



**Craft
Development
Institute**
SRINAGAR

Newsletter: 20 | November 2008

Need for Investing in Traditional Design Knowledge

Geographical Registration of Kashmir Pashmina, Sozni Embroidery & Kani Shawl

Since its establishment, Craft Development Institute has been working towards international brand building of Kashmir handicrafts, to ensure genuine as well as superior quality of craft merchandise for the consumers by doing registration of the crafts under the Geographical Indication of Goods Act, of India.

Now, to celebrate the first achievement of registering the three of the State's main handicrafts, Kashmir Pashmina, Kani shawl and Sozni embroidery, CDI conducted a grand function on 11th October 2008, at SKICC, Srinagar in presence of His Excellency the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Shri N. N. Vohra, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Commerce & Power Shri Jairam Ramesh and Advisor to Governor Shri H. H. Tyabji, they dedicated the GI to the artisans & craft Industry of Jammu & Kashmir.

(Ceremony pictures on page 3)

There is no doubt that the people of Kashmir are blessed with a deep sensibility and exquisite skills for arts and crafts. The given sensibility has been greatly instrumental in the growth and development of the region, in terms of trade, industry as well as earning a reputation and virtual brand for Kashmir as a centre of arts & crafts of great artistic quality.

The survival and refinement of this artistic talent and its practice is understood to be an outcome of an informed outlook, an open mind, fresh inspirations, exchange of new ideas, patronage and also, a close connectivity between the crafts person, traders, consumers and other members of the industry, especially true during any period that may boast of the best possible arts and crafts production from Kashmir.

However, in present times there are growing complaints of deteriorating quality, worsening skills and craftsmanship, declining number of artisans, rising incidents of cheating and misleading associated with the trade and industry of regional arts & crafts.

It is also felt that the present artisan community has become complacent, is closed to new ideas and the trade unwilling to invest in new knowledge development.

Apparent reasons of this downturn in the overall quality of regional craft are many but often convenient explanations like the global competition from industrial goods, cheap imitations, absence of patronage, lack of facilities and infrastructure, nonconductive environment and social disregard, etc, are given.

These issues are to be seriously addressed, if Kashmir aspires to regain and enjoy its past glory of being a centre of art, heritage and cultural excellence. We need to deliberate and identify necessary actions and priorities towards rebuilding the foundations of the losing legacy of Kashmir.

DO YOU KNOW?

Pashmina has a special luster due to its long fine fibers which are as thin as 12microns. By contrast, the human hair ranges up to 200 microns thickness.



Samples of raw Pashm wool and fine prepared Pashm

Pashmina fabric is made from the soft, downy undercoat that grows primarily on the neck and belly of the Himalayan Mountain goat, also called Pashmina goat, this under coat is called Pashm.



A young weaver weaving a natural colored weave.

The pure Pashm wool is so fine and delicate that it can only be hand spun and hand woven into fabric, as it keeps breaking during the entire process.

The times of patronage and indulgence have changed to more commercially oriented markets for the masses. New value systems have replaced the old ones. What is required is an appreciation and understanding of the present forces that are shaping the current market requirements, competition and the changing taste preferences of consumers. There is a need to rationalize the same towards bringing necessary amendments and interventions in the regional handicraft industry.

Further and most importantly from all points of references, the beginning of the requisite change appears to be internal rather than external. The need to introspect and focus on transforming our inside before we turn around to insist for improvement of all those things that are driven by 'others'. Changing our attitudes, mindsets and outlook by re-looking at the conventional approaches that define work, aesthetics or beauty specific to crafts and also that of related skills, techniques and technology. May be the old definitions are too limiting in today's context and stop us from competing with the factors that shape the present world and its requirements.

In the process of working towards the desired transformation the traditional design leadership has a more significant responsibility to assume in re-engineering and refreshing the industry, with new products, ideas and aesthetics. The other stakeholders and specially the business heads need to appreciate this aspect and proactively support in grooming and training this section of human resource that has the potential to play the needed role. Such an approach has demonstrated dramatic results in many other clusters and production centers of crafts like Saharanpur for wooden furniture, Moradabad for brass items and the north-eastern region of India, known for its cane & bamboo products, to quote a few regional examples. These craft centers were significantly small and not too well established, just about two decades back. After an initial struggle to synchronize efforts, there has been a significant transformation today in these clusters.

Well thought out policies and initiatives from the govt. as well as an active endorsement by private enterprises has been greatly instrumental in the present transformation of these locations and respective industry as well as associated people. These initiatives include setting-up of appropriate infrastructure like training centers and institutions for knowledge and skill up-gradation of artisans, intensive networking with a variety of technical experts for inputs and exchange of information, large scale development towards new range of products, higher quality standards, use of technology as well as aggressive marketing and promotion.

Necessary inferences should be drawn from such successful endeavors and integration. While the Kashmir story can be uniquely different in the nature of solutions to the present challenges but it is important to recognize the fundamental fact that the context of crafts has undergone a change and requires new approaches with equal contribution from all stakeholders of this traditional handicraft sector.

Geographical Registration Ceremony Pictures



1. (from L-R) Commissioner & Secretary to Govt. Department of Industries & Commerce Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Advisor to Governor Shri H. H. Tyabji, His Excellency the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Shri N. N. Vohra, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Commerce & Power Shri Jairam Ramesh .

2. His Excellency the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Shri N. N. Vohra addressing the gathering on the occasion.

3. Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Commerce & Power Shri Jairam Ramesh addressing the gathering on the occasion.

4. Director, CDI, Mr.M.S.Farooqi being awarded for his contribution towards GI Registration of Kashmiri crafts from Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Commerce & Power Shri Jairam Ramesh. Chairman, J&K Bank Mr. Hasib Drabu is also seen in the picture

5. Member of an Artisan Community "Tahafuz" receiving GI Certificate of registration for Pashmina.

SPOTLIGHT

GIFT BAZAAR
19-21-DEC-08

The Gift Bazaar Mega Event will be held between 19-21 December 2008 at Fanthome Hall, Lucknow, India.

Gift Bazaar is intended to create a common platform to bring together almost anyone & everyone connected to latest trends in product & services, be it Service Provider, Manufacturers & Industries or Consumers. Profile for exhibit includes Handicraft, gifts and novelties, dry fruit gift packs and other packaged food, thermoware, cookware and other products, glassware, bone china and melamine ware, cosmetics & other FMCG items, food bazaar, health & fitness, electronics, appliances & computers, furniture & interiors and dress material.

News-in-brief

Integrated Design and Technical Development Project (IDTDP) in the area of "Pulp Moulding" started from 5th June 08 and Mr. Jigme T. Bhutia (Accessory Designer) has been hired for the said project. The project involves aspects of orientation & training for artisans.

The present approach to design development has not explored overall product development in the paper Mache which can be influenced by means of mould innovation in sakhta making.

The project is being organized by the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar and sponsored by the Development Commissioner-(Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

A three month short-term Design Innovation Programme for Naqash was organized by the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar from 15th September, sponsored by the Development Commissioner-(Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

The objective of the programme was to upgrade the skills of Naqash by divulging them to the use of new appropriate techniques, processes, innovative designs and design language in order to the meet present day market requirements also to enhance their communication skills.

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