

January 2017

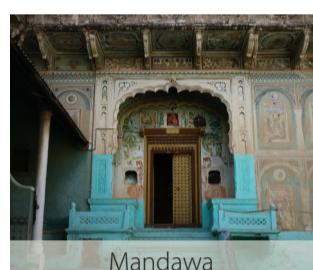
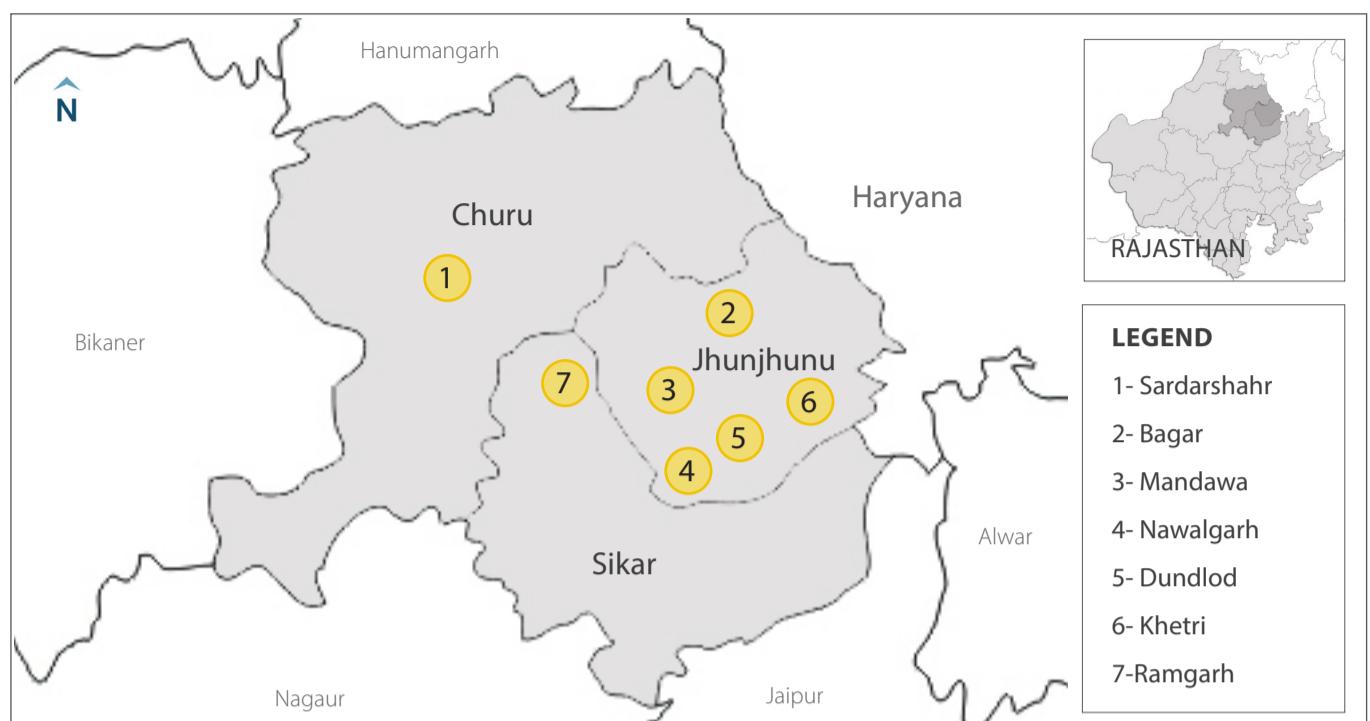
Focus On -
Shekhawati
(Churu, Sikar & Jhunjhunu)

OVERVIEW

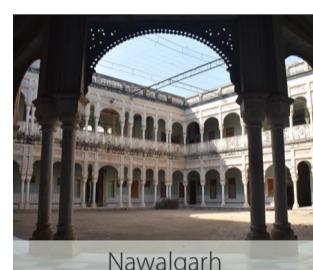
Places Visited :	07
Distance Traveled :	1454 km
Elements Mapped :	366
Scholars Approached :	17
Craftspeople Approached :	6



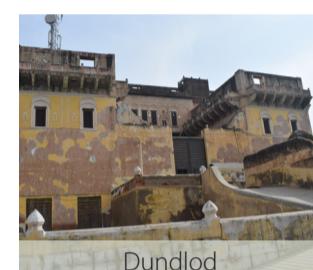
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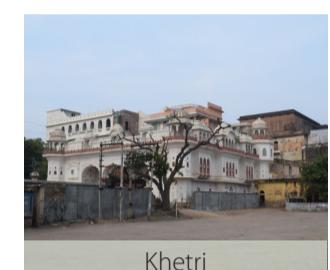
Mandawa



Nawalgarh



Dundlod



Khetri

Shekhawati is the northern semi arid region of Rajasthan on the eastern face of the Thar Desert. It is a cultural demarcation constituting the districts of Churu, Jhunjhunu and Sikar. This region hones some of the wealthiest traders of India who built meticulously painted traditional houses called *havelis*. In return promoting local crafts and commissioning painters to invent their own style of frescoes abundant in the region.

Prominently found and diverse in its usage, a *takaht* is a wooden low table with iron reinforcing brackets on the corners. The side walls are intricately carved with motifs and geometric patterns; while legs are made of modestly turned legs. Typically used to sit on by multiple people for recreational activities, these strong tables are located outside the entrance porch of havelis, in market squares or even in temples. A *takaht* was found to be used for display of goods by shopkeepers in markets and in some cases for catching afternoon siestas in public squares. The reverence to water storage furniture demonstrates the cultural response towards the extreme climatic conditions and scarce water supply in Rajasthan. Water is stored in close proximity with the religious deities and is worshiped on occasions. There were three types of water storage found, first are the in-built storage, which are stone shelves in wall. These stone platforms have depressions to hold the

pot without tilting. The second is a more elaborate form of the earlier. It is a small rectangular room with similar stone shelves and a small window for air circulation. Both these types are called *parindo*. The third type is a rectangular frame held up by a trestle, made from wood with metal fittings. The rectangular frame has strategic chamfers to hold the pots steadily. These movable trestles are called *ghaduchi* which translates to 'for a pot'. In Shekhawati, on occasions, small groups of people dine together from one dish. They use a low table called a *chowki* to place their dish. The *chowki* is found in variety of shapes and sizes. Simple square top with lacquered turned wooden legs are quite common. Octagonal, Hexagonal and an eight pointed star shaped *chowki* are found, with turned wooden legs and at times with stamped brass or silver cladding.

Another prominent feature of the Shekhawati household is the charpoy, which is referred by *macha, khaat* and *palang*. *Pidho* is a low stool used predominantly by women to sit. The most widely found seating element is the *baithak*; it is a room that flanks the courtyard of the traditional havelis. These rooms have well laid out floor seating of mattresses and large pillows over a carpet. The *baithak* functions as a guest room symbolic to the hospitality of the Shekhawati people.



1. Baithak (Floor seating), 2. Parindo (Water pitcher stand), 3. Takaht (Bench), 4. Khaat (Charpoy), 5. Hatadi (In-built cabinet), 6. Retractable bench, 7. Pidho (Stool), 8. Chowki (Low table), 9. Peti (Casket) & 10. Bilona (Butter churner)

A monthly report of field visits conducted as a part of Study of Vernacular Furniture of North West India.

A Collaborative research project by: