

VISIT REPORT ON HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SHRI. RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR TO BARAMULLA, KASHMIR

FRIDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2021



Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri. Rajeev Chandrasekhar visited traditional crafts cluster of Mirgund Pattan, Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Shri. Bhupinder Kumar along with various dignitaries from the State and District.

Shri. Arshad Mir, Chairman and CEO Mr. Krishan Kumar from Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council walked him through the centre that had all the infrastructure and raw material equipped with the traditional crafts of the region such as Carpets, Embroidery, Paper Machie and Namda products. Shri. Arshad Mir, explained the Minister of State MSDE the detailed process of producing the Carpets, embroidered products, Paper Machie and Namda products during a walk through the centre. Shri Arshad Mir also said that many artisans in Kashmir are moving away due to which export of Jammu and Kashmir handicrafts has declined. He informed him the need of more and more skill development training programs is needed to revive the languishing crafts such as Namda. Skill Development training programs shall not only revive the



traditional and cultural heritage crafts of the region but also shall create Job Opportunities for the artisans and weavers from the region.

The Hon'ble Minister of State held a comprehensive interaction with the artisans and took first hand appraisal of various activities carried out in the handicraft cluster. The artisans shared their views and suggestions for the upgradation and development of handicraft sector. After interaction, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar expressed delight over the magnificent art and skill performed by the local artisans and



said the union Govt. led by Hon'ble Prime Minister aims to promote traditional industries based on local art and skills. He said that through Skilling and up-skilling programme, special emphasis will be laid for the encouragement of local artisans adding that the quantum of revenue generated through handicraft industry to mark the exponential growth.



The Hon'ble Minister of State also distributed felicitation certificates to the local artisans who were successfully trained and passed the assessment on the various job roles of Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council conforming to National Skills Qualifications Framework under Skill India Mission.

TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS OF KASHMIR

Located in the northern most part of India the union territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir is the 2nd largest UT (Geographical Area - 42,241 sq. km) in India in terms of geographical area. The youngest Indian UT has a population of ~1.22 Crores.

The Handicrafts of Jammu & Kashmir have acquired worldwide fame for their exquisite refinement and aesthetic elegance. These crafts have great diversity and demand. There are nearly 5 lacs artisans directly dependent upon handicrafts in the State for their livelihood and there is still great potential for more employment to be generated in this sector if markets are expanded and demand is increased.

List of prominent traditional crafts of Kashmir are as follows:

Carpets:

Carpets from 200 knots to 900 knots/sq. inch both in wool & silk yarn have attained such excellence that they rank amongst the finest in the world. The loom used in Kashmir carpet weaving is composed of two horizontal wooden beams between which the wrap threads are stretched, one beam in front of the weaver and the second behind the first. The difference between a carpet and other hand woven rugs lies in the fact that short lengths of the thread or yarn are tied to wrap chains to form the pile of the carpet. These are commonly called knots though it is a loop rather than an actual knot.



There are different types of knots and in Kashmir the Farsi baff and the Persian system known as Sehna, or Sinneh, knot is originally used. Very simple tools are used to thread these knots, a wood or Metal comb to push knots and weft tightly together and pair of short scissors to cut the pile of the carpet to an even form once it is finished.

Kashmiri Shawls:

Shawls are produced by two techniques, loom woven or kani shawls and the needle embroidered or sozni shawls. The basic fabric is of the three types - Shah Tush, Pashmina and Raffal. Shah Tush (King of wool) passes through a ring and is also known as Ring shawl. It comes from a rare Tibetan antelope living at a height of over 14000 ft in the wilds of the Himalayas.



Pashmina is known world over as cashmere wool, it comes from a special goat (*Capra hircus*) living at an altitude of 12000 to 14000 ft reared by shepherded nomads around famous pongkong lake in close vicinity of western Tibet. Raffal is spun out of marino wool tops and is a popular type of shawl. The shawls are embroidered in floral motifs, various designs available range from Neemdoor, Doordaar, Paladaar, Baildaar, Jaalis and Jmmas, with the help of needle. Whereas kani shawls are woven on looms with the help of kanis. Kanis are small eyeless bobbins used instead of the shuttle.

