

Design Resource

## Carpet Weaving - Sikkim

Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom

by

Abhey Singh

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/carpet-weaving-sikkim>

1. Introduction
2. Place
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**Source:**

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/carpet-weaving-sikkim/introduction>

## Introduction

The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom was founded in 1957 by Sikkim government in an effort to preserve and promote traditional arts and crafts. With time it evolved as a centre for sustainable development of the region focussing on utilising the traditional knowledge and human resources. In modern perspective the centre serves as a important tool for providing employment and self-reliance across the strata of society covering diverse region, income rang and education. The centre has now expanded to 32 training centres with 650 trainees and 13 production units. The head office is located in Gangtok, the capital city of Sikkim. It provides training in carpet weaving, handloom, thanka painting, handmade paper, wood-carving, cane & bamboo craft, soft toys and multi-crafts. Training period ranges from 2-4 years depending on the craft. After that the artisans can either work in the centre's production units or work outside on their own. In order to promote the initiative the government also gives stipend to the students.

The process of carpet weaving at DHH is very similar to other oriental carpet weaving techniques. It is done on fixed vertical looms made of wood or iron with hand-knotting. The training is of two years with pupils of age 14 to 24 years. In first year techniques such as carding, plain weave and yarn spinning are taught. The second year consists of working on different designs. The designs are mostly of mythical birds, flowers like lotus, snow-lions and eight Buddhist lucky signs.



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## Place

Sikkim is 2nd smallest Indian state located in the north-east India. Sikkim chose to remain independent when India got independence in 1947. In 1975 it became the 22nd state of India after a treaty with the then Prime Minister of Sikkim. Sikkim has been very successful in protecting its cultural heritage along with embracing the modern ethos. The state has a very diverse flora and fauna and occupy a special place in India for it.



Directorate of handicrafts and handloom head office at Gangtok.



Hoarding explaining the mission of directorate of handicrafts and handloom.



Mannequins wearing traditional tribal costumes.



Bamboo exhibition at directorate of handicrafts and handloom.

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Plaque installed in corridor of directorate of handicrafts and handloom.



Sales emporium which sell all the items produced at DHH, Gangtok.

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Inside the sales emporium at DHH, Gangtok.



Sales emporium selling wood and bamboo products.



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## People

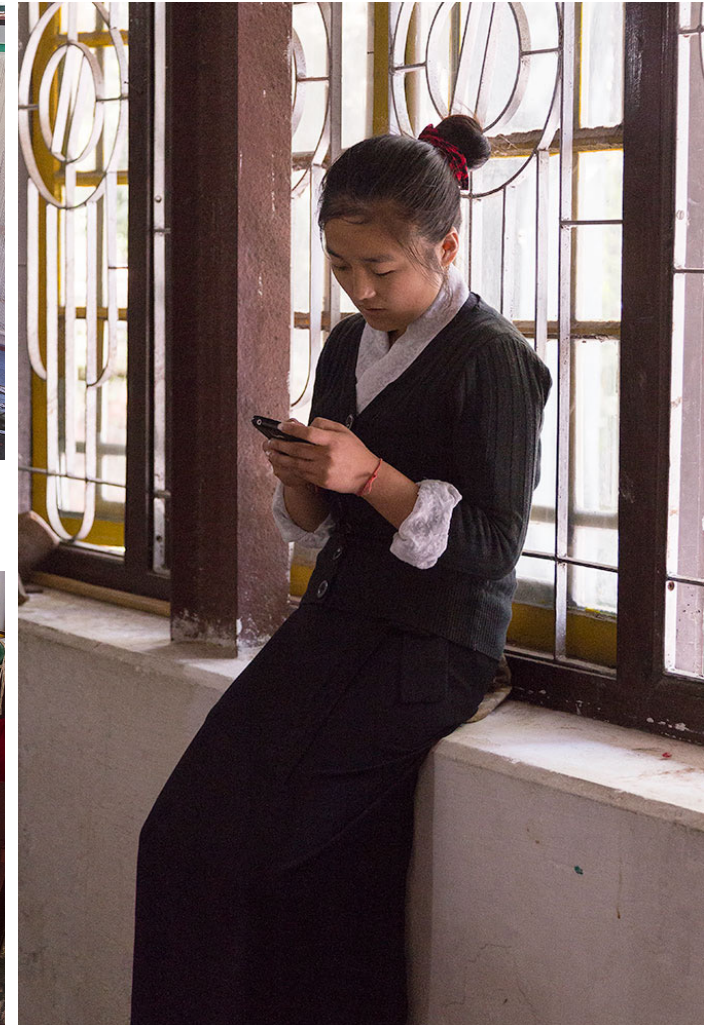
Most of the people working in carpet-weaving are women. You can see women from all ages either training or working at the centre. The centre benefits most the women from low income families and who live in countryside.



