

Design Resource

## Cane Furniture - Sandur, Karnataka

Craft of Making Cane Products

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Manmi Dutta

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/cane-furniture-sandur-karnataka>

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## Introduction

Cane is the term used for the material, which is harvested by peeling the outer skin of the rattan stem. Rattan is the word given to denote six hundred categories of palms. Rattan has slender stems with a vine like structure, growing over other floras. The various types of rattan ranges from few centimeters upto a diameter of 5 cm and 7cm. Cane falls under the categories of tall, perennial grasses with flexible wood textures from the plant family Poaceae, which is available throughout the world. The various qualities of cane from suppleness, strength to its durability and bendable properties has made cane useful for many purposes. Cane is used all around the world for weaving various objects namely, furniture's, baskets, walking sticks and many more. The method of weaving of cane into various products including furniture's is a process that can only be practiced only by skilled artisans. The raw rattan is generally managed into strands of cane to be used as materials in making of the furniture's. Rattan is considered a very useful material mainly because of its resemblance to wood and also for its lightweight. The rattan stalks are harvested and the thorns along with joints are detached and the bark is alienated from the core. The bark of the rattan is used in producing thin strips of cane, which is woven together to produce the furniture's and other objects. Canes are often of cylindrical structure with an even thickness of yellow to brown colour, which are enclosed in leaf covers. The raw material used for weaving the furniture is called cane, the product, which is obtained, is known as caned furniture and the process of weaving the canes into furniture is named caning. From ancient era, human beings to create baskets, which later evolved and developed into making of the furniture, have exploited cane.

Rattan is cultivated in few states of India namely, Assam, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala etc. Rattan is mostly cultivated in forests as it is much stress-free to harvest, transport and involves simple tools to harvest. Cane is cultivated in abundance throughout the state. One such state, Sandur of Karnataka, India practices the weaving of cane into furniture with the help of a Sandur Kushala kala Kendra. Sandur a town of Bellary district of Karnataka lies south from Hospet at a distance of 33 kms. Sandur was earlier a princely state which was ruled by Ghorpade the royal family of Marathas. Sandur Kushala kala Kendra is a non-profit organization set up in the year 1984 in Sandur for the welfare of the people. Shri M.Y.Ghorpade sponsors Sandur Kushala kala Kendra. The Kushala kala Kendra helps in employing the villagers all man and women and also works towards bringing international recognition to the traditional crafts of the place. The Kendra supplies all the raw materials required for the making of the crafts to the craftsmen and even provide training for local people. At present there are more than five hundred craftsmen working in Sandur Kushala kala Kendra. The Kendra also provides marketing provision to ensure the demand of the produced crafts. These crafts are very demanding all over the world and are extensively sell over domestic and international markets. This organization also deals with various other crafts like stone sculptures, embroidery, Khadi, Karnataka Kasuti etc. These crafts are extremely valued for their uniqueness in both international and domestic markets. Many products designed and weaved by the craftsmen are mainly exported to foreign countries.

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Master craftsmen in the process of assembling cane pieces.



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Cane furniture stool is used for showcasing.



Kids chair made of cane.



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Round-parallel cloth bin.



Birds nest basket.



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Set of cane furniture consisting of centre table and stools.



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## Tools and Raw Materials

The several types of tools and raw materials required for Cane Furniture are as follows:

- **Cane:** Cane is the raw material used for weaving the caned furniture.
- **Hacksaw:** Hacksaw is used to cut the cane into a required size.
- **Nails:** Nails are used in nailing the cane to the frame of the soap.
- **Hammer:** Hammers are used in nailing the nails in the sofa frame.
- **Blow Torch:** Blow torch is used to heat up the cane stem so that it can be bent easily.
- **Flattened Knife:** Flattened knife is used to peel out the outer layer of the cane and also the cane strips.
- **Hollow Iron Rod:** The iron rod help in giving support to the cane while it is been hammered.
- **Wooden Piece:** The wooden piece helps in shaping the heated cane into any required shape.



Wide blade used for skinning.



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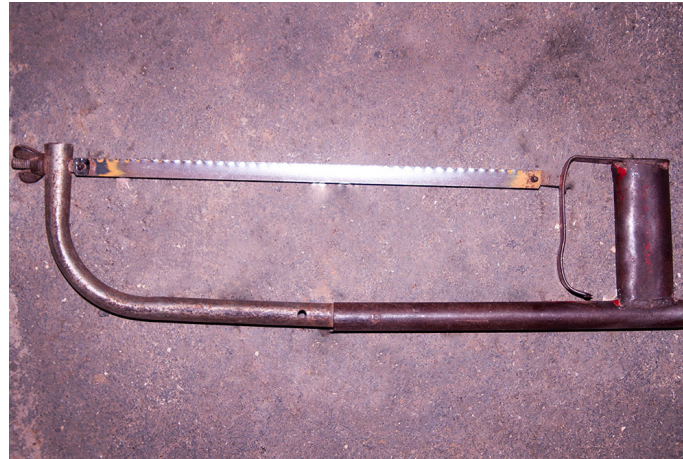
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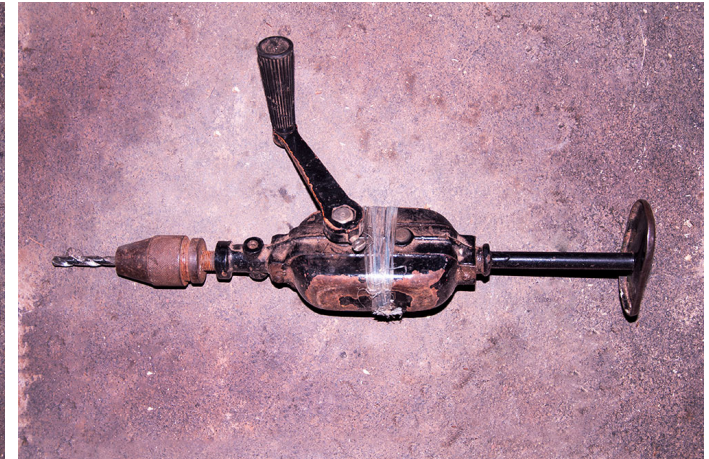
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Hacksaw used to cut the unwanted length of cane.



Manual drilling equipment.



Claw hammer used for pounding nails into or extracting nails from cane pieces.

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Metal nails of 1/4th, 1/2th and 3/4th size are used in assembling cane furniture.



Cane of size used are of 1 to 2 inches in diameter with 12-14 inches in length.



Flame torch is used to heat and bend cane when required.

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## Making Process

The cane products have established a significant position in the sector of handicrafts. Cane being an eco-friendly product is cultivated in abundance in few of the India states. Over the years the rural people has developed the art and skill of weaving furniture's with cane. Cane is mostly used as a substitute for wood. Cane products are durable and have a high life with least preservation with their own elegance and style. The unending demand of cane has resulted in many artistic works of cane. Cane objects are also used as interior beautification of houses and commercial places. In the Sandur Kushala kala Kendra craftsmen are divided into several groups according to the various crafts practiced in the Kendra.

Sandur Kushala kala Kendra purchases all the rattan stems in Lorries in huge amount mostly from the Dandeli forest of Karnataka, where cane is been cultivated in large quantity for the purpose of selling them. A very few people among others from the Kendra involves in the practice of making caned furnitures. Initially the rattan stems are peeled with a sharp knife and the outer skins are removed from the vine structure. After the thin cane is obtained from the stem then each cane is segregated according to their types and sizes. Then by selecting a lengthy cane, it is cut with a hacksaw into a required length for the furniture. The cane is then heated with the help of a blow torch and is bent according to the desired shape by the craftsmen. The heated cane is further bent with the help of a shaping tool made of wood into a given shape. Each part of the furniture is bent separately one by one keeping in mind the size and the proportions of the furniture. As the craftsmen is making the sofa, he firstly makes the frame of the sofa using long canes. After finishing the frame of the sofa he and his helper starts working on the rest of the sofa. One by one each cane is shaped with the help of a blow torch and the burnt area is again cleaned with the help of the sharp knife. After the parts are shaped and the burnt marks are cleaned then they are kept in position on the frame and are nailed to the frame with a hammer to fix the position of the cane. The craftsmen with his helper nails all the parts accordingly to their placement on the frame. Each part is measured, cut and bent in proportions and then is nailed to their adjacent parts on the frame of the sofa. A wooden piece is used to give the perfect shape in the cane by bending the heated can into desired shape. The thin cane strands are firstly soaked in water to attain the moisture before weaving it around the frame. Thin long cane strips are peeled and are tied to the joints of the sofa to ensure the strength of the joints and the end is knotted in the cane strip itself creating a pattern on the frame. The complete sofa is achieved and then is polished using natural wood polish. Usually three coats of wood polish are used to give the cane a fine shiny appearance.

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### Flow Chart of Making Process:



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Skinning the raw cane using wide-blade to get a smooth finish.



Slitting a the cane in symmetry which can be used in various motif.



Sliced cane pieces are soaked in water to achieve the property of flexibility and softness.

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Basic structure of chair is build using various lengths of cane fasten to each other.



Generally half-an-inch metal nails are used to fasten cane with a support to avoid twisting.



Metal fixtures are used to bend the cane.

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Cane furniture is done manually by supporting through legs.



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Hacksaw is used to cut the extra length.



Quarter inch metal-nails also used as additional fasteners in the assembly.



Generally flame torch is used for bending cane by heating the area.

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Bending to a required shape is a process of trial and error in cane, since fibers are very strong.



Skinning is required to remove the heated (burnt) area to achieve uniform finish.

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Wooden fixture is also used to adjust the angles and arcs of main frame.



Main structure in sofa is tied with thin strip of cane at equal intervals to balance.



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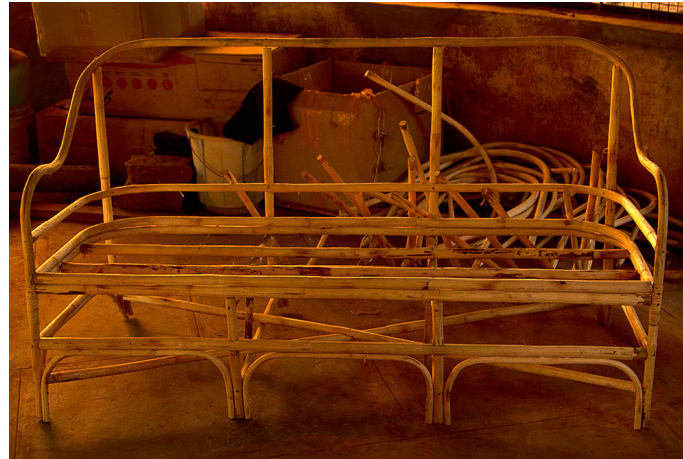
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A view of sofa with structure completed.



Young cane pieces are assembled in seating area and back rest after skinning.



Young cane pieces are cut to the required length.



Metal nails are used to fasten each pieces in diagonal manner.

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Finished product of cane furniture.



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## Products

Cane is generally used for making the furniture's. Most of the commercial buildings nowadays are using cane items and products to give the building an ethnic elegant and traditional look.

The most common products are listed below:

1. Sofa set.
2. Single chair.
3. Dining table along with chairs.
4. Single Tables.
5. Book shelves.
6. Dressing table glass frame.

These beautifully crafted products are available in many desirable shapes and sizes. Items are even crafted as per customers order.

Price of an item depends on the hard work and the time consumed in making the particular product.



Furniture ready to sell - Oval shaped centre table.

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Furniture ready to sell - Round shaped centre table.



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Furniture ready to sell - Round stool.



Furniture ready to sell – Chair.



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Furniture ready to sell - Parallel cloth bin.



Furniture ready to sell - Bucket shaped cloth bin.



