

Evaluation Of Spatial Design Of Existing Handicraft Shops At Dir Bazar And Proposal For Module Design



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Abstract: *In this research project four selected handicrafts were studied with respect to spatial design for their optimization of market selling opportunities and consequently their common issues and problems were explored. The common problems include design deficiency, low market price, low purchasing rate and poor productivity. The different opportunities and benefits were also discussed and further explored in the local context of study. The common opportunities were available due to natural resources of raw materials. All handicraft shops of Dir bazar are depending on each other, therefore they are together in the current challenges and opportunities. Hence research proposed to reach solutions for the common problems and utilization of opportunities. The detail design intervention are given in this research study for the best module of knives maker shops, the design theme and style, interior layout, seating, work station and proper designed display, racks, shelves and storage lockers. Research further explores the co-relation among four selected handicrafts and also the cross analysis among individual handicrafts.*

Keywords: Handicrafts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistani traditional crafts, Swat wood carving, Peshawar brass and copper work, Women empowerment through crafts, Community development in KPK

Introduction

Pakistan, is a country that remains a rich illustration of cultural diversity, heritage, and artistic identity through its handicrafts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) being one of the few regions where millennia-old traditions merge with modern utility (Shafi et al., 2020). The province has a rich diversity of localized crafts, including exquisite wood carving, Charsadda and Swat, hand-made rugs and carpets, Bannu and Kohat, brass and copper, Peshawar, and exquisite embroidery and beadwork (Abbas et al., 2024). These crafts are not just aesthetical objects; they are cultural stories that continue to propagate and highlight the identity of local

people, keeping records of the past, traditional methods of things making and specific motifs, symbols, which characterize the area. Swat based furniture, based on its exquisite inlay and bold geometric designs, is a great blend of cultural motives as well as Islamic patterns. Likewise, allied objects of beautification including woolen shawls and embroidered caps are one of the most popular handicraft objects throughout KPK (Bhatti et al., 2024). They have been recognized as statements of local identity and cultural preservation. The making and marketing of these crafts foster cultural pride as the younger generations are kept in touch with

their origins as well as being taught to preserve their heritage. On the social side, the handicrafts have been very remarkable in the development of the community and especially the women by giving them an opportunity to participate in income generating activities in the comfort of their homes. In most of the KPK villages, where cultural constraints do not allow women to engage in formal jobs, embroidery, weaving and beadwork have helped women earn their share of household earnings without compromising on their social values and honor (Shakeel et al., 2025). This not just boosts families financially, but also gives strength to women socially by making them more active in decision making activities at the household level. In addition, handicrafts helps in building communal relationships since the craft making process is predominantly collective and intergenerational.

Economically and financially, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa handicrafts have helped in enhancing the local livelihoods as well as adding to the total export earnings of Pakistan. International markets have been opened to KPK crafts, especially carpets, rugs, wooden furniture and embroidery due to worldwide demand of authentic, hand-made and culture infused products (Uddin et al., 2021). Likewise, the Pakistani Swat and Peshawar wood carvings and inlaid furniture have gained immense popularity among collectors and interior designers across the globe, thus enhancing the image of Pakistan as a producer of high quality artisanal products. Such exports have been a major source of not only generating handsome foreign exchange, but they also contributed to boosting local economic cycles by providing jobs to artisans, traders, and small-scale entrepreneurs at large (Warren, 1989). Handicrafts are labor-intensive (not capital-intensive) and therefore offer viable lives to the thousands of rural families in KPK that otherwise would not have access to formal job markets. The economic impact of this economic

activity is not trivial: the artisans receive higher salaries, local markets are flourishing, small enterprises are emerging, communities are experiencing higher quality of life (Humphreys, 1999). Also, government programs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have aided craft groups in the province through training programs, marketing and access to international trade fairs. Notably, the handicraft sector has also contributed to the cause of sustainable development by using local productions materials and making eco friendly production processes that further contribute to value addition in a time when consumerism globally is taking an eco conscious direction. Economically, export handicrafts in KPK have directly improved the economic profile of this region and this has become more visible in the trade statistics of Pakistan but at the same time, it has boosted the marginalized communities. In addition to the financial gains, however, is a larger community improvement aspect. It also opens up to tourism because tourists coming within Pakistan and outside of Pakistan will be attracted to craft bazaars and artisan villages around KPK and this will diversify the income streams of the region even more (Khan, 2011). This is how, handicrafts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can be a way of connecting tradition and modernity, culture and economy, identity and globalization, and at the same time contribute to enriching the Pakistani exports, keeping the communities alive, and representing the national cultural wealth on the global map (Cohen, 2000).

