

PAKISAN'S GIFT OF HERITAGE AND ITS EXPORT VALUE

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INTRODUCTION

The artisan crafts especially Handicrafts of a country are gifts from its heritage. The society that takes pride in these gifts exudes genuine love of the country and beauty manifesting itself through the creative hands of the craft-man.

Pakistan is one of the countries reputed for their exquisite and exceedingly attractive handicrafts since time immemorial. It dates back to the days of Moen-Jo-Daro, Harappa and Taxila.¹ The Mughul rulers also gave a new dimension to the art of handicrafts. They not only encouraged talented artisans but also gave them every assistance to revitalize their unique workmanship.² Pakistan was established in the same fertile areas where, the skill of the craftman has undoubtedly improved where the skill of the craftman has undoubtedly improved to the highest degree after practising craftmanship for centuries, where the skillful craftsmen with the help of their heritage and workmanship achieved a prestigious position. What ever bequeathed to them were eventually the efforts of their ancestors which reached to them with time and with same stream of time these craftsmen with their diligence and devotion polished the ingenuity of their craftmanship.

Whether it had been Sindh or Baluchistan, Punjab or NWFP artisans of each region alongwith its rich heritage specialized in making different articles and played a very vital role in projecting and promoting the handicraft of this country. Further else the people of these

regions perpetually praised the work of their artisan in every space of time and adopted as a part of their customs and traditions and thus patronage their culture.

A little addition was eventuated in the line of Pakistan's craftsmen when with the attainment of independence a number of Muslim artisans migrated from India to Pakistan gave a new edge to their inherent talents.³ Colonies of different classes of artisan were set up to develop their inherent talent on organized scale.

Creative hands of Pakistan produce such goods of exquisite beauty and ornate design that possess a sense of admiration throughout the globe. Handicrafts are Pakistan's proud cultural heritage. The ever evolving patterns and designs reflect the changes in aesthetic values and requirements in terms of utility. With the passage of time, new designs have been developed, blending centuries old motifs and needs of the modern life. Craftsmen have acquired from traditions an urge to create things of beauty and a sure skill from experience to meet the demands of times, which has introduced an element of compulsion responsible for the emergence of the innovation, taste and trends. Thus handicrafts gained an added importance in terms of aesthetic and utility value.

The handicraft making industry in Pakistan also defined as cottage industries, includes all units which are owned by craftsmen and artisans. Diversified product will serve the interest of the common man in a better way and will create an extended demand in foreign markets. Whether exquisite hand embroideries or lacquer work, brass ware or ivory, wood craft and pottery or cotton materials, they can all contribute to the embellishment of the beauty and elegance of a house. No wonder, therefore,

that these handicrafts are on the top of the shopping list of every foreign tourist. Men and women of taste in Pakistan embellish their surroundings with these items of rare beauty.

The Government handicraft centres and many gift shops in Pakistan are the centre of attraction all the year round. Both domestic and foreign customers throng these places every day to make the best buy of their time. Handicraft firms of Pakistan are producing replicas of the country's ancient glories and rich cultural heritage. Among the modern products, which are both of decorative value and can be put to various usage, are mirror work and embroideries carried out on cloth or leather, hand bags, belts, money wallets, bidri which involves moulding, carving and gold or silver inlaying in base metal, wood carving, ivory and bone carving craft, pottery and porcelain, lampshades made of skin, brass and copper jars and vases and bridal ornaments. Pakistan handicrafts are treated with considerable admiration at international fairs and exhibitions. Handicrafts of Pakistan produced on cottage industry basis and included in the export list of the economy.⁴ This industry has a great contribution in the welfare and development of the country. This has not only entertained the domestic requirements, but also has a source of foreign exchange earning. Besides the exports of leading products there is a great potential for the export of handicrafts to foreign countries. Proper planning and development of the industry can help in earning a lot of foreign exchange which needed very badly for the development of this country.

