

Design Resource

Jute Handicrafts - Kolkata

Utility Items

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/jute-handicrafts-kolkata>



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

West Bengal is a harvest land for handicrafts and handlooms. Thus the Bengal crafts have won an important place for themselves in the handicraft market of India. As the city comes with the perks of low labor cost and ready availability of raw materials than other metro cities, the occupation still flourishes with time. This renowned heritage is practiced in every district, each incorporating their style to the traditional method. Crafts like sola pith, dhokra art, and jute handicrafts are well-known activities among the natives. Jute, a natural fiber also known as golden fiber, is one of the cheapest and the strongest of all-natural fibers, and due to its eco-friendliness, it is considered as fiber of the future. India is the largest producer of jute goods after cotton products in the world, while Bangladesh is the largest cultivator of raw jute. In the country, jute is grown specifically in the eastern states like West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh in which almost 50 percent of total production comes solely from West Bengal.

Jute products, mainly bags, are much stronger and more nature friendly than other contemporary options like poly bags, cotton bags, paper bags that drastically affect the ecosystem. Nowadays, jute products come with a fancy, stylish dash, thus placing a strong competition against their counterparts. Macramé is a kind of jute bag largely practiced in parts of Kolkata that are named after the knots used in its making. The macramé knots though venerable, with multiple loops, form a series of patterns, thus producing elegant ornaments and accessories. This set of knots include a square knot, a half knot, a half hitch, larks head knot, and coil knot are widely used to create jewelry, bags, mats, plant hangers, and wall hangings. The making of Macramé involves certain hand movements that prove to be a great exercise method for fingers and the wrist. The hand joint seems loose and strong with regular practice of tying macramé knots. Jute craft making is a hobby for many women artists. Mrs. Nupur Bhawal from West Bengal is spending her leisure time making handicrafts. She has been practicing these crafts since many years. Her hobby is turned into a profession.



Artisan Mrs. Nupur Bhawal's house.

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Mrs. Nupur Bhawal.



Artisans are involved in jute bag making.



Mrs. Nupur Bhawal presenting a jute product.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials that are used for jute bag making are as follows:

- **Jute yarn:** It is the main raw material for jute bags.
- **Handle:** It is a bamboo version used for jute bags.
- **Scissor:** It is used for cutting purposes.



Jute yarn used in the bag making.

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Scissors used to cut jute thread.



Handles made of bamboo and plastic used in jute bags.

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Making Process

The artisan starts the jute bag-making process with the cutting of jute yarn into required sizes, all in equal length. Individual yarn cuts from this are then mounted on a wooden handle using a lark's head knot. After the knot is tied around the handle sides as well, the yarn cuts are wrapped together at the down end at both sides. Here two types of lark's head knots are used; Reverse knot and Square knot. In reverse lark's head knot, the jute yarn is folded in half and placed under the pair of handles from top to bottom. Now reaching under the loop and over the handle, the two loose jute yarns are brought down through the loop and pulled to tighten the knot. After mounting these jute yarns, the artisan proceeds to square knots to complete the work. For square knots, four yarn cuts are taken. Now placing the left end yarn over the middle two strands and under the right end, the artisan takes the right yarn and tucks it under the middle two. Use the same technique to tuck the far-right yarn through the loop created by the left-end yarn. Now pulling the outer yarn, the knot is secured. This step is repeated with four more yarns. It is essential to connect the yarns by taking its four centerpieces and tying another square knot. Here the second knot has to be started from the right end. This alternating method has to be practiced until the required size is achieved. Once the intended size is reached, the ends are secured for having the final look of a jute bag.

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The artisan cutting jute yarn for use in the bag making.



The artisan knitting jute yarn within the bamboo handle.



Another artisan lending a hand while weaving the thread by holding the bamboo handle right.



Eight jute threads being knitted on the bamboo handles to start the jute bag making process.

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Artisan weaving jute threads as per the net shape.



Artisan weaving the threads manually.

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Artisan tying the jute threads with hands.

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The final stage of the jute bag knitting stage.



Once the knitting process is completed, extra threads are trimmed with a scissor.



A jute bag with handles.



A glimpse of finished Jute bag.

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Products

Jute bags come in a range of designs, colors, shapes, and sizes while upgrading themselves with changing trends and demands of the market. The price of the jute products depends on the materials and their quality; hence their rates start at INR 400 and go up to INR 10,000. Different types of jute products available in the market are key bunches, wall hangings, mats, fabrics, sarees, decorative items, etc.



A beautiful piece of jute bag.



Artisan presenting the use of a jute bag.

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Artisan displaying a baby cradle made of jute.



A keychain depicting an owl made of jute threads.

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Video



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This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B 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:

Mrs. Nupur Bhawal

West Bengal

India

Mobile: 09093817199

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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