

Protecting Bangladesh's Geographical Indication Interests

The Case of Jamdani



CENTRE FOR POLICY DIALOGUE (CPD)
B A N G L A D E S H
a civil society think tank



National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB)

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Publishers

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First Published October 2014

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Cover by

Avra Bhattacharjee

ISBN 978-984-8946-18-3

Price: Tk. 250
USD 20

Printed at

Enrich Printers
41/5 Purana Paltan, Dhaka 1000

C12014_3PRO_TRC

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Acronyms

BARMS	Bangladesh Archives and Records Management Society
BFTI	Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute
BISS	Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
BWPMBA	Bangladesh Weavers Product and Manufacturing Business Association
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
DPDT	Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GI	Geographical Indication
LDC	Least Developed Country
NCCB	National Crafts Council of Bangladesh
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Acknowledgements

This publication is an outcome of a collaborative initiative of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB). In advancing the cause of protecting the patent of *Jamdani*, the initiative is indebted to a number of persons who have been involved with the effort in various capacities.

The challenging task of conducting a study on establishing the Geographical Indication (GI) for *Jamdani* was undertaken by *Dr Iftekher Iqbal* of the Department of History, University of Dhaka. His rigorous research work on the issue has extracted historical evidence which would indeed provide strong support for Bangladesh in asserting the claim of GI for *Jamdani* in the global regime of TRIPS.

The study was guided by an Advisory Committee of experts which included *Dr Hameeda Hossain*, Former Chairperson, Ain o Salish Kendra; *Ms Ruby Ghuznavi*, Vice President, NCCB; *Ms Bibi Russell*, Founder, Bibi Production; *Ms Monira Emdad*, Former President, NCCB; *Ms Khushi Kabir*, Coordinator, Nijera Kori; *Advocate Sultana Kamal*, Executive Director, Ain o Salish Kendra; and *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director, CPD.

The paper is prepared based on a field survey and debriefing of knowledgeable informants. Relevant ministries and government officials were also consulted at various stages in this regard.

CPD organised a number of expert group meetings at different phases of the project which were attended by experts from various sectors. A policy dialogue was also organised under the initiative in June 2014. Contributions of the participants at these sessions are gratefully acknowledged. The Dialogue and Communication Division of CPD deserves special thanks for organising these events and assembling the present publication. Thanks are also due to *Mr Shahid Hussain Shamim*, General Secretary, NCCB for his contribution, and *Ms Umme Shefa Rezbana*, Research Associate, CPD for her role in coordinating the project.

BRAC has provided support in conducting the study and has been a valuable partner in this initiative.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, CPD spearheaded the exercise.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB)

Foreword

This publication, entitled “Protecting Bangladesh’s Geographical Indication Interests: The Case of *Jamdani*” is the result of a unique collaborative research and dialogue initiative by the *Centre for Policy Dialogue* (CPD) and *National Crafts Council of Bangladesh* (NCCB). I was pleased that BRAC could provide support for the implementation of this excellent endeavour. The publication will help to increase awareness among producers and policymakers, as well as experts in the fields of trade, economics and law, of the need to legally protect intellectual property in Bangladesh. *Jamdani* is a perfect example of the importance of safeguarding Bangladesh’s Geographical Indications (GIs).

The Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides guidance on how to preserve a territory’s cultural heritage, protect the interests of consumers, and benefit local producers using indications that products originate in that territory. However, this process has to start at the national level with the design of legislation, a regulatory framework and institutional arrangements to implement the TRIPS provisions.

Although protecting GIs seems like a novel idea in Bangladesh, there is a long history of GI protection in many countries, mainly in Europe, as well as various international treaties to safeguard GIs. Even our neighbour India has gone far ahead in this area. For instance, India registered *Jamdani* as *Uppada Jamdani* from Andhra Pradesh in 2009, which is affecting our own rights in relation to *Jamdani*. The research paper forming the basis of this publication presents historical, geographical, commercial and cultural evidence to support the protection of *Jamdani* as a GI in Bangladesh. The dialogue which took place on the launch of the research paper demonstrates the high level of interest in this subject within Bangladesh.

There is no doubt that the recent inclusion of *Jamdani* in UNESCO’s *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List* will create new opportunities for thousands of *Jamdani* craftspeople. The Government of Bangladesh should now take swift action to bring the *Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013* into force, and thus legally safeguard the concerned products of Bangladesh.

I commend the efforts of CPD and NCCB in protecting the GIs which rightfully belong to Bangladesh.

Dhaka
October 2014

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed
Founder and Chairperson
BRAC

Preface

The *Jatiya Karushilpa Parishad* (National Crafts Council of Bangladesh – NCCB) has promoted the development of crafts in Bangladesh since its inception in 1985. Its multidisciplinary membership is engaged in research to promote the craft heritage of this country and it has provided support services to artisans to ensure their livelihood options. At the 2011 General Assembly of the World Craft Council held in Chennai, we learnt that India had applied for the Geographical Indication (GI) registration of several textile and other products, including *Jamdani* and *Kantha*, the two unique textile traditions of Bangladesh. To address this problem the NCCB has collaborated with the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) to undertake a research into the origins of the traditional production of *Jamdani* textiles in Bangladesh.

For more than a year we have lobbied with relevant ministries – the Ministry of Industries as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Law, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Cultural Affairs to draft an appropriate legislation to protect the intangible cultural heritage of Bangladesh. The contributions from all state institutions have been very supportive and led to the enactment by the Bangladesh Jatiyo Sangshad of the long-awaited GI Act – *Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013* in November 2013.

The NCCB and CPD have identified the GI of *Jamdani* so as to register it as a heritage product of Bangladesh. The present in-depth research study on *Jamdani* was commissioned to comply with the requirements of GI registration. The objective of the study was to establish the origin and geographical location of *Jamdani* in Dhaka and its environs; to record the unique weaving techniques of *Jamdani* as well as its outstanding traditional design content. The research has drawn upon archival records as well as field research and focus group discussions with different personnel involved in the production of *Jamdani*. The study thus provides a comprehensive record of the historical origins of the production and trade in *Jamdani* from weaving centres in the Dhaka region. We are confident that it will be a very useful tool in assisting the process of the GI registration of *Jamdani*.

A number of government agencies and non-government organisations, as well as the media have contributed to the enactment of the GI Act in order to protect the unique products of Bangladesh. We hope this study will be a valuable example of the process which has to be followed for the registration of all such traditional products under the GI. The citation of the *Art of Jamdani Weaving* as the *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bangladesh* by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in December 2013 has been a great achievement for this country. We hope the registration of *Jamdani* and other products of this country under GI will be the next step forward.

Dhaka
October 2014

Ruby Ghuznavi
Vice President
National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB)

GI, Bangladesh and *Jamdani*

Debapriya Bhattacharya

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya is a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). He can be reached at: debapriya.bh@gmail.com

1. The GI Regime

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) defines a Geographical Indication (GI) as “a sign used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that place of origin.” GI is a form of intellectual property right that provides exclusive rights, such as the right to use, to its owner(s).

GIs have been historically used for agricultural products, which typically have qualities that are influenced by specific local geographical factors such as climate and soil. However, GIs are being increasingly used for natural, or manufactured products such as handicrafts, which reflect specific processing skills and traditions.

In the international legal regime, the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) plays a critical role in protecting GIs. The TRIPS Agreement mandates compulsory protection for GIs. In order to implement international legal obligations under TRIPS, many countries have developed their own national frameworks in this area. Currently, there are at least 111 countries where GIs are recognised as a separate type of intellectual property with *sui generis* protection of GIs in place.

Aside from the need to uphold international legal obligations, the need to protect GIs in the national legal framework arises primarily due to the variety of socio-economic benefits which can be obtained from the effective implementation of national GI laws.

2. Socio-Economic Benefits of GI

Differentiation tool in marketing strategies. The economic rationale for protecting GIs essentially derives from the fact that the place of origin (geographical location) may be used as a quality signal, in which case, the exclusivity of the region may be captured in the origin-labeled product as quality attributes. GIs therefore, can serve as product differentiators in the market by enabling consumers to distinguish products which have origin-based characteristics. Thus, GI certification would provide a competitive advantage for the product, which would be difficult to erode.

In addition, the certification of GIs will have implications regarding the quality of the produced goods marked as GIs, as they will have to adhere to certain quality and traceability standards which are inherent characteristics of GIs.

Importantly, this product differentiation tool provided by GIs can be effectively utilised in marketing and brand development strategies of the specific certified GI products. For example, GIs could enable a transition from mere source identification to branding. In the specific case of *Jamdani*, the GI certification could be used by Bangladesh as a marketing tool to emphasise the reputation, quality, etc. of the product, i.e. the *sharee*.

Promotion of rural development. GIs may be deployed as a tool for rural development by enabling local rural producers to advance their commercial and economic interests through the production of local goods certified as GIs. Since ownership of the GIs will lie with the local producers, the added value generated by the GI certified goods in the form of a premium price would generate enhanced revenue

for the producers. Moreover, production of GI certified goods could lead to improved employment opportunities in the concerned rural area.

Means to preserve knowledge and know-how. GIs also serve as a tool to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. An important social benefit of GIs is that through the requirement that certain distinct qualities or characteristics are needed to be preserved in the GI certified goods. GIs can also foster and promote environmental protection and local values. For example, some GI certified products such as handicrafts can embody traditional artistic expressions, culture and heritage which would need to be maintained. This preservation of knowledge benefit provided by GIs is particularly pertinent for the *Jamdani* weaving tradition, which has been declared as an *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* of Bangladesh by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Cementing partnerships between producers. GIs provide for collective rights, which are accorded to all producers of the certified product. Therefore, GIs may contribute to promotion of substantive partnerships and coordination among members of producers' organisations of relevant goods. This can further foster business clustering and rural integration, while cementing collective reputation. GIs may also serve as a tool of protection for both consumer and producer interests by addressing information asymmetries and quality predictability, as well as by upholding reputation as an asset.

3. Protecting GIs in Bangladesh

As previously mentioned, the WTO TRIPS Agreement – the most comprehensive multilateral treaty on intellectual property rights – includes mandatory provisions for the protection of GIs. These provisions are to be implemented by all WTO Members, except for the LDCs (least developed countries), who currently have a transition period till 2021 for the full implementation of the obligations under TRIPS Agreement.

Bangladesh, although an LDC Member of the WTO, has in light of its national needs and priorities, enacted in November 2013, the national GI legislation known as *Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013*. However, the implementing rules of the GI Act are yet to be enacted by the rightful authorities.

In order to take advantage of the socio-economic benefits of GIs as mentioned above, there is a need for the urgent and effective implementation and operationalisation of the GI Act in Bangladesh, particularly by promoting the rules and provisioning the relevant public bodies. The rules under GI Act should be framed in a way so as to offer binding and concrete protection of GI certification to traditional products. On top of the list of such traditional products should be *Jamdani* and *Nakshikantha* which are of vital socio-economic and cultural significance for the country. The implementation of the GI Act and its rules should be particularly prioritised as India since 2009 has registered *Jamdani* as *Uppada Jamdani Sarees* from Andhra Pradesh as a certified GI. Therefore, we will need to register our GIs under a valid process before we go abroad to contest any infringement of our rights.

4. Considerations in Operationalising the GI Act

The operationalisation of the GI Act will depend significantly on how the legal, institutional and procedural architecture needed for the implementation of the GI Act will be actualised. The successful

implementation of the GI Act will require sustained commitment, strategic planning and adequate allocation of resources.

Legal considerations. One of the key considerations in the GI law operationalisation process is the need to ensure a clear and simple definition of a Geographical Indication to ensure legal certainty. This can be done through the effective drafting of the implementing rules.

The clear drafting of the provisions will prevent fraud with respect to the origin, which could compromise the reputation of the product, particularly whilst seeking protection abroad. Sufficient provisions should also be included for the effective monitoring and enforcement of the GI law.

Institutional and procedural considerations. Another important aspect of the operationalisation process relates to the collective nature of the GIs and the need for a substantive partnership amongst a number of actors, e.g. government and producers of the products, (and amongst the producers of the products,) and also the enterprises connected with the registered GI. Since no individual can register for a product and it must be done through an association or the cooperative of the product, the implementation of regulations enabling this process with a minimum burden placed on producers will be imperative. The development of local management structures and participatory methods for all producers will also be important.

In case of Bangladesh, the Ministry of Industries will need to open a wing for the GIs under the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (DPDT) with the chief of the wing being the registrar of GIs for goods.

The implementing rules should clearly set out the procedure for obtaining GI registration whilst ensuring that no undue burden is placed on the producers.

Additionally, creation of new institutions such as an entity to determine the standards for inclusion as a GI, is important. This will also require institutional change and reform within the DPDT, and also need to ensure effective functioning of the office with the required technical and human resources.

In addition, the registration process of each GI product can also include an assessment and strategic plan, which will include a long-term marketing strategy and a plan to effectively manage the GI.

5. The Initiative and the Publication

In light of these concerns, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), along with National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB), initiated a process to assess the state of protection of GIs in Bangladesh with a particular focus on the registration of *Jamdani* as a GI. A field research to trace the history and origin of *Jamdani* was launched which resulted in a study titled “Protecting Bangladesh’s Geographical Indication Interests: The Case of *Jamdani*”.

The mentioned research paper, contained in this volume establishes that *Jamdani* is a unique product of Bangladesh with characteristics and qualities stemming from its place of origin. This is demonstrated by the study through historical evidence as well as in-depth analysis of the cultural, commercial and geographical context of the *Jamdani* weaving trade. The study notes that the heritage of *Jamdani*, and indeed its production, is deeply rooted to the Dhaka region with a clear linkage to the region’s specific socio-economic and cultural traditions.

The study greatly benefitted from the guidance provided by our Advisory Committee. BRAC generously extended support to the initiative. Further the study was shared with a wide range of stakeholders at a policy dialogue which was held on 17 June 2014.

This publication is an attempt to raise awareness regarding the need to devise legal and institutional safeguards for the GI products of Bangladesh including *Jamdani*. The dialogue report included in the publication also reveals the concerns of the citizens regarding protection of *Jamdani* and other important heritages of our country. Therefore, it is hoped that the Government of Bangladesh would take effective measures to operationalise the GI Act (2013) to protect and promote *Jamdani* as Bangladesh's own product, and will move to register and protect other relevant GI products of the country.

A Research Report on
Protection of *Jamdani* as a Geographical
Indication in Bangladesh

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Author's Acknowledgements

This report is a result of fruitful conversations with and support from a number of individuals who I should acknowledge with deep gratitude. *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* put together the whole project and offered insightful suggestions at different stages. *Ms Ruby Ghuznavi* and *Dr Hameeda Hossain's* engaging guidance and attention were crucial, while *Ms Monira Emdad's* practical support made it possible to meet many stakeholders. I would like to thank *Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Ms Anisatul Fatema Yousuf* and *Dr Fahmida Khatun* at CPD for their keen interest and logistic support throughout the project. I would like to thank the following persons for their most valuable comments and suggestions in some of the meetings held in connection to the project: *Advocate Sultana Kamal, Ms Khushi Kabir, Ms Bibi Russell* and *Mr Shahid Hussain Shamim*. I would also like to thank some of my colleagues at University of Dhaka for their valuable suggestions, including *Professor Nematollah Iranzadeh*. Thanks are due to *Kasia Paprocki* from Princeton University for providing useful texts at the beginning of the research project. Thanks are also due to the *mahajans*, weavers and helpers who participated in the focus group discussions held at the *Tangail Sharee Kutir* in Dhaka. Comments from *Alexandra Bhattacharya* on the final draft proved very useful, particularly from a legal perspective. The field study for this report would not have been possible without the hard work and active engagement of two dedicated Research Assistants, *Mr Abdus Samad* and *Ms Sahida Khondaker*.

Abstract

Jamdani is a surviving variety of the world renowned *Muslin* from ancient period. The brand name of *Jamdani* was first applied around mid-16th century or perhaps earlier. This study suggests that ecological context of production of cotton and finished *Jamdani* products is unique in the Dhaka region of Bangladesh. *Jamdani* has formed part of national culture and heritage of Bangladesh, and such long-term cultural and historical continuity of *Jamdani* is not matched anywhere in the world. *Jamdani's* Dhaka connection is also clearly reflected in many international trade exhibitions in both historical and contemporary times. There has been no mention of the term *Jamdani* elsewhere in the world to denote this hand-made textile product. In other words, *Jamdani* is quintessentially a Bangladeshi brand with specific Geographical Indication (GI) locale of Dhaka.

1. Introduction

South Asia has at least 4,000 years of textile heritage. Of all the regions in South Asia, the Bengal Delta, or what makes up most of today's Bangladesh, occupies a prominent place in terms of cultivation of cotton and production of varieties of extraordinary fine clothes with the generic name of *Muslin*. Within the Bengal Delta, greater Dhaka (*Dacca* in colonial literature and used until 1983) was a premier site of production and trade in *Muslin* from ancient times. It is estimated that there were 36 varieties of *Muslin* products in the region (Talukdar 1987: 57) and *Jamdani* was one of the very best varieties of the *Muslin*. The art and skill of making of *Jamdani* was "exclusively possessed by the weavers of *Dacca aurung*" (Mitra 1978: 42; Gillow and Barnard 2008). Of the 1,400 samples collected in the mid-19th century by Watson (1866a: nos. 253 and 254), the 25 samples from what is today's Bangladesh contains at least two samples specifically titled '*Jamdane*'. There is no such term '*Jamdani*' used to introduce any similar items from anywhere across South Asia or the world.