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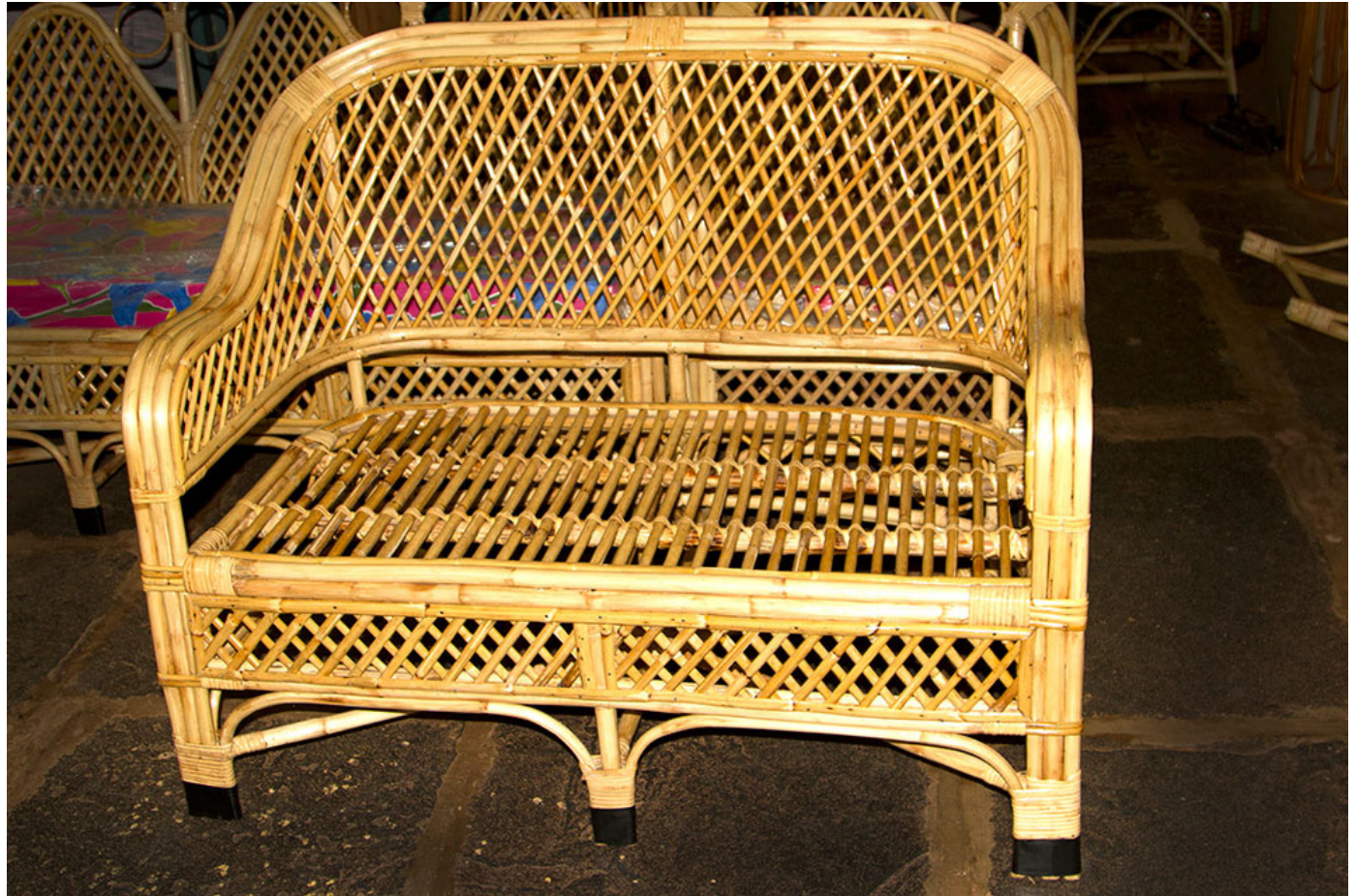
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Furniture ready to sell - 2 seat Sofa.

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## Contact Details

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