

Changing trends in traditional Mojari craft

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Rajasthan has a rich and long tradition of leather crafts. Each village had its families of leather workers. The juti, mojari or pagarkhi are leather shoes and slippers worn by both men and women of all communities (<http://trade.indiamart.com>). Mojari is a generic name for handcrafted ethnic footwear produced in India and Pakistan. Mojari is the staple footwear of rural Rajasthan. In Rajasthan there are about a hundred thousand households engaged in the production of this traditional hand stitched shoes made out of coarse vegetable –tanned leather, which are known locally as Mojari. The best varieties are found in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Dausa. In Jaipur the embroidery on the *Mojari* is done on velvet while in Jodhpur on leather with proficient golden ornamentation speak of gorgeousness and high skill of artisans. The present paper highlights the changing trends in Mojaris craft in Rajasthan.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Mojari, Changing, Trend, Technology, Mass media, Fashion

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Leather industry has been one of the traditional industries operating in India, it is essentially located in certain states, but dispersed as cottage industries in rural areas (Anonymous, 2012). In global scenario, India is the second largest producer of footwear accounting for 14 per cent of global footwear production only after China who produces 64 per cent of global footwear (Khan, 2009). India currently exports 115 million pairs of footwear. The export constitutes 5.6 per cent of total domestic footwear production. But it constitutes 11.40 per cent of total leather footwear produced in India. But in value terms the export constitutes 45 per cent of total leather footwear produced in India (CLE, 2008).

The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labour intensive, cottage based and decentralized. The industry is spread all over the country mainly in rural and urban areas. Most of the manufacturing units are located in rural and in small towns. Mojari is a generic name for handcrafted ethnic footwear produced in India and Pakistan, It quite popular and known by different name at different places like Jutti in Punjab, Mojari in Rajasthan and Gujarat and Khussa in Pakistan.

In Rajasthan there are about a hundred thousand households engaged in the production of this traditional hand stitched shoes made out of coarse vegetable –tanned leather,

which are known locally as Mojari. The Mojari were made in a wide area, from Udaipur to HindumalKot in Rajasthan. There are a large number of villages mostly in the Districts of Jaipur, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Jalore, The best varieties are found in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Dausa. In Jaipur the embroidery on the *Mojari* is done on velvet while in Jodhpur on leather with proficient golden ornamentation speak of gorgeousness and high skill of artisans. The production of the heavily traditional embroidered Mojari dates back to the royal era of Kings and Queens (Singh and Rajpurohit, 2008).

The *mojari* is the traditional footwear made out of leather, handcrafted and designed with care to perfection and excellence, with simple tools like a needle, a knife, a wooden block and hammer. The uppers are constructed with one leather piece and then embroidered and embellished with cotton textile embroidery, nails, cowries, mirrors and beads (<http://resources.archedu.org>).

Mojari are made by artisans mostly using vegetable-tanned leather. The uppers are made of one piece of leather or textile embroidered and embellished with brass nails, cowry shells, mirrors, bells and ceramic beads. Even the bonding from the upper to the sole is done by cotton thread that is not only eco-friendly but also enmeshes the

leather fibres with great strength. Some product range also uses bright and ornate threads (Jutta Jain and Bata shoe, 2000).

In ancient times these were worn by multitude and royalty. As it evolved through the centuries and is being produced by individual artisans, products vary in designs and colours. It encapsules cultural diversity, local ethos and ethnicity (<http://www.ishraqi.com>).

Traditional Mojari with heavily embroidered Upper part are made by specialised craft men. But, with the passage of time, these were replaced by artificial materials, beads, bells etc, in order to make them affordable for everyone. Mojari production continues to be concentrated in central and northern India, the region which formed the stronghold of Mugal power like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, produced mainly in Rajasthan, and West Punjab (Mangaldas, 2009).

The Jooties reflect the unique style of every district they belong to. It is amazing how the leather is beaten, tanned and dyed and put to the best use. The leather is punched and gouged to create patterns, studded, sequined and even embroidered with woolen motifs. Mojari is a closed shoe with an extended curled toe, while juttis have flat fronts. In juttis, rear is normally covered but mojaris have an open look from behind. Produced mainly in Jaipur and Jodhpur cities, these juttis are provide the royal touch to ones attire (<http://www.rajasthantour4u.com>). The shoemakers working in the market had been there for generations (Kapoor, 2011).

