

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya

(National Museum of Mankind)

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A Brief Note on Sola Wood Work of West Bengal

The Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru, is conducting an educational programme under 'Do & Learn' series. The main objective of this programme is to create an understanding, appreciation and insight into the diversity of Indian art and culture. The programme on **Sola wood work** started on 17th to 26th March 2015 for 10 days **Sh. Shyamal Ghosh** and his assistant from **West Bengal** will give training to the participants on Sola Wood Work

Sola wood work is very popular in West Bengal and it has more than 300 years of history in Bengal region. Both men and women involve in preparing the artifacts. This art is a continuous tradition of several communities. It is deeply associated with festivals, birth and marriage ceremonies. During marriages the couples wear a crown (mukuta) made of sola wood and it is a well-known practice followed by several communities of Bengal, Assam and surrounding states.

Sola Wood is weightless, which is available only in ponds, mostly in West Bengal and Bangladesh region. The artisans cut the wood and dry under the sunlight. After drying the dominant green colour of the upper layer of the wood turns to brown. Later on according to the size they cut the wood and prepare the objects. To prepare the desired design, first they draw the design on paper and cut the wood accordingly.

The themes drawn from the religious figures like Durga, Ganesh, Shiva, Kalim etc., are prepared more. Apart from the religious figures they also prepare traditional boat, peacock, tajmahal, horse-cart, flowers, and other dolls etc. After the preparation of the object decorative motifs like artificial jewels and vibrant colours are applied over them wherever necessary.

Shri Shamal Ghosh and his wife Sandhya Ghosh from Kolkata, West Bengal are giving training to the participants. Shri Shamal Ghosh is doing this work since his childhood. This tradition follows from generations to generations. He has learnt this art from his parents. Though his family depends on this work not only for their livelihood but they are preserving the art. Shri Shamal Ghosh has attended Workshops at Indore, Bhopal, Bangalore, Mysore, Nagpur, Delhi, Allahabad, etc. He markets his items all over India and also to few Europe and American countries.

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Photos of Sola Wood Craft:

