Design Resource

Cane Furniture - Ernakulam, Kerala

Cane Article

by
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NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/cane-furniture-ernakulam-kerala

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Introduction

Canes are generally referred to as eeta or chooral especially in Kerala that is one of the state in India. Canes are generally wood like vine which grows up to about hundred feet long, climbs up over most of the things and thrives in the tropical climates. It is generally flexible when it is heated and is also durable.

They are generally described as the coloured length of patterned glass rod that are used for cane working for various purposes like props on stage for regional folk dances, walking sticks, school canes, crutches etc.

In Ernakulam it is mostly the Christian communities who are found involved in making of the cane articles. Articles of cane are made more with plain, twill and in some cases with the hexagonal weave. As per the craftsmen there were lot of patterns which the olden people followed and is reduced to very few or extinct as younger generations are not taking interest in these aspects. It is found that a huge varieties are specially made at this place such as Fishing baskets, Kotta (rough work baskets), Muram (winnowing basket), Furniture, Boats, Roofs, Rocking chairs, Swinging chairs, Walking stick etc.

Furniture's are made weaving strips around wooden or metal frames to make tables, chairs and sofas. Rattan or cane generally grows like a tree that bends back to the grounds like vines and then like snakes. Canes are generally shaped by peeling the skin of the rattan vine, canes are less porous therefore they are preferred more.

Cane are stronger than bamboo that are most commonly used for binding purpose. These are lightweight and cheaper than the plastic or solid hardwood that can be transported easily with minimal sources. Due to its environmental friendliness and lightweight they are preferred in making musical instruments and martial art weapons.

Generally canes of thick type are generally brought from the Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Burma, Indonesia are grown by keeping in field for about 10- 60 years to obtain its thickness. Thinner canes are brought from the Wayanad and Kodagu regions of Kerala and Karnataka.

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Eco-friendly garden chair is one of the furniture made of cane.

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Hanging lamp shade is also one of the cane product made at Ernakulam.

Craftsman weaving the cane sofa.

Craftsman weaving the cane sofa.

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Cradle made of cane.

Craftsman weaving the cane sofa.

Artisan industriously weaving cane furniture.

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The work place of the cane furniture at Ernakulam.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for making of Cane Furniture at Ernakulam.

- **Cheevuna Kati:** It is type of knife used to scrape the outer surface of the canes.
- **Polikuna Kati:** It is used to cut open the canes.
- **Aache Kati:** It is used to make the cane strips of even sizes.
- **Hacksaw Blade:** It is used to cut the canes to required length.
- **Measuring Tape:** It is used to measure the length required for cutting and bending.
- **Pencil:** It is used to mark the portions to be flamed.
- **Gas Propane Torch:** It is used to heat the portions required for bending.
- **Two Poles:** Generally used as a support for bending.
- **Nails:** It is used to hold the frames to gather.
- **Hammers:** It is used to give impact on the frames.
- **Brush:** It is used to apply wood polish on the furniture.
- **Scissors:** It is used to cut the required length of cane strips.

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Cane is the raw material used for making furnitures at Ernakulam.

Cutting Pliers are used in cutting cane.

Different sizes of knives are used for cutting the cane.

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Hammers are used in impact to the nails while connecting the cane frames.

Scissor and knife is used for cutting purpose.

Nails are used for joining the canes to make the frame.

Scrapping tool is used for scrapping out the cane for weaving.

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Making Process

The thicker canes brought from the Indonesia, Assam, Arunachal regions are generally taken for the frame parts of the furniture. Thicker canes are also made stands that is the outline of any structure to be made. The knots in the canes are scraped out and cut to the required lengths with the hacksaw blade or knife as per the article in mind to be made.

Cut sticks are then measured and marked with pencil, the portions to be flamed for bending. The portions marked are flamed by the gas propane torch and placed between the two poles, bent to the required portions as the cane is flexible at this movement. The flamed portions are then scraped out as those portions have turned black colour. After every part is done it is arranged side by side and then nailed to make the frame portions of the furniture.

