

Design Resource

Wooden Toys - Sawantwadi

Tradition and History of Wooden Toys

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S.,

Lija M. G., Vijay G. and Smitha S.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-sawantwadi>

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Introduction

India has a splendid tradition and history of wooden toys since 5000 years. Toys are known as the timeless creation which guides children to adulthood. Wooden toy making is part of every state's art and culture in India, but only few place work is most famous and followed as traditional craft from centuries. Among such states Sawantwadi of Maharashtra is also known for its amazing work in wooden toys craft.

Sawantwadi is famous for its art and culture, popularly known for Ganjifa playing cards and wooden toys made from mango tree. The craft is traditionally done by the Chitari or Chitrakar community recognized by the king. These communities migrated from Karwada and settled in Sawantwadi. These families survived mainly by supplying handicrafts items to the royal families. Later other communities also adopted this craft because of its commercial success. Queen Satwasheela Devi continues the tradition even today, where many of the families are involved in Ganjifa cards and wooden toys making. The toys are made by assembling flat shaped solid wood. Seasoned mango wood is chiseled or carved into desired toy shape. The cutout pieces are finished on a sander, painted and assembled.



Sawantwadi wooden craft are famous for wooden fruits.

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Hand skill is required to carve fine detail.



Wood turning machine is used for faster productivity and time saving.



Assembling the parts of elephant toy.



Decorative spring hangings made of wood.

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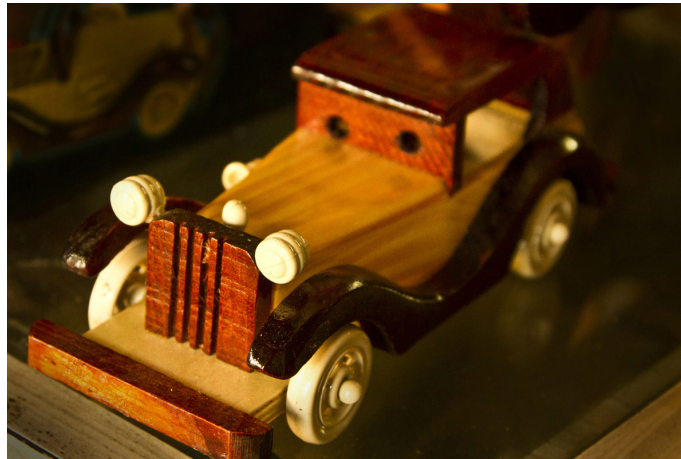
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Painted bus toys kept for drying.



Craftsmen involved in painting the toys.



Vintage toy car made of wood.



Wooden bullock cart is one of the famous wooden toys of sawantwadi.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Basic raw material used to make Sawantwadi wooden toys is Mango wood and Sivani wood. The raw material is purchased locally and sent to the saw mill for sizing wood blocks and planks. The wood is cut and processed into desired shape using following tools and machines-

Thin Blade Saw - It is used to cut the wood into required or desired shape.

Turning Machine - The wood piece is fixed to the turning machine and chiseled into required toy shape.

Chisel - Different types of chisel such as flat, curve and pointed chisels are used to carve the wood to the desired shape of toy.

Sander - A turning machine fixed with a sanding belt used for sanding process. The rough edges of the wood pieces are smoothened using this machine.

The coloring process is done using oil based colors. Various shades of colour powder is mixed with wood primer and applied on the toy using brush. Craftsmen also use spray guns to spray paint to finish the work faster. Thin paint brush is used in the end to add details and outlines on the toys.

The parts of the toys are assembled using nails and hammer. Other accessories like plastic wheels, chains, threads and buttons are also fixed in the end.



Color powder is mixed with wood primer, which is then applied on toys.