Trainees at DHH eating lunch.



Trainees at DHH eating lunch.



A trainee checking her phone during lunch hour break.



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An experienced artisan at the production unit of the DHH Gangtok.



An artisan at the production unit of the DHH Gangtok.



An experienced artisan at the production unit of the DHH Gangtok.



An experienced artisan at the production unit of the DHH Gangtok.



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## Process

Originally the process starts preparation of wool involving carding, dyeing and balling. But these days wool is bought directly from the market to be used for weaving. The process therefore starts from winding the yarn into balls. The weaving starts from a basic cotton warp which serves as the skeleton. The yarn is then loomed using a weaving rod from one end to other creating a pile of rug. The pile is then hammered tight against the previous one. The rod is then removed, the thread cut and again the row is beaten down to the previous one. The process is repeated following the design of the carpet.

After the weave is done the carpet is taken off the loom for trimming. Unnecessary fibres are removed and knots at the back are cut for a finer finish. A long scissor is used to give greater detail to design carving out some portions to result in a 3D look. With the help of machine the final surface is made smooth and cleaned with a brush.

<b>RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS &amp; EQUIPMENTS FOR CARPET WEAVING</b>	
1	Graph Design
2	Woolen Yarn - 50% N.Z. & 100% N.Z.
3	Cotton Yarn - 6/6
4	Cotton Yarn - 2/4
5	Cotton Rope
6	Carpet Loom (Iron Loom)
7	Wooden Hammer
8	Iron Rod
9	Weavers Scissor
10	Leveling Scissor
11	Chiptak
12	Carpet Knife
13	SWO (Pareng)
14	Tam (Bamboo)
15	Carpet Box (No. 18" x 10")
16	Pira (18" x 20")
17	Sharpening Stone
18	Measuring Tape
19	Embossing Scissor
20	Phang (for Spinning)

A poster in the carpet unit listing the tools, raw materials and equipment for carpet weaving.



Loose wool bought from the market.



A young apprentice at the training unit winding the yarn into balls.

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Wooden apparatus used to spin the loose wool known as phang.



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The spun wool is then rolled into balls.



Posters of the various designs used in the weaving.



A skeleton of vertical threads is made known as warp or taan. It contains 101 threads for a width of 2 inch of carpet.



Instructor at the DHH measuring the warp.



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The graph paper of design is placed on top.



A second thread is then used to knot the warp horizontally. It is known as weft or nesing. The bamboo piece used to tie is called SWO. After completing one weft or several knots a special comb and a wooden hammer are used to press the weft. It helps in making the carpet more even, durable and securing the knots.



Tying the knots.



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Tools used for weaving- wooden hammer to push the knots down, a special comb to separate the threads, a scissor to cut the extra threads.



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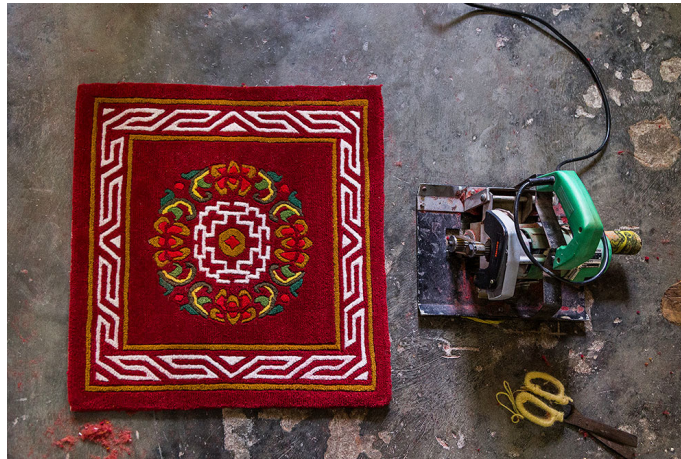
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Extra threads are cut using a pointed scissor.



A special scissor is used to cut along the design giving it a 3D feel.



The machine used to level the carpet.



This brush is used in combination with the levelling machine to give finish to the carpet.



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## Products

Carpets of various sizes are made which can be used with sofas, chairs, beds etc.





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## Contact Details

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See his work at [www.abheysingh.com](http://www.abheysingh.com)

You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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