

Design Resource

Sandalwood Carving - Sagara

The Craft of Wood Carving

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Mahesh, Tushar Barman

and Antony William

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/sandalwood-carving-sagara>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Frame Making
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Introduction

About Shimoga:

Shimoga is the district headquarters and famous tourist place. World renowned Jog falls are located in Sagara taluk of Shimoga dist. The area is the major source of Sheravat river water. Due to the availability of water the area is densely covered by forests. The forest is major resource for Sandalwood.

Introduction:

Sagara is located in Shimoga district of Karnataka. Sandalwood is expensive wood when compared to other varieties of wood and symbol of heritage. The craft is traditionally practiced in and around villages of Shimoga. Nearly 230 wood artists of Shimoga district are engaged in making artifacts of sandalwood. Wood carving art is carried from their ancestors. It is believed that the practice of Sandalwood carving is started to make the decorative items for the Royal families. Presently government is helping artisans by providing sandalwood for subsidiary prices.



Sandalwood bas-relief.



Wooden tile carved in floral motif.

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Women involved in garland making.



Sandalwood flowers used in garland making.



Expensive sandalwood is carefully carved to avoid damages.

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Beautiful garland is made using thin strips of sandalwood.



Small idols of deities carved with Sandalwood.

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Senior artisan making garlands of latest design.



Master craftsman with his product.

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Tools and Raw Materials

In Sagara, wood artisans mainly use sandalwood to make idols and other decorative articles. Due to non-availability of sandalwood, artisans shifted to rose and teak wood carving. However production of sandalwood carving is still in practice as the sandalwood is supplied by government for subsidized price. Other varieties of wood like rose, teak are also used for the production of many idols and decorative items. Artificial roses made of colored papers are used to decorate sandalwood garlands.

List of Tools:

- Sketch of the product is drawn on plain paper and used for tracing design.
- Wooden mallet.
- Different types of carving chisels.
- Automated hand drilling machine to carve minute detailing.
- Needle is used while stitching sandalwood garlands.
- Scooping tool is used to remove the extra wood while carving.



Sandalwood and other varieties of wood used as raw material.



Sketch reference used while carving.

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Different types of carving and scraping tools.



Wooden mallet and chisel is used in carving process.



Automated drilling tool used to carve minute detailing.

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Frame Making

Sandalwood is very soft in nature which allows artisan to create intricate carvings. There are two types of carving methods manual carving and automated carving which is done using hand drill machine. Wooden blocks are first cut into required size. After cutting, the artisan draws the design or motif on white plain paper. This design is pasted on wooden block for reference. The unwanted portions of wood are removed and the rough carving is done based on the sketched outlines. Major carvings are done using the wooden mallet and the chisel. Once the basic shape is carved, minute and intricate designs are carved with sharp edged shaping tools. After carving, the outer surface of the product is smoothed. Few frames are made with flat thin wooden piece using hand drilling machine. The design is directly marked on the surface of the wood. Minute elaborated motifs are achieved by drilling and cutting with the help of hand drilling machine. Once cutting is done, the sharp edges are smoothed. Finished wood article is fixed to a decorative wooden frame as a final stage.



Sketch reference is fixed to wood panel.

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Few designs are directly marked with pencil on the surface of wood.



The excess wood is removed as per marked design.



Minute carvings are done with sharp tool.



Popular motifs of the relief carvings are flowers, plants, birds and animals.

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The design is marked on small chip of sandalwood and drilled to make frames.



Border of frame is equally drawn with specific tool.



Uneven surface is smoothed.



Artisan working with drilling tool.

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A coping saw is used to cut intricate external shapes.



The edges are smoothed.



The finished product is framed.

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Garland Making

Sandalwood has unique identity by its fragrance and its softness. It is used in many rituals by many religions. The artisans of Sagara creatively make sandalwood garlands. These garlands are used as religious offering to gods during festivals and also in ritual functions. To make these garlands, the waste wood is cut into thin small strips. These strips are creatively stitched with the help of needle. The parts of garland are made separately and tied together. Bright colored artificial rose flowers and shiny velvet cloth are added to enhance the look of garland.



Strips of sandalwood are used to make garlands.



Arranging the strips of wood to make flowers.



Design pattern is arranged and tied with thread.



Parts of garland are made separately and joined.

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Manually stitched sandalwood flowers.



Artificial flowers are added to the garland.



Separately stitched parts are joined.

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Typical sandalwood garland.



A different type of garland as innovations also happens as per the market demand.

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Products

The elegant Sandalwood products are carved by skilled artisans with great passion. Many of the masterpieces are made for royal families of Mysore palace and for Government organizations. The final products include photo frame, boxes, Jewelry box, art figures, Mantapam-used to place idols of gods, key chain, door carvings, idols of gods and goddesses, book markers, letter cutter, paper weight, candle stand, paper knives, name plate, panels depicting episodes of nature, mythological epics and elephant idols.

Among all products, the typical Sandalwood garland is the unique product made using thin layers of sandalwood. Finished sandalwood products are exported all over India and abroad. Most of the products like idols of deities, chariots, elephants, candle stands and garlands are marketed to Cauvery Emporium in Bangalore. Work is completely based on orders. Jewelry box is carved from fragrant sandalwood in such a way that each side of the box has carved animal and floral motifs.



Huge idol of lord Ganesha.



Unique sandalwood garlands from latest collection.

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Collection includes page markers, page cutter, key chain and idols.



Panels in Goddess Lakshmi and lord Ganesha.



Bas-relief depicting fort.



Door panel in intricate floral design.

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Different postures of deities ready to adorn the spaces.



Jewelry box is one of the fast selling products.

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Video



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

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