Handicrafts are decorative domestic or other objects made by hand with or without tools. Dir bazar is the capital city of district Dir upper, it is famous for local handicrafts which are also a part of their local tradition and culture. The famous handicrafts of dir bazar are caps, leather shoes, garments, wooden utensils and iron hand made tools (Knives, Axe, Talwar etc).



Figure 01 Different forms of Handicrafts in Pakistan (TDAP, 2022)

Both of Dir districts (upper and lower) having only one vocational training college and it is not functional for the trainers. The main bazar of Dir Khas is very congested because of the shortage of planned area and near by to the river. The roads and streets are narrow which needs to be widened for solving traffic problems. The shop sizes and spaces are not adequate for the

requirements of their functional use. Most of the shops are made of vernacular structures. Approximately 1 out of 10 shops made of local handicrafts. But these shops are not properly designed for their functional use and are not able to fulfill the user requirements. Therefore, there is a need to design a research base module for the functional use of handicrafts.

Table 01 Demographic details of dist. Dir Upper

Area	3699 Sq. Km
Census-1998	575852 persons
• Male	291582(50.63 %)
• Female	284276(49.36 %)
Population Density	155.7persons/Sq. Km
• Urban Population	22901(3.98 %)
• Rural Population	552957(96.02 %)
Average House hold Size	8 persons/house
Literacy Rate (10+)	21.21 %
• Male	36.10 %
• Female	6.10 %
Census-1981	362565 persons
Average Annual Growth Rate(1981 -98)	2.76 %
Total Housing Units	71705
Pacca Housing Units	59580(83.09 %)
Housing Units having Electricity	27578(38.46 %)
Housing Units having Piped Water	1355(18.90 %)
Housing Units using Gas for Cooking	425(0.64 %)
Administrative Units	
• Tehsils	02
• Union Councils	31
• Town Committees	01

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The standard of handicraft depends on the

human skill development, technical facilitations and trade marketing. In most of the countries

handicraft are facing many problems and challenges. One of the problems in Thailand the country with long-standing elaborate ceremonies and a unique tradition of ornate arts and crafts, is facing a sharp decline in the production of traditional handicrafts. This decline is apparent in every region of Thailand and includes, for example, basketry, lacquer ware and hand-woven textiles (Shafi et al., 2020).

In South Africa, a developing country, design plays a significant role in redefining the country, which is in dire need of uplifting its community. It is proposed by Buchanan (2001) that the welfare and success of society require designers to have a strong grasp of the content of their work. Buchanan (2001) too, believed that design can help develop a new nation in South Africa. Buchanan (2001) also describes design as a 382 Oyekunle and Sirayi applied practice of responsible action and through this, the ability to bring the utmost values of a nation and civilization into an actual, workable state of being, and through such capabilities, designers can bring to fruition the intellectual concepts they hold into a clear and practical state. Buchanan (2001) presents evidence on this practical point by reflecting on the degree to which designs influence the lives of people, that is: it is through designing practice that all objects and communications are and that they assist people to achieve their needs and fulfill their desires. Through the exchange of ideas and information, which the design practice facilitates, the shaping of both civil and political life occurs (Buchanan, 2001).

Although the industry of handicraft in Pakistan is rich in culture and appreciated globally, there are various structural and systemic threats to the industry that have been frustrating the growth and sustainability of the industry. Lack of formal infrastructure and institutional support of artisans is one of the most burning questions (Wherry, 2008). The majority of craftspeople, especially rural ones, are working alone or in little groups without the possibility to be trained, to use the most modern tools, and to work at the organized markets (Oyekunle & Sirayi, 2018). Consequently, the industry is mostly informal

with limited integration into the overall economic system of the nation. Furthermore, due to lack of documentation and data collection, the national statistics would not give handicrafts due importance hence not considered in policy planning and resource allocation. The problem is also aggravated by an inadequate infrastructure in isolated regions that limits the access of artisans to urban markets, trade fairs, and exports. Numerous skilled craftspeople cannot exhibit their work outside of their local communities, and this leaves them incapable of increasing production or becoming financially viable. Therefore, despite the cultural diversity, the sector is unable to evolve into a viable economic partner that will benefit Pakistan (Mian Nasir Uddin et al., 2021).

