



Uravu Internship

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Photo courtesy : Vincent weil



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Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/date/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will cause a disciplinary action by the Institute and also can evoke penal action from the sources which have not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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Acknowledgment

I express my deepest gratitude to **Uravu** organization for their constant support throughout the internship. From providing insights into the craft industry, material knowledge to making the products, people at Uravu have helped in each step. The chechis at Urvara Jute centre have been extremely patient. The learnings from the project has been immense.

I am grateful to my classmates for contributing their valuable insights to this project. Special thanks to Sony Salma Priyadarshini Shashank Gautam, Nikhil Kunnath and Duttaram Chari for their help on numerous discussions and support and for those sharing those unforgettable moment in Uravu

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Uravu

“URAVU” is a network of community based, non-profit organisation spread out in Wayanad district, Kerala state, South India. It works close with people, governments and business organisation for the implementation of sustainable development in local areas.

Built with five main core branches , namely

- Uravu indigenous science and technology study centre
- Bamboo Nursery Unit
- Uravu Eco Links Ltd
- Bamboo Grove Project
- Uravu bamboo village .

This organisation is trying to improved the product and process development in bamboo handicrafts, furniture making and bamboo construction .It also helps in enhancing local skill and processing technique in handicraft and structural application of bamboo. Large number of their works include promoting community-led eco-tourism and local craftsmanship through local materials like bamboo and jute.





“Uravu Bamboo grove project is a community- based eco-tourism venture based on innovative design concepts for building structures using locally sourced materials including bamboo”



Bamboo nursery unit have more than 30 species of bamboos plants and also conducts bamboo-planting programmes

Purpose of the Study

The whole purpose of the study can be divided into two parts, the internship part which mainly focus on the product development for Uravu and its associated units .Then workshop part , a bamboo workshop which aims on developing structural application of bamboo on housing and furniture design for rural and tribal areas .

Internship

The internship started with knowing the structure of the organisation for two days , that includes mainly introduction session , visiting to different units under Uravu , discussion on eco -tourism and related topics. Then, each of us tried to figure out the different issues which can be analyse and look upon through design methods such as issues in existing products, platform for selling , market study etc. At the end each one of us worked on different area ranging from furniture to toy and tried to solve the problem in each area . For me, I worked with four women in a unit called Urvara which mainly makes jute bags and other related

products out of jute. My focus was mainly on promoting the local materials through developing toys which reflect the local culture and surroundings.

Workshop

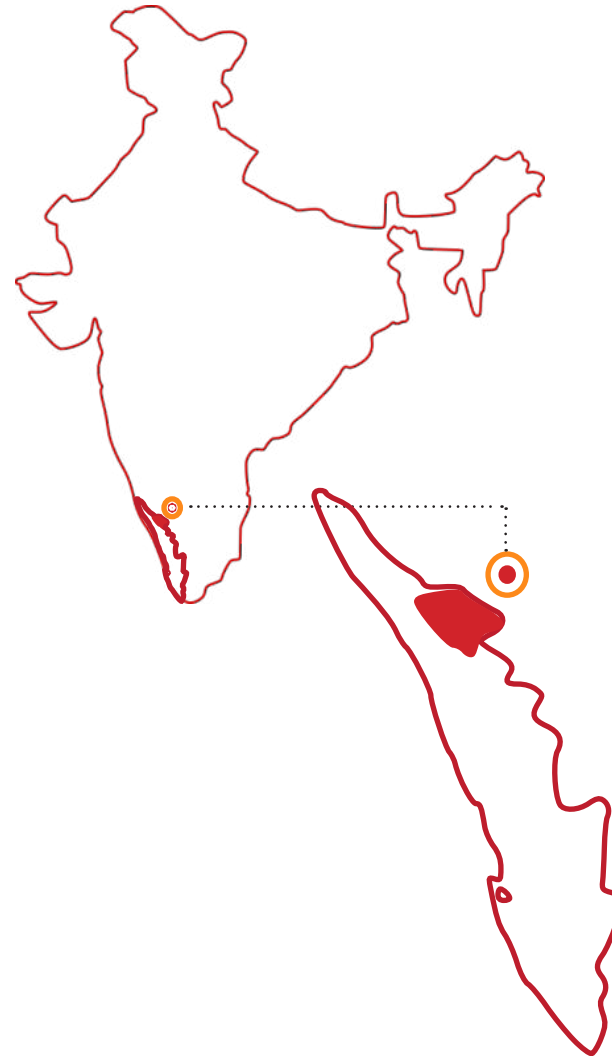
While we were doing internship , we also got a the chance to participate in one of the bamboo workshop organised by Uravu with collaboration with Habitat Forum INHAF, IN:CH, and Sangaru .

