

Cocoon Crafts

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Introduction

Sericulture is an agro based rural industry includes cultivation of mulberry, silkworm rearing and post cocoon activities. During the process of silk reeling many by products are generated which are disposed as waste and pollute the environment. Majority of the farmers belongs to economically weaker sections and unaware the full potential of by products. The silk cocoons are mainly used for silk production and remaining left over pupae are rarely utilized for animal feed, oil extraction, fertilizer. The cut cocoons and defective cocoons generated from grainage industry and cocoon market can be used for making crafts. Handicrafts are handmade products prepared from raw indigenous material using traditional artistic tools or even some simple machinery in its designing/innovation. Handicraft products are catchy, cost effective objects of gift and decorative value. Crafted items made from cocoons maintains luster for years with visual appeal. The eye catching art of cocoon craft is one of the very interesting utility of by-products which will give scope to develop human skills in addition to generate self employment and revenue.

Materials required for crafting

The basic raw material, cut and pierced cocoons can be procured from government grainage and cocoon markets. These cocoons are cut open from one end and the cap portion thus obtained along with cocoon body can also be utilized for preparation of handmade craft items. The other items viz., scissors, zig-zag scissors, blade, cotton thread, cardboard, drawing sheets, needles, fabric glue, craft paper, glaze paper, velvet paper, adhesive tape, colour tape, stapler, plastic ornamental material, softbinding wire, beads, chemical dyes and dyeing vessel, besides, heater required for cocoon dyeing. Fabric paint and water colour can also be used during cocoon craft fabrication.

Processes involved in craft production (make flow chart)

- ❖ Purchasing of cut cocoons from grainage

- ❖ De-flossing of cocoons
- ❖ Separation of cocoon and caps
- ❖ Sorting of cocoons according to size
- ❖ Selection of dyes
- ❖ Dyeing of cocoons with different colours according to requirement
- ❖ Drying of dyed cocoons
- ❖ Alignment of different patterns to make a final product
- ❖ Cutting of cocoons in different patterns to make a craft

Dyeing process

Colouring/dyeing is an basic requisite of cocoon handicraft preparation and gives colour and charm look to the cocoons. Cocoons should be preferably dyed with natural colours, which are going to add value and originality to the creativity of the craftsman. The chemical dyes are also used for colouring the silk yarn/fabric. Soft water should be used in dyeing the cocoons as hard water consumes more quantity of dye and it may results in uneven dyeing.

The water is boiled and add the desired dye powder with required quantity. About 100 gm of dye is required for making 1 kg cocoon dyeing. Initially 100 ml of hot water is added to dye powder and stir continuously to avoid formation of clumps and then filter the dye solution. Next add this dye solution to the hot water and stir it continuously for uniform mixing of colour. Then dip the clean, deflossed and double, rejected cocoons in this solution. Stir it again continuously till the colour absorption of dipped cocoons is uniform. Cocoons should be dipped up to the temperature range of 50°C only; otherwise the higher temperature will effects its sericin content giving deformed look to the dyed cocoons. Then the dyed cocoon should be removed from the solution and allowed to dry in a single layer under shade only, to avoid its decoloration. Now the dyed cocoon material is ready to be crafted into desired products.

Cocoon craft products

Cocoon Flower

- ❖ Cut the cocoon in the shape of petals making 3 to 4 petals per cocoon.
- ❖ Take 3-4 cut cocoons and arrange them in a flower shape.
- ❖ Then fix the petals with glue.

- ❖ Dry these flower cocoons and pierce a sharp needle in its centre to insert a soft fancy wire and knot it at the top as well as bottom of the flower which will act its stalk.
- ❖ Cut other green dyed cocoons in the shape of leaves.
- ❖ Then arrange these leaves in a way around the flowers to give it a natural leafy look.

Single flower bouquet

It is prepared by arranging/fixing a single or 2-3 flowers along with leaf to the branch shaped green plastic wire. Then it is wrapped in a conical transparent PVC sheet and in turn covered by a glaze paper with cello tape.

Flower “Bunch” bouquet

- ❖ Take about 25-50 bunch of cocoon flowers of different colours and arrange them in a flower bouquet shape.
- ❖ Number of flower cocoons depends upon the size and design of the bouquet to be prepared.
- ❖ Then wrap it in a transparent PVC sheet and in turn with a glittering craft paper to give it bouquet look.



Garland Designing

Single flower garland

- ❖ This type of cocoon garland is prepared by using the cut end of the cocoons.
- ❖ Give shallow cut to the cocoons from the cut/pierced end side of it with a small scissor to give it a flower petal shape.
- ❖ Then insert a colour cocoon or other flower into this cocoon flower.
- ❖ After this add one or two gold coloured beads through the basal end of this cocoon flower, followed by a flower and beads again alternately with the help of a needle/thread forming a shape of garland.

- ❖ Number of cocoons in preparing the garland is subject to its required length.
- ❖ This is a simple type of garland with an elegant look



Flower “Bunch” garland

- ❖ Cut the open end of the “cut cocoon” by using a zigzag scissor.
- ❖ Stitch or fix 5-6 such cocoons joining their ends firmly.
- ❖ Such more stitched circle of cocoons (bunches) can be stitched further by thick thread to give it a shape of garland. Multicoloured cocoons can be used to grace the look of the garland.
- ❖ About 500 cocoons are required for preparation of the garland with heavy bouncy look. Cocoon flower garlands look more graceful and last for years to come.



Greeting cards

- ❖ These cocoons are cut into small pieces of various designs so that these are shaped as flowers, trees, and other scenic objects including small huts, animals, birds etc.
- ❖ Then fix these shapes on a piece of a craft/drawing paper and use water colour/sketch pens wherever necessary to design and paint the card.

- ❖ These cards look awe-some with full emotional expression as being hand crafted from the natural material.



Other Fancy items

Small gift/decoration items like key chain, ear rings, colourful birds or any other items of aesthetic value which will exhibit the creative skill of craftsmanship, can be prepared and designed by utilizing cocoon by-products and waste deformed/ rejected cocoons. The cocoons are cut into small pieces of various designs, and these pieces are assembled together to form a particular shapes and fixed on craft, velvet or drawing paper. After giving it a finishing artistic touch, fancy product thus prepared can be glass framed and presented as gift.



Conclusion

Cocoon crafting is an art of designing of some handicraft products like flowers, bouquets, garlands, greeting cards, wall hangings and other artistically designed fancy items. These can be decorated in our homes and work places to add to its aesthetic look. Cocoon crafting can be taken as a commercial activity particularly by women folk of low socio-economic status and in turn bargain good economic return, simply utilizing cut/pierced cocoon waste with their creative skill. If development/designing of cocoon handicrafts is



taken as a commercial activity, it will attract attention of huge number of local masses, thereby boosting up their additional revenue returns and value addition in sericulture through handicraft market.

References

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