

Contemporary Trends of Hand-knotted Carpets' Designs in Lahore, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Contemporary hand-knotted carpets from Lahore are remarkable due to their oriental techniques, designs, foreign and indigenous influences. For contemporary carpets, traditional connectivity is maintained with an amalgamation of modern trends. The aim of the research is to identify the trends of the contemporary hand-knotted carpet designs and trace out different categories of designs on them.

Methods: The research uses qualitative research methodology to analyze these designs. The designs are classified into seven categories. The data has been collected primarily through visits to the carpet industries, where hand-knotted carpets are made, display centers where the carpets are exhibited for buyers. Study in the library, observation, and analytical study are key sources of the research.

Results: The result shows that geometrical, floral, abstract, individual and all-over designs for hand knotted carpets. It is a visual language that represents self-expression and the display of themes with symmetrical and asymmetrical compositions. On contemporary carpets Mughals, Persian, Chinese, Afghani and Turkish influences are found.

Conclusion: It is concluded that the weavers exhibit a revival of imagery and design themes in the shape of geometric and floral patterns, as well as a continuation of traditional designs and technique. They monitor wide range of new designs and also following in the footsteps of their ancestors to preserve cultural heritage. Every design has its own importance, own values, in addition to combining traditional and modern expression. The Lahore carpet legacy is upheld in the twenty-first century, and artisans adhere to the local way of life.

Keywords: Hand-knotted Weaving, Floral Designs, Geometrical Designs, Design Compositions, Stylization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Carpet making, as a traditional craft of Pakistan, has a special place among other crafts and is considered a most productive practice. As it belongs to the weaving family, South Asia has an ancient history of woven textiles that dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization. In the 11th and 12th centuries, Muslim conquerors, the Ghaznavids and Ghauris, came to South Asia and introduced carpet design trends called Islamic designs and established the traditional craft of the region. Weaving and hand spinning

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occupations were continued and adopted as favored professions. From the eleventh to sixteenth centuries, carpets were produced with new trends by adopting cultural weaving techniques. In the pre-Mughal period, pile rugs were woven, and for early carpet-making, wool was considered one of the major materials for handmade carpets. Carpet-making reached its peak with zest in the Mughal period. Production of this craft was continued during the British Colonial period. In 1947, Pakistan, as an independent country, came into being. After independence, several craftsmen settled in Lahore, Karachi, and their surroundings.

In the twenty-first century, the carpet industry is promoted in the cities by establishing centers, which become the backbone of carpet manufacturing in Pakistan. Tradition is maintained, and rugs are produced for local use and trading. These hand-knotted rugs are manufactured in various design patterns. By maintaining the tradition, carpets are used for domestic use and trading to improve the economy of the country. Contemporary hand-knotted carpets manufactured in Lahore are the finest among other cities in Pakistan. These hand-knotted carpets were particular in style and design, among other techniques of carpet making. Cotton and wool are used as major materials for woven rugs or carpets. Wool is preferred for the entire process of wrapping, wefting, and piling. The woolen pile carpet is called *galecha* or *qalin* (hand-knotted carpets). The preparation of its wrap requires a number of durable cotton threads. Silk is also used for special effects and emerges as a skillful representation of design. Sometimes merging of gold and silver with silken flowers and figures becomes part of the composition. These carpets embrace a variety of designs. In this research, seven categories of designs based on geometrical rectilinear and curvilinear design patterns, flora and fauna, individual compositions, and abstract designs with a variety of color schemes are identified. The complexity of these designs shows linear dimensions, color contrasts, and harmony, which reflect artisans' inventiveness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is apparent that numerous scholars, critics, and authors have commented on hand-knotted carpets. Several authors have discussed Mughal Garden carpets in detail, and is one of them who writes about Indian carpets as hand-knotted heritage, in which flowering trees, palmettes, rosettes, and blossoms play a vital role in attraction. in his book Mathour writes about the carpet-making material used by the artisans of the Mughalera and the subject matter of the designs are all under discussion in his book Persian weavers' design motives, themes, and designs are also part of the study (Mathour 2004).