The workshop was for one month duration with students participating from different colleges. Its main involvement was to find a way to demonstrate the versatility of the bamboo in using as a building and furniture materials .It ends up with studying and developing different creative housing design and furniture of rural areas around Wayand district .

How to reach?

Location

Uravu is situated in a small village of wayanad district called Thrikkaipetta, which is in the north-east side of Kerala . It is said that it is one of the least populous district in Kerala . It is 70 km by road from Kozhikode railway station. The nearest major airport is at Calicut.



People



The people around this village have a very simple living . However, they have very rich food and culture which each individual is proud of.

Community Participation



Image above and below : Shashank and Nikhil (*colleagues*) helping the small kid to learn paper origami as a part of creativity lesson

Image above : Baburaj (*president of uravu*) giving speech to the women community
Image below : Vincent weil (*an interns*) giving speech on eco- tourism .

While staying in Uravu, we realised that to know the people and community is very important , before starting what we want to do for them Many also have fun on doing things once we are familiar with people around .

Works in Uravu



Bamboo nursery

Most of the work happen in Uravu are related with bamboo. That is why it is very important to know about this materials before jumping to product development stage . So, the first two days we went to the bamboo nursery unit to know the details about different kind of bamboo species



Bamboo handicraft

They are famous for their skills on bamboo crafts , but due to lack of proper marketing channel and availability of proper transport facilities often their product are not able to reach to the market . Low wages is another problem which come from lack of proper marketing strategies and product planning



Bamboo Grove project

To improve tourism for the upliftment of economy in wayanad is another aspect of Uravu. Bamboo grove project build innovative structure of house and furniture with bamboo which are often reserved for resort or hotel.W



About the project

The project started with a presentation on different issues of the existing product on Uravu and also the possible product which each one of us can work on. Some of the most common problem in existing product are

- 1) Bamboo tray- splitting of bamboo slivers
- 2) Bamboo spice book -splitting and warping of bamboo slivers
- 3) Bamboo chair - lateral deflection (unstability)
- 4) Bamboo tools design
- 5) Branding etc.

Other possible product suggestions includes bamboo cutlery, bamboo and colour scheme, bamboo toy design , bamboo bicycle for kids



Image above : Uravu logo



Image above : Bamboo splitting problem in spice book and tray
Image below : simple tool used for bamboo work.

Direction Of The Project

After including different problems from others units which are under Uravu,. We divide ourself to different area , Sony (one of my colleagues) and me , we both started looking in the jute unit , Urvara . This unit has four women , who make jute bags and other small jute accessories like file covers , table mat etc .

Design focus :

Same as earlier step, we both started working on finding the problems in both product as well as in their business . Then our focus goes on improving the existing product especially the jute bags its colour scheme and at the same time introducing some more new products like toys and pencils pouch which they can easy make with their previous skills.

Design brief :

The design brief is fixed in making jute toys which reflects wayanad and also jute bags which can target to urban users .

Image right : With Urvara Jute unit (*the four women*)



Working with Urvara



Image above : Working space in Urvara , the jute unit

Urvara - the jute unit.

Most of their works are in jute bags with less products on table mat and file covers ,when asked how they come up with the design . They said most of the design are from other existing bags which they have. Sometime people give them the design and they follows the same with small changes in button and piping etc.



Image above : One of the chechi (*elder sister in malayalam*) explaining about the problems with

Some of the problem with their existing design are

- Most the design are looking quite random.
- Mixing of synthetic straps ,sometime make it look cheap and contradict the concept of using eco-friendly materials
- The bags doesn't have a tag or brand which limit the flow of the products in market .

