Art Emporium	- do -	Sutheri Road, Hoshiarpur
8.	M/s Matharau Ivory Industry	Manufacturing/Supplying	- do -
9.	M/s Sandeep Handicrafts	Manufacturing/Exporting	Sheesh Mahal, Hoshiarpur
10.	M/s Guru Nanak Ivory Art Emporium	- do -	- do -
11.	M/s Hindustan Export Syndicate	- do -	Model Town, Hoshiarpur
12.	M/s Craft Orient	- do -	Old Tanda Road, Hoshiarpur
13.	M/s Mahavir P.V.C. Agency	Manufacturing/Supplying	Sarafan Bazar, Hoshiarpur

Apart from the above listed establishments approximately an equal number primarily manufacturing plastic inlaid articles are functioning in the villages under study and on the fringes of the town. There manufacturer artisans are namely : *Mohan Singh* s/o Atma Ram, *Daulat Singh* s/o Manshi, *Pritam Singh* s/o Uttam Singh, *Nirmal Singh* s/o Thakur Singh, *Devinder Pal* s/o Ved Parkash, *Sukhdayal* s/o Ganesh Dass, *Ashok Kumar* s/o Sain Dass, *Charan Singh, Sada Ram* s/o Hazara Ram, *Hazara Singh, Baldev Krishan* s/o Faqir Chand, *Gurmail Singh, Ved Vir* s/o Achhra Ram, *Joginder Singh* etc. etc. The owners of establishments in the town have their show rooms to display the inlaid articles and sell them at their own price after getting these articles inlaid by individual craftsmen on a contract basis. Some dealers in the town are said to export the articles to USA, and U.K. The artisans in the villages have rarely given a thought to export directly the articles to foreign countries, which is beyond their means. Regarding rural sale, very few articles may be purchased by some well to do villagers or aristocrats for giving as gifts or part of *daj* (dowry) to the newly weds. To safeguard them against scratches the articles are packed by wrapping them in old newspapers. Sometimes paper cuttings or rice straw is also used for packing. The artisans neither have formed any association nor have constituted any co-operative society for rendering assistance to the artisans by means of opening a sales emporium where inlaid articles could be sold. There is hardly any source of information regarding changing marketing trends and emergence of new buyers. Neither any head-way is observed to have been made to modernise the production technique nor new innovations have been introduced by the craftsmen. However some apprentice training schemes were introduced during 1983 for couple of years so as to increase production and meet the demands of marketing orders for inlaid articles. During the periods the scheme are run, the master craftsmen imparting training are paid an honorarium at the rate of Rs. 850/- per month and the apprentice trainees get the stipends of Rs. 100/- per month and they get the requisite training under the supervision of master craftsmen. Such schemes are appreciated by master craftsmen and help to fulfil the demands of buyers. The marketing and service extension centre at Hoshiarpur is taking initiative to provide some marketing information and endeavours to arrange exhibitions to find out trends of buyers.

Terms and Conditions

The dealers in the town get the articles prepared from village manufacturing artisans on contract basis. The transaction resembles considerably in manner as a zemindar takes his agricultural produce to the *arhtia* (commission agent) in the market. The craftsman from the village visits the shop of his dealer in the city and gets seasoned *sheesham* wooden boards and other parts like legs of particular dimension required for artefact to be inlaid. For plastic sheets, glue/*fevicol* hinges etc. the artisan arranges himself from hardware merchants or other sources. If some private customer gives order for a piece of article the craftsman may also honour that. Sometimes they purchase seasoned wood from "Solar Wood Seasoning and Rural Marketing Centre" situated at Jalandhar Road, Hoshiarpur. It was learnt that "Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation" is also taking steps for providing allied material like flint paper, plastic sheets, *fevicol*, saw blades, *mansion* and *urethene* polish etc. which is an appreciable beginning reported by craftsmen. The name and address of artisan with signatures are entered in the account books of the dealer and if desired some money is also advanced to him to be adjusted later, towards labour charges involved and in this way he is bound with the dealer. There is sparingly seen any schedule or rate chart for labour charges certified by any approved organisation or agency responsible for such specifications, etc. The prevalent and popular designs to be inlaid are spoken verbally or a copy of it is shown. Slight variation in designs sometimes is permissible which is also determined by the quality of wood. The smoother the wood with straight streaks, the lesser may be inlaid portion and conversely, the inferior the wood the greater is the filling up with plastic smithereens. The labour charges slightly differ from dealer to dealer and artisan to artisan. The encroachment on preparing specific parts by a craftsman on a fellow craftsman is rare. The labour charges are agreed upon between individual parties i.e. the dealer and his associated artisan. The craftsmen maintain some rough account of purchases but rarely of each individual piece. After searching inquiry into the construction cost of certain pieces a group of master craftsmen gave broader details as follows :-

1. Name of the artefact		Table/Teapoy	
Shape of top		Round, 30 cms. diameter	
Legs		3 or 4 elephant type, detachable	
Height		40"-45" cms.	
Design pattern		Floral	
Cost of material		Rs.	Rs.
	Board for top	15.00	
	Sandpaper, screws,hinges	7.00	
	Plastic sheet	25.00	
	Legs with fixtures, nuts bolts	30.00	77.00
Cost of labour			
	Carpentry work	5.00	
	Cutting and inlay of plastic	35.00	
	Finishing	12.00	52.00
Total cost of production			129.00
2. Name of the article		Central Table for Sofa set	
	Top	Elliptical, 50x90 cms; 2 cms. thick	
	Legs	Elephant leg type, detachable	
	Height	45 Cms.	
	Design	Floral	
Cost of material			
	Sheesham wood top and *Jhallar* (collar)	140.00	
	Hinges sandpaper, screws etc.	10.00	
	Legs with fixtures	100.00	
	Plastic	40.00	290.00
Cost of labour including carpentry			
	Cutting of plastic and inlay	130.00	
	Finishing	50.00	180.00
Total cost of production			470.00

