CHAPTER – 5

ARTISTS WORKING TO SET UP THE ACADEMY OF ART CULTURE AND LANGUAGES.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ACADEMY

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages was set up by the Govt. by proviso to section 146 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1958. It was declared an autonomous corporate body vide SRO No.340 of 1963. As there is no Directorate of Culture in the state as such, at times the Academy is called upon by the Govt. to perform such functions, as are usually assigned to the Directorate of Culture.

New policies were thus implemented and then with the change to a new era, the history of the visual art, in the state began with the golden pen.

The Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was founded in 1958. When artists from various fields came together under one and the same umbrella.
In 1958 Dr. Karan Singh, Sadari-Riyasat guided and encouraged the writers, poets, artists to establish such a kind of place where they grew as artists.

Dr. Karan Singh has done a very useful work in focusing the attention of the state people on their cultural heritage.

The role of the Academy in the upliftment of different cultures from the different three regions.

With the changing winds in the state whole socio-political environment of the state was going through a churning process and new means. New ideas were fermenting for the future of the state.

The main purpose in setting up this academy was to promote the growth and development of Sahitya Kala, Lalitkala and Sangeet Natak etc.

In addition to its normal work concerning the development of culture, the Academy also acts as a Govt. nodal agency/ representative in Govt. business with the Govt. of India and other state departments of culture like exchange of cultural troupes with other state Departments of culture, like the exchange of cultural troupes with other states or countries, presentation of tableaux at the Republic Day Prade in New...
Delhi, thus assigned with the multifarious activities/duties than any other cultural sphere.

The academy has carved a niche in the country in the cultural sphere.

With its enormous and numerous activities, the Academy is poised on the path of a great stride towards reaching the pinnacle of genuine, success and achievement.

the Academy of Art, culture and Languages is playing a pivotal role in the development of Artists in the field of art.

In the beginning Dr. Karan Singh wisely promoted even Dogri literature. In Dogri, the Academy has published a number of books.

Dr. Singh not only patronized the poets by holding Dogri Mushairas every year on Baisakhi Day, he also held mushairas in his palace, and himself translated some Dogri songs. Mostly folk songs, his “Sunlight and the Shadow” which was translated in Hindi by Prof. R.N. Shastri and notation were given by Uma Dutt Sharma.

In 1961 the Academy published 23 books in or about Dogri, Kashmiri, Urdu and Hindi,
In common parlance, this Institution is the embodiment of Lalitkala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi at Central level in the country, having a large infrastructure of its own.

The Academy has its jurisdiction over the entire state. It is the nodal agency in the matters of interaction and co-operation between the J&K State and the Centre and the other state academies. It combines in itself the functions of:-

a) Sahitya Akademy (Akademi of Letters)

b) Sangeet Natak Akademy (Akademi of Music, Dance and Drama).

c) Lalit Kala Akademi (Akademi of Arts).

OFFICES OF THE ACADEMY

It was proposed that the headquarter of the academy shall be in Srinagar. This was provided in the Constitution of the Academy but it could be partially or wholly moved to Jammu during winter.

The Academy has set up its offices at the following places and assigned them the role of development of the languages mentioned against each as under:-

1) Regional office, Srinagar: Urdu, Kashmiri and English.

3) Sub-office, Leh – Ladakhi (Bodhi)

4) Sub office Kargil – Balti

5) Sub office, Doda – Urdu and other major languages/dialects of the area.

6) Sub office, Rajouri – Pahari, Urdu and other major languages/dialects of the area.

7) Headquarters – Gojri and Pahari languages.

PATRON AND OTHER OFFICERS OF THE ACADEMY

a) Patron:- The Governor of Jammu and Kashmir is the ex-officio patron of the Academy.

b) President: The Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir is the ex-officio President of the Academy.

c) Vice President: The Vice President is elected by the General Council of the Academy from time to time.

d) Financial Advisor: The Financial Advisor is appointed by the President in consultation with the Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir.
e) Secretary:- The Secretary is appointed by the President in the consultation with the Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir. He is the Principal executive and member secretary to the General Council and Central Committee of the Academy and Chairman of all the advisory sub-committees.

