

Design Resource

Coir Craft - Raghurajpur, Orissa

Eco-friendly Toys

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Aakash Sharma

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/coir-craft-raghura-jpur-orissa>

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Introduction

Puri city is located in Orissa on the coast of Bay of Bengal in eastern India. The capital of Orissa, Bhubaneswar, is only 65 km away. Intertwined magnificence feel is what you get once you enter the city, this is also popular for the crafts like coir product. The efforts ahead manufacturing the raw resources are huge and involve several developments. Coir is a totally natural, eco-friendly and extraordinarily tensile fiber removed from the nuts of coconut palms. This natural wonder is available in profusion and finds various demonstrations. A natural product, coir being decomposable, atmosphere friendly and echo proof makes it a high quality product from an everlastingly renewable source.

There are various castes and tribes in the village of Siriapur in Patnaika situated in Puri District such as Vaishya, Khandayak, Silcot, Dhobi, Brahmins. These people are mainly farmers who do farming in the seasons suitable for farming.

The coconut palm has been praised as 'Kalpvriksha' the all giving tree in the classics of India. The use of coconut throughout India makes it a symbol of national unity. Woven magnificence is what you see in a coir product. Coir or coconut fiber is used very artistically to make a wide range of eco-friendly toys, wall hangings, key rings, Christmas hangings, pen stands and other home peyorative's. Coir products are 100% natural. This craft is unique as it is produced only in Orissa and not in any other coconut rich states of India.

The Wonders of Coir Fiber are as followed:

1. Fiber is Moth-proof and strong when it comes in contact with one another.
2. It's resistant to fungi and rot and is also easy to clean.
3. Provides excellent insulation against temperature and sound.
4. Fiber is not easily combustible and totally static free
5. Unaffected by moisture, dampness, tough and durable for long.

Previously raw coir fiber was separated with the help of hands and the price of raw material was high. However, now they have mechanical process of extracting/separating the coir which is cheap as well as it's easily available. Keeping in mind the eco-friendly customs, chemical coolers are not used or dyed coir is not used. Instead colored thread or wool is used. Due to the increasing competition from businesses, a shift from coir mats to utility and decorative products is made. Now the business is increasing from local markets to international markets because of attractive designs and reasonable prices. Earlier this craft was only used for domestic purposes such as door-mats for self-use, ropes etc. But now this area has been explored and addition to the existing products is made rapidly.

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There are multiple societies working for the craft industry but many families in Raghurajpur are successfully fulfilling their everyday needs by selling the crafts to customers that they make.

The society delivers women and girls of the village with employment along with education. The women of the village can either work in the space provided for work or can take the work home and finish a prescribed amount of work and they are then paid accordingly. The craftsmen are happy with their socio-economic status. They are getting orders from in and around Orissa. They also distribute their products to various countries like Japan, America etc. Due to timely design intervention the coir products are able to keep up with the growing competition.

There are many castes in Orissa who practice the coir craft to earn their livelihood, such as Vaishyas, Khandayak, Dhobi and Brahmins alike. It is used to make a wide range of eco-friendly toys, wall hanging, key rings, Christmas hangings, pen stands and other decorative items. Keeping in mind the eco-friendly norms, chemical coolers are not used or dyed coir is not used. Instead colored thread or wool is used.



Odisha is one of the main production clusters of coir toys in India.

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Skilled artisan of coir crafts.



Artisan learnt coir craft from her grandmother.



Coir toys are ecofriendly.

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The cotton thread is winded more near the joint to make it stiff.



Well-refined coir fibers are used for making toys.



Senior artisan inspecting the toys.



Idol of elephant with beautiful woolen ornaments on them.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Simple hand operated tools are used for making coir toys. Two sizes of scissors are used for different purposes, these toys are made by many family members which may not talk long for one to understand the process of mining and joining hands to help one another. Raw material required for making coir toys and other coir products are very few and basic. Coir is traditionally processed from coconut husks cured in saline or freshwater for eight to ten months by process called “Retting” for increasing the flexibility, strength and durability of fiber.