Similarly the production costs of other articles are estimated by the dealers and craftsmen and slight variation may be met somewhere depending upon the cost of material and intricacy of design for surface decoration. The craftsmen supply their inlaid articles to the town dealers and exporters. The dealers later on label their own price on the article which is obviously higher than the production cost. They dispose of the articles through their own outlet and thus cater to the local as well as outside demand. There is reported a great demand for such articles which is not fully met. The dealers have their own net work of rapid and universal communication together with banking facilities involved. Principally, it is the market which influences the production of any craft. If there occurs a slump in the market, the products pile up and the channels of disposal choke resulting in chain reaction of stopping the workers from production and risking their livelihood. The craft workers here have rarely seen good earnings, but they are continuing it half heartedly as it has traditional association with them. Majority of the persons practising it are voluntary and full time professional workers. Particularly manual power by means of hand tools is harnessed in this craft. The specialisation in skill is main requirement for this job. The effectiveness of tools, the serviceability of the workshops has a great bearing on the production process as well. For an average workshop engaging 3-4 craftsmen to run the inlay work the informants in a discussion gave the estimate of funds required as follows :-

Description	Approximate Funds (Rs.)
Building premises	50,000
Tools and machinery including power tools	15,000
Working capital	25,000
Total Investment	90,000

Many craftsmen are incapable of having well equipped workshops with electrically operated tools and well furnished accommodation. Subsidy in respect of investment on purchase of improved tools, exemption in interest and abolition of state and central sales tax is required by craftsmen for giving a boost to the dull grind and monotonous pace of the craft. The disturbed condition in the state is another hurdle adversely affecting the growth and proper functioning of the craft establishments. Recent floods in September, 1988 also caused damage to certain old workshop premises in these villages.

In order to maintain proper beauty, *sheesham* wood hardly has its substitute but this kind of wood is getting scarce and costly. The craftsmen were vehement to report that they should not be hit by scarcity at the cost of its export outside. They are also genuine in reporting that the labour charges are not adequate and these need to be enhanced with respect to man hours and exquisite skill involved in respective jobs undertaken. The beauty and elegance of inlaid article varies from one worker to another and village to village depending upon quality of wood and one's proficiency in skill. The use of sun-mica sheets on table tops also interferes with the progress of inlay craft.

The craftsmen are unable to withhold their products for long due to lack of any long term planning and their resources also rarely permit that. The workers take the inlaid pieces by small instalments to the dealers and settle the accounts as they always need money to keep the wolf away from their door. The craftsmen feed the dealers with their articles who further supply these to the outside customers and the trade thus goes on. Profiteering marketing is in the hands of town dealers.

For craftsmen there is hardly any occasion for exhibiting their produce for sale at *melas* (fairs), *hats* (shops) or any other market held periodically or seasonally in the area. They lack resources to carry the artefacts to far off urban centres or cities.

Time Spent Versus Labour

Some of the establishments also employ at times one or two hired workers as well as pupil(s) undergoing training. Through there is apparently no loss, but at the same time profit is marginal. It has been reported by all informants that the payment for labour involved is lesser than the other prevalent labour rates. Had they been working on muster roll basis with some department or agency they could earn double the emoluments by working for limited hours per day and income would also be regular. They emphatically state that average earnings of a skilled inlay worker rarely exceed Rs.

25 per day even by toiling from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. which hardly compares with labourer's wages. An ordinary carpenter fitting window panes or a mason earns Rs. 50-60 a day, which is psychologically painful to him. On this account, to any inquirer they talk for a proper remuneration system and adequate returns for their skilled artistry.

Seven per cent sales tax and four per cent central sales tax is imposed on the handicraft goods in Punjab, whereas in adjoining states of U.P. and J & K the wood craft articles are exempted from the sales tax. Craftsmen are burdened by this tax. The artisans also complain that sometimes the labour charges are also reduced if there occurs some asymmetry or minor deviation from the conventional design or if there occurs inordinate delay in despatch of the articles. The transaction is settled in cash. Discouraged by low earnings through the craft some craftsmen have abandoned it. If the returns are commensurate with labour involved, more craftsmen may be attracted by the craft.

Disposal of Inlaid Articles

There is sparingly reported any problem related to disposal of artefacts. The manufacturers supply the inlaid articles to the dealers in the town and thus augment the household income. The rates of labour differ from article to article and from one craftsman to another. The actual amount of income derived by craftsmen and village(s) individually was difficult to estimate. No such records are maintained by the craftsmen. As per records of marketing and service extension centre functioning at Hoshiarpur there are about 50 manufacturing establishments in Hoshiarpur district mainly concentrated in the towns and the villages under study and a few found sporadically scattered in couple of other villages like Adampur, Manderan etc. in Jalandhar district and their annual production was estimated to be worth rupees 45 lacs annually. The prices of articles vary widely, so the estimate may be a rough one. Due to disturbed conditions in the state the occasional customers dare not visit these craftsmen and the question of sale to outside customers by the craftsmen does not arise. They do not have direct link with the exporters functioning in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and other centres. It would give a boost to the craft if some agencies come forward and ensure the disposal of their products. By proper disposal of their products the traditional art and skill can further prosper and be of immense value in improving the economic status of the craftsmen.

