

INDIAN CRAFTS

Crafts are an integral part in the life of an Indian, despite the rapid social and technological changes that are taking place. In the Western world, special artists create craft objects and they are considered as luxury items. But in India like many other developing countries it is the main source of employment for a vast majority of the population, next to agriculture.

Handicrafts can be defined simply as objects made by the skill of the hand and which carry a part of the creator as well as centuries of evolutionary tradition. It can range from the simple clay- lamps to the diamond -studded jewellery items. Handicrafts consists of objects created by skilled people for religious rituals and for personal use as well as luxurious ones created by specialized craftsmen for specific requirements. Handicrafts bring a great sense of grace to every home be it the poor hut or the opulent star hotel. There is a timeless quality in these craft objects, for they have evolved over centuries and continue to be made even today with the same sentiment.

There are three main classifications of crafts.

- **Folk crafts**
- **Religious crafts**
- **Commercial crafts**

People for their personal use, or for a limited client base create **folk crafts**. Folk embroideries done by the village women folk of India are a good example. There are craftsmen who are specialized in creating textiles or jewellery which meet the criteria set up by a particular group of people, usually a particular caste or community. They have their own distinctive designs and styles.

Religious crafts are developed around religious centers and themes. These craft items are connected with religious institutions and relevant ceremonies. Various religious places in India are specialized in particular craft items. For example, Varanasi and Kanchipuram in Tamilnadu specialize in weaving clothes for religious ceremonies, particularly silk materials. Similarly Puri in Orissa, which is a big pilgrim center, is connected with crafts like patacharita- a painting on cloth and wood and stone carvings.

Specialized craftsmen of a particular group who are specialized in a particular skill and who can completely master the craft do **commercial crafts**. They even have sub groups, which work for particular groups, and their tools and techniques may vary. The Weavers, the Dyers, the Printers, the Goldsmiths and the Carpenters are some of the commercial craftsmen.

History of crafts in India

Crafts were an important commodity for world trade and they were a part of the economy in India, since ancient times. Trade links between India and the rest of the world existed from ancient periods. India being the home of cotton had textile trade with the Far East and the Western world. Indian textiles and their **permanent dyes** were accepted throughout the world. Roman trade documents mention that **silk** was exported from India to Europe from the 6th century A.D. The Arab sailors brought silver and gold from their countries and took back shiploads of handicraft objects from

India to the Far- East. In the North, caravans carried woven textiles along the Silk route and went right unto Moscow by the Fur- route.

Under the good patronage of the early Mughals, India's handicrafts reached its pinnacle of perfection. Crafts like carpets, textiles and jewellery were developed into fine arts. The famed Mughal Emperors namely Akbar, Shah Jahan and Jehangir invited skilled craftsmen from all over the world and blend their native ideas with our own techniques and skills. Brocading and velvet manufacturing developed rapidly in India than in their native countries. But with the break- up of the Mughal Empire and the growing enmity between the smaller Princely states, local crafts lost their centuries-old local patronage. With the East India Company coming to India, the volume of trade reduced though they managed to strive.

England flooded the Indian market with its cheap machine-made items, which ousted the homemade crafts. A number of craftsmen were turned destitutes overnight. Those who continued with their craft had to compete with the machine-made goods, that quality was made to suffer. Gandhiji's ***Swadeshi movement*** focused on the plight of the Indian craftsmen and on the need for maintaining the ancient craft traditions.

After Independence, ***The Handicrafts Board*** was set up to look into the plight of the dying crafts. Slowly demand grew for these items both at home and also abroad. Recent export figures show that India is lagging behind in many handicraft commodities except in the case of gems and jewellery items.

Despite the growth of handicrafts industry in India, the average earnings of the craftsmen when compared to other fields is very low. Hence the younger generation is moving onto other fields with only the elder craftsmen left over. The average age of many master craftsmen is around 50 years.

Improving educational system and lifestyles of the middle class people contribute a lot for the eroding of the native crafts in India. Cheap plastic items have now flooded the market and people have left out the age-old clay and metal containers. They do not understand the harmfulness of plastic items, which may react with their food. Also they have moved onto wearing synthetic clothes avoiding good, comfortable and cheap cotton woven items, just for their patterns and cost.

The need of the hour is assistance for the craftsmen to improve their techniques, availability of good raw materials, direct marketing channels, credit and enough wages and socio-economic benefits.

CARPETS

Durrees

A variety of floor coverings are used in Indian homes. The simple durree is used for making beds. Larger durrees are used on festive occasions over which pile carpets and other embroidered items are spread for the guests. Long strips of durrees are prepared specially for serving food for the guests during festivals and marriages. The durree is a cotton -woven thick fabric meant for spreading on the floor and it is an indigenous floor covering with a variety of designs and patterns. Weaving of a durree is a common sight in almost all of the Indian villages.

In the states of Punjab and Haryana, the Jat women weave durrees for their personal use. Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan produce woolen durrees. Uttar Pradesh is an important center for the commercial weaving of these durrees. The durrees produced here have geometrical patterns woven in strips, diamonds and lozenges.

The other centers, which are weaving durrees, are **Navalgund in Karnataka** and **Salem in Tamilnadu**. The Navalgund durrees are also known as Jamkhans. They are richly patterned and depict stylized parrots and peacocks. Normally rust, yellow, green and black colors are used.

The Salem durrees come from a town called Bhavani and they are woven in silk and cotton. They are prepared in brilliant colors with a central pattern of lotus and borders with flowing floral patterns.

Warangal near Hyderabad also produces durrees. The Bandha or Ikat durrees are being woven here.

Carpets

Pile carpets were probably introduced into India from Iran. During the Mughal period, this craft flourished in Agra, Delhi and Lahore. Kashmir developed this carpet industry in the 15th century during the reign of **Zain-ul-Abidin**. Here the carpet making closely follows the shawl- weaving tradition. It is specialized in designs based on Persian and Central Asian styles.

The important centers of carpet weaving in India are **Srinagar** in Kashmir, **Jaipur** in Rajasthan, and **Amritsar** in Punjab, **Mirzapur**, **Agra** in Uttar Pradesh and **Warangal** and **Elluru** in Andhra Pradesh. Amritsar came into the scene only in the beginning of the 19th century. It has a tradition of weaving fine quality rugs and particular designs called Mouri. The designs are geometrical patterns. They mostly export their products. Embossed carpets based on Chinese designs are reproduced here. Carpets produced in Agra are of the finer quality patterns in red, ivory, green and black background. Fine quality carpets are also produced in Amritsar.

Jaipur in Rajasthan produces medium quality carpets, which vary from 80 knots to 120 knots per square inch. Most of them are of the geometrical pattern. Mirzapur and Bhadoli also make medium quality carpet varieties.