**Authorities of the Academy**

Following are the authorities of the Academy:-

i) General Council;

ii) Central Committee;

iii) Finance Committee and

iv) Such other committees as may be declared by the Central Committee to be the authorities of the Academy.

**Functions of the Academy:**

a) The Academy is working in the field of Sahitya Akademi,

b) Sangeet Akademi,

c) Lalit Kala Akademi.
SAHITYA AKADEMI (Languages & Literature)

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has the rare distinction of having more than eight languages, in which quality literature is being produced. Two major regional languages namely, Dogri and Kashmiri are recognized by the Sahitya Akademi Delhi, and awards are being given in these languages. It is noteworthy that prior to the setting up the Academy, very little literature was being produced in these languages. Various schemes operated by the Academy for the promotion of these languages and literature has yielded fruitful results. Work in Gojri and Pahari languages was undertaken by the Academy in the late seventies. For furtherance of the languages contained in the 6th Schedule of the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir and other major languages of the region, the academy has embarked upon the following plans:-

1) Publication of SHEERAZA

A literary journal under the common title of “SHEERAZA” is published by the Academy. Whereas Urdu “SHEERAZA” is monthly, Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, Punjabi, Ladakhi, Gojri and Pahari “SHEERAZA are bi-monthly. There is nothing common in SHEERAZA of one language and the other, except for its title and quality. The special numbers of SHEERAZA in various languages are published regularly on the occasion
of Centenaries of great masters, literary giants, social reformers and the like, besides special topics pertaining to Art, Culture and Languages.

2) **Publication of Annual Anthology:**

An Annual Anthology is being published by the Academy in Urdu, Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, Punjabi, Ladakhi, Gojri and Pahari. Initially the purpose was to showcase the best writings of the year in the respective language through the Anthologies but since 1975 the issues of the annual Anthologies are devoted to research on a particular theme so that it could provide an in-depth study and analysis for the scholars and general readers.

3) **Publication of books**

In the earlier stages no publisher was ready to take risk in publishing books in regional languages of the State. This became only possible because Academy took it upon itself to publish books relating to creative writings, research works in the history and the culture of the State etc. To have interaction and understanding among the writers, the publication of translations of classics and other major works from one language to the other was also undertaken.
4. **Preservation of Folklore**

Jammu and Kashmir has a rich treasure of folk songs and folk tales, but these treasure houses of folk wisdom are on the verge of decline. Hence with a view to collect, document and preserve the folk treasure of songs and tales, the Academy has undertaken the printing and publication of volumes of folk tales and folk songs of all the major regional languages of the state.

5. **Dictionaries**

The publication of dictionaries became essential to facilitate the common reader to have knowledge of unknown words. Most of the regional language started producing literature on regular basis. The Academy took up the task of compiling dictionaries in regional languages of the State and set up dictionary sections, initially in the Regional offices of the Academy. The following are the languages in which Academy has published dictionaries viz. Kashmiri (52000 words), Dogri (60,000 words), Gojri (50,000 words), Urdu – Kashmiri Farhang.(80,500).
6. Encyclopedia Kashmiriana

Academy has taken up the charge of publication of E K and has published four volumes of this E-covering the following areas:-

a) Kashmir Archaeology and Architecture (Vol.I)
c) Kashmir Handicrafts (Vol.III).
d) Kashmir Language & Literature (Vol.IV).

7. Subsidy to Authors

It goes to the credit of the Academy that more than 95% books of creative writings in different languages in J&K have come into existence with the help of the subsidy provided by the Academy. Because to offset the production cost of the authors, they provided them subsidy for publishing their books, if publishers and the number of buyer readers was inadequate.

8. Best Book Awards:

In the year 1966, the Academy initiated Best Book Awards in order to encourage excellence. Initially in each language the 1st prize constituted of Rs.1000/- and IIInd prize constituted of Rs.700/-. Now the Award money is Rs.25,000/- per book in each language.
9. Mushairas, Seminars, Literary conferences etc.