The present paper highlights the changing trends in Mojari craft in Rajasthan. It is the outcome of one aspect of the study undertaken to document the traditional pattern, design and procedures of Mojari craft along with exploration of the changing trends in this work since last two decades.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was conducted in the Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur district of Rajasthan as it is the main centre of Mojari work. The sample of the present study was 90 respondents were selected randomly from three districts who was involved in Mojari work directly or indirectly since last 2 decades. These were whole sellers, retailers, exporters and some were involved in doing all the works together from manufacturing to sales at their own. Purposive sampling method was used for sample selection. This research was based on a descriptive cum exploratory research design to obtain information about the changing trend of Mojari craft

of Rajasthan.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Recently, the craft has begun to cater to the urban and export market. In the last two decades many changes occurred into the work of Mojari craft. The changes observed are being divided into categories and discussed as follows :

Changes in raw material used :

With regard to the changing trend in raw material used in Mojari craft, data in Table 1 revealed the distribution of respondents observing changes in raw materials used.

It is evident from Table 1 that 73.33 per cent respondents were agreed that there have been changes in raw materials used during last two decades. With passage of time and dictated by technological improvement and market demand, non-leather is also now being used for its production. Previously only pure leather was used but now chrome leather, rexine and other textile material are also in demand. Besides these plastic and rubber sole, sponge and rubber milk are also being used commonly. These are not only cost effective but also easily available. At present, chrome leather in uppers, rexine in upper and sole, foam and rubber in the sole is used. Uppers have stitches and wooden beads to provide different patterns.

The shift from country leather upper to chrome leather was a gradual process over two decades based on the demand of wholesalers, Mojari were made with soft leather in the uppers.

The artisans and designers of Jaipur are famous in the world for this Mojari footwear craft, made of camel leather, it is designed and embroidered in quiet an artistic manner. It is given a fashionable and highly sophisticated look (<http://www.jaipurmagazine.com>). Chrome leather and country leather are traded in the weekly Jaipur haat. Out of 100 traders, more than 80 procure leather from Agra (Kumar, 2003).

Changes in tools and machines :

The major changes were observed in the use of machines for stitching and embellishing various designs on uppers and in finishing, wooden last was replaced by polymer last. The detail information about machines and polymer last used by respondents has been presented below in Table 2.

Machineries used in Mojari craft :

In Jaipur and Udaipur respondents used to work on different types of machineries for Mojari craft *i.e.* throw

Aspect	Category	Respondents						Total	
		Udaipur		Jodhpur		Jaipur		f	%
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
Changes in raw materials	Yes	20	66.67	20	66.67	26	86.67	66	73.33
	No	10	16.67	10	16.67	4	13.33	24	26.67

skiving, rotting glider, finishing machine, computerized embroidery and sewing machines for embroidery work besides using elementary machines like heavy duty stitching, compressing machine, Die cutting.

Polymer lasts :

As discussed earlier, there are two types of lasts used by artisans in the sub-sector.

Wooden lasts :

These are the most common lasts used by artisans, the most commonly used raw materials for making these lasts are babool, sisam or pras wood. However, sisam is used only when the lasts are required for left and right Mojaris. Usually, the orders are only for a single last of a specific size as in the traditional Mojaris where there is no difference between the left and right Mojaris.

Polymer lasts :

These are recently being used in the production of Mojaris and are made of hard plastic. They are durable and do not deform with use and provide better finish.

As is clear from the table, in finishing of Mojaris, wooden lasts have been replaced by polymer lasts by more than 80 per cent respondents in all the three selected study areas. The reason for change in use of wooden lasts may be that wooden lasts deform with repeated use which adversely affect the quality of Mojaris. With continuous use they also develop cracks and eventually break during the process of hammering the lasts inside Mojaris.

