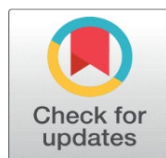
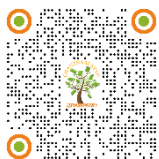


## METAL ART OF TIKAMGARH

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## ABSTRACT

The tradition of Bell-metal art has a vast historical background since the time of Indus Valley Civilization. [Kumud \(1995\)](#). Excavation at Mohenjo -Daro, Harappa unfurled the technique of Lost wax process 'Cire-perdue [Majumdar \(1996\)](#). It was the great turning point in the history of art. The analytical study defines that the craftsmen who were pursuing the bell metal craft as a traditional occupation and doing this work as a religious domestic work are regenerating their interest in creative art [Shukla \(1998\)](#). The prime centres of Bell metal Craft in Madhya Pradesh are Tikamgarh, Datiya and Betul the Bell-metal craftsmen of Tikamgarh infused their experiences and creativity to develop a new-fashioned form. They evolved their creations from jewellery artwork. "The growth of crafts in society was the sign of cultivation of sensitivity and the steering and mellowing the humanism". [Chattopadhyay \(1975\)](#).

**Keywords:** Jewellery, Ritualistic Materials, Decorative Materials, Gabo, Mould, Kapo, Resin, 'Piswan Wax', Chanwa Wax, 'Garma' and 'Sunti', 'Barauli Soil', 'Gaarn Ki Mitti'

"Communication through various arts is an important and easiest way through the ages. The essence of the art communicated in society has a large and diverse area. Each example of art has its own definition of public art."

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tikamgarh is located in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. It has the traditional pattern of craft tradition although there is no specific name for this traditional Idol craft. It is popular with the name of the 'Metal Idol craft of Tikamgarh'; the work of Idol craft is done by the Swarnkar Samaj. The artist calls themselves Awadhiya or Audhiya Sonar as their forefathers were initially residents of Avadh who later settled in various places of India and Madhya Pradesh ie. Tikamgarh, Gwalior, Chanderi Chhatarpur, Shahgarh etc. The artisans of Ayodhya, who settled down in the Tikamgarh region vanished from the Sonar caste, are now engaged in work related to utensils, jewellery and other metal craft.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Ganesh

**Source** AsiainCh.org

These metal craftsmen are presently doing sculpture and jewellery work only. Some craftsmen have adopted the work of making jewellery while some craftsmen are making metal sculptures and other material decorative items etc. (Soni, L. R. Interview, 2009)

At present due to the changes in social interest there have been changes in manufacturing and trading centres of traditional ornaments at present, the trend of some new designs and light weight jewellery has increased.

" The craftsman thus combines within his being the tradition that embraces both the producer and the consumer within the social fabric". Chattopadhyay (1975)

Due to which the business of traditional gold jewellery has also been affected. Some goldsmiths follow their ancestral business. Apart from this they have adopted the sculpture business and have started manufacturing idols and other brass Handicrafts and decorative materials and other useful metal craft material.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** Saraswati

**Source** Dainik Bhaskar News

In the past, traditional and ritualistic materials, ornaments, utensils and other items like hookah danka, Khichdi ka Bela, Gudgua, in utensils, and in ornaments-Bichhiya, Anklet, Toda, Armband, Waist belt, Hasali, Ticly, Jhumki, Haar, Bindi, Chuda, Karnfool, Matar Mala, Angutha, Naughari, Gajra, Belchudi, Kangan etc ornaments are made. At present, due to the increase in foreign tourist traffic on various festivals in Khajuraho manufacturing of some new handicraft items has also started according to their interest. (Soni, L. R. Interview, 2009)

## 2. EQUIPMENT MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE

**Tool material:** The craftsmen use basic tools such as hammer, tong, pata, Thapia, Katarni, Clippers, Dye of faces etc to make Idol craft.

**Sculpture techniques:** In the method of Idol making first of all the mould of Idol is made which is called 'Gabo' which is basically a model replica of the idol. Both yellow coloured clay and black coloured clay are used to make this model. At some places the artisans use only smooth black clay. While using both types of soil, first the 'Gabo' of idols is prepared from Khasra soil and later the layer of smooth soil is put on it.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Shri Krishna

**Source** <https://m.indiaMART.com/SoniMetalCraft>

To make a mould from clay it is first crushed and sieved to make fine powder by which pebbles, stones etc are removed from the clay. A mixture of both cow dung and leed (shit) of horse, is added to sieved soil. In black soil, only cow dung is mixed, while in yellow soil a mixture of both cow dung and leed (shit) of horse is prepared.

While making solid or hollow idols, special care is also taken of the proportion in the above mixture of soil. While preparing the mixture of Hollow sculpture, 65% of clay and 35% cow dung are taken, whereas for solid idols the black soils part is 90% and countdown is 10%. If yellow soil is used to make 'Gabo', then a mixture of 80% yellow soil and 15% cow dung is taken.

According to the requirement and convenience the idol is prepared by preparing the mixture. Then it is kept for drying for 2 to 4 days. After drying, the

process of making the Idol of the next stage which is called 'Kapo,' starts. The soil from the bank of the pond is used to make 'Kapo'. This soil is black in colour with very fine particles of sand. The particles of sand are so fine that it is difficult to identify them separately. The property of the soil also gets changed due to exposure to air and sunlight, due to which the tendency to shrink due to daily exposure to the soil reduces.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Model Making

**Source** Dainik Bhaskar News/bhaskar.com

To prepare 'Kapo' this soil of the pond is finally ground and filtered through a cloth. This filtered soil is more suitable for coating the idols module. After filtering this soil with water, it is coated on pre-made and dried modules. Due to the smoothness of the soil, the desired shape of the idol can be given. The possibility of cracking of the clay of the mould made from this particular clay gets greatly reduced and this elasticity of clay remains intact due to the heat of Furnace and does not crack.

