

Design Resource

Lac Bangles - Jaipur, Rajasthan

Handcrafted Sparkling Bangles

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Manmi Dutta

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/lac-bangles-jaipur-rajasthan>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Traditional ornaments worn by women in India, covering their wrists are named as Bangles. Bangles hold a very significant place in the life of Indian women. Bangles are made of gold, silver and many other alloys. Lac bangles produced in Jaipur are considered divine and is compulsory for newly married females to wear them in Jaipur, Rajasthan of India. The bangles are created in amazing varieties and are decorated with lovely stones, colours and metal embedding etc. In India a new bride is distinguished by her bangles and it is also considered a doom to see a women uncovered wrist after her marriage. Bangles are known by many different names across the country. There is a high demand for lac bangles mostly during festivals and occasions in India. Even foreign people has started adorning these Lac bangles and are even exporting these bangles to foreign countries. Many tourists from foreign countries comes to India in search of Lac Bangles, stays in India for few months practicing this craft and after learning goes back to their countries to produce lac bangles. Jaipur is recognized as a chief centre of art and crafts in India. The pink city (Jaipur), India was founded in the year 1727 by the King of Amer, Jai Singh II. Jaipur has a wide range of handicrafts depicting history and stories. The pink city is also prominent for its Lac Bangles which is easily available in Jaipur in various different designs. Lac Bangles are in high demand in India as they are considered as a lucky symbol of married women. Lac is the natural resin secreted by a tiny insect collected from trees and is further processed by traditional craftsmen to create Lac bangles. Lac Shellacs are made and sold in the wholesale shops for the craftsmen. Shellac is the developed form of lac which is acquired from seed lac in the shape of thin flakes. This traditional handicraft practiced in Jaipur, Rajasthan in India is prepared by ancient methods passed down by earlier generations.

Babu Khan with age 61 years is a resident of Maniharon ka Rasta, Jaipur, India has been performing this craft from ages. Lac bangle making was taught to him by his father. This craft has been in their family from seven generations and though the designs has developed through time the method of making the lac bangles remains the same as earlier. Maniharon ka Rasta is the area which is famous for hand crafted sparkling Lac bangles, and Babu Khan is widely known for his Lac Bangles in this area. Babu Khan has his own small shop where he sells different varieties of Lac bangles decorated with stones. He along with his two sons prepares lac Bangles for customers and earns their living. Babu Khan has also taught this craft to many foreign people.

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A charcoal stove, commonly used by lac bangle artisans in the vicinity.

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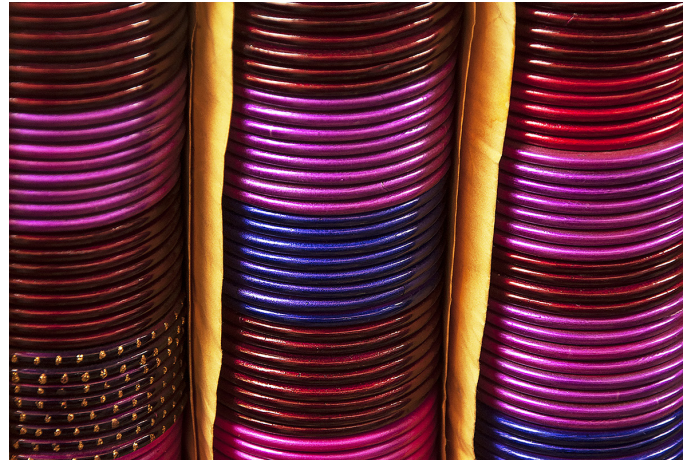
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Set of vibrant colored pure lac bangles, stacked up to be sold.



Artisan explaining the process, holding a bar of Lac.



Artisan melting the lac, in order to shape it to required design.



A completed bangle, with a coat of golden lac on it.

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Green and red set of pure lac bangles, commonly used in marriage ceremony by local communities.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used for the process of Lac Bangles:

- **Raw Lac Shellacs (Chapdi):** Raw Lac Shellacs are bought from local wholesale markets.
- **Coal:** Coal helps in the heating and melting process of the lac.
- **Metal Plate (Silla):** Metal Plate is used as the base to roll the melting Lac.
- **Flat Wooden Tool (Hatta):** Flat Wooden tool helps to roll out the warm lac in equal thickness.
- **Coal Burner:** It helps in heating up the coal pieces in a measured manner.
- **Lac Wooden Stick:** Lac shellacs are melted and attached around the wooden stick.
- **Coloured Lac:** Coloured Lac is used to paint a required colour to the lac wooden stick.
- **Wooden Mandrel:** Wooden Mandrel is used to form the precise shape and size of a bangle.
- **Scissors:** Scissors are used to cut and separate the rolled out warm coloured lac coils.