Demand of Articles

All the craftsmen in these villages stated that there is a good demand of inlaid articles particularly from outside the state which is met only partly by dealers in the town. There is shortage of skilled workers which results in limited production. The demand can be fully met if more and more skilled workers are trained and diverted towards the crafts by providing them enhanced emoluments and related facilities like supply of material and collecting the articles after regular intervals. The low emoluments are the main hurdle in the way of production. If the emoluments come at par with a carpenter working on muster roll basis the craft can surely improve and open avenues of employment to the people. If some state government agencies come forward for arranging regular supplies of material to the craftsmen and collecting of inlaid articles it will give a fillip to the craft. The supply of fine quality *sheesham* wood need be ensured to craftsmen first and its outside export be permitted only after meeting the local demands. The range of items manufactured may also be widened by introducing some more small items of decoration and luxury to be placed in niches in the houses. For a proper recognition of the craft new look is required to improve the craft in the sphere of its production and marketing.

CHAPTER – VI

CRAFT AND EMPLOYMENT

Association of Craft in Villages

The inlay in wood as described in chapter one, is mainly carried out in Hoshiarpur district and few establishments in neighbouring Jalandhar district. A brief account regarding its origin with ivory inlay and then its transference to plastic inlay as a result of shortage of ivory, has already been discussed briefly. The craft is carried out in a few villages as it deals with costly and antiquated articles that please the rich and is characterised by its artistic and exquisite designs. In reality it is carried out by few persons having creative imagination and sense of fine workmanship. Approximately 300 persons were reported to be engaged in this craft in the two districts. Apart from lack of workers, there are certain hurdles in the form of low returns for labour, scarcity and high cost of material, abnormal/disturbed conditions, imposition of sales tax in the way of progress of the craft. It has got potential for offering employment to sizeable number of persons if proper remedial measures are taken in the light of diagnostic findings in this monograph.

The craftsmen in these villages came to be associated with the craft more in a traditional way and it is a means of subsistence for them. Their ancestors shifted from carpentry to ivory work and then to acrylic plastic inlay forced by shortage of elephant tusk. The craftsmen were persuaded by the dealers in the town to do the job for them on a petty *thekka* (contract). Reciprocal inter dependence between dealers and craftsmen is quite apparent to any observer. At the same time craftsmen rarely have any other gainful opening. Compelled by economic stringencies, they have to struggle hard for subsistence. Members of any caste may adopt this occupation as its boundaries are quite permeable. The occupation is considered as a prestigious one. Amongst the two villages in the sampled 26 households, there are 44 total workers, out of which only one belongs to Saini Caste, 4 to Adi Dharmi (SC) and the remaining 39 to Lohar/Tarkhan caste group. A paltry few households belonging to various other caste groups were also reported to be doing the inlay work in few other villages sporadically but sizeable number of traditional workers could not be located elsewhere. Broadly the genesis of the craft in the area goes to more than a century or so ago as reported by 20 households traditionally associated with craft whereas other 4 households of other caste showed ignorance about its chronology.

Unemployment in Sampled Households

An inquiry was held regarding unemployed persons in the selected villages together with relevant attributes for such unemployment. Particulars of such persons as age group, duration of unemployment, experience and relationship with head of household are furnished in table VI.1 underneath :–

TABLE VI.1

Distribution of unemployed persons in the households by relationship with head, age group, experience/training and duration of unemployment

Age group of unemployed persons	Relationship of unemployed persons with the head	Number of unemployed persons	Number of persons unemployed since, with and without experience and training	
			3 -5 years	
			Without experience	Experience in repair of TV and Radio sets
1	2	3	4	5
15 - 34	Sons (2)	2	1	1
Total	Sons (2)	2	1	1

It is apparent from the table that 2 persons in age group 15-34 related as sons to the head, were recorded as unemployed and they were idle for 3-5 years. Both these unemployed persons had studied upto matriculation or higher secondary level. One of these is unexperienced and the other is trained in the electronics trade dealing in repair of radio and T.V. sets.

These unemployed youths reported that there are bleak chances of getting employment as there is scarcity of jobs as compared to the number of candidates available. Both had got registered their names with employment exchange, one for clerical and other for electronic mechanic but had not received any call for interview. They are trying to be absorbed in some government or semi-government department on regular monthly salary basis. One of them had worked in a private factory as a labourer for short duration without gaining any experience whereas the other used to repair radio and television sets in private concern i.e. one had got experience for the desired line while another had no relevant experience. Both have discontinued their work as the wages were meagre and game was not worth the candle. At the time of survey they were helping their father (here head of household) by fits and starts. They are available for particular types of jobs for which unluckily opportunities lack. In certain villages such as Adamwal, Pur Hiran, several Adi Dharmi (SC) have adopted the craft after acquiring the skill from some traditional master craftsmen and it is a development of the last 2-3 decades and they are further passing the skill on to their children. The economic stringencies and lack of employment has moulded them to take up the craft which helps them to get rid of idleness and adds to their source of income.