Perusal of the Table 2 reveals that in general, modern machines were used by 40 per cent and polymer lasts by 88.88 per cent respondents. In Jaipur, majority of respondents used modern machines (86.67%) and polymer lasts (100%) as compared to Udaipur, where only 16.67 per cent respondents used modern tools. In Jodhpur, none of the respondents used modern tool as is clear from the table.

Changes in pattern draft ,design and colour used in Mojari craft :

With regard to the changes in pattern draft, design and colour used in Mojari craft, Table 3 reveals the data collected from respondents:-

Table 3 indicates that 51.11 per cent respondents found changes in pattern of draft, design and colour and nearly half of the respondents (48.89%) reported no change in Mojari craft.

It was noticed that 86.67 per cent respondents in Jaipur agreed that pattern draft, design and colour has been changing day by day. They detail is compiled as follows as per the discussion by the respondents :

Pattern draft :

The ordinary Mojari is either pointed in shape or rounded but now different forms are available known as gol-panja (Round Toe), chota-panja (Small Toe), salem shahi (Pointed Toe), cut out Mojari, sandals and slippers was a few modernized versions of Mojari. Recently, the craft has begun to cater to the urban and export market; consequently, the previously unidirectional mojari is now being made with a left-right distinction although still using the three-piece last integral to indigenous footwear construction technology (<http://mojariexporters.com>).

Design :

Along with traditional used design of Mojari such as Appliqué Mojari, punch work Mojari and embroidery Mojari with Wool, silk, cotton, golden and silver zari, new design has been introduced in the market these are interweave Mojari, bead stone Mojari, weaves with small leather strips etc. The ethnicity of the traditional skills accentuate into poetry when intermingled with the contemporary colours and designs. Applique in form of differently designed figures are cut out of leather and sewn on the vamp manually. The design would dictate the nature, colour and shape of the appliqué. It could

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents by changes in tools used (n=90)

Aspect	Category	Respondents						Total	
		Udaipur		Jodhpur		Jaipur		f	%
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
Tools used	Modern machines	10	16.67	0	0	26	86.67	36	40.00
	Traditional tools	20	66.67	30	100	4	13.33	54	60.00
	Wooden lasts	10	16.67	0	0	0	0	10	16.67
	Polymer lasts	20	66.67	30	100	30	100	80	88.88

Table 3 : Distribution of respondents by changes in pattern draft, design and colour (n=90)

Aspect	Category	Respondents						Total	
		Udaipur		Jodhpur		Jaipur		f	%
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
Pattern draft, design and colour	Yes	10	16.67	10	16.67	26	86.67	46	51.11
	No	20	66.67	20	66.67	4	13.33	44	48.89

range from an intricate appliqué which itself could incorporate other design features like embroidery, punches, weaves, etc., to a simple cut out shape from any material like leather, textile, synthetic, etc. Mojaris are available in a host of contemporary designs, rendering it to be very comfortable for daily wear (<http://www.apparel-manufacturers-directory.com>).

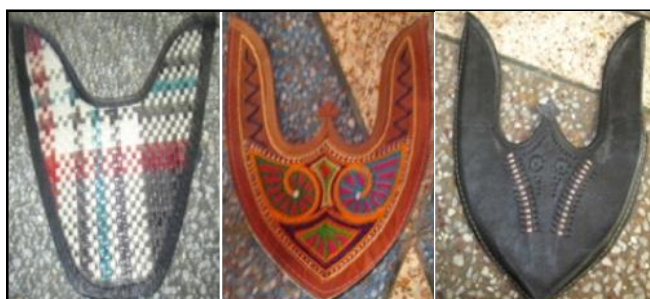


Fig. 1 : Variety of embellishment on Mojari uppers

Colour used :

The artisans were mainly producing plain colour Mojaris due to non-availability of treated leather and colouring agents. Cent per cent respondents kept base colour of the Mojari as brown (Camel shade) with embroidery of gold and silver colour threads. Fabrics used were black, green and red colour in Jodhpur and Udaipur but in Jaipur artisans make use of wide range of coloured leather. In leather, primarily only natural (vegetable colour and minerals) colours were used which remained fast and fresh for a long duration. Though in present time synthetic colours had also gained prominence.

Operation *Mojari* helped to revive the livelihood of several thousand of artisan in the state. It transformed traditional hand stitched local footwear into a modern hand crafted product with a contemporary appeal (Harper, 2010).

