

Khadau Paduka: A Timeless Walk-Through Indian Traditional Footwear Heritage

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Abstract

The Khadau Paduka, India's traditional wooden handcrafted footwear, represents India's rich cultural and spiritual legacy. This footwear, also known as Paduka, has been used in India for millennia and is regarded as one of the world's oldest styles. The Khadau Paduka, with its basic form of a hardwood sole and a knob for the big toe, serves as both utilitarian and symbolic. Historically, it was worn by sages, saints, and ascetics to symbolise a life of simplicity and sacrifice. Also, they prefer it because of the non-leather footwear. The sandal's simple design, which requires the wearer to walk with balance and attention, represents the values of dharma and mindfulness profoundly rooted in Indian philosophy.

Khadau (traditional wooden sandals) are made with exceptional craftsmanship and attention to detail, which is typically passed down through generations and generations. Utilising a chronological context and current evolution analysis, this paper will discuss the chronology of Khadau crafting in India, as well as its future scope and trends.

Keywords: Khodau, Footwear, Wooden craft, Sandal

1. Introduction

In modern times, the Khadau Paduka has transcended its religious overtones, applying it to cultural events, art, and fashion. Its impact may be observed in modern Indian footwear designs that combine traditional features with new trends, preserving the spirit of history while appealing to contemporary sensibilities. The Khadau Paduka is, therefore, a timeless artefact that not only demonstrates Indian workmanship but also emphasises the significance of cultural preservation in the face of globalisation. This study investigates the historical history, cultural importance, and contemporary relevance of the Khadau Paduka, shedding light on how this old footwear continues to inspire both traditional craftspeople and modern designers.




2. Research Objective



The current study investigates the ancient, cultural, and artistic elements of traditional wooden-made footwear Khodau in order to get a thorough understanding of the design and evolution, as well as the embellishment process. Indeed, it seeks to explore the historical development and evolution of this skill in India, as well as the arts associated with it, in order to better understand its cultural implications. Furthermore, the study will track the manufacturing process in various stages. In this approach, the study will add to the current literature on the subject.

3. Historical Context and artistic development.

Khadau showcases India's rich intellectual and historical legacy. Khadau began as a simple functional accessory used by monks, sages, and regular people, but throughout time, it grew into a mark of beauty and workmanship. Initially made of plain wood with limited design, artists began to add exquisite designs, geometric patterns, floral designs, and even inlay work in metal, ivory, or other materials to improve its aesthetic appeal. These patterns were frequently religious and cultural, reflecting Indian society's spiritual foundations. Over the years, regional styles arose, exhibiting the distinct creative expressions of various sections of India. Despite its loss in popularity owing to contemporary footwear, khadau is still a treasured cultural artefact, representing the combination of usefulness and creative creativity in India's traditional arts and crafts.

4. Types of Khadau.

1.	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.1</p>	Traditional Wooden Khadau
2.	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.2</p>	With brass inlay work
3.	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.3</p>	With Plastic inlay work

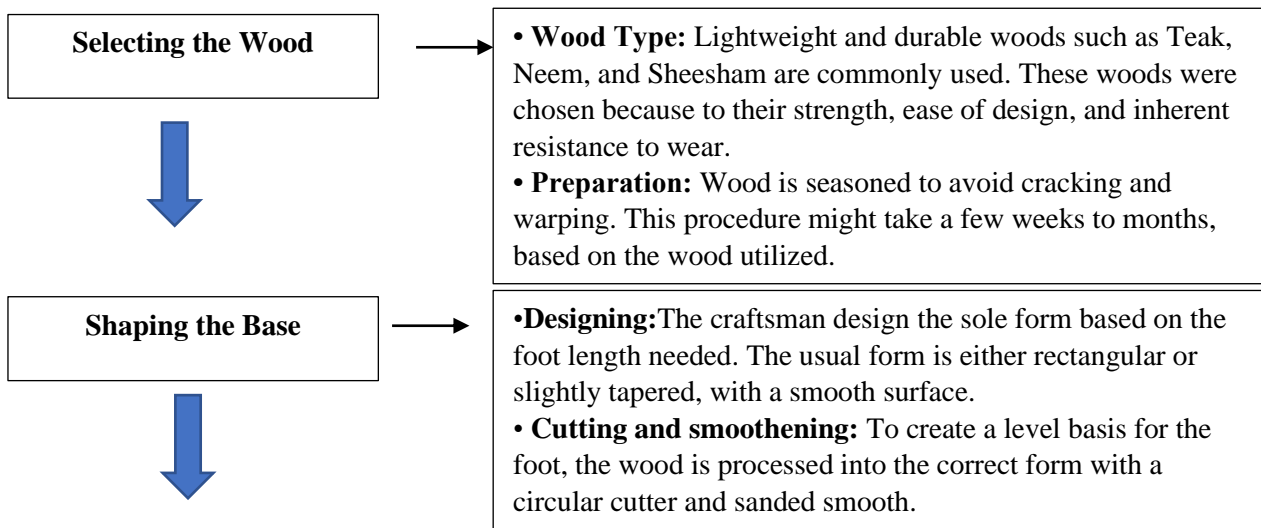
4.	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.4</p>	Hand painted
5.	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fig.5</p>	Engraved

