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Hamedan's Position & Characteristics of Handicrafts, Tourism & Pottery Production in Iran

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Hamedan province has an ancient history due to its natural location; the vast plain in which the city is formed and Alvand, which rests on its slopes have formed Hamedan. already This geographical situation has made Hamedan a permanent habitat. The geographical location and place on the trade route have given a coherent economic and commercial structure to Hamedan in different periods. Hamedan with historical, cultural, handicrafts, sports, food, health, religious, recreational, and mystical tourism capabilities have 1800 registered Historical and natural monuments. It has many capabilities in tourism and handicrafts to show to the world. Among the handicraft capabilities of this province, we can mention the number of global and national cities and villages, which has made Hamedan gain the first rank and a special place in the country. Lalejin, the world pottery capital, which was registered in 2016, also Malayer national city of woodcarving, which was registered in 2019 by the World Council of Handicrafts are from the mentioned cities. It should be noted that Malayer was also registered as a national woodcarving city in 2017 by the Strategic Council of the deputy of Handicrafts and Traditional crafts. In 2019, Tuyserkan was selected as the national city of Golriz (literally meaning small flowers) woodcarving and in 2020 Oshtormel was selected as the national village of Golriz woodcarving. Acquiring these five titles indicates that Hamedan province has several centers and regions in which the production of handicrafts is an important job compared to other jobs. Due to handicrafts, in some production centers, not only is the unemployment rate zero but they are also employed people from the neighborhood. One of the major economic and handicrafts production centers in this ancient province is the world city of Lalejin, which has a long history in the field of pottery and ceramic arts. This city, which has more than 1300 workshops with more than 5000 direct employees and more than 200 pottery stores, has the highest volume of pottery production and exports in the country. The role of creating jobs and production in Lalejin is such that it is very effective in the province and even in the country, because in all cities of Hamedan, paintings on pottery, especially in the form of domestic jobs, has become common. There are few cities and villages in the country whose pottery products have not been known. Moreover, the products of this city are exported officially and unofficially to various countries, including Iraq, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Netherlands, Germany, Ghana, the UAE, France, Oman, and many other countries. The production of pottery and ceramic arts of Lalejin minus all the economic features, create indescribable peace and pleasure that makes us experience it even once and sit behind the wheel of pottery and create our work of art.

Hamedan Handicrafts

Hashem Mazaheri

**Deputy Director General for Handicrafts' Affairs
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Handicrafts are the cultural treasure of a nation. Handicrafts, with their valuable characteristics, are considered as independent products that need support based on full knowledge of their specific values. Accordingly, it can be considered as one of the pillars of economic independence. Handicrafts have a special place and importance in creating jobs, increasing income, saving currency, production increase, and national income and it is one of the economic mechanisms. Handicraft production has a direct effect on gross national income and an increase in production and quality improvement will increase it.

The Deputy of Handicrafts and Traditional crafts of Hamedan Province, with more than half a century of experience, has determined to develop and promote, preserve and revive, support, and guide the traditional crafts and handicrafts of the province. In this regard, identifying and issuing production licenses for more than 29,000 large, medium and small handicraft workshops in the form of workshops and domestic with more than 44,000 employees, identifying more than 700 stores and exhibitions offering handicraft products, especially in the field of pottery and woodcarving, Identifying more than 28 major handicraft center such as cities, villages and specialized handicraft towns, identifying 85 production fields out of 296 active fields in the country, being in the top 5 provinces of the country in terms of production volume, holding international, National and provincial handicrafts exhibitions, Revitalization of obsolete and dated fields including Gemstone cutting, wood joinery, carpet-weaving, Toreutics, Girih tiles and traditional spinning, Receive geographical indications for Tuyserkan woodcarving, Receiving 11 World Quality Awards (AUTHENTICITY SEAL OF UNESCO) and 89 National Awards for the Quality of Handicrafts may be considered as the most effective steps to achieve these goals. At present, the artists and craftsmen of the province are working in this ancient city, which is called the capital of the history and civilization of Iran.

Pottery, ceramics arts, woodcarving, and leather products, are prominent and indigenous fields of handicrafts in Hamedan, which more than 60% of the province's well-known artists and craftsmen are working in these fields. Among the active fields of the province are weaving, carpet weaving, gemstones cutting, making traditional instruments, various types of traditional embroidery (roudozi), traditional clothing including crocheting and doll weaving, metal and forging artifacts, Marquetry, Perforation, Wood joinery, and wood carving, painting on pottery and glass, Tapestry and jewelry making, Traditional tanning and stone carving.