Wood Carving:

Carved walnut wood-work is among the most important crafts of Kashmir. Kashmir is now one of the few places in the world where walnut is still available at an altitude of 5500-7500 feet above sea level. The wood is hard and durable, its close grain and even texture facilitating fine and detailed work. It also presents visually interesting effects with mere plain polished surfaces in fact in contemporary products, plain surfaces and small carvings are preferred, especially on trays, tables, bowls and similar items. The Kashmir craftsman, however, rejoices in carving intricate and varied designs. A variety of carved products bear recurrent motifs of the rose, lotus, iris, bunches of grapes, pears and chinar leaves. Dragon motifs and patterns taken from kani and embroidered shawls all find their place in wooden objects with deep relief carving. A variety of articles, both decorative and utilitarian, ranging from small items like bowls, trays, cigarette boxes, wall plaques and table lamps to screens, bedsteads and larger items of furniture are carved in walnut wood. Four main types of carving are usually practised in Kashmir-raised, engraved, undercut and plain. The carving of furniture and smaller items is an elaborate process and involves high degree of skill and craftsmanship. The carving is done with the help of small indigenous tools. The art of wood carving is centred in the city of Srinagar.



Papier Machie:

Papier Machie is one of the most popular of crafts practised in Kashmir. The tradition of the Kashmir Papier Machie has its origin rooted in the 15th century when king Zain-ul-Abidin invited accomplished artists and craftsmen from Central Asia.

A French term so commonly adopted in East and West and meaning "mashed paper" papier machine is in fact a unique combination of line and colour on moulded forms of a variety of objects. It involves ornamentation in colour over smoothened surfaces built up of paper pulp or layers of paper.



Paper pulp is not always found effective and is some times replaced by other substitutes. The colours painted on object are made from pigments diluted in water to which some glue is added to fix the ground on which it is used. The three categories of colours are -- mineral (both actual and artificial) organic (both plants insects etc.) Vegetables. The final objects papier machie is given one or two coats of varnish which besides giving it shine serves as a protective agent.

Crewel:

Crewel - A special kind of embroidery done with a hook known as crewel is commonly used for drapery and upholstery. Rows of chain stitch done with hook from solid patterns usually rotating from centre & creating an embossed effect to add richness to the textile.

Crewel embroidery is done on thick material popularly used for furnishing and usually carries floral and creeper designs.

The designs are available in assortment of colours ranging from a single colour to multi colour embroidery. The width of the material is 54 inches and is available in running meterage. The price is related with the amount of embroidery done on the material. This craft is also available on bed spreads in various sizes ranging from single to king size.



Namdha:

Namdha - A hand made felt rug that makes excellent floor covering, made of unspun wool or wool and cotton pressed and felted in specific proportions, the rug originally came from Yarkand, Sinkiang and stayed to become an indigenous craft. The felt is embroidered with a hook in bold designs and assortment of colours. The sizes range from 2'x3', 3'x4', 4'x6' to 6'x9' feet and 3',4',5' 6' dia in round shape. The quality depends upon percentage of wool in the felt, popularly made quality is 32% wool, 50% wool and 100% wool.



Phool Kari:

Phool Kari - A traditional craft, recently revived, is Phoolkari, Bagh or Shaloo embroidered in the phoolkari style was an essential part of the bride's trousers till only a few decades back. A craft with its origin in Punjab Phoolkari, as the very name suggests is a style of embroidery of floral designs. The present day designs, however, are by no means limited to flowers alone and include a variety of other patterns.



Chain Stitch:

Chain Stitch - Natively known as "Jalakdozi", chain stitch rugs are the speciality of Kashmir. These rugs are made on "hessain cloth" or hand made cotton cloth, in continued stitch with superior woolen or silken yarn, with the help of a hook type tool natively called "Aurah".



The designs range from floral patterns to animal and human forms traced by a designer, while the craftsman embroiders in two-ply or three ply woolen/silken yarn. The rug looks like a carpet in which the pile is substituted by the texture. Chainstitch rugs is used both as floor covering and wall hanging.

The rug is supported with cloth-lining to add to the durability. It comes in sizes 2x3, 3x5, 6x4, 6x9 and 9x12 feet.

HCSSC VISION FOR KASHMIR

The main objective of Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council is promotion and development of vibrant traditional Handloom, Carpets and Handicrafts products indigenous and unique to the state of Kashmir. With this vision HCSSC wishes to establish a **Traditional Heritage crafts Centre of Excellence** in various traditional crafts clusters of Kashmir, for skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling the existing artisans and weavers, starting with Baramulla. HCSSC so far has trained more than **24000 artisans** and weavers from Kashmir State. Post training these artisans and weavers are working as self-employed workers and have been connected with the Industries from in and around the respective clusters.