Academy organizes mushairas, seminars, literary conferences, Sham-i-Afsanas, Sham-i-Gazals and literary get-togethers etc. not only at the head quarters of its various offices but at the remote stations also. These are held at local level, State level and All India level. These programmes provide an opportunity to young and budding writers to meet, listen and inter-act with each other and with seniors too. In the state of J&K, the writers and artists residing in far flung areas did not have the means and access to keep themselves updated with the latest trends on the literary scene. So this gap was fulfilled by the Academy.

10. All State Writers’ camps

In order to provide more time to junior writers of a respective language to live and interact with their senior writers and the writers of one language and the other by organizing All State writers camps. These have proved instrumental in promoting understanding and cordiality between writers of various languages.

11. The Academy also introduced the scheme of playscript competitions in order to encourage writing of stage plays in the regional languages of the State.
12. Meet the Eminent contemporary Programmes: the Academy has been organizing Meet the Eminent contemporary programmes, keeping in view, the sharing of experiences of literary doyens of regional languages who have contributed a lot to bring the respective regional languages to commanding heights. They are the store houses of information and experiences which require to be shared with younger generations so that they are aware of the developmental process.

13. Installation of Memorials

To honour the sacred memory of a number of poets/writers, whose graves were almost forgotten and could not be located easily for the benefit of their admirers and research scholars, a scheme to install memorial plaques on these graves was introduced, under which the Academy installs a plaque and citation in the memory of eminent artists/writers at a place to be easily identified. One notable memorial plaque was installed at the resting place of the last king of Kashmir and a great patron of art, sultan Yusuf Shah Chak, in Bihar by the then President of the Academy Jenab Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Sangeet Natak Akadmi (Music, Dance and Drama)

The State of J&K has rich tradition of folk and performing arts. There are various folk forms which are unique and we should be proud of
these. So in order to preserve, encourage and highlight the folk and performing arts of the State, Academy has introduced many schemes which are as under:

1) **Revival of Bhagat Theatre in Kashmir.**

   “Bhand Pather” being the most accomplished folk performing art form of Kashmir, was on the verge of extinction due to various factors of independence. In order to revive it again, Academy started providing subsidy to Bhagat theatre, Akingam, Kashmir. The scheme provided that the theatre will produce at least one new play every year and will give 12 performances of “Bhand Jashan” in a year at the place identified by the Academy. This promise attracted many more groups. Today there are more than 32 theatre groups, committed to the upliftment and development of this most cherished folk form.

2. **Theatre Festivals:**

   Although Ram Leela, Bhagtan and Haran folk theatre forms were prevalent in Jammu and Bhand Pather in Kashmir, modern drama was still in its infancy in Jammu and Srinagar, till the sixties. The Academy introduced ‘Theatre Festivals’ to encourage staging of modern plays and develop of theatre, starting in the cities of Jammu and Kashmir, this extended to all the districts of the state. The Academy had sponsored
scho...b to National school of Drama, New Delhi for training in
...atics. The trained workers co-ordinated the ‘Theatre Festivals’ and
provided much needed guidance to young and upcoming theatre workers.

3. Theatre and Playwright workshops.

With rapid changes in the national and international theatre scene,
the need to improve the skills of local artists according to the changing
times and trends was felt, so to fill up this requirement, Academy
organized ‘theatre workshops’ from time to time while as some of the
workshops are being conducted mainly by the Drama Instructors of the
Academy, at times the trainers are being invited outside the Academy as
well as the state for the benefit of the trainees. In order to attract the best
possible faculty, the Academy has started collaborating with Sangeet
Natak Academy, New Delhi. In order to meet the shortage of stage plays
in the regional languages, ‘playwright workshops’, are being organized
by the Academy from time to time.

4. National Theatre Festivals:-

Academy has been organizing National Drama Festivals in order to
educate and bring the local theatre workers face to face with the best
theatre groups in India. To organize these festivals, Sangeet Natak
Akademi, New Delhi, National School of Drama, New Delhi and North
Zone Cultural centre Patiala have provided generous support. Now there is ever increasing demand for such festivals.