The distinctive character of designs, techniques and textures of the rich variety of South Asian textiles are often determined by "geographic factors and cultural influences" (Else 1988: 73). In the light of the Geographical Indication (GI) law, this report attempts to locate *Jamdani* within the geographical, historical and cultural contexts of the Dhaka region in particular, and Bangladesh in general.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Government of Bangladesh enacted the *Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013* on 15 July 2013, and it was passed in the National Parliament on 5 November 2013. Until the passing of this Act, Bangladeshi products were vulnerable to abuse by other parties. The Act will now enable the registration process of Bangladeshi products under the national and global GI regime.

In the meantime, however, India has registered a few items with its GI regime that have actually distinctively originated in Bangladesh. One of these items is the '*Jamdani share*' of Dhaka, which is registered by India as '*Uppada Jamdani*'. This report deals with the question of reclaiming and protecting of *Jamdani* as a Bangladeshi product in the light of the GI regime. It is hoped that the report will help to register *Jamdani* as a GI product of Bangladesh. This report is complemented by another report (Annex 1), which is based on the *Jamdani* weaving techniques of current time, found through extensive fieldworks.

1.2 Methodology

This study is a result of a four-month long intensive qualitative and quantitative research between September and December 2013. Various types of primary and secondary sources, including official publications, creative literature and research works from pre-modern and modern times, have been consulted. Data collected from extensive fieldworks by two Research Associates in the major *Jamdani* production sites enabled us to corroborate and engage in textual analysis. A workshop in Dhaka attended by about 50 weavers, their helpers and *mahajans* offered the opportunity of a cross-cutting professional insight into the industry. The research has been guided by a team of advisors who have excelled either in their professional engagement in the weaving or textile sector or in their erudition on the subject.

2. What is Jamdani?

Jamdani is most possibly derived from the Persian word *Jama(e)*, which means clothes. *Jamedan* in Persian means a closet or wardrobe.¹ In the textile history of Bangladesh *Jamdani* generally refers to the *sharee*, most popular garment of Bengali women. Here are the three authoritative definitions of *Jamdani*:

- i. A kind of cloth in which the flowers are woven and not worked (generally *Muslin*) (Hunter 1808: 539).
- ii. A *Dacca Muslin* woven with figures of flowers and other ornaments (Knight 1881).
- iii. A type of brocaded *Dacca Muslin*, usually flowered (Cannon and Kaye 2001).

Beyond the definition of *Jamdani* that highlights flower, there are other intricate issues that must be noted in understanding its specialty. The patterns are generally geometric and designs can contain items other than flowers, such as plants and living species like fish. The range and varieties of *Jamdani* are quite extensive and numerous, but there seems to be three basic layouts: *jaal*, the most intricate, is an all-over design covering the entire ground; *terchi* denotes floral or geometric diagonal; and *buti* is a combination of individual floral motifs and springs scattered across the fabric (Ghuznavi 2006: 47; see also Gillow and Barnard 2008: 186). The weaving process and the types of implements are also unique. In short, richness of designs, skills of weavers and availability of raw materials made the *Jamdani* a quintessentially Dhaka product. Watson (1866b: 79) asserts:

The Jamdanees or loom-figured muslins, from the exquisite delicacy of manipulation which many of them display, may be considered the chef-d'oeuvre of the Indian weaver. From their complicated designs they have always constituted the most expensive productions of the Dacca loom.

Any discussion on *Jamdani* must also refer to the unmatched skill of the *Jamdani* weavers, who have retained the weaving technique for centuries, despite the relative overall decline in the quality of *Jamdani*.

3. Geography and Ecology of Production

The GI for *Jamdani* can be studied from at least two vantage points offered by Dhaka. *First*, the location and ecological context of production of raw cotton in the region. *Second*, ecological conditions of production of *Jamdani* itself. This study will focus here on to what extent these geographical factors aided the emergence and development of *Jamdani* industry in the Dhaka region.

3.1 Geography and Ecology of Cultivation of Raw Cotton

To understand the development of *Jamdani* in Dhaka region, we need to understand the context and conditions of cotton cultivation, as cotton was the crucial backward linkage for *Muslin* in general, and *Jamdani* in particular. Cotton, from Arabic *qutn*, is perhaps the oldest commercial crop of Bengal. Of the four kinds of cotton that Basu (1955: 281-82) mentions, *Gossypium Barbadosense*,

¹Conversations with Dr Nematollah Iranzadeh, Visiting Professor of Persian Language and Literature, University of Dhaka. Also see Akbar Dehkoda ed. *Lughatname' Dehkoda*, vol. 16. Tehran.1338 AH.p. 71.

Gossypium Herbaceum, *Gossypium Arborium* or *Hirsutum* and *Gossypium Peruvianum*, cotton of South Asia and China falls in the second variety. From one root of this variety a number of plants grew like bush, growing upto 3 feet. This type of cotton was called *Karpas* in Sanskrit and *Kapas* in Bengali (Roxburgh 1832: 184). Although *Gossypium Herbaceum* was cultivated all over Bengal and Coromandel, according to Roxburgh, its Dhaka variety was special as it provided “exceedingly fine cotton” that was used to produce the “very delicate, beautiful *muslins* of that place.” Of the four characteristics that Roxburgh ascribes to this variety, one refers to “staple of the cotton being longer, much finer, and softer” (Roxburgh 1832: 184).

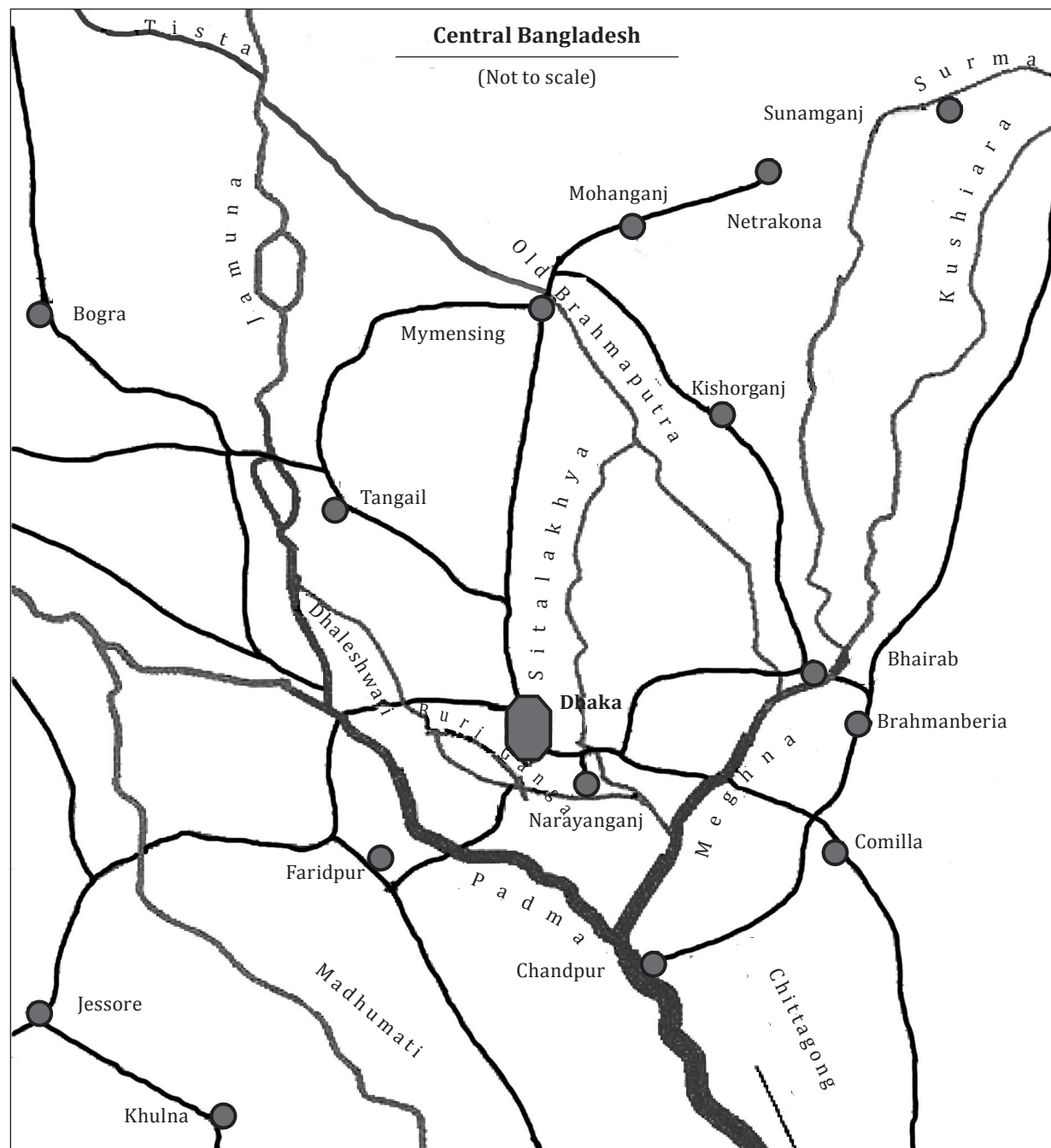
The Bengal Delta in general, and the Dhaka region in particular, was famous for production of *Kapas*. Many competent authorities from pre-colonial and colonial times suggested that the Dhaka cotton yarn of unique quality meant for use in the production of *Muslin* grew “only along the banks of the Brahmaputra and the branches of the Meghna” (Ghuznavi 2006: 38). By the turn of the 19th century, John Taylor specified the following areas where cotton was produced historically: Firingi Bazar, Rajendrapur, Idilpur, Bikrampur and Kartikpur. The region around Rajendrapur on the bank of River Shitalakhya is still called Kapasia, and it is a well known sub-district (upazila) of the country.

In other words, the cotton production found its most fertile ground in the regions around the connecting points between the Old Brahmaputra and the Meghna Rivers (Map 1) (Talukdar 1987: 57). Hunter suggests that a special kind of cotton fibre, *desi*, had been produced in the northern areas (around Kapasia) of the Dhaka Division from “time immemorial” (Hunter 1877: 84). In these regions, John Taylor suggests, the finest cotton (*Kapas*) in the world was produced (quoted in Ghuznavi 2006: 84-85). More recent authoritative works suggest that the quality of Dhaka *Muslin* resulted greatly from the quality of raw cotton grown in the region.

In terms of the specific soil ecology, it was observed by colonial officials that the water of this region’s rivers contained siliceous and calcareous earth mixed with iron, which might have aided the cultivation of a special variety of cotton (Allen 1912: 8; Taylor 1851). Basu (1955: 289) notes that the more the root of the plant of *Kapas* goes underground, the better the quality and quantity of cotton. The quality and quantity is further enhanced if the soil is loamy or which contains maximum moisture and heat. The central Bengal Delta, or the regions around Dhaka, seems to have ideally and uniquely fit for such condition.

The geological process was climatically aided as the freshness of sea air nourished the *Kapas* cultivation. A favourable combination of geological and climatic condition offered the Dhaka region a production site for cotton, which was unique to this region. This is reflected in the fact that the British attempt to cultivate the *Kapas* elsewhere in 1790 and 1791 failed completely (Ghuznavi 2006: 84-85).

Map 1: Historical Cotton-Producing Regions in Greater Dhaka



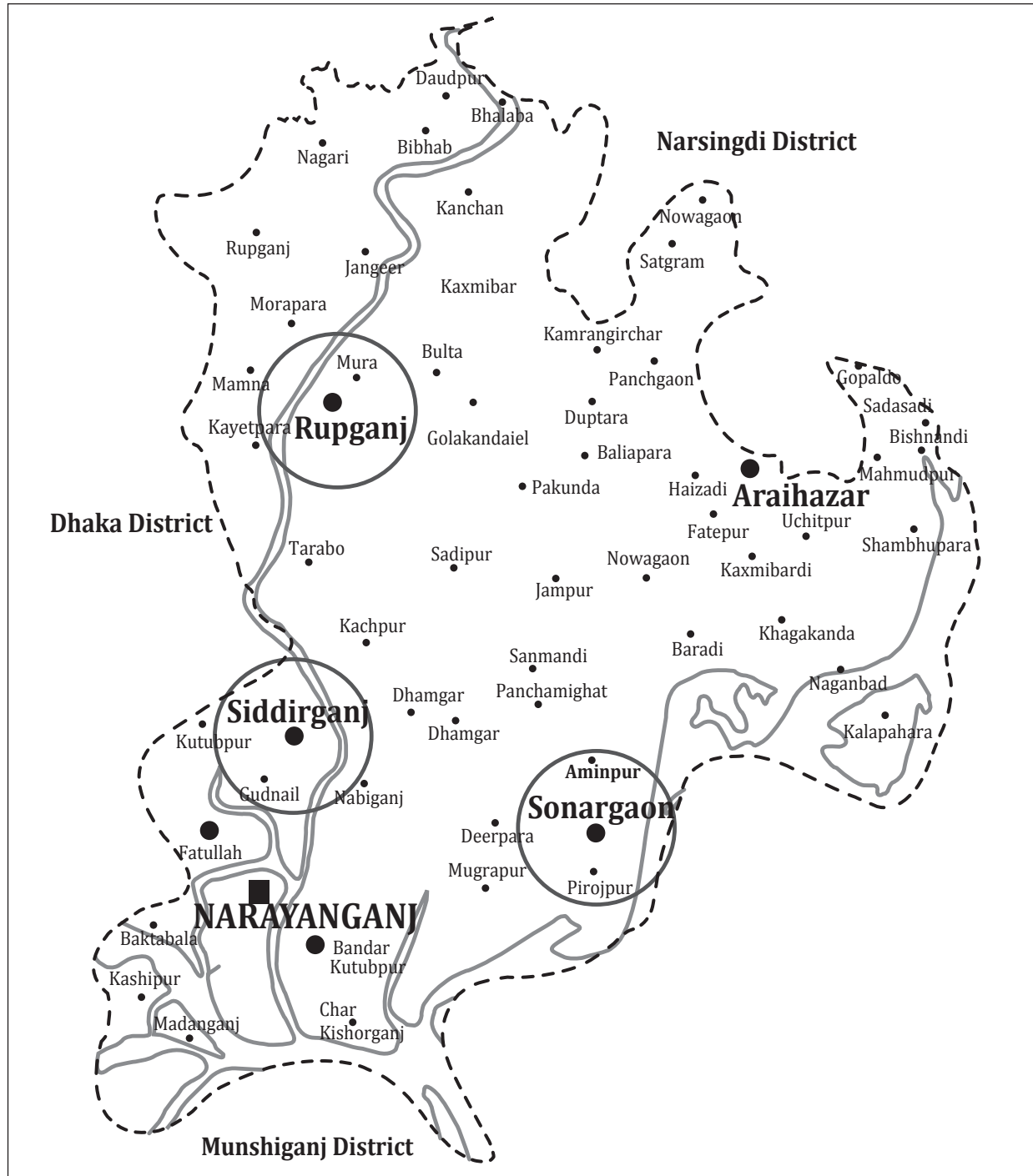
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhaka#mediaviewer/File:BD_Map_Central_Bangladesh.jpg

3.2 Geographical and Ecological Context of the Location of Jamdani Production Sites

James Taylor suggested in the mid-19th century that in almost every village of Dhaka district there was some sort of weaving establishment, but the major manufacturing zones/centres were Dhaka city, Sonargaon, Dhamrai, Titabadi, Jangalpur and Bajitpur. At present the production sites are concentrated in Sonargaon. Historically, a chain of production sites were located around the water networks of Dhaka.

Sonargaon, on the Meghna drainage basin, was perhaps the earliest site of production and it expanded northward along the banks of River Shitalakhya. From north to south along the river, the *Jamdani* production sites exist in Kapasia near Narsingdi (Ghorasal), Rupganj (Kazipara, under Rupganj's Tarabo municipality, along the banks of Shitalakhya, Pabankul, Morgakul, Rupshi, Noapara), and Siddhirganj. Glassie (2000: 403) reports that there were two to three thousand *Jamdani* looms in the region, "nearly half of them in the villages that run together, north of Tarabo,

Map 2: Jamdani Weaving Zones in Dhaka



Source: Photograph taken at Aarong exhibition in 2011 at Shilpakala Academy.

along the bank of the river.” Sayeedur (1993: 33-34) named about 26 *Jamdani* villages along both sides of the river with more than 5,480 looms.

What are the reasons for concentration of *Jamdani* in these sites? First of all, it is understood that these production centres were located in the middle of production sites of cotton specifically suited to weave *Jamdani*. Secondly, the river system greatly facilitated the supply of raw cotton, and distribution and marketing of finished products. All the markets (*aarongs*) were, therefore, on the river banks. Hossain (2010: 141-144) and Allen (1912: 7) mentioned the following markets: Barmi, Kapasia, Lakhipur, Jamalpur, Kaliganj, Rugganj, Murapara, Demra, Siddhirganj and Narayanganj.

A third issue relates to the quality of waters of the region. Hunter noted that the Shitalakhya River, with a length of about 50 miles, had a high and wooded bank, which never overflowed and that it was “remarkable for the purity and coolness of its water” (Hunter 1877: 21). Since water was needed for processing cotton and other production contents, it may be assumed that the water of Shitalakhya had something to do with *Jamdani* production. It is also well known that for dying, bleaching water with appropriate mineral content is crucial² (for details on this see Basu 1955: 373-385; 465-69). One of our interviewees and *mahajan* from Sonargaon, Osman Gani, noted that pre-dye cleansing of cotton thread in the water of Shitalakhya and Meghna brings such a glaze to the finished products that is not possible in any other region. He also reported that many who had left for trying this in other regions, have actually come back here because of failure to produce *Jamdani* of the same quality. This is corroborated by another veteran weaver interviewee, Abu Taher, who had tried to recreate *Jamdani* in Chittagong, but it did not work.³

Fourth, in terms of climatic issues, some writers refer to the level of moisture of the region. There were many processes of weaving which were dependent on the right level of humidity and moisture. For example, lack of humidity could be a cause of warp breakage (Basu 1955: 75).

Fifth, the unique criss-crossing of rivers offered internal navigation and connected ports to cater the transaction for the wider world and the region through the Bay of Bengal. In other words, the greater possibility of connecting to the oceanic trade network made the region a lucrative zone for textile production.

Sixth, the implements for the making of *Muslin* are easily available in the region. Taylor lists 126 different implements, including *maku* (shuttle), *shana* (reed), that are required to prepare the finest *Muslins*, and all of these are either made of bamboo or reeds (Taylor 1840: 174). Most of these implements are still used by the *Jamdani* weavers, as our field survey suggests (Annex 1).

Seventh, the local ecology inspired most of the *Jamdani* designs. It seems that in terms of design, *Jamdani* was not a static weaving practice. Over the times the floral designs gave way to a diverse pool of designs, focusing on local flowers and plants, signifying local orientation. Designs are drawn from the lived life and the natural environment of Bangladesh in general, and Dhaka in particular. Following is a list that reflects this enormous diversity of designs used by the *Jamdani* weavers (Sayeedur 1993: index pages; Ghuznavi 2006: 47).

²Interview taken in Panam Nagar (Sonargaon) by Sahida Khandaker and Abdus Samad. 20 September 2013.

³Interview taken in Panam Nagar (Sonargaon) by Sahida Khandaker and Abdus Samad. 20 September 2013.

Pattern (Bangla Name)	English
Angti	Ring
Angur	Grapes
Baghnoli or Bagher Paa	Tiger claws or paws
Belley	Jasmine
Dalim	Pomegranate
Dubla	Tender grass
Ganda flower	Marigold
Golap	Rose
Kalmilata	A kind of creeper
Kakra	Crab
Kochu	Arum
Kola	Banana
Korola	Bitter goard
Moyur	Peacock
Motordana	Peas
Paan	Betel leaf
Pona	Small fish
Sabudana	Barley
Shankha	Shell
Shap	Snake border

4. Locating Jamdani in Local and National Cultural Heritage

Although there are reasons to believe that the precursor of *Jamdani* existed in Dhaka region from time immemorial as alluded to earlier, the name of *Jamdani* became a popular brand with the arrival of Muslim rulers in India. Persian connection to Bengal seems to have been established even before the arrival of the Mughals in the subcontinent. Odoardo Barbosa, who travelled in Bengal during 1516-1521 AD, mentioned that the Arabs and the Persians used white clothes made of cotton for *hijab* (veils/tocche), the colour white perhaps being a reference to *Jamdani* background (quoted in Lamm 1937: 189).

In the course of time *Jamdani* and Dhaka became synonymous. Not only had it begun to appear in authoritative research work such as in Basu (1955: 210), but also in popular expressions and creative activities. A grand example comes from the Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore who, in a famous poem titled *Banshi*, writes:

এ গান যেখানে সত্য
অনন্ত গোখুলী লগ্নে
সেইখানে
বহিচলে ধলেশ্বরী,
তীরে তমালের ঘনছায়া-
আঙ্গিনাতে
যে আছে অপেক্ষা করে, তার
পরনে ঢাকাই শাড়ি, কপালে সিঁদুর।

Where this song is true
In the meadow of infinite dusk
There
Runs the Dhaleswari [river],
On its banks are the dense shadow of tamals [tree]–
And in the courtyard
Who waits [for her beloved]
Is wearing Dhakai Sharee and vermilion on the forehead

More recently, in one of his popular novels, Amitav Ghosh deals with *Jamdani*. Through his main character – a master weaver, the readers get to understand the futility of learning the secret of Dhaka's *Jamdani* craft by an outsider: “We know what we know, they said when he tried to teach them the secret of jamdani, and we want to know no more. A crow falls out of the sky if it tries to learn peacockery” (Ghosh 2005: 68).

5. *Jamdani's* Regional and Global Outreach

The centrality of Dhaka in the regional and global circulation of *Jamdani* is well documented, which can be briefly mentioned here. This is important from the GI perspective since the origin of such circulation could be invariably traced to Dhaka. One example is Pocahontas, also known as Rebecca Rolfe (1595-1617), a female American-Indian from Virginia who was a negotiator with English settlers. As one Rev. Whittaker narrates about an English delegates' meeting with Pocahontas: “All the people of Jamestown were pleased spectators. The chapel was trimmed with evergreens, wild flowers, and scarlet-berried holly. Pocahontas was dressed in a simple tunic of white muslin from the looms of Dacca” (Lossing 1902).

As late as early 19th century, at a time when textile trade was at its lowest ebb in Dhaka, Dhaka *Muslins* were still being used in Arabia (Jeddah, Makkah), Iraq and parts of Mediterranean coastal countries. Earlier Dhaka *Muslin* had a monopoly in various trading zones of Asia, Europe and North Africa (Karim 1965: 1, 130). It may also be noted that the last influential emperor of India, Aurangzeb, was fond of *Jamdani*, for which he offered Rs. 250 per piece (Taylor 1851: 48).

During the colonial times, when *Jamdani* lost royal patronage from local rulers, it continued to grace many international exhibitions of Indian products. For example, *Jamdane scarf, from Dacca* was displayed in the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations* (Ellis 1851: 159). The London Exhibition of 1862 displayed *Jamdane Scarfs* (Dowleas 1862: 1). The Dublin International Exhibition of 1865 displayed *Jamdane muslin* and *Jamdane scarf, plain* under item no. 679 and 680 respectively (Executive Committee 1865: 52). The New Zealand Exhibition of 1865 displayed *Jamdane Sharee* under item no. 847. (Watson 1865). A catalogue of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers (1876) described *Jamdane*, listed on no. 318, as “a figured muslin of Dacca, of exquisite delicacy; and, by reason of the complicated designs of such fabrics, they are considered the greatest work of the weaver, and are the most expensive production...” (Bulletin of the National Association of Wool Manufactures 1876: 187).

6. Antiquity and Evolution

Since *Jamdani* was one category of the fine cotton products of Dhaka *Muslin*, and since historical literature does not pinpoint a time for the emergence of *Jamdani*, we have to trace it's antiquity by

tracing the references to Bengal *Muslin*. The following quotation is from a Greek text by Diogenes Laertius of the 3rd century CE:

When Demetrius of Phalerum sent him loaves of bread and some wine, he reproached him, saying, "Oh that the springs yielded bread as well as water!" It is clear, then, that he was a water-drinker. When the police-inspectors found fault with him for wearing muslin, his answer was, "I'll show you that Theophrastus also wears muslin" (Hicks 1972: 91).

The passage suggests that among the intellectuals of ancient Greece, *Muslin* was widely used, perhaps under certain restrictions. It is not certain if this relates to *Muslin* from Bengal, but there are suggestions that the Greeks used the finest cotton clothes from Bengal (Gilroy 1845: 334). Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (Book of Economy) mentioned the fine cotton clothes of Eastern Bengal. It is also suggested that during the time of Ptolemy textile products of this region had a good reputation in Rome and Egypt. Arab geographer Sulaiman in the 9th century, Moroccan world traveler Ibn Batutta in the 14th century, some Chinese authors in the 15th century, and Mughal imperial author Abul Fazl in the 16th century highly praised the *Muslin* of Bangladesh (Karim 1965: 3-5). In particular, Sonargaon was mentioned by Abul Fazl and Ralph Fitch about the end of the 16th century as a place "where the finest cotton cloths are made." In this place, thin-textured *Muslin* and flowered fabrics were manufactured by Muslim weavers in the "town (Dhaka) and in the country around it" (Taylor 1851: 8). Testimony to the *Muslin's* quality and spatial connection to Dhaka became all the more clear in the colonial literature.

There might be a fine line between classical *Muslin* era and the medieval *Jamdani* era, but it might be possible that forms of *Jamdani* emerged even before the Mughal's arrival. I would suggest it came up at a time of the most global moments in Bangladesh's trade history. Tome Pires, who was in India around 1510 AD, notes that:

The Bengalees are merchants with large fortunes, men who sail in junks. A large number of Parsees, Rumes, Turks and Arabs, and merchants from Chaul, Dabhol and Goa, live in Bengal (Peres 2005: 88).

The above observations indicate that Bangladesh was an important emporium of the Indian Ocean during the Muslim rule, and not only the major Asian merchants were having residency here, but also the Bengalis themselves were going places. It was in this cosmopolitan moment of Bengal that *Jamdani* made its debut in Sonargaon, the Golden Port, which was also China's entry point to India (Mukherjee 2011: 43). The Mughals perfected the production of *Jamdani* which was already in place in the global commercial and ecological crossroads in Dhaka.

7. Trading in *Jamdani*

A historical understanding of trade statistics is important in identifying the original GI credential of a product. We do not have clear trade statistics for *Jamdani* from medieval times, and have some scattered data only from British colonial times, when the trade was declining. In the early colonial periods, as Hossain (2010: 151) shows from Bengal Commercial Records of 1795-1802, varieties of *Muslin* including *Jamdani* were clearly an important export item. Anisuzzaman (1981: 165) enlists an archival item from the British Library for the year 1799 which mentions that 5,000 pieces of cloths including *Jamdani* were received in Dhaka *aarong*. One needs to remember that this was a

period when glorious days of *Jamdani* were slowly coming to an end. Following major decline of the *Muslin* trade in early 19th century, Taylor (1840) found only 1,700 weaver families in the region concerned. In the following century, the *Jamdani* industry experienced a further fall. A survey conducted in 1961-62 revealed 1,459 *Jamdani* production units in Tarabo in Narayanganj, and another survey in 1967 found only 1,173 left, showing a decline by 20 per cent (EPSIC 1967: 9).

Despite all odds, *Jamdani* has survived its most challenging time in the colonial period, and slowly revived in post-colonial times, especially since the liberalisation of Bangladesh market in the early 1990s. Compared to 1,600 *Jamdani* weavers in the year 2000, the number was around 15,000 from 3,000 families in 2013. In the same year the *Jamdani* weaving industry used about 15,500 weaving units (Suman 2013). According to the government organisation Bangladesh Handloom Board, the total number of *Benarasi/Jamdani* weaving unit is 12,383.⁴ It is estimated that about 2,000 pieces of *Jamdani sharees* are being produced per week in the region. The price of *sharees* ranges between Tk. 5,000 and Tk. 40,000. Specially made *sharees* can attract as much as Tk. 150,000. In addition to meeting domestic demands, the *Jamdani* industry is supplying *sharees* to South Asia, Europe, Middle East and North America. The increasing demand of *Jamdani* from Dhaka is corroborated by the report that in the International Jamdani Taant Bastra Mela (Handloom Textile Fair) organised in 2011 by Bangladesh Weavers Product and Manufacturing Business Association (BWPMBA), a spot order alone was worth Tk. 120 million. It needs to be particularly noted here that it is India itself which has been the leading importer of *Jamadani* from Bangladesh. In the fiscal year 2010-11, Bangladesh's export of *Jamdani* to India was worth USD 6.12 million as against USD 1.49 million in the fiscal year 2008-09.⁵ It is widely believed that there is much more export of *Jamdani* to India for which there is no official data. The total export of *Jamdani sharees*, including to India, jumped from USD 4.84 million in 2008-09 to USD 10.41 million in 2010-11.⁶

All these figures testify to and reflect on the once flourishing *Jamdani* industry of Dhaka.⁷ Without a strong historical and geographical base, such a revival of goods made of unique intangible cultural skills and practice would not have been possible.

8. GI Policy Implications: *Jamdani*, *Dhakai Jamdani* or *Uppada Jamdani*?

India registered *Jamdani* as *Uppada Jamdani Sarees* (serial number 106 and application number 122) from Andhra Pradesh in 2009. However, the above discussions in this report clearly suggest that there is no combination of geographical, ecological, historical or commercial conditions elsewhere in the world except in Dhaka, where *Jamdani* would be produced and traded on such a vast scale, both nationally and internationally (Shahed 1985: 58). At the same time, there has been hardly any mention of *Dhakai Jamdani* in the existing literature except in a couple of publications that came up in recent years. What seems to be the case is that *Jamdani* has been marked as '*Jamdani*' with reference to its origin in Dhaka. So *Jamdani* has to be a unique name whose geographical location indicator must be Dhaka, but not '*Dhakai Jamdani*'. In other words, Dhaka and *Jamdani* are synonymous; hence, India's registration of '*Uppada Jamdani*' under its GI law is illegal and a violation of the existing Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) regulation.

⁴<http://www.bhb.gov.bd/statistics.php>

⁵The Financial Express (2012).

⁶Ibid.

⁷<http://news.priyo.com/business/2011/08/15/jamdani-fair-gets-tk-012b-expo-34687.html>

We strongly disagree with the term '*Dhakai Jamdani*' for a number of other reasons. *First*, greater Dhaka region was the earliest and sole site of *Jamdani* production; so *Jamdani* is automatically entitled to GI tag of Dhaka and does not need an additional geographical locator. *Second*, the term '*Dhakai Jamdani*' encourages other countries/places to call *Jamdani* prefixed by other place names adding confusion to GI. *Third*, Dhaka had many physical reincarnations in different historical periods, and we are not sure if *Jamdani* existed at a time when this region was yet to be named Dhaka (Iqbal 2011).

Jamdani's Dhaka GI credential is also corroborated by stakeholders in India itself. Mr Ghanshyam Sarode, who was instrumental in creating the new brand of *Uppada Jamdani*, in his weblog clearly mentions that *Jamdani* originated in Dhaka.⁸ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has also recently recognised *Jamdani* as a Bangladeshi *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*.⁹

As far as *Uppada* is concerned, this village in Andhra Pradesh is well known for silk products, but we have not found any historical link of *Jamdani* with it. In fact, it appears that in the past two decades, *Jamdani* motifs and designs have been applied to some of the silk products of *Uppada*, and therefore, the term of *Uppada Jamdani* must have originated fairly recently, although *Jamdani* had no prior existence in *Uppada* village. This is supported by the following remark in a book on the traditional industry in Andhra Pradesh:

*A second change that has taken place is the use of techniques like jamdani to produce designs in saris. This has been introduced in Uppada, where motifs are woven into the body and the pallu of the sari is woven in real zari. This has proved extremely popular.*¹⁰

Considering all historical, geographical, commercial and cultural contexts of the *Jamdani*, the present research suggests that Dhaka was, and still is, its only true centre of production. Now that the GI law has been introduced in Bangladesh, and that the global community has recognised *Jamdani* as Bangladesh's own, it is hoped that the Government of Bangladesh and international trade regime will take effective measures to restore *Jamdani* as Dhaka's own product and heritage.

⁸<http://sarode1.wordpress.com/2009/05/07/ghanshyam-sarode/>

⁹<http://archive.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/jamdani-recognised-as-intangible-cultural-heritage-by-unesco/>

¹⁰Mukund and Syama Sundari (2001: 108).

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Annex 1

Agencies, Tools and Techniques of *Jamdani* Production*

This report, based on intensive fieldwork, complements the research report on “Protection of *Jamdani* as a Geographical Indication in Bangladesh.” It deals with the current situation in the traditional *Jamdani* production areas, focusing on the techniques, tools and different workers and actors involved at different stages of the *Jamdani* production process.

1. Methodological Issues

This research was conducted between September-December 2013 using various qualitative tools. Data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), one-to-one interviews, close observation and informal discussions with people who were not comfortable to be recorded. Throughout the fieldwork the study team attempted to capture the story of *Jamdani* with photographs that portray the whole production process and techniques.

Interviews conducted under the study generated a broad idea of *Jamdani* production process such as the pre-production preparation, designing, marketing, etc. Detailed and micro-level understanding of the experience of particular group of people like *mahajan*, weaver, helper, *hazani*, *shonar*, etc. were also sought in this study. At the same time, a general perception on the socio-economic condition of the people involved in the industry was gleaned from the study through keen observation.

