

Design Resource

Silk Thread Jewelry - Ahmednagar, Maharashtra

Ethnic Handicraft

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Srikanth B
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/silk-thread-jewelry-ahmednagar-maharashtra>



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

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Introduction

Jewelry arose out of the need and desire to adorn or protect one's body. As society progressed, the jewelry also evolved in its form and conceptual aspects. According to legends, before precious metals were discovered, people who lived along the seashore decorated themselves with a great variety of items obtained from the sea like shells, pebbles, fish bones, fish teeth, etc. While the inhabitants of the mainland created unique wearables from animal bones, especially of the animals hunted for food like reindeer, mammoth, snakes, buffalo, fox, etc. Later civilizations of Egypt became the first to explore metallurgy science, which gave rise to a jewelry tradition that stayed for several thousand years and occurred to be a strong inspiration for many European civilizations that were the successors. Jewelry in India is as old as civilization itself. The excavated lands of Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravathi, and Ajanta are the living evidence of the prevalence of a wide range of jewelry that existed in India. The 3300 BCE Indus valley civilization also has left traces of beaded and embroidered jewelry worn by men and women. With heightened beliefs in mysticism, certain types of stones were affixed onto the jewelry to protect one from evil forces in the ancient days. Society then witnessed a wave of change in jewelry production during the Mughal rule, which brought in styles similar to present-day Kundan and Minakari. These styles are very much in use in the northern part of the country even today. While the embellishments on South Indian jewelry stuck to inspirations by nature, it has floral patterns, leaves, raindrops, clouds, stars, etc. If divided into two, these two territories are famous for their set of jewelry, like South India makes more chains and necklaces while North India is renowned for bangles and nose rings.

In India, the varieties of jewelry are enormous, as we create metal fashion for head to toe. The materials used for them range from ivory, navaratna, beads, thread, terracotta, paper, crochet, etc., thus forming different forms. These styles are often blended with precious stones or metals to improve their grandeur. Here thread jewelry is the latest in vogue, which incorporates the use of natural or synthetic fibers to create unique jewelry products. Natural fibers always have an advantage over the synthetic variety for their innate capabilities to withstand climatic changes and foster comfort. Cotton is the most commonly used natural fiber to make a thread. After the thread is manufactured, it is then set through a dyeing process, where types like Vat, Fiber Reactive, and Direct dyes are treated for fast results and perfection. Kavitha Vinayak Gudewar is a renowned thread jewelry artist from Ahmednagar, part of Maharashtra, who since her childhood has been practicing the art and now serves a wide array of customers spread across the state.

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

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisan Ms. Kavitha Vinayak Gudewar.



Artisan working on thread jewelry.

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Bright colored thread bangles.



Pair of bangles with pearls.



Beautiful hanging thread jhumka.

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw material required for the making of silk thread jewelry:

- **Fabric Glue:** It is used to stick the threads and beads onto the surface of plastic bangles.
- **Pliers:** It is used to hold and bend brass pins, which are used to make earrings.
- **Old Plastic Bangles:** It is used to make remodeled bangles in a new style.
- **Coloured Threads:** It is used to wound around the bangles and beads to prepare a jewel.
- **Zari Threads:** It is used for decorating the jewels.
- **Stone Chain:** It is stuck around the threaded jewel to give it a feel of real stones.
- **Ball Chain:** It is used in decorating the earrings by attaching these golden-coloured balls.
- **Brass Rings and Pins:** These are used as a mounting accessory on the earring.
- **Studs:** It is a pin, the part that goes into the person's ear hole.
- **Scissors:** It is used to cut the raw materials into intended shapes and sizes.
- **Toothpicks:** It is used to hold the earring while making them.



Fabric glue is used to stick the threads and beads together.

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



Scissors used to cut things into two or more pieces.



Old plastic bangles used to make refurbished bangles with a new look.



Coloured threads, which are wound around the bangles and beads to prepare jewels.

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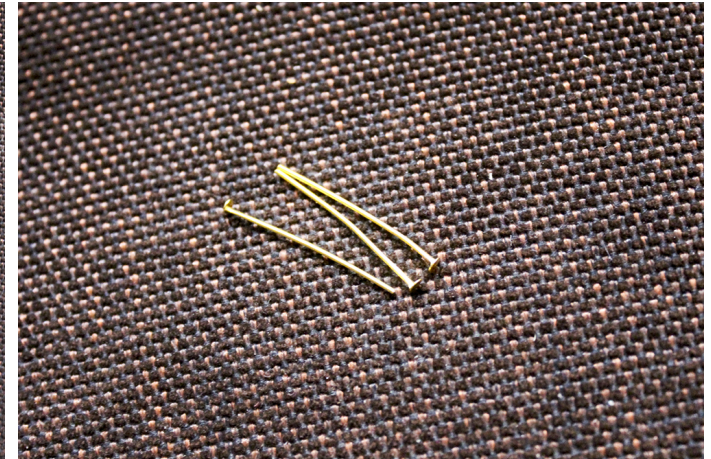
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Zari threads that are used for decorating the jewels.



