

DESIGN STUDIO

कोल्हापुरी चप्पल

WITH THE ARTISANS OF KOLHAPUR

Introduction

Kolhapuri footwear has been around since the 13th century. It is thought to have begun around 1920 with the Saudagar family. The first version, dubbed "Chappal with ears" or "Kanwali," had a smaller sole with two side flaps and finely sculpted uppers. By the 18th century, the footwear had gained popularity and was dubbed "Kolhapuri." When the Saudagar family submitted their design to the "J.J. and Sons" retail store in South Mumbai, it was well appreciated. The store bought more pairs, and the popularity of these Kanwali-style shoes skyrocketed. To fulfil the rising demand, the Saudagar family began teaching others the artistry. Kolhapuri footwear gained popularity as it expanded to neighbouring towns and cities in Maharashtra. Locally it is also known as "pie-taan".

The narrative centers on Parmeshwar telling Rohidas Maharaj, "I want footwear (Chappals)." As a result, Rohidas Maharaj removed some flesh from his thighs and made Parmeshwar a pair of chappals. Parmeshwar, pleased with his invention, offered a penny to a Brahmin. Parmeshwar requested that Brahmin give the coin to Rohidas Maharaj. He chose to keep the coin for himself rather than give it to Rohidas Maharaj.

He'd been carrying the currency around for a while, and it was starting to agitate him. He made the decision to give Rohidas Maharaj the coin after growing apprehensive. He eventually found Rohidas Maharaj and gave him the coin back. The coin was hurled into the water by Rohidas Maharaj. Soon after, he discovers a golden bracelet in his drink. Devi Ganga manifests from the sea. Maharaj is addressed by Devi Ganga, who says to him, "Whatever he wishes will be fulfilled." However, Rohidas Maharaj claimed that all he really wants is the Devi's blessing, adding "Man Changa Toh Kathoti Mein Ganga."



STRENGTHS

- Kolhapuri chappals have a deep-rooted connection to Indian culture, showcasing centuries-old craftsmanship. They embody a unique identity that reflects tradition, making them an iconic symbol of Indian heritage.
- The chappals are handcrafted by highly skilled artisans, ensuring exceptional attention to detail and unique designs that cannot be replicated by machine.
- These chappals are often made using natural leather and eco-friendly dyes, which align with the growing global preference for sustainable products.
- Kolhapuri chappals are gaining recognition in international markets, appreciated for their authenticity and uniqueness, especially among consumers seeking handcrafted products.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Leveraging their expertise in leatherwork, artisans can diversify into related categories such as belts, wallets, handbags, or clutches that incorporate Kolhapuri motifs and techniques.
- Crafting leather-based home décor items such as coasters, rugs, wall hangings, or table mats with Kolhapuri-inspired patterns and embossing can tap into the artisanal home accessories segment.
- Partnering with contemporary fashion labels to integrate Kolhapuri elements into high-street or couture collections can open new avenues in both domestic and global fashion industries.
- Establishing a strong online presence through e-commerce platforms can help artisans reach a wider audience, bypassing middlemen and enhancing their profits.
- Offering bespoke designs, personalized fittings, or custom embellishments can cater to the luxury and premium footwear markets.

WEAKNESSES

- Traditional designs often fail to align with the preferences of younger, fashion-forward audiences, leading to a limited appeal in contemporary markets.
- The craftsmen face low wages, limited access to modern tools, and minimal government support, which hinders their ability to scale production or experiment with innovations.
- The entirely manual production process restricts scalability, leading to higher production times and difficulties in meeting large-scale demands.
- Kolhapuri chappals lack a strong brand identity and effective marketing strategies, which affects their visibility, especially in competitive markets.
- While durable, Kolhapuri chappals are often criticized for lacking ergonomic designs, making them less comfortable for prolonged use compared to modern alternatives.

THREATS

- The rise of cheaper, mass-produced footwear, including international brands, threatens the demand for traditional Kolhapuri chappals in both local and global markets.
- Younger generations are moving away from traditional crafts due to low earning potential, risking the eventual loss of skilled craftsmanship.
- Kolhapuri chappals rely on specific types of leather and materials, and disruptions in their availability can impact production and pricing.
- Imitation Kolhapuri chappals, often made of inferior materials, dilute the authenticity of the craft and create unfair competition.
- The growing preference for comfort-oriented, functional, or athleisure footwear poses a challenge to the relevance of traditional designs.