Craft Through Previous Decades

The craft was started in Buthgarh Village more than a century ago and still earlier in village Bassi Gulam Hussain. An inquiry was conducted regarding the number of households and persons as well during different decadal brackets of time i.e. information on two indicators was collected concurrently. Out of (9) heads of households in age group 15-34 years only 3 gave the information regarding households engaged in craft as more than 10 during 1961-70 and all the (9) gave the number of households during 1971-80 and at present as 10 and correspondingly these heads reported the number or persons engaged as more than 20 during these period brackets. From (12) heads of households in the age group 35-59 years 2 each could report the number of households ranging from 5-9 during the periods (before 1940), 1940-50, eight reported the number of households exceeding 10 during 1951-60, 9 reported the same number of households during 1961-70 and all the 12 heads of households converged to give the reply as "more than 10" households during the periods 1971-80 and at present. One each of the heads of households giving information for the period (before 1940) reported the number of persons in the range 10-19 and (more than 20). Similarly one each head of households gave the number of persons in the ranges 10-19 and (more than 20) during the period 1940-50. The heads of households giving the information for the decade brackets 1951-60, 1961-70, 1971-80 and at present gave the number of workers engaged invariably as more than 20. From 5 heads of households in elderly group of (60 + above) years 2 reported the number of households in the craft as 5-9, and 3 reported the number of households as more than 10 during the period (before 1940). One and 4 heads of households separately gave the number of households as 5-9 and more than 10 respectively during the decade 1940-50. The same sets of heads of households gave the same information during the decades 1951-60 and 1961-70. All the 5 heads of households gave the number of households as more than 10 both during 1971-80 and at present. Regarding the number of persons engaged in craft during different durational brackets except one, each reported the number ranging from 10-19 before 1940 and 1940-50, all others reported the number of persons exceeding 20 engaged in the craft. It emerges that elderly group of persons could give information about earlier times whereas younger group spoke about the recent 2 or 3 decades. The craft showed a brisk start and progressed till 1981 but afterwards became static. The craft appears to be in a sort of stagnant stage during the current decade. The traditional workers are thinking to deviate from the craft and some semiskilled workers belonging to other castes are emerging to adopt it afresh. The skilled workers are disheartened by low returns for their labour and skilful art. The reasons for previous upsurge in craft were that the raw material was easily available at nominal rates, the traditional caste had a centripetal hold over the craft, as also the conditions were peaceful and favourable for

outside customer. The government sponsored schemes to promote the craft by imparting skill to other willing workers also gave a boost to the craft. These days the pendulum has swung in other direction as there is scarcity of desired raw material apart from its high cost as well. There is reported defect after defect despite remedy after remedy in restoration of peaceful conditions year in and year out. The imposition of state and central taxes and low returns for work of exquisite and intricate art are also taking a toll upon the growth and progress of the craft. These facts were evident from the information collected through field inquiry. The craftsmen have been caught unaware by multiple happenings. The small wages earned by the craftsmen are dissipated in purchasing paltry household goods of daily consumption.

The work is done by the craftsmen as a sort of bounden duty towards the dealer on old contract lines which is thrust upon him and that is devoid of expected monetary reward. The calculation for payment is sparingly made on the basis of time units spent. During processing of work a pause also occurs as for drying the smeared surfaces after inlaying and coming and going to the dealing agent in town. That time is lost and nothing is chalked up for this wastage. They rarely have any proper wage system defining so much reward for so much labour after taking into account all the details, though it is beyond the scope of the monograph to lay out this standard. The fear of loss of nominal financial returns whatsoever keeps the grinding mill on. The inferior quality inlaid articles are sometimes equated with better quality articles which devaluates proficient workers in the craft. This sort of gradation is disheartening. Inquiry into the method/way by different households coming to be associated with craft revealed that all the 22 households belonging to Lohar/Tarkhan caste group adopted it as their traditional craft. The three households of Adi Dharmi (SC) adopted it compelled by economic stringencies or forced by poverty because the craft gives them some sort of earnings. The solitary Saini caste household adopted the craft so as to augment the income of the family.

On the aspect of duration of period engaged in this craft as a gainful activity since memorable past, light is also cast. The data are furnished in table VI.2 below :–

TABLE VI.2

Distribution of households by period engaged in the craft since start of the craft in the villages

Duration of period engaged in craft (years)	Number of house-holds in the craft	Households reporting start of the craft in village since the last	
		More than 86 years	Period not known
1	2	3	4
Less than 5	–	–	–
5 - 9	1	1	–
10 - 19	9	6	3
20 +	16	15	1
Total	26	22	4

It is seen that 16 households are engaged in the craft for more than 20 years, 9 for 10-19 years and one was engaged for the last 5-9 years. Out of total 26 households 22 reported its start towards the beginning of the present century and 4 showed ignorance regarding the start of the craft.

Factors for Disintegrations/Stagnation

Reasons were asked for stagnating trends in the craft. Out of 26 households, 5 reported the craft in a stagnating stage for the last less than 5 years and 21 gave its stagnation for the last 5-9 years. The relevant data are given in table VI.3 below :–

TABLE VI.3

Distribution of households reporting reasons for stagnating/deteriorating trend of the handicraft classified by period

Sl.No.	Stagnating period since (years)	Number of households	Number of households reporting reasons				
			Disturbed conditions	Hard labour but lesser emoluments	Raw material costly and scarce	Monopoly and vagaries of middlemen (Dealers)	Imposition of State/Central Sales Tax
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Less than 5	5	5	2	3	1	1
2.	5 - 9	21	17	19	8	6	5
	Total	26	22	21	11	7	6