The study team went to many specific spots to gain insights about specific issues, including Demra and Noapara *Jamdani haat* to have an understanding on the marketing process. Observations from these tours through the villages were meticulously noted down.

Site Selection

The research was conducted on seven field sites, including the famous *Jamdani* villages on the bank of Shitalakhya and Meghna Rivers and two *Jamdani haats*.

- Panam Nagar: Under Sonargaon upazila; this area is well known for the Folk Art Museums which preserves specimens of *Jamdani*. Many weavers and *mahajans* work in this area.
- Kazipara, Bhargaon: Kazipara is located in Bhargaon union of Sonargaon upazila. Many weavers live here.
- Shiddhirganj: An industrial area in Narayanganj district; it was once inhabited by many skilled weavers, but their number has decreased these days. Most of those still living here are making women’s dresses like *orna* and *kamiz* rather than *sharees*.
- Noapara: Noapara is a BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) zone for *Jamdani*. Bangladesh Government has allotted plots here for *Jamdani* weavers.

*This part of the report has been prepared by *Abdus Samad, Sahida Khondaker and Iftekhar Iqbal*.

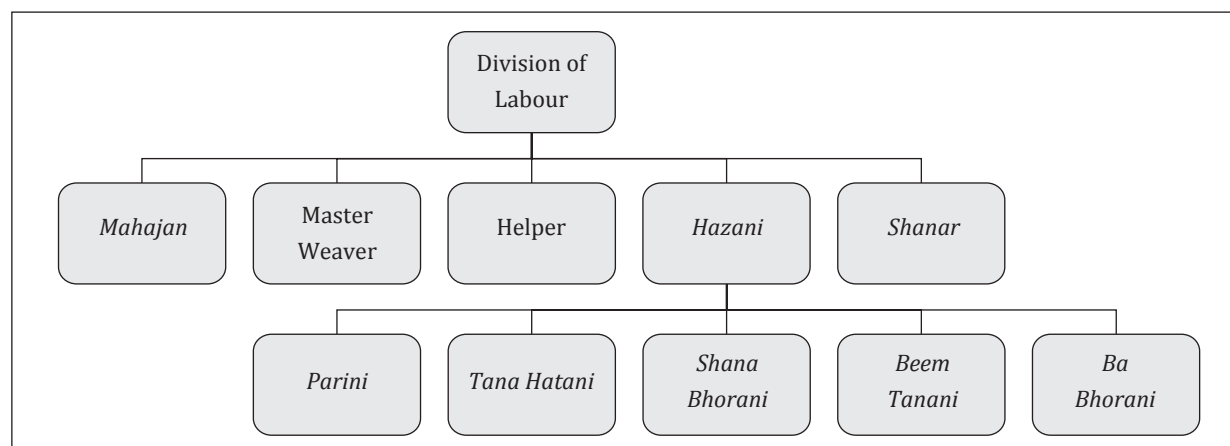
- South Rupshi: South Rupshi is famous for quality *Jamdani* production. It is located near Noapara BSCIC zone. Most of the weavers' houses in this village are situated on the bank of the Shitalakhya River.
- Demra Haat: Demra Haat is famous for trading of *Jamdani* raw materials and finished products. It is a wholesale market.
- Noapara Haat: Noapara Haat is managed by BSCIC administration. It is a wholesale market for *Jamdani*.

Informants

The informants of this field research comprised of five main groups: *mahajan*, master weaver, helper, *hazani* and *shanar* (please see Section 2 for definition of these groups).

2. Division of Labour and Socio-Economic Conditions

The *Jamdani* making process comprises a few layers of different professional expertise. Some of these are involved with preparatory phase, some with weavers, and some with mechanical part of weaving units. The division of labour for *Jamdani* production can be understood from the Figure below.



Mahajan

Mahajans are the financiers of *Jamdani* production. Most of them are no longer actively engaged in the production of *Jamdani*, rather they are owners of weaving units as well as weaving houses. They appoint weavers and helpers for the actual production work; and themselves are designers (colour, pattern, etc.), quality controllers of production, and also take care of the marketing of their products.

Master Weaver

Master weaver is the key person of a weaving unit. Many master weavers own one or two weaving units; they sell their products directly at the *haat* or to the *mahajans*. Usually the profit margin in this case is Tk. 500-2,000 per *sharee*, depending on the quality and design. Most master weavers however work under *mahajans* as employees. In such a system, the remuneration may range

between Tk. 1,500-3,000 per week. It was noted that while weaving is traditionally a hereditary calling, getting engaged as a newcomer to the industry is not uncommon these days.

Helper

A weaving unit is usually comprised of two persons – the master weaver and the helper, who is also known as the apprentice. Apprentices need to start their career early on, as skill of *Jamdani* weaving grows with practice and maturity. A helper gets Tk. 500-1,500 per week as remuneration. A helper can become a master weaver after years of working as an apprentice.

Hazani

Hazani are persons involved with the preparatory work of *Jamdani* production. They make beams for weavers. One beam can produce up to five or more *sharees*, for which a *hazani* gets Tk. 2,000. *Hazanis* are also engaged in related preparatory works, including producing *shana*, *tana*, *buti*, *ba*, etc. for the weavers.



Parini is processing yarn through chorki

Parini

The *parini* prepares the yarn. Usually women work as *parini*. They prepare *maarih* (starch made of rice) and mix it with yarn, and prepare *natai* through *chorki*, and then dry these out. After drying the yarn they prepare *chata*.



Tana Hatani (Warping)

Tana Hatani (Warping)

Processed yarns go through *noli (pirn)* machine and *tana*. Two persons walk through 20 bamboo sticks with *noli (pirn)* and yarns – this process is known as *tana hata* (walking through at a stretch). *Tana hatanis* again, are mostly women, although both men and women can be engaged.



Shana Bhorani (Denting)

Shana Bhorani (Denting)

The process involves putting yarns through *shana*. Usually women are engaged in this job.



Beam Tanani

Beam Tanani (Beaming)

This is a three-person task where the yarn is rolled in a bamboo rod which is called the 'beam'. Mostly women are engaged for this process.



Woman busy with processing Ba

Ba Gathani (Drafting)

In this process, women put yarn through *ba* after preparing the beam.

Shanar (Denting or Reeding)

Shana is an important part of weaving that requires special skill and expertise of the *shanar* (who make *shana*) to produce high quality of *Jamdani*. The loom is tied in the *shana* before starting production. Generally women are involved in this job.



Making Shana

3. Setting up the Weaving Unit

3.1 The Steps

Step 1: Colouring Yarns

Hazanis dye the yarns provided by the *mahajan*.

Step 2: *Pari*

The yarns are mixed with the rice starch (sizing process), and set in the *charka*. The *charka* cycling the yarn puts it in a *natai*. The *natai* is then dried in the sun. Mostly women are involved in this phase of tasks, and they are known as *parani*.



Women busy with colouring and setting yarn

Step 3: Tana Hata (Warping)

A machine named *noli* is used for this purpose. The yarn is set to the machine with a slate made of wood. Two persons walk through some 40 wooden sticks. A wooden frame tied with yarns is also used in processing the *tana* (p. 27).

Step 4: Shana Gatha (Denting)

In *shana gatha* the processed yarn is set with *shana* (p. 27).

Step 5: Beam Tanani (Beaming)

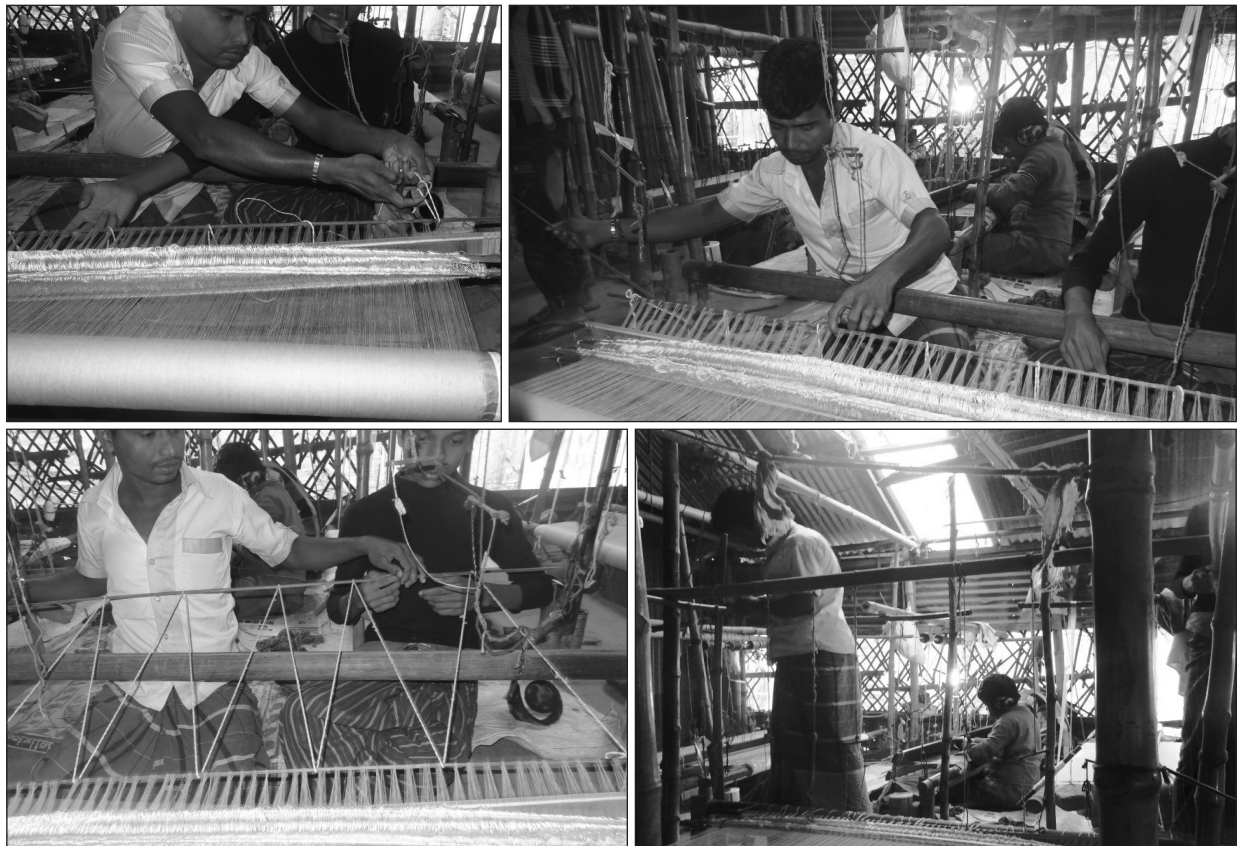
This is an important stage of processing yarns. This is a labour-intensive task where both men and women are involved (p. 28).

Step 6: Ba Gathani (Drafting)

As described above this is to put yarn through *ba* (p. 28).

Step 7: Paya Fela (To set up the loom for preparing Jamdani)

The weaver starts setting the beam to the machine – the process is known as *paya fela*.



Various stages of Paya Fela



Various stages of Paya Fela

3.2 Various Tools and their Functions

This section focuses on the various parts of a *Jamdani* weaving unit. It can be noted here that most of the machines/tools for the production of *Jamdani* have remained the same for centuries.

1. Ailna and Malshi



These are very important parts of *ba* which are made of bamboo sticks. Four *ailnas* and ten *malshis* are needed in a *Jamdani* loom. *Malshi* holds the beam and *ailna* helps to put yarn into the body of the work-in-progress *sharee*.

2. Babari



Babari is a long piece of bamboo. Two *babaris* are required in the loom. They tighten the *chowchala* to keep the loom fit and strong.

3. Bairer Narod



One piece of *bairer narod* is needed for the loom. It holds the beam and yarns.

4. Kuler Narod



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *kuler narod*, which keeps the fabric intact.

5. Chowchala



Jamdani loom needs one unit of *chowchala*. It restrains the *nachni dori* (dancing rope) and *ba*.

6. Ubi



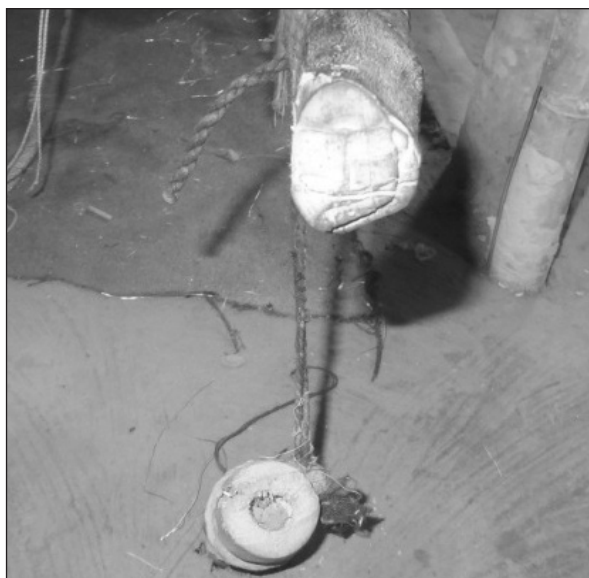
Jamdani loom needs four pieces of *ubi*, which are made of bamboo. They restrain the *babari* and *chowchala*.

7. Juitash



Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *juitash*, which are made of wood. They help the *ba* in the maneuver of the backward-forward movements.

8. Muni, Muni Khuta and Muni Dori



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *muni*. *Muni khuta* is made of bamboo and *muni dori* is the rope that is used in this part. *Muni* tightens the yarn of weaving the *Jamdani*.

9. Bishforon Khuta



Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *bishforon khuta* which are made of bamboo; this part is used to hold the *kuler narod*.

10. Fandi



Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *fandis* that strongly hold the *ubi*.

11. Ghorar Kathi



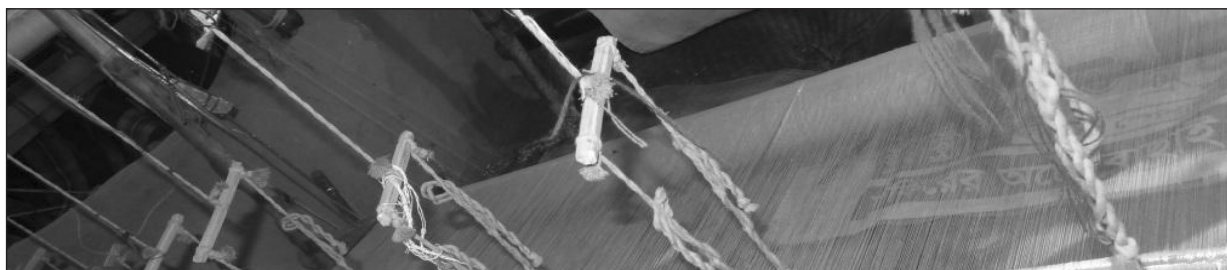
Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *ghorar kathi* which are made of bamboo. These are set in the lower part of the machine and they hold the *tolpao* together.

12. Muti Gamani



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *muti gamani* made of bamboo that connects the two parts of the border of *Jamdani* while it is being woven.

13. Nachni Kathi and Nachni Kathir Dori



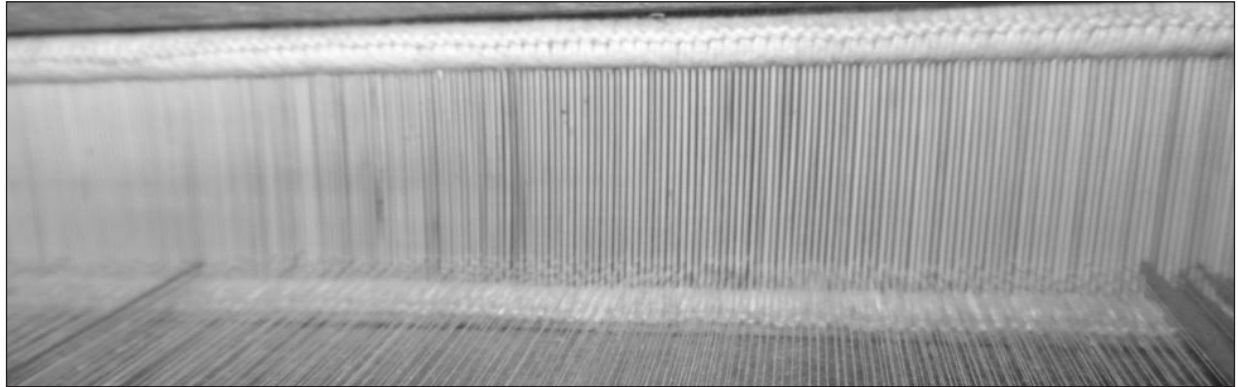
Jamdani loom needs eight pieces of *nachni kathi* and sixteen pieces of *nachni kathir dori* which are made of bamboo sticks. *Nachni kathi*s hold the *chawchala* strongly.

14. Putul Kathi



Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *putul kathi* made of wood that link the *dokti* (sley) strongly with the main body of the *Jamdani* loom.