Shah discusses the techno-economic survey that does not deal with design motives (Shah 1980). In an article Gupta, mentions the Mughal emperors' love for nature and flowers (Gupta 2020). On a website, knowledge about images of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal court carpets is given in full detail, in which the design motives and themes of these carpets are discussed (smarthistory.org, 2023). Another study of Mughal flowers and European inspiration on them is about the study of different flowers on paper in different colors to gain knowledge about variety of flowers and their implementation in art works (Google 2014). Design descriptions and decorative arts of Mughal's period help to know about the design trends during that era (Dewji 2018). All crafts in Pakistan, including history, introduction, and essential knowledge about crafts and carpet making, are covered in another book (Dar 2010). All the above-mentioned books will help to get knowledge about the historical designs and motives, which will be beneficial for the present study to know about influences on the contemporary carpet designs made in Lahore.

In the part about hand-knotted carpet, brief information about carpet weaving and *karkhanas* (places of carpet making / industry) working during the Mughal period is mentioned. The art of weaving carpets is the most common among other textiles and weaving techniques. A short history of carpet weaving, some knowledge about the development of carpet weaving after the independence of Pakistan, the private weaving sector in the area, and the types of carpets produced in the area are mentioned in a book (Dar 2009). In the chapter of a book, Indian carpets from the later Sultanat period and Mughal carpets' history and floral designs are discussed. Persian influences on the carpet designs and aesthetics, the Mughals'

floral and pictorial designs, and the carpets with grotesque and portuguese rugs are mentioned (Riazuddin 1988). A vast range of the carpets are covered by (Susa Day 1996).

Walker lists three fundamental weaving techniques in his book and also discusses the Mughal era's millefleur depictions, animal patterns, pictorial motifs, scrolling vines, and blooming blossoms (Walker 1997). In a book, the knowledge of textile techniques from pre-history to the new technology of the contemporary era is explored. The prehistoric material and technique of textiles are discussed in the first part. Dye and loom age, trade and trends, and surface patterning are all part of this book. The importance of cotton and linen is also discussed (Schoeser 2003). Mehta focuses on the overall handicrafts practiced in India, and carpet weaving is one of them (Mehta 1960). Very little attention is given to the discussion of the art of weaving practiced in India. At first, he mentioned general knowledge about rugs and carpets, then he mentioned the history of Mughal carpets, border bands, and flowers. The use of tie and dye on rugs and carpet weaving in Kashmir is highlighted.

As it is evident that the majority of research projects belong to the South Asian region, focus on samples from Mughal carpet designs. But in the present research, contemporary hand-knotted carpet designs from Pakistan are chosen for the case study. However, the symmetrical and asymmetrical design patterns and color schemes of these carpets need to be studied in detail. The present research explores and highlights the design patterns of contemporary carpets in Lahore, Pakistan. It is shown how the design motives are categorized according to their appearance and application on the surface. It is also highlighted that what kinds of traditional, stylized, and abstract design patterns are used for contemporary trends. Knowledge about new ideas and stylizations of the natural forms in curvilinear and rectilinear designs will be helpful for scholars to know about current trends to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the region. On the contemporary hand-knotted carpets of Lahore, seven types of design categories are found, with a variety of geometrical forms, floral types, and compositions implemented in a realistic and stylized manner. This research focuses on the seven categories of design patterns of the contemporary hand-knotted carpets of Lahore, Pakistan. The study aims to detect and classify the designs and patterns. What kinds of contemporary carpet designs are there? Is one of the issues of the study aims to address. It is an effort to make a contribution and to highlight the dearth of research in this area.

3. METHODOLOGY

It is qualitative research, and the method is descriptive, explanatory, and analytical. In this study, the fundamentals of qualitative research provide an overview of the field. The reader is persuaded to think or act a certain way. Since there are many samples of hand-knotted carpets in small industries and in the market, it is feasible to visit the site and take interviews with the craftsmen and artisans working in the *karkhana* (working place carpet weaving or industry) to examine the samples. The statistical population includes selected items that have relevance to the specific type of design under discussion.

The study has examined potentially most relevant samples of the design categories under discussion. Due to the repetition and similarity in design compositions, limited or essential examples are under discussion that cover all required analytical and observatory studies to reach their results, and twenty-seven samples in total have been examined for this article. By taking notes and accessing reputable websites. All pictures and drawings of the design patterns of the contemporary carpets have been taken by the author, unless otherwise mentioned with their captions. What makes the present research worth the reader's time? What do I contribute? How significant is this research? The research questions are about the variety of these designs. This step leads to the conclusion by highlighting the importance of the study. It exemplifies how this contribution foresees future development in the domain of research.