Andhra produces geometrical- patterned carpets of medium quality of around 30 to 60 knots per inch. They are mostly meant for export orders.

Kashmir is also known for other types of floor coverings apart from the carpets they are well known for. Those are the **Namdass**, **Hook rugs** and **gabbas**. Namdass are made of felted wool and cotton and are embroidered with woolen chain stitches.

The hook rug is made with chain stitch embroidery worked with a hook called ahri. A thick jute cloth is used and then it is embroidered fully so that the base material is not visible. The Gabba is a kind of an appliqué work done with worn out woolen blankets and Pattis.

WOOD WORKS AND CARVED CRAFTS

Wood Works

The tradition of woodcarving existed in India from ancient times. The early wood -carved temples bear witness for this. Wood -carved temples are surviving till date in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In India, each region has developed its own style of structures and carvings. Local traditions and locally available wood varieties influence them a lot.

Number of folk forms has been developed in woodwork all over India. Toys for children, utility goods and religious objects are the main ones.

The whole of North India has a tradition of carved wooden doors with intricate designs, brass inlay and trellis work for the windows.

Assam, which has extensive forests, has a rich tradition of wood works. Their places of worship included large carvings of mythical figures like half-man, garuda, hanuman, lion, etc. Also the carvers create a Simhasana wherein they place the deity to be worshipped.

In **Bengal**, the clay houses have large wooden pillars and beams with intricate carvings.

In **Kashmir**, the houses are lined with wood, with ceilings worked in geometrical patterns and lattice- worked windows made up of pieces of wood locally known as **Pinjara**. The state also produces many wood carved items like furniture, screens, boxes, bowls, etc. These are mostly prepared from walnut wood, which is in abundance here. Decorative wood panels used for ceilings and pillars is a special craft in Kashmir and it is called **Khatamband**.

Gujarat too is rich in wood carving tradition. Sections of Ahmedabad city have houses with carved facades. Balconies jut out of the houses with carved and perforated patterns.

Tamilnadu has a well -developed tradition of woodcarving used for decorating houses and temples. The Tanjore dolls made of wood form a part of the rituals followed here and they are also used for educating small children.

Andhra Pradesh has a tradition of manufacturing woodcarvings for religious centers. The Tirupathi red dolls are meant for sales for the pilgrims. In a village called **Nirmal** in Andhra, carriers of the main deities called Vahanams are made by means of a soft wood. Another village called Kondapalli is famous for its toys made of Punki wood. Very meticulous attention is paid in their making.

Kerala state has one of the richest traditions in woodcarving. The houses here have carved pillars and beams. Most of the houses have a carved family temple. Kerala wood -carvers also work wonders on sandalwood and rosewood. Kerala woodcarvings have strength of form, which is reminiscent of the murals and dance forms of the area. Large wood carved figures are prepared in the round as well as in relief work.

In **Punjab**, old havelis have carved doors and windows. Woodcarving and inlay are now practiced in Hoshiarpur. Jalandhar is specialized in lacquer- turned furniture.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, Saharanpur is an important center in woodcarving. Screens and room- dividers with carved patterns and ivory -inlays with minute details are produced here. Nagina is another important wood carving center in U.P.

Manipur is an important center for Tarkashi, metal thread work, done in furniture.

Sankheda in **Gujarat** is an important center for lathe- worked lacquered furniture. The surface is painted with designs on a lacquered background. This is used to give silver-like effect. Bedposts and cradles and toys for kids are also made here. Surat has a tradition of marquetry work, which is also called **Sadeli**. In this, different materials like ivory, ebony, sandalwood, metal having different textures and colors are used. These materials are made into strips with their width shaped as triangles, squares and circles. These are then joined by gum to get a geometrical pattern. They are then cut across into thin strips and pasted on a wooden background ,mostly boxes. Wooden blocks for printing in textiles are also made in Gujarat. The design is first stenciled on the wood and then the intervening spaces are chipped out.

Karnataka is specialised in sandalwood carving. Earlier the deities were carved out of sandalwood but now boxes are their specialty. The **Srigandha** variety of sandalwood is used for this purpose. They have a distinctive aroma that sets them apart from other woods. Large boxes covered with mythological scenes are an important product of Mysore, Kumta and Sagar. In south Kanara, life-size wood carving of Buddha figures is carried out. Mysore city developed an intricate form of ivory -inlay on wood. The ceilings and doors of Mysore Palace are expressions of this special skill of its artisans.

In **Rajasthan**, wooden figures of Ghangore, a form of Parvathi is worshipped. These stylized forms are manufactured in a village called Bassi in Chittogarh district.

The village also specializes in making a wooden temple like structure, which can be folded into a book form called Kavadh.

In **Orissa**, the main deity of the famed Puri temple, Lord Jagannath is reproduced in wood. A number of wooden masks are also made for the traditional Sahi Jatra. **Nagaland** has a tradition of manufacturing statues as well as Commemorative pillars in wood.

CARVED CRAFTS

Stone-Carving

The art of stone carving developed in India, a little later when compared to woodcarving. India has a huge resource of different variety of stones and our skilled craftsmen impart life into them. The Indian craftsman's mastery over stone is best revealed in the architecture and sculptures found in **Khajuraho temples**. The intricate carvings found at **Sanchi** are among the finest found anywhere in the world. Gaya, a pilgrim site for the Buddhists also has an ancient tradition of stone carving.

The ancient stone carvers were guided by the **Shilpa Shastra**, which clearly laid the rules for them. The main deity was carved by specialists who were knowledgeable in the properties of different stones, their grain, as well as their proportion needed for the carving.

The act of carving the deity was considered as an act of worship and was considered as a sacred ritual. Stone temples are built even today and the **Sthapathis** of Tamilnadu

as well as the **Somapuras** of Gujarat and Rajasthan are in good demand throughout the country.

Varanasi is an important center for stone carving works. Here a community of people called **the Raidas** do it. Around Varanasi, Hamirpur, Tehri Garhwal and Bageshwar are famous for statue works whereas Banda is known for agate stone works.

Agra in Uttar Pradesh is famous for its marble stone works. Many pieces like lattice windows, mirror frames, carved brackets, canopies, pendants and filigree works are carved here. The craftsmen are famous for their inlay works. Mostly geometrical and floral patterns are worked on using colored stones and semi precious ones.

Rajasthan maintains a rich tradition of stone carving even in the common domestic buildings. Doorframes are commonly built of red stones. Windows have stone trellis works and even the supporting frame for the loom is made of carved stones. Jaipur is one of the most important centers where a large community of stone carvers carve deities in marble. Large commemorative stones are a common sight in Rajasthan as well as in Gujarat.

Orissa also has a tradition of stone carving. Besides the main deity they also carve figures for the temple friezes. Nowadays soft stones are used for carving small souvenir items, which are meant for sales to the tourists.

Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu deals with hard granite stone carvings. There is also a school for training the Sthapathis according to the rules of the ancient Shilpa Shastras.

In **Karnataka**, Devanahalli a village near Mysore produces carved figures in relief on black stone. The figures appear to have movement and strength in their postures. The figures not only have the effect of light and shade and a rounded form but also a linear quality.

Durgi, in **Andhra Pradesh** is another stone carving center where large nandis, bulls and local deity images are carved.

Ivory Carving

Ivory carving is one of the most ancient crafts of India. Ivory is a precious material and a difficult one to carve; yet the Indian craftsmen have mastered this art from ancient times. Export of these ivory carved items continued from the Roman times. The important centers for ivory carving are Trivandrum in Kerala, Mysore and Bangalore in Karnataka, Delhi, Jaipur and Jodhpur in Rajasthan, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Amritsar in Punjab, Benrampur in West Bengal and Ganjam and Puri in Orissa.

Kerala specializes in the carving of God and Goddesses images in Ivory. The carvings are in the round and are based on the different styles of the temple sculptures of the area. The master craftsmen of Kerala make many other figures with rhythmic and expressive stances.

Mysore developed this craft under the patronage of the Royal court. The artists prepare deities, carved bedposts and intricate inlay patterns for doors, windows and ceilings.

In North India, ivory carving developed during the reign of the Mughals. **Delhi** and **Lucknow** are important centers noted for their floral motifs, geometrical patterns

carved in low relief or worked in fine Jali work. Small items like caskets and pen cases are also produced. Fine latticework boxes are their other specialty. Delhi is also known for its ivory costume jewellery.

Rajasthan and Gujarat are important centers for ivory bangles for women. The lathe- worked ivory bangles are lacquered in red and are given to the women folk during their marriage.

Amritsar in Punjab developed ivory carving during the Sikh rule. It is famous for table lamps, bracelets and chess sets in ivory.

Varanasi also produces many designs based on local traditions, as it is a big pilgrim center for the Hindus and Buddhists.

West Bengal has its own style of carving based on local folk traditions. Intricately carved figures of elephants and Goddess Durga are the common items done here.

Orissa also has an important tradition of ivory carving. Ancient temples and palaces here have ivory carved items like the mithuna figure, etc.

Of late this craft is dying as the Indian Government has banned elephant poaching and on ivory- working. Hence the carvers are turning onto other crafts particularly, bone-carving.

Bone And Horn Carving

This craft has been prevalent in India from ancient times. The tribals are usually associated with this craft. The Himalayan tribals practice this craft for making ritual items.

In Orissa, bone carvings of animals and mithuna figures are common. Carved combs of bones and horns are a specialty. The most important centers include Sarai Tarin in Uttar Pradesh, Cuttack and Parlakimedi in Orissa, Honawar in Karnataka and Trivandrum in Kerala. Decorative combs, buttons, flower vases, penholders, cutlery items, toys are some of the common items that are done in these places. The Horn combs prepared in India are very popular throughout the world.

In Cuttack horn and filigree work are combined to produce decorative jewels, bangles, etc. The craftsmen of Trivandrum are famous for making different kinds of crane birds in horn.

FESTIVAL CRAFTS AND GRASS CRAFTS

Festival Crafts

Not even a single day passes off in India without the observance of a festival in some corner of the country or the other. In India, festivals are associated with the changing seasons, like the different phases of the moon, with pilgrimage, with agriculture, with rituals like birth, marriage, death, ancestral worship, etc. Crafts are closely related to festivals and fairs in India. Women create a number of objects closely related to domestic rituals and ceremonies and master craftsmen prepare crafts for special occasions.

Women make clay figures or idols for special rituals or to signify some ancient or ancestral happenings. Women all over the northern part of India make clay figures of Govardhan for the pooja associated with the God Govardhan.

In the South, during Ganesh Chaturthi, idols of Lord Ganesh are made in all possible shapes and sizes both by the women folk and also by skilled craftsmen. These idols would be immersed in holy rivers after the pooja. In Bengal, a number of vratas, fasts undertaken by women necessitates the making of clay images.

Women decorate their home according to their own fantasies and ideas. This is one of the most expressive craft form. The flowing linear ***patterns on the floor*** of beaten clay are worked with rice paste. Different states have different names for this: it is ***Alpana*** in Bengal, ***Aripana*** in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, ***Mandana*** in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, ***Rangoli*** in Gujarat and Maharashtra and ***Kolam*** in South India.

The common motif is the Lotus associated with Lakshmi, Vishnu and Brahma. Very complex patterns are involved in the Kolams. The alpanas of Bengal are rounded and the symbols are universal. They have a flowing linear pattern. The Aripanas of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are geometric in pattern. The Kolam patterns of Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nadu are geometric. They are generally prepared by creating the general structure with dots and then linking them with lines or going around with them as flowing lines.

In Karnataka a special kolam of sun, moon and the nine planets is prepared. The kolams of Kerala are far more complex in design and symbolism, for besides the kolams made by the women, there are the ritualistic kolams prepared by the priests. The Pulluvans of Kerala make elaborate snake kolams, like Karinagam, which are prepared for propitiating the snake gods.

Folk wall murals

A number of ritualistic paintings are ***prepared on the walls*** of homes in India. Some are for festive occasions and others are associated with rituals.

In Bihar, the murals on the house walls depict episodes from the Puranas.

In certain parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, murals are prepared on the walls merely for the purpose of decorating or embellishing them.

Free- hand drawing by the women with the use of a twig and white chalk against the mud colored walls gives a gay appearance.

Women in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana prepare a form of low relief work on walls of the Sanjhi figure. Women prepare the basic form in cow dung on freshly plastered walls after which they fix tablets made in different colors, shapes and sizes. In Kutch district of Gujarat, bold and large mirrors are embedded in the walls.

Women also make finger- free hand patterns out of mud and cow dung mixed with straw. These patterns are prepared when the plaster on the wall is wet and they have a strong textual pattern. The Punjab and Haryana women prepare Jali of unbaked clay for their homes.

GRASS CRAFTS

Basket Making

Weaving of baskets is an art, as ancient as pottery in India. The ancient nomadic food gatherers wove reeds together to prepare baskets to hold their food or their other collectibles. Later with the advent of different cultures, basketry took shape both for domestic and ritual purposes. Special patterns evolved according to the local traditions and techniques. . Various styles are associated with **basketry**. The **coiled style** is the most famous one. The **wicker** weaving technique comes next in terms of fame. Colours are rarely used in this art, yet if the item has to look impressive, bright colours are generally preferred. Colours that are applied are most of the times, natural **dyes**.

A bundle of **grass** could form the material for weaving the basket. Few of the other known materials used in the weaving process are **reeds** and **leaves** that are generally **dyed** or **bleached** as per requirement before the final product is made ready.