Following are the tools and raw materials used for the process of coir craft:

- **Small Scissors:** They are used for cutting thread and other small things.
- **Big Scissors:** They are used for cutting the coir fiber.
- **Pliers:** It is used while stitching, it is used for plucking out the needle from the coir toy.
- **Needle:** It is used for stitching. The size of the needle depends on the type of work.
- **Measuring Tape:** It is used for measurements.
- **Cello Tape - (adhesive tape):** Workers use cello tape to wrap it on their fingers to prevent from being cut by the stiff coir or by thread while tying the toys.
- **Tamarind Seeds:** It is used as glue after it's been heated with water.
- **Ground White Stone:** Natural white stone powder which is sued with glue.
- **Cotton Thread:** It is used to tie and shape the craft.
- **Sewing Thread:** It is used to tie jute on together.
- **Coconut Husks:** Extract of coconut which is used as a raw material.
- **Cardboard:** It is used to stuff inside the object.
- **Bamboo Sticks:** It is used for stiffness as an armature.

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Refined husk (coir) is the main raw material used.



Cotton thread is used to wind the coir in the various shape.



Sticks are placed in between coir to make the toy stiff.

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Embroidered lace is used to decorate the toy.

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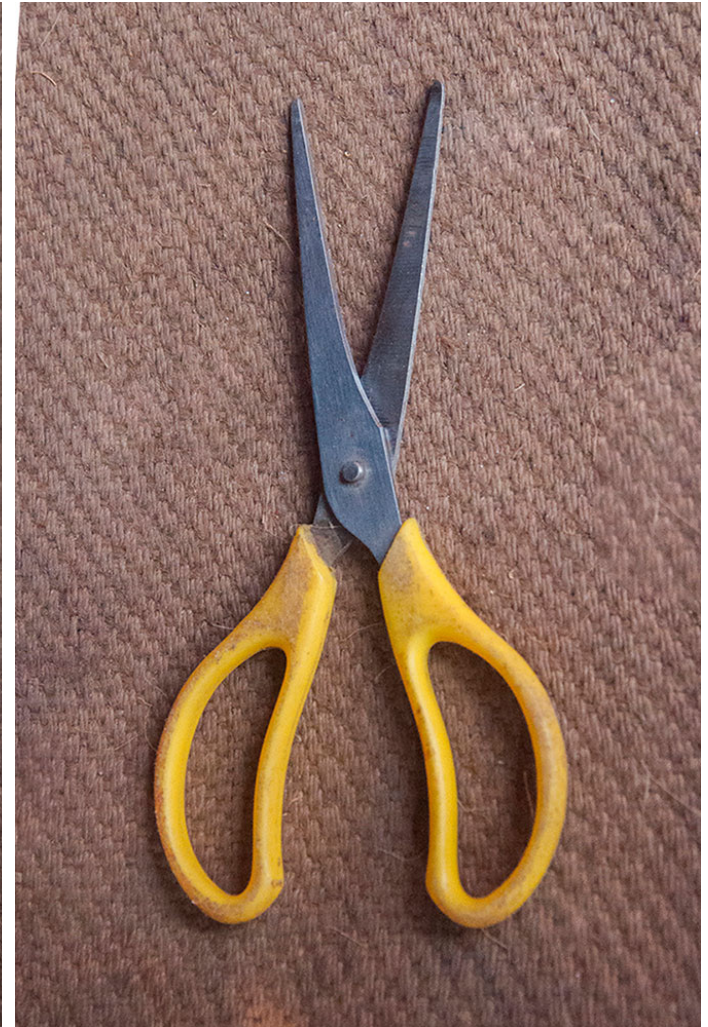
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Needle is used in stitching designs on the coir toy.



Scissor is used to cut the thread and cloth in required shape and size.

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Different colors of woolen yarns are used to decorate the surface of the coir toy.



Tapioca pearl (Sabudana in Indian language) is diluted in water to make starch.



