

Dr Suniti Bhagat

Assistant Professor

P.G. Department of Home Science

Patna Women's College P.U.

Email: [sunitibhagat@gmail.com](mailto:sunitibhagat@gmail.com)

## **HOMESCIENCE, BA- (Semester II)**

### **GE: Home Science**

### **HSC GE 202: Appreciation of Textile Crafts**

### **Unit –III: Shawls and Carpets of various centres**

#### **Shawls**

##### **Kashmir Shawls**

Kashmir also known as the paradise on earth is famous across the world for not only its natural beauty but also for the handicrafts made by the artisans. Among the handicraft products, the Kashmiri shawls have remained as one of the most cherished acquisitions in the world since centuries. The English word 'Shawl' is derived from Persian word 'Shal', meaning a woven woollen fabric, which is draped across the shoulder to provide protection against the cold. origin: The Kashmir shawl industry developed over 300 years, through four different periods of political rule in India, viz the Mughals, afghans, Sikhs and dogras. As recorded in 'Jaina rajatarangini', king Zain-ul-abidin(1420-1470 a.d) was considered as the founder and chief patron of Kashmir shawls. He taught this art of shawl making to the people of Kashmir by getting experts from Turkistan. Since then, this art is being transferred from generation to generation in order to preserve the rich heritage

During the reign of great Mughal emperor akbar, miniature paintings and portraits show the emperor wearing robes and gowns made of Kani shawl, giving evidence towards his being the great admirer of the art. He encouraged the weavers to try new motifs, and also started the fashion of the twin shawl, where two identical shawls were sewn back to back, hiding the rough edges of tapestry weave, and giving the impression of a single, reversible shawl.

**Region:** Three districts of Kashmir valley, viz Srinagar, ganderbal and Budgaon are famous for pashmina shawl making. other areas include Kanihama, Batpora, and Manzhama villages on the outskirts of Srinagar where majority of people are associated with weaving of Kani Shawl.

**Raw material:** Shawl is prepared from material like woollen fleece, Pashmina, Shatoosh and angora wool etc. Pashmina considered as the king of fibres derived its name from Persian word, Pashm

meaning soft gold. It is famous for its softness, warmth, fineness and desirable aesthetic value. It is obtained from the soft, downy underbelly fleece of a mountain goat called *Capra hircus* which the animal sheds on the high altitudes during summers. Fleece is sometimes imported from nomadic Khirgiz tribes and also from Yarkand and Khotan.

**Technique:** On the basis of production techniques, the Kashmir shawl can be categorized into two main types - the loom woven or Kani shawls and the needle embroidered or sozni shawls. Wooden spools instead of shuttle known as Kani or 'Tujis' in Kashmiri language meaning eyeless are used for weaving a Kani shawl on the loom. The Tujis interlock the respective color threads through disconnected weft technique as they complete each weft of the shawl with twill tapestry weave to create an intricate pattern. Weaving process is meticulously regulated by a coded pattern, known as the talim drawn by the naqqash for guidance of the weaver.

The shawl is also widely known as *Jamawar* and *Shah Pasand* as the king and nobility preferred buying it and got *Jama* or gowns made out of it.

**layouts:** The body of the shawl is termed as *matan* while the borders are termed as *hashiya*.

- **Doshala:** Shawls in pair sewn back to back, i.e. the under surfaces of the shawl were never seen

**Char bagan:** Four pieces of different colors are neatly joined together with invisible stitches. Generally the central field of the shawl is embellished with a medallion of flowers in embroidery.

- **Dorukha:** The pattern is woven and embroidered in such a manner that it appears same on both the sides of the shawl.

- **Chand dar:** Moon shawl has round large pattern woven or embroidered in the centre.

**Motifs:** The motifs are inspired from beauty of nature. Some examples are mango or *kairi*, almond or *badam*, chinar leaf, apple blossom, tulip, lily flower, cherries, plum; birds like parrot, wood pecker, magpie etc. No wild animals are depicted but hunting scenes known as '*Shikargah*' are depicted in shawls for trade and commercial purposes.

**Colors:** Pashmina fleece colours range from beige, grey and brown to black. However, the fabric adapts itself beautifully to dyeing and colouring. Rich colours are most commonly seen on *kani* shawls like yellow (*zard*), white (*sufed*), black (*mushki*), blue (*ferozi*), purple (*uda*), crimson (*gulnar*) and scarlet (*kirmiz*).

**End use:** The shawl or shoulder mantle has been in existence in India in a variety of forms since ancient times. It was worn and used as a warm protective garment against biting cold. unrivalled for its light weight, in earlier times people folded these shawls into four folds and draped them. Now days they are generally worn as stoles without folds or are merely thrown over the shoulder.

**Decline:** as the Mughal kingdom began to collapse and Kashmir came under the Afghan rule, the shawl trade also began to focus increasingly on the west, while the Indian market went into decline. During the regime of Afghan governor Haji Das Khan (1776-83), heavy taxes were imposed on the shawl weaving industry that forced the artisans out of their profession. The artisans and weavers were in miserable conditions and started shifting to nearby areas like Amritsar in Punjab, where time and again attempts were made to establish a successful shawl industry but all in vein. This gave rise to embroidered shawls known as *amlakar*, where the tax was paid just for plain woven shawl which was later embellished with embroidery by the artisans.

