

STONE CARVING



Ancient practice of stone carving is a form of art where pieces of rough natural stones are shaped by the controlled removal of stone. Stone Carving is one of the major handicrafts of Orissa. The craft finds its genesis in ancient temples, palaces, forts, monuments etc. Both hard and soft stones are used for carving. Hard stones like black granite, sand stone, red stone, weather resistant and used for temples, monuments, and other exterior works. Soft stones like Kendumundi, green stone are used for carving interior decorative works.

Religious and Mythological Themes: The stone carvings in Jajpur often depict deities, mythological stories, and religious symbols, with images of gods and goddesses such as Lord Vishnu, Shiva, and Durga. Many carvings also illustrate scenes from epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana, as well as stories of local saints and spiritual figures.

Architectural Integration: The carvings are typically part of the region's temple architecture. Some of the most notable examples include the sculptures found at the famous Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitgiri archaeological sites, which date back to the early medieval period. These temples often feature finely detailed carvings on stone slabs, pillars, and walls.

Techniques and Craftsmanship: The skill involved in creating these carvings is passed down through generations. Artisans use traditional tools and methods to chisel stone, and the work often involves intricate detailing. Stone carvings range from large, grand depictions to smaller, more delicate motifs, all showcasing the precision of the craftsmanship.

Cultural Significance: Stone carvings not only hold religious value but are also symbols of the region's rich cultural and historical past. They serve as a window into the artistic and cultural traditions that have been maintained over the centuries.

Impact on Local Economy: As part of the ODOP initiative, the stone carving tradition of Jajpur has been promoted for its potential to boost the local economy through tourism,

craft production, and the development of skill-based employment. Local artisans and stone carvers are encouraged to preserve and enhance their craft, attracting both domestic and international visitors who come to admire the historic carvings.

Overall, stone carvings from Jajpur district are not just an artistic expression but also a cultural asset that continues to shape the identity of the region and contributes to its economic development.

HANDICRAFT



Jajpur district is a home of skilled craftsmen and women. There are thousands of stone sculptors, golden grass and tussar silk weavers, bamboo grass artisans, and terracotta craftsmen besides potters, painters, musicians, singers, dancers, tailors specializing in theatrical costumes, and folk artists and performers.

BAMBOO GRASS ART: Locally called Kaincha, the wild grass is found in many parts of the Jajpur district. It grows only in marshy areas during August and September and reaches up to a height of about 5 feet when fully matured. After the grass reaches the maturity stage, local farmers collect it and supply it to these artisans.

The artisans make grass bundles and keep them in the sun to dry them for about a week. The green grass turns yellow after losing all water content, which gives it a shiny matte look. Therefore, the artisans call it golden grass. For generations, golden grass items like bowls, fans, mats, etc. have been used as utility items in many parts of the State.

The artisans often paint the grass in various colors like blue, green, red, etc. to make the final product more attractive. Powdered colors are mixed with hot water, and the golden grass is soaked in it. It eventually takes the desired color.

The government of Odisha has decided to apply for the 'Geographical Indication' (GI) tag for Golden Grass craft. The GI status will give the craft a distinct identity as nobody can misuse the name to market similar crafts.

TUSSAR SILK WEAVING: Tussar is a form of silk – derived from larvae of various species of silk worms. The silk yarn is handwoven into intricate designs to make sarees, scarves, jackets, etc. Gopalpur, a Tussar cluster in Jajpur is about 400 years old. There are about 1900 Tussar silk weavers in Jajpur District.

Silk is obtained from silk worms which feed on the leaves of certain plants and form cocoons. The cocoons when ready, are unravelled into silk fibre which is then woven into fabric. There are various species or ecoraces (breeds) of silk worms. These silk worms feed on the leaves of the Arjun and Asan trees.

The Tussar silk threads are dyed and woven into fabric which is then used to produce a variety of products with the saree of course, heading the list.

TERRACOTTA CRAFTSMANSHIP specializes in pottery and clay products. There are over 105 Terracotta artisans in Jajpur. The primary challenge with the craft is an overemphasis on decorative items, limiting its customer base, while potential solutions involve design diversification and technology integration.