Laljin, WWC for Pottery

Zahra Shirzadi

Expert of handicrafts' Promotion in Hamadan Administration Office

According to the census of 2016, Lalejin has a population of more than 14,916 and is situated as the second city of Bahar county in the north of Hamadan province. Laljin residents speak a special dialect of Turkish. Lalejin is known as the center of pottery and ceramic production in the Middle East.



Based on the findings, regarding the background of the situation of pottery in Lalejin, it should be said that since about three centuries ago, pottery has been practiced professionally with the aim of production and supply to other parts of this region. It has grown significantly over the last century.

The old texture of Lalejin

The main texture of Lalejin has historical antiquity. This adds to the potential of Lalejin as a valuable cultural heritage site. One of the factors that harms the art and culture and background of Lalejin region is the deterioration of the old texture. Therefore, to strengthen the old texture of Lalejin and preserve the originality, repairing and refurbishing old workshops, the national registration of valuable old workshops was put on the agenda of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism.

Also, in recent years, to approach the standards of globalization as a world pottery capital and attract tourists, reconstruction The streets and beautification of the city and the construction of large and prestigious handicraft stores with a focus on pottery and ceramics with the efforts of Administration of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Hamedan province, Lalejin Municipality and City Council and the pursuit of provincial officials were at the top of the activities.

Different methods of pottery in lalejin

Some of the working methods of potters in different regions as well as their tools are more or less the same. We explain these methods below.

Wheel-throwing

Using a prepared clay and the water that is next to the craftsman, sits on the bench of the potter's wheel, while special tools are available, he makes the desired pottery product with the technique of kick wheel or electric-powered potter's wheel.



Coiling

Another method of producing pottery with wheels is coiling, which is used to make large and voluminous jugs and vases. In this method, making clay to form the coil prepared by the apprentice is placed next to the craftsman and he uses the long pliable cylinder to organize and make large jugs on the potter's wheel.

Slab technique

In this method, the potter's wheel is not used for manufacturing, the mold of the desired container is made of gypsum in advance. This method is commonly used for non-circular shapes. To prepare the pottery in this way, the clay that has been cut into sheets is placed in a gypsum template. After covering the inside of the template with clay,

the inner surface is polished by hand and then left in the shade for 24 hours to harden. then taken the clay out of the template and placed it in the shade again. After drying, it is placed in the kiln.



■ Slab building using plaster mold



■ Slab building Technique

Slurry

In this method, first the desired piece is made with clay and then with the prepared sample, the gypsum mold is obtained by using gypsum slurry. After preparing the gypsum mold with clay slurry by casting in gypsum molds, they make artifacts such as different pots or vases. From each gypsum, mold can be obtained in a large number of pots of one type and size.

As the slurry dries, the ceramic piece gradually diminishes slightly and separates from the mold. Now, the mold must be separated from the ceramic piece.

Jiggering and jollying

In this method, designers and builders make flat dishes such as plates and saucers. Jigger is a device consisting of a gypsum mold plate, the desired design, an electro-motor drive, and a stencil. After placing the clay on the gypsum mold and applying pressure to the clay, the stencil should get the extra clays and arranging the container.

This method is also used to make porcelain.

Relief carving

In this method, the design is drawing on the pottery that has not yet dried, and with special delicacy begin to carve some parts with tools called gelkan and add clay to other parts to highlight the design with the desired quality of the potter.

In Hamadan province and many other regions, inscriptions and embossing are usually used for the entrance and especially the walls of various places such as religious places, indoor markets, subways, traditional tearooms, fireplaces, etc. Embossing is sometimes done on containers.



■ Relief carving technique

Glazing and painting

For glazing, the earthenware is held with pliers and then floated in the glaze. After removing, the container is stained with a brush and glaze and put together to dry.

In some cases, painting is done on the pot after glazing. The pottery is then transferred and fired in a kiln. Sometimes painting is done with a brush on pottery and then a transparent glaze has covered the painting. As explained in the section on painting on pots or containers, this method of painting is called underglaze painting.

Colored pottery with Arabesque patterns and embossed glaze, which is known as enamel pottery (sofal minaie) allocates a part of the sales in the pottery shops. This type of pottery was revived and exported to the domestic and foreign markets since 2001 by Khoshouei brothers. Today, the employment created in the field of painting enamel pottery in Lalejin, Hamedan province, and even in other parts of the country, is due to the efforts of the khoshouei brothers.