15. Shana



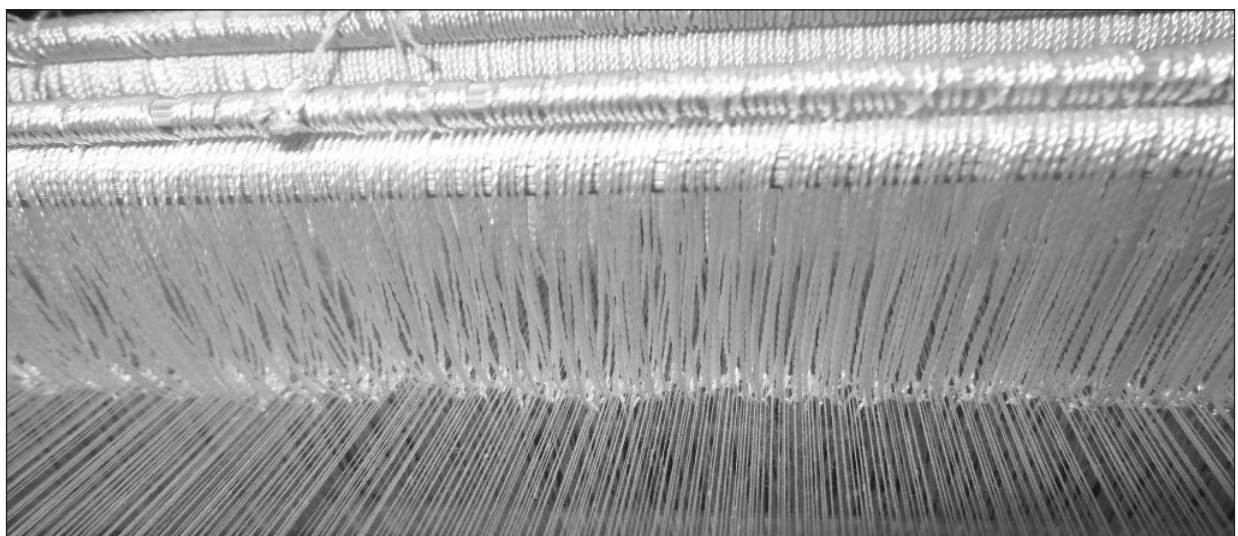
Jamdani loom needs one piece of *shana* which holds the yarns to be used for weaving *Jamdani*.

16. Dokti (Sley)



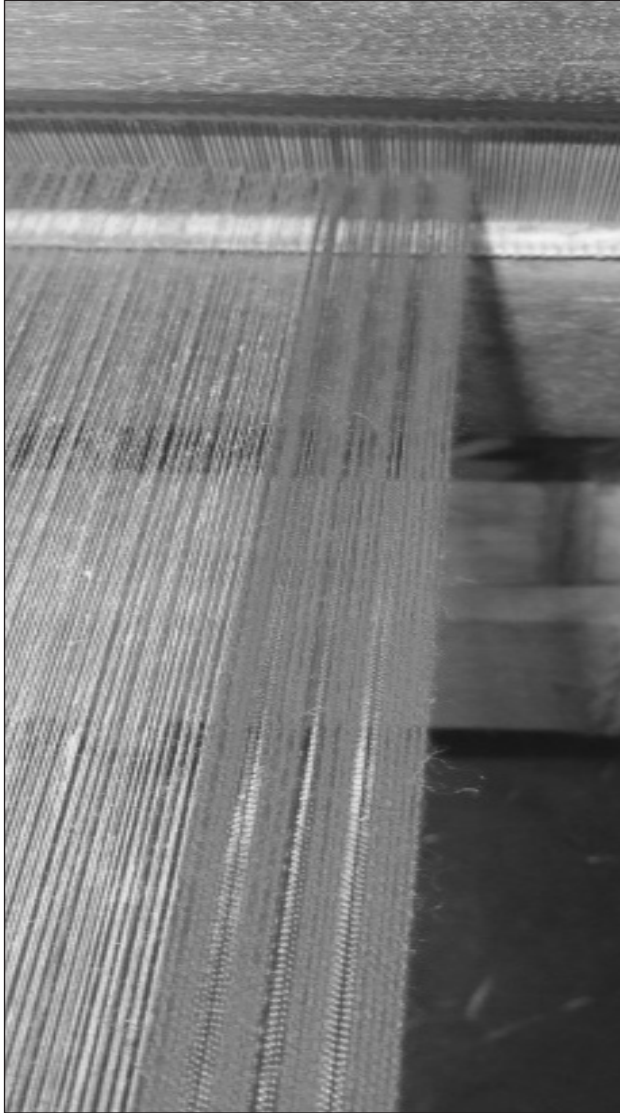
Jamdani loom needs one piece of *dokti* which is made of wood and is an important part of *Jamdani* loom. It is used to place the yarn in the exact position.

17. Ba



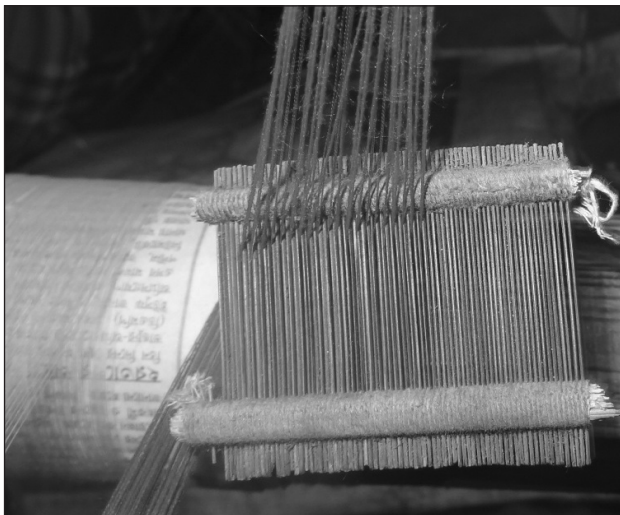
Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *ba*. Yarns are set inside the two pieces of *ba*. It helps the maneuvering of *shana* forward and backward.

18. *Kandhir Bite*



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *kandhir bite* which holds the yarn.

19. *Biter Shana*



Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *biter shana*. *Biter shana* is used for preparing the *parh* (border) of *Jamdani* if the body is of different colour.

20. *Biter Bhaar* (Weight)



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *biter bhaar* which carries the weight of a brick or a stone to keep the balance of the loom.

21. *Khili*



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *khili*, which is made of iron. It is set with the *bairer* (outer side) *narod*, and is used to keep the woven piece of *Jamdani* straight.

22. *Tol Paoer Shick (An Iron Stick)*



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *tol paoer shick* that keeps the weaver's feet in the proper position.

23. *Tolpao and Tolpaoer Dori (Bamboo made paddle and rope tied herewith)*



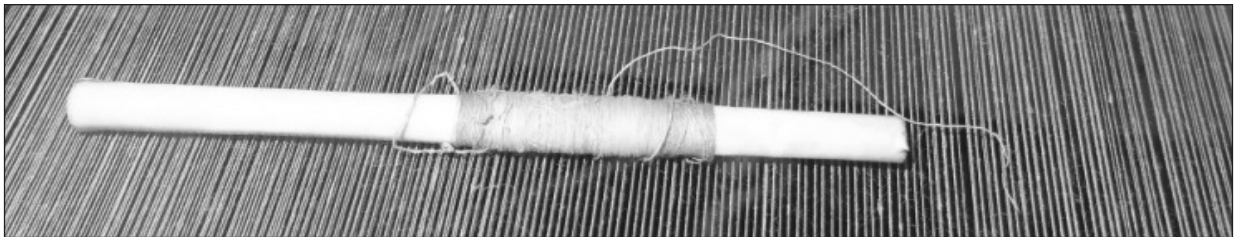
Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *tolpao* and *tolpaoer dori*. These are used to move the paddle upward and downward.

24. *Tolpaoer Khairul Dori* (a kind of rope set with the paddle)



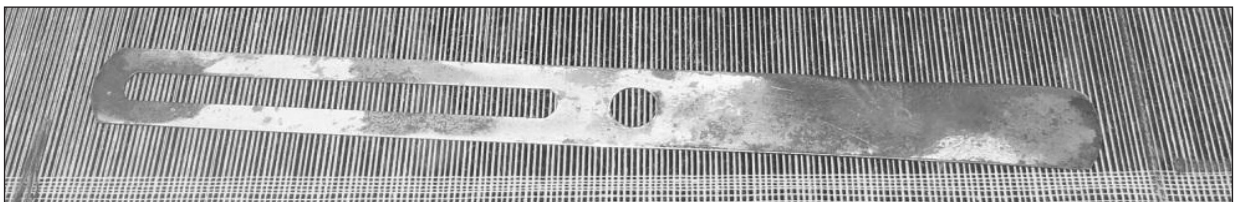
Jamdani loom needs sixteen pieces of *tolpaoer khairul dori*. These parts are used to connect the *juitash* and help moving the *tolpao* (paddle).

25. *Chata* (Bamboo Stick)



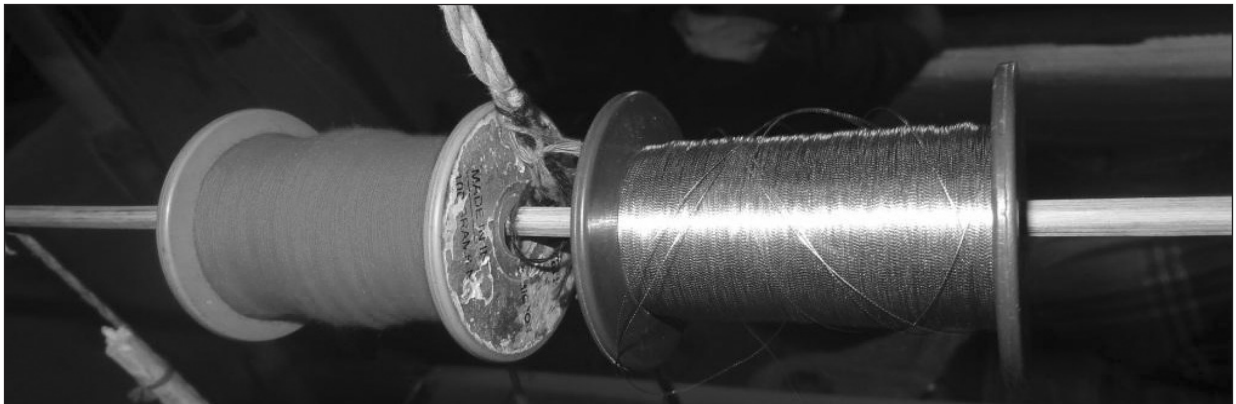
Jamdani loom needs 40-50 pieces of *chata*. Yarn bundles are set over the *chata*.

26. *Chakku* (scissor)



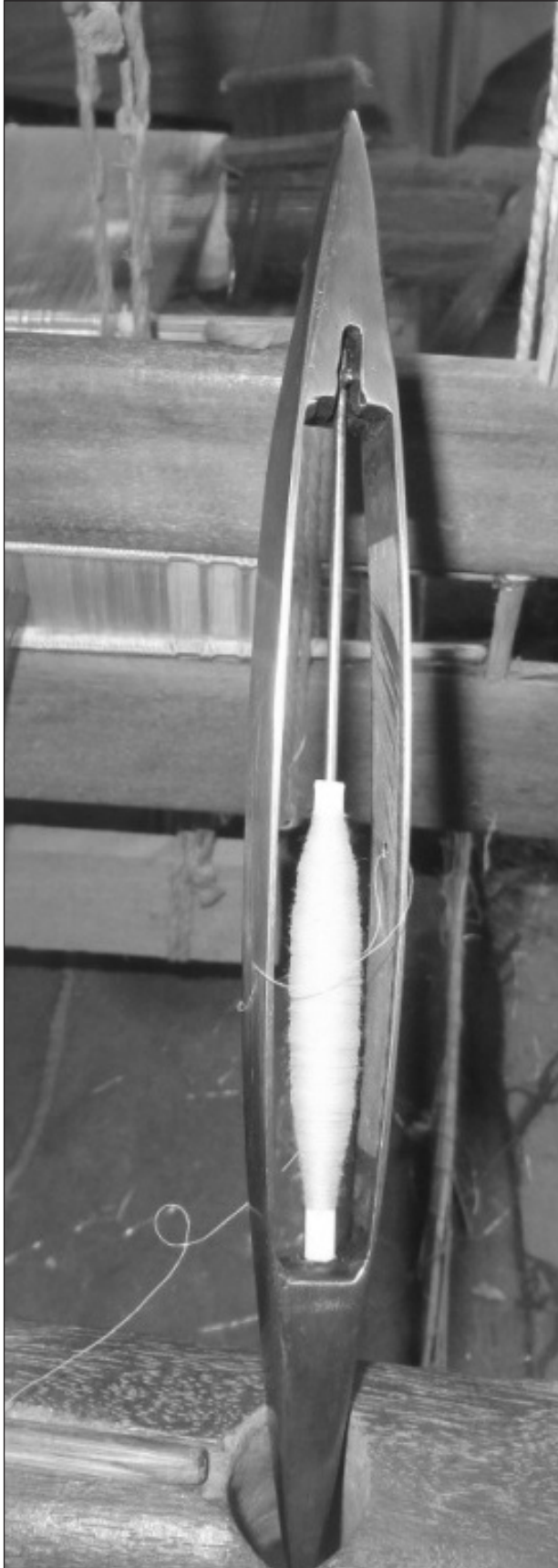
Jamdani loom needs two pieces of *chakku* which are used to cut the yarns.

27. *Design Bobbin*



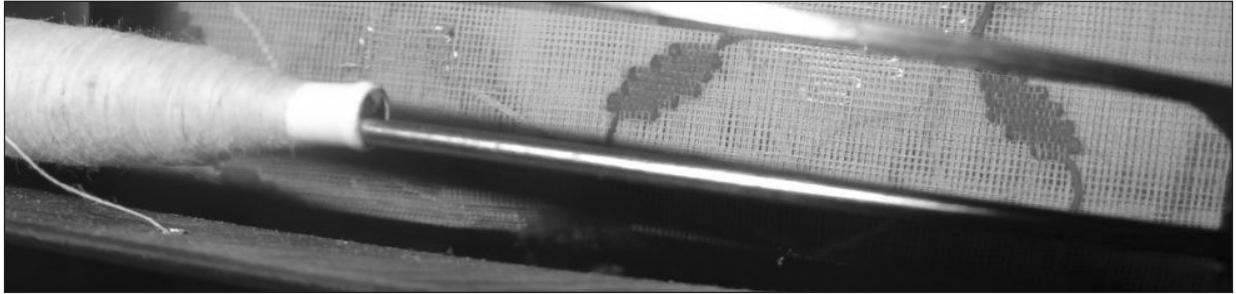
Different colours of yarns are set in the bobbins. This part is set over the upper part of the weaving unit.

28. Maku (Shuttle)



Jamdani loom needs one piece of *maku*, which is made of iron. It is used to pass the yarn across the warp while the *Jamdani* is weaved.

29. *Mechka*



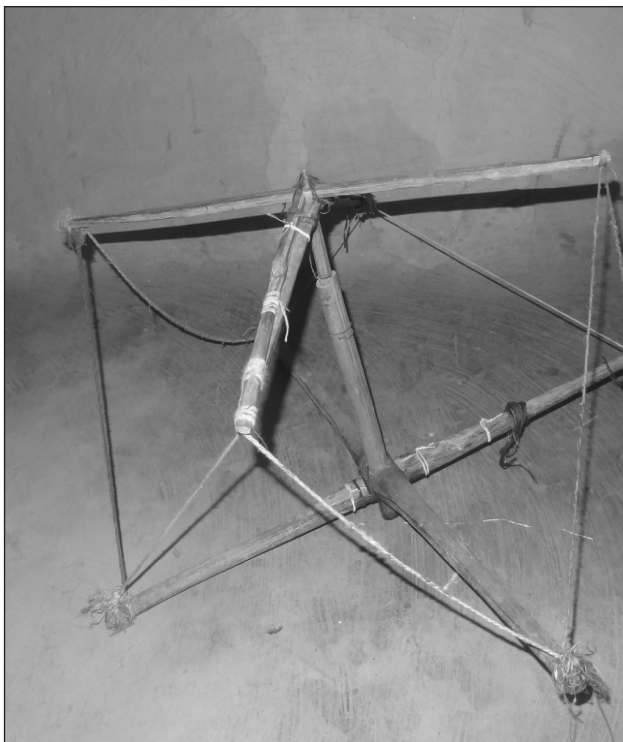
Mechka is a part of *maku* (shuttle). It holds the yarn with the *maku*.