Basket weaving has gained fame in India due to the generations of various tribes, keeping this rich art alive.

Commonly baskets in India are made of twigs, bamboo, cane, wild monsoon grass, and are then covered with golden grass or the dried skin of the paddy plant.

Punjab is famous for its sturdy spiral baskets. A swampy wild grass called **Sarkanda** is basically used; it is stitched together with the use of date palm leaf. The dry date palm leaves are worked in intricate patterns.

Kashmir specializes in willow baskets, the wood of which tree is famous for making cricket bats. The young twigs of the tree are woven to make different variety of baskets.

Uttar Pradesh makes baskets out of monsoon grass called **Moonj**. Allahabad and the surrounding villages are famous for these baskets.

In **North Bihar**, baskets are made in a coiled form with local monsoon grass, which is covered with the golden colored **Sikkri grass**, which is dyed according to the color desired. Besides baskets many toys of birds and human figures are also made in this manner.

In the **Terai area** of Bihar the tribals weave baskets with a bolder form, which are decorated with human, and animal figures in stylized forms. The baskets are decorated with tassels made out of shells, which are presented to brides during marriage as part of their dowry items.

Mysore district of **Karnataka** produces cane baskets.

Northeastern part of India has the finest work in cane and bamboo. Even their houses are made of cane and bamboo. Bamboo baskets are used for various purposes. Whole bamboos are used for containers as the solid nodes make it a tubular container. They are used to carry water, store other liquids like rice beer, and Chang, and also for making drinking cups.

The Chettiand baskets of **Tamilnadu** have intricate patterns made with the use of date palm leaves. These patterns are as fine as embroidery and are the specialty of the Chettiar community people of Tamilnadu.

Bengal has a tradition of fine work bamboo baskets, which are used for ceremonial purposes. Winnowing baskets called Kulas are also prepared and used for winnowing. Master craftsmen also prepare special Pitaras, oval boxes, Jhampis, oblong caskets, Phul Saji, flower baskets, chalnisi and sieves.

Mat Weaving

Materials like reeds, grass, cane, and bamboo are used to make different types of mats throughout India. **Pattamadai village** in Tirunelveli District of Tamilnadu is famous for its fine quality mats. Here the local reed is split into nearly hundred pieces and are woven on a loom with a cotton warp. The mats are so fine that they can be rolled and placed into a small box. The weaving also takes enormous time and patience on the part of the weaver. Men and women of the Lebbai Muslim Community weave these famous mats only in this village.

While the weft of the Pattamadai mats is of reed, the warp is of cotton or silk, depending upon the quality required. Four strands of the 100 count are taken together to produce a single thread of great strength.

Now starts the actual weaving, which is done by women. One end of this wet grass is inserted in a hole of a long fine stick, which can be compared to a huge needle. With the help of the stick, the grass is passed into the loom.

Afterwards the stick and the grass is held on both sides by both hands and slightly twisted to give uniform roundness and strength. Then the reed is placed against it several times to keep it in position. After the weaving is complete, the mat is compressed to eliminate any unevenness, a process that takes at least four hours.

The best mats weigh only 400 grams and can very easily be folded. They can either be single color or combined in traditional red, green and black.

Kerala is famous for **Kora grass mats**. They carry intricate designs where black and deep maroon colors are used. The **screw pine mats** of Kerala are made from the fragrant Keora plant. They have a soft texture and intricate embroidery works.

Manipur is famous for the **red mats**. They are stitched together and a border is formed at the edges. These mats are also exported.

Bengal is noted for **Sitalpatti mats**, which are woven with green cane. The name Sitalpatti meaning cool spread, best expresses the quality of the mat. Here one set of cane in golden color is placed diagonally and another dyed maroon is placed above it in the opposite direction. The craftsmen with deft fingers plait them together to make animal and human forms. Bengal is also noted for fine quality mats made of the Madhur kothi grass. Intricate patterns are worked in by dyeing the grass a russet color. These are known as fine **Masloni mats**.

JEWELLERY AND METALWARE

Jewellery

Man's desire to decorate himself with objects of nature like feathers, seeds, and cowrie shells was the initial stage in the development of jewellery. The tribals took great pains to collect these items for their personal decorations. With the advent of the agrarian society, jewellery became associated with the status of a man in society and became a form of savings. In India, jewellery is counted as the wealth of a woman and she inherits it from her father or her husband as gift.

Jewellery is mostly associated with married woman in Indian society and a widow hardly displays any form of jewellery.

A special community of people called **Sonars** in India make the jewels. They are attached to specific groups and castes of people. Most of the jewellery items worn by Indian women are the same but for some regional influences.

Nose ornaments are widely used throughout India. Different shapes and designs are involved, as also different materials are used in its making. Gold, silver, pearls and a variety of precious stones are used.

The nose ornament took shape only in the 10th century, with the arrival of the Arab invaders. It is of different types like the simple Lavang, clove, to Phuli, the elaborately worked stud, or Nath the nose ring worn in the right nostril and the Bulli the ring worn in the center just over the lips.

Bore is a **head ornament**, which is placed at the parting of the hairs. It is also called as Boldra in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The **tikka** is a round pendant at the end of a long chain and which falls on the forehead.

It is also commonly used throughout India. Bengal has a range of hair jewels, which decorate the hair tied as a bun at the back. In South India a variety of ornaments are available for decorating the loose plait.

For the **neck** there are scores of chains, necklaces, and chokers available. Guluband is made of beads or rectangular pieces of metals strung together with the help of threads. Then there is the longer Kanthi. Under this can be worn a silver chain or a necklace of beads.

To adorn the **hands** there are of course a variety of rings from the cheap silver items to diamond rings, which are worth a fortune. The top of the hand can be adorned with the hathpool or Rattan Chowk. For the wrist there are the Karda, the Paunchi, the Gajira and the Chuda and these all together make up the bracelet category. Bracelets come in cheap mixed metal varieties to diamond studded gold ones. Above the elbow women wear the Bazoo, the Joshan and the Bank.

For the **hips** women wear a series of chain item called the Kandora.

Anklets for **the toes** come in different models of heavy metals and silver. The delicately worked paizebs ending in tinkling silver hollow bells is really a good piece to adorn oneself with. The bichua or scorpion ring for the toe is a symbol for married women.

Designs and the mode of techniques vary from region to region and the material used depends upon the status of the wearer in the society. Ornaments range from the simple metal collections to the silver ones, mixed metals, gold, diamond and platinum.

Regional Jewellery

The Tribals of **Assam** patronize silver jewellery but the others use mostly gold items. The patterns are extremely beautiful and they are finely polished. The **Thuria earring**, which has a most distinctive design of its own in the form of a lotus with a heavy stem, is a common item. It is made of gold and studded with rubies. Necklaces and pendants of other neighboring regions are also common here.

