



Bamboo Craft

Aesthetics of green gold

Seraikela Kharsawan | Jharkhand
Mayurbhanj & Koraput | Odisha

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The use of bamboo by indigenous communities is a testament to their sustainable way of life and respect for nature.

-Medha Patkar

Roots to Prosperity



‘Roots to Prosperity’ is a transformative journey led by Contact Base and supported by Axis Bank Foundation. The initiative aspires to empower traditional cultural practitioners as confident cultural entrepreneurs, while strengthening the ecosystem of heritage-based tourism. It works across the districts of Koraput and Mayurbhanj in Odisha, and Seraikela-Kharsawan in Jharkhand—regions endowed with natural beauty and deep reservoirs of indigenous artistry and living traditions.

Across these culturally rich landscapes, the project walks alongside more than 5,500 rural creative practitioners. It supports them to refine skills, access markets directly, build strong community-led enterprises, and shape vibrant cultural tourism experiences. At its core, the initiative recognises that culture is more than memory—it is identity, dignity, and possibility.

By strengthening grassroots creative economies, Roots to Prosperity fosters inclusive growth, sustainable livelihoods, and resilient communities. The initiative seeks to affirm culture as a pathway to empowerment – where inherited wisdom nurtures confidence, resilience, and a more secure future for communities.

This brochure presents Bamboo Basketry—the centuries-old practice of weaving bamboo intertwined with India’s cultural and ecological heritage.

About the craft

Bamboo craft is an integral part of everyday life in India, particularly across the eastern regions, where it reflects a lived relationship between people, material, and environment. Rural communities have long relied on bamboo to meet domestic, agricultural, storage, and ceremonial needs, shaping basket forms and weaving patterns through knowledge passed down within families.

Artisans in eastern India possess a deep understanding of bamboo—its strength, flexibility, and seasonal qualities—which guides the creation of objects that are both functional and durable. These baskets serve daily household purposes while also playing important roles in festivals, marriage ceremonies, and community gatherings. Bamboo is sourced locally, with artisans carefully selecting varieties

that yield long, supple strips suitable for weaving, reinforcing sustainable and resource-sensitive practices.

Rooted in forest-fringe and rural landscapes, bamboo basketry in eastern India continues as a living heritage, where utility, cultural meaning, and ecological balance come together through everyday use.



Location

This brochure features bamboo artists living in Jharkhand's Seraikela Kharsawan district and Odisha's Mayurbhanj and Koraput districts. These regions, characterised by forested hills, agricultural fields, and abundant bamboo resources, provide an ideal ecological and cultural setting for the growth of bamboo basketry as both a livelihood practice and a living tradition.

In Odisha, bamboo craft clusters are spread across Baipariguda, Dasmantpur, Jeypore, Kundra, and Laxmipur in Koraput district, as well as Jamda and Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district.

In Jharkhand, the craft thrives in the Nimdih and Kukru blocks of Seraikela Kharsawan district.

Together, these regions reflect how natural ecology, community knowledge, and everyday necessity have sustained bamboo craft as an enduring craft tradition in eastern India.

Block : Seraikela Kharsawan in Jharkhand and Mayurbhanj, Koraput in Odisha



Villages:

Sima, Tetlo, Matkamdih in Seraikela Kharsawan

Banaguda, Gumi, Upper Telemating, Keramati in Koraput

Chapal and Kandsore in Mayurbhanj

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The Makers

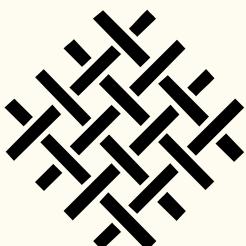


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Practitioners span multiple generations, with bamboo craft being upheld as a family tradition for all artists. Most clusters create products for personal and household needs, with some products like baskets or trays being sold in the local haat.

The vibrant tradition of basketry craft clusters features the Nimdih Block of Seraikela-Kharsawan district, Jharkhand, where the Mahali community lead the craft; Kandsore, Chanpal villages in the Jamda Block of Mayurbhanj district; and Banagunda, and Gumi villages in Baipariguda; Upper Telemating of the Laxmipur Block, Keramati in the Kundra Block from Koraput, Odisha.

Today, the practice is proudly women-led. With an intimate understanding of bamboo—abundant in their natural surroundings—these artists weave not just baskets, but stories of resilience, heritage, and creativity.



Shefali Mahali	7870747278
Jyotsna Mahali	8102167406
Anil Mahali	8292120213
Manjuri Mahali	9798573254
Mamta Mishra	9938814954
Gadua Hantal	6370986771

Process

01 Cutting & making Strips

The bamboo craft process began with collecting and preparing raw bamboo. They used traditional tools like the kati (curved knife) and ghoda (wooden stand) to split and peel the bamboo poles.



Kati (curved knife)



Ghoda (wooden stand)

02 At first, the bamboo is cut into pieces using a saw. They carefully removed the green outer layer using the kati and then began splitting the bamboo into strips using both hand strength and simple wooden levers. Once split, the bamboo strips were shaved and thinned using the kati fixed on the ghoda. This step was to achieve the right flexibility and thickness for weaving. Strips are known as pati, which is different for fitting and depends on the product patterns.

03 Dyeing & soaking

Water was first heated on a stove, after which powdered dye was added. Once the color was thoroughly mixed, bamboo strips were immersed in the solution and left to soak until they fully absorbed the dye. Afterward, excess dye was removed from the bamboo strips by washing with plain water.

04 Weaving & finishing

Interlacing bamboo strips, typically in a criss-cross pattern, starting from a base and building up walls and rims using various techniques. 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.



Products

Traditionally, bamboo craft was a localised cottage industry, rooted in seasonal demand and focused on everyday utility. Artisans primarily crafted winnows, baskets and other household essentials from locally sourced bamboo, using time-honoured techniques that were inherently eco-friendly, biodegradable, and sustainable.

Today, these artisans are rising to new creative and market challenges. By dyeing bamboo strips and combining them with wood, they have expanded their repertoire to include contemporary products such as boxes, baskets, and décor pieces like lampshades and wall hangings. Through innovative weaving techniques, geometric patterns, and refined design elements, bamboo basketry has evolved into a diverse, sustainable craft—opening pathways to new markets while remaining grounded in environmental responsibility and traditional knowledge.



Scan for
more products



Wall shelf



Baskets and containers



Lampshades



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Jewellery



Roots to Prosperity

Contact Base has partnered with Axis Bank Foundation on the "Roots to Prosperity" project to enhance culture-based livelihoods of artists in Seraikela Kharsawan Mayurbhanj & Koraput.



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