

The Balochi needlework's and handicrafts

The Baloch are famous for handicrafts such as pottery, needlework, design, clothes, instrument making, mat weaving, basket weaving, carpet weaving, 'Gelim' weaving, home decoration, and 'Sekeh-Doozi' (coin works) and of course Balochi Rugs (Carpets). The Balochi rugs are world renowned and there is no need here to tell you more about it. You can find scores of commercial web sites which will tell you all about Balochi Carpets (rugs). A few of such web sites can be accessed from here by clicking numbers from 1 to 7. 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7, By researching on culture section you will get some more information.

Needlework, An Art exclusive to Balochi Women

Right now 8,000 needle workers are working in 90 villages covered by Sistan and Balouchestan

ancient form the needle, thread and fabric is used to produce a needlework. This art has nothing to do with the machine and the wheel. The fame of Balouchi needlework has traveled many thousand miles beyond our homeland and many countries in the world consider Balouchestan as the birthplace of needlework. Ms. Mohsenzadeh, an expert on handicraft industry, says: "All Balouchi women and girls aged between 4 to 40 are engaged in that trade. There is no precise historical record for this craft but in old times raising of silk worm was popular in Iranshahr and Chanef. There many people were engaged in that trade and women used to produce handicraft by silk thread."

A Balouchi woman who has spent many years in this craft, says: "The Balouchi female artists in the region used to sew silk embroidery on nightcaps, skullcaps, sleeves and tobacco bags and one can trace a link between embroidery and needlework on fabrics with the production of silk. This art continued until today and has been christened 'Balouchdouzi' which is the exclusive industry of Balouchi women. Dorbibi Mobaraki went on to say: "In the past due to lack of access to the city for procurement of fabrics, traditional textile works was popular in old nomadic villages where they used to weave their own cotton fabrics. These fabrics were not very strong and durable and in order to strengthen parts of the dress which easily wore off or were torn, the women used to add needlework on sleeves, the front of the dress and pockets. But nowadays the needlework which is normally worn by Balouchi women for their beauty is employed for decoration of the house."

Gradually this art exited from its narrow boundary and with the invention of ornamented things such as the decorated pillows, tablecloth, bed covers, shawls, prayer carpet, wedding table and lamp shed, it turned into a popular art. Needlework is so intermingled with the life of these women in the region that each Balouchi girl, aged between 4 to 5, while learning housekeeping, learnt that art as well. Most of the time a Balouchi woman carries a needle and some thread and fabric in her pocket and wherever she sits down she engages in needlework. The managing director of SBHIO said: "Needlework is mostly popular in the suburbs of Iranshahr such as Chanef, Shahre Yanj, Govanka, Mateh Sang, Peep and Heridook as well as Khash, Indandegan and Margin districts."

He said the raw material for the needlework is made up of thread andPRIVATE "TYPE=PICT;ALT=jewel"

fabrics. In the past the raw material for needlework was imported from Pakistan which was adjacent to Sistan and Balouchestan Province but nowadays the SBHIO procures fabrics from Mazandaran and Iran Barak textile factories and the viscose or polyester thread from the viscose thread factory in Yazd and then distributes them among the needle workers. According to Ms. Lida Mohsenzadah, an expert with SBHIO, needlework is classified into intense needlework, medium needlework and light needlework. She said in

Balouchestan first of all the artist sews the needed design on the fabric. This is called 'demarcation of the path'. After that the design is filled with needlework.

Mahpari Dorzadeh, a Balouchi female needle-worker, lauded SBHIO for supplying the raw material to the artists and added that part of the needlework such as pockets, decorated sleeves and breast covers are used in the region to adorn the dress of Balouchi women. She said this tradition is used by both the poor and the rich and each woman is wearing part of such works on their dress according to their income.

"Should SBHIO insure the female needle workers, they would continue their job with much encouragement and security," Dorzadeh added. The managing director of SBHIO said since these women are working for themselves (in their homes) and are selling their products to us, we are unable to insure them." Identification cards are issued by SBHIO for producers of needlework who work with the Organization. All the products of these artists are purchased by us and after completing part of the work, a small portion is sold in the Organization's department stores and the rest is distributed among companies affiliated to Iranian Handicraft Organization throughout the country.

According to several female needle workers, much of the needlework is taken out of the country by Iranian passengers as souvenirs. Buyers of such items say that the handicraft is widely welcomed by foreign customers," they added. The managing director of Sistan and Balouchestan Handicraft Organization said right now 4,000 women are engaged in that trade in 50 villages in Sistan and Balouchestan Province and their work is monitored by 10 master artists from SBHIO.

Should the raw material be supplied on time due to limited opportunities in their life each artist can produce five cushions and four silver tablecloths a month. "The average monthly income of a Balouchi woman from this trade is 75 thousand rials for 3 hour work a day which sum varies according to her skill, experience and precision. The flourishing of handicraft industries in the villages has prevented villagers from migrating into towns, " the head of SBHIO added.

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