

The Enduring Legacy of Bombay Blackwood Furniture of Surat Parsi Community: Community Engagement and Preservation Strategy

Vahhbiz P. Engineer^{*}

M S – IDPT, Sarvajani University, Surat, India

Pratiksinh S. Vaghela^{*}

S. R. Luthra Institute of Management

Sarvajani University, India

Email: pratiksinh.vaghela@scet.ac.in

Zeenia Engineer^{}**

M S – IDPT, Sarvajani University, Surat, India

Abstract: The Parsi community in India, an ethno-religious minority with a rapidly declining population, traces its origins to pre-Islamic Zoroastrian Iranians who migrated from Persia (present-day Iran) to escape religious persecution. Over time, they assimilated peacefully while maintaining a distinct cultural identity and made significant contributions to industry, commerce, education, and philanthropy. Today, however, the community faces a subtle but serious crisis: the loss of tangible cultural heritage, particularly Bombay Blackwood furniture crafted for affluent Parsi households during the colonial era. Often sold cheaply outside the community, these objects embody memories of rituals, social practices, and domestic life. Their disappearance contributes to a gradual erosion of collective identity. This paper traces the history of Bombay Blackwood furniture, documents select pieces from Surat's Parsi community, and proposes community-driven strategies for its preservation, based on literature review and semi-structured interviews.

Keywords: Bombay Blackwood, Antique, Parsi, Retention, Surat City

^{*} and ^{**}Research scholar. ^{*}Email: vahhbiz.engineer@scet.ac.in; ^{**}Email: zeenia.engineer@scet.ac.in