30. *Takua*



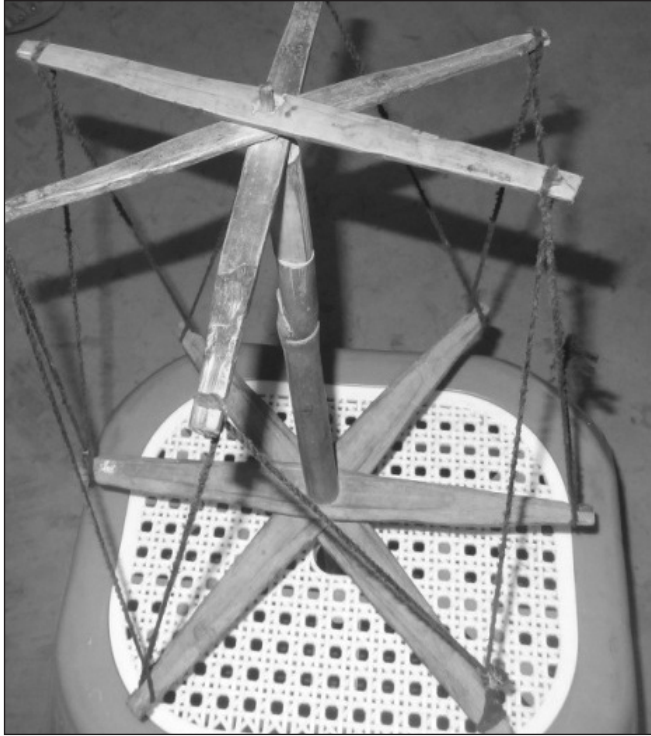
It is a thin stick made of iron, used for collecting the processed and coloured yarn from the *chorki*.

31. *Boro Chorki*



A bamboo circular structure which is used to set the yarn while colouring.

32. Chhoto Chorki



Its structure and functions are similar to that of *boro chorki*.

33. Teler Shishi



Bottle for keeping the oil which makes the *maku* swift and smooth.

34. *Kandur*



A thin wooden tool which is used for setting the design of *Jamdani*.

35. *Natai*



It is made of bamboo and is used to dry the yarn in the sun.

36. *Choka and Maal Dori*



Choka is made of iron and plastic and is used to cycle the *chorki*. *Maal dori* (rope) connects the *chorki* and *choka*.

37. *Doktir Jhulan Dori*



A kind of rope that holds the *dokti* (sley) with the main frame of the loom.

38. *Paya*



It is made of bamboo or wood. A weaver works while keeping his/her leg over the *paya*. It is connected with the *kuler narod*.

39. Jamdani Taant (Loom)



4. Changing Pattern in the Division of Labour

Production of *Jamdani* is traditionally a family business. Members of a family do all the works related to different stages of *Jamdani* production. Master weavers' sons/nephews work as helpers and learn the family business of the craft through generations. Women of the family work on the *pari*, *tana hata*, *shana bhora*, *bo gatha*, etc. The study did not find a single female *mahajan* in the fieldwork areas.

During the field visit, it was observed that there has been some change in the pattern of hereditary division of labour. In some cases, a *mahajan* or master weaver is the owner of a weaving unit, but seldom sits on the loom. The sons or daughters of the master weavers or *mahajans* hardly use their hands on the units. There is some apprehension about becoming branded as *jola*, which is socially down-grading for them. They prefer to see their children in office jobs or in business.

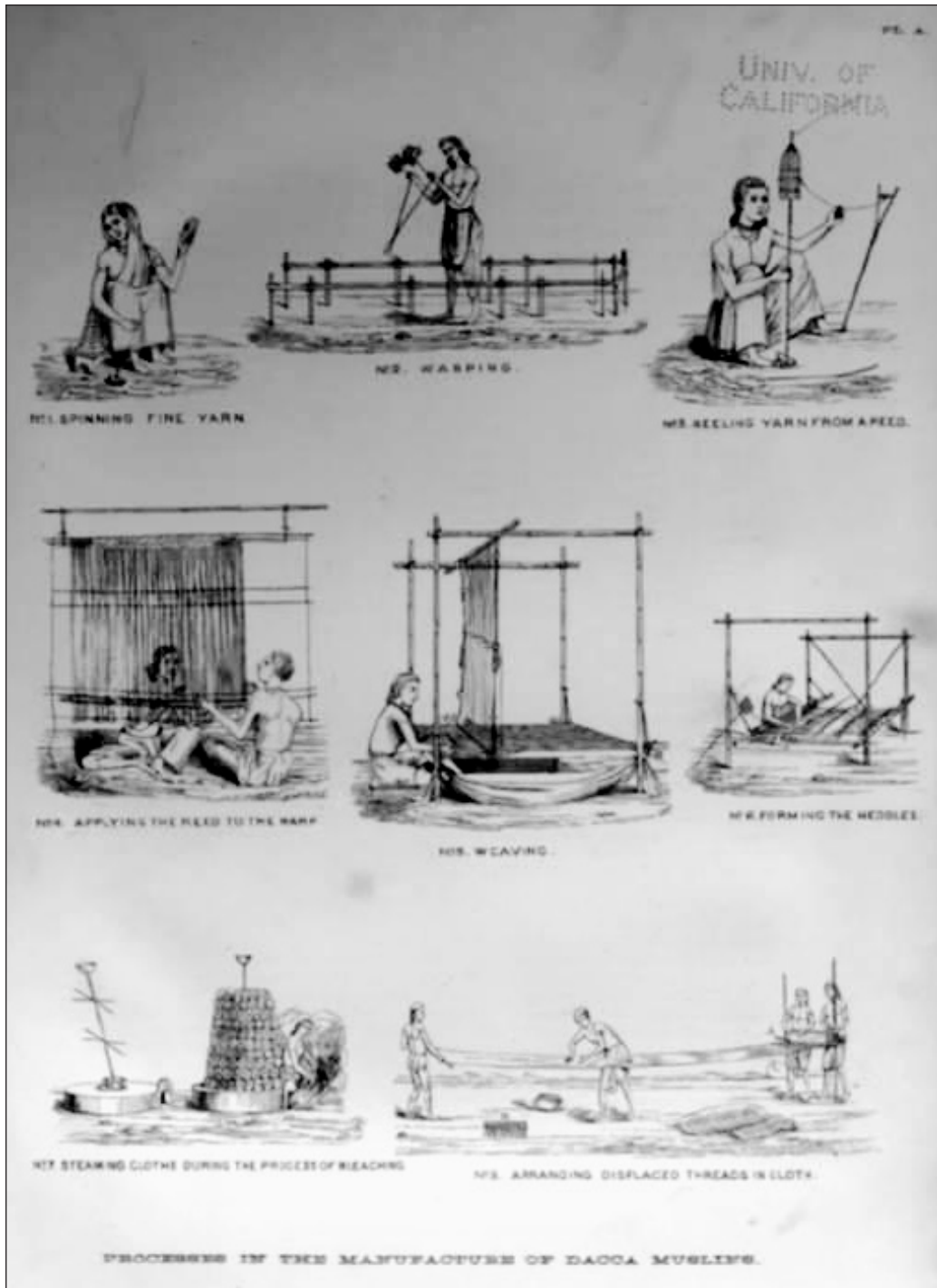
However it may also be noted that the recent increase in demand for *Jamdani* in national and international markets is slowly drawing attention to the *Jamdani* industry. Whether the industry remains a hereditary business or not in the future will need to be seen. There are signs that a new professional group specialising in *Jamdani* weaving may take over the traditional industry.

5. Marketing

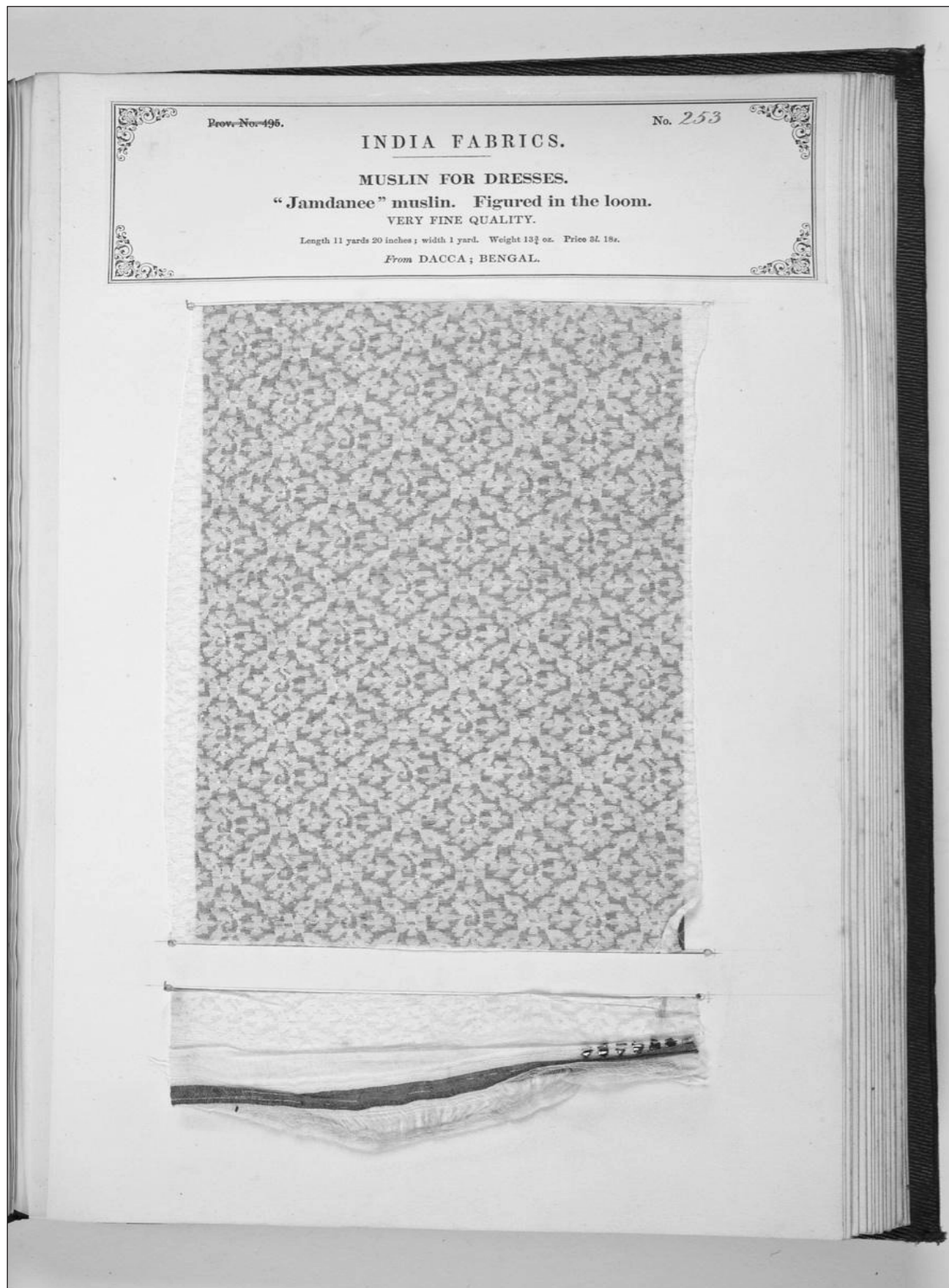
Jamdani marketing spots and processes generally include:

- a. *Haat*
- b. Show room supply
- c. Home delivery
- d. Export
- e. Black marketing across the borders

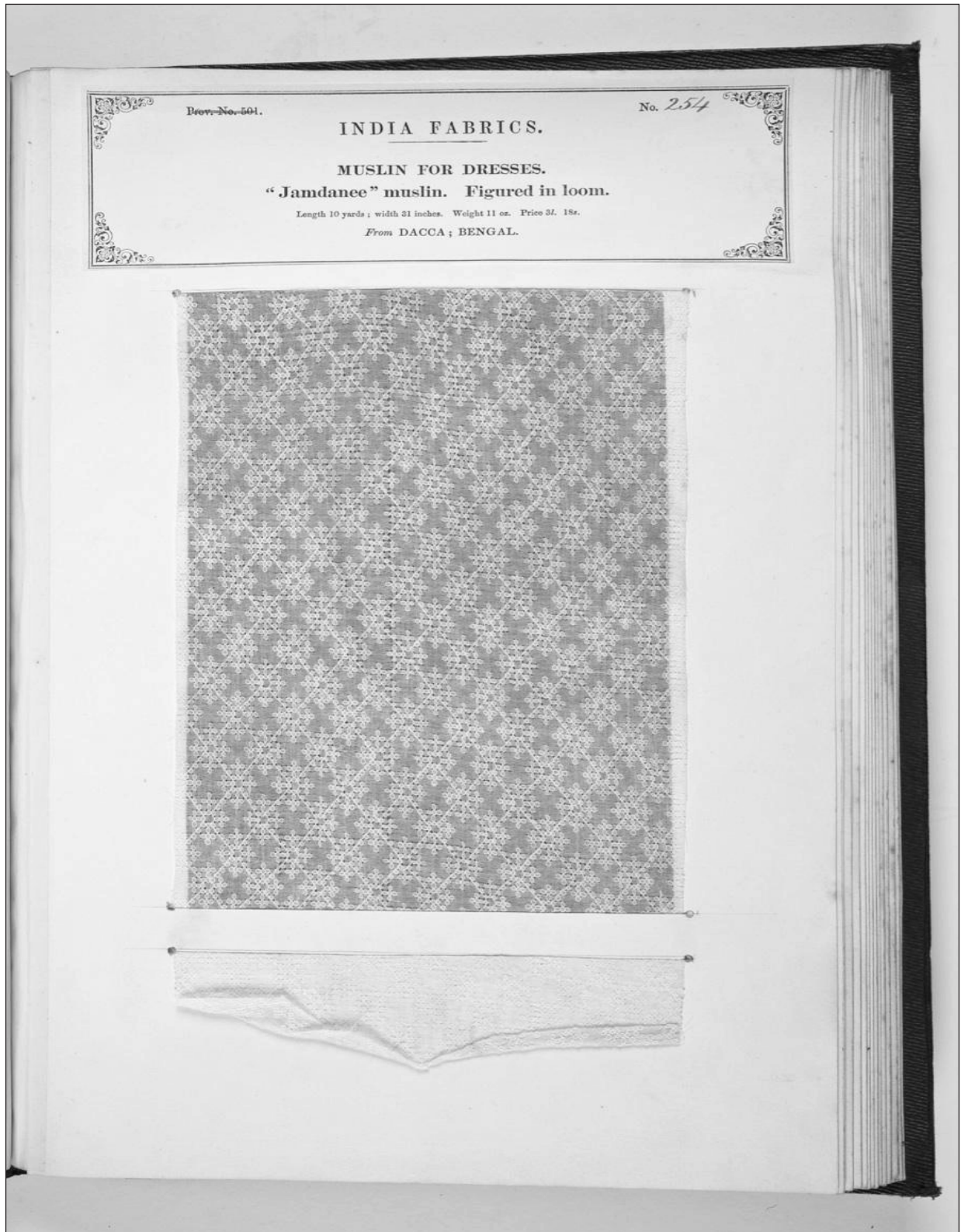
Annex 2
**Muslin Weaving Process
and Some Old and New
Designs of Jamdani**



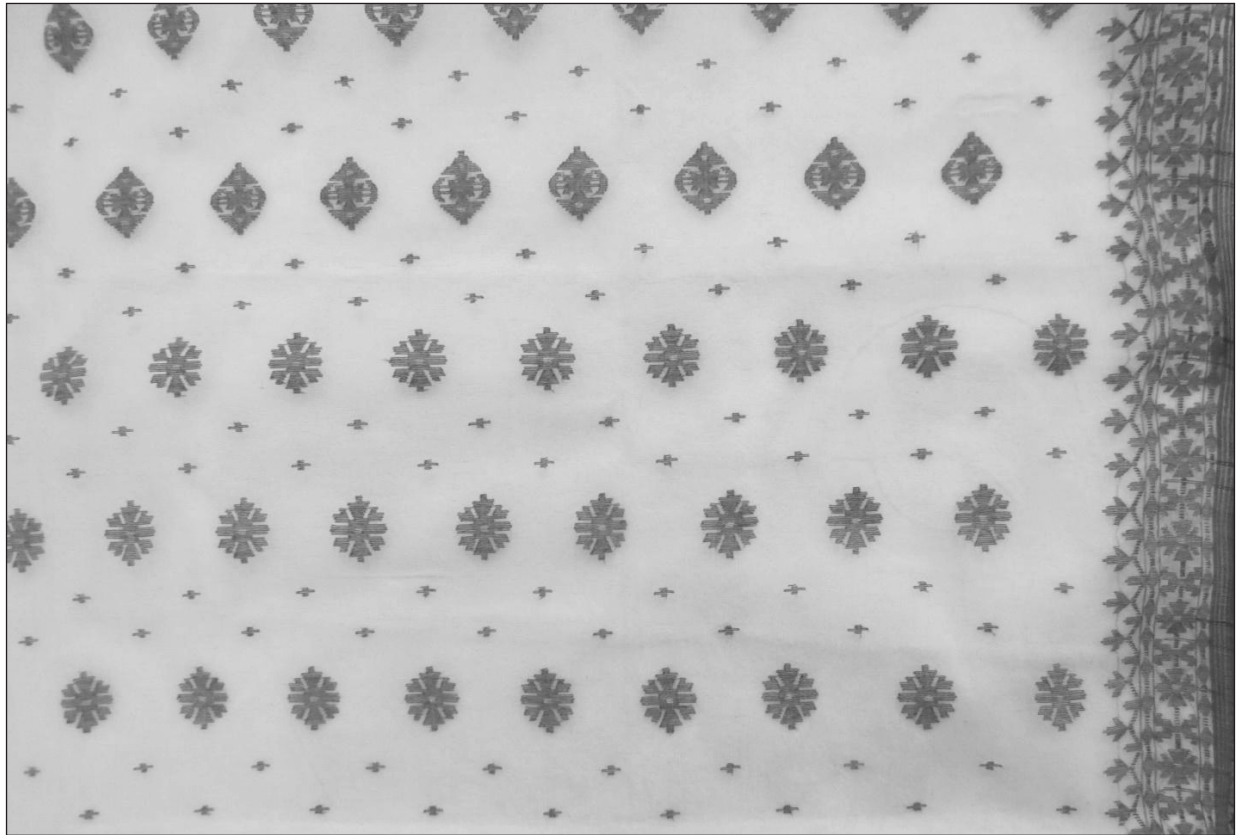
Muslin weaving process from colonial period



