



**GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS),
PUDUKKOTTAI-622 001., TAMIL NADU, INDIA**

**(An Autonomous Institution Affiliated to Bharathidasan University)
Re-Accredited (3rd Cycle) with 'B⁺⁺' Grade by NAAC**

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EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT MONTHLY REPORT

With the motto of establishing Unity in Diversity of our Nation to maintain strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our country, the Government of India has instigated the nationwide programme called **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.

Based on MHRD's methodology, each state is paired with some other state to exchange their various field of knowledge for example, (language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.) Accordingly, Tamil Nadu is paired along with Jammu & Kashmir.

This inspired our **EBSB Team** which has been effectively working on the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) conducting various activities every month since June 2020. The EBSB team of our college planned to give an aesthetic joy to the students, a visual tour series with various themes. For the month of **February 2022 Visual Tour Series – 1 : Arts and Crafts of Kashmir** was presented to the students.

Details

Report for the Month : **February 2022**

Topic : **Visual Tour Series – 1 : “Arts and Crafts of Kashmir”**

Beneficiaries: Students of Government Arts College for Women (A), Pudukkottai -1, Tamilnadu.

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VISUAL TOUR SERIES – 1 : ARTS AND CRAFTS OF KASHMIR

Not only is Kashmir one of the most picturesque corners of India but also home to many handicrafts which speak volumes about the artistic expertise of the Kashmiri people

1.Papier Mache



The bright colours, the intricate patterns with minute detailing on the products, and the range of merchandise will keep one engaged for hours. The art is believed to have been introduced to the valley from Persia and was used to make designer ‘qalam dan’ or pen holders. Today, one will find boxes, bowls, cups, trays, decorative pieces, etc. in all sizes. According to some senior craftsmen, artists in Kashmir have even mastered the art of using liquid gold for painting. Artists draw inspiration from a variety of things around them, from geometric patterns to floral motifs to scenes from everyday life. Apart from using distinct colours for the paintings, different shades of the same hue and intricate use of brushes of various thickness are also used to add a dramatic effect.

2.Crewel embroidery



Part of Kashmir’s needlework variety, it is a chain stitch using threads made of fine wool with the help of a crewel (a pointed hook). Earlier executed on silk and cotton, now artists have learned how to work on a variety of fabrics, including silk organza, velvet, linen and even jute. The crewel fabrics are usually used to make furnishings or upholsteries. Flowers and creepers seem to be the most popular pattern. Some of the commonly available products include curtains, bed spreads, cushions, pillow covers, throws, etc.

3. Sozani embroidery



This typical embroidery from Kashmir, better known as Kashmir Sozani craft, which is also believed to have Persian roots, can be found on various fabrics and apparels. Executed by an expert ‘sozankar’, the appeal of the embroidery lies in the combination of basic and reinforced stitches. The dominant motif appears to be the ‘buti’, essentially a floral or an almond with a bent tip. However, geometric patterns as well as the valleys flora and fauna may also be part of the motif. Although the sozani embroidery may differ in quality, the finest is said to be those where the sozani stitch is used for outlining the motif with a darker shade of thread while the filling up and the empty space outside the motif are covered with fine sozani stitches in different colours, and there is no visible gap between the outline and the filling. The finest sozani embroideries may take months and are usually used on costly material such as silk and pure pashmina. If you are at a factory outlet, request to see the traditional wooden blocks used for drawing the patterns, which are also handmade by a special group of craftsmen.

4. Walnut wood carving



With walnut trees indigenous to Kashmir, it is not surprising that the enterprising artisans of Kashmir have been using it to produce a variety of handcrafted products. The close grain, the even texture and the colour are used to enhance the carvings in deep relief or made by undercutting. While the large products such as cabinets, folding screens, bed or dining tables may not be easy to carry back home (look for them at crafts fairs near home), you can always choose from smaller items such as trays, candle stands, jewellery cases, decorative items, etc.

5. Hand-knotted carpet



It is the density of the knots per square inch which makes Kashmir's hand-knotted carpets a work of art. Carpet weaving can be found across the state. The carpets are made in silk on silk, silk and cotton, wool and cotton and silk, and wool and cotton. Available in variegated colours, designs and sizes, they can be a collector's item if you are a discerning buyer. However, if you are not too keen to lug it around during your return journey from the state, enquire at the Jammu and Kashmir state emporiums found in most metro cities

6. Pashmina



From an item of basic clothing to see Kashmiris through the bitter winter to a much sought after luxury item, the pashmina has travelled a long way indeed. According to the Srinagar-based Craft Development Institute, which had filed the application for the Geographical Indication tag for Kashmir pashmina, this warm woollen fabric, derived from the fleece of the Himalayan mountain goat (the pashmina goat) was first introduced by the inhabitants of the state. It is said that the best pashmina is obtained from the soft, downy undercoat that grows primarily on the neck and belly of the goat. It is usually woven in three patterns - twill or 'sade bunai', the popular diamond or 'cheshm-e-bulbul' and the special herringbone style or 'gada kond'. The raw wool is turned into a fine shawl through an elaborate process and is a specialised job as the softness has to be retained through every step.

7.Saffron



Locally known as ‘kesar’ and cultivated in the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, it is said to be the one of the costliest of spices (by weight) in the world. The strands, known for their strong fragrance and rich colour, are actually the dried stigma and styles of the flower of the *Crocus sativus* plant. Pampore (Pulwama district) is known as the hub of saffron cultivation. It is also grown in Budgam, Kishtwar and Srinagar. Apart from being used in cooking, kesar is also used as an edible colouring agent, in medicine, etc. Subject to weather conditions, the flowering usually takes place between the second fortnight of October and first week of November.