Design Resource

Wooden Toys Making, Nirmal - Telangana

The Traditional Art of Toy Making

by
Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Rakshitha
NID, Bengaluru



Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
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4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Introduction

Telangana, one of the states being located in the southern region of the country is formed on 2nd June 2014. Hyderabad is the capital city of this state. This state gained its identity as the Telugu-speaking region, which was ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad, joining the Union of India in 1948. Telangana is bounded by the states of Andhra Pradesh towards the east and south, Karnataka towards the west, Chhattisgarh to the north and Maharastra to the north and north-west.

Telangana, the name is derived from the word Trilinga Desa which means "the country of the three Lingas". According to a Hindu legend, Lord Shiva descended in the form of linga on three mountains. These three mountains namely Kaleshwaram, Srisailam and Draksharama mark the boundaries of Trilinga Desa. In later days the name Trilinga Desa was transformed to Telunga or Telinga. Further, the name Telinga changed over to "Telangana". The name "Telangana" was designed to differentiate the Telugu speaking region of the erstwhile Hyderabad State from its predominantly Marathi speaking people of Marathwada. According to some rare information, the earliest uses of the word Telangana was also called Tilangani.

The state of Telangana acquires an area of 114,840 square kilometers with a population of 35.19 million as per the census conducted in the year 2011. This state is considered to be the twelfth largest state and twelfth most populated state of India. The major cities of Telagana are Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Ramagundam, Khammam, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Adilabad, Suryapet and Miryalaguda. The main focus of this article is on the craft related to a town named 'Nirmal' in the Adilabad district of the Indian state of Telangana.

The town Nirmal is located at 19.10o N – 78.35oE. It acquires an area of 32.06 kilometers with a population of 88,433 according to the census held in 2011. But according to a survey conducted in 2014, the population of this town is approximately 96,000. The town of Nirmal is well connected with roads and is 210km from Hyderabad, 270km away from Nagpur in Maharastra and also 658km away from Kalyan in Mumbai. Nirmal bus station is considered to be the biggest in the district. And the languages originally spoken in this town were Marathi and Gond. But the major languages used these days are Telugu and Urdu. Since 1956 Telugu has been declared the official language of this place.

The name Nirmal is derived from one of the famous rulers of the 17th century, Nimma Naidu. He was a great patron of arts and encouraged the art of toy making that flourished during his period and brought significance to the town. Toy making is a small-scale industry in this town. The wood used for toy making is teak and poniki (a unique tender wood). The traditional art of Nirmal toy making is a 400-year-old art form. This art form belongs to the genre of realistic art and was practiced by the Naqqash artisans who emerged from Karnataka. These artists were initially trained by their seniors in the workshops. The study of the physical features of the animals, birds and the shapes of fruits was their initial learning. This paved way for the artisans to master their craftsmanship by achieving perfection in the terms of proportions that were shown through the drawings. Naqqash artists were allowed to craft the wooden toys only after mastering the drawing which was followed by a training session. Thus the art of toy making practiced well and was developed. Further, these craftsmen families also prospered well in the current location.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Traditionally made soft wood nirmal toys.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisans involved in nirmal toys making.





Tradition of making nirmal toys is followed since 400 years.



Shop of nirmal toys and painting located in Nirmal town of Telangana state.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisan applying lappam on the toy.



People shopping nirmal toys and painting.



Artisans preparing paint for applying on toys.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



A finished nirmal toy for display.



Senior artisan cutting the wood using a power saw.



Beautifully made toy of a Parrot.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials used for Wooden Toys are as follows:

- **Wood:** Wood is the main raw material that is used for making Nirmal wooden toys.
- **Cutting Machine:** It is used for cutting machine is used for cutting the wooden logs into smaller planks.
- **Saw:** Saw tool is used for cutting the wood into the desired size.
- **File:** File tool is used for shaping the wooden pieces to make small toys.
- **Sawdust:** Sawdust is used to prepare a mixture that is applied to the wooden pieces.
- **Glue:** Glue is used for fixing the two or more wooden pieces together.
- **Water:** Water is used for preparing the mixer of sawdust and tamarind seeds.
- **Tamarind Seeds:** Tamarind seeds powder is mixed with sawdust to prepare a mixture.
- **Colors:** Colors are used for enhancing the beauty of toys.
- **Painting Brush:** Painting brush is used for applying the paint to the toys.



Poniki wood used for making toys.



Hand saw and wood file used for cutting and shaping the wood.

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https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/tools-and-raw-materials

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Handheld needles are used for making holes and as a sculpting tool to sculpt lappam.



