

Design Resource

## Seashell Products - Goa

Exotic Art

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/seashell-products-go>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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## Introduction

Many of us saw seashell, but everybody does not know where they came from or what they are. A seashell is a part of an animal's body. Human beings have skeletons inside the body; likewise, mollusks have the shell on their external anatomy. Mollusks are any soft-bodied invertebrates of the phylum, such as snails, octopus, and clams, etc., who have external skeletons. When the animal dies, the shell is left behind, and the soft pieces of its body are either eaten by other animals or simply rot over time. The seashell is typically composed of calcium carbonate or chitin. Seashells are intricately beautiful as they are designed by nature. Humans used seashells for many different purposes, right from tools to decorative objects. In some Indian communities' seashells have religious importance. The scallop shell is considered to be the symbol of Saint James the Great in Christianity. Left-handed shells of *Turbinella pyrum* (the sacred shankha) are considered to be holy to the Hindu God Vishnu. The scientists follow the system of classifying seashells into seven classes. They are Gastropoda – gastropods, Bivalvia – bivalves, Scaphopoda, Aplacophora, Polyplacophora, Monoplacophora, and Cephalopoda. Each class is further subdivided into species. Gastropods and bivalves are the categories in which maximum seashells fall. Beachcombers collect empty seashells for trading purposes. To fulfill the high demand and for commercial trading, seashells have been collected alive in bulk and then killed and cleaned. Hence, it creates a substantial negative impact on local ecosystems and sometimes can significantly reduce the distribution of rare species.

### Seashell Products:

Seashells have been used for many different purposes like musical instruments, jewellery, decorating furniture, inlay work, and so on. It is used as a wind instrument for hundreds of years. The shells of giant sea snails are used, as trumpets, by cutting off the tip of the spire altogether or by cutting a hole in the spire of the shell. Since ancient times, seashells have been used in forms of adornment. Mother of pearl was historically primarily a seashell product. Usually, seashells are used by cutting into different kinds of shapes or by drilling or making a hole so that they can be threaded like beads. Various types of jewellery such as necklaces, earrings, pendants, rings, and hair combs, etc. are made by using elegant seashells. For inlay work, coloured and iridescent shells have been used to decorate walls, furniture, and boxes. The seashells are arranged to make patterns that have been used to decorate furniture and mirror frames. Every region has different types of seashells. Hence, the designs and the quality of the seashell products vary according to the seashell type and on Artisans. Mostly Artists follow different kinds of techniques to stand out among other products.

Ms. Namrata Sardesai is well-known artist residing in Goa for the past six years. Goa is one of India's most popular tourist destinations and also well-known for its variety of handicrafts. Goa is visited by large numbers of international and domestic tourists each year for its beaches, places of worship, and world heritage architecture. Ms. Namrata learned these art techniques from the workshop organized by the Goa Government to empower women artists. She used to collect seashells from beaches in Goa and make crafts out of them. The seashell products will not get stained quickly, and they can be preserved for a lifetime at home.

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Seashells are widely found in coastal areas that are used in the making of various crafts.



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Seashell artisan Mrs. Sharmila from Goa.



Seaweed is made out of shells.



Mrs. Sharmila is working on shell craft.

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Showpiece made up of shell.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw material required for seashell craft:

- **Seashell:** It is used as a primary raw material in making seashell products.
- **Glue Gun:** It is used to produce hot glue, giving more extended durability when used to stuck materials.
- **Artificial Decorative Items:** It is used to add designs to the seashell products.
- **Acrylic Paint:** It is used for painting seashells.
- **Scissor:** It is used to cut the adhesive tape while attaching something.
- **Adhesive Tape:** It is used to hold or stick things together.
- **Decoration Papers:** These are used to wrap flower bouquets.
- **Empty Glass Bottles:** These are used as a decorative base.



Shells of various sizes and shapes are used for making art.



Hot glue gun.

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Bud shaped seashells.

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## Making Process

Shells are found everywhere, in the depths of the oceans, among coral reefs, deserts, forests, on top of mountains, and in freshwater. Gathering shells in the natural habitat is the most comfortable and least expensive way to obtain a collection. Shells lying on the beach, known as beached shells, are especially abundant after a storm. Shell's favourite hiding spots are under seaweed, clinging to rock ledges, in shallow pools of water, and on sandbars. Before working on shells, it's essential to consider several design principles, such as the colours, patterns, shapes, and sizes of the shells, as well as the shapes, sizes, and forms of the surface and objects on which they will be applied.

The Shells find on beaches and along waterways need to be cleaned thoroughly before use. The selected seashells are soaked in a solution of bleach and water. There is no standard time set for soaking because of various types of seashells, and the number of seashells that are soaked needs a different time to clean. They are being cleaned until the periostracum is gone. The periostracum is the flaky leathery covering that covers the seashells. Then it is left to dry. The seashell is wiped with a mineral or baby oil to give a shimmering effect. If they have a strong fishy smell, they are soaked in a solution of ½ cup of baking soda to 1 quart of water. They are set to dry on newspaper in the fresh air. Here artisan is making a seashell flower for which a semi-circle-shaped seashell is taken as a bottom. A tentacle-shaped seashell is fixed on the base shell using a hot glue gun. It is set one by one in such a way that it should form a flower shape. Once done, it is left to dry for a few minutes. A wooden stick is taken and coated with green-coloured tape entirely in order to make it look like a stem. Then plastic leaves are attached to it using a glue gun. The ready stem is attached to the bottom seashell flower.

The other item is a bird showpiece. Here many decorative materials are used for giving embellishments. A glass bangle is wrapped with coloured satin ribbon and added fringe on it. Then semi-circle seashells are taken as a base, and a bangle is fixed on it. A small artificial beautiful bird is stuck on a bangle and let it dry. Depending on the artisan's creativity, unique designs, number of coatings, detailing, etc., are decided.



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Flow Chart:

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Artisan is making a flower using a cup shell as the base.



By using the glue gun, the artisan is sticking the tentacle shaped seashell on the cup-shaped shell.

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Once the flower is completed, artificial leaves and stems are attached to the flower.



While using hot glue, the artisan has to hold the shell for a few seconds on the shell to fix it properly.



Artisan drapes coloured fabric tape to an old bangle.



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Artisan working on making of a bird showpiece.



Applying hot glue on the colored fabric tape draped on the bangle.



A frill lace is pasted on the bangle to give an attractive look.

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The cup shells are used to make the base of the showpiece.



Hot glue is applied to the base.



The designer ring made out of bangle is placed on the base.

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An artificial bird which is available in the market is placed on the ring with a hot glue gun.



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A beautiful showpiece is made up of seashells.

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## Products

Ms. Namrata Sardesai sells her Seashell products in her own home, also sold through various handicraft emporiums in the local markets in and around Goa. She also makes different kinds of decorative products such as dolls, showpieces, flower bouquets, glass and plastic bottle art, shell mirrors, etc. the price is fixed on the basis of the seashell product quality, size, techniques, designs, and artistry. The cost of the products ranges from 400 INR to 500 INR. Regionally, a standard price list is kept by all artists for making Seashell Products. Goa handicrafts are a blend of Portuguese and Indian cultures.



Showpiece made up of seashell and the artificial bird.

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Flower made of seashells of a different shape.



Beautiful doll made up of seashells.



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Attractive craft made up of machine processed seashells.

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## Video



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