Changes in mechanizing of manufacturing procedure :

Certain processes in Mojaris manufacturing has been mechanized since last two decades which included introduction of elementary machines like heavy duty stitching, compressing machine, Die cutting, finishing machines etc. to

reduce drudgery, improved aesthetics and finish but at the same time retained the basic hand stitched nature.

Regarding changes observed in, manufacturing technique, data in Table 4 clearly shows that these machines were found more popular and extensively being used by the respondents (86.67%) of Jaipur district. It was found that in Udaipur and Jodhpur, majority of the respondents (66.67%) were still using the traditional manual mode of stitching and finishing.

Basic manufacturing procedure was found similar to section I but some steps were changed that is as follows: Respondents of Udaipur and Jaipur used to prepare both traditional and Modern Mojari as follows:

Traditional Mojari :

- With embellishment : Appliqué Mojari
- Without embellishment: Nagra Mojari
- Aari Tari Embroidery

Modern Mojari :

Respondents agreed that manufacturing trend had been changed during last two decades. In Modern times, three types of embellishment are done:-

- By printing
- By computerized embroidery machine.
- By simple machine embroidery

Respondents of Jodhpur prepared Mojari using traditional method but applying new designs *i.e.* mate work,

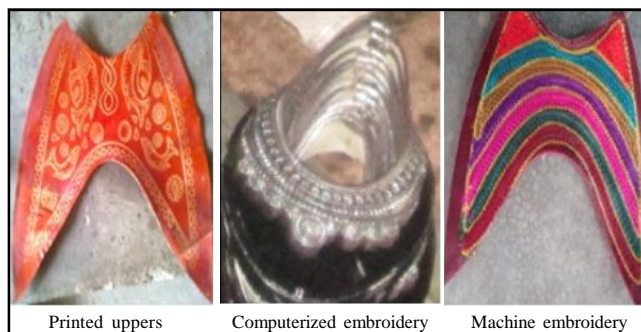


Fig. 2 : Design of modern Mojari

Table 4 : Distribution of respondents by changes in manufacturing procedure (n=90)								
Category	Respondents						Total	
	Udaipur		Jodhpur		Jaipur		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Mechanized process	10	16.67	10	16.67	26	86.67	46	51.11
Traditional process	20	66.67	20	66.67	4	13.33	44	48.89

Table 5 : Distribution of respondents by observing change in demand and sell (n=90)								
Category	Respondents						Total	
	Udaipur		Jodhpur		Jaipur		f	%
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Yes	10	16.67	20	66.67	26	86.67	56	62.22
No	20	66.67	10	16.67	4	13.33	34	37.78

interweave, two separate part of the Mojari *i.e.* toe of the Mojari and ankle of the Mojari, open at the back (dolma Mojari) and stitched by turning upper part outside.

Traditionally, the design of Mojari has close back and stitched by turning upper part inside example: Appliqué, cut out Mojari, punch, and embroidery and both chain and stem stitch were used for embroidery work but now chain stitch was more common as reported by respondents.

Changes in assembling technique :

It was observed that assemble technique was not similar as in past. In Udaipur and Jaipur respondents told that assembling technique has been changed as per the requirement and availability of raw materials.

Changes in uppers embellishments :

Generally, the men perform the leather work, including the ornamental punching and studding, while the women undertake the embroidery, which is done either directly on leather or on textile (natural or synthetic) in woollen, cotton or silk the threads are selected depending on the material of the upper surface.

Printed Mojari :

Before printing leather uppers of the Mojari are cut in round shape. The pattern for the upper part is traced with a pointed tool on dyed leather. Tracing is done using a marker or pen followed by cutting draft with a rounded knife called a Rapi and scissors. It was found that previously (before 2 decade), no artisans make use of printing technique while making of Mojari. Printing was done on the Mojari uppers with Rotating glider machine. Artisans have 5-7 block design with contemporary and geometrical motif for this purpose.

Embroidery with computer machine :

Respondents took help from experts for developing embroidery design using software and this type of embroidery is done in industry. Computer machine embroidery is done on a bulky fabric and 350-500 Uppers /day prepared.