Hammer, sandpaper and chisel are used in shaping the toys.



Mixture of tamarind seed paste and saw dust used to make lappam.

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https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/tools-and-raw-materials

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Custom made paint brushes.



Clear clay paste to apply on the toys.



Various colors used to paint on toys.



Different size and shape of paint brushes.

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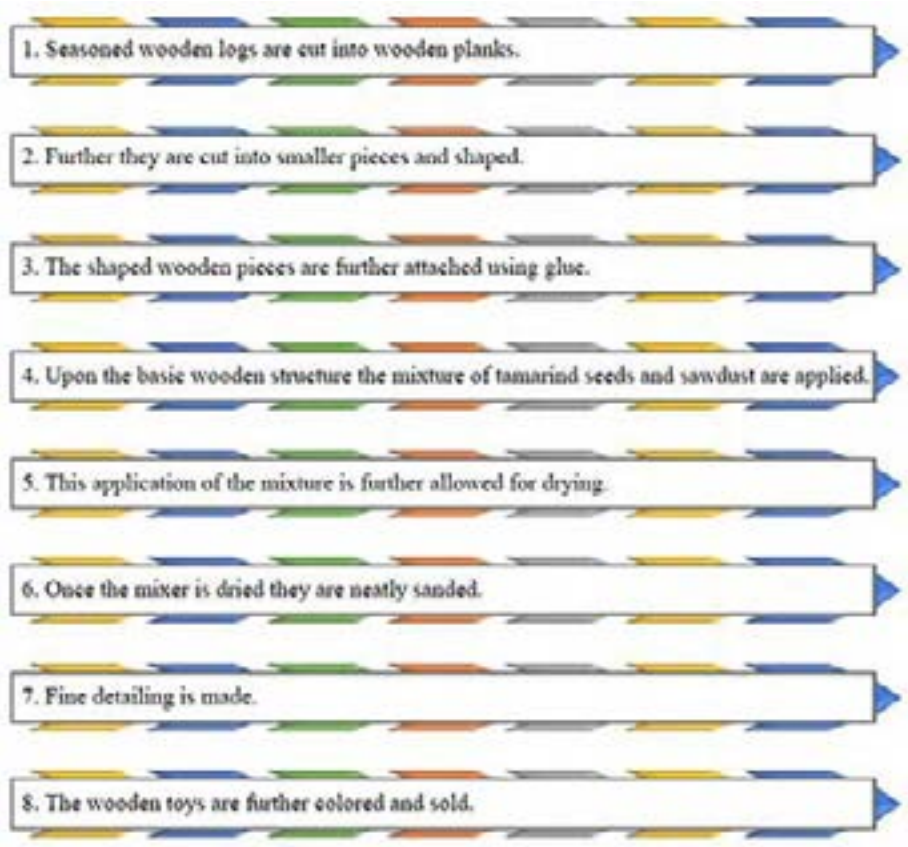
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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Making Process

Nirmal wooden toys are made of a softwood called poniki or white sander. The seasoned wooden logs are bought and cut into small wooden planks using a cutting machine. Further, they are cut into smaller pieces as per the requirement using the saw tool. These wooden pieces are further shaped using a file tool. The shaped wood pieces are further attached using glue or tightly fixed in-between the gaps. Upon the basic structure, the paste is applied. The paste is a mixture of sawdust and tamarind seeds that are ground well and kneaded together with water to get the required consistency. This paste is applied to the basic structuring of the wooden structure of the toy. Adding this paste to the wooden structure enhances in pertaining the fine curvatures of the toy. Further, this is allowed for drying. Once it is dried, it is sanded neatly and fine details are made. As a final process, the toys are painted and allowed for drying. Thus the Nirmal wooden toys are set ready for the sales.

Flow Chart:



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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Poniki wood is cut to size.



Wood is further cut to required size of toy.



A slot is being made to make the skeleton of the toy.



A wooden piece is inserted in the slot.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Lappam is made by mixing tamarind seed paste and saw dust.



Lappam is applied on the skeleton of the toy.



Shape of the toy is achieved by applying lappam layer by layer.



Semi-finished toy kept for drying.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Toy is being filed to get the required shape.



Semi-finished toy after filing.



Cane stick is used to make the legs of the toy.



Small holes are made to fix the legs.

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Source:
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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Glue is used to fix the legs.



Artisan is sculpting the beak of the bird.



Lappam is applied at the bottom of the bird to get the required shape.



Tail feathers are being made using lappam.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Toy let to sundry after giving the shape.



