



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

ECO-FRIENDLY HANDICRAFT'S OF KERALA IN INTERIOARCHITECTURE

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Abstract: Kerala is very famous for eco-friendly practices. Most of the handicrafts in the state Kerala are made from naturally available materials. They are also given special training in making the artifacts, which appear to have a life of their own. The variety of arts and crafts in Kerala is diverse and emphasizes a lot on the use of colors. All art forms in Kerala are full of intricate designs and vibrant details. The state has an edge as far as eco-friendly handicrafts are concerned because it has a tradition of making beautiful handicrafts from naturally available materials with articles like ivory, bamboo, palm leaves, seashells, wood, coconut shells, clay, cloth, metals, and stone and so on. These are regional handicrafts from Kerala, here we are taking one region where coconut shell handicrafts are familiar, which is alleppey town situated in south of Kochi, coconut fruit has spread worldwide with help of seafarers and coconut is very light and long lasting material, these coconut shall be used as decorative purpose, Like coconut panels, flooring, false ceiling, coconut furniture, in interiors etc.

Index Terms - Handicrafts, techniques, materials.

INTRODUCTION:

Alleppey is a town situated south of Kochi and also it is a district of Kerala state of southern India. It is also known as the Venice of the east due to a large number of waterways that inter connects different parts of this town. The term coconut dates back to the 16th century. It derives from the Spanish and Portuguese word coco, meaning "a grin", "a monkey face" respectively, since there is a slight resemblance to a human face or a monkey head because of the three tiny indents on the hairy shell of the fruit. *Cocos nucifera* is a scientific term for the coconut tree, or coconut palm. Tropics and subtropics are the natural habitats of the plant. The coconut is a plant, which favorably grows on the shorelines, it prospers on sandy soils. The fruit prefers rainy and sunny weather; it cannot resist low temperatures. For a propitious growth coconuts also require an area of high humidity.

The origin of the coconut plant is vague. Many researchers suggest Malaysia to be the likeliest place; others consider the northwest of South America. The fruit has spread worldwide mostly with the help of seafarers. The coconut fruit itself is light and water resistant, it can keep itself afloat on the surface of the water, thus able to be spread by currents. Now it is grown in more than 70 countries throughout the world. The major countries are India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Maldives.

Coconut Crafts in India refers to the creation of utility and decorative items with coconut shells, which is practiced in various parts of the country. Coconut crafts in India are mostly manufactured in South Indian states which feature the majority of coconut plants. Indian states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other coastal states have abundance of skilled artisans for making coconut crafts. A coconut tree is a tree that is widely grown all over in Kerala.

Coconut Palm Tree produces one of the diversified fruits where every bit is utilized in a variety of way. The craft of making decorative and utility products out of coconut shell and wood is mostly practiced in parts of India where coconut is grown in abundance. However with the passage of time and the improvement in tools, people started making various other small utility and decorative articles by cutting coconut shell. From the coconut shell products like bowls, vases, teapots, hookahs and many other varieties are crafted.

Regions of Production Coconut shell and wood craft are primarily prevalent in Kerala: in and around Calicut, Trivandrum, Attingal, Neyyatinkara and Quilandy in Kozhikode. Other states where this craft is practiced are Goa, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and a few parts of Bengal, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu.

TOOLS AND RAW MATERIALS:

Tools and raw materials that are used to coconut shell craft:

- **Coconut Shell:** It is a basic raw material used in making of coconut shell craft.
- **Hacksaw Blade:** It is used to cut coconut shell.
- **Emery Sheet:** It is used to smoothen the outer surface of coconut shell.
- **Buffing Machine:** It is used to smoothen the outer surface.
- **Bastard File:** It is used to carve the coconut shell into required shape.
- **Hammer:** It is a tool with a heavy metal head mounted to beat repeatedly.
- **Quick Adhesive:** Used to stick the articles.
- **Wood Polish:** It is used to give the coconut shell a wood finishing.
- **Sleek Glossy Top Coat:** It is used to give a glossy effect to product.



MAKING PROCESS:

The process of coconut crafts involves sketching, cutting, sanding, and buffing to create the finished product. The process involved in sourcing the coconut shell to the finished product has undergone drastic changes. Initially hand tools were used to carve, cut, and finish the edges. With advent of machines, there are lathe machines that have replaced all the hand tools. The process is much faster.

Initially artisan begins with cutting off the coconut shell with a band-saw reveal the interior of the coconut and Scoop out the flesh of the coconut with a chisel. It should be dry and easy to remove. At each stage sanding is done to make the surface smooth. Finally buffing is done for the inside surface in case of a hollow product or serving bowl.

The edges of the coconut shell are made smooth by filing or by sanding with sand paper. This process is followed repeatedly till the finish is satisfactory. Outer surface of the shell is cleaned using buffing machine and then inner part of the shell is smoothened. Using a bastard file, half sliced shell is carved into required design. Once the shell is given a design it is then they start working on the base part of the instant stick holder by cutting of the small circle out of coconut shell. To make the base part of instant stick holder initially they clean the outer and inner surface of the coconut shell using buffing machine and emery sheet. Once the surface is cleaned circle kind metal tool is hammered placing over the center coconut shell.



After a shape is cut out, the edges are made smooth by filing or by sanding with sand paper. The base part of Incense holder is then made holes by piercing with chisel. Once the all parts of incense holder is carved out it is then fixed using quick adhesive. It is then polished using wood polish. Alternatively, if a glossy finish is desired, it is given a coat of synthetic varnish. If the surface is to have a dark finish then it is painted before the varnish coat is applied. The inside of the object in this case is first rubbed with sand paper to get the desired smoothness and then it is buffed on machine.

TYPES OF PRODUCTS AND USES FROM COCONUT SHELL

Various designs are engraved in the shell using a file. Many articles are made using coconut shells such as Basic jewelry such as earrings, pendants, necklaces, Key rings, bowls, ice cream cups, spoons with a coconut wood handle, penholders, Incense holder Etc. And the price is depended on the product and its design.

Container: Use the coconut shell to keep trinkets, treasures and small items in. Things to keep inside might include rubber bands, keys, toys, pens and pencils, twist ties, your stash of used plastic bags, etc.

Plant holder: Grow a small plant in the coconut shell. While half a coconut shell can work, having it cut about three quarters of its height is usually the best size for a coconut shell plant holder. Drill or pierce some drainage holes in the base of the shell first, and line with sphagnum moss.

Bird feeder: Turn into a hanging bird feeder. Drill some holes at even spaces around the top and thread through some heavy twine or thin rope. Tie at the top with a ring or similar to allow for hanging. Fill with birdseed and hang in an appropriate place. Clean regularly.

Children's crafts: Have the kids use their imagination to turn coconut shell halves into heads, faces, toys, decorations or anything else that takes their fancy.

Basket: As with the idea for the bird feeder, add heavy string or light rope to form a hanging handle. Use the coconut shell basket to carry things in, such as freshly cut herbs and flowers, freshly laid eggs and seeds from your garden.

Natural candle holder: If you like making your own candles, use the coconut as the container into which you tip the wax. Keep the wick centered and it'll be a great candle for many hours.

Bowl: As a bowl, the shell can hold anything you like. A fun thing to try is a bowl of nuts still in their shells; try macadamias, Brazil nuts, almonds and walnuts, for example. Keep a nutcracker nearby to encourage snacking on healthy nuts.

Lampshade: If you're good with carving, you could carve a whole shell with neat holes in a pretty pattern. Add a globe and lamp base and you'll have a wonderful lamp with many light patterns glowing from it.

Jewellery: Carve pieces of the shell into necklaces, earrings and other jewellery. Designs for barrettes and elastics can be carved for hair accessories.

Coconut buttons: Carve buttons from the coconut shell fragments. Durable and pretty.

CONCLUSION

The process of making coconut shell crafts are easy to make cutting ,sharpening edges , making into a shape of any craft. It is also sustainable material and durable and long lasting. These coconut shell products can be used in different ways in interior architecture. It can be used as decoration purpose and also for interior wall panels, flooring , false ceiling etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mentor Asst. prof. Ar. Srishti Srivastava, Department of architecture, Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University, for their constant support and encouragement. I would like to thank my parents for their support in all possible ways through no amount of praise can tribute their effort. And furthermore, I need to thank my friends for being a help to the fulfillment of my research.

I believe, I owe my sincere and deepest gratitude towards all of them.

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