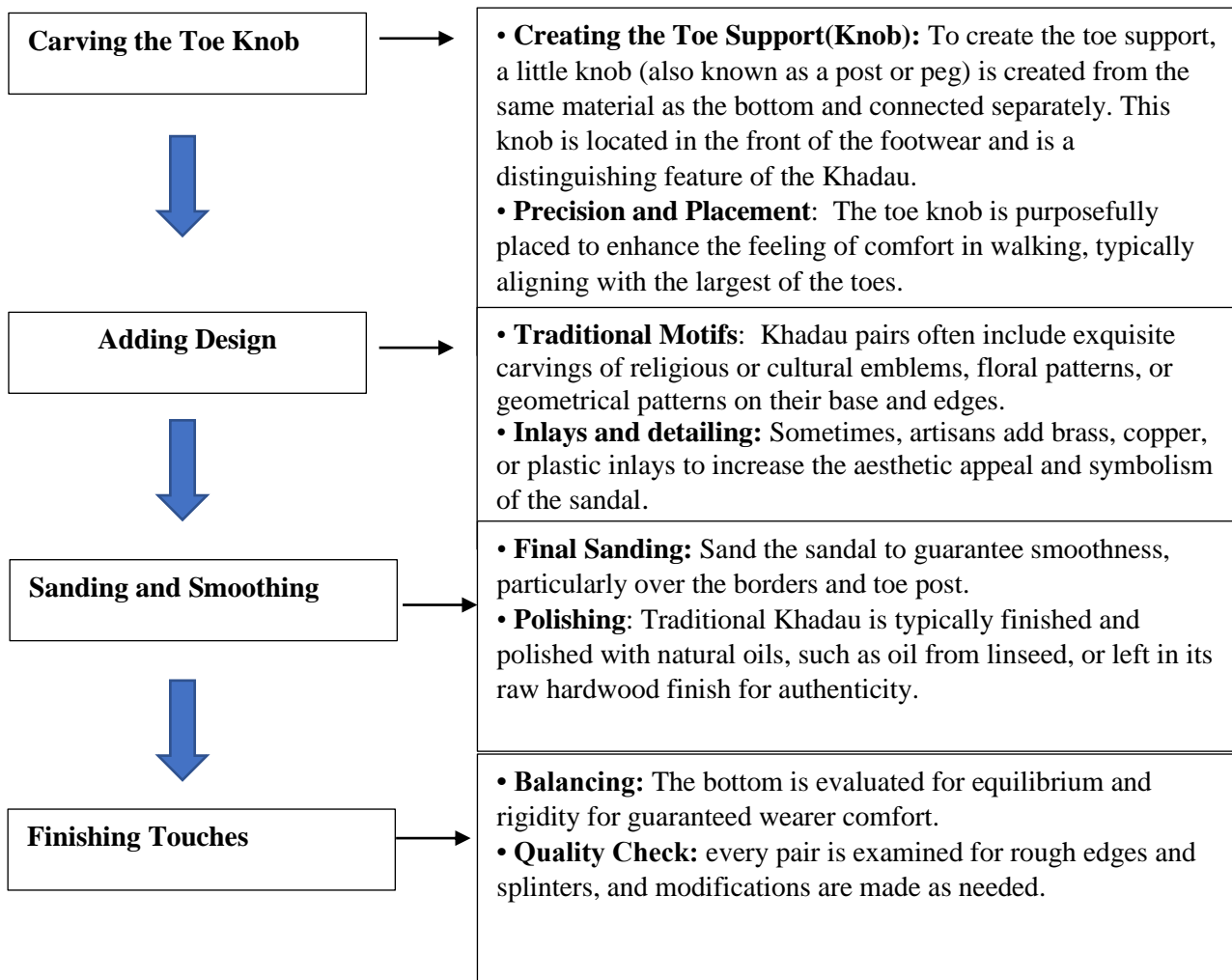
5. Making process.

Padukas are frequently made from a piece of wood that has been roughly cut into the shape of a footprint. It has an attachment and knob that fits over our big and second toes. This style is ideal for the Middle Indian climate. Its open and airy design keeps the sole high above the sun. They are built of sturdy, durable materials such as hardwood, which protect the feet from stones and thorns. The notion of comfortable footwear first appears with the introduction of the Paduka. When designing the Padukas, the shoemakers took into account the landscape in the area. The basic materials for the Padukas were carefully selected good quality and lightweight wood.

Khadau is made with excellent craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail, which are typically passed down through generations. Here is a step-by-step instruction for the procedure.

Process of making Wooden Khadau





The Khadau-making technique not only demonstrates expert carpentry, but it also exhibits an artisanal legacy based on Indian culture. Although their simplicity, every pair of Khadau embodies the artisan's dedication, functioning as useful footwear and a sign of cultural history.