For the stagnating trends of the craft, 22 households reported "disturbed conditions" over the state as the most prominent barrier closely followed by another reason as lesser emoluments for hard labour involved reported by 21 households. Eleven households reported that superior *sheesham* wooden boards and other hardware consumable items like, hinges, screws, sandpaper, blades, files, rasps, glue/*fevicol* are costlier than before. Seven households reported that the craftsmen are at the mercy of dealing agents in the town who derive the main benefit from this craft, and they are in a sort of bonded position with them. The prices have shot up unexpectedly but the emoluments have not gone up proportionately. Much time of the craftsmen is lost in knocking at the door of middlemen for money which they too get in instalments and whatever money they get, that readily cuts holes in their pockets for meeting other household goods of daily consumption. Six craftsmen households reported that they are burdened by state and central sales taxes which weigh heavily on their shoulders. They were emphatic to report that the taxes need be abolished as in J&K and Uttar Pradesh. The replies were alike irrespective of educational attainment of informants. From the replies of the craftsmen it precipitates that disturbed conditions and inadequate emoluments for their hard and skilled workmanship are the radical upheavals. The people as well as the craftsmen in the village look askance at unfamiliar people whom they come across, as several fatal incidents have taken place. The outside customer(s) dare not enter the village. The people were frightened and tight lipped after the incident when 34 persons were reported killed in nearby villages of Kahri and Sahri in one sweep. Not to speak about the customers even brief field work is fraught with danger and difficulties, as the social climate is charged with depression, fear and suspicion. Even the customers have restricted their movement outside. This situation has given a jolt to the craft. However under normal and subsided conditions, the stagnation is caused by low emoluments for hard labour involved.

Attitudes and Opinions of Craftsmen

The artisans in these villages were clamouring for commensurate wages for the labour input. According to them the daily wages of a labourer are higher than a skilled inlay worker as he is barely able to make his both ends meet. His earnings per day were reported to be less than Rs. 25 even when he works like a bee without rest from 8.00 A.M. to 6.00 P.M. Whereas an ordinary carpenter gets Rs. 60-70 per day for working from 8.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.. It was also alleged by the artisans that the dealers sometimes under-rate their work with an element of bias and they have to bear the brunt of depreciation even for standard type of craftsmanship. They say that in government service and elsewhere there are periodical revisions of pay scales and enhanced D.A. instalments paid to the employees whereas their rates of payments are stagnant. It was also reported by them that they are at the mercy of dealers in the city and sometimes payments are kept pending for long. Those who arrange for their own material and sale, feel moderately satisfied as they are safe from the clutches of middlemen but that definitely requires more vigorous pursuance.

The imposition of state and central sales tax is considered burdensome and weighs heavily on them. In the absence of any co-operative society they are unable to make their voice heard at higher level. Element of professional rivalry is also observed among the craftsmen and for this reason they do not unite to form a union. They have started thinking to keep their children away from this occupation and hanker after some lucrative jobs where they can earn more. So they are doing the work half heartedly.

The artisans face a problem regarding final finish of artefact as the prevailing wax polish does not meet the requirements of foreign customers. The wax polish is not much resistant to heat and dampness. Polyurethane lacquer finishing is suggested by many as the remedy for desired polish which is sufficiently inert to action of heat and water. It would be in the interest of the craft if such lacquer polishing is resorted to before the articles are exported outside. The full scientific and technical know how in this regard is felt by them which needs to be provided.

Another difficulty they repeatedly complain is the shortage of *sheesham* wood. Logs of century old *sheesham* tree having atleast 150-160 cms. diameter are the ideal for use in plastic inlay industry. The export of *sheesham* wood outside the state is causing its shortage. In the opinion of artisans export needs to be restricted lest the craft should suffer. There is shortage of old *sheesham* trees in the State. Only few are now to be seen on roadside. They also suggested that distribution of seasoned *sheesham* wood from the wood seasoning plant in the city be made available to them directly. Black coloured *Kinnow* wood is also preferred by the artisans. By virtue of their love for the job they are keeping it alive. Efforts for providing adequate remuneration for the labour input, procurement of desired type of *sheesham* wood and exemption from sale taxes would be the major incentives to help these skilled craftsmen and save the craft from crumbling. In order to increase products of the craft, artisans suggest that technically developed equipment for cutting plastic *masala* (Smithereens), carving of cavities after stencilling the desired pattern followed by planing and sandpapering for reducing the labour of artisan, would be a welcome step. That would undoubtedly boost the product and result in uniform finish to considerable extent.

Views of Non-practising Craftsmen

Six households of such craftsmen whose member(s) in the past practised inlay work but had left the work were also contacted during the rapid survey to ascertain the reasons for abandoning the craft. There were 3 such households each in the two villages under study. Out of the 6 households so contracted, 3 had left the craft for less then five years primarily due to lower wages for the labour involved and one from these three also gave additional reason as he was in the grip of the middlemen. One household had left the craft for the last 5-9 years solely due to low emolument for hard labour. Two households had given up the craft for the last 10-19 years primarily again on the grounds of low wages and secondly due to tight dealings of middlemen. It emerges from the replies of informants that they bade good bye to the craft compelled by low financial returns for the work whereas they were able to earn more via other pursuits. It is also mentionable here that 4 heads of these households belonged to Tarkhan/Lohar caste and one each to Adi Dharmi and Ravidasi scheduled caste who had adopted the craft about a decade ago. The educational attainment of these households hardly had any influence in the matter of sticking to or leaving the craft.

The occupational structure of the non-practising heads of households was also examined. All were engaged in diversified occupational pursuits such as heavy machinery hydraulic rapairs, preparation/repair of agricultural implements, carpentry, *rajgiri* (masonry work), service in commercial establishment, and weaving. The age structure of these six workers in different occupations revealed that one each was in the age group 15-34 and (60 and above) and 4 were in the age group 35-59 years. These households had member(s) in them quite familiar with the necessary skill of inlaying, but had left it primarily due to lower wages for hard labour and dominating attitude of dealers. They may be tempted to retake the craft if the emoluments see an enhancement in parity with their present occupation. Under the prevailing conditions they are not contemplating to restart the craft.