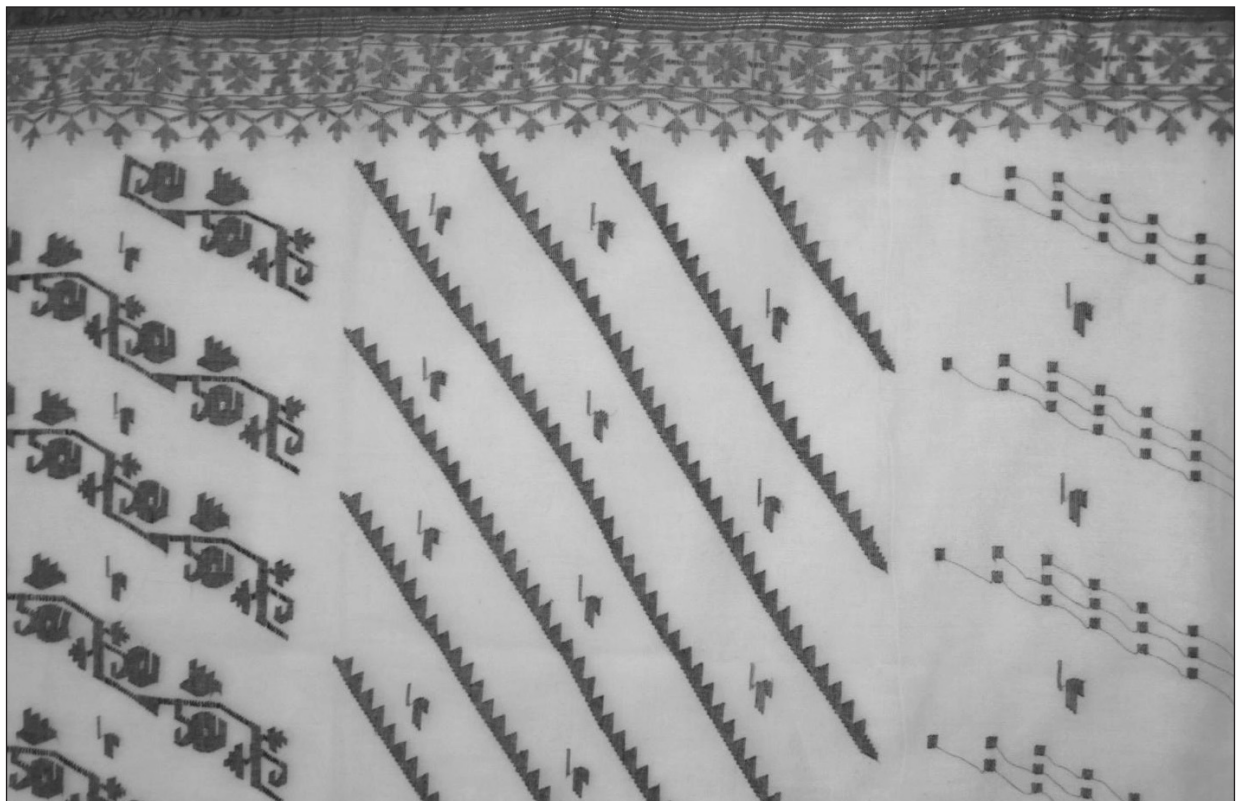
Design from the 19th century (1)



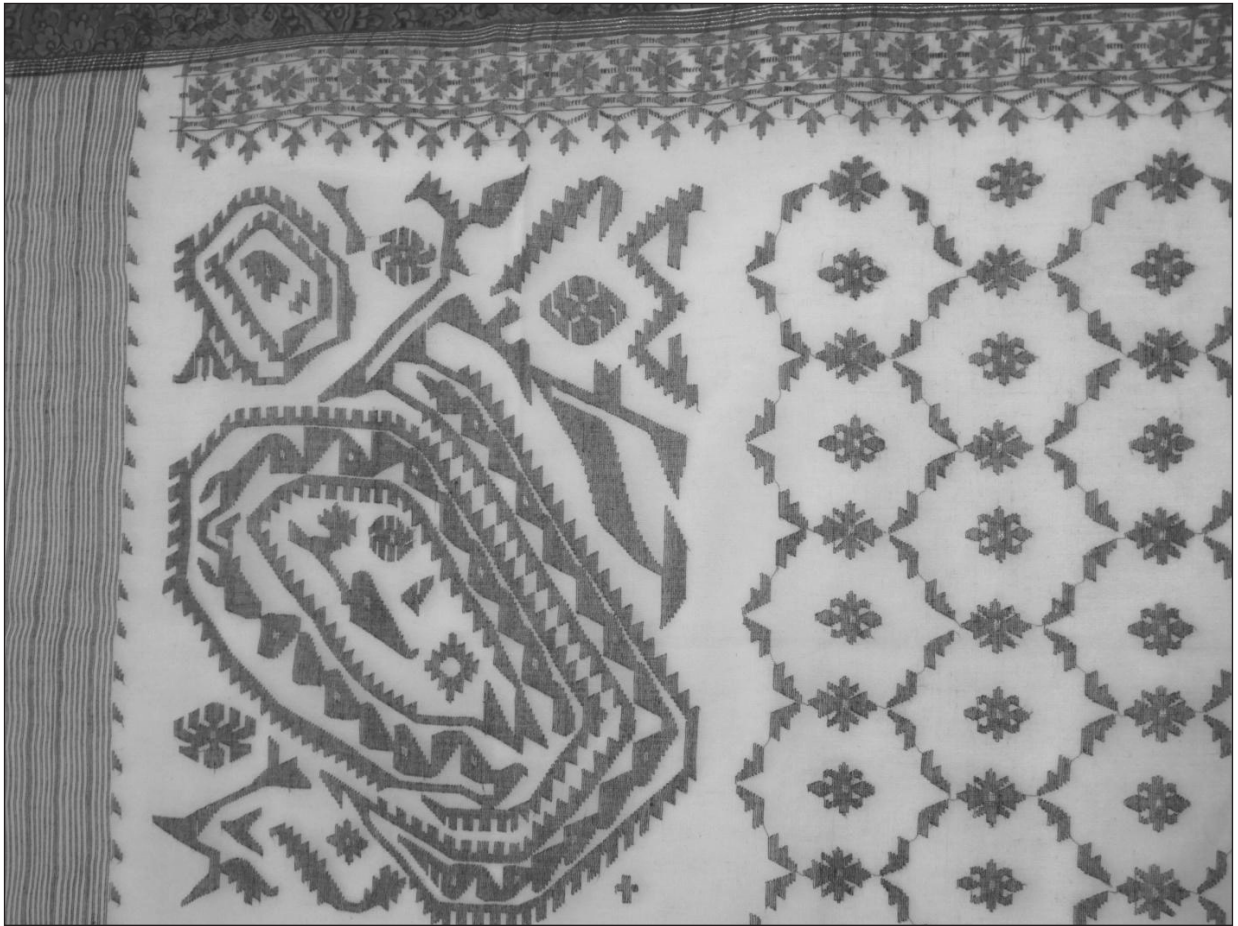
Design from the 19th century (2)



Contemporary design (1)



Contemporary design (2)



Contemporary design (3)

Dialogue Report on

Protecting Geographical Indication Products
in the Context of Bangladesh
and Way Forward

The Dialogue

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in collaboration with the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB) organised a dialogue titled “Protecting Geographical Indication Products in the Context of Bangladesh and Way Forward” on 17 June 2014 at the CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka. The dialogue dwelt with the issue of operationalising the newly enacted Geographical Indication (GI) law in Bangladesh with associated rules to safeguard the patent of *Jamdani*, one of the finest crafts deeply rooted in Dhaka. *Mr Amir Hossain Amu, MP*, Hon’ble Minister for Industries, Government of Bangladesh was invited as the Chief Guest and *Sir Fazle Hasan Abed*, Founder and Chairperson, BRAC as the Special Guest. However, due to some unavoidable circumstances they could not attend the dialogue.

Dr Iftexhar Iqbal, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Dhaka presented the keynote paper based on his study titled “Protection of *Jamdani* as a Geographical Indication in Bangladesh.” *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Distinguished Fellow, CPD acted as the Chair of the session. The dialogue brought together legal experts, relevant government officials, eminent fashion designers, trade, textiles and craft experts, academics and representatives from the media and the civil society. This report takes stock of *Dr Iqbal’s* presentation and points raised during the discussion, and captures recommendations to reclaim and protect *Jamdani* as a GI product of Bangladesh.

Welcome Address by the Chair

Welcoming the dialogue participants *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* spoke on the purpose of the dialogue, and explained the rationale for the study on *Jamdani* commissioned under a collaborative initiative of the CPD and the NCCB. Dwelling on the GI, he stated that it is “a name or sign used on goods or certain products which refers to a specific geographical location or origin with attributes for quality, reputation or other characteristics essentially to their geographic origin.” He observed that a GI should have:

- Special characteristics or reputation attributable to its origin
- Territoriality (town, region or country)
- Traceability (scientifically proven)

Highlighting benefits of the protection of GI, he observed that the benefits of GI are not individual rather they are collective. GI is the right of its producers, the community of its origin and social groups, and it enforces a more balanced distribution of added values of the product between the producers, distributors and the community. Elaborating further he said, when GIs are given protection, they create a comparative advantage for the product or good, receive extra marketing facilities, and thus help producers, as well as the community of the product to obtain a premium price or rent for their products. According to him, GI has social benefits as well. It contributes to make an inclusive, associational relation among the producers, consumers and the state or country. Thus, when GI is protected through laws, all parts of the community receive its benefits which help to build a social cohesion as well as social capital.

Dr Bhattacharya informed that there are various types of concepts to protect GIs with international treaties and national laws, and also there exist examples of GI products’ protection systems in the

17th or 18th century. However, one of the first GI systems is the one used in France from the early part of the 20th century known as *appellation d'origine contrôlée* (AOC).

He said that the World Trade Organization (WTO) first included Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement under the multilateral international framework of trade dealing with the protection of GIs in 1995. Based on the agreement, different countries were given direction to prepare their national laws. And different countries have prepared different national laws based on that.

He presented his concern stating that, although Bangladesh as a least developed country (LDC) was not obligated to implement this Act till 2021, considering the national interest, the Government of Bangladesh has decided to initiate the GI Act, in the wake of India already registering the *Uppada Jamdani* under their GI Act.

He pointed out that in an international context, when one country registers a product which originally belongs to another country, the first step to protect that product for the originator would be to enact the law regarding protection, and register that product under the act. The next step would be to fight legally for the ownership of that product, and finally, if needed, take steps for multilateral resolution. He reiterated that, Government of Bangladesh enacted the 'Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013' on 15 July 2013, and it was passed in the National Parliament on 5 November 2013. The government is now drafting the required rules to enforce the Act. Once the Act is enforced, it will need to appoint a registrar, other manpower, ensure adequate funding, etc. But to register a product under the Act, the important thing will be to prove its linkage with the geographical origin. That means by generating substantive knowledge, data and information will be needed to prove that the product contains unique characteristics attributable to a specific origin. Thus, parallel to legal procedures, research is also important to prove that the particular GI product belongs to that specific origin. To protect *Jamdani* it is also needed to prove that it is a unique product of Bangladesh. In this connection, he mentioned that CPD-NCCB collaborative effort and the research work done by *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal* basically focused on collecting evidence in favour of *Jamdani* being a unique product of Bangladesh with historical, technical and cultural evidence, based on primary and secondary data and information. *Dr Bhattacharya* hoped that the study, guided by an Advisory Committee of experts, will help the country to establish its exclusive ownership of *Jamdani*.

He then invited *Ms Monira Emdad*, former President of NCCB to present her introductory remarks.

Introductory Remarks by the NCCB Former President

Pointing out the glorious heritage and tradition of *Jamdani*, *Ms Monira Emdad*, former President and Executive Member of the NCCB stated that the history of *Jamdani* dates back to the globally acclaimed *Muslin* of Dhaka. Explaining the reason for NCCB's engagement in this project she asserted that the *Jamdani* is an elegant brand of Bangladesh. She noted that historically Bengali women had been great admirers of *Jamdani sharee* and it was appreciated beyond Bangladesh's borders as well.

Mentioning the contribution of NCCB to the passage of the GI Act in Bangladesh, *Ms Monira Emdad* informed the audience that the NCCB members were first formally introduced to the TRIPS while

attending the World Craft Council Conference in Chennai. Exploring other seminars, *Ms Monira Emdad* herself as the then President of NCCB along with *Ms Ruby Ghuznavi* and *Ms Bibi Russell* persuaded relevant ministries such as Industries, Commerce and Foreign Affairs to get the GI Act framed in Bangladesh. In November 2013, the Act was passed in the National Parliament.

Ms Monira Emdad expressed her profound gratitude to *Mr Shamsuzzaman* of Bangla Academy, *Sir Fazle Hasan Abed* of BRAC, *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal*, *Barrister Shukla Sarwat Siraj* and CPD for various support provided in the course of bringing the case for *Jamdani* to this stage.

Stressing the importance of establishing Bangladesh as the one and only owner of *Jamdani* by showing historic evidences, the Moderator invited *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal* to make the keynote presentation.

The Keynote Presentation

The keynote presentation by *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal* underscored that the most accepted definition of GI by TRIPS, which refers to indications that identify a good as originating in a territory or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin. In view of this, the research project investigated the geographic origin of *Jamdani* by covering the following aspects: climatic or natural factors; human factors, e.g. skill of the weavers or other local knowledge deeply rooted in the area; signs and indications, reputation, trade history, cultural context, e.g. integration of *Jamdani* in Bengali culture.

The word *Jama(e)* in Persian means ‘clothes’ and *Jamedan* means ‘closet’ or ‘wardrobe’ while *Jamdani* in Bengali directly refers to *sharee*. According to travellers’ accounts, the origin of *Jamdani* could be traced back to the craftsmanship of Bengali mercantile community of the world renowned Sonargaon Port in the 15th century Dhaka. Citing geographical evidences, *Dr Iqbal* recalled British scientists’ classification of the *Gossypium Herbaceum* variety of cotton, known as *Karpas* in Sanskrit and *Kapas* in Bengali. He drew upon evidences that the favourable climate and humidity to produce varieties of this cotton prevailed only in Dhaka. He added that rivers of this region including *Shitalakhya* contained siliceous and calcareous earth mixed with iron, which might have aided the cultivation of *Kapas*, while the water of *Shitalakhya* was very favourable for finished *Jamdani* products. A region near *Rajendrapur* around Dhaka on the bank of the River *Shitalakhya* was still called *Kapasia*.

During the 1860s, a number of exhibitions in Dublin, London and New Zealand displayed variations of finished *Jamdani* products, marking its origin as *Dacca* (Dhaka). Historical accounts show that the last Indian Mughal Emperor *Aurangzeb* used to buy *Jamdani* from Dhaka at a very high price. A number of literary accounts, including an Englishman’s narratives stating a “simple tunic of white muslin from the looms of *Dacca*” worn by ‘*Pocahontas*’ (a Native American woman) could have meant *Jamdani*, according to *Dr Iqbal*.

In reference to the Indian claim of *Uppada Jamdani* being its GI product, the research did not find any historical link between *Jamdani* and *Uppada Jamdani* of Andhra Pradesh, which is rather known for silk products. According to an Indian author *Mukund*, *Uppada Jamdani* of Andhra Pradesh imitates some design patterns of *Jamdani*, where motifs are woven into its body and its *pallu* is woven in real *zari*. In a recent novel, author *Amitav Ghosh* highlighted Dhaka’s *Jamdani*

and its makers' exclusiveness that was unmatched by any outsider's futile attempt of learning the secrets of this craft.

Dwelling on the above propositions, *Dr Iqbal* asserted that findings of the research provide strong grounds for Bangladesh to genuinely claim the sole ownership of *Jamdani*. He also argued that *Jamdani* should be named as '*Jamdani*', not '*Dhakai Jamdani*', as *Jamdani* is not generic, rather an innovative unique product which does not need any territorial indicator. The traditional art of weaving *Jamdani Muslin* in Bangladesh was included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) list of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2013, noted *Dr Iqbal*.