Name of figures and used designs

One of the designs that potters today beautifully transfer to their products with new methods of making glaze is Khorshidkhanum and Khatai twists which are completed with beautiful paint and glaze.

Some of most common motifs are:

Lady Sun

It has a general round shape with big eyes, black interconnected eyebrows, small lips and Qajar women's hair. The face is adorned with decorative lines.



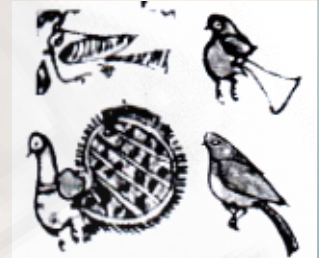
Fish

The fish is executed in two forms, single and double, with a double tail on the jug and inside and outside the bowl. It is decorated with a checkerboard or parallel lines.



Bird

Birds come in several different forms, all with heads, eyes, beaks, tails, legs, and wings. Their tails are single-winged, double-edged, or peacock-shaped.



Flower

The flowers are concentric and have 4, 8, 9 or 12 petals. Today, Shah-Abbasi and flowers with several petals are common.



Border

Patterns with regular and symmetrical lines that are executed on the inner or outer edge of the container. Sometimes it is a simple linear border that is embossed on the edge of the container or in any part of it, such as the waist or bottom.



Shrub

A pattern in the shape of a cypress shrub around which decorative lines are drawn in the form of buds.



Today, the figures and designs used on pottery are in many cases spontaneously motifs with glaze, which are created by spraying two or more glazes on top of each other.

The role of teaching the pottery painting, Negini style, in expanding handicraft workshops and creating jobs

Kamran Amjadian

Expert of handicrafts' Education in Hamadan Administration Office



One of the ways to preserve, revive and spread handicrafts is to teach them and expand training courses. Therefore, these fields are always dynamic and there are people to replace the disabled and retirees. It is obvious that not holding training courses in the long term causes the handicrafts to be forgotten and dated. Also, through education, the quality and quantity of handicraft products can be improved.

Handicraft training improves the techniques and production style and ultimately improves the quality of the product. In addition, from an aesthetic point of view, it makes the product produced more eye-catching and closer to the characteristics of art.

Another role of training in handicrafts is to improve the quantity of the products. training of handicrafts, the number of artists and craftsmen has increased, and as a result, the amount of handicraft production and variety in work has increased too. Education ultimately leads to a boom in production and product sales and a boom in society.

Teaching painting on pottery is no exception to this rule. The style of Negini painting on Lalejin pottery was invented and expanded in 2005 by Lalejin artist, Mehdi Khashoei, and the beauty and effect of the work caused this style to quickly spread in Lalejin. Now, apart from Lalejin, in many cities and regions of the province and the country, the employees of this field of art are engaged in activities and livelihood. The Deputy of Handicrafts of Hamedan Province, by teaching the mentioned field, had an important role in spreading and expanding this art in the province. Due to the availability of raw materials such as raw pottery, enamel paints, etc., as well as due to the market for product sales and high demand, this field has spread rapidly in the province and many workshops in cities and villages produced this product. So the field of

Negini painting became widespread in cities and villages that did not have any activity in the field of pottery and painting on pottery in the past.

Training in this field, in addition to increasing the production of pottery workshops with Negini painting, also made it possible for the products of artisans who had learned the field as amateurs from other artisans to be upgraded and reached a high level of quality. Training courses for employees in related fields such as pottery body strength, glaze, electronic marketing, etc. to improve the quality of produced products and as a result helped to sell the products of craftsmen.

Currently, the field of Negini painting (enamel pottery) has been run in most of the cities and villages of the province in-home workshops as well as outside workshops and has created a lot of employment.

Mahdi Khoshouei

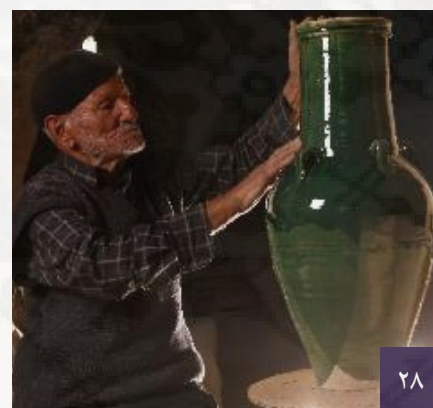
What now is considered as a part of the sales in the pottery shops of the city are various colored pottery products with Islamic motifs in relief which are glazed. This type is known as “enamel pottery” and exported to the domestic and foreign markets since 2001 by Khoshouei brothers’ effort. Today, the employment rate has risen as a result of prevalence of “enamel pottery” in Lalejin.