A circular iron disc, which is heated on charcoal stove, to roll up the lac.



A charcoal stove, used in melting the lac, for various process during its making.

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A flat wooden mallet used in pressing lac bangles sideways for a precise width.



A round wooden log, which helps in making varying sizes of bangles.

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Raw lac chips, which are to be melted and used further.



Image showing a stick holding bar of lac, which is applied on a lac base.

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A stick on to which lac is melted, to handle it well.

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Making Process

Lac craft was initiated in a few villages and were used to decorate homes, over the course of time this craft developed and formed a large scale industry. At present many small organizations practices this craft and each organization has added their own individual creativity to the craft. Lac Bangles are mostly adorned by the women folk of the world. The process of making Lac bangles includes very less technology and hard work and as it needs a very less space it can be set up anywhere in rural areas. The average size of a bangle starts from 2-2, 2-4, 2-6, 2-8, 2-10, 2-12, 2-14, and 2-16. The making of Lac is a tiresome process, which involves a lot of steps to produce the shellacs. Collecting and cultivating the resin produced by the insects send it for refinement and then they are sold in local markets.

The crafts men buy the lac shellacs from the wholesale markets in large quantity. The lac shellacs are melted in a vessel and when it is in a semi molten state the mixture is stirred and attached on the end of a wooden stick. Then the lac attached to the wooden stick is gradually heated with coal that is kept in the coal burner. When the lac starts heating and softening it is pressed against a metal plate (Silla) simultaneously in intervals with a flat wooden tool locally known as Hatta. After the lac is adequately warm and soft, the coloured lac of a desired colour is heated and melted and then it is evenly rubbed along the Lac to achieve the colour. And after applying the colour the craftsmen rolls out the lac till a required length and thickness from the wooden stick with the help of the flat wooden stick, and then the craftsmen cuts out the rolled out lac with scissors. After which the lac is again rolled out in equal length and is cut out from the plain lac stick. Then the craftsman takes one lac coil and slightly heats it to forms a pear shape and keeps it aside, the same process is followed with the other lac coil. Then the both shaped lac coils are placed opposite to each other and both their ends are inserted through each other and subsequently pulled creating a knot that forms a different pattern on the lac. After the knot both the ends are heated over the coal burner and joined with each other and is firmly pressed and the attachment is ensured. Lastly the craftsmen's inserts the completed Lac bangle into the Wooden Mandrel to give it a proper size and shape. Bangles are gracefully created and finished with utmost attention on each precise detail. Few craftsmen's keeps their bangle simple while others embellish the bangle in various designs by adding stones, colors etc to the bangles.

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The stove is prepared by adding charcoal to it and burning it up.

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A base lac is heated, such that it becomes soft to handle and shape it.



Artisan then heats up the colored lac, which he/she has prepared earlier.



The colored lac is applied on a base lac, for more options in color shade.



It is then reheated once again to ensure bondage between two shades of lac.

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Artisan carefully rotates the stick, while heating it, such that it is heated evenly all over.



An iron disc is kept on the charcoal stove.



The heated lac is rolled upon it with the help of a flat wooden mallet.



It is then brought down and rolled again on heated iron disc, until desired thickness is attained.

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It is being rolled down to a thinner lac rope, according to required design.



The completed lac ropes are then measured and cut, to required length.



A design is made by the artisan by interlacing two of such lac rope.



He then shapes it by hand for accuracy, while it is still soft to handle.

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Artisan then heats the completed design pattern to soften it for further process.



Both of its ends are joined on a round wooden log, such that it forms a circular loop, a bangle shape.



It is pressed with the flat wooden mallet to achieve a desired width.



It once again goes on, on a round wooden log for final shaping and sizing of bangle for accuracy.

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Artisan displays the completed product.

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Products

The market price of the bangles depends and varies upon the nature of embellishments decorated on the bangles. Countless bangle designs with various colours, beads and stones are produced for sale. Lac bangles are the most distinctive products found in the markets of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Lac Bangles:

Lac bangles embellished with precious stones are available in various designs. From simple to complicated designs, big to small lac bangles are available in pairs and singles. Lac bangles are exquisitely created with intricate designs adorned with decorative stones and beads for the customers to ornate their wrists.

Price of a 2-4 sized lac (Leheriya) bangle in pair costs 90/- rupees each.



Different colored lac bangles, infused with glass and various plastic based gem replicas.

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Thin lac bangles, which are studded with colorful stones.



Thicker lac bangles, which are studded with plastic replica of diamonds.

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A modern makeover for traditional lac bangle, done looping lac into each other.



Lac bangles, formed by interlacing different shades of lac.



Lac bangles of different shades, having same design pattern.



A combination of red and green lac bangles, used commonly in marriage ceremony by the local communities.

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