

# Enlivening the folklore : A case of Channapatna, Karnataka

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**Abstract** -Culture propagates on the vine of tradition. Every culture and tradition has its character, its weakness, its strength, its beauties, its cruelties, and its architecture. Understanding discrete cultural traditions is no longer a luxury; it is now a necessity to preserve it. The paper focusses on the proposal of a “Community-oriented habitation” for artisans of “Town of toys”. The city famous for its wooden toys and lacquerware – Channapatna. Channapatna is located near the Bengaluru - Mysore highway. The origin of these toys can be traced to the times of the Tipu Sultan, who invited artisans from Persia to train local artisans. With the least support and lack of marketing platforms Channapatna toy industry is facing a financial crunch for more than a decade and is almost on the verge of extinction.

An architect’s work must always have a significant impact on society and culture, to become an inseparable part of the culture and society as a whole. Architecture can play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage.

**Key Words:**Culture, tradition, Channapatna, toy products, architecture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Channapatna – The toy land of India

The incursion of overseas devices has taken over the demand for traditional handicrafts and hand made handicrafts. The art of making wooden(lacquerware) toys in Channapatna is one such tale of dwindling art and artisans. Between the cities of Bengaluru and Mysuru in Karnataka lies Channapatna. Channapatna toymakers have kept one of the oldest customs flourishing. It’s a tiny city yet it has an evident name in the field of handicrafts.

The artisans involved in creating lacquer products work either at home or in work sheds with at least 40-50 people working together. The work sheds provide the artisans with all basic facilities. They are equipped with machines, tools, raw materials, with decent light and ventilation to support the work environment. But living conditions are unfavorable.

### 2. What initiative can be taken by the Architects to succor the Channapatna community?

As you all are already aware that it’s stressful to work in dire living conditions. Providing a living condition that is comfortable and satisfying for them is the key. “Home” is where we feel a ‘sense of belonging’. It is where we are welcomed into a familiar space.

This project calls for an interesting and creative design of a “**Community-oriented Habitation**” to explore the character of community spaces and the significance in housing projects. To understand the dwellers, lifestyle, and social context. Using the locally available materials and understanding the vernacular architecture of the site would enhance the living conditions of artisans. The site proposed for “Community-oriented Habitation” is located in the central sphere of Channapatna. The site area is around 5420 square meters.

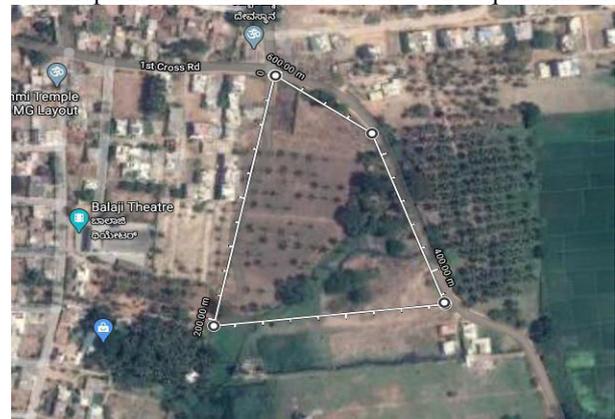


Fig -1: Site location: Channapatna

The requirements of the project are a one-bedroom hall kitchen (twenty numbers), two-bedroom hall kitchen(ten numbers). The site would be a home for around eighty to ninety people. Working space- a space where around sixty artisans can work on the toys at a time. Space where raw material required for toys to be made can be kept. Storage space to accumulate toys before the final product has to be consigned. Exhibition space to showcase the toys. The influx of the public to the exhibition space would enhance the admiration of channapatnalacquerware and toys.

**Idea backing the design-** “Culture and Society” The bond of unifying culture and society is pivotal. The insight of culture, sometimes, can be grasped by the buildings around. Often the architecture of a place originates the culture of a place. Keeping into consideration Karnataka, elements like stonework, sloping roofs, Mangalore tiles shall play key roles. The main focus of the concept is to provide a new comforting place with the aura and features which artisans are already accustomed to.

