



June - July 2009

Aaghaaz
Inspiring
CHANGE

Need for Synergy in Times of Recession

It is almost a year since the crafts of *Pashmina*, *Sozni Embroidery* and *Kani Shawl* from region of *Kashmir* were registered as Geographical Indication (GIs) and “*Tahafuz*” a registered society of artisans was made the proprietors of the said GIs.

The registration itself was a long and tedious process with many downturns but has gradually built a sense of brotherhood and consensus among the artisan community practicing the craft. In contrast, though the initial phase of the initiative evoked limited interest amongst various classes of producers of the craft, it has since gathered momentum to the extent that today a majority of them are aware of the GI registration as a legal protection against sale of fakes and imitations.

The artisans community specially regards that the GI registration as an acknowledgement of the fact that the *Pashmina* craft is their cultural heritage and they are the proud protectors of the associated Traditional Knowledge that has been passed on to them from their forefathers for future generations. As one of the *Kani shawl* weavers Manzoor Ahmad mentioned “we consider it a divine material; sent to us Kashmiris by the almighty to support us in all difficult times and for the betterment of our people”.

The GI registration has also raised expectations of the artisans for higher earnings as is expected and desired from the given initiative.

Together with this, the entire *Pashmina* Supply-chain has been adversely affected

THINK A WHILE

TODAY

Today is the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the activities
And realities of your existence-
The bliss of growth,
The splendour of beauty,
The glory of action.
Yesterday is but a dream,
Tomorrow is only a vision,
But today well lived will make
Every yesterday a dream of happiness
And each tomorrow a vision of hope.
So look ye well therefore to this day.
Such is the salutation of the drawn.

SANSKRIT

Contributed by: Rouf Wadera,
Manager, CDI

by the recent market recession. As a result, the artisans and manufacturers associated with the craft are the most displaced, being at the bottom of the supply-chain with their small-time businesses dependent on an extensive chain of wholesaler traders, exporters, buyers and retailers.

Interestingly, in this regard, the artisans and producers are trying to combat the lowered demands and recession hit economy, in several ways as possible in their capacity. This is an encouraging sign in the otherwise gloomy environment. For example, the artisans and manufacturers have decided to produce only a low priced product range for the next season. Thus the production of stoles has increased versus the production of bigger shawls and correspondingly the elaborate ornamentation has been reduced to suit the lower price range.

While these are obvious solutions that artisans may take up at their level, it is also reducing their profitability and income. It is thus imperative that such challenges are addressed in more professional ways through intervention of design, technology and marketing initiatives, so that the given consequences are limited. Some of the ideas worth exploring in this context are such as identifying alternative market segments like the younger age groups, men's accessory wear or new design themes like fusing the traditional and the contemporary.

There are also possibilities to convert the current crises into viable opportunities by creation of high value products in *Pashmina* that may fetch better returns for the artisans. To point out a few examples the revival of traditional techniques and craft like "*Rafugari*" or patched worked shawls through proper design innovation and quality craftsmanship.

To explain the above, *Kani* as well as the fine *Sozni* embroidered shawls at present are all made in one piece, unlike the patched shawl. Thus a full shawl takes around 6-8 months to make and it has even longer shelf life of about 2 years or so before the same is sold.

The patched shawl that was developed in the 1840's to meet the booming demand, basically meant that artisans were continually at the loom producing a large stock of standard patches of borders and narrow widths of intricate designs. These pieces were later put together ingeniously, by skilled "*Rafugaars*" and according to customers' preference. The assembly was so cleverly done that not only the overall design was harmonious and unique but the intricacy was further enhanced.

There is no reason why similar ideas cannot work in times of low demand. The special darning or *refugaari* could become a unique feature in a shawl and similar explorations that may provide a unique selling proposition.

It is critical that agencies involved in aspects of design, technology and marketing work with artisans in addressing the challenges of the forthcoming season starting from November 2009, in a synergetic manner before any further deterioration in the *pashmina* prospects for artisans and craft industry.