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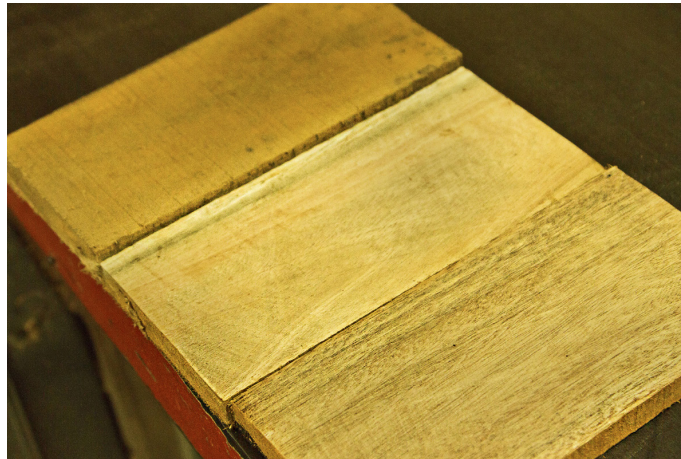
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Sawantwadi is popularly identified with wooden toys that are made from mango tree.



Sanding machine is used to smoothen the rough edges.



Wood piece is cut to the required shape.



Turning machine is used to shape the wooden piece with the help of chisel.

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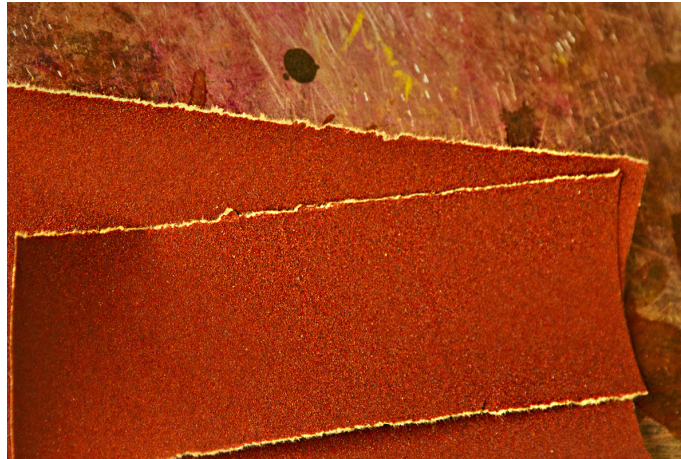
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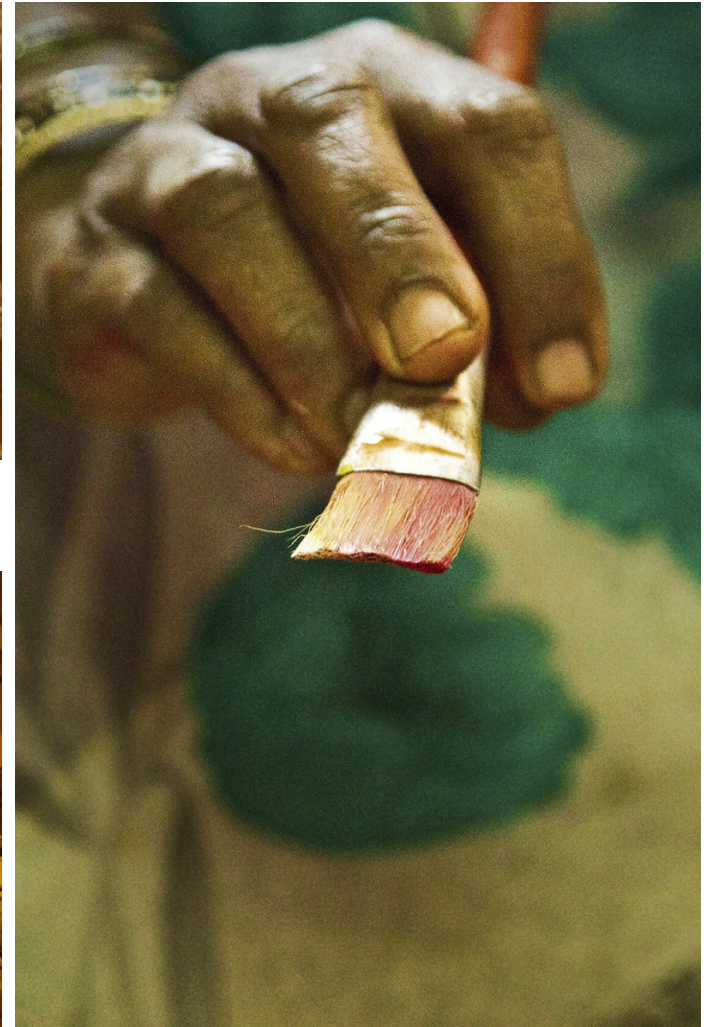
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Sand paper is rubbed on toy surface to make smooth.



