



Rural Craft & Cultural Hubs
of West Bengal



Department of MSME&T
Government of West Bengal

BAMBOO BASKETRY

Weaving Wonders





Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Rural Craft & Cultural Hubs of West Bengal



West Bengal is a treasure trove of natural and cultural heritage. The intangible cultural heritage of Bengal is an exemplary instance of the aesthetic lineage of Bengal. Utilitarian lifestyle items like basketry made with date palm leaves and Sabai grass, hand spun and hand woven jute rugs (Dhokra), mats made with cane slips (Sitalpati) or Madurkathi (Madur), pottery, Kantha-spreads, decorative and ritualistic items made out of Shola and others, reflect a curious fusion of indigenous craftsmanship and utility. Bengal's art and craft reflect cultural history, ethnic roots, and lifestyle in-tune with nature. Variety of masks, Dokra and metal work, range of indigenous weaves and embroideries, dolls, masks and figurines curved out of wood are examples of Bengal's artistry. Culture of Bengal is enriched by the mellifluous tunes of the Baul, Bhawaiya, Bhatiyali singers, rapturous dances of Chau, Raibenshe and Jhumur, storytelling traditions like puppetry and Patachitra, and folk theatres like Gambhira, Banbibir Pala among other folk forms.

The Rural Craft and Cultural Hub (RCCH) Project is an initiative of the Department of Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises and Textiles (MSME&T) and UNESCO aiming to rejuvenate the rich cultural heritage of West Bengal and strengthen rural creative enterprise. The journey started in 2013 and the RCCH project currently covers 50,000 handicraft and folk artists across the state. It has strengthened the ecosystem supporting the transmission of traditional skills in art and craft, fostered direct market linkage, engaged youth in pursuing their traditions, and promoted cultural tourism to the villages of



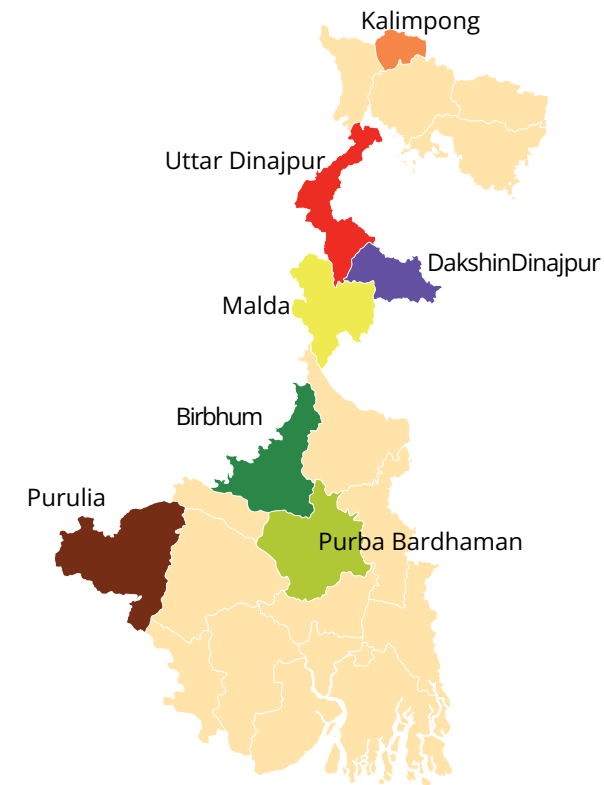


BAMBOO BASKETRY

Basket weaving is an ancient art in India. Rural communities develop special shapes and patterns of baskets based on their local traditions, needs, and techniques. Traditionally, the crafts persons used to make baskets & winnows, a type of tray-like bamboo basket used in Bengal, for everyday use and rituals. Different types of baskets, hand held fans, sieves, etc., are also made, then painted with auspicious symbols and are used in marriage and other ceremonies. Nowadays, crafts persons are producing various diversified products like lamp-shades, coasters etc.



CRAFT HUBS



The tradition of Basketry is prevalent across the villages of many districts. In Ushaharan of Dakshin Dinajpur, the artists make bamboo masks. In Uttar Dinajpur, the prominent hubs are Bhalukdanga, Subhasganj, while in Malda, the prominent hubs are Majlishbag and Sarkarpara. A folk-art centre with a community museum has been developed at Majlishbag in Gazol, Malda under the SFURTI scheme. Dighidanga in Birbhum is also a small and vibrant cluster of the region. There is bamboo tradition present in Kalimpong. The artists of Algora in Kalimpong are very skilled and makes various utility products. The artists in Purulia and Dakshin Dinajpur makes basic products like winnows, baskets, etc.