Opportunity Mapping

EXPAND

- Explore new markets for Kolhapuri leather accessories (global e-commerce platforms).
- Develop premium collections targeting fashion-conscious consumers.
- Introduce Kolhapuri leather accessories in fashion segment.
- Collaborate with high-end designers or boutiques for limited-edition pieces.
- Expand product range to include office accessories (leather organizers, wallets).

CREATE

- Develop leather bags, backpacks, duffel bags etc with traditional Kolhapuri patterns.
- Introduce tech accessories like leather phone cases, laptop sleeves, and smartwatch bands.
- Custom leather jewelry (bracelets, cuffs, rings) with a Kolhapuri twist.
- Offer personalized leather goods (name engraving, bespoke designs)
- Enter the lighting market with development of hanging, side lamps etc or even watches and clocks.

TRANSFORM

- Innovate with mixed materials (leather with fabric, metal, wood).
- Use digital printing or laser cutting to incorporate modern art or graphics on leather.
- Integrate smart tech into leather accessories (LED-embedded designs).
- Revamp traditional Kolhapuri patterns with modern color schemes or minimalist designs.
- Introduce modular accessories (customizable sections, detachable parts).

REDUCE

- Simplify product lines for budget-friendly options without compromising quality.
- Streamline production processes to lower costs (automation, efficiency).
- Reduce waste by incorporating recycled leather or upcycled materials.
- Offer smaller, versatile accessories instead of large, bulky items.
- Sustainable packaging

Gap Analysis

PROBLEM	CURRENT STATE	DESIRED STATE	GAP	ACTION NEEDED
Product Innovation Gap	Limited product range (mainly traditional footwear, belts).	Expansion into modern accessories like bags, tech accessories, jewelry.	Lack of variety in product offerings beyond traditional crafts.	Develop new designs for bags, wallets, tech accessories, and jewelry incorporating Kolhapuri craftsmanship.
Market Reach Gap	Primarily local markets or niche audiences familiar with Kolhapuri leather.	Global presence through online platforms and fashion collaborations.	Limited international exposure and reliance on traditional retail.	Establish e-commerce platforms, expand distribution channels, and collaborate with international designers.
Technology Integration Gap	Traditional methods of leather crafting with minimal technological innovation.	Integration of smart technology and digital innovation into products.	No use of smart tech (e.g., embedded LEDs, solar-powered accessories, custom digital prints).	Innovate with digital printing and smart accessories (e.g., tech-enabled leather goods).
Brand Positioning Gap	Kolhapuri leather products are seen as traditional, regional, and functional.	Perceived as a modern, high-fashion, globally recognized brand.	Brand is not marketed as a premium or trendy option.	Position Kolhapuri leather as a luxury, eco-conscious, and innovative fashion brand through strategic marketing and collaborations.

Possible Product Categories

Lighting & Lamps Kolhapuri Leather Side Lamp Leather Pendant Lights Table Lamps Floor Lamps	Home decor Accessories Leather Wall Panels Leather Trays Leather Cushions & Pillows Leather Clocks	Furniture and storage Leather Upholstered Chairs Leather Storage Boxes Leather Bins Leather Sofas	Personal Accessories Leather Wallets Leather Phone Cases Leather Tech Accessories Leather Bags
Fashion & Wearables Leather belts Leather Jackets Leather footwear Leather Gloves	Office & Desk Accessories Desk organizers Journals or Diary covers Coasters and desk mats Mouse pad	Pet accessories Pet collars, leash, harness Pet toys Leather beds for pets	Gifting Keychains Phtoto frames Gift boxes set

Design Brief

Design a modern lamp that blends traditional Kolhapuri leather craftsmanship with contemporary design. The lamp should feature intricate hand-stitching and embossed patterns, using sustainable materials and eco-friendly LED lighting. Incorporate adjustable brightness, smart features, and modular customization for a unique, functional home decor piece. Focus on craftsmanship, sustainability, and innovation to appeal to design-conscious, eco-aware consumers.