Different types of Chisels and files are used for carving.



Paint Brush used to apply color on toy.

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Oil based color powder is used for coloring.



Nails are used to fasten the parts of the toys.



Wood scraper is used to flatten the wooden surface.



Automated saw machine used to cut the wooden pieces.

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Making Process



Cutting and Shaping



Colouring



Assembling

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Cutting and Shaping

Sawantwadi toys are basically made from Mango wood used for showpieces and the toys like bullock carts and rocking horses are made of Shivani wood. The wood has strength and durable processed from sawmill and cut into basic required size of wood blocks.

Shaping and Chiseling- Initially the design for the toys is decided and a sample of the toy is made. The craftsmen make the sample piece and examine the mechanism of the toy and time taken to make one toy. If the craftsman is satisfied with design and the time taken to make it, he approves to make more otherwise not. Masterpiece of the design is approved by the master-craftsman and is considered as reference for batch production.

The sample piece is kept on the wooden plank and outline marking is made around on the plank. The design is drawn close to each other covering the whole surface to prevent from wastage of wood. The marked plank is taken for cutting process. The pieces are cut according to the design with the help of a thin saw blade. The parts of the toys are cut separately and then joined. At a time more than hundred pieces are cut. Craftsmen also use plywood sometimes. All the cut pieces are further taken for sanding process. The cut pieces sanded by a turning machine attached with a sand belt. This process is done to smooth the rough edges of the cut piece and give a proper shape to the toy piece. Some piece of the toy is chiseled of the wood by fixing the wood piece to the turning machine. This process doesn't contain any marking of the design. Craftsmen directly chisel the wood into desired shape and smooth the rough edges with the help of a sand paper.



Mango wood is used to make sawantwadi wooden toys.

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With the help of a masterpiece, shape of the toy is marked on the wooden plank.



Automated thin saw blade is used to cut the wooden plank.



The wooden plank is cut based on marking.



Sanding process levels the wooden surface.

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Sides of the toys are levelled.



Different kinds of chisels are used to create the groves.

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A metal rib is fixed while turning which supports the cutting tools.

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Semi-finished article is drilled as per the requirement.



The toy is fixed in the wooden jig.



Hollow space is created to reduce the weight in the toy.

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Colouring

Coloring - The wooden toys are painted with vibrant colors to make them look attractive. Earlier craftsmen used natural colors extracted from fruits and vegetables and now it has opted to oil based colors as vegetable colors.

Different shades of colour powder are well mixed with wood primer and kept to settle for a while. Pieces of toys are fixed to the turning machine and painted with desired colour and kept to dry. Two colors are merged together and brushed with dry paint brush to get a smudge texture. Some toys are spray painted to save the time. All the toys painted with three coats of paints for long durability. When the paint is dried craftsmen paint the details like facial expression and outlines. Finally a coat of wood primer is applied on them to the wood from observing moisture and gives shine and luster to the final products. Women artisans are also involved in this work.



Wood primer is mixed with color powder to prepare color solution.

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The mixture is stirred manually to remove bubbles.



The colored powder is finely mixed using small wooden log.

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Vibrant colors are used to paint the wooden toys to get the attention of kids.



Stick and divider are used to hold the masking paper to avoid the color from mixing with each other.



A spray gun is used to paint the toys.



Crimson red color is applied as a part of coloring.

