

Design Resource

Coir Jewelry - Alleppey, Kerala

Eco-friendly Jewelry

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Amulya S.
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/coir-jewelry-alleppey-kerala>



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

Coir is one of the natural fibers extracted from the matured coconut husks that are used in producing multiple eco-friendly products. Coir is rough and uneven short fibers that are naturally strong thick commercial fibers. Coir is sorted by two means brown coir and white coir. Brown coir is extracted from the matured coconuts and white coir is from the immature coconuts. These fibers are one of the most durable ones and have a low decomposition rate because of the highest concentrations of lignin thus it is used for many purposes. There are several environmental benefits of coir like eradicating erosion by putting geotextiles blankets on the soil, it is also a good water-absorbent where the moisture is stored and supplied to the plants when necessary, likewise, there are many uses of coir in the horticulture field. Coir is also used for several purposes in making the products like sacking, doormats, brushes, mattresses, rugs, insulation panels and packaging. Nowadays artisans have been experimenting with natural fibres in making products of various kinds and forms. The structure of coir strands has changed from just being in the bundle to a versatile important strand in jewelry.

Coconut is eminently grown in India and it is used productively with all the parts from the coconut water to the husk. Kerala is one of the major production and consumption place for coconut and its by-products like coconut oil, coir, coconut shell and many more. Likewise, it has also played a major role in the craft of coconut coir. Coconut is used extensively in Kerala from its ethos to its dishes. In fact, the name Kerala is derived from the name of the coconut tree in Malayalam. In Kerala, Alleppey (Alappuzha in Malayalam) is one of the main centers for the coir industry where the Indian Coir Board has initiated a National Coir Training and Design Centre (NCTDC) for rural people to involve in the coir crafts in order to sustain in their daily lives. There are many products that they get trained and produce to build small cottage industries. From making a simple mat to making a jewelry a lot of transformation occurs inside the craftsmen. He/she learns many attributes of the coir and application of the material to new products like footwear, a waistcoat, a hat, intricate jewelries and many more.

Artisan Mrs. Mamatha Sunil is one of the trained craftswomen from the National Coir Training and Design Centre who pioneers in making beautiful jewelry out of coir fiber strands. She comes from Orissa and has got trained in coir jewelry making. She says that tourists from other places generally complain that they cannot buy products of coir because it consumes too much space, thus they have come up with such products as jewelries. Dyed coir and many glittering articles are used in beautifying the jewelry more. Usually, these coir strands used for jewelry are from green coconut immature ones. Jewelries like chains, bracelets, bangles, earrings, rings and other items are exclusively developed and trained by rural craftsmen with the help of the German designer Verena Schatzlein.

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Hand crafted pendant made of coir.



Artisan explaining about the importance of coir jewelry.



Beautifully crafted coir artifact.



Artisan crafting jewelry wisely.

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Elegant necklace made of coir.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used to coir jewelry:

- **Coir Strands** are very important and essential raw material.
- **Pen Refill** is used like a crochet hook in ring making process.
- **Sewing Needle** is used in sewing the coir strand.
- **Embellishments** are used in enhancing the jewelry.
- **Nail Cutter** is used in cutting minute strands of coir protruding from the article made.



Coir is the basic raw material used for making coir jewelry.

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Needle is used to stitch the coir. Needle to stitch the coir.



Scissor and nail cutter are used to remove extra coir fibers.



White pearls are used to ornament the coir jewelry.

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Making Process

Firstly the coir strands are taken out of the husk. For making of the coir jewelry the coir is taken from the immature green coconut and soaked in water for months together. Later the coir strands are naturally dyed with pleasant colors. Small articles like sequences, pearls, crystals, stones and studs are used in embellishments for the jewelry. Initially, the longer coir strand is picked and sewed onto a thin stick (pen refill) in order to make a ring with the help of needle. The rings are made in bulk which is then comprehended in making a finger-ring by binding all the linked rings together and sewing them in an appropriate manner like how plaiting is made. Sometimes the coir is wined with regard to the diameter required and then a single coir is taken and sewed around the wined coir to fasten the rings in crochet technique. The protruding strands are cut with the help of nail cutter. The jewelries are made subject to the form and design thought. The coir strands are bound together, sewed and twisted to the form needed.



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Coir fibers are softened using coir softening machine.

Coir is being inserted through the needle head.

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Artisan coiling the thin coir fiber carefully to held the bundle of coir fibers together.



Sewing the coir bundle using needle.



Pulling the coir fiber to tighten the stitch.



Removing unwanted coir fibers cautiously.

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The unwanted fibers are removed with the help of nail cutter.



Stitched coir strand is bent to get a round shape.



Bent coir strand is rearranged to get a required design.



Sewing the article to obtain a desired shape.

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Removing the extra fiber for neat finish.



Joining the edges of the artifact made of coir fiber.



White pearl is used to embellish the article.



Pearl is sewn by using needle and coir fiber.

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The rough edges are cut to get a smooth finish.

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Products

Coir jewelry is one of the exotic new products launched by Coir Board. Training in making jewelry has taken place in National Coir Training and Design Centre at Kalavoor, where many rural women and men take an equally active part in learning the coir craft. Likewise, artisan Mrs. Mamtha Sunil got trained in making coir jewelry and successfully established the business and also trains many other craftsmen. Artisan makes many beautiful jewelry articles like bracelet, necklaces, bangles, earrings, finger rings and other exclusive products. The price varies from INR 900 to 1400.



Elegant jewelry set made of coir fibers.



Stylish eco-friendly coir necklace.

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Attractive coir jewelry embellished with purple beads.



Fashionable finger ring ornamented with white pearl.

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This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Amulya S. 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:

Key Contacts:

Soumya Coir Industries

Alleppey, Kerala

India

Phone: 0477 2248778

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator

Project e-kalpa

R & D Campus

National Institute of Design

#12 HMT Link Road, Off Tumkur Road

Bengaluru 560 022

India

Phone: +91 80 2357 9054

Fax: +91 80 23373086

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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