

Design Resource

## Bamboo Mat Weaving - Tripura

Agartala Handicraft

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/bamboo-mat-weaving-tripura>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Contact Details

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## Introduction

Agartala is the capital of the Indian state of Tripura and also is the second-largest city in northeast India after Guwahati. Agartala is one of the fastest-growing, developing cities in India. Artisans at the Agartala cluster practice crafts starting from utility products, decorative items, room dividers, turning products, and several other products. The Government of Tripura initiated Tripura Bamboo Mission to support artisans and develop the state's bamboo sector. This mission aims to upgrade the artisan's skills in making bamboo products and give them professional training. These bamboo crafts have high demand and are being exported to various countries. In the present scenario, it is approximated that nearly 200 exquisite products are produced here, and About ten thousand skilled artisans are engaged in the production of these handicrafts in the state.

Tripura has a tropical savanna climate hence heavy rain, which results in the highest bamboo and cane growing state. Bamboo is a quick-growing, easy to cultivate, and non-timber product. Most bamboo species are being harvested in three to five years, and some species are reaching maturity in a year. Therefore, it is a low-cost material that is strong and durable and can be used for just about anything from house building to decorative objects. It can be used as a raw material for making various products. The craftsmen developed many methods of jointing bamboo without using any other materials. Weaving is not the only method of joining but a unique process of bamboo handcraft that represents the unique material properties of the highly developed techniques of artisans. Bamboo has been used to make beautiful and antique goods as well. People opt for such products for house decoration and office interiors. It is a sustainable product and can adapt to the temperature. Bamboo has been used to make almost everything from clothing, textile, flooring, stationery, and handicrafts like baskets, trays, and mats.



Weaved bamboo mat kept on the floor.



The artisan is weaving the bamboo strips for making the mat.

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Mr. Sukumar Das, bamboo mat weaver.



Woman artisan is weaving the bamboo strips.



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Bamboo baskets are also made from bamboo strips.

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Wide-open bamboo basket.



Decorative bamboo basket.



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Traditional yet modern look.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used for bamboo mat weaving are:

- **Bamboo Strips:** It is the basic raw material used for making a mat.
- **Knives:** Different types of knives are used for splitting, cutting, and slicing the bamboo. The big knife is used for slicing the bamboo, and a small knife is used to cut extra bamboo sticks during the weaving process.



The hacksaw is used to cut the bamboo tree.



The Sword tool is used to cut the strips of bamboo.



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The bamboo strips are used in mat making.



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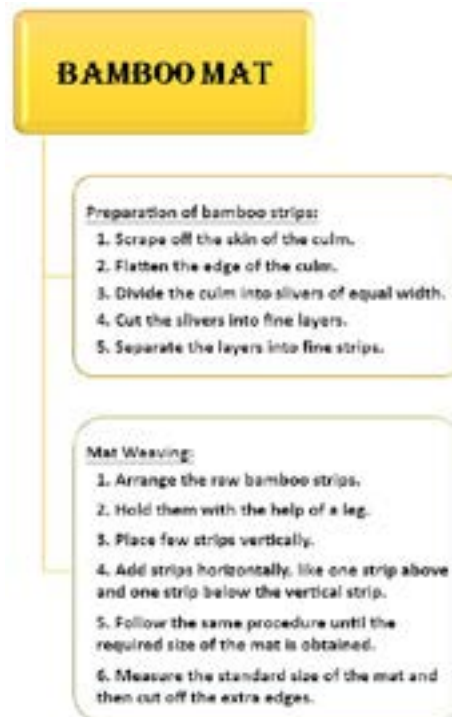
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## Making Process

**Preparation of bamboo Strips from bamboo:** The craftsman fetches the bamboo from the forest. The whole bamboo is split into small pieces using a sharp knife. The outer layer of bamboo is peeled. It is cut into thin strips. The strips are manually woven into mats of different sizes and patterns, depending on the specific requirements. Sometimes, these strips are dyed using the colour solution. These colourful strips are used for making decorative products.

**Mat weaving:** It begins with the gathering of the raw material. Firstly, five strips are placed vertically as a base and hold by a leg. Other strips are inserted horizontally under the two vertical strips by taking up one above the vertical strip. Like that, add strips one above the vertical strip and one below the vertical strip. Once the base of the mat is prepared, add the required amount of strips for weaving. A criss-cross pattern is used in this mat weaving. The same procedure is followed until the required size of the mat is reached. When the weaving is completed, extra edges are cut. The woven mats are air-dried and can be stored without any treatment.

Flow Chart:



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Artisan is arranging the thin bamboo strips for the mat weaving process.



The artisan begins the mat weaving process.



The artist is weaving the bamboo strips in a criss-cross pattern.

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Artisan is adding the other bamboo strips to continue the weaving process.



Half a portion of bamboo mat weaving is completed.



The artisan is involved in the bamboo mat weaving process.



View of the half-finished mat.

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About to finish the bamboo mat.



Finally completed bamboo mat.



Artisan is using the scissor to cut the extra part of the bamboo mat strip.

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Completely weaved bamboo mat.

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## Products

Mr. Sukumar Das is a senior craftsman from Agartala. He is doing mat weaving for the past 25 years. Different types of patterns are made as per the customer's demand. The size of the mat is approximately 3feet x 4feet. The price of the mat is 80 rupees. Apart from the bamboo mat, different kinds of products such as bamboo rice steamer, chairs, hats, baskets, mats, beds, cups, bowls, pots, chopsticks, fishing traps, boats, carts, and musical instruments like flutes and toys are also made.



The small bamboo mat.

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The big size bamboo mat made with bamboo strips.

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## Contact Details

This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

You can get in touch with him at [bibhudutta\[at\]nid.edu](mailto:bibhudutta[at]nid.edu)

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

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