An inquiry was held as to why heads of households were disinterested in having their sons/daughters to take to the inlay work but were interested to put them in occupation of their own

choice. The reasons ascribed by them were almost the same as mentioned earlier, the nuclear replies centred at "low income for hard labour", i.e., the craft is non-lucrative under existing conditions and peripheral replies were that they can earn more by pursuing other occupations. They were getting conscious to channelise the natural endowments of their children so as to enable them to have lucrative vocational pursuits in life. All efforts are on the increase of their earnings. Some of children were studying and parents take interest if they can enable them to fix in suitable lines of their choice.

The views of the informants for prosperity/adversity of the craft during the recent past were also collected from the non-practising households. At the same time, their views regarding measures to be taken for the development of the craft were also sought. Broadly speaking on the prosperity aspect of the craft during recent past they mentioned primarily that the emoluments were closely matching the labour involved including cost of material and secondly there was neither political turmoil nor any disturbance. For recent adversity faced by the craft, the "disturbed conditions" and "lesser emoluments for hard labour" were coupled together as primary reason followed by high cost of material, high handedness of dealers in transactions as secondary reason. On the aspect of measures for development of craft they firstly suggested that the craft should be patronised by government or some semi-government agency and the material be supplied on moderately subsidised rates. There was a sort of consensus on replies regarding their suggestions irrespective of age, education and ethnic composition. They were all non-migrant. It would be far appreciable if some governmental van is arranged for supplying the requisite material to the craftsmen and inlaid products are collected weekly or fortnightly by making on the spot transaction in cash and sale of articles be explored through governmental emporia on the lines of "Khadi Bhandars". For such functioning, proper wage schedule reckoning so much reward for so much labour input as well as relative cost involved is an imperative. Exact monetary equivalents eliminating the element of any haggling are essential. Secondly other things being equal the restoration of peaceful conditions will act as a catalyst for growth and boosting the craft. The craftsmen expressed that they would co-operate whole-heartedly if steps are taken covering other villages as well, on above lines to lay such a network and it would offer employment to many others in the rural area and scope of the craft will be quite promising.

Views of Practising Craftsmen

Views of practising craftsmen were recorded regarding adoption of the craft and its evaluation as a source of income. All the 22 households of Tarkhan/Lohar caste group had adopted it in a traditional manner from their parents and it is deemed as a source of livelihood by them. Three households of Adi Dharmi scheduled caste are traditionally weavers but they adopted it to augment the family income, though it is considered as non-lucrative by them because of its non-traditional nature to them. Single household of Saini caste traditionally being a cultivator/ horticulturist also expressed the same opinion. In a nut shell all adopted the craft thinking it to be a gainful and at home activity with full freedom to perform it as convenient to them. For making the craft more profitable 16 heads of households stressed the need of increase in remuneration preferably on scheduled rate basis, 10 reported for remedy against middlemen, 22 reported for patronising the craft through government agencies which should arrange for supply of material and lifting the inlaid products, and 2 stressed for abolition of state and central sales taxes. It is to be noted here that informants were asked multiple reasons.

Further, 7 heads of households reported to have improved their economic status by this craft as there has remained a good margin of profit a couple of years back whereas 19 reported that there occurred no improvement in their economic status and from these 19 heads, 14 reported less emoluments, 13 reported costly raw material, 12 stated burden of state and central sales taxes and 8 reported bonded sort of treatment meted out by dealers as the main reasons for economic drift.

Further probe was made if the heads of households wanted/not wanted to absorb their children in the craft along with pertinent reasons. Out of 26 heads of households 11 favoured to engage them in the craft on the grounds of its having good margin and as it is their traditional work. The remaining 15, disfavouring, reported incommensurate monetary returns as main reason and one each gave additional reasons as "costly material" and children are getting education to pursue the occupation of their own choice. No derogatory stigma is, however, reported to be associated with craft which may attribute as repulsive force to children to take it up. Out of 26 heads of households, 12 reported that the younger generation takes interest in the craft whereas 14

reported reverse of it, the former group attributed the interest due to its being their traditional work and capable of adding to household income whatsoever and the latter group quoted low emoluments from it as the reasons.

It was inquired for how long and by what factors they were compelled or motivated to adopt the craft. Of the 26 households engaged in the craft one had taken it up for last 5-9 years, 9 had taken up for the last 10-19 years and 16 had taken it up for the last over 20 years. Further, twenty one had taken it up as their traditional following, 3 had taken it up thinking it to be gainful and seeing some profit in it than their other pursuits and 2 had adopted it in the absence of some other suitable work or precisely forced by unemployment. On the whole the craft has got an important place in their economic structure and has got the scope for employment. They have an innate belongingness to the craft, but certain barriers come in their way. If the marketing channels and mode of transactions are modelled on the diagnosed lines and due incentive is given to the inlay workers, the craft can rise to its glory.

Furthermore a peep was made whether they expressed satisfaction/dissatisfaction with craft. Seven of the heads of households expressed satisfaction due to its being their traditional source of income. Out of nineteen expressing dissatisfaction 14 gave "low income for hard labour" and 5 gave "vagaries of middlemen" as the reasons for dissatisfaction. It is also worth nothing here that out of 19 expressing dissatisfaction only one intends to leave it and adopt cultivation whereas the other 18 though dissatisfied yet cling to the vacation as they are traditionally associated with it and have no other immediate substitute means of subsistence. They rarely have any such planning and the old monotonous rut is followed as usual and it may continue till their voice is heard sympathetically. The proverb "what cannot be cured must be endured" seems to hold good in the prevailing paradoxical situations.