After drying rough edges are smoothened using sand-paper.



Bird is mounted on a small wooden piece.



Lappam is applied at the joints and kept for drying.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Cotton cloth is wrapped around the toy for strengthening.



A coat of lappam is applied on the cloth.



Toy is kept under sun light for drying.





Clear clay paste is made.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Clay paste is applied all over the toy.



Toy allowed to dry after applying the clay.



Paper strips are cut to wrap around the joints.



Paper strip is coated with lappam.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Strips are wrapped around the joints for smooth finish.



Toy is allowed to dry for some time.



Paint is prepared from the mixture of color powder and oil.



Various colors are mixed to obtain particular shade of color.

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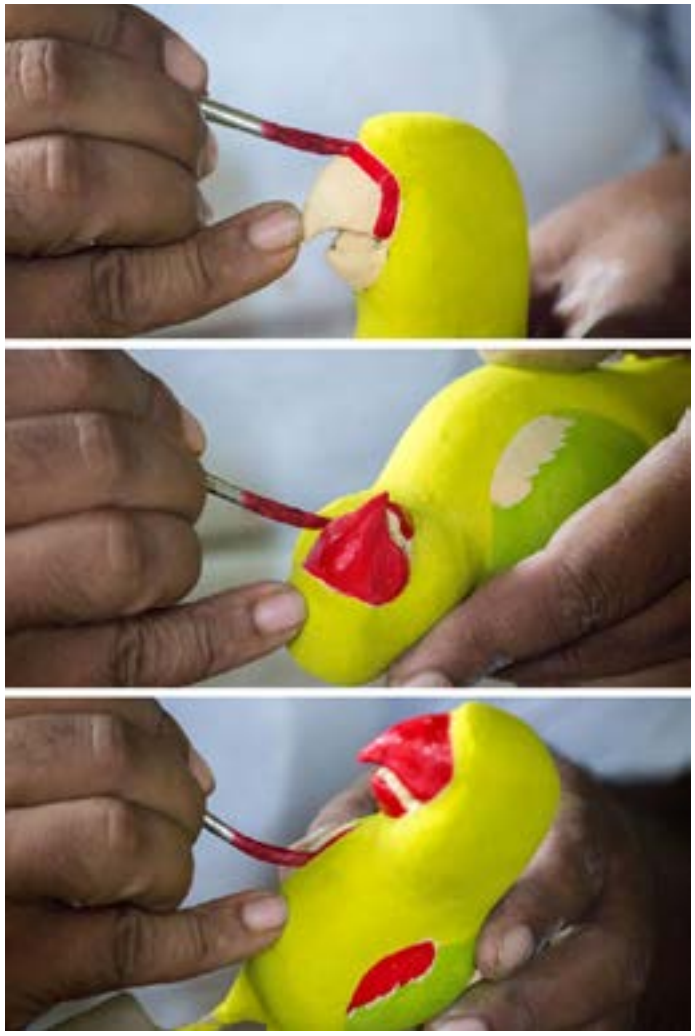
1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Paint is applied all over the toy.



Various colors are used to show different parts of the toy.



Feathers and the beak of the toy is being painted.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/making-process

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Various details of the bird are being painted.





A fully finished Nirmal toy.



A coat of lacquer is applied to get a glossy finish.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/products

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Products

These days' artisans at Nirmal produce the trademark birds, animals and fruits that are based on photographs instead of their own style, focusing on the study of shapes and forms of the subject. To enamel these toys synthetic paints are also used other than natural colors. The finely carved figures of Nirmal toys are used for decorating the homes of thousands across the country. These elegant toys are made out of locally available wood that is very light and flexible to cut into desired shape and size. The themes and style of making these toys have developed a positive approach to meet the demand of modern taste.



Beautifully made boiled eggs cut into halves.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/products

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Realistic looking dates displayed.



Tray containing pan masala, betel nut, cigarette, matchbox, betel nut cutter etc.



Different kinds of vegetables which looks realistic.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/products

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Colorful birds on a tree displayed at the stores.



Various kinds of animal toys.



Toy showing the lifestyle of local people.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/products

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Different kinds of birds on display.



Idol of lord Ganesh.



Traditional dolls made using nirmal toy making technique.



Price range of the Nirmal toy starts from INR.30.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/wooden-toys-making-nirmal-telangana/products

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Toy of a man climbing tree.



Beautifully made eagle catching the snake.

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Video



Nirmal Toy Making - Part1



Nirmal Toy Making - Part2

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Rakshitha at NID, Bengaluru.

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