Jute toys in the market



Jute toys

In the market itself there are very less jute toys, this is because of its rough texture and thick clothes which are very hard for stitching. But on the better side they have they could be made softer by mixing with different other fabrics such as cotton or with leathers.

Jute bags in market



Jute Bags:

Though jute bags are hard to compete with the others fabric bags like canvas, leather etc. , it has its own good points too if we analyse it . Due to its rough texture and strong fibres most of the time this material is used as grocery and other heavy work bags . But recently people have re-looking the materials from an eco friendly side , thus a lot of packaging is done with jute bags

Product development



Image above (right) .first trials of making frog

Image above (left) sketch and template for toy elephant

Image left. Jute toy elephant

The idea was to come a jute toy which can reflect the beautiful natural habitats of wayanad. . Before starting the concept generation , a deep study was performed by visiting the nearby market to look for different traditional toy. From the study we have found that there are very less local dolls available not only in wayanad but also in entire Kerala. Our first concept was more on cultural and traditional dance form but due to sensitive connection , it come to animal which are available around wayanad .My first trials was to make a stuff frog out of jute and cotton clothes . After this is concept I realised it is not easy to work with jute as the fabrics is really thick and the stitches come out easily. Then, after further design consideration a stuff elephants is made using waste clothes as the stuffing materials

final product



Image (right) Final jute toy elephant
in the hands of village kids

Workshop

bamboo

The project "Bamboo and Bamboo Workers", supported by the Advisory Council of the Indian Professionals of the Pfizer Foundation based in the USA, as part of its work to "utilising resources of the power of trees and bioresources in all areas of human endeavor", is mainly involved in finding ways to demonstrate bamboo's versatility as a building and furniture material through exciting creative designs of two houses, one community center and three furniture sets by teams of formally trained architects and furniture designers, on one side, and the traditional bamboo craftsmen, on the other. The opportunity is also to study living conditions of the bamboo workers and explore ways to enhance their employment prospects.

Design workshop

An invite to architecture students, furniture design students and young professionals to work in teams with bamboo craftsmen and design houses, community center and furniture sets for a live demonstration project.

where In Thrissappetta, a bamboo village set in the mountainous backdrop of Wayanad, Kerala.

when 28th May 2015 to 18th June 2015 (architecture)
28th May 2015 to 26th June 2015 (furniture)

expenditure Travel and food to be borne by the participants.
Accommodation will be provided (on request).

To apply write to us at bamboo.designworkshop@gmail.com
(Kindly attach your CV, a note introducing yourself and your experience working with bamboo / other alternative materials and technologies and experience working with communities).

apply by 15th May 2015

Habitat Forum Habitat Forum INHAF is a network that aims to bring together NGOs, organizations and communities, design planning and development professionals, professional training institutions and young students working in the human settlements development field with special interest in housing for the low income groups, participatory planning and inclusive development, people centered, poor sensitive and environment friendly cities and sustainable development.

IN:CH IN:CH is a trans-cultural and interdisciplinary organization aiming to bring positive changes through design and innovation to all strata of the society with projects ranging from architectural, interior and urban design, social and regional planning, publishing and educational programmes.

SANGARU Since its inception has been actively involved with the craft sector, working with local people and local material like bamboo to create job and products.

URAVU URUVU is a NGO working with people, governments and businesses to implement programs for sustainable employment and income generation in rural areas and promote social enterprises based on value addition of local, natural resources, especially bamboo.

www.inhaf.org www.inch.org.in www.singarur.com www.uravu.org

The bamboo design workshop which was held from 28th may to 26th June 2015. The workshop is divided into two parts one architectural parts and furniture parts . The main objective of the workshop is to build up a connection between the craftsman and design and architectural student in projecting out the versatile materials bamboo in structural application such as housing and furniture design. It was organised by Uravu with collaboration with Habitat forum INHAF, IN:CH and SANGARU. At the very first day each of student from different colleges are divided to groups and started working in three different areas.

- 1) Designing two houses for rural areas using bamboo as one of the core materials
- 2) Designing a community centre for local people using bamboo
- 3) Three different furniture for different people one for rural, community centre and for resorts, again using bamboo as core materials .

Image left. Poster for Bamboo workshop

Team and Plan

Team members



Bharat S. Khidia



Rohit Surekh



Nandha Ravichandran



Girish Sampath.

