

Design Resource

Wooden Toys - Kondapally

The Craft of Wooden Toys

by

Mr. Antony William, Ms. Shruti K.,
Ms. Pargnya and Mr. Mahendra Patidar
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

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



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making of Aakra Paste
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Introduction

Kondapally is a small village near Vijayawada. Kondapally toys have been famous for quite a number of decades and the history seems to be that few Rajasthani karigars (Artisans) settled over here and started making these figure. The craftsmen of Kondapally belong to the Arya Khatriya Community and toy making has been in the family for generations. Today the number of people devoted to working on this art form has come down drastically and there are around 30-40 families in Kondapally who undertake this as a lively hood.

The themes of these toys were primarily depicting rural background & Hindu mythology with backdrops like Churning of Milk/Curd, Bullock cart riding, Elephants with Ambari, Dasaavatar set, Radha Krishna combos etc. The toys are small but narrative. Mythology and village life are the most common depictions carved in Kondapally.

Currently bulks of these toys are procured by Lepakshi (AP Govt) and few private merchandisers.



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Tools and Raw Materials

Different types of tools and Raw materials used are as below:

Wood:

Tella Poniki wood is soft in nature, available in local forest.

Chisel:

Different types of chisels and files are used to cut and carve the wood.

Aakra paste:

Aakra paste is locally made using mixture of sawdust and Tamarind seed powder, which acts as adhesive and used to fill the gaps and give shape to the toys.

Colors:

Vegetable dyes and Enamel Paints are used to color the toys.

File:

Used to smoothen the surface of the toy.

Paint Brush:

Different sizes of paint brushes used in color filling and sketching process.



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Making of Aakra Paste

First the parts are attached together and then a thick resin from Tamarind seeds (Pulian kottai) & Sawdust is prepared and applied on the dolls. It dissolves in water and helps to shape the toys as required. Essentially Aakra (tamarind + saw dust paste) is used to close the cracks, even out the rough edges and also to bring the subtle forms like the crest & Dewlap of bull. Thus the outer look of the toy is prepared and allowed to dry and sent for coloring process.



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Toy Making Process

The wood used for carving Kondapally wooden toys is from the tree called "Tella Poniki" (White Sander wood and botanically called *Jiuotia Rotteri Fromis*) and this grows abundantly in local forest. Tella poniki wood is very soft and light in nature; hence it is chosen to make wooden toys.

Before cutting, the wood is treated by warming as the weight of the wood reduces to one third of the original weight. After treating, Tella Poniki timber is cut into required blocks.

Initially, the design is marked on the surface of the wood. The wood blocks are then carved with bahudara (chisel) into the desired shape of the toy. The chiseled components are then filed to remove uneven edges. All the pieces like Body, Head, Ears, Trunk, Tail are carved separately and fitted together with glue and a slow process of heating on a wire frame is done to evaporate the moisture.

Once the carving is done, the early-prepared Aakra paste is applied to the toy to fill the cracks and also to give proper shape of the toy. The toy is dried and then smoothed by rubbing with sand paper. Once the surface is smoothed, it is sent for coloring process.



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Coloring Process

Initially, the karigars (artisans) used Vegetable dyes for coloring and then migrated to synthetic paints and now they make in both the flavors. Vegetable dye based artifacts are bit costlier than the painted ones. The only disadvantage of vegetable dyes is that when exposed to air conditioning for a longer duration they tend to absorb the moisture and become sticky. To avoid this, artisans apply a coat of sheen-lac polish, which gives a glossy finish.

Now-A-Days artisan's uses enamel colors, as they are economical and easily available in market. Before painting, wood primer solution is coated on the wood to avoid color absorption and also to enhance the life of enamel colors. Once the wooden toy is carved and coated with primer solution, it is dried and sent for coloring process. Artisan spontaneously creates designs of their own imagination on the toy. Different contrast colors are used to highlight the outer look and appeal. Most popularly used colors are bright red, green, yellow, black, white and blue.

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Products

Traditional Kondapally toys are locally known as 'Kondapally bommalu'. There are few well-known products, which follow traditional themes till date, which specially talks about skill and creativity of Kondapally toy artisans. The traditional products are world famous Kondapally Aata bomma - bobble head toy, typical village hut, traditional bullock cart and several themes of village life. Many products are created inspired by mythology, rural life and animals like tiger, elephant and cow. Birds like swans, peacocks and parrots are popular themes too. Themes like women drawing water from a well, snake charmers, Ambari (elephant with a mahout), potters, wedding ceremony are beautifully created and embellished with vibrant colors. Mythological figures are great favorites, which include Lord Krishna, the playful God, are shown playing the flute with a cow listening on.



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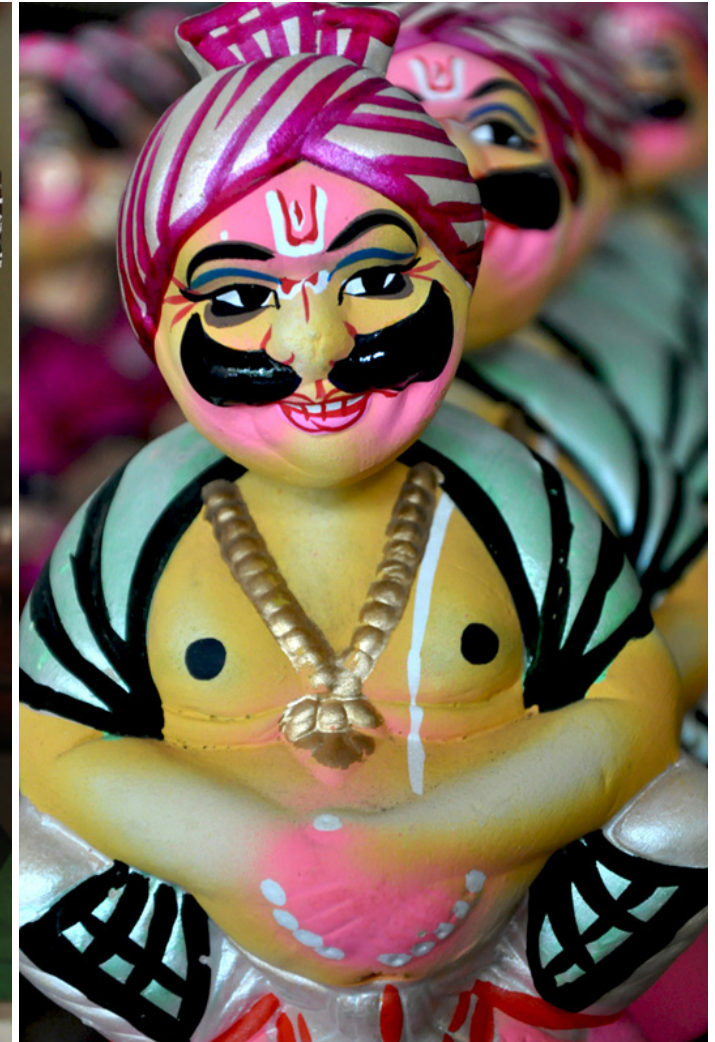
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Charcoal is used as fuel to produce heat.



Oil is poured into the mould for the easy flow of liquid silver.

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Mr. Antony William, Ms. Shruti K., Ms. Pargnya and Mr. Mahendra Patidar at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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