

# HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE KASHKADARYA REGION

**Suyarova Feruza Sobir kizi**

Independent researcher at Karshi State University

**Abstract:** This article analyzes the historical development stages of handicrafts in the Kashkadarya region. The formation of such handicraft industries as pottery, blacksmithing, jewelry, textiles, and woodcarving in the region since ancient times is highlighted based on archaeological sources. It is revealed through scientific sources that in the Middle Ages, cities such as Shahrisabz and Karshi, located at the crossroads of caravan routes, were exported to domestic and foreign markets. The impact of technological innovations in the 19th and 20th centuries and the industrialization processes of the Soviet era on the development of handicrafts is analyzed. In the years after independence, the restoration of national handicrafts, the privileges and opportunities created by the state for craftsmen, participation in international exhibitions, and integration processes with tourism are considered on a separate scientific basis.

**Keywords:** Kashkadarya, history of crafts, pottery, blacksmithing, jewelry, carpet weaving, woodcarving, Soviet era, independence, national values, economic development, tourism, cultural heritage.

**Introduction.** Kashkadarya region is located in the southwestern part of Uzbekistan and is one of the centers of ancient culture and crafts. The history of this region dates back centuries, and the local population has been engaged in various crafts. Handicrafts have played an important role in the national economy and have played a significant role in the formation of national culture. This article discusses the formation, development and current role of crafts in Kashkadarya.

In the Kashkadarya region, handicrafts have long been an integral part of the lifestyle, culture and social life of the people. In this region, handicrafts have been formed not only as a practical activity, but also as an expression of aesthetic views, national traditions and spiritual heritage. Historical sources indicate that since the time of the ancient Sughd and Bactrian states, pottery, metalworking, jewelry, carpet weaving and wood carving have been widely developed in the Kashkadarya region.

**Main part.** The first forms of craftsmanship in the Kashkadarya region date back to the pre-Christian era. Various spool items, metal weapons, jewelry, and household items found as a result of archaeological excavations clearly confirm that craftsmanship has been developed in this region since ancient times. In particular, under the strong influence of the ancient Sogdian and Bactrian cultures, pottery, blacksmithing, jewelry, textiles, woodcarving, and other applied arts flourished in Kashkadarya. These handicraft products not only satisfied the needs of the domestic market, but were also exported to neighboring regions, playing an important role in strengthening economic and cultural ties.

According to scientific sources, the ancient cities of Kesh (now Shahrisabz) and Nasaf (now Karshi) stood out as centers of craftsmanship. The pottery, household and military weapons



made of iron and copper, as well as textile products produced in these cities were famous for their high quality. The activities of craftsmen played an important role not only in economic, but also in socio-cultural life, and were reflected in national traditions, rituals, and religious beliefs.

At the same time, the traditions of craftsmanship in Kashkadarya developed further in later periods, especially in the Middle Ages, and spread along caravan routes to Central Asia, Iran, India and other regions. In particular, the elegance of blacksmithing and pottery products and the artistic decoration of jewelry demonstrate the high skill of the craftsmen of this region. Today, the handicraft industries in Kashkadarya are being revived as an integral part of national culture and are gaining special importance in the processes of tourism and economic development.

In the Middle Ages, the Kashkadarya region, located at the crossroads of caravan routes, developed its craft industries. In particular, the cities of Shahrisabz (ancient Kesh) and Karshi (Nasaf) occupied a special place as economic and cultural centers, and craft workshops were widely developed. Historical sources note that pottery, blacksmithing, weaving, carpet weaving, and embroidery industries were highly developed in these cities. Potters produced ceramic vessels decorated with elegant patterns and exported them to local markets as well as to distant countries. Blacksmiths, on the other hand, made knives, daggers, swords, bowheads, and various tools, satisfying not only domestic needs, but also played an important role in military and economic life.

The art of carpet weaving and embroidery not only provided household needs among the people of Kashkadarya, but also became widely popular as an aesthetic and artistic value. Jewelry products were distinguished by their elegance, artistic decorations and patterns corresponding to national traditions. Especially due to their location at the intersection of medieval caravan routes, Kashkadarya handicraft products gained significant importance in international trade relations. During this period, products produced in Kashkadarya were exported to India, China, Iran, as well as to the countries of the Middle East via the Great Silk Road.

