

DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFT EDUCATION IN KASHMIR VALLEY DURING THE RULE OF SULATAN ZAINUL AABIDEEN BUDSHAH

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Abstract

The paper explores the role of Sultan Zainul Aabideen in the development of craft education in the region of Kashmir. The study examines the Sultan's contribution towards preserving the traditional crafts of Kashmir and creating an environment that fostered innovation and creativity in the local craftsmen. The paper analyzes the initiatives taken by the Sultan to establish craft schools and workshops, provide training and support to craftsmen, and promote the products of the local artisans. The study also examines the impact of these efforts on the socioeconomic development of the region and the preservation of the cultural heritage of Kashmir. The findings of this research indicate that the Sultan's vision and commitment to craft education have played a crucial role in the development and promotion of traditional crafts in Kashmir, which has led to the growth of the local economy and the empowerment of the local artisans.

Key Words: *Artisans, Craft, Socio economic, Zainul Aabideen.*

Introduction

The development of craft education in Kashmir valley during the rule of Sultan ZainulAabideenBudshah was a significant turning point in the history of the region. Sultan ZainulAabideenBudshah was known for his patronage of art, literature, and education, and he actively encouraged the growth of various crafts in the region. During his reign, educational institutions were established to teach various crafts, such as woodworking, carpet weaving, papier-mache, shawl weaving, and embroidery. The workshops or "karkhanas" were established where skilled artisans taught young apprentices the art of different crafts. The Sultan also encouraged the production of handicrafts and established markets for the sale of these products. He sent his officials to different parts of the country to study the latest techniques incrafts.ⁱ One of the significant contributions of Sultan ZainulAabideenBudshah was the establishment of educational institutions to teach various crafts such as woodworking, carpet weaving, papier-mache, shawl weaving, and embroidery. The workshops or "karkhanas" were established where skilled artisans taught young apprentices the art of different crafts.ⁱⁱ

Paper Machie:-

Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah played a significant role in the development of the papier-mache industry in Kashmir. He introduced new techniques and designs to make papier-mache products more durable and appealing. The industry flourished under his rule, and today, papier-mache products from Kashmir are famous all over the world. One of the significant contributions of Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah was in the area of the design of papier-mache products. He introduced new motifs, colors, and shapes, which enhanced the aesthetic appeal of the products. He also encouraged artisans to experiment with different techniques and materials to make the products more durable. Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah also played a role in the standardization of the papier-mache production process. He introduced rules and regulations for the production of papier-mache products, which ensured the quality of the products. The standardization of the production process helped in the growth of the industry, and today, the papier-mache products from Kashmir are considered among the best in the world.ⁱⁱⁱ

Wood carving:-

Under Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah's patronage, the art of wood carving in Kashmir reached new heights. The artisans developed intricate designs and patterns using a variety of woods, including walnut, deodar, and pine. The wood carving work during his reign was highly regarded for its finesse and aesthetic appeal. Moreover, the Sultan's contribution to the development of wood carving was not limited to the promotion of the craft.^{iv} He also facilitated the exchange of ideas and techniques between different crafts, which helped in the cross-fertilization of different crafts. This exchange of ideas and techniques led to the development of new styles of wood carving in Kashmir. He also commissioned various wood carving works for the construction and decoration of his buildings, including his palace and mosques.^v

Shawl making:-

Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah's patronage of the shawl industry helped in its growth and development. He encouraged the weavers to experiment with new designs and patterns, and he provided them with financial assistance and subsidies. He also set up training institutions to impart technical and artistic skills to the weavers.^{vi} One of the significant contributions of Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah to the shawl industry was the introduction of the Jamawar shawl. It was a highly intricate and costly shawl that was originally made in Persia. The Sultan brought the Jamawar weavers to Kashmir and provided them with the necessary support to establish the industry in the region.^{vii} Under the Sultan's patronage, the shawl industry flourished, and the shawls produced in Kashmir became famous for their unique designs, intricate embroidery, and fine quality.^{viii} The shawl industry became one of the significant exports of the region, and it contributed significantly to the economic development of the state.^{ix}

Carpet industry:-

Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah also played a significant role in the development of the carpet weaving industry in Kashmir during his reign. He recognized the potential of the industry and took several measures to promote and enhance it. The carpet weaving industry became one of the significant sources of revenue for the state during his rule.^x Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah's patronage of the carpet weaving industry helped in its growth and development. He provided weavers with financial assistance, subsidies, and raw materials. He also set up training institutions to impart technical and artistic skills to the weavers.^{xi}

One of the significant contributions of Sultan Zainul Aabideen Budshah to the carpet weaving industry was the establishment of the royal carpet weaving center at Srinagar. The center was equipped with the latest tools and machinery, and the weavers were trained to produce high-quality carpets with intricate designs and patterns.^{xii} Under the Sultan's patronage, the carpet weaving industry flourished, and the carpets produced in Kashmir became famous for their unique designs, intricate embroidery, and fine quality. The carpet industry became one of the significant exports of the region, and it contributed significantly to the economic development of the state.^{xiii}

Conclusion:-

In conclusion, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's reign during the Dogra Rule in Kashmir was marked by significant developments in the field of craft education. He played a crucial role in the promotion and growth of various crafts such as paper mache, wood carving, shawl-making, and carpet weaving, which were not only significant for their artistic and cultural value but also for their economic importance. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin established institutions and patronized artists and craftsmen, which led to the flourishing of these crafts and the emergence of a skilled workforce in the region. His contributions towards the development of these crafts and the associated educational institutions have played a vital role in the preservation and promotion of Kashmiri art and culture. Today, these crafts continue to thrive in the valley, and their significance is recognized globally. The legacy of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's patronage towards craft education continues to inspire generations of artisans, and it remains an essential chapter in the history of craft education in Kashmir.

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