Renuka Savesere,
Designer / Consultant,
CDI

Budding Views

SHAHTOOS: INCREDIBLE BUT NO MORE!

Our land is not only bestowed with beauty but also by some captivating arts and crafts. We are gifted with a unique culture having few traditions inherent to it one of them being 'art and craft'. We possess some skilled hands at disposal which have been providing service to the 'art and craft' of Kashmir for ages. Fabricating the finest products, which have earned the distinction of being the best in the world. Our craft is unique in the world and some say, the best and the most rewarding. It includes carpet, papier-mâché, Pashmina/Kani shawls, rugs and a number of items which in fact are known to most of the Kashmiris. Out of these, shawl trade was the most renowned, It pushed Kashmir to its pristine glory especially shahtoos shawl.

As a product known for its warmth and softness, Shahtoos Shawl was also known as ring shawl as entire shawl could pass through a ring with utmost smoothness. Many people in past have made their fortunes out of shahtoos Shawls business, it has brought many laurels to Kashmir in past but as of now it has no future. There are many reasons for the downfall of this glorious trade, one of the most significant being the ban clamped by the government on this trade (shahtoos trade). The wool which is used to manufacture the shahtoos shawl is obtained from the Tibetan antelope, also called the Chiru after killing the animal, resulting in their endangered status. The government banned the Shahtoos trade to protect the Chiru from extinction but it never thought of alternative solutions for preserving this legendary trade. This not only brought the production to a halt but, also rendered many people jobless.

The other reason which further contributed to the doom of the Shatoosh production and its business, is the indifferent attitude of the people who never searched for alternatives to save this trade. The industry is busy manufacturing adulterated shawls which are of a disputable quality. It might sound strange to us, but the truth is that we tend to overlook the larger interests for our narrow selfish needs. For gratifying our vested interests, we sell 'Amritsar shawls' in the name of Kashmiri shawls. We can well imagine the fate of that edifice that has been constructed in air, one day a strong blow of wind will sway it away.

*Yasir Ahmad
Student
CM & EL (Batch 2008)*

DO YOU KNOW?

Habitat of pashmina goat "capra hircus" lies at the high altitude of approx 4500mtrs in the western Himalayas (including contiguous south eastern Ladakh) with harsh windswept terrain and winter temperature that fall as low as -30degrees.



It takes three goats to produce the wool for 1 standard shawl measuring 78" x 39".



Chief Minister Visits CDI

Mr. Omar Abdullah, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of J&K state visited our Institute and glanced at the various activities and achievements of CDI. The Chief Minister highly appreciated the efforts and the work done by the Institute and also extended financial support in the form of sponsorships to four meritorious students of Craft Management and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CM&EL) Programme.



1. HCM interacting with the artisans at work on a design training workshop at CDI.
2. CM & EL Student, Ms. Mahvash Masood briefing HCM about her work.
3. HCM browsing through the large collection of books available at CDI library.
4. Director, CDI, Mr. M.S.Farooqi taking the HCM through various work done by the institute.
5. CM & EL Student, Ms. Arifa Jan, sharing her views about craft industry and its challenges.
6. Designer, Mann Singh, explaining some of the issues involved in the copper craft industry of Kashmir.

News-in-Brief

Strategic Thinking Module

A module on Strategic Thinking was conducted by Prof. A. G Rao from 12th May - 22nd May 2009, for the faculty members of CDI. The objective was to understand and apply strategic thinking and make effective strategies for future, to learn to make long-term and short-term strategies at an individual level and at an organizational level.

In this module various brain storming sessions and mind mapping was done by the faculty.

Leather - Design & Technical Development Workshop

Design & Technical Development Workshop in the area of Leather started from 1st June 2009, organized by the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar and sponsored by the Development Commissioner-(Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

The workshop was aimed at developing new and competitive product range, with value addition by applying various embroidery techniques. Also, improving the existing skill of artisans in terms of pattern making and stitching techniques. Ms. Shivani Kumar was the design consultant for the said project.