4. DISCUSSION

Pakistan is one of the world's leading producers and exporters of hand-knotted carpets and rugs. Due to their designs and styles, these carpets are well known worldwide. A variety of durable materials make the production sturdy. This craft, being a part of Pakistani culture, developed in various cities in Pakistan.

Weavers prefer to practice different kinds of weaves, such as twill, satin weave, weft-faced weave, warp-faced weave, tabby weave, tapestry weave, damask, and supplementary. Lahore is one of the largest carpet production areas of Pakistan. Handmade carpets, particularly those prepared in Lahore, are popular all over the world and are one of the major export items. Different kinds of carpets and rugs are made today to adorn interior spaces. Lahore produces kilim, plain weave, flat weave with warp and weft threads, hooked rugs, and carpets with knotted piles. However, hand-knotted pile carpets are preferred, and symmetrical (Turkish) and asymmetrical (Persian) kinds of knotting are frequently found. In Lahore, wool piles on a cotton or silk basis are frequently used to weave hand-knotted carpets. Mughal tradition calls for a wool pile on a wool foundation and a wool pile on a cotton base; however, a silk pile on a silk base is influenced by Chinese. Punjab Small industries are playing a vital role in the promotion of carpet making using traditional techniques and methods. Carpets of various designs are primarily used to cover the floors, and wall hangings are chosen to adorn the surfaces. In Lahore, Garhi Shahu, Qila Gujar Singh, Nisbat Road, and Nicolson Road are famous due to the production of hand-knotted carpets and the development of small industries. These industries are maintaining the legacy of the region. In the beginning, goat hair and sheep wool were used for carpeting. The weave of these carpets was similar to that of *durrees* (a kind of tightly woven thick cloth) and was designed in different geometrical compositions. Later on, wool was preferred for hand-knotted carpet weave.

4.1 Contemporary Pakistani Carpet Designs

The application of designs is direct communication through line and color, which connects the viewers by telling stories of the specific art and design trends of a particular area and time. On the contemporary carpets of Lahore, traditional design motives are repeated with a combination of natural and stylized design motives according to the requirements of the contemporary world. These designs can be classified into seven categories. A variety of designs in rectilinear, curvilinear, realistic, and stylized forms are composed to make the surface appealing. These designs become popular with simplified motives in vibrant, contrasted, and harmonized color schemes. In this study, seven types of designs are discussed, which are as follows:

4.2 Rectilinear Designs

In the beginning, after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the designs of the carpets in Lahore were simple geometrical. But later on, complex, intricate geometrical designs took place. The carpets manufactured are a representation of Bukhara Royal Mauri design (figure 1), and have overall rectilinear design patterns with a border that presents Turcoman influence. Such designs are in practice today. Beside Bokhara Royal Mauri design, - Bukhara Pende, Bokhara Shah Saloor, Bukhara Princess Yomud, Bukhara Tekke, Bukhara butterfly and Bukhara diamond are also in practice (figures. 2 &3).

On the other hand, the hand-knotted contemporary carpets of Lahore made in 2000 are an example of simplified design in straight-lined geometry with a combination of individual and overall designs (figure 4). These stylized rectilinear designs were influenced by the Mughals' fruit dishes painted in Mughal miniatures and wall frescoes. Pillars with arches are representations of architectural elements in stylized form.

Another carpet with a geometrical design manufactured in Lahore, dated 2001 (figure 5), is an example of the straight and curvilinear geometrical design composition with a black linear design on a red background. Its minute details create interest in the composition. The carpets of the twenty-first century, produced by the craftsmen of Lahore, have concentric lozenge-shaped medallions with highly complex geometric patterns and a black geometrical design with some touches of yellow and white on a deep red base with overlapping stylized, simplified flowers. The overall design is based on geometric patterns composed of multiple squares, rectangles, and diamond shapes in the same small size. These shapes make an interesting composition of checkered patterns.

Red was commonly used for the Mughals' classically dynamic hand-knotted carpets. Comparatively, in the Mughal period, strict geometrical patterns were implemented on the borders of pictorial and garden carpets. In contemporary carpet designs, geometrical patterns frequently repeat circles, ovals, squares, rectangles, hexagons, octagons, and pointed stars with interwoven borders.

