

Element Form

1. Defining the intangible cultural heritage element

- Name of the element as used:

Jafnah

- Other name:

Yafnah / jadah / qadah

- Short and useful title of the intangible cultural heritage element (Including domain(s) of cultural heritage manifested by the element):

Traditional craftsmanship associated with the production and use of household items – *Jafnah*

- Practitioners and groups concerned:

- Women.
- Carpenters.
- Potters.
- Crockery and tableware merchants.

- Geographical location and range of the intangible cultural heritage element:

Most regions of the United Arab Emirates.

- Brief description of the intangible cultural heritage element (Not to exceed 200 characters):

Jafnah is a round, deep wooden bowl, usually made of log wood from the trunks of local trees in the desert. The wood is carved and used to produce the *jafnah*

by skilled craftsmen. Some *jafnah* are also made of clay. It usually comes in different sizes depending on its purpose, including preparing and serving food on regular days for family members. The larger *jafnah*-s would be used in preparing and serving food at feasts, weddings and celebrations, or to serve food in the month of Ramadan, when a lot of guests would usually be invited. When serving food at these events, the *jafnah* could have a diameter of up to 50 cm with a depth of about 20 cm. Each home would have many *jafnah*-s in different sizes to meet the needs of all occasions.¹

Jafnah is also known as “*yafnah*” in the local Emirati dialect. It is a large, flat serving dish usually made of wood that is used for serving food at large gatherings, especially the daily Ramadan *iftar* tables. This dish is also known as *jadah* meaning “*qadah*” (jug) by Bedouins. It also came in smaller sizes that were used for drinking water or other liquids. In this case, they were used as cups, not plates.²

2. Features of the Element:

- Concerned practitioners and performers of the intangible cultural heritage element (including name, gender, occupational category, etc.):

- Craftsmen: carpenters
- Craftsmen: potters

- Other participants whose work relates to the element and contributes to sustaining its practice or facilitates the performance and transmission of the element (including those who attend a performance or those who are responsible for training, supervision or sponsorships):

- Crockery shop owners.
- Exhibitors of antiques (ancient items of heritage).

¹ Abdullah Ali Al Taboor, et. al., Introduction to UAE Folklore, Zayed Heritage Centre, Al Ain, UAE, 2002, p. 215-222.

² A field interview with the narrator, Mrs. Fawzia Al Merri, Al Rahba City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 10/08/2010.

- The language (s) used (in the element):

The local dialects used in the nomenclature and terms associated with the element.

- Tangible elements associated with the practice of the element and its transmission, such as: instruments, equipment, costumes, spaces, and ritual tools (if any):

Tools:

- Log wood.
- Clay.
- Shovels.
- Sharp knives for sawing, slicing and sanding.

Spaces:

- Carpentry workshops.
- Pottery workshops.
- Traditional souks (markets).

- Other intangible elements related to the practice and transmission of the element in question (if any):

- While making *jafnah*-s, carpenters and potters exchange folk tales, stories and news.
- They also narrate proverbs and riddles.
- They chant poems and songs.
- The drawings, inscriptions and symbols found on the surface of the *jafnah*, which have social connotations that reflect certain societal customs, traditions and practices.

- Customary practices governing access to the element or any of its specific aspects

Practitioners of the element can easily be accessed for data collection. There are no restrictions.

- Modes of transmitting the element to others within the group:

- The element is transmitted by craftsmen to the younger generation.
- Experiences are transmitted to the younger generation through observation as they participate in the craftsmen's work.
- Experiences are also transmitted to the younger as they assist their family in their work.
- Organizing training workshops at exhibitions and festivals.
- Organizing workshops in artisan's houses.

- Concerned organizations if any (associations/civil society organizations, etc.):

- Emirates Heritage Club.
- Traditional markets that specialize in selling replicas of traditional household items.
- Heritage villages.
- Artisan's houses.
- Heritage societies.

3. Status of the element: its viability and sustainability

- Threats to the practicing of the element in the context of the relevant community / groups concerned:

- The element is freely practised without restrictions.

4. Data: restrictions, and private permissions (collectively and access)

- Group / community approval and involvement in data collection:

- Groups, communities and individuals have been involved and have expressed complete approval in providing data.

- Restrictions on data access and use

- There are no restrictions on data access. All concerned groups have agreed to cooperate with researchers in providing data about the element. Some of these groups have also been actively involved in data collection.

- Experts and narrators (their names, position, and affiliation):

- A field interview with the narrator, Mrs. Fawzia Al Merri, Al Rahba City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2010.

- Dates and locations of data collection:

10/08/2010

5. Sources of information about the element (if any)

- Literature: books, articles, and others:

Abdullah Ali Al Taboor, et. al., Introduction to UAE Folklore, Zayed Heritage Centre, Al Ain, UAE, 2002, p. 215–222.

- Audio-visual materials, records etc. in archives, museums, and private collections (if any):

- There are some records in the archives that have been reviewed.

- Documentary materials and tools in archives, museums and private collections (if any):

- Documentary materials and tools can be found in archives, museums and media institutions.

6. Data about the inventory process

- The person(s) who performed the classification and collection

Researcher Mahasin Abdul Rahim Wagee Allah

- Date the information was entered into the inventory:

10/08/2010

- Pictures:



wooden *jafnah*



clay *jafnah*

Date created: 8/10/2010

Date updated: 11/07/2020

Username: Mahasin Abdul Rahim Wagee Allah