Number of Artists

Purulia:	1057
Malda:	964
Birbhum:	239
Purba Bardhaman:	176
Uttar Dinajpur:	113
Dakshin Dinajpur:	72
Kalimpong:	20



PROCESS



Cutting and Soaking

Bamboo is cut into pieces as per the desired sizes and is soaked in water for nearly three days. The different types of Bamboos that are used are Makla Bانش, Jeotha Bانش, Chikan Bانش, Bhaluka Bانش. Makla and Chikan are mostly used for making baskets as long strips can be taken out from them. At first, the Bamboo is cut into pieces using a saw. Chisels of various grades are also used. Then, awls are used for making small bores. In case of fine slicing, sharp knives are also used. Scissors are used for cutting the ends of the slices.

Drying and Shaping

The bamboo pieces are sun-dried, and slices are made of desired shapes and sizes.



Colouring and Dying

A wide variety of patterns can be made by changing the size, colour, or placement of a certain style of weave. To achieve multiple colours in the design, the artists first dye the twine and then weave them together in elaborate patterns.

Weaving

Bamboo pieces are sliced into thin strips to make it pliable so that it is easier to twine and weave. Small hammers are used for assistance in carving and sand paper is used for polishing the product. Glue and adhesives are used for pasting in cases.





ARTISTS

The crafts persons of Birbhum, Purba Bardhaman belong to groups like Byadh, Mahali, etc. The crafts persons in Dakshin Dinajpur belong to Rajbangshi community. In Malda, the crafts persons belong to Mahali community and one-third of the crafts persons are Christian. In Purulia, the scheduled caste community, are also practicing the artistry.

In Majlishbag of Malda, the prominent artists are Srinath Tudu, Jatil Tudu, Jatin Tudu and Manik Rabi Das. Women also play equal roles, and artists like Bandana Das, Sujata Mondol of Majlishbag have excelled in the craft tradition. Monoranjan Mondol from Sarkarpara has travelled to France. In Raiganj, the craft practices are mostly led by women like Minati Das, Gouri Dey, Bina Das, Rekha Das, Lakshmi Rani Das, Santana Das, Pratima Das, Sayanti Das, who are the leading artists.

In Dighidanaga of Birbhum, Baidyanath Hansda, Rajen Hembram are prominent artists. Daspara in Purba Bardhaman is a prominent cluster where Ajit Das, Purna Chandra Das, Subhas Das are quality artists. In Kalimpong, the Lepcha community is involved in the craft. Anand Lepcha is a quality artist practicing the craft.

Malda

Srinath Tudu: 9064766615
 Jatin Tudu: 7602126100
 Sujata Mondol: 7501121068
 Manoranjan Mondol: 9733457947
 Anjali Mahali: 9382169011

Uttar Dinajpur

Minoti Das: 9614557745
 Laxmi Das: 9907900141
 Jayanti Das: 7908838848

Dakshin Dinajpur

Gostho Baishya: 7407149148
 Paltu Baishya: 7098201104

Birbhum

Baidyanath Hansda: 8617535834
 Rajen Hembram: 6297871157
 Prasanta Kisku: 9064295004
 Santosh Tudu: 9064424846

Purba Bardhaman

Ajit Das: 9593519521
 Purna Chandra Das: 9091695934

Kalimpong

Anand Lepcha: 7076753185



PRODUCTS

Traditional

Bamboo is traditionally used for making baskets and winnows which were ideal for everyday use and rituals. They are woven with the raw fibre, painted with auspicious symbols, and are used in weddings and other ceremonies. The artists also make ordinary baskets, hand held fans, and sieves. The artisans mostly procure bamboo from Malda and other parts of North Bengal.



Baskets



Diversified Products

Among contemporary items such as, wall hangings, desk calendars, lanterns & lamp shades, bouquets, flower vases, ash-trays, mats, fruit baskets, coasters, chandeliers and more are being made for home décor. The artisans of Uttar Dinajpur, Birbhum, Purba Bardhaman and Malda are equipped to make the same. Subhasganj of Uttar Dinajpur and Gazole of Malda make best of the diversified products like lampshades, colourful baskets, jewellery box, jewellery, bangle box etc. Ushaharan of Dakshin Dinajpur makes furniture items. The quality of Bhaluka and Jeotha Bansh is highly durable and has good strength, which is why this bamboo is used for making furnitures like sofa sets & chairs.



Containers





Serving Tray



Container



Bottle Covers



Flower/Fruit Basket



Lamp Shades






Jewelleries



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