Three or two rows of rectangles that are concentric on the carpet and close to the borders are a common feature of all patterns. Small rectangular shapes are used to design the intervals in between; square and rectangular shapes are used in the composition of the base of the borders. All-over patterns cover the surface in repetitive applications of a single motif or a unit of related motifs. Thus, by examining the instances where the patterns and design work together to create an appealing aspect, a strong composition is arranged.



Figure 1. Bukhara design in strict geometrical patterns on the carpet of the twenty-first century, made in Lahore, 2012 (picture by the author).



Figure 2. Bukhara Mayuri, Bukhara Dimond and Bukhara Butterfly designs practiced for the ornamentation of Lahori carpets made in 2010.

Source: <https://www.bashircarpets.com/en> accessed, May 7, 2023.



Figure 3. Drawings of Bokhara Pende, Bokhara Shah Solar and Bokhara Princess Yomud (drawings by author).



Figure 4. Stylized rectilinear designs influenced by Mughal's fruit dishes made in Lahore in 2000 (picture by the author).



Figure 5. Geometrical patterns on the carpet of the twenty-first century, made in Lahore, manufactured in Lahore, 2001 (picture by author).

4.3. Curvilinear Geometrical Designs

The second category deals with curvilinear geometric patterns, and every pattern has an individual existence without any link between them. There are several samples of curvilinear geometry. Usually, the appearance of the central medallion is considered a center of interest filled with individual patterns (figure 6). These carpets, made in Lahore in 2007, have complex stylized geometry with Afghan influences and show a certain composition of stylized curvilinear geometrical designs. The appearance of the central medallion is influenced by the Ottoman court carpet and sixteenth-century Persian carpets of silk weft, cotton warp, and wool knotted pile. The twenty-first century's carpets manufactured in Lahore have complex geometrical compositions developed for the new millennium; figure 7 also comes in this category. Geometric patterns are combined and duplicated by following the reverse and mirror method, which interlaces intricate combinations. Their color tones and arrangement represent the continuity of individual design patterns. The entire composition shows the advancement of complex design and innovative composition, which Pakistani craftsmen have been maintaining since Pakistan came into being.

In figure 9, the composition of contemporary hand-knotted carpet made in Lahore in 2022 is divided into three major parts through forms and colors, and the entire surface is designed with overall floral design units of morning glory in light yellow and shrubs. Such floral patterns seem influenced by the carpet's design, made in the Mughal era during Jahangir's period. There are several examples of floral carpets made during the Mughal era, and the carpet design in figure 10 is one of them. It has all-over floral design motives on a red background with black floral-patterned border carpet that belongs to Shah Jahan's period. It is an example of naturalistic floral representation in carpet design. Few samples of such designs are preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and the Boston Museum of Mughal Art collections. They signify complex compositions of foliage with geometrical designs. Figure 11 shows a variety of flowery plants such as irises, tulips, and poppy belong to the Mughal era. These naturalistic flowery plants make a composition. These plants are surrounded by a border of scrolling vines with lotus and poppy flowers favored by the Mughals. These floral motifs appear on carpets, Kashmiri shawls, miniature paintings, and textiles for embroidery and block printing. The comparative analysis of this category shows that contemporary Lahori carpets still have Mughal influences in their designs.

The Safavid carpet, dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, placed in Met Museum (rugrabbit.com/classical- 2022), is based on complexed curvilinear geometrical shapes with six pointed star patterns. This example shows an overall geometrical design with a border. The shapes are filled with stylized floral patterns. The cartouches and medallions on the border reflect influences from Safavid book binding, Chinese bands, and Persian art. Such designs give inspiration to contemporary carpet designs in Lahore.



Figure 6. Curvilinear Geometrical design having medallion, over-all design and border design (picture by author).



Figure 7. Circular medallion with over-all design (picture by author).