■ Mahdi Khoshou'ei, master of pottery making and painting in Lalejin

Haj Asgar Asgari

Haj Asgar Asgari was born in 1929 (1308) in Lalejin. From the age of 6, he worked in Lalejin pottery workshops. Now, he, with special interest and loyalty, is making pottery in the form of jugs and large pots with his son in their workshop, which has also been registered as a cultural heritage due to its antiquity and special values. Haj Asgar, as one of the most pioneering artists of



■ Asgar Asgari, veteran master potter of Lalejin

Lalejin potters, has been repeatedly honored with the titles of an active, pioneering, and glorious artist in various festivals.

Morteza Khanipour

Morteza Khanipour was born in 1977 (1356) in Lalejin. since his childhood, in addition to his education, he was engaged in pottery and painting on pottery. While studying, he won first place in four consecutive courses by participating in the Eight Arts Education Competition. During his artistic career, the artist succeeded in reviving the Egyptian blue color after 200 years of obsolescence. He also invented tear glaze (ashki) in several color combinations. He used calligraphy in embossed pottery and painting on pottery in perfect elegance. One of his actions is to expand the field of negini painting by using 130 people in Lalejin, who has trained these people and used this manpower to produce negini painting. His specialties include Wheel-throwing, embossing, design, and execution of various models of pottery and ceramics, molding techniques, and production and execution of various glazing techniques. In his works, he currently uses Arabesque and Khatai motifs (delicately Illuminated manuscript) as well as the Negini painting style. From 1999 to 2014 (1378-1393), he participated in domestic handicraft exhibitions. Also, attend in 1390 in Milan (Italy), 1391 in Florence (Italy), and 1392 in Bucharest (Romania). In two consecutive periods, in 1392 and 1394, he has succeeded in receiving the certificate of the national emblem. In producing his works, this artist uses the techniques of Wheel-throwing as well as the knowledge of traditional and native motifs.



■ Morteza Khanipour, master of pottery making and painting in Lalejin



■ An elegant example of Negini Pottery (enamel pottery), with illumination design, by Morteza Khanipour

The role of pottery and its export as the most important communication bridge of Lalejin economy with the world

Masoumeh Didari

Expert of handicrafts' Business in Hamadan Administration Office



Today, handicrafts, in addition to maintaining their position in the field of art, aesthetics, and national and regional identity, have become an important source of added value and economic productivity. This art industry is one of the advantages of the country and can be considered a good alternative to oil and earning a stable income.

The development of sustainable exports is one of the important and effective infrastructures of economic development and has an undeniable role in the development of production, investment, employment, and ultimately social welfare.

Improving the performance of the export as one of the main components affecting national income to achieve sustainable economic growth, reducing unemployment and social justice are among the indicators that have always been considered by economic policymakers. Also, it plays a major role in balancing the equipoise of payments and increasing their reserves.

One of the most important factors influencing the development of sustainable exports is to create a calm, stable, and forward-looking business environment.

Iran, as a developing country in terms of technology and one of the three most important poles (center) of handicrafts in the world, can use its capacities and domestic and global studies and experiences, along with machine industries, to expand its handicrafts and rural industries achieve the expected economic development.

One of the main export products of Iran is pottery and ceramics, the highest export figure in this field is related to Hamedan province and Lalejin, the world pottery capital.

Having a suitable market abroad and exporting pottery and ceramics to more than 20 countries in different parts of the world has caused this important art to occupy a significant share of the province's exports and glazed and unglazed pottery products, Pottery and ceramic sculptures, pottery with the painting on pottery (glazed and under glazed), etc to be exported from this world city. Generally, these goods are exported to Iraq, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Eurasian countries, Germany, Sweden, etc.



■ Adel Bashiri, the country's top exporter for 10 years

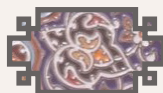
The target markets of Lalejin, in relation to the economic role of the city and the pottery and ceramics industries, are very wide and include the whole country, neighboring countries, and even European countries. Having such a dynamic economy attracts the labor force in the city as well as from the surrounding settlements so that people from the surrounding villages and

towns come to Lalejin for work on a daily basis. Some of these daily migrations also lead to the formation of permanent migrations.