In **West Bengal**, silver and gold jewellery are made. Delicate filigree works are practiced here. **Tara Kanta** and **Pan Kanta** are some of the finest pieces of jewellery, which are meant for the hair. The Tara Kantas are pins made in the form of flowers and stars. The Pan Kanta is a betel leaf ornament, which is fixed at the center of the hair bun.

In **Orissa**, the dominant technique employed is that of granulation and filigree. Both gold and silver are patronized. Mainly arm jewels, necklaces, nose rings and anklets are prepared. Finest designs are available for the nose rings. **Maurpankhi**, one of the designs is shaped like a peacock with open feathers and the whole thing is prepared according to the granulation and filigree technique. **Sampangi** is another nose ring, which is of the stylized pagoda type from which hangs delicately worked chains each ending in a small pipal leaf. Another peculiar jewel item of this area is **the Bank** worn on the forearm. This is formed of stiff chains brought together by adjustable links of flowers. Sambalpur is famous for brass jewellery. Delicately worked bangles in different patterns are available but they need regular polishing.

Punjab has hair ornaments that are different from the other parts of the country. Here the Tikka is flat and circular with small pendants hanging in the front of the Tikka.

In the **Kulu region**, most of the items are made in Hoshiarpur, which has its own style. The **Pipal Patra** made out of silver pipal leaves fastened to an enameled piece of silver is commonly worn by the women folk of this area. Here necklaces are formed out of large metal plates, which are engraved with traditional designs and filled with green and yellow enamel. The nose ornaments of this area are highly specialized. The large sized **nath** and **boulak designs** of single leaf are specials of this region.

Kashmir differs a lot from the other regions in jewellery. The most important designs here are for the ear ornaments. These are known as **Kan Balle or Jhumka** normally worn by the Muslim women on both the sides of their head. Then comes the common Zululand , a neck jewel item. Engraving and cut works are the important techniques used here.

In South India, wearing of silver jewellery is mostly associated with the tribals and the rest resort to gold items only. The Chettinad (**in Tamilnadu**) jewellery made of uncut rubies is one of the finest. The Addigai is an important neck item also made of uncut rubies set in gold. Mangai Malai, a long necklace made of mango shaped pieces studded with uncut rubies and diamonds is another specialty of this area. Nowadays diamond jewellery has caught the fancy of the South Indian women. The Thalli, a necklace, which is worn during marriage, also has various patterns according to the community of the couple.

Kerala has a rich variety of gold designs but precious stones are very rarely used. Necklaces are available in various shapes and designs. The **Garuda necklace** is famous here.

North India is famous for a special form of jewellery called **meenakari** combined with the Kundan technique. Very delicate stuff are developed using these techniques. First, a basic form of the jewellery is created with hollow spaces allowed for the stones to be inserted. Then the Meenakar fills it with lac and engraves delicate designs on it. Lines are engraved to hold different colors. First the colors, which require the maximum temperature, are filled in and fired. Then the other colors are applied and fired until both the sides are enameled properly. Then the Kundan worker places the stones in their respective area. The piece is then polished with a leather cloth. Different types of jewel items are prepared by this method and **Jaipur** is the main center specialized in this technique. This art is also practiced in Delhi, Lucknow and Varanasi.

Metalware

In India, the mastery over the mining, smelting and working of metals developed from ancient civilizations. The ancient Indians used to make weapons of defence from the available metals. Over the years the availability of metals increased and shaped vessels were developed gradually for personal kitchen purposes apart from tools and items of armor.

The commonest objects of metal in India are the **water vessels**. It is the skill of a **Metal Smith** who makes a water pitcher with a narrow neck and rounded contours to match the curvaceous form of the women folk! The North Indian pitchers have a flat base and a top, which rises, at an angle from the base. The Rajasthani pitcher on the other hand is rounded with a small mouth and a narrow neck, which prevents any spillage of water in the water-thirst desert regions.

Another common usage of metal in India is for the **temple bells**. The bells of India are noted for their depth and purity of tone and also for their designs and shapes. They are made of bell metal, which is considered to be the purest of all metals. It is nowadays also used for making utensils and other ritual vessels.

Indians are not much used to utensils of glass, porcelain and wood like the Westerners, so most of the items like cups, saucers, glasses, plates, containers and serving dishes are commonly made in metals.

Sheet metal is used commonly in India for preparing water vessels, serving plates, tabletops, dowry boxes, etc. Alternatively heating and hammering the sheet metal make these forms. Another important technique of sheet metal in India is the **deep repousse work**. Here the flat part of the metal is first filled with lac and the basic pattern is drawn. Then the outline is beaten into the lac with the hammer and the area to be depressed is beaten down.

The lac is melted and the right side is embedded in lac and the process is reversed. The sections that are to be raised in the final piece are beaten outwards. This process is repeated until the **deep repousse work** emerges. Finally engraving is done. This method is used in making vessels and images of worship. Madurai, Tiruchi and Tanjore in Tamilnadu, Bombay, Varanasi, and Bhuj in Gujarat are specialties in this technique.

Casting of brass and copper is done in Moradabad. Bell metal casting is followed in Kerala, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Assam. First the piece is made in sand or clay and then cast in metal.

Another technique of working with metals in India is the combining of two metals.

This technique is also called **Ganga -Yamuna**. Combining of different metals is also done by a method called **Damascening** where other metals are encrusted into the basic metal.

The final works are called Bidar work, Koftagiri, Zarnishan and Tarkashi after the places where they are prepared.

Koftagiri is a form of Damascening, an ancient art wherein one metal is encrusted onto another either in the form of wires or small pieces. Originally gold and silver were done on iron and steel defense items.

Now this is practiced in Kerala where silver wires are inlaid on iron sheets.

Bidri is a method developed in Mysore and it involves the damascening of silver on oxidized black vessels of copper and zinc. It is now practiced in Lucknow and Purnea and Murshidabad in West Bengal.

In **Zarnishan**, silver pieces are first engraved with the pattern and then inlaid. It is also called Zarbuland.

Wire patterns are called **Tarkashi**.

Tanjore Plate works, which are very popular throughout India, are also a form of Damascening. Here copper forms the basic metal over which silver medallions carrying repousse designs of Gods and Goddesses and their Vahanas are attached.

Brass decorative rosettes are also attached.

Enameling is followed in Jaipur, Delhi, Lucknow and Moradabad, where metal is engraved so as to provide depressions in which different colored laces are heated and fixed to create a surface of various colors.

In **Bronze casting**, the **lost wax method** is a fine art in India. Many images of worship are made by the process. The images are cast according to the rules laid down by the Shilpa Shastra. In the Lost Wax method, the basic form is first prepared by melting wax and then it is enclosed in clay moulds and fired. The wax melts and a clay mould is created with a hollow space. Then hot molten metal is poured into the mould and then the piece is cooled. The basic solid metal image emerges. Then finer details are engraved on the surface of the body.