The mixture of water, fevicol and Sabudana (Tapioca pearl) is used as starch.



Waste coconut husk is used for applying glue on the toy.

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Making Process

The coir fiber is first sorted out and separated on the basis of their knots and other similarities. For making a toy, firstly, the design is to be finalized and made on the paper. According to the design they work on the proportion of the toys. For simple and small products, the coir is simply tied with the thread to make desired products. Glue is diluted with water and then used for pasting the fiber on the main body. The card board is cut into required shapes then fiber is stuck over the board which is used to provide proper shape and stiffness. Sometimes if the product is quite small for instance, a leaf, then cardboard is cut into that shape and coir is tied on it with thread and glue. These toys are worked out in different parts and made in different forms. An artisan makes these parts in the particular day after which they are attached once all the parts are ready. Different parts are made by different people and then all the parts are assembled together with the help of thread, needle and glue. After the completion of the product it is to be dipped in diluted glue for durability and stiffness.

Cotton thread is used to wrap the forms or products made of coir fiber. This helps the product to take a definite and a stable form. Colored wool is used for surface ornamentation of coir crafts like for eyes, clothes etc. Depending on the design. Use of color wool also enhances the look of the toy. For value addition, wooden beads and metal bells are also used. After the completion of the toy or product, it is dipped into diluted glue. This is done, so that the thread stiffens up and does not open up. Glue solution provides better durability and stability to the product or toy. The final product may take two hours to six hours for completing depending upon the size of the product.

Once the products are dried, they are packed in a newspaper, tied with the help of thread, and either sold to the middle men or direct marketing in front of a temple, tourist spots, shops etc. These product's is attractive due to its decoration and various other attractive elements involved in the fiber.

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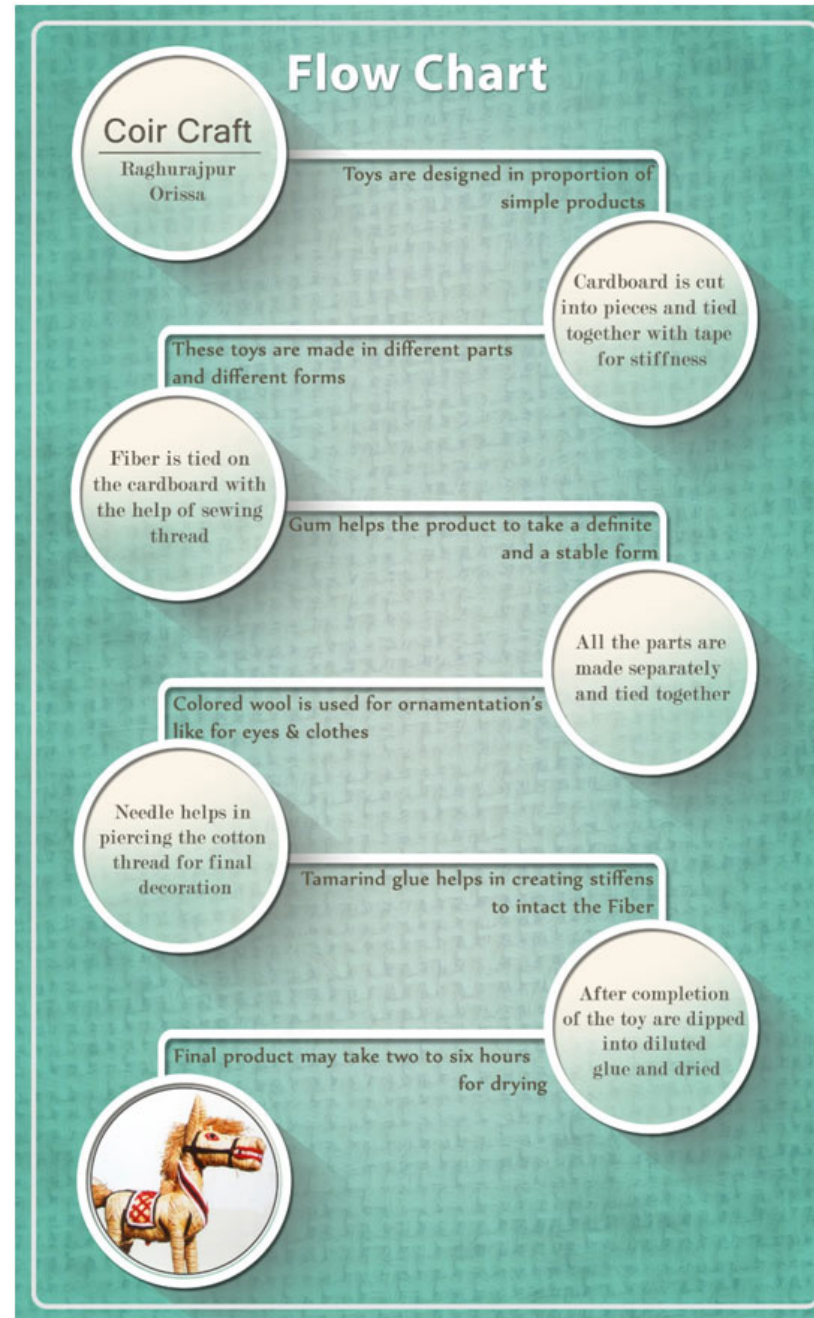
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Artisan collects a bunch of coir and winds it with cotton thread.