Ways/Means for Rejuvenation

Concluding, the views of the households practising the craft were recorded as to how the stagnating craft could be rejuvenated. In the first instance they acidly remarked that for the betterment of the craft the fundamental ways and means constitute to enhance the labour charges in a justifiable manner calculated on the basis of the time units involved. This feature warrants special attention to reduce the dullness of the task. Secondly the phase of disturbed conditions a turn of circumstances had added to frustration and their abatement will prove another hall-mark to rejuvenate the craft. Recent upsurge in disturbances has considerably paralysed the functioning of the craft. Thirdly they suggested that craft may be patronised by government or semi-government agency or some co-operative society be constituted to manage the affairs of the craft regarding transactions involving supply and disposal of inlaid articles with which safeguard against dealers is also implied. Exemption from the state and central sales taxes as proposed by them requires a sympathetic consideration. If steps are taken to overcome the above mentioned upheavals it can be said with certainly that the craft will result in spectacular prosperity. The measures are important and discreet thought is an imperative for taking steps in this direction.

Potential for Income and Self Employment

The inlay craft is reckoned to have got a considerable potential for the local as well as for foreign markets if proper innovations are introduced and diversification of articles is followed. More technical know how as well as new designs need to be introduced. The handicraft can serve an important avenue of self employment if the returns are enhanced squaring with the labour input. Technically, more improved equipment in the form of improved tools will have to be devised for various processes as cutting of plastic, carving of cavities and furrows thus reducing the amount of manual labour of the artisans. Electrically operated machinery as buffing machine, roundsaw, planer, grinder etc. need to be provided. The state designs centre may also contribute by offering new designs to the craft-workers. Other shapes and sizes of items may also be introduced. In place of wax polishing which is not inert to the hazards of weather some other material like plyurethene may be tried for better results. Arrangements for regular supply of material like boards of *sheesham* and *kinnow* wood, plastic sheets sandpaper, *fevicol*, sharpened chisels, and other consumable material be made available to the craftsmen. Similarly manufactured products be collected timely by paying proper remuneration on the spot thus saving the time of the craftsmen. The significance and importance of the craft needs to be duly reckoned by the government and steps be taken to develop its base in rural areas to ameliorate the economic structure of rural society. The inlaid articles of single piece *sheesham* wood are indeed more durable and attractive than similar articles got prepared from plywood sheets or boards using sunmica sheets. More demand for these durable artefacts is obviously raised by the aristocrats and the rich who can afford.

CHAPTER – VII

CONCLUSION

Review

As revealed from previous pages, the ivory has been called by many as *Chitta Sona* (white gold) and due to scarcity of tusk the craftsmen have transferred their skill to inlaying of acrylic plastic in wood and still the craft is characterised to have its own exquisite elegance and antiquated importance. The ivory is costlier than plastic and so the plastic inlaid articles are cheaper than the ivory inlaid ones. It is feasible for men of middle income group as well to have these decorative articles. The inlay process requires mostly the hand work involving much time and patience and consequently leads to an excessive labour cost. The craftsmen lay much emphasis on increase in labour cost i.e. adequate emoluments for the amount of labour involved. No diagnostic study seems to have been attempted so far to understand the problems of craftsmen and improve the craft by spreading its network to other villages offering avenues of employment to others, introducing innovations for increasing production and new designs. The craft has been badly hit by the turn of disturbed and turbulent conditions in the state during the current decade. The dealers have got a monopolistic hold on the craft, and the craftsmen are in a sort of problem cage and feel bonded with them. The craftsmen sparingly have the direct link with customers, so the result is that middlemen take the main benefit from the trade. The material is also costly and there is shortage of seasoned *sheesham* wood. The imposition of state and central sales taxes is another burden which the craftsmen frequently complain. The craft has its own scope and place in the sphere of cottage industries for offering employment avenues, once measures like increase in emoluments, restoration of peaceful conditions, supply of material, escape from vagaries of middlemen and abolition of taxes are taken as revealed through the inquiry. Nothing appreciable regarding promoting the craft through certain measures from its stagnating stage is known. The general awareness of people about the craft is lacking. The craft has its own uniqueness in manufacturing deluxe articles of skilled workmanship as well as the pieces of decorative ornamental value particularly for aristocrats. Guided by these factors the census organisation endeavoured to take up the study of this handicraft. It fulfills the criteria of being traditional and rural based one. The field work is therefore limited to rural area. Being characterised as rural based it is adjudged capable of offering more employment openings to several others provided adequate working conditions are created as briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter. The study was conducted in the middle of 1988. The conditions were disturbed and risky too and establishing rapport with informants was an uphill task. The functioning of the craft has considerably retarded. In this monograph an attempt has been made to diagnose upheavals and find out consequent ways and means for its promotion.

As per our inquiry design we contacted two types or segments of informants to throw light on the craft as a source of livelihood under the prevailing circumstances. Both the types of informants, first those practising it at present, and second who practised it earlier and abandoned later on, have got symbolic belongingness with craft and the number of households of former category is 26 and those of later is only 6. Broadly speaking their economic life looms largely on the craft and it is the main source of livelihood for them. It has a great bearing on their whole cultural matrix. The economic gain or profit though marginal, they are clinging to the craft compelled by circumstances in the absence of any immediate alternative for it. The economic gains hardly square with the labour input despite vigorous pursuance because there is lack of calculated wage schedule. Middlemen have the hold on the craft. Absence of some recognised agencies providing some sort of economic support through this craft as gainful activity is also telling upon their economic condition. They are though conscious, yet have not taken steps to constitute any co-operative body to regulate their transactions and create link with outside market and efforts in this direction are least. Remunerational inconsistency with labour involvement and disturbed conditions in the state have been reported as the main upheavals for stagnation or deterioration of the craft.