Figure 8. Hand knotted carpet made in Lahore having complexed floral designs of star shaped medallion in the center, dated 7th July 2022 (picture by author)

4.4 Floral Motives and Compositions with Design Patterns

The third is based on individual floral motives and balanced compositions that accommodate design continuity. Hand-knotted carpets made in Lahore in the twenty-first century have complex natural and stylized floral designs with star, oval, hexagon, and circular medallions in the center. Paisley, vine motives, scrolls, acanthus leaves, and split leaves are key design elements that have Persian and Mughal influences. Naturalistic and stylized motifs with intricate stylized birds, deer, and floral patterns are

observed according to the taste and interest of the new generation. Their wool pile, cotton and silk bases maintain the tradition of the region. They also have small, naturalistic-looking flowers and blossoms with scroll vines, creating an infinite composition by intermingling intricate motifs. These designs present both traditional and trendy appearances in design. Figure 11 is the foremost example in this category made during Mughal's period. The composition is based on acanthas flowers and split leaves. Trellis patterns, scrolling vines, and niches with natural floral designs have been seen on Mughals' carpets.



Figure 9. Contemporary hand-knotted carpet made in Lahore 2022 (picture by the author).



Figure 10. Floral all-over design with medallion and triple border. Twenty first century, made in Lahore (picture by the author).



Figure 11. Floral motives on red back ground with black floral patterned boarder carpet belongs to Shah Jahan's Period. Pashmina pile, wilk wrap and waft. Frick Collection New York.

Source: "Frick Collection". Frick Collection Photos, Google, accessed October 16, 2020 <https://www.facebook.com/frickcollection/photo/pcb.1015905818216118/10159058182091180>



Figure 12. Irises, tulips and poppy plants on Mughal carpet made in 1630-40.

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452197>

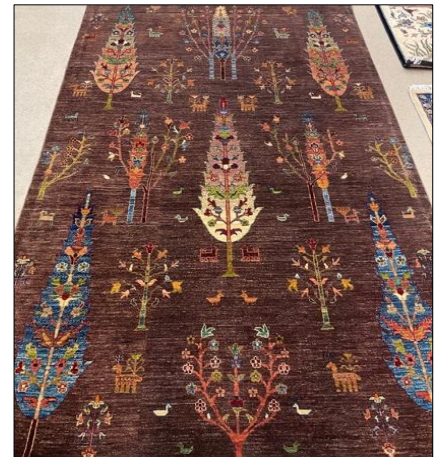


Figure 13. Stylized cypress design with small birds and animals on dark brown colored wool pile manufactured in Lahore (picture by the author).



Figure 14. Stylized simplified design pattern in vibrant colors wool pile manufactured in Lahore (picture by the author).



Figure 15. Artistic appearance of pictorial carpet of the carpets manufactured in Lahore, dated 2005 (picture by author).

4.5 Stylized Floral Motives

The stylized cypress design with small birds and animals on a dark brown-colored wool pile carpet is made in Lahore in 2010 (figure 13). This design is one of those that represents the appearance of stylized floral motives. Cypress, tulips, ducks, and animals in stylized forms obtain repetition in symmetrical design, in which every unit has its own importance due to design elements. Craftsmen and designers admire its intricate and stylized nature. Cypress was a favorite plant used in Mughal miniatures, frescoes, and other surface decoration. There are several examples of artwork produced during the Mughal era. The contemporary carpet under discussion shows an unusual composition with an overall stylized design of cypresses, tulip plants, birds, and animals; such stylized, scattered composition with individual overall units has never been seen in Mughals' carpet designs.

Another example of a stylized simplified design pattern in vibrant colors wool pile carpet prepared in Lahore shows bright colors with curvilinear geometrical designs and stylized floral motives in a repeated overall design (figure 14). Such kinds of carpets are made in different areas of Pakistan. It is a representation of modern designs with stylized patterns that have their own importance in representing modern contemporary design trends. Stylized floral designs with individual compositions are presented all over design. Every unit has a different design repeated with a combination of natural and stylized design motifs. The motifs are arranged in repetitive design patterns with horizontal and vertical axes.

4.6 Flora and Fauna Appearance

The next category is a composition of independent tree shrubs among flora and fauna with artistic expression. The hand-knotted modern carpets made in Pakistan have various subject matters, and the pictorial carpet theme is one of them. The artistic appearance of the pictorial carpet made in Lahore (figure 15), dated 2005, is a realistic depiction of a complex, tight composition of flora and fauna influenced by Mughal carpets made in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mughal and Persian garden carpets from the seventeenth century have influenced these carpets. Scrolls and split leaves are key design elements. This realistic imagery, when compared to Mughal pictorial carpets, has a harsh appearance of flora and fauna due to the dark contours in the black-colored outline of each animal, bird, leaf, and floral motif in burnt umber, yellow, peach, blue grey, and veridian green. All are prominent on the beige-colored background wool surface of these carpets made in Lahore. Mughal's borders are in geometrical designs with star-shaped medallions, but here, imagery of wild animals, birds, and stylized floral motifs is designed for borders. On its border design, birds in action are composed of foliage with a variety of floral patterns. The carpet (figure 16) made in Lahore is another example of pictorial imagery composed on