5. **Academy’s own play productions:-**

   Academy has been putting up shows of its own theatre productions, with a view to bring workers working in various groups on one platform and to produce the best theatre. Such type of experience had an encouraging impact on them.

6. **All India Classical Music Concerts.**

   Academy has been organizing ‘Classical Music concerts’ from time to time so that the young generation could be introduced to ‘Hindustani Classical Music’ and to meet the demand of the music lovers of the state. All top notch artists (vocalists as well as instrumentalists) have performed in these concerts.

7. **All India Classical Dance Recitals**

   People had virtually lost interest in Indian classical dances due to their classicism and having direct relationship with the temples and Bhakti movement. Academy started organizing classical Dance Recitals from time to time, in order to revive the lost interest of the masses in our
fine traditions and to encourage the young generation to take to the classical dance forms.

8. Folk Festivals

To showcase the treasure of folk songs and dances in various regional languages, the Academy started organizing “Folk Festivals”, the purpose being to encourage the folk performers and keep their interest alive in this field. The revival of “Bhand Pather” “Daastan”, “Chakkari” and “Dhamali Dance” from Kashmir likewise “Hasan”, “Masadhi” and “Geetru etc.” from Jammu region are witness to this fact.

9. Music Programmes

In order to retain the interest of general public in light music and also the importance of these art forms, Academy organized, Sham-i-Ghazal, Mehfil-i-Qawali, Light Music concerts and so on and so forth. The top ghazal singers, qawals and also the light cum classical music signers are invited to render their compositions before the invited audience.

10. Inter-State Cultural Exchange Programme

Academy has been sponsoring cultural troupes to visit various states of the country to promote cultural understanding between the state
and the country. The troupes comprise of all the three regions of the state and selected items are from states best cultural heritage. The troupes of other states too are invited to perform here. This leads to cultural exchange as well as better understanding and national unity. The scheme is generally run in collaboration with Sangeet Natak Academi New Delhi.

2) Children’s Activities

In order to encourage school and college going children of various age groups Academy has taken upon itself the task of organizing on the spot children’s music competitions. They display their talent by presenting items based on classical music (vocal as well as instrumental). The children adjudged best by the jury are being awarded certificates and cash awards. To introduce children to dramatics and dance, Summer training camps are also organized by the Academy, usually these camps are held for short durations during summer breaks. The response is encouraging.

12. International visits of State Cultural troupe.

The Academy, in collaboration with Indian council for cultural relations, New Delhi, has sponsored the visits of state cultural troupes to Germany, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, France, Malaysia, U.A.E and erstwhile USSR etc.
13. **Production of audio Cassettes**

In order to give the public authentic folk music through cassettes and to preserve authentic folk tunes and to record the voice of master folk singers for posterity, the audio cassettes were produced by the Academy. It was done in different languages viz Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojri, Pahari, Ladakhi etc.

**FINE ARTS**

The whole world is in the know of Basoli paintings of J&K. The recent tradition of miniature art (in jammu). The fresco painting of Ramnagar (Jammu) and Alchi Gompa (Leh) are the witness to the fact that the art of painting is flourishing in J&K. But in order to keep the local artists abreast with the modern world of art it became necessary to organize various schemes:-

1. **All India Painters/Sculptors camps**

To introduce local artists to the works of senior artists of the country, it was thought more important for local artists to see master artists at work apart from seeing their work. This was the aim of the scheme which was launched in 1968 of holding the All India Painters / sculptors camps. The work done in these camps became the prized possession of the Academy, thus Academy has the richest collection of
modern paintings and sculptures. It includes approx 385 paintings and 118 sculptures. Great Artists to name a few, like M.F.Hussain, G.R.Santosh, V.R. Khajuria, Tyub Mehta, B.C. Sanyal, Shanko Choudhary, J. Swaminathan. They all came to Kashmir for the workshops and camps and they enjoyed surroundings too.