Initially the process of the idol starts from the neck.



Handful of coir is collected and it is attached with the initial part by using thread.

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Sticks are placed inside the coir, which gives stiffness, and it is used as legs for the toy.

Legs are attached to the body and are molded using thread.

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Bunch of coir is placed in the end of the toy to make a tail.



More coir is placed on the body to bring the shape of the toy.



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Coir is bent and placed on the neck, which is like head.



The horn is placed on the head and it is winded.

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Starch is applied all over the idol to attain stiffness.



The idol is kept in the sunlight to dry.



The idol is decorated with the woolen thread.



Embroidered lace is cut into required size of the idol.

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The Embroidered lace is placed on the idol and it is stitched with woolen thread.



Crest hair is placed and it is stitched with the woolen thread.



Eco-friendly toy is ready.

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Products

Coir fiber is converted into gorgeous toys and ornamental objects by tying and folding the fibers together, the craftswomen in Raghurajpur make these animal figures, nearly a decade ago, this craft was made in these village. Raghurajpur is abundant in coconut plantations, to generate employment for women. The figures are made in parts and then accumulated together. Facial structures are added with colored wool, stitched on the figure. Sometimes, fiber is also colored to make them good-looking. Apart from animal figures, wall carpets and utility products are also produced. Artisan shaping coir into animal figures. Various other products like Ropes, Doormats Toys like Curled coir Dolls, Birds, Animals, Handbags, Table mats, Wall hangings, Pen stands are also made out of this jute.

Products made out of coir fiber which are mainly ornamental products. The toys made of coir are very popular as Enlightening products, used for teaching children in nursery and kindergarten schools. Some utility products have come into occurrence during recent times. The price range of these merchandises starts from INR.50 to INR.400.

Both domestic and worldwide markets are promising for coir products. Coir products are treasured all over the world. Within India, their work is being appreciated in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Kanpur and Chennai. The products are judiciously priced; therefore, it is liked by the local clients. The working process is so easy and springy that it can easily adapt to the changes according to the changes in the demand. Agents also take orders and designs from the customer. It is an eco-friendly product so it is easily exported to various countries like Japan, China, America and Great Britain.



Toys displayed in an exhibition for sale.

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Nest made by using coir with artificial birds placed on it.



Beautifully made house and horses toys out of coir.



Adorably made horse out of coir with woolen ornamentation.

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Intricately coir winded to make this beautiful tree.



Turtle with decorative shell.

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Colorful dragon made out of coir and bright colored woolen threads.



Minute nest on the tree made out of coir.

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Marvelously made Tyrannosaurus with coir.

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