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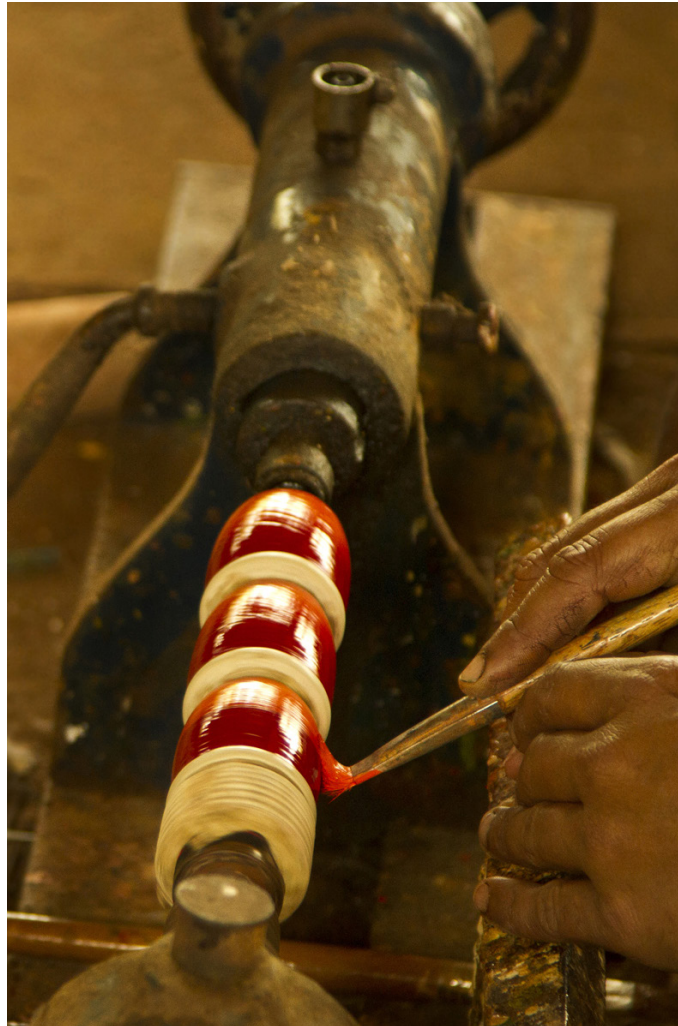
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Different colors are painted as per the design.



Two color combinations are used for one toy.



A flat brush is used to smudge two colors.

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Assembling

Assembling - The painted articles are assembled together in one piece of toy. The different parts of the toys are joined and assembled together. The parts are nailed with each other with the help of small iron nails. Fixing of toys is done manually. This process is done by experienced craftsmen as they have to assemble the pieces and the mechanical parts of the toy. Some toys are fixed with plastic wheels and other such accessories to the toys. It takes at least two to three days to finish a medium sized toy and fifteen to twenty days to complete 100 pieces of such toys. All the steps are done manually except sanding and drilling.



Slices of mango wood as fasten that acts as sidewall of the bus wooden toy.

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Two parts of the sidewalls are joined.



Parts are assembled and allowed to set.



Wooden parts are joined together by nailing.

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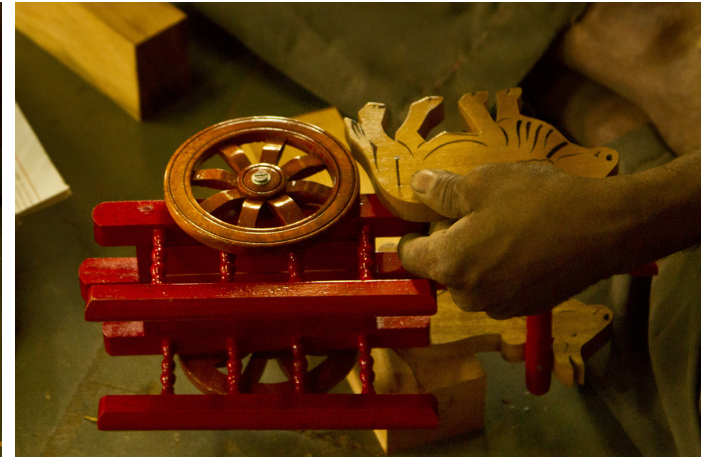
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Skidding logs are fixed to the yoked pair.



All wooden parts are fixed by nailing.



Artisan checks the quality of toy.

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Products

Wooden fruits, Bullock cart and various animals are well known toys of Sawantwadi. Size of these toys varies from 4inches to 8inches.



The colorful wooden lacing animals like elephant are very pleasant and eye catching.



Bullock cart is one of the famous toys in Sawantwadi.



Wooden rocking horse.



Walker made for infants to help them learn walking.

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Train engine made of wood.



Show piece made of wood depicting the horses.



Toy depicting the tiger with wheels to move.



Wooden fruits and vegetables are the most eye-catching toys in sawantwadi.

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All kinds of vegetables are replicated in sawantwadi.



Watermelon made of wood.



Show pieces of vehicles made of wood.



Wind chimes made of wooden toys.

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