After the frame part is completed, canes of the slender ones are scraped, split to the required widths by the Polikuna kati and then on the Aache kati. The slender pieces are dipped in little amount of water for few minutes and then woven around the frames by knotting in beginning and then weaving in plain, twill or hexagonal weaves as per the request of the customer. On wooden frames holes are made and the cane slender splits of the required widths are weaved, this is also another type of furniture that the craftsmen makes at Ernakulam.

Once the weaving of the slender strips are completed, it is then flamed throughout to burn the extra strip portions that protrudes out. It is then lightly sanded by the sand paper throughout. As most of the people prefer the natural colour wood polish is coated on the furniture for preventing it from decaying. Whenever there is a request of coloured furniture the available synthetic colours are applied and given to the customers.

The Craftsmen also makes baskets, showcase items etc. for which thinner canes are used to make the base and further woven throughout as per the required patterns for various end uses.

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1. Thicker canes brought are taken as the frame parts of the furniture.
2. The knots are scraped and cut to the required length with the hacksaw blade or knife.
3. Portion to be flamed are marked with pencil and then bent at the flexible movement.
4. The flame portions are scraped out as they have turned to black colour.
5. After every part is done, they are placed side by side to make the frame portion of the furniture.
6. Canes of the slender ones are scraped, split to the required widths by the Polikunakati and Ache kati.
7. Slender pieces are then immersed in little amount of water for few minutes and then woven around the frames.
8. After weaving completely the extra strip portions which protrudes are burnt.
9. It is then sand with sand paper for smooth finish.

10. It is then coated with the natural colour of wood polish.
11. A coat of wood polish is applied on the surface to prevent from decaying.
12. Dried completely and taken to the show rooms for sale.
13. Craftsmen makes a large variety of products with the cane items.

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Cane is initially measured in the tape.

Later the markings are made on the cane for the required measurement.

Cane is fired through the gas propane torch in the particular area.

Cane is fired through the gas propane torch in the particular area.

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Cane is fired through the gas propane torch in the particular area.

Then the cane is bent according to the design required.

Then the cane is bent according to the design required.

Cane is more fired to make it flexibly bent.

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Cane is more fired to make it flexibly bent.

After the firing the cane the outer area of the cane is scrapped out.

The close up of scrapping out the outer layer of the cane.

Later the canes are arranged according to the requirement and nailed.

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Later the canes are arranged according to the requirement and nailed.

Later the canes are arranged according to the requirement and nailed.

Then the frame of the furniture is made.

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Then the frame of the furniture is made.

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Then the frame of the furniture is made.

In the next level cane is cut into several thin pieces.

These cane pieces are still made thin by cutting (slicing) them.

These cane pieces are still made thin by cutting (slicing) them.

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These cane pieces are still made thin by cutting (slicing) them.

Further these thin pieces of cane is scrapped out passing through the knife.

Further these thin pieces of cane is scrapped out passing through the knife.

Later these thin pieces of cane is soaked in water.

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Later these thin pieces of cane is soaked in water.

And then the thin cane pieces are been used for weaving.

Once the furniture is completed with the weaving, then it is completely fired with the gas propane torch.

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Then the polish is used.

Furniture is then polished well and kept for drying.

Cane furniture is then ready to use.

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Products

Varieties of cane/ rattan products are made at Ernakulam by the craftsmen such as Flower basket, Fruit basket, Lamp shades, Hanging lamps, Cradle baskets, Hanging's, Chairs, Sofa sets, Sitting stoles, Tray's, Baskets made to carry gift items, Hanging chairs, Swinging chair, Idiyappam making set etc.

Cost of the product varies from about Rs.50 to Rs.50,000 with small product of a small flower basket or Idiyappam set to a wooden sofa or a leaning chair etc. Some of the bigger products made are of six feet long and two feet wide in length says the craftsmen.

Attractive cane chairs made at Ernakulam.

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Hanging lamp shade made of cane.

Intricately designed Table lamp shade.

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Flower basket weaved out of cane.

Basket that is used as a closed container.

Swing chair made of cane.

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Impressively interweaved cane tray.

Cane basket used for storage purpose.

Cane basket used for storage purpose.

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