

Design Resource

Making of Kanghi - Himachal Pradesh

Part of Loom

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/making-kanghi-himachal-pradesh>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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Introduction

Himachal Pradesh, the northern Indian state is home to scenic mountain towns and resorts. It is renowned for its natural beauty, hill stations, and temples. Many hydroelectric projects have been set up here due to the perennial river's flow. Tourism, agriculture, and hydroelectric power projects are important parts of the state's economy. It has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Himachal Pradesh has been ruled by many kingdoms like Gupta kingdom, Delhi sultanate, Rajputs, Mughals, Kingdom of Nepal, British, etc., and has witnessed multiple waves of human migration from other areas. Many tribes such as the Koili, Hali, Dagi, Dhaugri, Dasa, Khasa, Kinnar, and Kirat inhabited the region from the prehistoric era. The growth and economy of the state are dependent on tourism. Beautiful Himalayan landscapes attract tourists from all over the world.

The state has many important pilgrimage centers with prominent Hindu temples. Himachal handicrafts are renowned around the world. The leather works, Kullu shawls, Chamba rumals, carpets, Kangra paintings, and woodwork are some of the aesthetic handicrafts that belong to this tiny hill state. One of the highly in-demand products is the Pashmina shawl. Local music and dance reflect the cultural identity of the state. The wool weaving is necessitated by the extremely cold winters of the Himachal. Almost every household in Himachal owns a pit-loom. Both men and women have acquired the skill of weaving. The weaving is done in the month of winter when all are inside the home, and all other activities such as horticulture have been completed. Wool is also considered as pure and is used as a ritual cloth. The well-known woven object is the shawl. Kullu is famous for its shawls with geometrical patterns and bright colours.

A device used to weave fabric for clothes and tapestry is called Loom. Every region and location has a different Loom and its working mechanisms, but the basic function is the same. The basic purpose of using any loom is to hold the warp threads in tension to facilitate the interweaving of the weft threads to create fabric. The looms contain various parts which serve a different purpose, which all put together comprises a loom. One of the parts of the Loom is the REED, which is locally known as "Kanghi". Reed resembles a comb, which is used to push the weft yarn securely into place as it is woven. It also separates the warp threads, holds them in their positions, keeps them untangled, and guides the shuttle as it moves across the Loom. Modern reeds are made by placing flattened strips of wire (made of carbon or stainless steel) between two half-round ribs of wood and binding the whole together with tarred string. Historically reeds were made of canes. Mr. Bhime Ram from Kullu is still making traditional type reeds known locally as Kanghi. The past three generations of his family are doing this work. Now let's see how a conventional kanghi is made.

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Mr. Bhim Ram, the master artisan of kanghi making.



Mr. Bhim Ram, the master artisan of kanghi making.

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Different sizes of kanghi are displayed.



A view of artisan's workplace.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used for making of Kanghi are:

- **Cane Strips:** Which holds the wooden ribs in place.
- **Twisted Yarn:** It is used to tie the ribs together.
- **Hacksaw:** It is used to cut the length of the cane.
- **Sickle:** It is used to split the cane into strips.
- **Metal Strip:** It is used to tap on the ribs to reduce the space between them.
- **Coloured Threads:** These are used in decorating during tie the ribs together.



A metal strip is used to tap on the ribs to reduce the space between them.

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Bamboo ribs are used for making kanghi.



Twisted yarn is used to tie the ribs together.



Hacksaw is used to cut the length of cane and make it into strips.

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Making Process

The reeds are made using cane strips. The cane is cut to the required length so that it can accommodate around 200/250 reeds along the length of the cane. The cane is split exactly in the center using a handle-held sickle. Similarly, two cane of equal length is split into two. Between the split canes, the small ribs of wood are placed, acting as dents, creating space for the threads to pass through. These ribs between canes are secured in place using twisted yarn and tied together. These yarns not only secure them in place which also acts as a spacer between the dents. The space between the dents is where the threads pass through. The ribs for the dents are made using the cane by splitting into small strips and shaving them evenly to the required size. The artisan has a template for the dent's exact length, and every dent is measured using this template and cut to size. Once in a while, the artisan uses a metal strip, inserts them between the split canes, and taps to reduce the gap between the wooden ribs. Once the required number of dents are placed between the split canes, the artisan ties the split ends and secures them in place.



The bamboo is split exactly in the center using a sickle.



Similarly, bamboo of equal length is split into two.

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The strips are shaved to the required size by using a sickle.



These ribs between bamboos are secured in place using twisted yarn and tied together.



Once in a while, the artisan uses a metal strip, insert it between the split bamboo, and taps to reduce the gap between the wooden ribs.



Every bamboo split is tied to the sides with the crusted yarn.

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Split canes are tied at the end of bamboo ribs to not to come out.



Finishing the work by cutting the end of the split bamboo.



The artisan has a template for the exact length of the dent.



Every dent is measured using the template and it is cut to the required size.

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Products

Mr. Bhime Ram from Kullu is an expert in doing Kanghi as it is his family business. The Kanghi is made, which is used during the weaving process.



Kanghis are displayed for sale.



Artisan showcasing the final product.

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This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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