The purpose of this papers to explore and evaluate the primary handicrafts of Pakistan and their contribution in foreign trade of this country and also to underline

certain considerable suggestions for the future prospectus and development of these gifts of heritage which are the vital assets to the economy of the country.

HANDICRAFTS AREAS

Handlooms

In spite of modern textile industry products, hand woven cotton cloth (Khaddar) is still a very popular fabric. They are either block printed or beautifully embroidered. In the Northern Area even woollen cloth is hand-woven. Sindh is famous for its Khaddi and Sussi and Punjab for beautiful Khes-Lungi in cotton and Silk. Brocade is the finest handloom product. Kamkhwab (beyond the dreams) is the most prized one. It is produced by interweaving silk and gold or silver thread in a rich variety of colours and floral designs. Karachi, Khairpur and Lahore are famous for excellent Brocades and Silk fabric (Banarsi Silk).⁵

Printing and Dyeing

Various forms of hand printing and dyeing of textile in traditional designs and bright colours are in vogue throughout Pakistan.⁶ Sindh is reputed for its Bandhanu for dupatta and Shagra (Shirt) materials. The patterns are generally geometric arrangements of dots, squares or circles in vivid green red, yellow and indigo. The famous multipurpose Ajrak in which predominant colours of dark blue and maroon with a sprinkling of white, comes in a variety of designs, and is a very popular print with the Pakistani and foreign tourists as well as the Sindhis themselves.⁷ The Northern areas of Pakistan are well known for their calico - printed lehafs (cover sets) and chadders (shawls), which have distinct persian in-

fluence in the designs and colours. Peshawar is the home of Khosi method of printing textiles with wax. Another form of textile printing, found mainly in Sindh is Khari or tinsel printing, the process consists of printing the design by means of wooden block using coloured or silver or gold powder.

Embroidery

Embroidery in cotton, silk, wool, gold or silver thread has a proud long standing tradition in Pakistan. Swat is famous for its Kashida embroidery. Dori work or braid embroidery is very effectively displayed on Choghas (long wool coats). And Swat quilt work has been adopted for ladies bags and table mats. The traditional Baluchi or Sindhi embroidery presents fascinating works of art in colour and clearly stands out among the best in the world. The embroidery alone has 118 different basic designs and their Pusks (shirts), table and tray mats and caps fully justify this claim. Minute mirrors in different shapes are used as an additional embellishment, but in a more sophisticated manner than in the embroidery of Sindh. The Sindhi embroidery consists of a variety of stitches, repetitive geometric and floral patterns, and motifs using abstracted forms of birds and animals.⁸

Small mirrors of different shades are incorporated to form an integral part of the design. The colours used in upper Sindh (Uttar) generally tend to be brighter than those employed in lower Sindh (Lar). Sindh is also famous for its colourful patch work quilt called Rilli, made from old, dyed pieces of cotton or silk cloth, the basic design is a multicoloured check tukri. Embroidery in silk, gold and silver thread, beads, shells and tassels is often used to add ornament to it. The leather embroidery of

Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab is a popular medium for decorating shoes, hand bags and horse and camel gears.

Pottery

Unglazed pottery is made every where in Pakistan and has been so far the last 5000 years. Earthen toys and vessels recovered from Moen-Jo-Daro are identical with those in use today. In Pakistan the places famous for un-glazed pottery are Gujrat, Sahiwal, Rawalpindi, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dudu.

The glazed pottery of Sindh, and Punjab is famous for its simplicity of its shapes, the spontaneity and the beauty of its colouring. The thin clay pottery called Kaghazi (paper thin), the ultimate in the potter's craft, is produced in Bahawalpur, Rawalpindi and its environs also produced colourful painted pottery. Sindh is famous for painted pottery in which two colours are used at the same time, black and maroon and even they are usually light and dark shades of the same colour.