2. **All State Art Exhibition:**

   Academy held Annual Art Exhibitions, where artists could display their works, because then there were no Art Gallaries in the state. The scheme was launched in 1960’s where first All India Art Exhibition was held in the state. Later on this was restricted to the participation of local artists only. Awards were instituted to the best artists in order to give them encouragement.

3. **Subsidy to Painters:**

   Academy introduced the scheme to provide subsidy to the Artists to facilitate holding of solo show as well as group shows by the artists from outside as well as within, whereas the grant of subsidy is limited to putting up exhibitions within the state and in the country, but there are a couple of cases where the subsidy has been granted to artists outside the country viz in USSR and Geneva.
4. Publication of Rasmanjri:-

In order to highlight the ‘Rasmanjri” series of Basoli paintings within the reach of art lovers and common people, Academy published a portfolio containing six colour plates, its forward was given by famous Art critic Sh.Mulk Raj Anand.

5. Children’s Activities:-

Academy also introduced the scheme of ‘children’s on the spot painting competitions’ in order to generate interest in painting for school and college going children. For this purpose summer camps during summer vacations are also being organized to learn art of painting.

General

1. Robes of Honours/Fellowships

The towering personalities of the respective fields were conferred with Robes of Honour and Fellowships to acknowledge the excellence and life time achievement of writers/artists. The scheme of Robes of Honour carry a cash award of Rs.5000/- and a Darsa and the fellowship carries with it an insignia with citation and an amount of Rs.5000/- each.
2. **State Academy Award**

This award was instituted in 1997 and is one state Academy Award of Rs.1.00 lac for the life, outstanding, significant contribution in the field of literature and art. This award has been decided by a jury comprising of H.E., the Governor, Chief Minister, Chief Justice High Court of J&K, all members of the Central Committee of the Academy and Secretary of the Academy as member secretary.

3. **Auditoriums/community centres**

As part of the Tagore centenary celebrations, the Tagore Hall was built in 1960, in Srinagar. In Jammu, in 1978, Abhinav theatre was inaugurated, it was so named after the great scholar and an authority on Sanskrit Drama, Acharya Abhinav Gupta. It got air conditioned in the year 1998. This theatre has a seating capacity of 805 persons, whereas Tagore Hall has a seating capacity of 675 persons. Both the auditoriums have all the facilities for professional performances and are well equipped.

4. **Art Conservation**

Academy has established a conservation laboratory at Srinagar under the guidance of National Research Laboratory for conservation of cultural property, Lucknow. Its objective is to conserve and preserve
priceless manuscripts, miniature paintings and other artifacts. The staff of the Academy trained at NRLCCP, Lucknow is managing the laboratory. It has got facilities like fumigation of manuscripts written on paper, palm leaf, lamination of calligraphed objects on scientific lines, curative binding, conservation of oil paintings and miniature paintings for posterity.

5) Academy Archives:

Manuscripts:

Academy is in the hold of a collection of rarest manuscripts and miniature paintings. There are 592 manuscripts on Mysticism, Vedant, Islamiat languages and literature, history, mathematics, palmistry, politics, sociology and music etc. Prominent among them are:-

a) **Holy Quran** :- Written with an ink blending Gold with saffron. This is the only manuscript in the world calligraphed in saffron ink in 1594 A.D.

b) **Majmua-E-Wasaya** :- The manuscript contains the parables of great philosophers and kings. It is a beautiful specimen of calligraphy illuminated with gold.
c) **Holy Quran:** This is the oldest available manuscript of Holy Quran in Kashmir calligraphed by Fateh-ullah-Al Kashmiri 1237 A.D. i.e. 83 years before Muslims assumed political power in Kashmir.

D) **Mahabharta:** Persian version of world known epic Mahabharta by Mulla Abdul Quadir Ba dayooni, the court Historian of Mughal Emperor Akbar.

e) **Illustrated Gulistan:** This illustrated manuscript carries 14 miniature, done in Natural colours.

f) **Qasidi-i-Gusliya** – the manuscript was written and calligraphed by Hazrat Baba Dawood-i-Khaki on Muslim jurisprudence in 1580. This is the only copy of the manuscript in the world.

g) **Sharda Manuscript:** This manuscript written on birch bark is the only of its kind in the whole world. The subject matter of this manuscript is Shaivism and Dharma Shastra.

