

Role of technology in sustaining Sistan and Baluchestan Province’s identity

Iranica Desk

In recent years, the focus on preserving and promoting the cultural heritage, language, and indigenous arts of Sistan and Baluchestan Province has intensified more than ever before. This region, with its rich ethnic diversity, multiple languages, unique customs, and ancient rituals, stands as a valuable asset whose proper preservation and continuation are crucial for fostering unity and sustainable development in the area. Safeguarding this heritage demands a combination of scientific and cultural efforts, the integration of modern technologies, and close cooperation among responsible institutions to protect it from distortion and instability. Cultural experts emphasize that cultural heritage is not merely a historical symbol but a vital factor in reinforcing collective identity and social cohesion. Essential strategies include targeted planning focused on educating future generations, producing digital content, and organizing festivals and cultural workshops, all of which must be addressed as top priorities. The role of media in this endeavor is particularly influential, as accurate and effective representations of cultural heritage are key to preventing the region’s culture from fading into oblivion, chntn. ir wrote. Zohreh Shami, a local arts expert from Sistan and Baluchestan Province, explained that in border communities, indigenous arts, traditional clothing, local music, and cultural rituals collectively form the identity of the region. She emphasized that showcasing these elements through cultural programs, festivals, and both national and international events is essential to authentically represent the region. She further noted



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that by harnessing digital technologies, this heritage can be effectively conveyed through multimedia content, films, and online educational platforms aimed at younger generations. Creating such content not only preserves and expands the region’s cultural legacy but also familiarizes young people with their identity, instilling in them a sense of pride. Shami stressed that the continuous and sustainable preservation of cultural heritage requires close and purposeful

collaboration among cultural and media institutions. Additionally, education and promotion within schools and universities must begin early to ensure that this heritage remains vibrant and alive in future generations. Mowlavi Abdolmalek Shahnnavazi, a cultural expert in Khash, highlighted the integral role of religion and culture, stating that religion, language, and local rituals are inseparable components of the region’s identity. He underscored the im-



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portance of maintaining these values dynamically through various cultural and religious programs. Traditional ceremonies, local events, and religious festivals serve as vivid examples of activities that contribute significantly to the preservation of this heritage. Shahnnavazi further elaborated that with media development, these rituals and beliefs can be broadcast through visual, audio, and written formats, reaching audiences at national and international levels. He also emphasized the

crucial cooperation of regional scholars and cultural elites to transmit the region’s religious and cultural heritage coherently and impactfully. He added that the combination of religious, cultural, and artistic activities strengthens regional cohesion and demonstrates that cultural identity is one of the foremost factors for unity and development. In this process, the active participation of local people and cultural activists is of great importance and should be contin-

uously fostered. Experts agree that digital technologies play an essential role in transmitting cultural heritage. The production of visual content, motion graphics, practical applications, and the use of social networks offer unique opportunities for introducing and promoting local arts. Virtual training sessions, online workshops, and cultural campaigns amplify the impact of these activities and underscore the necessity for coordination among cultural and educational institutions. Meanwhile, continuous education and promotion of the region’s authentic arts in schools, universities, and cultural centers are vital for the sustainable transmission of this heritage. The proper utilization of modern technologies allows cultural heritage to be communicated to future generations through diverse and engaging formats, enhancing its influence at both national and international levels. Overall, the integration of modern technologies and comprehensive education stands as the primary strategy to ensure cultural sustainability and strengthen regional identity, which will play a pivotal role in future sustainable development and social cohesion. Protecting and promoting cultural heritage, pursued in an integrated and purposeful way, can be the key to success in regional and national development. Harnessing new technologies, maintaining continuous education, encouraging active public participation, and implementing strategic policies collectively pave the way for preserving cultural identity and reinforcing regional unity. These concerted efforts not only keep the heritage alive but also establish a firm foundation for sustainable economic and social growth.

Enduring craft of woodturning in Iran

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Woodturning, known in Persian as Kharrati, is a traditional handicraft of Iran in which a piece of wood is cut using a horizontal cutting machine. In fact, woodturning is the art-craft of cutting and shaping the wood by its rotation in the lathe machine. Kharrati is an Arabic word and its root is “khart” which according to the Dehkhoda word encyclopedia means cutting and smoothing of the wood. In regard to the history of woodturning, it should be mentioned that there are reliefs of throne, royal stool and censer in the remaining of Persepolis that indicate the craft of woodturning. Jean Chardin, the famous French traveler, was touched by the skills of the Iranian wood turners, saying, “The craft of woodturning is a mechanical art in which the Iranians has successfully prospered.” The primary material of woodturning is white poplar wood. But other kinds of wood are also used. High density and strength of the wood makes it possible for finer and more durable products



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to be made. After White poplar, Walnut, Alder, European ash, White Willow, Plane, Mesquites, Pear and Maple are mostly used. In Dezful, the woodturning artists use the wood from a kind of local tree. The first step of woodturning, is choosing and cutting the desired piece of wood to the in-

tended size. After the piece is cut, it should be completely dry to be ready for the next step. In the past, the pieces were put in a frame that turned them around their axis by mechanical pedals but today there are electric machines which make the process much easier for the craftsmen. Another tool



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of woodturning are kinds of chisel. The piece is tightly put in the opening of the machine. Then as it rotates fast around its axis, the chisel is pushed to the wood to cut and shape it. The final step is to file and polish the piece from outside and inside and is done by grinding machines. Today products are coat-

ed with a layer of polishing oil which makes them shinier, and occasionally they are painted, too. Objects such as couch legs, lamps, hookah hoses, railings of the stairs in modern houses are produced by woodturning. Several Iranian cities are renowned for their woodturning craftsmanship, where the tradi-

tion has flourished both historically and in modern times. Torbat-e Heydarieh in northeastern Iran has seen a revival of woodturning arts, with local artisans producing finely crafted objects that reach international markets. Khuzestan Province is another key center; here, skilled craftspeople work with local woods, to create functional yet artistic items such as lamp stands, stair railings, and hookah components. Cities like Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, and Dezful also hold great importance in this craft, where woodturning integrates into broader woodworking and marquetry traditions. The dense and resilient woods native to these regions, combined with the artisans’ mastery, enable the creation of beautifully detailed, long-lasting pieces. This fusion of traditional techniques with modern tools ensures woodturning remains a vibrant and respected part of Iran’s handicraft heritage, with products sought after both domestically and abroad for their cultural authenticity and artistic excellence.