

## **A BRIEF NOTE ON THE HANDICRAFTS OF HOSHIARPUR**

Punjab is a state known for its colourful handicrafts, which brings out the colourful and vibrant spirit of the state of Punjab. The handicrafts of this vibrant state is acclaimed world over. Hoshiarpur the land of ‘choes’ is famous for its handicrafts too. The prominent handicrafts of Hoshiarpur district of Punjab are detailed below:-

### **WOOD INLAY**

Inlay is a decorative technique of inserting pieces of contrasting acrylic, bones, and shell in to depressions in a base object to form patterns that normally are flush with the matrix. The district of Hoshiarpur produces dark sheesham furniture with painstakingly detailed dense foliage pattern that are both engraved and inlaid with acrylic, camel bone and shell. The motifs are either Persian origin or adaptations of the executive wood carving in the havelis, mansions of Hoshiarpur. The foliage pattern usually depict trees that appear in most of the inlay work are now being supplemented with figures and landscapes the details of which are etched and colored with natural ink. When the craft came up in this region, the wood workers inlaid their wares with ivory remnants brought from the ivory carvers of Amritsar. Acrylic having replaced ivory as the medium of inlay the crafts men have taken to creating large products like Coffee Table, Chairs, Dressing Mirror, Charkha, Almirah, Dining Table and small utility items like tray, pen stand, jewellery box, photograph frame, flower base, charkha, agarbati stand etc. Around 100-150 artisans are practicing this craft in Hoshiarpur district but scarcity of sheesham wood and declining figure of handicraft wood inlay artisans have posed a real threat to this beautiful traditional craft. The areas of district Hoshiarpur where this craft is practiced are main town, Village Bassi Gulam hissain, Boothgah, Adamwal, Rampur colony, tathlan etc. Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) has conferred National Award, and National Merit Certificate in this craft of wood inlay. Efforts are being made to revive this languishing craft through Guru shishya Prampara training programmes sanctioned by this Office from time to time.

### **WOOD & LAC TURNERY (LACQUERWARE)**

Among the wood working community of Hoshiarpur are the khardila the turners who make turned wooden furniture ornamented with motifs etched on a lac coating. Furniture elements are turned on power lathes and the rotating pieces are coated with multiple layers of lac usually applied in three layers-while, black and red in that order. Yellow is occasionally added as well. Purple the once characteristic colour of lac coated ware from Hoshiarpur is seldom used now. After the lac is applied, a sharp metal is used to etch motifs thus revealing the underlying colours. Contemporary designs appear in white on a reddish brown base, apparently imitating the plastic inlay work practiced in Hoshiarpur. The layered lac coating done in Jalandhar district of Punjab uses different colours from those of Hoshiarpur district of the state and the surface is engraved using needles so that the design appears in a variety of colours. Artistic peerahs (chairs), tables, table lamps, baby walker, Gajras, jewellery boxes, fancy boxes, flower bases, candle stands, toys and animal figures etc are some of the main items presently made in this craft. The areas of district Hoshiarpur where this craft is practiced are main town, Village Bassi Gulam hissain, bijwara kalan, nasrala, basi kiran, nara nagal etc. Not more than 25-30 artisans are practicing this craft at present. If efforts are not made to revive this craft it will soon become extinct.

## **ARTISTIC WOODEN FURNITURE**

Among the other wood crafts of Punjab, pidhis deserve a special mentioning. They are the small stools made of wood, which has an intricate design made on it. They are small in comparison to chairs, just 6-10 inches in height. They are highly attractive and add to the décor of the room apart from serving the usual purpose of seating. Pidhis are traditional and at the same time, have a modern touch. Kartarpur, Jalndhar and Hoshiarpur are the main centres of pdihi manufacturing. . The carpenters of Patiala, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Bhera, Kartarpur and Hoshiarpur are highly acclaimed for their artistic skills. Woodcarvers use the skill of carving, incising, coloring and inlaying.

## **MUD WORK**

Mud work is one of the simplest form of art in Punjab used for designing different motifs. This craft is practiced in villages in Punjab. Pottery is a form of mud work in which mud and clay is used to make utensils and other objects. This craft is being practiced in Bassi Daulat Khan, Bahadurpur, Nahar colony, Hoshiarpur etc.

## **PHULKARI**

One of the most colourful and vibrant feature of Punjab's handicraft tradition is Phulkari which goes back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Phulkari literally means flower working which was at one time used as the word for embroidery but slowly the word phulkari became restricted to embroidered shawls and head scarfs, simple and sparsely embroidered Odni (Head scarf), Dupatta and shawls made for everyday use. Phulkari and baghs are worn by women during marriage festivals and other joyous occasions. They were embroidered by the women for their own use and use of other family members and are not for sale in the market. Thus it was purely a domestic art which not only satisfied their inner urge for creation but brought colours in to day to day life.

Today Phulkari has attained a commercial proportion and has moved away from the geometrical style and has stylized flowers, animals, birds, jewellery pattern etc. This craft of phulkari is practiced all over Punjab including Hoshiarpur distt but efforts have not been made to explore and develop this craft in Hoshiarpur distt. Areas where this craft has been developed by the efforts of D.C(Handicrafts) include Ropar, Nawan Shehar, Amritsar, Mansa, Bathinda and Gurdaspur.

Assistant Director(H)  
HM&SEC Hoshiarpur