Lack of financial empowerment and access to credit by the artisans is another major challenge to the handicraft industry in Pakistan. Most craftspeople are small scale workers and therefore do not have collateral, or financial literacy necessary to enter into loan agreements with banks and other financial institutions. In this financial exclusion, they are limited in investing in a more competitive tool or raw materials or innovative designs that would make their products more competitive in both domestic and international markets (Shafi et al., 2020). The effects are more pronounced on women artisans, especially because cultural and social barriers also limit access to financial resources and business opportunities. In addition, the supply chain is controlled by middlemen, who tend to abuse artisans by buying their products at very low prices and selling at high margins in foreign and urban markets (Gul et al., 2025). The bias in distribution of profits continues to keep artisans in poverty loops even when they work so hard and are creative. Their bargaining power is also diluted by the fact that they have no collaborative societies or powerful unions, which can exploit them. Meanwhile the competition on the international market with cheaper machine made products, most of them produced in China and India, has saturated domestic markets cutting the demand of genuine handmade products (Ali et al., 2024). Pakistan

artisans are marginalized without financial inclusion, equitable trade practices, and institutional protection that will allow them to exploit the full economic potential of their talents and practices.

Another problem faced by the handicraft sector in Pakistan is issues of globalization, modern design, and international marketing. Global consumers value hand made products, but they also require innovation, consistency in quality and modern utility, which most Pakistani artisans are unable to offer with lack of exposure and training. The other significant problem is the poor marketing of handicrafts both nationally and internationally (Abbas et al., 2024). Pakistan is moving behind other countries such as India, Turkey, or Morocco, where governments have spent a lot in marketing campaigns, artisan fairs, and online sites to market crafts around the world. Conversely, Pakistani crafts have been traditionally sold in disjointed and disorganized patterns and have been largely dependent on individual exporters or NGOs. Digitalization, which has the potential to close this divide via e-commerce applications, is not fully used because of low digital literacy rates among rural artisans (Shah et al., 2025). Moreover, the lack of interest in younger generations is a threat in the long run as most young people choose modern jobs rather than studying in the traditional crafts that are not that financially stable. This lack of connection between generations threatens the continuation of centuries-old customs, thus establishing a threat of cultural extinction. The handicraft industry of Pakistan might remain uncompetitive in the world market unless appropriate actions are taken to restore its competitiveness through strategic interventions, including design education, e-commerce training, global marketing support, and enforcing intellectual property rights (Bhatti et al., 2024).

Because of the industrial revolution, the production of handicrafts has been reduced globally and consistently remains on the trend of decline. While, in case of Dir bazar the trend was different, because of the rural mountainous demographic location and there was no other option for earning their livings, therefore the

people are constrained up to local handicrafts, but due to modernism and social media access the society of dir bazar is continuously changing and due to this serious threat exist to disappear the local cultural and traditional products from dir bazar. Therefore, there is a need to take some steps for the advancement and development of society as well as for the revival of cultural handicrafts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used for this study is mostly mixed method with qualitative and quantitative data collection, included questionnaires, personal interviews, observations and discussions for primary data collection.

POPULATION

The population of Dir bazaar according to census 2017 was almost 44,165 persons. There are almost 3000 shops in Dir Bazar, the total number of handicraft shops were 300, so the ratio with total is one out of ten.

SAMPLE

Four types of local handicrafts shops (caps, leather shoes and garments, wooden utensils and knives makers) were selected for data collection. Identifying one of the best handicrafts for design intervention. Researchers visited all of 300 shops of 4 types of handi crafts and distributed 100 questionnaires and conducted 30 interviews. Same questions were asked from 30 shopkeepers to find the common problems, benefits and opportunities. For the users satisfaction we have asked 50 customers about their demands and requirements.