**Contemporary Scenario:** The world-famous Kashmiri '*Kani*' shawl has been given a 'geographical Indicator' (GI) status, which will not only provide legal protection but also help in prevention of shawls made in other regions of the world from carrying the '*Kani*' shawl tag. The Kashmir

government has also sanctioned Rs 40.4 million to set up a laboratory to test the genuineness of a *Kani* shawl. The GI tag will also help the *Kani* shawl to regain its rightful place in domestic and global markets. The government has also allocated financial assistance to help the *kani* shawl weavers to purchase new looms or renovate and modernize their old handlooms.

## **Kullu & Kinnaur Shawls**

Kullu and Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh are also known for good quality woollen shawls. The traditional colours used for the base of the shawls are red, maroon, black, brown and off-white. Bright colours are inserted in extra weft on borders of the shawl. Geometric motifs inspired from nature are made into beautiful colourful borders.

Kinnauri shawls are known for their labour intensive skilful weaving. These shawls are heavily embellished with motifs and are treasured by the women of Himachal Pradesh. These are draped by the women in two peculiar ways. Heavy silver jewellery is then worn along with it to give it a festive look.

## **Shawls of north-east**

North eastern India comprises of both tribal and non-tribal population. The seven North East Indian states are popularly known as seven sisters, comprising of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya. Textile weaving is done by women in each of these states. There are more than 38 tribes in North east of India, and each of them have their own distinctive design, colour combination and a different design for special occasions. The design and colour, which varies not only between the tribes but also sometimes between clans of the same tribe and between different villages, records the wearer's position in society. Shawls and wraps were originally made of cotton and the use of wool came much later. The colors used were mainly black, dark blue, red and yellow. The textile weaving is exclusively a female occupation in this part of the country. For domestic consumption a back strap portable loom is used by the female weavers.

Fabrics from Assam include the hand-woven fabrics of cotton, muga, pat (mulberry silk) and eri (wild silk). Muga has a natural golden texture; it is mildly warm and particularly suited for winters. Textiles include bedspreads, furnishing material, *mekhala-chaddars*, *rihas* (traditional garments used by the women), *gamosas*, shawls and saris. The patterns generally involve animals, human figures, flowers, birds and diamonds. The designs in Assam are symbolic of the different tribes and ethnic groups of the region.

## **Floor Coverings**

### **Carpets**

A carpet is a textile floor covering which consists of an upper layer of 'pile' which is attached to a backing. The pile is either made from wool or a manmade fibre such as nylon or polyester and usually consists of twisted tufts which are often heat-treated to maintain their structure. Carpets can be from wall to wall or smaller in size such as area rugs.

The knotted pile carpet are said to have originated in the 3rd or 2nd millennium BC in West Asia, or the Armenian Highland. Carpet weaving in India can be traced to the beginning of the Mughal Empire wherein under the patronage of the Mughals, Indian craftsmen adopted Persian techniques and designs. Akbar, a Mughal emperor, introduced the art of carpet weaving to India, during his reign. The Mughal emperors patronized Persian carpets for their royal courts and palaces. The carpets woven in India showed the classic Persian style of fine knotting. The Indian carpets are

known for their designs with attention to detail and presentation of realistic attributes. In India, carpet industry uses wool, silk, acrylic and Jute.

## **Carpet types**

### **Woven Carpets**

The carpets are made on looms similar to traditional handloom. The piles can either be cut pile or loop pile. Many coloured yarns are used in making of these carpets and this process of weaving produces intricate patterns. Woven carpets are produced in Kashmir, Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Jaipur and Agra in India.

### **Needle felt Carpets**

These carpets are more technologically advanced as compared to woven carpets. Needle felts are produced by intermingling and felting individual fibers using barbed and forked needles and hence forming an extremely durable carpet. These carpets are generally used in areas which are prone to friction due to high footfall. Namda is a felted woollen carpet and is common winter flooring in Kashmir. These are thick carpets made up of either wool alone or wool and cotton

### **Knotted Carpets**

These carpets are made on upright or vertical looms. A knotted pile carpet is a supplementary weft cut-loop pile carpet where the structural weft threads alternate with a supplementary weft that rises at right angles to the surface of the weave. Knotting by hand is most prevalent in oriental carpets. Carpets produced in Kashmir are also hand knotted.

### **Hand tufted Carpets**

In such carpets there is a pile injected into a backing material, which is then bonded to a secondary backing made of a woven fabric to provide stability. This is the most common method of manufacturing of domestic carpets for floor covering purposes in the world. Common motifs include scrolling vine networks, arabesques, palmettes, cloud bands, medallions, and overlapping geometric compartments. animals and humans are not depicted in the persian imagery because Islam is the dominant religion in this part of the world which forbids their depiction. Persian influenced imagery of trellis, vines, medallions, paisleys etc is seen in most of the Indian carpets. The majority of these carpets are wool and silk.

### **Durries and rugs**

A durrie is a thick flat-woven rug used traditionally as a floor-covering. They come in variety of colours and patterns and have low maintenance cost as they do not get infected by Silverfish or other insects responsible for destroying carpets. Woven durries are produced in Jodhpur, Hoshiarpur, Bhatinda and Warangal in India. Durries can be used year round, as the cotton durrie is warm in winters and cool in summers. The use of a durrie depends on the size, pattern and material. Durries are used in large political or social gatherings as well as in schools in rural areas as they are easily portable being light weight and foldable. Generally the material used for durries are cotton, wool, silk and jute.

### **Rugs**

A rug is a pile-less, woven textile floor covering that is made from various materials like linen, wool, cotton, jute etc. Cut shuttle and chenille rugs are made for the higher end of domestic or

international market. In India these rugs are made with mainly recycled material which is used as weft. Panipat, Meerut and Bijnore are big production centers of rugs