User Persona

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age: 28–40
- Gender: Any
- Location: Urban cities, globally
- Occupation: Professional or entrepreneur (e.g., marketing manager, designer, consultant)
- Income: Middle to upper-middle class
- Education: College-educated, often with a focus on business, arts, or design
- Tech Savvy: Highly active on social media, comfortable with online shopping and using tech to research products

GOALS

- To support brands that prioritize sustainability and craftsmanship.
- To purchase accessories that align with a professional, yet personal and creative, lifestyle.
- To invest in products that are durable, functional, and ethically made.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- **Lifestyle:** Loves her home and decorates it every chance they get with valuable pieces. Values products that reflect individuality and cultural authenticity.
- **Values:** Sustainability, ethical production, and craftsmanship. Prefers unique, story-driven products that combine tradition with modern aesthetics.
- **Shopping Habits:** Shops online, seeks curated, premium brands. Enjoys discovering niche, high-quality products and supports brands with sustainable practices.
- **Challenges:** Frustrated by mass-produced options and lack of customization. Concerned about environmental impact and product authenticity.

PAIN POINTS

- Frustration with the lack of unique, high-quality products that blend traditional craft with modern trends.
- Difficulty finding products that offer customization or personalization options.
- Concern over the environmental impact of mass-produced fashion and accessories.

Inspiration Board





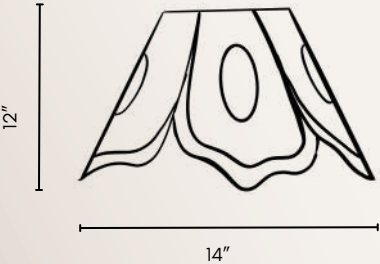
Ideations



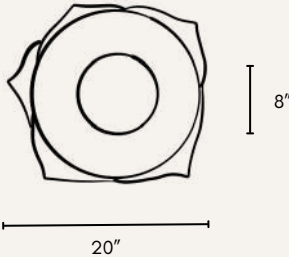
Final Design

Technical Drawings

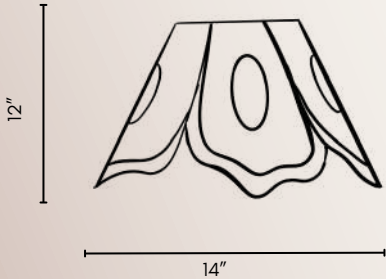
FRONT



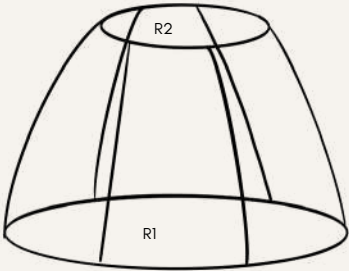
TOP



SIDE

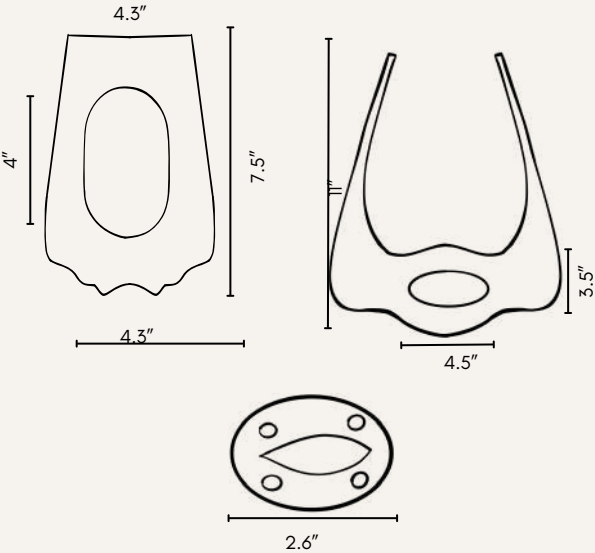


WIRE FRAME



Circumference R1 - 60"
Radius R1 - 10"
Circumference R2 - 35"
Radius R2 - 5.5"

PATTERN OF LEATHER



Process Pictures



Marking the pattern



Cutting the pattern



Applying water to make it foldable



Marking another pattern



Thomping to make it softer



Cutting motifs



Sticking the pieces together



Braiding of leather

धन्यवाद !

ISHA MEENA | MEMANSA BAJPAI