RESEARCH TOOLS

Questionnaires were used to find out the average monthly income of shopkeepers, raw material cost, productivity, qualities, sizes and designs. Excel software used to determine the average percent ratios of common features, like average monthly income, shopkeepers common demands, high average probable solution in users perspective. Researchers have covered our interviews conducted with shopkeepers using camera and make some analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

Researchers have collected relevant descriptive data from concern department i.e. Tehsil municipal administration (TMA), and the inscriptive data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and personal observations.

ANALYSIS USED

The comparisons were made between the primary and secondary data, on the basis of these comparisons, common issues and problems were identified and explored.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

The data was collected from all the selected sources which included observations of 300 shops, 100 questionnaires, 50 interviews of customers and 30 interviews of shopkeepers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The common issue is the non-relevant design for all shops. Minimum shop area will be 150 sft, average is 200 sft and maximum is 250 to 300 sft. The standard size of shop will be 10'x20'.

Minimum 3 persons will work in one shop, two will be the maker and one will be the supporter and Bayer.

Working table, display walls, racks and shelves, storage and seating area are the common function space requirements. There are 2 types of work stations using in design, floor table seating and chair table seating. Wall display racks starting from 4x4 inches upto 2x2 feet. Working table and display area should be designed as per the function requirements. The average monthly income of 3 persons in one knives maker shop is 200,000 PKR. Knives maker shops are more beneficial in productivity but less in trading market.

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The product rates directly depend on the shop design and visual display. There are 3types of display which will be designed in the shop and they are floor display, wall display and slab display. In present age we can go for digital and blinking display to develop the attraction of customers.

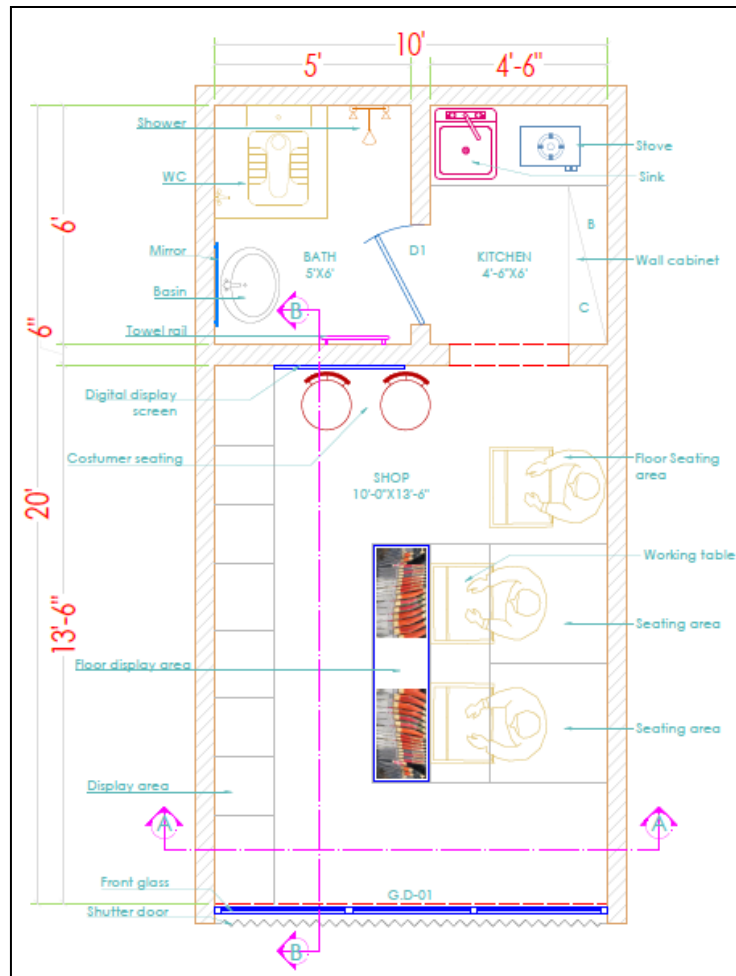


Figure 02 Floor plan of the proposed facility

The display racks size must be design as per the display product size, by considering 3 dimensions, length, width and depth as per the architectural approach the overall display needed to be design within artistic form which becomes an abstract for the visitors. Floor display will be placed in the center of shop between the customers seating and working

table, the front of working table will also be used in floor display area. Slab display will be used for permanent and for the display of samples for the exhibition purpose. The wall and floor display will be used for selling product display. Digital display is used in the sign board and front glass.