In South India, Madurai, Swamimalai, Mysore, Bangalore and Karaikal are the important centers practicing this method. Palitana is an important center for casting of Jain images in Gujarat. Varanasi, Mathura, Calcutta, Balasore and Puri are also important metal -casting centers.

POTTERY, TERRACOTTA AND PAPIER MACHE

Pottery

The art of handling of clay called Pottery was one of the earliest skills known to the Indians. From time immemorial, lumps of clay were hand -moulded to form toys and deities of worship. The advent of the Potter's wheel gave man the task of making beautifully shaped pots for his personal use. The movement of the wheel and the pressure exerted by the hands on the clay gives new shapes and forms.

Unglazed Pottery

Although the art of glazing pottery was known in India from ancient times, the finest pottery in India is of the unglazed variety. This unglazed pottery has a wide range. Very fine paper-thin pottery is produced in Kutch, Kanpur and Alwar. Alwar is known for paper-thin pottery called Kagzi.

There are three different styles in unglazed pottery.

1. **Paper thin**, biscuit colored pottery with incised patterns.
2. Here the pot is polished, painted with red and white slips into intricate patterns while the outline is incised. The **scrafito technique** is used here.
3. In this style, highly polished pottery is given strong, deeply incised, stylized patterns of **arabesques**. The rest of the area is covered with rows of black dots and the contrast in color and texture gives the incised area greater prominence.

Kangra and Andreta in Himachal Pradesh, Pokhran in Rajasthan, Meerut and Harpur in Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur in Maharastra, Kutch in Gujarat, Jahjjar in Haryana, Birbhum in Bengal and Manipur are famous for their special styles in pottery. Each region has its own specialty.

Kangra is noted for **black pottery**, which resembles the Harappan pottery style.

Pokhran has stylized forms with incised decorative patterns. Kanpur makes thin pottery with incised designs. Meerut and Jhajjar make slim necked water containers called surahis. These are half -turned and half -moulded and have a variety of patterns and designs. Kutch is famous for pots, terracotta horses and elephants. The pots are made for different occasions like marriages, death, etc.

Nizamabad in Uttar Pradesh is noted for black pottery with silver patterns worked in it. This is similar to the Bidar work of Andhra where oxidized gunmetal is inlaid with silver wire.

Glazed Pottery

In India, the making of Glazed pottery came into being with the advent of the Arab influence in India. Only a few centers in India are known for its production. Glazed pottery with white background and blue and green patterns is developed in Delhi, Amritsar, Jaipur, Khurja, Chunar and Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, and Karigari in Tamilnadu.

Delhi, Khurja and Jaipur are known for the famed **Blue Pottery**. This does not involve the usage of clay. First, the basic forms are created and then they are painted on the surface.

Then it is covered with finely ground glass and fired. Jaipur and Delhi follow this method whereas Khurja and Rampur prepare the base from red clay and then fire it.

In Chunar, the raised designs in Surahis are adapted for glazed pottery. A brown slip is given finally.

In Karigari in Tamilnadu, biscuit ware is created with incised patterns and given a blue or green glaze.

Terracotta

The rural parts of India commonly display terracotta animal figures in places of worship or under the mango or pipal trees in the vicinity of temples. The potters mostly do the terracotta figures. In some parts of Indian villages, the women folk create their own forms of Gods for worship and other decorative pieces for adorning their houses.

In Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat, during festivals, the women prepare clay figures to propitiate their Gods and Goddesses.

The relief- worked plaque of Moela in Rajasthan has a distinct style. Here on flat surface local deities are created with moulded clay. They are then fired and then painted brilliant colors.

Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh has villages where clay figures of animals are done. The potter creates the basic form by throwing separate pieces on the wheel and then joining them.

Tamilnadu is famous for the terracotta figures of the Aiyandar Deity. The figures are huge and they are found standing guard at the entrances of villages protecting the insiders from evil spirits.

Gujarat also has votive figures like horses with riders, etc.

Papier-Mache

In the year 1398, when India was invaded by Tamur Lane, Sultan Sikander sent his son to pay tribute to the invader. Tamur lane betrayed the agreement of his alliance with the Sultan and made his son a hostage in Samarkhand for seven years. Many craftsmen from Central Asia and Persia had accompanied Tamur Lane to India and were placed in Samarkhand as well. There this young dynamic Prince saw the strange craft made of paper pulp. He learnt the art and later when he became the king after his father's death, spread this art among the craftsmen of his region.

The base of this craft is paper pulp coarsely mashed and mixed with copper sulphate and rice-flour paste. Then moulded by covering the mould with a thin paper and then with layers of this mixture. The designers then sketch the designs intricately and finally it is laquered and polished in bright colors. A touch of golden color is always found on all papier-mache products owing its root to the Persian design.

Textiles

India has a wide range of textiles of varied designs and manufactured by numerous techniques when compared to other countries in the world. The styles depend upon the location of the place, climatic conditions, cultural influences and trade contacts. The

varied topography of India from the snowy mountains to the rich river valleys and from the lush forests to the arid deserts as well as the various cultures brought down here from the invaders have influenced the growth of a number of textile weaves.

Bengal and Kerala where the land is lush and green mostly wear white clothes. The desert area, which comprises of parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi sport intense sun- burnt colors with strong linear patterns. Embroidery and mirror works are predominant here.

The rich river plains have a softer texture and milder colors with linear patterns and well-defined borders. Mostly floral patterns are used for the decorations of the cloth. In the Deccan region, the colors match the black alluvial soil of the area. Dark maroon, bottle green and turquoise blue are common colors here. The dry and hot climate of the Southern states, which comprises Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra, favors rich and luminous colored silks. The Himalayan area, which consists of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Northern parts of Uttar Pradesh, concentrates on woolen weaves with highly geometric patterns woven in tapestry weave in the primary colors.

Cotton Fabrics

The Indian subcontinent is the home for the Cotton crop. The art of weaving and dyeing of cotton was known in India some 5000 years ago. This has been established by the fact that some cotton fragments have been unearthed from the Harappan area. Cotton fabrics are woven almost throughout the length and breadth of India.

The cotton saris of West Bengal are called ***Jamdani*** and they follow the traditional patterns. Twisted yarn is closely woven together and so the saris are more lasting. Initially the Jamdani saris were woven for the nobles of North India. Now this art is still practiced in Tanda and Varanasi. This inlay technique is fully indigenous. This Jamdani technique of patterning is found in the cotton centers of ***Venkatagiri*** in Andhra, ***Morangfi*** in Manipur and ***Kodialkarruppar*** in Tamilnadu.

Chanderi is noted for fine cotton saris and shallus, wraps worn by the womenfolk. The warp is silk and the weft is cotton. The saris carry motifs or roundels or ashraf buti on the body.

