



Craft  
Development  
Institute  
SRINAGAR

August 2009

Aaghaaz  
Inspiring  
CHANGE

## Reflections of an Artisan

On a hot July afternoon we knocked on the beautifully carved wooden door of honorable Khalil mohammad Kalwal Sahib, recipient of the Shilp guru award for walnut wood carving.

While we waited for the door to open I managed to take a look around, logs of walnut wood were neatly stacked to be seasoned in air. A thin stair case went up to the first floor workshop. we could hear the artisans talking to each other along with the hammering of the chisels. A strange sense of soothing calmness seemed to flow through the air, suddenly the door opened and the smiling face of Kalwal sahib greeted us warmly. He guided us through the thin stair case to his workshop where the artisans were working.

He sat against the wall, a large wooden tree trunk split in half set in front of him as a working table. A semi-finished wooden panel along with a set of chisels lay still on the table waiting to come to life. He pointed towards the panel and said "no matter how hard I try I can't make an exact replica of this panel, this is the beauty of handcrafted products. No two pieces are the same."

I asked him since when has he been working with wood. He smiled and said "I have watched this craft since I was a child my father used to work and I used to observe him. Later I joined him I must have been around 14 years old, and since then I have been working". We asked him whether his children were also involved in this craft, he replied with a smile, "Yes I have two sons both of them are involved in this craft. They are well educated one of them is a commerce graduate, they had a choice of entering other professions but both of them choose to serve their ancestral craft". He pointed to a picture on the wall, "That's my son receiving an award from the government, during this award ceremony he was offered a government job but he declined the offer. We are very happy with our work, people appreciate our work, I am really grateful to God for everything". I looked at him wanting to ask, why is it that people in the craft sector are not so satisfied,

## DO YOU KNOW?

The basic stitch used in Sozni embroidery is the sozani stitch, which has evolved from the famous darning work done by 'Rafugars' from Kashmir.



It has reinforcing stitch on top of the basic stitch. While this reinforcing stitch is similarly known as Couching stitch but unlike couching stitch, Sozni uses a base stitch which is a kind of Stem stitch.



The beauty of this stitch is its delicacy, which lends uniformity to both sides of the fabric.

why are they leaving the craft sector? He seemed to read my mind may be and suddenly he said "No matter what work you do, if you do it with dedication you are bound to succeed. I have put my heart and soul in my work I treat it with reverence and it has bought me respect and honor, which is priceless." Kalwal Sahibs words reminded me of my meeting with honorable Ali Mohammed Beigh Sahib recipient of the Shilp Guru award for Sozni, approximately 3 yrs back. The pride and reverence with which he talked about his work seemed to mirror the feeling of Kalwal Sahib. The similarity to thought between both of them was amazing. I deeply wish that every artisan in the craft sector could be equally satisfied with his work.

I have visited countless number of artisans all over India, but such sense of satisfaction towards their work was almost negligible. It is this sense of satisfaction that is actually required by the craft sector. I remember talking to the artisans, listening to their issues their concerns, their feeling of dissatisfaction which is clearly visible in their eyes. Their words clearly said one thing though the languages I heard it from were many "We don't have a choice it's too late for us, but our children will not meet the same fate. There is no future in this profession even if we are paid well we are not given the recognition for our work. Man doesn't work for money alone, you also need respect. At times we feel that we don't exist".

Listening to these words in different languages is a common thing for me, somewhere I like the rest of the people in the craft sector was desensitized to this statement, but after listening to artisans like Kalwal Sahib and Beigh Sahib I suddenly realized something.

There is no doubt about the fact that the craft sector holds innumerable opportunities for growth for a country like India which is plagued by unemployment, but the threat this sector is facing universally in India is that of diminishing number of artisans due to job dissatisfaction. The newer generations are not willing to take up the craft, and even the existing younger artisans are willing to give up the craft in case a better opportunity presents itself.

Under such circumstances we really need to understand how the feeling of dissatisfaction can be over come. Talking to people like Kalwal Sahib and Beigh Sahib, one can easily understand that what is needed most by this sector is a new outlook of looking at the needs of an artisan. Giving fair wages is not enough, sense of a secure future, respect and recognition along with opportunities for growth and self actualization should be provided to the artisans in the craft sector. Serious interventions need to be made by the government and major industrial players to devise means of increasing job satisfaction among the artisans. Human resource research experts should be employed to study the various craft setups to understand the issues faced by the artisans and suggest possible remedial actions to improve the working conditions and motivational levels of the artisans. A fair system of wage calculation specific for each type of craft should be put in place by the government bodies to check economic exploitation of the artisans. If proper constructive measures are taken on time the feeling of satisfaction which is rare in the craft sector would spread to the whole of the artisan community, giving our country an empowered dignified, self-sufficient, prosperous and economically productive workforce.