Team Guide



Sandeep sangaru



Andrea Noronha

Our team comprise of five member including me. We have been given the task of building a furniture range for tribal houses using bamboo.

The team start the project with a discussion on different possible furniture and separated the one which is fit for tribal areas. It is follow by preparing a time line chart for completion of the project. At the same time team guide Sandeep and Andrea ensure all the team members to be in the same direction in the overall runs of the project .



Field visit

As a part of the field study, to validate the idea we have discussed in the Uravu, a field trip was organised with different teams going to different areas. Our team went to a place called Thirunelly 32 km from Mananthavady and 120 km from Kozhikode International Airport.

After reaching there, we went to each house asking their problems regarding the current housing and furniture (if any). Also, we explained about our idea of giving them a furniture or house built up of bamboo.

Some of the insights from the study are

- 1) Most of them have very less furniture
- 2) They have been given houses from the government side but most of the time these houses remain incomplete as the budget gets over in the middle. One reason for this is the use of high-price concrete blocks.
- 3) The typology of the house is something which we need to carefully study as its architectural built are different from those of other areas.



Insights From Field Study



Images from field study showing different possible furniture for tribal areas whether is a separate done or is integrated to the house .

Meeting With Craftsman

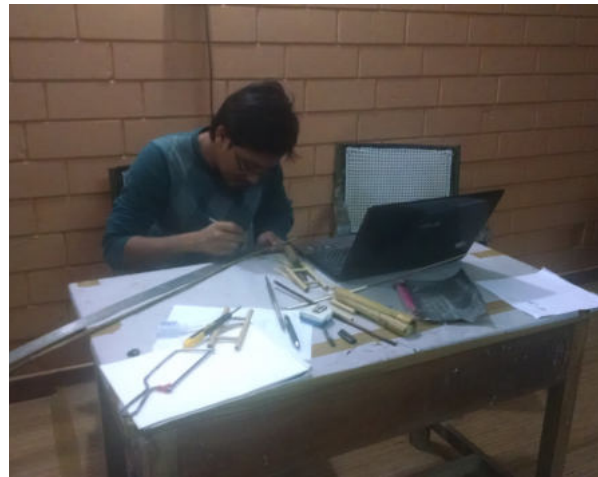


The next step is to discuss the idea with the craftsman and debate on the most appropriate furniture in terms of their construction as well as usability. It is in-cooperates with other details of the concept like joinery , movement of the furniture etc .



The skill person explaining the different possible joinery in bamboo , also how the bamboo can be treated for long lasting. The team also exposed to many different variety of bamboo species and its properties .This help in choosing the bamboo for different furniture which will be used for different purpose.

Product Development



In the beginning a mind-map is created to know about the various connection of things with the furniture . Different furniture like chair bed , clothes hanger, utensil table and many more are put on the table for segregating the most effective one for tribal areas . The possibility of combining either with house or with various furniture is critically analysed ..

Working on Mock up



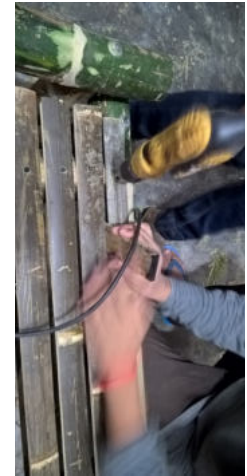
Then come the part for concept generation and mock up model

Concept generation



Different concept are proposed , modular concept to , removable frame , convertible structure etc.

Prototyping



Final concept



A simple bed with a removable head rest which can be used either bed or a storage

Final concept



The bed can be made in two days with one skill person and a helper. It has two removable head rest which when remove still can be used as like a coat . If not used as a bed then , it can be used for keeping things just like the people in tribal have a table to keep their clothes .

Conclusion

Though the project are not fully completed as it was planned due to shortest of time and others issues . It give an opportunity of give and take learning from the craftsman as well as from the guide.

The project will not be having the soul it has now, if a group like Sony salma , shashank, Nikhil , Duttaram were not there. Also heartiest thanks goes to Uravu for having us for two months.



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Photo courtesy :

Sony Salma Priyadarshini

Nikhil

Vincent weil

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