black background, showing the contrast of colors. The composition is based on a single tree that has blossoms and birds on it. It depicts bunches of blossoms, a variety of leaves, colorful birds, and scrolling vines arranged in an asymmetrical manner. Naturalistic design is exaggerated for the sake of beautification, and sometimes forms are simplified in a stylized manner. Three deer are woven in the foreground, reminding Mughal miniature paintings. Its border is designed in a tight arrangement of realistic and stylized floral patterns. Botanical floral carpets depict bunches of blossoms, a variety of leaves, colorful birds, and scrolling vines arranged in an asymmetrical manner. Arrangement of the imagery of floral patterns with animals and birds in a naturalistic landscape, surrounded border, and stylized floral motifs are directly influenced by Mughal carpets.

The hunting scene on a carpet combines Mughal and Persian influences with an indigenous touch (figure 17). The carpet shows foliage with horses, jaguars, tigers, lions, antelopes, and foxes all in action. In border hare, rabbits, wild dogs, and falcons are woven in a symmetrical composition with a light-colored wool knotted surface. The carpet, figure 18, was manufactured in Lahore in 2021. The composition measures the taste and reflection of a hunting scene, portraying royal life activities in artistic manners. Dark and somber colors are relieved by contrast and bright motives. The strong, crowded composition of the hunting scene with horses, tigers, lions, and male figures sitting on horses in action is full of movement. The turban and dresses of riders are Persian in influence and surrounded by a border, which is also designed with flora and fauna designs. Flying birds, animals, leaves, and stylized flowers are scattered throughout the border. The overall impact of the floral theme is artistic.



Figure 16. Single tree composition with flora and fauna. Made in Lahore, 2012 (picture by the author).



Figure 17. Hunting scene with figurative representation. Made in Lahore, 2019 (picture by author).



Figure 18. Hunting scene. Made in Lahore, 2019 (picture by author).



Figure 19. A figurative carpet manufactured in Lahore 2007 (picture by author).



Figure 20. Single tree with representation of flora and fauna reminding Chinar tree's composition of miniature painting painted in Mughal period. (picture by author).



Figure 21. Centralized single tree composition with representation of flora and fauna, made in Lahore 2022. (picture by author).



Figure 22. Mughal Miniature painting, Flowering tree with a bird under and architectural niche. Source: www.flickr.com/photos/asianartsandiego accessed May 2003.



Figure 23. Representation of peacock with morning glory floral design. Made in Lahore 2022 (picture by author).

4.7 Individual Compositions

This kind has significance apart from the aforementioned classifications. Pictorial carpets are another example of twenty-first century Lahori carpet design. The figurative carpet under discussion has Persian influence (figure 19). A water jug *zarooof* (water container) in the hand of a female figure sitting on the tree is an Iranian influence. The figures, treatment of trees, and simplified buildings do not meet the high standards and skillful treatment of Persian carpets made during the seventeenth century and later periods.

Another example of this category is a single tree with representations of flora and fauna (figure 20). Mughal Garden carpets can be seen on contemporary carpets made in Lahore, dated 2022. On the Prussian blue background, white Chinese clouds stand out. Persian and Mughal influences coexisted to create a modern stylized appearance of tree stems, flying birds perched on tree bushes, tigers, deer, leaves, flowers, and small hills. Figure 21 shows a centralized single-tree composition with representations of flora and fauna. The carpet, manufactured in Lahore in 2022, has similarities with the

Mughal period's single tree with flora and fauna designs (figure 22). It is surrounded by a stylized, thin floral border. The representation of an individual flowering tree with a bird is a typical presentation of Mughal miniature paintings made during the 17th century. The modern carpet made in Lahore in 2022 is a stylized, simplified representation of peacocks, swans, and birds with foliage (figure 23). The peacock was the preferred bird for artistic imagery during the Mughal period, as illustrated in several carpet designs and other decorative arts. In contemporary example Lahori modern carpet drawing is less refined as compared to the Mughal's artistry on knotted carpets. The Mughal peacock and birds were woven more delicately and with careful attention to minor details, making the craft more valuable and high-class than this. However, green, white, blue, and beige colors against a red background are giving an artistic effect to the entire composition.