The glazed pottery of Pakistan, which dates back to the 13th A.D. century, has obvious traces of the Persian influence, and its use in architectural decoration such as mosaic and tile is an exclusively Muslim contribution to the architecture in the region.⁹ Fine examples of such pottery are today found in Hala, Multan, Jhang, Gujrat and Peshawar.

Wood Work

The traditional wood work, such as furniture, carving, inlay, lac turnery, musical instruments and toys, is a very ancient art. In Sindh, Punjab and NWFP regions, it

is not uncommon to find even in small villages, carved doors and pillars on which floral designs are delicately chiselled with considerable skill and beauty. The wood carving of Kashmir is of international fame, chiniot is known for brass inlay. The designs are bold and have freedom of execution which is absent from the more or less similar work of the rest of the Punjab Veneer and marquetry, using buffalo horns, ivory and, more recently, plastic are also very popular. This craft when applied to boxes, trays and table tops is often mistaken for inlay works. Ornamenting of wood with lac demands intricate and artistic manipulation by the craftsman of Khankut (Hala) and Kashmore.

The sub continent was acquainted by the first glimpse of lacquer work toys and handicrafts during the Mughul period 1000 A.D. to 1700 A.D. Since then the industry flourished although the art and craft has undergone numerous changes due to passage of time and varying demands. Hala and Kashmore in Sindh are very much famous for their traditional lacquer work on toys and handicrafts. The technique of applying patterns of colour to the surface of the wood is a form of lacquer work also used to decorate chair, head boards of beds, bedsteads, tables and sofas. Sindh lacque work is colorful, brightly oranamented and inexpensive.¹⁰

Metal Craft

Pakistan is the home of varied types of metal wares. The metals most extensively used are copper and brass. Each area has its local characteristics. Persian, Chinese & European influences can be traced but the products are distinctly Pakistani.¹¹ Brass and copper have wide-ranging technique, design tradition and excellence to offer.

Enamelling or enamel inlay to metal is mainly done at Multan, Hyderabad and Karachi. The repousse work in base metal is practised in the Punjab, Kashmir and Peshawar. In the Punjab the designs are in low relief with clean out-lines. In Kashmir elaborate repousse in low relief is common. Peshawar metalware is conspicuously Arabesque, and the techniques is delicately chiselled, pierced or incised. Today Gujrat and Sialkot are renowned centres of Koftgari, producing domestic articles. Copper and brass articles, though less intricately engraved, are seen in the Kasera bazzars of copper market of Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi and Karachi.

Silverware industry has developed into a fine art, particularly with addition of Minakri (Enamel). The silver jewellery of the Punjab is identical in designs and execution with the gold jewellery of towns. In Multan, Bahawalpur and Sindh, silver ornaments enamelled in light, or dark blue, red, black and yellow are made. The jewellery of Chitral, Kaghan and Swat is clearly influenced by Graeco-Roman and Buthist cultures. There is pronounced absence of stone setting in the jewellery of NWFP. The jewellery in Baluchistan and Sindh has a definite family resemblance, though the local products retain their regional names.

Besides the handicrafts mentioned above, two other major artisan crafts play very dominant role in the handicraft of Pakistan, it is handmade carpet and onyx and marble industry. The art of these handicraft are since long remain praise worthy and entitled to proclaim themselves as one of the important gift of heritage,¹² are excluded from the list of those handicrafts which are listed as handicrafts of Pakistan consider for exports, as the both item, posses separate independent values and utility.

Export of Handicrafts

Importance of handicraft industry in the economy of Pakistan is well established, export as a vital commodity for export. The export of handicrafts have, however, varied trends in the trade. In the year 1970-80 value wise export was quite impressive, that is Rs.105.89 million but due to gradual decline it reached at Rs.60.01 million in 1984-85, showing a decline of 43%.

