

GOLDEN RESEARCH THOUGHTS

A TRADITIONAL ART OF KASHMIR- PASHMINA SHAWL



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Abstract: The Kashmir valley is called paradise on earth. It is a small state of India, located on the north end. Kashmir is also playing an important role as a business point of view. Shawl made in Kashmiri are quite famous around the world. These are considered as a symbol of fashion. The shawl industry of Kashmir is pristine sustenance which is given over generation after generation for centuries. these shawls are so beautiful and delicate but the manufacturing process is so daunting. The processes of making shawls are very laborious and time consuming. The objective of the study was to enucleate the traditional process of shawl weaving in Kashmir valley.

Keywords: Traditional Art , manufacturing process , making shawl.

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INTRODUCTION

Kashmir shawl used to create three types of fibers - the cashmere, Pashmina, and Shatoosh. Some people believe that cashmere and Pashmina fibers are same but when we talk to the local weavers and businessmen they told us that the cashmere and Pashmina fiber is different depending on its length and thickness. Thick and long fibers from *Capra hircus* sheep known as cashmere while the soft and small fibers are placed in the category of Pashmina. Shatoosh fiber is derived from an antelope named Chiru, In terms of quality it is the most delicate and soft fiber. To get Shatoosh fiber Chiru is killed by the men, for a shawl around 3 or 4 chirus are killed. Seeing constantly dwindling of chirus government has banned the construction of Shatoosh. In Kashmir valley there are some minor changes noticed over time in shawl manufacturing business.

The shawl making business in Kashmir valley is an art and tradition for the people of Kashmir that's why even after passing centuries the shawl making process is in its original form and it did not change.

Traditionally, the process of making shawl is divided into several parts. From collect the fibers to the prepared shawl this task is divided into several stages. Each phase is completed by a special group. Each person of the group work has an important work at his level. The work has done very carefully as a tiny mistake can be spoil the entire functions.

The Traditional Process Of Making Shawl

Three districts of Kashmir Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal are the well known centers of Pashmina shawl making. The traditional Pashmina shawl making is separated in some steps where the expert of the method introduced with shawl. These all is work like a chain.

Getting raw material- to get the raw material for Shawl is done by the owners of *capra hircus* sheep locally they known as Shepherd. They rearing the sheep and collect the wool obtained from sheep The Pashmina is produced for the duration of spring season, when animal unsurprisingly discard their undercoat as natural schedule. The collection of wool is done manually by combing. And reach the wool to weavers or traders of raw material.

Sorting-(puch-nawun)-

In this process they separated Pashmina fibers from guard hair. Traditionally the work had done manually by women, but today machines are used to separate the fibers.

Combing-

The process of cleaning is done to remove impurities from raw material. For obtaining clear material is the Combing process is repeated 3 to 4 times. The task was a long time ago, but using machines saves both time and labor.

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Glueing-

In the Process clear fibers are drowned in rice powder solution for one or two night. It gives the fibers more moisture, power and flexibility. After glueing the process of combing done again to remove the rice particles from fibers.

Spinning-

Cleaning and spinning - the spinning process of raw material is mainly done by females of the house generation over generation, the process of spinning is as it was in past, the spinning is done on traditional charkhas made of wood mostly by the old women of the house. In villages of Kashmir valley it is a status symbol to spin the Pashm on charkhas by the women and a source of income too. Here the yarn is ready to go to the weaver

Preparation of Weaving-

Before separating the warp or weft, yarn is washed with light warm water with nut soap and dried in the sun light. For preparing the yarn for warp they treated the yarn for provide the required thickness ability of warp. They twisted the yarn and dipped the yarn in rice starch called Maya locally for two days. After two days the yarn dried in sun light and then stored on spools in traditional language they called the spools, Tulun. Then the warp reached to warp dresser (bharam-gour). He prepared the warp on loom (saaz) for weaving after that the yarn is ready to weaving.

Weaving –

After preparing the Loom with yarn weaving initiated by the Weavers (master). This is mainly done by two people each Weaver has a partner for work. This task is very difficult and takes more time. The time of weaving depends on shawl type.

Washing- After weaving the shawl goes to washer men who washed it with reetha powder, and cold water. Now the shawl is prepared for finishing.

Finishing-

After weaving the shawl need finishing. In traditional way the finishing separated in some steps like-

Purzgar with wouch- (rafugaar)

Now the fabric reached to Purzgar. Here it is determined that the fabric does not have any fault in any way, such as a cut or any other impurities. For check all this they stretch the fabric on the diagonally situated beams. If they find any fault they make it right and the fabric is sent for further processing.

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Kasher-

In kasher. Process fabric is rubbed with a soft, thin and dried core of gourd, to remove the impurities.

Dyeing (optional)-

Fabric sent to the dyer (rangrez) if the dyeing is required.

Embroidery (optional)-

if embroidery is needed the shawl is sent to the designer known as Naqqash locally. He draw the design on fabric then sent to the embroiderer for embroidery.

Washing and Stretching-

At last for final washing shawl come again to washer man and he treated the shawl with cold water and herbal soap. And dried the shawl in Gentle sunlight

Then left the fabric starched on frames for several (around 4-5) days. Then the shawl is ironed packed and prepared for sell.

Conclusion:

According to the study we reached the conclusion that in Kashmir valley, thousand of people are engaged in shawl business for a long time. They produce Pashmina shawls through traditional method by centuries because the fiber used for Pashmina shawl is so delicate to treat with the machine, the weavers told that the Pashmina fiber can't bear the vibration of electronic loom. if anyone told the shawl made on electronic loom it surly the blend. Weavers told as that they work with traditional method to protect the originality and purity of traditional art.

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