Embroidery with machine :

Respondents took help from assistant craft men in creating design using machine embroidery. Sewing machine embroidery is done on a small piece according to demand and 150-175 Uppers / day are developed.

It was observed that previously embroidery was not done directly on leather but now embellishment was directly done on leather and rexine and weaves with small leather strips.

Changes in sole and insole :

It was noticed that previously sole was prepared by leather at home but now day's plastic and rubber soles were more common. Insole was cut on cardboard and sole was cut

on rubber or thick plastic site using rotating glider machine.

Changes in joining process :

Following changes were observed in joining process in Mojari :

- The uppers embellished and stuff with rubber milk.
- Inside edge was finished with piping
- Put the uppers on the lasts and turn the edge inside and attach with rubber milk
- Prepared sole and insole are put on lasts.

Changes in demand and selling price :

Recently, the craft has begun to cater to the urban and export market; consequently, the previously unidirectional mojari is now being made with a left-right distinction although still using the three-piece last integral to indigenous footwear. The demand of sequined footwear in the European market is reflected in the plethora of sequin embellished mojari flooding the shops of Jaipur (<http://www.cohanda.in>).

In this part researcher describe the detailed information about changes in sources of orders, places of orders and price.

Changes in demand and selling :

The data regarding changes in demand and selling of Mojari has been presented in Table 5. Majority of the respondents (62.22%) reported that there has been considerable change in demand and sell of the Mojari in recent past. This is reflected by increased number of orders procured from local, domestic and International market by retailers and wholesalers.

This may be due to changes in selling pattern of mojari via internet, increased awareness generation among consumers due to mass media, efforts of government, collaborative programmes etc. 'The Mojari goes international –the tribune' (Unnati, 2001).

Rajasthan's traditional footwear 'Mojari' is now providing overseas business opportunities to craftsmen. Growing demand in local and global markets has boosted sales of this item. Since a big number of tourists come to Rajasthan during last two months of the year, demand for Mojari reaches its maximum in this period. Rajasthan's traditional footwear 'Mojari' is now providing overseas business opportunities to craftsmen. Growing demand in local and global markets has boosted sales of this item. People are enjoying the comfort of this Jaipuri footwear in US, UK, Europe and Gulf countries. Attractive features of Mojari are that it is handmade, weighing just 100 grams and made from soft leather. Mojari industry provides employment to about 10,000 people in Rajasthan and it has a monthly profit of Rs. 2 billion. Owing to heavy demand, craftsmen are making different designs and nearly 200 Jaipuri shops are selling 100 types of the footwear (<http://www.fibre2fashion.com>).

Changes in selling price :

In response to the question about changing trends in selling price of Mojari, it was found that respondents engaged in making of trendy Mojari fixed the price on the basis of type of machines involved in embellishment of Uppers, use of mechanized process, involvement of semi skilled and skilled workers for help to get quality production of desired standard for export orders.

Due to involvement of advance tools and machinery in production, change in raw materials and accessories etc. the selling prices has been increased by 25 to 30 per cent.

Conclusion :

To conclude, the major changes observed in Mojari craft can be summarized as-

- Introduction of standard polymer lasts to inculcate internationally accepted sizing and fitting conventions.
- Left-Right distinction -the previously unidirectional *mojari* is now being made with a left-right distinction although still using the three-piece last integral to indigenous footwear construction technology.
- Conforming patterns to impart more accuracy and enhanced comforts
- Contemporary styles and designs dovetailed with the existing skills. Variety of embellishment techniques for upper.
- Appropriate mechanization in processes of stitching and finishing to improve production speed and quality and use of alternative cheap materials to add variety and reduce the cost.

Based on the above, there is need to address the issue of lack of advance technical know-how among mojari craftsmen, an appropriate package of technical inputs, involving custom designed and sturdy synthetic lasts, newly developed patterns, introduction of left -right differentiation, and training and exposure to newer designs, stitching methods and sole adhesion processes can be designed and executed through proper intervention and monitoring by appropriate bodies, which will ensure profitability and marketability of the products and prevent artisans from diversifying to other sustainable livelihood.

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