

Design Resource

Brassware - Karaikudi

Handmade Brass Lamp Making

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, B. Srikanth and Tejesh J.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/brassware-karaikudi>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Tamil Nadu is one of the most famous religious places is well known for artistic brass lamps. Brass is considered to be superior (social relevance/perception) to all other metals, and brass products are one of the famous hand-made crafts in Karaikudi.

Lamp is one of the products made from brass which is an alloy of copper. Bride carrying the 'Kuthu Villakku' (sliver or brass oil lamp), to her in-law's house, as a symbol of bringing prosperity is a tradition practiced till date. These lamps come in varying styles Yaanai Villakku (elephant carrying a lamp), Thavalum Pillai (Crawling Krishna) and so on. Products like, diyas, bells etc. are made in brass to be used for poojas/worshipping and also for decorative purposes. Big, medium and small lamps are the types of lamps with varying size from 4 inches to two feet. Oil lamp mainly consists of 3 parts -

- _ Bottom half,
- _ Body and
- _ Top half.

Bottom half acts as a base, body acts as a support between base whereas top half holds oil.



Artisan chisels the casted piece of metal to obtain the curved surface.

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Different sizes and designs of bass lamps.

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The chisel is heated and hammered to get the pointed edge.



An well-carved brass lamp.



The lamp is carved to the required shape by chiseling.

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Internal tapping is made to join two piece.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used:

- **Casting Frames:** The wooden boxes of approximately 3in. depth is used to cast the product.
- **Iron Rod:** This act as the spine for the cement casted moulds.
- **Furnace:** It is used to melt the metal.
- **Turning Machine:** It is used to make teeth and shaping the casted lamp.
- **Buffing Machine:** Used for polishing.
- **Hammer:** Used for beating and adjusting the different parts.
- **Chisel:** It is used for making grooves.
- **Saw:** Used to remove the extra material.
- **Clay, Sand and Cement:** Mixture (in ratio) used as a filling material during the process.
- **Jaggery:** Used as binding agent for clay.



Turning machine used for chiseling and polishing of the product.

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Internal tapping machine to carve the tread for joining the parts.



Buffing machine used for polishing the articles.



Verities of hammer used for hammering to shape the product.

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Casted mold.

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Tong used to hold the heated substance.



Different sizes of chisel to engrave designs.



Varieties of filers/files are used to refine the product surface.



Brass fiber brush used in washing the product.

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Casted brass pieces.

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Making Process

The Lamps are made by simple technique of sand casting, where the wooden boxes of three inches deep are used as casting frames to cast the product. The metal pieces are heated in a vessel on the furnace and the molten metal is poured. The casted piece is then cooled and chiseled using different tools to obtain curved surfaces and edges are smoothed. Three parts of big lamps are connected with the help of threads turned on a turning machine and the material is passed through the Lathe machines where the internal threads are inserted or push-fit to connect the different parts together.

Lamps are then polished using buffing machine to obtain a good surface finish and super-finish is obtained by using pointed tools and washed in the soap nut solution with a rotating brass fiber brush to obtain the luster. Finally, it is washed in plain water.



Wooden base is used to prepare the mould for casting the required brass article.

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Articles are placed on the base to acquire the shape for the mould.

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Mud is filled in the wooden base.



The mud is patted with wooden mallet to settle firmly in the wooden base.



Excess mud is removed with a help of metal scale.



The mould is ready for the casting process.

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Pieces of casted articles.



Edged are refined for smooth finishing.



Article is chiseled to give required shape.

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Brass Lamp stand is chiseled to the required shape in the turning machine.



Internal tapping is done to join the parts.



Buffing is done to smoothen the surface of the articles.



Soapnut water is boiled for washing the products.

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Soapnut water is poured in the washing tub.



The finished articles are washed in soapnut water using a brass fiber brush.



The different parts of the articles are joined into one piece of product.

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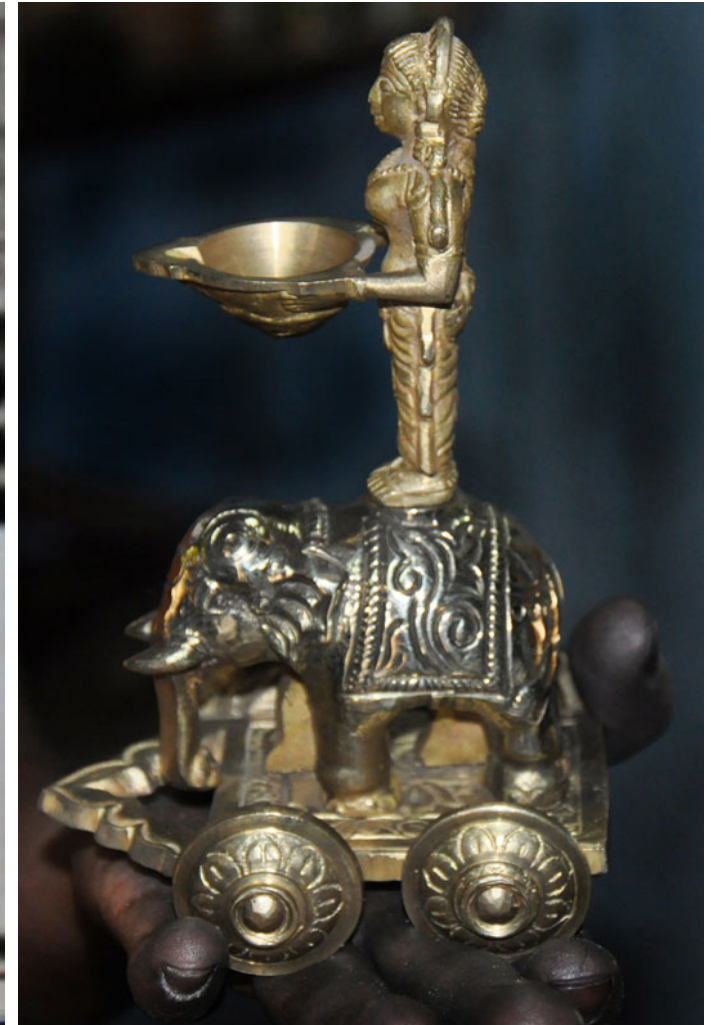
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Products

Brass lamps are the main products among the metal crafts/wares. The various types of lamps like standing lamps, chain lamps, and votive lamps are made. Patterned trays, panch-paathra, kudam (pot used for carry water), and idols of god and goddesses are the other products made of the brass metal. Some decorative pieces like horses, cows or elephants are also made using brass.



Traditional brass lamp with peacock motif.



Traditional brass lamp with intricate designs.

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Brass lamps are made in different sizes with traditional designs.



The lamps are mainly used in special occasions and rituals.



Decorative piece of an elephant.



Different varieties of designed lamps.

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Video



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Contact Details

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You can get in touch with

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You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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