Maheshwar on the banks of the river Narmada weaves fine cotton saris with tiny checks, which combine complimentary colors together. Very soft colors are used for the dyeing. Maharastrian women wear these saris with the flowing pleats in the front while the back is tucked into the waist.

The ***Ilkal saris*** of Karnataka and the ***Narayanpet saris*** of Andhra also have the same style but they are woven in dark earthen colors. In Ilkal, the naturally grown indigo is used for dyeing purposes. Andhra has a rich variety in cotton saris. Gadwal and Wanaparti produce saris of thick cotton body mostly in checks with a contrasting silk border and pallu worked in gold. ***Nander*** is famous for its fine quality cottons saris richly worked in gold thread with silk border. Venkatagiri manufactures saris of the Jamdani technique with stylized motifs woven in half cotton and half gold threads.

In Tamilnadu, the cotton sari patterns closely resemble the silk ones. The important centers are ***Kanjeevaram, Salem, Pudukottai and Madurai***. ***Coinbatore*** has its own style of cotton saris which are less expensive and which resemble the Chanderi

patterns. Nowadays cotton saris woven with the traditional silk patterns called **Kalakshetra** is widely popular.

Kerala has started weaving cotton saris of late. Its specialty is the **Karalkudi saris** of unbleached cotton with rich broad gold borders and pallus.

Silk Weaves

In India, **Varanasi** is one of the most famous silk weaving centers. Originally, it produced cotton and was a cotton-weaving center. Silk weaving started in Varanasi for producing saris, dhotis and chaddars for use in worship. Later with the growth of trade and demand for silk fabrics, it began to produce a variety of textiles in silk for personal uses. The specialty of the region is the heavy gold brocade, which has an extra weft of rich gold thread running across the warp threads.

The **Amru silk brocades** of Varanasi are very famous. The amru saris are the Butidar ones enclosed by a border and a heavy pallu of flowering bushes or the flowing mango pattern.

The **Baluchar technique** of weaving brocades with untwisted silk thread was developed in the **Murshidabad** district of West Bengal. It is based upon the miniature paintings of India. The specialty of the Baluchar saris is the large Pallu with a central pattern of flowing Kalgas, the mango design enclosed by repetitive frames of miniatures. Gujarat is an important brocade center with a class of its own. Extra weft brocade developed in Gujarat only. Silk weaving continues in Ridrol in Mehsana District and Jamnagar in Saurashtra in Gujarat. Materials for Ghagras, skirts, saris, ordhnis, cholis and many items for religious purposes are also woven here. Small Torans to be hung outside the family temples are also made.

South India has a class of its own in silk saris. Heavy lustrous silk with broad borders and elaborate pallus are made here. Contrasting colors are used to produce a harmonious blend of colors. Traditionally the pattern is a part of the woven fabric and not an extra weft. The checks and strips are woven into the warp and weft. **Kancheepuram, Tanjore and Kumbakonam** are the important silk centers in Tamilnadu. **Sangareddy** in Andhra, **Kolegal and Molkalmoru** in Karnataka are also famous silk weaving centers. **Tanjore** is specialized in weaving the all -over gold saris used for weddings and temple uses. Molkalmoru has its own distinct tradition of simple **ikat** weave combined with a rich gold border carrying stylized motifs.

Tie and dye fabrics

India has a great variety of **Bandhani**, tie and dyed fabrics. This form involves a good mastery over dyeing. The fabric is first degummed and dipped in a mordant so that it absorbs the dye. Then the basic divisions of areas, borders etc are carried out. The technique is quite simple. In India, the important centers noted for this technique are **Saurashtra and Kutch** in Gujarat and Rajasthan state.

Bleached cloth is folded lengthwise and then widthwise into four folds. One side of the width, which has the two ends of the sari, has the intricate patterns of the Pallu, while the border pattern runs down on one side. The patterns on the body are then distributed all over the surface. The dyer indicates the designs to be tied. Then tying the cloth into tiny knots creates the outline of the pattern. Womenfolk generally do the tying works.

Gujarat does saris, which are dark in background color while Rajasthan has developed another technique wherein the background color is light and the patterns are in dark shades.

Kutch produces the finest Bandhanis in India. **Mandvi and Bhuj** are also other important bandhani producing centers. The Khatri community of Gujarat is known for their fine quality dyeing.

The **Gharchola saris** carry tied and dyed patterns. These saris are traditionally bought for weddings and they carry a gold thread for the checks with small golden motifs like peacock or lotus in the center. These saris are tied and dyed in Kutch. The final red color of the Gharchola saris are dyed in Jamnagar because of the special quality of water there. Rajkot in Saurashtra is another important center for bandhanis.

In Rajasthan, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Sikar are the notable centers. Sikar produces one of the finest Bandhanis. Another form of tie and dye in Rajasthan is the **Lahriya and Mothra**. Here the opposite ends of the length of the cloth are pulled and rolled together. They are then tied and dyed in different colors producing multicolored lines. Mothra is formed when the same process is repeated by using the opposite ends. This is done only in Jaipur and Jodhpur. Lahriya technique is used for making turbans for the Rajputs of Rajasthan.

In Bihar, the Bandhani technique is worked to create bold patterns in single colors. The same technique is used in Madurai in Tamilnadu to produce the famous **Sungudi saris**, which are a must for many communities during marriages in the South.

The technique of tie and dye of threads before weaving is known as **Patola**.

Internationally it is called as Ikat. Ikat weaving is done in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. In Andhra it is known as Pagdu Bandha Baddabhasi or **Chilka**. Ikat furnishing weaving is done in the whole of Nalgonda district of Andhra.

Orissa has a distinct style of Ikat known as **Bandha**. In this method the single ikat is worked in the warp and the borders are prepared separately.

Hand - printed and Painted Fabrics

The method of hand printing of textiles is found all over India. The important cotton printing centers are in the desert regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Alizarin, indigo and many vegetable colors are used for hand painting in these regions. Various methods of printing like **direct printing, resist printing and screen-printing** are practiced in India. In a method called **Kalamkari**, the cloth is painted by using a pen with dyes and mordants. This method is widely popular.

Direct printing is popular throughout India and it involves a bleached cotton or silk fabric printed with the help of carved wooden blocks. In hand block printing around three or four colors are used.

In the resist method, a paste is made up of different materials and it is used for the printing areas, which are required to resist the dye. The fabric is then immersed in the dye.

Batik

Batik is a medium that lies somewhere between art and craft, and is believed to be at least 2000 years old. The Batik technique is a development of resist printing. The fabric is painted with molten wax and then dyed in cold dyes after which the cloth is washed in hot water. The wax melts and the pattern emerges. The effect of this resist technique is soft and subdued and the outlines are not clearly defined.