Figure 24. Abstract design on contemporary hand-knotted Carpet in Lahore 2021 (picture by author).



Figure 25. Abstract design with stylized overall design, made in 2022 (picture by author).

4.8 Abstract Designs

This category shows nonobjective abstract representation through colors (figure 24). Such kinds of carpets show harmonized and contrasted colors, which are usually preferred for modern interior settings. While some people choose more subdued, delicate tones, others find that the use of bold, brilliant colors conveys feelings. The impression is achieved by using forms, colors, and gestural marks rather than providing a true representation of visual reality. The intensities of hues are controlled to enhance their value.

The visual experience is created through the use of color, shape, and pattern. For interiors, abstract design refers to the use of these elements to create a cohesive and visually interesting space. Balance in composition, emphasis on rhythmic patterns, unity of design, variety of shapes, and contrast in colors, speak the voice of the soul. Even though abstract designs appear straightforward, they are the most sophisticated genres and demonstrate a greater degree of thought. In figure 25, visual language speaks to the reality of intermingling the abstract design with minute geometrical shapes and stylized floral motifs.

5. CONCLUSION

After a long journey, the traditional craft of hand-knotted carpet making has extended its worth in the modern era, where a variety of designs are implemented for the sake of beautification. Contemporary artisans gave special attention to imagery and material. The craftsmen use wool, cotton, and silk for refined finishing to attain and maintain standards. The aim of the present research is to explore the categories of design trends in hand-knotted contemporary carpets in Lahore.

After analyzing all seven categories of contemporary hand-knotted carpet trends, it is observed that the weavers present continuity of traditional techniques and a revival of imagery and design motifs in the form of geometrical, floral patterns in pictorial scenes with new dimensions. Usually, carpet weavers follow in the footsteps of their ancestors and produce a variety of designs. These designs are not only the amalgamation of traditional and modern expression but also a representation of color combinations, harmony, and contrasts, which have their own values. It also helps to empower the craftsmen who took years to train themselves with their forefathers. The craft is preserving cultural heritage with new design trends. In the twenty-first century, the tradition of Lahore carpets is maintained, and craftsmen follow the culture of the region. It is examined how directly and indirectly traditional imagery and patterns inspire modern-era designers and craftsmen and how they promote indigenous traditional art with a touch of advanced compositions. It is apparent that hand-knotted carpet making is a cultural heritage of Pakistan, which has covered different stages of development and has become one of the most demanding products of arts and crafts.

Flora and fauna, garden carpets, and intricate geometrical design patterns as vital key elements of the compositions are still in use by contemporary designers and craftsmen in Pakistan. The implementation of motifs, design patterns, and artistic imagery gradually changed into new impressions but never lost its standard regarding designs and color schemes. Stylization in forms and abstract representation with lines and colors is an addition to contemporary design taste.

Mughal, Persian, Safavid, Ottoman, Turcoman, Afghani, and Chinese influences with complex arrangements of naturalistic and stylized flora and fauna, intricate geometry, and a variety of color schemes are observed. It is a speedy play to tie the knots around the wrap according to the planned design and color. Craftsmen maintain the standard of traditional craft by adding their unrest and continued efforts towards the development of technique and skill in an honorable manner and by providing new life to the cultural craft of Pakistan, which became a cause of national identity all over the world. The significance of the study is to explore contemporary hand-knotted carpet design trends in Lahore. In which the importance of design elements and geometrical designs, naturalistic, stylized, flora and fauna, abstract, asymmetrical, and symmetrical formations of the design compositions are analyzed.

The results show that today in Pakistan, geometrical and floral designs follow naturalistic and stylized simplified motifs for individual forms and overall design patterns. Compositions with flora and fauna are influenced by the Mughals' themes, resulting in little change in compositions. Artisans are using some historic carpet designs by making little alterations to modern carpet designs. It seems that the traditional designs are continued on contemporary carpets with the addition of ingenious ideas and stylization of the natural forms in curvilinear and rectilinear designs, which will be helpful for scholars to know about current trends to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Pakistan.

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