



BIDRIWARE : A GLORY OF BIDAR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

A number of traditions of crafts based on metals, alloys, gems and stones flourished in ancient India. Many of these traditions started in ancient India and continue vigorously even in modern India. One such craft is Bidriware. Bidriware is a flourishing Handicraft of Bidar, North Karnataka. The craft of Bidriware was introduced in Bidar by a Persian artisan Abdulla-bin-Kaiser, who was among a group of skilled workers brought from Iran by Sultan Ahmed Shah WaliBahamani in the 15th century. Abdulla's expertise in this exquisite craft impressed the Sultan to such an extent that he arranged for the training of local craftsmen in Bidriware handicraft in the Mahmud GawanMadarsa.

KEYWORDS: Woman, Woman Empowerment, Role of Media, Gendered information, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Bidar district is the home of the Bidriware industry and the very name Bidri is derived from Bidar. The Bidri articles are well known from their artistic elegance and beauty in India and abroad. This craft was introduced in Bidar during the rule of Bahmanis.

Origin: In its original Persian avatar, Bidri work involved the inlaying of gold or silver on a steel or copper base. The present method envisages an alloy of zinc and copper as the base metal. Artisans sketch intricate floral and geometric designs on the matt black surface using a sharp metal stylus. This special type of encrusted metal-ware was used to embellish various objects, including platters, paan boxes, goblets, hookahs and trays.

Unique feature: A unique aspect of the Bidriware craft is the soil used to ornament the art objects. This soil, which has not received rain or sunlight for centuries, is collected by

artisans from the inner areas of the Bidar fort. The soil contains ingredients that give a lustrous black colour to Bidriware. The paucity of raw materials impedes the mass production of Bidriware artifacts. The intricate nature of the Bidriware craft demands pains taking efforts from the artists. Bidri craft is metal work where objects are cast from an alloy in which zinc predominates with small amounts of lead as well as copper and tin. The traditional artifacts made are the hookahs, goblets, vases, caskets, jewellery and various other decorative accessories.

The Technique: 'Bidri' describes metal work produced by a technique only in India. Objects are cast from an alloy in which zinc predominates but which may include small amounts of lead as well as copper and tin. The surface of the objects is made smooth and a solution of copper sulphate darkens it temporarily for the next stage of engraving. The engraving tools cut the design into metal, which is then lighter in colour than the darkened surface and enables the pattern to be seen more clearly. The engraver's work having been completed; the piece is passed on to the layer. The inlay may be of silver or brass, the brass often having a gold-like appearance due to its high zinc content. Rarely gold has been used as an inlay, as has gilt silver. The inlay may be of wire or sheet metal and some of the finest pieces have a design cut out of sheet silver so that it appears silhouetted against the body of the object. This is usually known as *aftabi*.

The final state, after the inlay has been burnished, is to blacken the surface of the piece so that the inlay stands out against it. This is done by applying a paste of ammonium chloride, potassium nitrate, sodium chloride, copper sulphate and mud, which darkens the body while having no effect on the inlay. The paste is washed off and finally oil is rubbed into the piece to deepen the matt black ground.

Material and Process: the main basic materials required in this industry are zinc, copper, silver and a particular type of earth. The other subsidiary raw materials needed are lead, tin, copper, sulphate, ammonium, chloride, wax, ground oil, castor oil, resin etc. The process of production may be divided into four main stages viz, casting, engraving, inlaying and oxidizing.

The Bidriware is solid. It does not dent or break unless struck or hurled with great force. It does not rust either. The entire process of manufacture of Bidriware is carried on with great expertise and celerity by different sections of the people.

Style and places: The style of Bidriware varies from region to region.

1. In Bidar, the design of poppy flower has caught the fancy of its craftsmen. This pattern incidentally is also copiously found in Kimkhab textiles. No doubt, the unfolded poppy metals wrought in wire or leaf of precious metals on the stable surface of Surabhis, pikdans, abkgoras etc., speak of a refined proficiency on the part of the designers.

2. Purnea Bidri work manifests a different style unlike Hyderabad Bidri the style shown here is conventional, away from the naturalistic depiction of flowers. Instead of wire, leaf has been used. Two kinds of Bidriware were produced in Purnea. The deeply cut and better finished design is known as Gharki while the inferior type passed by the name of

KarnaBidri.

3. In Murshidabad , West Bengal , interesting designs were produced in which patches of gold and silver leaf along with wire were extensively used.