The conditions changed in subsequent period while some effective measures were introduced to raise the exports of handicrafts, resulting into rapid rise and a healthy figures of Rs.162.88 million was achieved in 1989-90, thus showing a rise of 63% in the exports of handicrafts, as evident from the following table.13

TABLE - 1
Showing Export of Handicrafts
(Rs.in thousand)

YEAR	VALUE
1979-80	105895
1980-81	88625
1981-82	77364
1982-83	74015
1983-84	73178
1984-85	60013
1986-87	103358
1987-88	111351
1988-89	149600
1989-90	162885

Source: Statistical Survey, Government of Pakistan

This was all due to government's encouragement and incentives to boost up the handicrafts manufacturing industry and the export of handicrafts.

INCENTIVES

Handicrafts industry has been provided following incentive for encouraging exports:

1. 8% of FOB value of customs rebate is available on export of handicrafts made of copper, brass, aluminium and alluminumally.
2. Import of certain banned and restriated items which are used in the production of handicrafts, are allowed on cash licence.
3. Income tax and super tax on profits and gains derived from exports of goods manufactured in Pakistan, reduced by an amount equal to 55% of amount income tax and super tax if any, attributable to sales proceeds of such goods.¹⁴

MAIN BUYER'S OF PAKISTANI HANDICRAFTS

Pakistan's handicrafts are exported to many countries of the world in Europe, America, Asia and Africa and have acquired a sound recognition from its clients, entailing a sense of good will and mutual trust and helps in bringing two countries together culturly.

The leading buyers of Pakistani handicrafts are USA, UK, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Dubai, Japan, France and Italy. Following is the list of main buyer's of Pakistan handicrafts showing the value-wise export in the last three years.¹⁵

TABLE - 2

SHOWING COUNTRY WISE EXPORT OF HANDICRAFTS
(Main Importers of Pakistani Handicrafts)

Value in thousands Rs.

COUNTRY	1989-90	% of Total	1988-90	% of Total	1987-88	% of Total
USA	28506	17.5%	24783	16.5%	13894	12.5%
Saudi Arabia	23007	14%	28693	19.1%	32772	29.5%
UK	16934	10.5%	16847	11.2%	9043	9.1%
Dubai	14000	8.5%	12382	9.2%	3636	3.2%
Germany	13074	8%	9355	5.2%	4533	4%
Japan	8734	5.3%	7207	4.8%	9428	9.4%
France	8336	5.1%	7534	5%	6130	5.5%
Italy	8312	5.1%	6302	4.2%	5929	5.3%
Netherlands	4714	2.8%	2849	1.9%	990	0.8%
Luxemburg	4670	2.8%	462	0.3%	-	00%
Canada	4161	2.8%	1909	1.2%	1506	1.3%
Belgium	3061	1.8%	3598	2.4%	1685	1.5%
Kuwait	2331	1.4%	1220	0.8%	1026	0.9%
Iraq	1935	1.2%	17	0.01%	3217	2.8%
South Korea	1933	1.1%	1594	1%	1430	1.2%
Bahrain	1921	1.1%	1782	1.1%	2642	2.3%
Australia	1227	0.75%	2628	1.7%	2522	2.2%
Other countries	17251	10.5%	20438	13.6%	10968	9.8%
TOTAL	162885	100%	149600	100%	111351	100%

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics of Pakistan Survey,
Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

CONCLUSION

The scope of the development of the handicrafts industry in Pakistan would continue to be fair wide, for promotion of handicrafts industry it is suggested that efforts should be made to provide financial assistance to craftsman through commercial banks, IDBP and other specialized agencies on quick, simplified and adequate basis. Small industrial estates should be established. There is no institutional frame work for promoting sub-contracting, making it difficult to integrate properly with the large and medium scale industries.

Participation in fairs and exhibitions, national as well as international should be comprehensive with a wide range of handicrafts for display and retail sales. Procurement and distribution of imported raw material, to artisans and craftsmen should be rationalized. Development centres to be established to provide technical training and guidance to artisans. Exports of handicrafts to be allowed free and without duty under liberal concessions and grants.

If government takes serious steps and look into these suggestions, the export should increase automatically and our products would become competitive in the international market.

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