It should be noted that in the Middle Ages, handicrafts in Kashkadarya were not only an economic activity, but also had a significant impact on the formation of local culture, religious rituals, and social traditions. The elegance and aesthetic aspects of handicrafts reflected the artistic views of the people, and the process of their production was passed down from generation to generation through the master-disciple tradition.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the development of handicrafts in the Kashkadarya region was closely linked to the introduction of new technologies and the gradual industrialization of the production process. During this period, traditional handicraft industries, which were based on manual labor, were gradually modernized and the use of machines and machine tools was introduced. In particular, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of the introduction of new technologies in the fields of cotton ginning, silk production, textiles, and metalworking, handicraft industries became an integral part of economic life.

During the Soviet era (1920s–1980s), the national craft industries in Kashkadarya were radically reorganized as part of state policy. Craftsmen, in many cases unable to continue their activities independently, were united into state-organized artels, and later into factories and mills. This process led to the mass production of craft products, but the artistic aspects of traditional manual labor were often lost.

Nevertheless, some types of national crafts managed to preserve their historical appearance. In particular, such fine arts as carpet weaving, embroidery and wood carving continued among



the people. These art forms retained their place in the lifestyle of the local population, in national ceremonies and household needs. In particular, masters working in the cities of Shahrissabz and Karshi sought to develop traditional decorative styles in the conditions of the new era.

Although handicrafts produced during the Soviet era were mainly aimed at the domestic market, some art objects, in particular carpets and jewelry, were also exported abroad. This paved the way for the international recognition of national handicrafts. At the same time, numerous state-controlled craft associations played an important role in the economic life of Kashkadarya.

Since the years of independence, the revival of national crafts in Uzbekistan and their support as an important factor of cultural and economic development have become one of the priorities of state policy. In particular, in the Kashkadarya region, such crafts as carpet weaving, pottery, wood carving, embroidery and jewelry, which were formed on the basis of ancient traditions, are developing at a new stage in modern conditions.

The preferential loans, tax breaks, and activities of the "Hunarmand" association provided by the state to artisans have accelerated this process. The necessary organizational and legal conditions have been created for the introduction of artisans' products into the domestic and international markets. In particular, samples of national crafts are widely promoted at international exhibitions, cultural fairs, and tourism festivals. This serves to promote the works of Kashkadarya masters on a global scale.

In addition, special training courses and apprentice schools have been established to engage the younger generation in craft traditions. This process serves to ensure the continuity of national values and convey the secrets of craftsmanship to the younger generation.

Crafts are now recognized not only as an important part of national culture, but also as one of the important directions of economic development. Craftsmen in Kashkadarya make a significant contribution to the country's economy by selling their products not only in local markets, but also in international trading platforms. In particular, the export potential is increasing in areas such as carpet weaving and jewelry.

The development of handicrafts is directly related to the tourism sector, and national products, especially handmade art objects, are of great interest to tourists. Therefore, the development of handicrafts is important not only for preserving historical and cultural traditions, but also for creating new jobs, increasing regional economic activity, and developing tourism.

Crafts in Kashkadarya have a long history and reflect the culture and lifestyle of the people. Today, various programs are being implemented to develop national crafts and pass them on to the younger generation. Traditional crafts are not only economically beneficial, but also one of the important areas of preserving cultural heritage. Therefore, Kashkadarya crafts should always be in the spotlight as a national value.

Today, during the period of independence of Uzbekistan, the restoration of national crafts and their advancement to a new level have become one of the important directions of state policy. The activities of the "Hunarmand" association, the provision of preferential loans to craftsmen based on presidential decrees and decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers, the introduction of tax breaks, and the creation of opportunities to participate in international exhibitions are significantly developing the activities of craftsmen in Kashkadarya.

In addition, training centers, apprentice schools, and vocational schools have been established to bring craftsmanship to the younger generation. This not only preserves the secrets of traditional craftsmanship, but also adapts it to modern design and market requirements.



**Conclusion.** Handicrafts are considered not only a means of preserving cultural heritage, but also one of the important factors of economic growth. Carpets, embroidery, ceramics and jewelry produced by Kashkadarya craftsmen find their buyers not only among local consumers, but also in international markets. In addition, the development of the tourism industry is further increasing the demand for handicraft products. From this point of view, the development of handicrafts occupies a special place in the socio-economic development of the Kashkadarya region.

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