**Miniature paintings:**

Academy is in the possession of rich collection of rare miniature paintings belonging to Jammu, Basoli and Kashmir schools. There are round about 160 miniature paintings available in Jammu and Srinagar offices of the Academy. Some of the miniatures from Kashmir school
have been done on ivory. There are a few incomplete miniature paintings in Academy collection which is a clear indication that the creative process still continues.

6. **Documentation of Ancient Arts:**

   This project takes over the audio/video and photographic documentation of the rarest art traditions of the performing as well as visual arts. Academy has wholly initiated this scheme.

7. **Institutes of Music and Fine Arts.**

   In Jammu as well as in Kashmir, two institutes of Music and Fine Arts were set up for imparting training in instrumental and Vocal Music as also in painting, Graphics and Sculpture etc. Initially these institutes conducted hobby classes but later on they gave training in various courses leading to the award of Bachelor’s degree by the respective universities of Jammu and Kashmir. At present training is being imparted in the following disciplines:

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<th>Jammu Institute</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Vocal music</td>
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<td>4. Painting</td>
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<td>5. Applied Art</td>
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<td>7. Sculpture Metal casting</td>
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<td>8. Dance</td>
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<td>9. Violin</td>
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8. **Academy has set up Reference Libraries** in both the Institutes and in its regional offices at Srinagar, Jammu, Leh and Kargil. Books are being issued to scholars for consultation and reference purposes in these libraries only.

9. **Calligraphy class:**

   In order to keep the age old tradition of Urdu calligraphy alive in the state, Academy is running a calligraphy course of 3 years. Admission criteria is 10th class pass. The rural students are paid scholarships @ Rs.350/- P.M. and urban students are paid @ Rs.450/- P.M.

10. **Financial Assistance/Recognition to the voluntary organizations:**

    The above mentioned relief is given to those voluntary organizations who are engaged in the promotion of languages and literature, performing arts etc. At present Academy is providing financial assistance to more than 100 cultural and literary institutions.

11. **Financial Assistance to writers/Artists who are indigent circumstances:** Financial assistance at the consolidated rate of Rs.300/- p.m. is provided to writers and artists, who are in indigent circumstances and who leave their families un provided for.

12. **Seminar Rooms:** In Jammu, due to the unavailability of space for literary meets and seminars, Academy has set up 3 seminar rooms,
whereas one seminar room each has been set up in the administrative block of the Academy secretariat at Jammu and Srinagar, the third one has been opened in Tagore Hall, Srinagar. These rooms have a stage, PAS equipment and seating arrangement for audiences. The changes taken for the seminar room at Tagore Hall is Rs.1000/- per day for 8 hrs.

13. **Writer’s Club:** For the convenience of writers and artists, Academy proposes to set up a club to be known as ‘writer’s club’, comprising of a state of the art seminar Hall, one shopping arcade for art objects, and a library and coffee serving club facility. This will perhaps be the first club of its kind in the country.

14. **Kitab Ghar:** For the sale of its own publications and audio cassettes besides other books. Books of local authors, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and many other agencies are also being sold through the following Kitab Ghars:

   Kitab Ghar of the Academy
   Near Govt Press
   M.A. Road, Srinagar.

   Kitab Ghar of the Academy
   Near Abhinav Theatre
   Canal Road, Jammu.

   Kitab Ghar of the Academy
   Leh, Ladakh.
15. **Republic Day Tableaux at Delhi:** Republic Day parade is an important event in Delhi the National Capital of India. Cultural pageants form an important segment of this parade. These pageants showcase the cultural diversity of India and highlight the concept of unity in diversity. Academy takes the responsibility of designing and fabrication of State Tableaux and selection of tableaux artists. The state Tableaux was adjudged for the Years 1997, 1999, 2002. The presentation of State Tableaux during the years of turmoil had left positive effect to the entire world.