6. Inlay Process.

A selected piece of Sheesham wood stem is seasoned by dipping it in water. During this process, the twig's outside and raw wood layers become exceedingly soft, separating them from the hard interior layers of the main piece of wood. The remaining piece of wood is let to dry naturally. The dimension of the aged piece of wood is then produced according to the product's specifications using an electric cutting machine. Round and flat slices of wood are cut from this log and left to cure in the environment for another six months, ensuring that the water content of the wood is entirely dried.

Inlay is the method of incising a pattern onto a hard, typically smooth surface by carving grooves into it. Therefore, we rely on hand sketching abilities, photographs, and common design components to create the exquisite design of the suggested artwork. Before beginning inlay works, the work to be carved out is softly scribed and etched on the surface using patterns, pharma (stencils), and a few specialised instruments like chisels and hammers, owing to the hardness and temperature requirements. The appropriate part for inlay filling is carved using chisels after sketching outlines. After that, 8-10 acrylic plastic motifs of various shapes and sizes are created using hand tools such as files and thin saws, as well

as inlays work on the wood.

This is the most important technique for achieving a smooth and faultless appearance of the crafts on the piece of wood. Adequate time is provided for the adhesive and pasting material to set before being removed so that the joints can cure to full strength. After filling the surface with wood substance, it is allowed to dry, and any excess wood sand or other material is carefully removed with a sharp-edged blade for waxing and sealing. The work is subsequently sealed and protected against contact with environmental elements and time by the use of a range of spray enamels and finishing processes, followed by polishing with a cotton towel.



Fig.6

7. Tools and raw materials that are used for Inlay on khodau are:

- **Sheesham Wood:** It is commonly utilised owing to its qualities such as closed pack grains, natural oil, being weighty, somewhat coarse, and having a consistent texture.
- **Chisels:** Chisels, also of various shapes are used for carving the wooden block.
- **Hex Saw:** Used to cut wood.
- **Bow Drill:** Used for drilling holes in specific locations.
- **Hathodi (Hammer):** a tool that is used for carving out designs on wood by softly pounding the chisel. It is used to inlay metal or plastic wire into wood. These hammers are typically square with circular heads.
- **Scraper:** It serves to plain/smooth the surface of wood during manufacturing and finishing.
- **Adhesive:** A combination of adhesive(Fevicol)and wooden dust is mixed and used as a putty to fill gaps.
- **Wooden Dust:** When combined with adhesive(Fevicol), the paste is used to cover the gaps between the inlay and the wood.

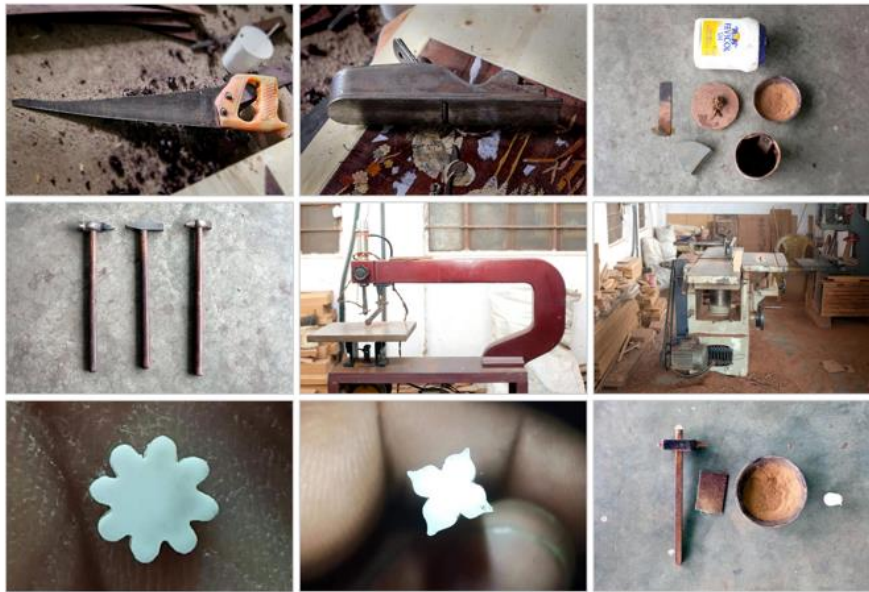


Fig.7 Resource: Dsource.in

8. Conclusion

Wooden footwear has cultural importance in several nations (for example, clogs in Europe and geta in Japan). The resurgence of traditional styles in contemporary situations has the potential to attract a specialized audience. Wooden footwear may also attract high-end or handmade design consumers due to its sustainability. The tradition of using Khadau or Paduka is nearly extinct and rarely seen. But here's why we should adopt this traditional footwear habit as soon as possible: It does not require the death of any animals in order to provide comfort for our feet. The wooden Khadau gives stern support to the curvature of our feet, balances our body posture, and maintains our spine straight. Wood is an excellent insulator in cold climates and comfy on rough terrain. Padukas provide enough pressure on delicate points of acupressure on the foot, which aids in the regulation of blood pressure, muscular tension/strain, improved digestion, oxygen intake, and toxin elimination from the body. It gives the foot muscles a deep sensation of relaxation, which calms the mind and improves mental wellness.

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