*Sanna Masood,  
Faculty (Management studies),  
CDI*

## News-in-Brief

### Jury Evaluation

The second trimester of the 2nd batch of the Craft Management & Entrepreneurial Leadership programme was successfully completed. It was concluded with the jury evaluation which included experts from the field of design, management and education. Mr. Darshan Bhat, Creatnet Services, Mr. Ali Mohammad, Siamese Exports & Co, Ms. Nighat Shafi, Shehjaar foundation and Mr. M. S. Farooqi, Director, CDI. The overall presentation made by the students was appreciated by the jury and were given constructive feedback for their future.

### Inspection on 22nd July 2009

On the completion of the Integrated Design & Technical development project in the area of Namdah craft, the Inspecting officer Mr. Mohammad Shafi Wani CTO, FAC, DC-(H), Sgr, visited the project sites and said that "after seeing the work in the Namdah craft from initial stage to the last stage lot of efforts have been made by the implementing Agency and the designer (Ms. Jigisha Patil) in giving a new look to the craft in terms of pattern making, colour combinations and innovative designs which had been receding from the market". By arranging these Integrated Design & Technical Development Project in the area of Namdah craft, a new lease of life will be ensured to it.

### Visit of Principal Secretary

Mr. Arun Goswami, Principal Secretary to Govt. of J&K state visited our Institute and glanced at the various activities and achievements of CDI that were briefed by Mr. M.S. Farooqi, Director CDI. The Principal Secretary highly appreciated the efforts and the work done by the Institute and also interacted with the students of CM&EL programme.

### Situation test for 3rd batch

CDI conducted the situation test and Interviews on 1st and 2nd August, 2009 for the candidates to be admitted in the Craft Management & Entrepreneurial Leadership Programme at CDI, Srinagar. The situation test and interviews were conducted by expert panel that included Mr. Darshan Bhatt, CEO creatnet services, Mr. Rauf Wadera, Manager (Administration & Finance, CDI) and Mr. M. S. Farooqi, Director, CDI. Students have been shortlisted and the programme will start from 24th August 09.



1. A Namdah workshop being inspected by the inspecting officer.
2. One of the final products of Namdah Workshop.
3. Principal Secretary to Govt. of J&K, Mr. Arun Goswami checking various prototypes developed by CDI.
4. Principal Secretary to Govt. of J&K, Mr. Arun Goswami interacting with the students of CM & EL Programme.
5. A student of the 2nd batch of Craft Management & Entrepreneurial Leadership programme Presenting his work to the jury members.

## Spotlight

**Indian Festival Hindustan Mela 2009** will be held at Grote Kerk, Netherlands from September 10 - 13, 2009. Exhibit product range includes: Handicrafts, Jackets in 100% wool fabric, Woollen Stoles/Shawls, Fashion Accessories, Silk Stoles/Shawls, Leather products, Bed sheets and pillow covers, Carpets & Rugs and Silk Cushion.

**Gifts India 2009** is India's Largest Trade Show on Corporate & Personal Gifts & Premiums now in its 16th year. It is also other season's rightly placed undoubtedly the most popular show year after year. For all related manufacturers and dealers, GIFTS INDIA 2009 is the number one marketing vehicle for business in Indian & International Markets.

Profile for exhibit includes Gift Wrappers, Cutlery, Artifacts, Labels, Promotional Caps & Wear, Watches, Glassware, Folders, Wallets, Bags, Appliances, Gold Coins, Toiletries, Crystal wares, Souvenirs, Trolleys, Table Planners, Cameras, Crockery, Silverware, Bone China, Wall Clocks, Diaries, Calendars, Planners, Key chains, Leather Briefcases & Portfolio holders, Festival Decoration Products, Handicrafts, Promotional Toys, Gold & Diamond Jewellery, Antiques & Decorative Products.

CDI Newsletter: 27 | August 2009

**The Craft Development Institute  
BAMK, Nowshera, Opp. J&K Bank  
Srinagar - 190 011  
Jammu & Kashmir**

Phone/ Fax : 0194 231 2772  
email: [cdi@cdisgr.org](mailto:cdi@cdisgr.org)

[www.cdisgr.org](http://www.cdisgr.org)

