

Design Resource

Varakh - Hyderabad

Silver Foil

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Antony Willam, Mahendra Patidar, Aruna Kumari. Y and Shruti K. NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/varakh-hyderabad>



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

Varakh, or Silver foil as it is generally known, adds glitter to Indian sweets and fruits. The craft is practiced since ages and is in great demand among the people across the country. It is also used in Ayurvedic medicines and on deities in many jain temples and also in cosmetics. This work is practiced in Hyderabad over 100 years from the time of King Hakim Lukman. Mohamed Sharrif, 45 years old artisan is performing this work from past 30 years. Four people do this work locally in a small workshop in Charminar. Five to six families are involved in this work.



Idol of lord Hanuman carved in red stone.



Carved stone slabs.



Displayed products at artisans place.



Replica of lion.

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Stone carver involved in carving.



Carved idols of elephants.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The raw materials are available locally, if not they are purchased from Delhi.

- Silver and Gold: It is used to make the silver foil.
- Hammer: It is used to beat the silver to convert into foil.
- Sheepskin: It is used to make the book.
- Steel Holder: It is used to remove the silver foil from the book.
- Wooden Clip: It is used to bind the book together.



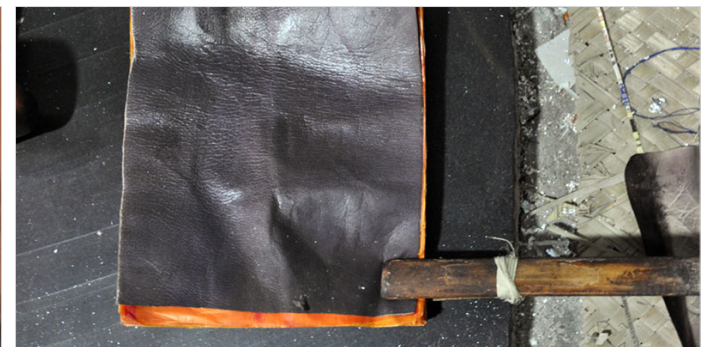
Silver strip cut in square pieces.



Hammer used to hammer on the book.



Book made of sheepskin.



Wooden clip used to bind the book.

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Roughly carved idol.



Shapes obtained through the process of hammering and chiseling.

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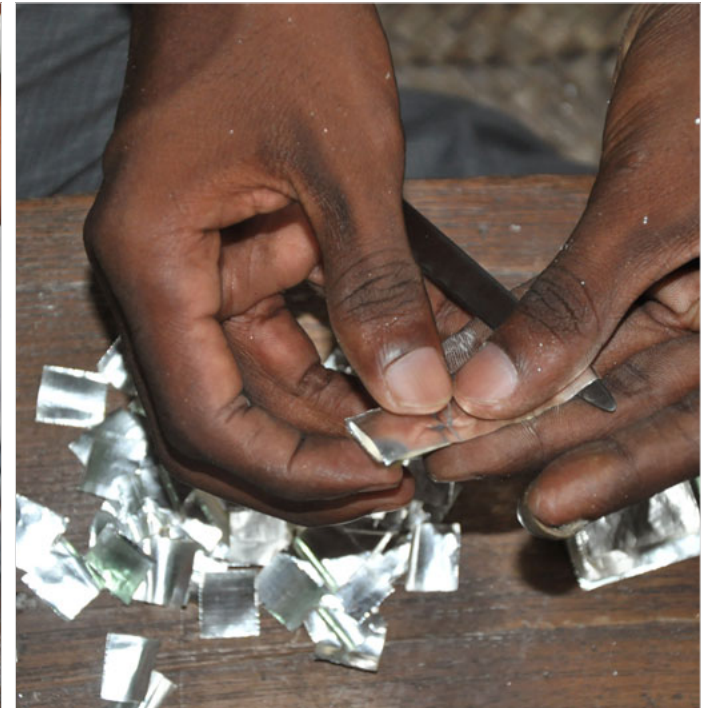
Making Process

Varakh involves both silver and gold work. First the silver is converted into thin strips using a machine. These strips are measured and cut into small squares of equal sizes. A book is prepared in which the sheets are made of sheepskin, which is bind together with a wooden clip, which is then covered with leather pouch. The silver square pieces are arranged and kept between the sheets of the book and covered with the leather pouch. The book is then continuously beaten with hammer. The hammering spreads the silver pieces and converts them into thin foils. The artisan keeps checking the silver foil at regular intervals to make sure that the silver foils are properly converted or not. Once the foil is ready they are sent for packing. Newspapers are cut in rectangular shapes. A steel holder/stick is used to remove the silver foil from the book and place it between the newspapers. The newspapers are then packed and sold to the sweet shops.

One book holds 160 pieces of silver square pieces and produces 6 grams of silver foil. They are best marketed on festival and marriage times. Silver and gold foils are demanded by temples for polishing the temple idols.



Silver Strips of one inch each.



Silver strips are cut into square pieces in equal size.

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Silver pieces are arranged between the sheets of the book.



The book is clipped with a wooden clip.



The book is covered with a leather pouch and beaten with hammer.



The silver pieces are converted into a silver foil.

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The foils are handled by a steel handle.



The silver foils are taken from the book and placed between the newspapers.



The newspapers are packed and the varakh is sold to customers.

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Products

Varakh is high in demand and marketed all over the world. It is used in food industry on large scale for Decorating and enhancing the flavor of Sweets, Kheer, Halwa, and Ice Cream etc.

This varakh is also used in temples to polish the idols.

Varakh is also turned into powders, which is used to sprinkle on food items.



1. Varakh is used on food items for decoration.



2. Varakh is kept butter paper and packed.

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Antony William, Mahendra Patidar, Aruna Kumari Y, and Shruti K at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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

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