

AIACA is a membership-based apex body for the handloom and handicraft sectors. Similar to an industry association such as the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), AIACA seeks to represent a range of organizations in the handloom and handicrafts sector and to engage in policy advocacy activities aimed at increasing the domestic market for handloom and handicraft products and improving the standard of living of craftworkers.

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Currently, AIACA consists of 55 member organizations including leading NGOs such as Dastkar, Dastkar Andhra, SEWA, Kalaraksha, Urmul and Udyogini; and private businesses such as Anokhi, Bandhej, FabIndia, Bharat Carpet Manufacturers and Soma.

All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA) to help denote genuine Indian handicrafts, develop sector-wide minimum standards and norms for labeling a product as a handicrafts product, and increase consumer awareness of distinct handicraft traditions, has launched Craftmark initiative. Under this initiative, AIACA will license the Craftmark logo for use by Craft-based businesses, cooperatives and NGOs for use on product tickets and labels.

Organisations which are producers or retailers of Indian handicraft products can be associated with craftmark initiative by applying for the same with AIACA. The association can be obtained by paying membership fees to AIACA. The membership's fee's vary for from organisation to organisation depending upon their nature. The member can also register the production process of the craft, through craftmark initiative however in this case the craft process has to be documented by AIACA. Only after verification that the organisations are producers and retailers of Indian handicraft products and are members of craftmark initiative will the craftmark logo be licenced to applicants



Source:www.craftmark.org

Craft Development Institute, Srinagar

April 2005

News

Training the Trainer....

The Department of Handicrafts, Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir, has around 500 centers that provide basic & advance skill development training in various areas of handicrafts, through out the State. The centres conduct two programmes, namely an elementary course of 1 year and an advance course of 2 years duration. Every year, a fresh batch of 25-30 youngsters is admitted in these courses and given hands-on training to develop future craft practitioners and artisans. Senior craft instructors, who are expected to have an in-depth understanding of a given craft, provide the training in each centre.

The CDI, Srinagar, was approached to visualize a comprehensive orientation programme for the instructors employed at the above-mentioned craft training centres. The proposal was put forward with a primary concern that the training currently provided in the craft centres must also include focus on evolving an entrepreneurial mindset, together with the inputs on skill & technical development of the aspiring artisans.

In response, the CDI, Srinagar, recommended a curriculum for the proposed orientation programme, based on observations made over field visits to various training centres and interactions with the training staff & trainees. It must be mentioned that a sense of motivation and enthusiasm was noticeable in most of the centres visited.

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It was strongly felt that these centres could be a fantastic platform of initiating & introducing positive changes with reference to their sheer number already present and actively functioning.

A curriculum for the orientation programme has been prepared by the CDI and is now ready for implementation. The programme would be carried out with a fundamental approach that the new artisan must be trained to identify newer opportunities to sustain all possible alternatives of business & employment. The artisan must also be sensitized on how to register external changes & make quick adaptation, explore potential synergies and be informed about the available resources of support & service institutions. The artisans must also be introduced to interpret market requirements and appreciate concerns of quality and style, outside their local context. With the growing phenomenon of distant markets, it is extremely necessary that the artisan is not alienated from his work and all efforts are made to bridge the diametrically opposite worlds of producer and consumer.

Innovation in Wooden Furniture

The Craft Development Institute, has recently concluded an integrated project in the area of wooden furniture, traditionally manufactured in and around Srinagar valley, Kashmir.

The project was envisaged as a design development exercise involving professional designers, local artisans, manufacturers and traders engaged in the production of wood based traditional furniture.

The following aspects were focused upon, in the above project:

- To address typical production related concerns and innovate joinery & detailing.
- Introduction of new hardware towards further value addition and quality enhancement.
- Explore alternative surface finishing techniques.
- Explore possibilities of combining modern technology with traditional techniques.
- Develop knock-down possibilities, stackability and volume reduction for economical transportation.
- Design development towards optimal use of material and resources.

It was apparent through a preliminary study, that the traditional style and overall product configuration is not adaptable to the parameters arising with reference to any non-local domestic or international market. To be able to compete in a global context, traditional products must not only propose a unique character but also address other concerns of efficient & timely production, economy of scale, cost effective overheads and professional management of orders.



The project resulted in 3 main collections of different furniture & accessory items. The collections were inspired from the following themes:

1. Application of "Pinjrakari" (traditional lattice work) on furniture based items.
2. Form exploration based on traditional architecture of Kashmir.
3. Contemporarisation of traditional carving styles & application on accessory based items.

The new products were developed in close association with the regional industry & artisans. The CDI, is planning to organize an exhibition cum sale of the new furniture items designed in the project.

The project was conducted by professionally qualified designers from NID, Ahmedabad, namely, Mr. Sandeep Sangaru, Ms. Ranjit Khaira and Mr. Mann Singh.

1. Book-Shelf cum Partition using "Pinjrakari"
2. Bench cum Shoe-Rack
3. Nestling Tables with "Pinjrakari" tops
4. Chair with Willow-Wicker
5. Chair with carved back-rest
6. Chair inspired by traditional architectural forms



Feasibility Report on TK Project

The on-going work over the Feasibility Report to assess potential benefits of protection of Traditional Knowledge with reference to Kashmiri Handicrafts is almost over with background research, analysis and inputs on related legal aspects.

A comprehensive presentation was also arranged on the 25th April 05, to share the conclusions and recommendations of the undertaken study. The presentation was attended by the Hon'ble minister of state, Industries & commerce, Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir, Senior Govt officials, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry and selected entrepreneurs.

Networking with School of Designs, Srinagar

Several interactions have been made with the School of Designs, Srinagar, to mutually conceptualise initiatives towards new product developments and documentation of specific handicrafts.

Assistance to the Dept. of Tourism, J&K Govt.

On the request of the Director General, J&K Tourism, assistance was extended by the CDI, in planning & execution of a photography exhibition at SKICC, Srinagar, on the occasion of inauguration of bus service to Muzaffarabad.