Undoubtedly, one of the important reasons in justifying the positive aspects of handicrafts, the importance of traditional crafts and handicrafts in job creation, its effects in combating unemployment (such as hidden unemployment, etc.). Perhaps Lalejin can be considered a symbol of domestic production with transnational export potential. Due to access to natural raw materials such as suitable soil and sufficient water resources, etc., this city is a suitable place for the production of pottery and ceramics and job creation, and therefore the unemployment rate in this city is almost zero.

One of the main exporters of this city is Mr. Adel Bashiri Jalal, who has managed the production and store of Taj pottery in Lalejin and has been the top exporter of the country for ten consecutive years until 2019.

The export of Lalejin pottery and ceramics is done in two forms, formal and informal, formal one is the customs portal and the other type is informal bases and so-called luggage.



Hand Spinning in Nahavand

Hamedan Administration Office of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism

The word kilim is referring to a smooth woven mat or a type of rug without fluff or knots khab (direction of fluff placement) that consists of two important parts of warp and weft. Its warp (yarn) is made of cotton or wool and its weft is wool or silk. Saf baf (kind of weaving) industry is found in all parts of the world. Kilim weaving first appeared among nomadic tribes whose main occupation was animal husbandry. After learning to spin and weave wool, they began Kilim weaving, and then over the centuries, they acquired sufficient skills in kilim weaving and

improved their tools.

From the past, in Nahavand, the craft of spinning wool has been one of the skills of rural women, which has been performed along with other tasks due to the abundance of livestock and suitable wool in the area. This traditional craft was declining due to industrialization. The training and production of this craft were performed in 2020

(1399) among the interested women of Nahavand and the neighboring villages.

Now, one of the traditional spinning centers is Nahavand, which is used at a proper price for the county's kilim products. The use of completely natural raw materials and their availability in the region and preserving the background and originality of the kilim weaving techniques, has made Nahavand the most active kilim weaving area in the province.



■ Traditional hand spinning



■ Teaching hand spinning to women from the countryside in Nahavand

Note from the Editor in Chief



The world of Handicraft and traditional art is amazing, because ideas and innovations which create diverse products and objects, have direct connections with each other also have great impacts on each other. Of course, this interior connection form in accordance with exterior situation and is updated constantly to enable handicraft to grow and develop in terms of raw materials and immaterial connection with its society. But the role of Deputy of handicraft and traditional art of the Ministry of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicraft cannot be ignored in this growth process nor can the impressive measures taken to stable handicraft be denied.

Therefor after necessary studies and surveys regarding the measures and actions taken, due to the viewpoints of Her excellency Ms. PooyaMahmoudain, the respected deputy of handicraft and traditional art, it was decided that important information regarding fundamental ideas and opinions, events, provincial colleagues, also professional/ specialized notes be written, edited, recorded and disseminated through a domestic publication. The office of development and promotion of handicrafts, has been assigned as the body in charge of programming, preparing, and editing contents during this significant process and On The AlmightyGOD's Will "Armaghān-e-Honarvarān" monthly, meaning "artisans' gift", is being presented to the dear and respected colleagues.

Vida Tavahodi

Director General of Handicrafts Education & Promotion
The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

Armaghan-e Honarvaran (Artisans' Gift)

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Front Cover: Clay flasks made by Morteza Khanipour in Lalejin, World City for Pottery (Photo by Hossein Karimzadeh)

Back Cover: Faramarz Rezaei, Lalejin's veteran potter (Photo by Dariush Rezaei Meshgin)

Comments are most welcome and appreciated. To provide a comment or ask a question please email us via: ichtotarvij@gmail.com



Minister Message

WCC-World Craft Cities & Villages are a novel and brilliant opportunity to present Iranian culture and arts to other countries, which in addition to cultural assets provides crucial infrastructures to develop domestic and foreign exports of handicrafts' products. In this sense, it is an important opportunity should be used properly.

Ali-Asghar Mounesan

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts



Deputy Minister Message



Handicrafts possessing unique peculiarities like capacity of registration, disseminating cultural identity and original lifestyle, relying on domestic technology, creativity, plenty of value (added), increasing employment rate, revenue making and bringing currency, are the manifest materialization of resistance economy and sustainable development, and also the most prominent instance of production boom in quality and quantity.

Pooya Mahmoudian

Deputy of Handicrafts and Traditional Arts