Scope for Improvement and Potential to Provide Employment

The present monograph tries to focus its main analysis on the basis of data on this rural and traditional craft. More emphasis is laid on how it can be improved by taking various steps. It being a non-factory rather hand product is capable of offering employment to sizeable number of population.An exhorbitant increase in inlay cost, paucity of material and ill organised marketing channels overpowered by middlemen have profoundly resulted in stagnation of the craft. Certain schemes were reported to have been introduced by the government in 1983 which continued for a couple of years so as to impart instruction to willing and learning workers by master craftsmen with a view to open avenues of employment and improve the craft, but the impetus proved to be short lived and only marginally helped to improve the craft. It was primarily handicapped by low monetary returns. The revision in relative input cost or the wage system was strongly stressed by the master craftsmen, commoners and new entrants which can only improve their economy and the craft in turn. The inner brown black *sheesham* wood and improved technology and equipment helping to reduce the manual labour involved is also required to develop the craft. The provision of raw material and power driven equipment for ancillary and final touching of artefacts can help to reduce labour cost. These are the factors which appear to be of relevance at first sight. Opening direct channels of marketing and exemption from sale taxes are the secondary steps emphasized by craftsmen. They need to be duly rewarded for their skilled labour work. The phase of disturbed conditions is another bolt from the blue to retard the pace and development of craft and frustrating the craftsmen.

Stagnating Trend

The craft experienced a stagnating trend during the current decade. The stagnation of the craft resulted due to the factors (1) phase of disturbed and risky conditions, (2) lesser emoluments for more labour, (3) vagaries of middlemen, (4) exhorbitant rise in price as well as paucity of raw material and (5) the imposition of sales taxes. All the households practising the craft invariably described the above factors responsible for degeneracy or stagnation of the craft. Opinions of the households were divided in the matter of absorbing their children in the craft. One set of informants from amongst those practising it favoured their absorption on the grounds that they still see some margin of profit and augment the household income through this trade secondly it is their traditional occupation from which they obtain satisfaction and get the usual remuneration and such feeling emerges from social demands and not merely by the notion of selling their work i.e. they were pursuing it in a customary way as well as meeting the social obligation. They bother lightly about the extent of gain. Their response seems to be apt and genuine. Another set of informants were rather discontented and frustrated on the cardinal factor of low returns for high inlay cost and labour involved in it and so disfavoured engaging their children in the craft. They argue that the returns fall much short of labour involved and their argument also appears weighty. The latter set of informants may change their views once the emoluments are raised matching the extent of labour involved. The heads of those households who have abandoned the craft are disinterested in absorbing their children in it on the main ground of low returns from it and that they are capable of earning more through other pursuits. Low income from the craft was the nuclear response. They frankly honour that work which gives them more money and they consequently deviate from the craft and strive for lucrative pursuits. They have a liking for getting regular jobs in some government department or agencies for deriving regular income as there is no fear of loss of income. They have come to the conclusion that it is the money that makes the mare go and so are fond of pursuing diversified occupations. Actually concrete results are difficult to be derived from scanty data in the matter of occupational mobility howsoever it leaned towards horizontal type and lineal occupational mobility is conspicuously week. New methods of reducing manual labour by introducing mechanical appliances and other innovations, seasoning wood, and finding other types of wood as substitute for *sheesham* can be further helpful for invigorating the craft and canalizing the depressed manipulative potentialities in desired direction.

Suggestions for Rejuvenation of craft

The most fundamental and cardinal ways to rejuvenate the craft in the light of upheavals already mentioned are suggested by the informants as under :

(1) abatement of disturbed and turbulent conditions, (2) enhancement of emoluments for labour involved, (3) safeguards against the vagaries of middlemen, (4) fair supply of raw material on moderate price and (5) exemption from the sale taxes. These are the important orientations which presage development and growth of the craft as well as change in the economy. The development of the craft is a function of these orientations. The craftsmen have got a sense of belongingness to the craft but the main barriers as mentioned earlier are the big obstacles in its growth and development. Once these barriers are crossed away by taking remedial measures on the above lines many more will be attracted by it as it has considerable scope for employment opportunities. With proper wage schedule, the craftsmen will make more efforts introvertly to expand the craft as it is the only craft in these villages. It was also proposed by the craftsmen that it may be patronized by government or some semi-government agency or some co-operative body be institued to manage the affairs of craft regarding transactions involving supply of raw material and disposal of inlaid artefacts with which safeguard against dealers is also implied with. For material supply they opined that wood, plastic and other requisite material be supplied by arranging a matador and inlaid articles be collected after making on the spot transactions on weekly or fortnightly beats which would save their time and add to progress of craft. Advancement of financial loans, subsidies for purchase of necessary traditional and modern tools would be the other auxiliary steps to promote the craft. Certain factors might have been omitted during the hurried survey but the main theme seems to have been covered. The outcome of the inquiry has been given in precise manner. The craft is indeed of an aesthetic cultural significance and much more can be studied by further research towards totality and its relationship with environment.

The craftsman is an exemplar and artistic and has the honour of contributing towards the craft but at the same time he needs to be arty in order to shape the things around him gracefully. If the steps are taken in the light of above mentioned orientations, it can be assured that craft will rejuvenate and contribute to advancement of technology and it will get rid of grotesque and ill proportioned things.