Pliers: It is used to hold and bend brass pins necessary in the making.



Ball chain: It is attached to the earrings as decoration, where mostly golden coloured balls are preferred.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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Making Process

Earrings and Bangles are the ones widely made out of thread strips, making a set of unique jewelry. For making thread earring jewelry, the craftsman firstly starts by preparing its hanging or jhumka part. For which he takes up a plastic cap of hemisphere shape with a diameter of roughly 15mm and usually white, bearing a small hole on its top. Once the right cap is selected, cotton thread strips are wound around it until it is very well covered. Here the number of windings is not less than 14 times. At the endpoint of this winding, the thread strip is cut and glued together. Enough glue is applied to the internal areas of the plastic cap as well to make sure that the strands and the cap are attached thoroughly and are left to dry. After drying, a toothpick is passed through the top hole of the cap to hold the work for the next step, i.e., decoration. Holding the toothpick, coloured beads and stones are adhered to the threaded cap using glue. Then a stone chain, followed by a ball chain is pasted across the circumference of the plastic cap, to add beauty to the final product. A brass pin is passed through the top hole in a bottom-up direction, which is later topped up with a small stone and ball. A small chain with three links is inserted into this pin and locked. With this, the hanging part of the human gets ready.

Moving to the stud part, the craftsman takes up a canvas paper and glues a bright coloured stone over it. Once it dries, glue is applied around the stone to paste the ball chain circularly. This is done twice to make two layers, followed by a layer of ball chain. The number of layers can depend on the size of the stud required. Then using a toothpick, these attached chains are positioned in place and left to dry. After drying, the stud part is cut in a circular shape in the size that suits the jhumka. Now the stud is attached to the hanging part, and thus the earring is ready.

Next, to make a threaded bangle, firstly, a plastic bangle of the desired size is chosen. Then a coloured thread of approximately 1.5 feet in length is wound a number of times around the bangle. Once it properly covers the bangle, leaving no space in the view, the thread ends are cut and glued to hold them together. Next, the thread strip is secured rightly inside the bangle with a good amount of glue. Once this glue is dried, the bangle is decorated with differently coloured pearls, beads, and stones, making various floral patterns and designs. After the bangle making is done, the prepared bangles are brought together as per designs and colour combinations to make a set of bangles that suits a particular function or attire.

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

Design Resource

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



The required size of the colour thread.

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/silk-thread-jewelry-ahmednagar-maharashtra/making-process>



Bangle of the intended size being chosen.



The artisan starts winding the thread around the bangle which is applied with glue.



Artisan making sure there are no gaps after the winding process is completed.

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

Design Resource

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Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/silk-thread-jewelry-ahmednagar-maharashtra/making-process>



Extra threads being removed using a scissor.



Artisan applying glue, so that the thread and bangle adhere well.



Showing threads strip bangle.



Artisan doing the decoration part using glue, beads, and pearls.

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

Design Resource

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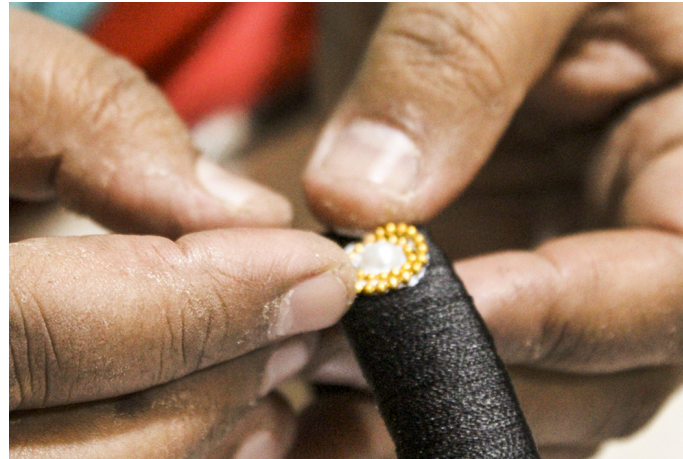
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Source:

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Artisan attaching floral designs over the threaded bangle.



The bangle is decorated using various floral patterns and designs.



The bangle is decorated using various designs.



The final look of a decorated thread bangle.

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

Design Resource

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Products

Various types of thread earrings and bangles coming in different colours are created to suit different functions and attires. The price range of the thread jewelry starts from INR 200 and goes up to INR 1000.



Bright coloured bangles.



Golden thread bangles with stone chain decoration.



Hanging jhumka with stone designs.



Various types of ear hangings, that suit different types of traditional attire.

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Video



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Maharashtra

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

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