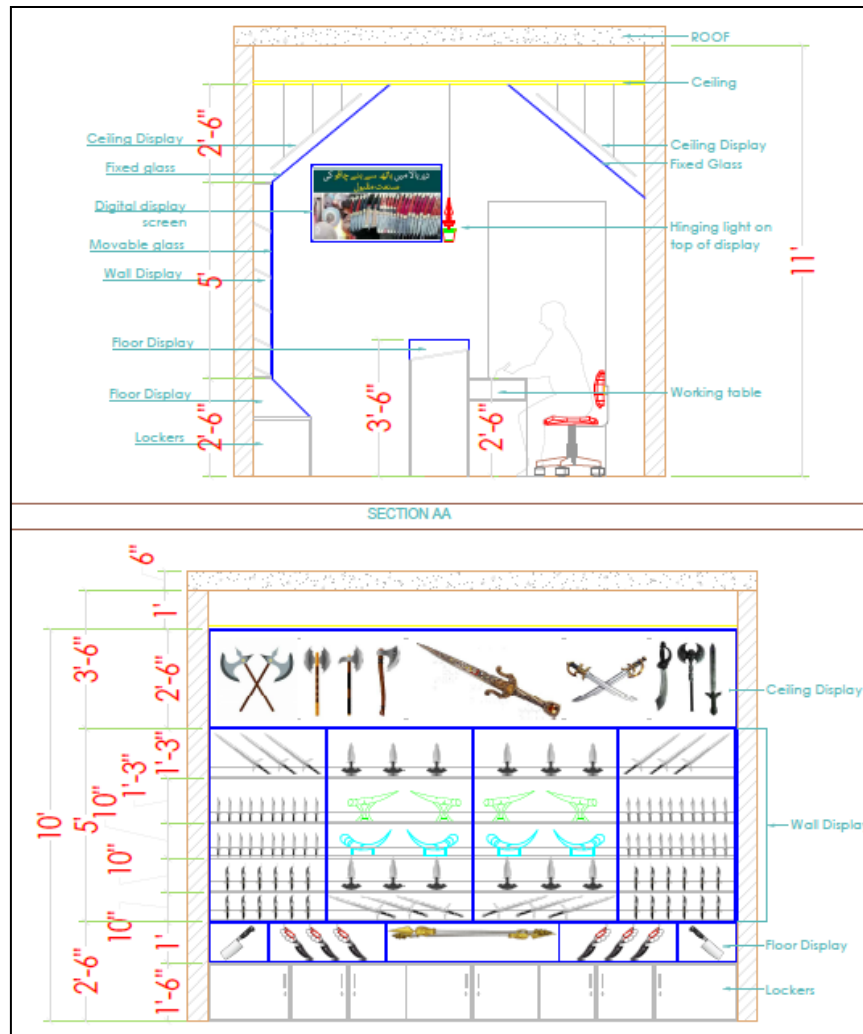


Figure 03 Internal Elevation & Section

Interior seating and layout affected on workability, the seating of furniture need to design where the worker feel relax and comfortable also needed to place 4 seated bench for customers seating. In case of floor seating the table height will be from 12" to 18". The lockers should be mounted in the top of wall face used for permanent raw products or using as storage. The shelves should be placed on the floor level, backside the working table. Using of proper lighting for display object, there are 4 types of exhibit or display object based on view angles, 1,2,3 and 4 sided open display object. The wall display will be used for 1 and 2 sided and floor display will be used for 3 and 4 sided open display object.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is strongly recommended to design a small

society of handicraft community having their own central exhibition areas and studio houses where they live and work also. The shops will be used as their working stations, where they work and sell their products.

The design of module shop should be related to the theme of handicraft. I selected four types of handicraft then one (knives shop) was selected for detail design, the remaining three are also recommended for research study.

FUTURE STUDY DIRECTIONS

For our proposed plan we have studied some common problems for four selected handicrafts, so it is necessary to study each and every handicraft individually in details. To enhance the productivity of selected handicrafts, the advanced and modern working tools can be utilized. The research study can be carried out to

make best format for the new trainers, and to develop syllabus for the handicrafts based knowledge and consequently the verity, design themes, technical ideas, new fashions, and versatile products will be developed.

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