The basic process of batik is simple. It consists of permeating an area of fabric with hot wax so that the wax resists the penetration of dye. If the cloth we begin with is white, such as bleached cotton, linen, or silk, then wherever we apply hot wax that area will remain white in the final design. After the first waxing the fabric is dipped into a dye bath whose color is the lightest tone of those to be used. When the piece has dried, we see an area of white and an area of cloth that is the color of the first dyeing. Wax is now applied to those parts in which we wish to retain the first color, and the entire fabric is immersed in the second dye bath whose color is darker in tone than the first.

This process is repeated until the darkest tone required in the final design has been achieved. When the fabric, now almost wholly waxed, has dried it is placed between sheets of absorbent paper and a hot iron applied. As the sheets of paper absorb the wax they are replaced by fresh sheets until the wax is removed. At this point the final design is seen clearly for the first time.

In another method of printing, *mordants* are used. The cloth is first printed with mordants and then immersed in the dye. Only the sections, which have absorbed the mordant, can absorb the dye. The cloth is then washed in flowing waters and allowed to dry in the sun when the colors develop. Then the untreated sections are bleached with local ingredients.

Hand printing is practiced in Jaipur, Sanganeer, Bagroo, Apli and Barmer in Rajasthan. In Gujarat, Mandvi, Dhamardhka, Mundra, Anjar, Jamnagar, Surrendranagar, Jaitpur, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Deesa are the important centers of printing fabrics. Mandvi and Anjar in Kutch district of Gujarat use both direct printing as well as resist printing.

Delhi has many printing establishments, which cater to both the internal and the external markets. Farukhabad in Uttar Pradesh is an important printing center and it produces bed covers, curtains, and hangings for Export.

Mausilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh has printers who are specialized in hand printing, Kalamkari printing, Resist printing, block printing as well as Batik works. Hand- painted **Batik** using locally grown indigo dyes is famous here.

Tanjore in Tamilnadu produces fine quality hand printed saris with the resist method in a village called **Kodial**. Gold work patterns are woven in the body of the sari and the outlines are worked with a combination of Kalamkari and printing which produces a rich and delicate look.

Folk Embroidery

In India, folk embroidery is always associated with the women folk. It is a form of their self-expression. They create patterns that are connected with their native culture, their religion, and their desires. In short, the pieces mirror the daily life of the people.

Women embroider clothes for their personal use, for their children, their husbands, the elderly members of the family, etc. The people connected with the pastoral occupation prepare embroidered animal decorations. Decorative covers for the horns, forehead

etc, for the bulls, the horses ,etc are prepared. *The Rabaris of Kutch* district in Gujarat do some of the finest embroidered decorations for the camel.

Embroidered pieces are also prepared for use during festivals, marriages and other important social functions. The embroidered or appliqué work called *Dharaniya* is an important decoration for the homes of Saurashtra and Kutch people. Embroidered Torans are put on the walls during festivals. Long Pattis, running embroidered strips cover the rafters.

One of the important techniques of Saurashtra is the *heer embroidery* which has bold geometric patterns worked in silk.

The Mutwa women of the Banni area of Kutch have a distinct style of embroidery. They create fine embroidery works with stylized motifs and mirrors of the size of pinheads. The Gracia Jats use geometric patterns of embroidery works on the yoke of their long dresses. Saurashtra also makes embroidered quilts. Kutch prepares quilts with appliqué works and also makes quilts from small multi- colored cloth pieces.

Bikaner has a distinct style of embroidery, which is prepared on woolen ordhnis with woolen thread. They stimulate the Bandhani effect.

The *Bagh and Phulkari embroidery* of Punjab is a labor of love. The Phulkari does not have embroidery all over the surface, but it has motifs distributed over the surface revealing parts of the background material. The phulkaris are of three types: one carries stylized motifs of flowers, fruits and birds, the other carries folk motifs and the third one sports stylized Haveli gateways.

The hill areas of Himachal Pradesh produce a double-sided embroidery known as *Chamba Rumal*. This may be of the simple folk type or the classical form, which has simplified versions of miniature paintings of Pahari.

Bihar has a rich variety of embroidery works. The *Akshida* is famous here and it has embroidery work throughout the whole surface like the Bagh. Appliqué work of Orissa is prepared in Pipli, near Puri known for the Jagannath Temple. Here special canopies, fans, umbrellas, etc used in the famous Rath Yatra Festival are made.

The *Kasuti embroidery* of Karnataka is a stylized form with stitches based on the texture of the fabric. Negi, Gavanti and the Menthi are the three different types of stitches used.

Bead Works

Transparent and semi-transparent beads are used to produce a remarkable line of embroidery. This craft developed in India in the 19th century because of the influence of the European traders. They bought beads as articles of trade. Unlike other places where the beads are stitched on cloth to form a pattern, here they are used with no backing material at all. A large number of different beads and a needle and thread are the only materials with which the craftsmen create chaklas, door hangings, belts, bags, pot covers and a variety of other things.

The design is woven with thread and needle. The work is done row by row on a tri-bead system, three beads being taken up at each stitch. On the return row, the stitching of the beads moves one position forward, so that a tight network is created.

Usually the background is white with the pattern in different colors. The beadwork of Saurashtra and Kutch is very special. This work is not found in any other part of India.

Woolen Weaves

The **shawls of Kashmir** are well known throughout the world. They are made of superfine quality wool with intricate designs and excellent workmanship. They are reputed in the international market for several centuries. Kashmir makes a range of shawls like the Kani shawl, the double colored pashima, the soft Santoosh, the majestic woolen shawl, the Dhussa, the men's long shawl with its woven border and the fine Ambli or embroidered shawls.

Kashmir is known for the **Kani shawls** for several centuries. The Aini- Akbari, written during the reign of Akbar mentions it and says that during the 18th century merchants used to come from all over the world to purchase it. They were worth their weight in gold then. The designs of the shawls are very complicated, that individual craftsmen prepare small pieces of the shawl and then later they were joined together. One of the methods to detect whether a shawl is a Kani shawl or not is to check at its back whether it has been woven as a separate piece or as a whole one.

Embroidery is also a fine art of the Kashmiri people. The double-sided shawl called **Dorukha** is a fine piece, in that, the right side cannot be differentiated from the wrong side.

In the **Aksi shawl**, the design is produced on one side by splitting the warp threads into half, leaving the other side plain or embroidered with another pattern.

The **Santoosh woolen shawls** are made from special wool, which is taken from the underside of the wild **Pashima goats**, which are found at high altitudes of the Kashmiri hills. The wool is first collected, sorted and then spun by hand by experts and then woven. The finished product is light and extremely warm.

The Himalayan region also produces many other varieties of shawls and tweeds for local usage. The shawls carry motifs inspired by the Buddhist traditions, the swastika, etc.

