

## **Modernizing Traditions: Standardizing a Rural Heritage Craft The Panja Dari Makers of Punjab**

- 1. Shweta Sharma<sup>1</sup>**
- 2. Dr. Meeta Gawri<sup>2</sup>**
- 3. Prof. Prabhdip Brar<sup>3</sup>**

### **Abstract:**

The ‘Panja Dari’ or hand woven mats of the pre-Independence Punjab (currently comprising the areas of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh today) are a vibrant piece of its heritage that has been virtually hanging by a thread in the past few decades because of several reasons with not the least being lack of patronage. The colourful, very practical ‘dari’ had been in great demand in the days of yore and continues to be so among rural households even today. There are many uses of the quintessential ‘panja dari’. Rural socio economic life of the region has been dependent upon the village and cottage based even household based crafts. This craft is gradually dwindling in the villages today because there is a need to give it a new direction, new usage and a conversion identity that will make it compatible with the demands of the current years. The world stands at a crossroads of negating everything that leaves a carbon footprint and reclaiming all those practices that have made a connection with healthy environmentally conservative practices. This paper examines the recreation of a weaving story that can find tremendous usage acceptance among the ‘Green Brigade’ as also make a fashion statement on the front of home décor across homes in India and abroad. This would entail the process of training, skill building, capacity enhancement, design development under the mentorship of experts with a vision to making this local product domestically and globally. These are processes that can be taken up on mission mode in a directed manner.

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<sup>1</sup> The author is HoD, Textile Design Department, NIIFT, Mohali

<sup>2</sup> The author is HoD, Fashion Marketing Management, NIIFT, Mohali

<sup>3</sup> The author is Chairperson, UIFT & Voc Devt. Punjab University, Chandigarh

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