4. In Moradabad, a type of work is produced a sudden glimpse of which makes it appear like Bidri. It appears that the Moradabad designers have adopted intricate meandering patterns as their forte.

5. In Lucknow, along with leaf and floral patterns, is to be found a remarkable infusion of European motifs in the designs. Amongst many, the most conspicuous design is perhaps the Mahi-Muratib or fish patterns which is not only found in Bidri, but extended over to other spheres of art including architecture.

Bidriware, as we have seen in briefly were manufactured in four major centers e.g., Murshidabad and Purnea in West Bengal (at present purnea is incorporated with the state of Bihar) and Lucknow in the north and Hyderabad in the Deccan. Kashmir also produced Bidri craft in a limited way. At present, however craft lingers only in Bidar or Hyderabad.

Bidriware Designs: The Bidri articles traditionally used by the nobility in the former Hyderabad State were water jugs, wash basins flagons, hookas, candle sticks, spice and cosmetic boxes , dishes and flower vases. Now –a-days as many as 200 types of articles are being manufactured in these units such as goblets, flower-vases, ash-trays, statues, boxes, ear-rings, necklaces, caskets, table lamps, cigarette cases, wall and table decorative figure plates, pin trays, fruit-bowls etc. Among the traditional designs traced on the Bidri articles, the ‘poppy flower”, the “Persian rose” and “phooljari” are the most popular. Other types of specified articles are also produced, provided the designs and drawings are supplied to the workers.

The most frequently designs are conventionalized flowers, creepers and geometrical patterns. It is interesting to note that the artists engaged in the craft were the local and Muslims and the Hindus of the Lingayat sect. The Hindus craftsmen preferred the swastika, the lotus, human figures, etc., while the Muslims craftsmen favoured Persian motifs.

Bidriware has been used for a wide variety of artefacts, ranging from domestic vessels to bed legs and in recent times, cigarette cases and buttons. Present day Bidri production caters mostly to a tourist demand. Smokers requisites are now cigar and cigarette boxes and ashtrays rather than hookas ; also produced are necklaces, cuff-links and tie pins. A new development is the production of articles with no useful function whatsoever-wall plaques depicting folk dancers and signs of the zodiac are found, and there are found, and there are also sculptural pieces which draw their inspiration from the wall painting of Ajanta.

Marketing: In order to suit the modern tastes, to promote the sale of articles, new designs are being introduced. The Bidri articles are marketed locally and also sent to big

cities like Bangalore, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Hyderabad through the Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation and also through wholesale dealers. They are also exported to foreign countries.

Bidri articles also exported to 93 countries of the world like America, Italy, Singapore, England, Australia, France, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Brazil, Austria, German, Greece, Japan Malaysia, Netherland, Newzealand, Sweden, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Russia, Venezuela, Java, Burma etc. List of the countries where Bidri articles exported.

Bidriware Museums: To encourage the Bidri art many exhibitions, Museums and marketing organizations and Government policies involved are as follows:

1. SalarZang Museum, Hyderabad
2. National Museum, New Delhi
3. Surabhi Exhibition, Kerala
4. Fairs of Ajanta and Ellora
5. Handicrafts fairs
6. Indian Kalabhavan Art Gallery
7. Kaveri Exhibition
8. District Archaeology and Museum, Nizamabad.
9. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.
10. Hyderabad Museum
11. SardarVallabhai Patel Museum, Surat
12. Jagdish and Kamala Mittal Museum, Hyderabad.
13. Indian Museum, New Delhi
14. Craft Council of Karnataka
15. NABARD (National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development)
16. Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation.

CONCLUSION:

The town of Bidar is celebrated for the manufacture of a kind of ware which is styled Bidriware. The metal is composed of an alloy of copper, lead, tin and zinc. It is worked into articles of most elegant designs, and inlaid with silver and occasionally gold. As there is not unfortunately much demand for these beautiful manufactures, the industry is fast dwindling. It is high time to that art lover, marketing agencies and handicrafts promotion organizations join forces to save this great art form and take it to greater heights of glory. It is high to consider this problem seriously, and no amount of talk will help to produce Bidriware of high water mark. It is our duty to save this art for the sake of art and Bidriware artisan's life. Education to Bidriware artisans, encourage to good craft work and propaganda about Bidriware among the new generation along with using science and technology are the few remedies to save the diminishing Bidriware.

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Modern Bidriware



Various Uses of Bidriware