The Discussion

Thanking *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal* for his presentation the Chair *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya* invited the participants to the discussion. It gathered various information, arguments and suggestions on how and what to do for reclaiming and restoring the GI status of *Jamdani*.

Knowledge is the key

Dr Hameeda Hossain, Former Chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra, who was present at the dialogue as the Special Speaker, appreciated the knowledge-based report of *Dr Iftekhar Iqbal*. She expressed the view that such knowledge would help the government in establishing Dhaka's claim for hosting the origin of *Jamdani*, and apply it to the operationalisation of relevant rules of GI law.

History and heritage

Mr Saiful Islam, CEO, DRIK mentioned that the record of *Muslin* is thousands of years old. Bangladesh will need to provide strong evidences that should include very old records of heritage of *Muslin*, which will help to make the case stronger. *Muslin* at the height of its time, had a profound impact on economic as well as social dynamics of the region. So, Bangladesh should also register the *Muslin* along with *Jamdani*.

Dr Perween Hasan, Vice Chancellor, Central Women's University pointed out that *Muslin* is the fabric, and *Jamdani* is the technique of having woven pattern on it. *Jamdani* is a Persian word. It means 'wine cups' which are very delicate and is comparable to the delicate texture of *Muslin*. The best quality of cotton (*Muslin*) does not exist any more. So, priority should be given on safeguarding the technique, i.e. *Jamdani*.

Dr Hameeda Hossain observed that once *Jamdani* was traded to far distances such as Indonesia, and sometimes through the land route to Istanbul. Folded pieces of clothes (*thaan*) were taken from Dhaka and gifted to the Mughal emperors of Delhi. One of these clothes was *Jamdani*. She clarified that, though the name *Jamdani* had arrived from the Persian language, but the technique that is used to produce *Jamdani* was uniquely developed in Dhaka.

Dr Hameeda Hossain further noted that *Jamdani's* irrefutable connection with Dhaka is also clearly reflected in many global trade exhibitions in both historical and contemporary times. She recalled the display of *Jamdani* in London International Industrial Exhibition, and said that the archives also prove that the *thaan* that Mughal women used to make their dresses was in fact sent from Dhaka,

and it was *Jamdani*. It also got a place in Victorian Albert Museum of London, Calico Museum in Ahmedabad, Guimet Museum in Paris, etc., she added.

In this context she mentioned some of the notable research works and libraries containing valuable information regarding *Jamdani*. For instance, translation work by Dr Anisuzzaman who was called to British Library in the 70s to translate various old documents from different *aarong* outlets in Dhaka such as list of exports, accounts, correspondences between chiefs of two renowned factories at that time. Besides, research done by Mr Abdul Karim was also significant who especially mentioned about *Jamdani* of Dhaka region in his work, she added.

Jamdani was produced in the two out of eight *aarongs* of the then Dhaka. Echoing the keynote presenter, Dr Hameeda Hossain said there was no difference between the pictures of *Jamdani* preserved in the archives of 18th century and the pictures used in the report presented today. Moreover, the samples given by Forbes Watson (preserved in New York Metropolitan Museum), also show the origin of *Jamdani* as 'Dhaka,' she added.

Dr Hameeda Hossain regretted that there are many citations regarding *Jamdani* in the history of Bangladesh, but no textile museum to support those claims. The government should take initiative in this regard if it really wants to value *Jamdani* as its pride product.

Telling the world the traditional artistry of Jamdani

Barrister Shukla Sarwat Siraj of Bangladesh Supreme Court, while making her remark as a Designated Discussant, asserted that at this age of globalisation, upholding the traditional artistry of Bangladesh to the world has become very important. She expressed her fear that otherwise Bangladesh may have to face the negative consequences not only on artistry, tradition and history, but also in terms of the economy and trade relations.

GI Act in Bangladesh: Status and weaknesses

About the GI Act's present status in Bangladesh, Barrister Shukla Siraj informed that Bangladesh has been a signatory to WTO since 1995 and also a signatory to TRIPS from the very beginning. But in the last 20 years there has not been any reflection of TRIPS in the economy or in any legal field. After 18 years of the establishment of WTO, Bangladesh has enacted the GI Act. She regretted that no rules have yet been passed to make this act functional.

Barrister Shukla Siraj mentioned that the neighbouring country India had already enacted their GI law with full-fledged rules. Taking the advantage of the absence of such a law in Bangladesh, India had already registered *Nakshikantha* and *Jamdani* as products of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Besides, *Fazli* and *Himsagar* mango fruits have been listed in the Indian register as their GI products.

Regarding the weaknesses of the GI law in Bangladesh, she explained that the GI Act of Bangladesh is actually the mirror of TRIPS and is a hybrid of Indian law. But its coverage is not as wide as the Indian law, and also it does not ensure the international perspectives like the TRIPS. It is basically regulatory, but not promotional. There is no reciprocal arrangement between India and Bangladesh. Had there been a reciprocal arrangement between these two countries, they could have settled the disputes over the GI products mutually. Sharing the view of the Designated Discussant,

Mr Selim Ahmed Chowdhury, Examiner, Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, Ministry of Industries admitted that there were loopholes in the GI Act as it was prepared in a very short time.

Mr M S Siddiqui, CEO, Bangla Chemical pointed out that the definition of GI dwells with the relation between the GI products and the place of its origin, and this needs to be changed. *Barrister Shukla Siraj*, however, disagreed arguing that the definition of GI products in the Bangladesh Act entails the direct Bengali translation of the definition stated in TRIPS GI Law. As a signatory to WTO, all the Member countries shall have to use the same definition. Therefore, there is no scope to change this definition, she asserted.

Jamdani sans Dhaka

Dr Iftekhar Iqbal in his keynote presentation mentioned that in 1790 and 1791, the British attempted to cultivate the *Kapas* out of Sonargaon area, but it was in vain because the raw materials required for production of *Kapas* were available only in Dhaka. Information captured from the field survey, showed that efforts taken up by some of the *mahajans* to recreate *Jamdani* elsewhere also fell flat as climate of areas other than Dhaka did not suit its production. So duplication of *Jamdani* in other areas or region is not possible. Similarly, *Mr Shahid Hussain Shamim*, the General Secretary of the NCCB and CEO of Ajiyer informed that *Jamdani* is prepared under the craftsmanship of two weavers together. Without any drawing of the design, they create the design as they weave. The technique of weaving *Jamdani*, therefore, is unique; and such uniqueness of Dhaka does not match elsewhere in the world.

It should be only 'Jamdani'

Barrister Shukla Siraj expressed her concern for *Jamdani* being classified as a generic product. According to the Act of Bangladesh, generic name means – a name that has been transformed into the general name of a product or type of product. *Jamdani* has not been transformed into general name or title of any *sharee*. So, *Jamdani* is not 'generic'. Echoing *Barrister Shukla Siraj*, *Dr Mohammad Abu Yusuf*, Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) observed, it is not correct that without geographical name, registration will not be possible. For example, *Bashmati* is not a name of any place. But the name automatically points to its origin.

However, *Barrister Shukla Siraj* asserted that it is an Indian concept that "*Jamdani* is a generic name." The Indians created a variation in *Uppada* silk using the *Jamdani* technique and motifs. They have given it a regional title *Uppada Jamdani* of Andhra Pradesh. She stressed that for thousands of years *Muslin* had been produced here in what today is Bangladesh. At least from the medieval age *Jamdani* had been in existence as a remaining variation of *Muslin*. Merely adding a title of an Indian region to Bangladeshi *Jamdani* does not in any way justify that the product can be registered as Indian, she added. Hence, India's registration of *Uppada Jamdani* under its geographical indication law is illegal.

In addition, *Barrister Shukla Siraj* observed that *Jamdani* is a beautiful revelation of artistic talents of Bangladesh. Even today on special occasions Indian politicians and their families wear *Jamdani*, bought from Dhaka. Bangladesh is the sole proprietor of *Jamdani*. With a similar view, *Ms Maleka Khan*, Executive Member, NCCB mentioned that in many ways, her outlet, Banglacraft, has been playing the role of an ambassador of *Jamdani* in foreign countries. They are exporting a large volume of *Jamdani* to India. Thus, there is adequate official evidence to prove *Jamdani* is the product

of Bangladesh. *Ms Khushi Kabir*, Coordinator, Nijera Kori and Member, CPD Board of Trustees noted that *Jamdani* needs to be established as a product of Dhaka both in the country and multilaterally. India is famous for its *Kanchivaram*. *Jamdani* is comparatively less popular there. So, Bangladesh should establish its right on *Jamdani* as soon as possible.

In this context *Ms Bibi Russell*, Founder, Bibi Production suggested not to recognise *Jamdani* as merely a *Jamdani sharee*. It can be any product using the technique.

Points to ponder over the study paper

Ms Ruby Ghuznavi, Vice President, NCCB expressed the view that the study paper needs to consider emphasising on the hand-spinning method of the yarns, the *Jamdani* weaving techniques and more elaboration of its use during the Mughal period.

Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad, Chairman, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) voiced his concern that historically proven climate, cotton and water which were suitable for *Jamdani* weaving, do not exist anymore today. He was wondering whether this would create any weakness or how such issues can be dealt within the registration of *Jamdani* as a GI product so that it does not go against Bangladesh in establishing its right. This should also be carefully looked at, he added.

Dr Mohammad Abu Yusuf informed that *Jamdani* has been included in the UNESCO Heritage List and Bangla Academy provided many historical documents during the process. He suggested that these may be used in this research.

Mr Suhel Ahmed Choudhury, Former Commerce Secretary mentioned that Bangladesh Archives and Records Management Society (BARMS) has been trying to gather *Jamdani* GI information from Holland. The present research may also use information from the BARMS.

Like Jamdani consider other products as well

Ms Bibi Russell stressed on ensuring protection of other items such as 'rickshaw painting' also. Taking cue from her, *Ms Khushi Kabir* observed that protection of *Jamdani* would be only the first step. Subsequently steps should be taken to protect *shitalpati* of Sylhet as well. And gradually the other GI products should also be taken into consideration.

Mr Saiful Islam noted that since *Muslin* is the origin of *Jamdani* and its record as a product of Dhaka goes back to thousand years in history, Bangladesh should also register the *Muslin* along with *Jamdani*.

Role of Ministries matters

Mr Selim Ahmed Choudhury said that they are aware about the Act and its loopholes. *Mr S M Nurul Alam*, Director, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce mentioned that the Commerce Ministry is also aware of the need for coordination of GI Act and rules. Quick completion of the task of finalising the rules is under consideration, he added. Echoing, *Ms Shanchita Haque*, Director, Economic Affairs Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that her Ministry always tries to uphold the interest of the country and pursues the activities related to important issues in their different Missions. For

instance, in the Delhi Mission, they shared the activities on GI as well. After the enactment of GI rules, it will be possible to take up the matter more effectively, she added.

Way forward

Mr M S Siddiqui pointed out that the bilateral agreements are generally powerful instruments to protect a country's own interest. The GI has also given importance to the bilateral agreements, he mentioned. Bangladesh is yet to sign the Lisbon Agreement and Madrid Agreement. *Mr Siddiqui* felt that Bangladesh should also sign these agreements.

Elaborating on this, *Dr Mohammad Yusuf* maintained that if Bangladesh had signed the Lisbon Agreement, this product could be multilateralised in the present (28) signatory countries. Now, however, Bangladesh would need to submit applications to each of the countries, and each will have the right to accept or reject the application based on its merits.

About the way forward, *Barrister Shukla Siraj* observed that the important task for Bangladesh, at present, is to prepare and finalise the rules and to make a Geographical Indication unit within the jurisdiction of the rules; and then to recruit registrar and other necessary manpower under the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (DPDT).

Dr Yusuf suggested that the *Jamdani* producing associations need to be made aware and organised. He remarked that there is still a misconception among the members of the DPDT that *Jamdani* shall be registered as '*Dhakai Jamdani*'. Therefore, consultation and coordination with them is important to clarify this issue, he asserted.

Regarding the registered proprietors *Dr Yusuf* informed that there are nine proprietors in India. He suggested that in Bangladesh also *Jamdani* associations and other associations (if in real sense quality is maintained) including the government can take initiative to be the registered proprietors. *Jamdani* producers often say that they do not get the yarn of the best quality. He suggested that the government should take necessary steps in this regard.

Regarding the GI Act, *Dr Yusuf* suggested that the loopholes of law should be addressed. It has been mentioned in the Rule 26 that for registration of the GI product, application shall be submitted in the specified form. He observed that this process lacks due importance on historical evidence. He emphasised to review this matter because without proper evidence, it may pose difficulty in case of registration of a product from a foreign country.

Ms Maleka Khan laid emphasis on the protection of the lands of the *Jamdani* production area, especially Sonargaon.

Ms Mahua Zahur, Lecturer, School of Law, BRAC University suggested that coordination with the policymakers is necessary as it may have a far-reaching impact on the international relations of the country.

CPD-NCCB joint effort should not be an unfinished agenda

Barrister Shukla Siraj informed that with the initiative of CPD and NCCB, a lawyers' group, including herself, has been formed. It is now working on the draft rules, and looking into the lacuna and

loopholes of the law. She expressed hope to go ahead with these works for successful implementation of the law. Expressing similar views, *Mr Shahid Hussain Shamim* said that the lawyers' group is expected to recommend necessary steps to safeguard *Jamdani* as a product of Bangladesh.

Mr Suhel Ahmed Choudhury mentioned with regret that in 2007, a GI-related research report was proposed under the Bangladesh Trade Support Program. After that, a meeting was held to discuss different GI products in 2008. Stakeholders also participated in that meeting. *Mr Choudhury* regretted that so many things were done regarding the law, but it is not yet effective. He stressed quick completion of formulation of the laws and observed that CPD-NCCB's initiative should go ahead. *Ms Maleka Khan* also shared his view.

Concluding Remarks

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, in his concluding remarks, said that while preparing the list of products to be registered under GI Act, the criteria of possible economic benefits should also be considered. He summarised the following tasks for the government to perform on an urgent basis.

- i. If there is any loophole in the GI Act, amend it.
- ii. For finalisation of the draft rules, establish a GI unit and recruit registrar, manpower under the unit as well as arrange finance.
- iii. While finalising the draft rules, try to include a clause that would take care of the weaknesses/loopholes and clear confusions, if any, in the GI Act.
- iv. Immediately after the recruitment of registrar, manpower and organising finance, steps should be taken for registration of the GI products. *Jamdani* shall be registered as the first product and it should be registered as '*Jamdani*'. *Jamdani* will have to be a unique name, it should not be *Dhakai Jamdani*.
- v. After registering in the home country, necessary steps should be taken to prove it as a unique product of Bangladesh in the Indian law. If needed, government should take actions through WTO as well.
- vi. Research work needs to be continued side-by-side.
- vii. National initiatives should be coordinated at the government level.
- viii. *Jamdani* should be showcased in the national and foreign museums.
- ix. The geographical features/characteristics should be protected.
- x. Proper steps should be taken so that the real producers get benefits.

Dr Bhattacharya conveyed thanks to all the participants of the dialogue. Also thanked NCCB for their initiatives. Thanked the members of the CPD Trustee Board – *Sir Fazle Hasan Abed*, *Ms Khushi Kabir* and *Advocate Sultana Kamal*. Besides this, *Dr Bhattacharya*, expressed his gratitude to *Ms Ruby Ghuznavi*, *Mr Shahid Hossain Shamim*, *Ms Monira Emdad*, *Ms Bibi Russell* and *Dr Hameeda Hossain* for their inspiration.

He informed that CPD and NCCB would provide assistance in drafting the rules, support in the process of registration of GI products, and also continue to exert pressure on the government to take necessary and quick steps to make the GI Act functional. He also solicited cooperation of all, and particularly the media, in this connection. He concluded with the hope of quick registration of *Jamdani* as GI product of Bangladesh.

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The present publication emerged from a collaborative initiative of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB). The study taken under the initiative deals with the issue of operationalising the newly enacted Geographical Indication (GI) law in Bangladesh (*Geographical Indicative Products (Registration and Protection) Act 2013*) with associated rules to safeguard the patent of *Jamdani*, one of the finest crafts deeply rooted in Dhaka. GI as defined by the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the WTO refers to “indications that identify a good as originating in a territory or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin.” Thus the study seeks to identify ways and means to protect the patent right of *Jamdani* exclusively for Bangladesh through historic evidences. An Annex to the report, included in this publication, elaborates on the current day techniques, tools and workers and actors involved in the different stages of *Jamdani* production.

Part B of the publication presents a report on the dialogue organised under the initiative in June 2014 that brought together legal experts, relevant government officials, eminent fashion designers, trade, textiles and craft experts, academics and representatives from the media and the civil society.

CPD-NCCB is currently engaged in follow-ups regarding the operationalisation of the GI Act in Bangladesh. It is hoped that this publication will help the readers in understanding the depth of interest for Bangladesh in protecting such traditional crafts, and will stimulate them in contributing to the effort.

