



TRADITIONAL CRAFT/ ART WORK OF THE PAHARIS OF PIR PANJAL

1. Pahari Embroidery Art/Needlework Tradition:

Pahari embroidery is entirely done by hand, with techniques including **chain stitch**, **satin stitch** and **mirror work** in some sub-regions. The process is slow and meditative, often carried out in communal settings during winter months or social gatherings. Embroidery is passed matrilineally, from mothers to daughters, forming part of a girl's informal education. It also plays a key role in community storytelling, with designs reflecting changes in seasons, festivals, or historical memory.



2. Traditional Pottery Art:

The Pahari tribe of Jammu and Kashmir have a long-standing tradition of pottery that reflects their earth-bound lifestyle, ritual practices and seasonal rhythms. Deeply rooted in ecological awareness and everyday utility, pottery among these hill communities is more than just craft-it is a form of ancestral knowledge shaped by hand, fire and memory. Pottery is often associated with specific caste-based communities (e.g., Kumhars or Prajapatis), though in hill regions, many families also practiced small-scale pottery for household use. It is traditionally a male-dominated craft, but women often assist in clay preparation, drying and decorative work.

3. Indigenous Pahari Gharat System/ Traditional water-powered flour mill:

The indigenous traditions of the Pahari communities in Jammu and Kashmir are deeply intertwined with sustainable practices, seasonal wisdom and indigenous technology. Central to this heritage is the Gharat system - a traditional water - powered flour mill used to grind grains like maize, wheat and barley.

Powered by the natural flow of mountain streams, the Gharat represents eco-sensitive engineering, requiring no electricity or fossil fuel. It produces stone-ground organic flour known for its texture, aroma and nutritional value - essential for staple foods like *makki ki roti* and *kulth dal*.



WATER MILL OR KARHAAT



4. Woodwork (Wooden Basketry/Spoon):

The Pahari communities of Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the Pir Panjal and Chenab Valley regions, have nurtured a centuries-old tradition of woodwork that is both utilitarian and artistic. Among the most enduring forms are wooden spoon-carving and basket-making. Crafted from locally available woods such as walnut, deodar, and kail, wooden spoons (*chamach*, *karahi*, *kadchi*) are carved entirely by hand using simple tools. Using willow twigs, and wild bhushes, Pahari artisans especially women make strong, flexible baskets for carrying grains, dairy products etc.



5. Animal Skin Leather craft:

Among the Pahari communities of Jammu and Kashmir, **leatherwork** from **goat** and **sheep skin** is a time-honoured craft rooted in pastoral life. Using natural tanning agents like bark and lime, artisans handcraft durable items such as footwear for rugged terrain, harnesses for livestock and leather containers for storage. This eco-sustainable practice reflects deep mountain wisdom-where every part of the animal is used and each item is tailored to the harsh Himalayan environment. Passed down through generations, this resilient craft blends utility with quiet artistry.