International Education & Career Fair

The students & faculty of Craft Development Institute participated in an International Education & Career Fair Summer from 14th June to 16th June 2009 held at City Center Lal Chowk, Srinagar. The objective was to create awareness about the various career options and job orient courses being offered by CDI. Beside CDI, various other institutes like DBS, RBS, GSB, NIMS, HIMS, NIIT, etc also participated in the said fair.

IRFT Workshop

Workshop on Compliance, Standards and Fair Trade Practices was organized by CDI from 6th July to 9th July'09 and conducted by Mr. Sanjay Dattatraya Raut, Chief Manager Ethical Business Programme, IRFT and Ms. Maya Talkar, Business Counselor, Ethical Business Programme, IRFT. Apart from the students and faculty of CDI, this programme was also attended by various industrialists and businessmen.

The main objective was to evolve a comprehensive understanding, implementation and appreciation of the concepts of international compliances, benchmarking standards and fair trade practices.

Jury Evaluation

The fifth trimester of the 1st batch of Craft Management & Entrepreneurial Leadership programme has completed successfully. It was concluded with



1. Leather - Design & Technical Development Workshop in progress.
- 2 & 3. Some of the bags prepared by the designer during Design & Technical Development Workshop in Leather.
4. Prof. A. G. Rao interacting with the faculty, CDI, during Strategic Thinking module.

News-in-Brief (continued)

the jury evaluation which included experts from the field of design and education. Mr. I.M. Chishti Professor of Architecture, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, Mr. Mann Singh, Designer, Mr. Mifta Majid Shaw, MD (Shaw & Shaw Brothers) besides the internal members. The students were appreciated regarding their performance and were given constructive feedback from the jury.

Industrial Visit

The students of 2nd batch of the Craft Management & Entrepreneurial Leadership programme visited various industries at Delhi as a part of their module "Materials, Processes and Technology". The industries included Brass world, Sibrama, Saify interior decorators, Dhimen engineering corporation, FabIndia, Paragon apparels, Marino, Wise design India, Cuirinde and Arco laser etc.

The objective was to make students gain some practical exposure and experience in the craft sector and other industrial organizations in order to generate awareness, appreciation and understanding towards the nature & characteristics of basic material, processes, tools & techniques, even factors controlling costing, management and other factors.

Hajj / Umrah 2009 Bag

CDI designed and developed a prototype (a carry bag) for the J&K Bank that is intended to be given as a gift for the people pursuing for Hajj or Umrah for year 2009.



1. One of the prototypes designed by CDI for J&K Bank Hajj Pilgrims.
2. Students of CM & EL programme (batch 2) collecting information during their recent Industrial visit at Delhi.
3. Jury session of 1st batch CM & EL students in Progress.

Spotlight

Kashmir Expo - 2009

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry is holding Buyer Seller meet - 2009, sponsored by Ministry of Commerce, Govt. Of India from 8th to 11th August, 2009 at SKICC, Srinagar. About 125 International Buyers of Kashmir Carpets and other Handicrafts including Dry Fruits, Morals, Herbal Oils etc are expected to visit the Buyer Seller Meet- 2009.

International Handicrafts & Handloom Expo

ZAK India Handicrafts & Handlooms Expo-Singapore is aimed at increasing exports by showcasing best handlooms & handicrafts products from India. The expo will be held between 13-16 Aug.2009 at Singapore Expo, which is being organized by ZAK Trade Fairs and Exhibitions Private Limited.

Visitor's Profile:

Importers, Industry Professionals, Decision makers for business contracts to explore joint venture from: Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Burma, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China are the target visitors.

Exhibitor's Profile:

Profile for exhibit includes Manufacturers, Exporters, Trade Promotion Councils / Associations of: Handicrafts, Hand-made Jewellery, Hand-made Textiles, Handloom Furnishings, Hand-made Artifacts, Arts & Crafts, Government agencies for promotion of Handicrafts / Handlooms, Publications / Magazines relating Handicrafts / Handlooms, Handicrafts / Handlooms institutes.



CDI Newsletter: 26 | June - July 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

www.cdisgr.org