In the next phase of the idol, the metal craftsman of Tikamgarh prepare the wax mixture for 'Sancha'(mould) form beeswax in this mixture along with wax, two types of wax are prepared by mixing market wax, resin ie. gum of Sarai tree, oil etc which are called the 'Main Piswa' and 'Main Chanwa'.

The mixture of incense red resin wax and oil is used in 'Piswa wax'. In this wax bee wax or normal wax is used. Common wax is relatively easily available than bee wax and due to its low cost, common wax is used more.

To prepare wax, first of all half a kilo of finely grounded resin is filtered from the sieve and kept in a metal vessel there. In another pot half a kilo of normal wax or 250 grams of Beeswax is heated, when this wax melts then 250 or 200 grams of oil is added to it, according to the winter or summer season in the prescribed proportion. This mixture is heated for such a long time that when its ground resin is sprinkled in it, the resin does not sit on the bottom of the vessel and remains on the top of the mixture.

The mixture is allowed to cool down to a certain temperature and the resin is added to the mixture only when the required temperature is reached.

The required hot mixture of oil and wax is added to the powdered resin, kept in another vessel by filtering it with a cloth as well as stirring this mixture continuously with wood. When the mixture cools down and becomes thick. It is kneaded like a dough by applying oil in the hands, spreading this needed mixture like Roti is prepared, which is called grinding wax or 'Piswan Mom'.

**Figure 5****Figure 5 Mask**

**Source** [gatha.org/Bellmetal-Tikamgarh](http://gatha.org/Bellmetal-Tikamgarh)

To prepare Chanwa Wax, resin is heated and melted in a metal utensil. When the resin metals become very hot, bubbles start forming in it. To test its heat, put a hot iron rod in it and stir it up. If it catches fire after steering the liquid, then it is understood that the resin has become completely hot. After 5 minutes the prepared mixture is filtered in a vessel filled with water. This liquid mixture takes a soil form on contact with cold water called 'Chanwa Wax'. This wax is used to make designs or ornaments. This wax does not break by stretching it, and so wire from this wax can be easily prepared.

After the method of 'Kapo' a layer of 'Piswan wax' is applied on the form of Idol obtained. After this process by using filtered wax, craftsmen do the work of ornamentation according to their interest and Idol. 'Gaarn ki mitti' - (solution of clay) is applied after ornamentation. The clay is filtered and diluted with water applied to an ornamented form of the idol. Being diluted it easily covers the delicate work of ornamentation.

After drying the 'Garan', when a little moisture remains, then a coating of yellow coloured 'Barauli soil' is applied on the pattern. The passage between the brass and wax layer is called 'Sonta'. Through this passage the liquid brass substance reaches to the place which is decorated with wax and takes the shape and place of wax.

After drying of 'Barauli soil' a mixture of 10% straw and 250 grams of sand in about 1 kg of smooth black soil is used. The idol is completely covered, this is called the 'process of Thapan', only the end of the 'Sonta' remains outside. 'Sonta'- the (funnel shaped) source of filling brass is shaped by the 'clay of Thapan' which is called 'Garma'. [Shukla \(2010\)](#)

The brass is melted in the earthen pot of pitcher shape, which has the place to keep the pieces of brass, according to the requirement of the idol. When this joint dry then the joint and part of the pitcher (Ghadia) and the mould are kept in the Furnace. While keeping it in the Furnace, the pot (Gharia) part is kept at the bottom and the idol part is at the top.

The size of the Furnace is about 2 to 3 feet in which 15 to 20 'Sancha' s can be kept; about 22 - 37 kilos of brass is cast in one batch. This furnace is made inside the

houses of craftsmen. 'Uple' of cow dung, wood charcoal, stone charcoal, roots of Khair wood are used in the furnace.

The bronze of 'Sancha' kept in the Furnace melts into a liquid form within about 3 hours; The craftsman can easily estimate this by the changing colour of the flame of the furnace. When the brass kept in the furnace melts completely, at the same time the wax of the mould also melts in and mixes with the soil.

Both these processes take approximately the same amount of time. After this process, the moulds are taken out from the Furnace and the moulds are shaken slowly. By this process the liquid brass passes through 'Garma' and 'Sunti' and reaches to the part of the idol. The place decorated with wax becomes empty. After the wax of the 'Sunti' and Idol melts and mixes with the soil and the brass material kept in the Gharra (pitcher) fills this empty space.

These artisans also check the correctness of this process in between. After an hour or two, when the mould cools down the part of a clay mounted on the model of the idol is slowly removed and cleaned. After cooling down the brass takes the shape of Idol. Then the grinding and cleaning of the idol is done by machine. After grinding and cleaning, the idol acquires a more beautiful and Shiny appearance. [Shukla \(2010\)](#)

**Figure 6**



**Figure 6** Radha Krishna  
**Source** Shoppingkart24 Handcrafted

"The consciousness of fine art opened new dimensions. The revolution of the creative concept grew with new forms of objects. Here we see the transformation of the mere functional into works of aesthetic value, the common becoming the cherished, the joy giving. Utility is the necessary part in the completeness of life. Through aesthetics in utility, beauty is brought into our intimate life." [Chattopadhyay \(1975\)](#) The items of daily use and idols have changed their forms now the craft is impressing the full range of creativity with intellectual, physical, and psychological environment. Today these traditional arts are losing their identity which now makes it necessary to conserve them from vanishing.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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