**Planning the Site-** The methodology of placing spaces is such that when people walk from the entry till the end, they experience the journey of toy making. Spaces are arranged in the following order 1. Raw material spaces 2. Toy making area 3. Exhibition spaces where the final products shall be

displayed for trade. The exhibition area is far-flung from the main entrance. The main motto behind this concept is to make sure that the public experiences the live scene of the toy-making process. The aim is to attain the public's attraction towards the traditional toy-making process and their culture.

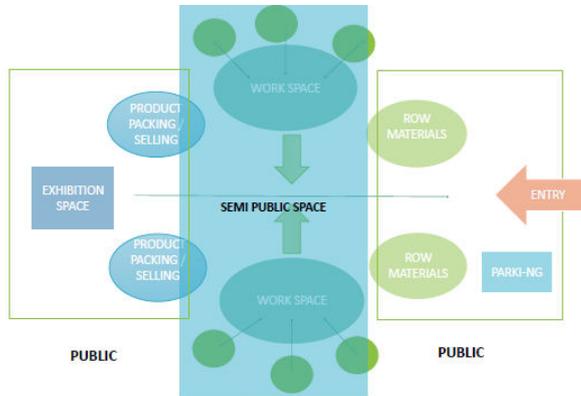


Fig -2: Basic idea of site planning



Fig -3: Site plan

**Exhibition space** –It stands on two floors. The ground floor is dedicated to displaying and trade toys. The first floor is occupied for workshops or hands-on activity areas for the public.

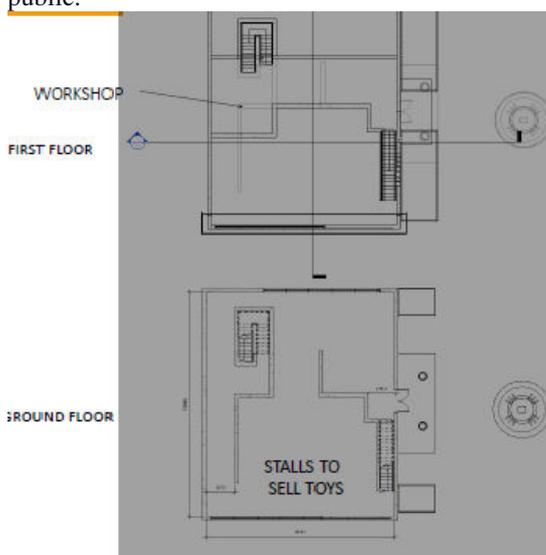


Fig -4: Plan – Exhibition Area



Fig -5: View – Exhibition Area

**The dwelling for toymakers-** One bedroom hall kitchen of twenty numbers are placed on the site. A two-bedroom hall kitchen of ten numbers is allocated on the site



Fig -6: Plan – One BHK

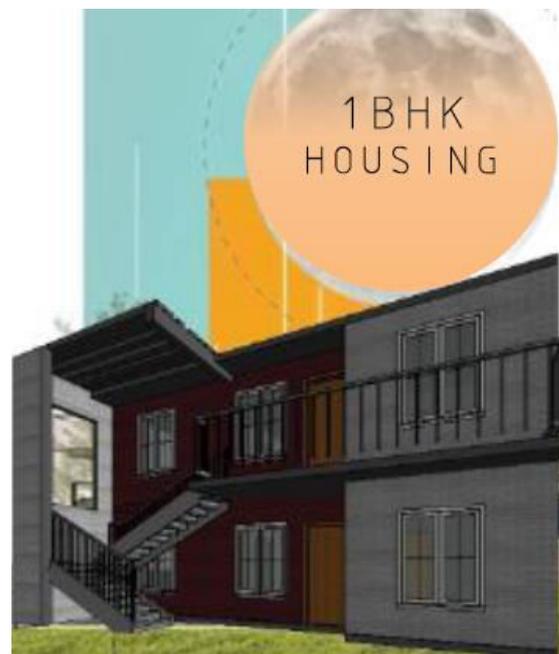
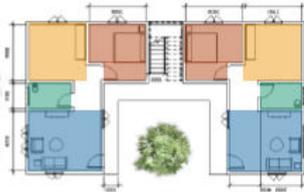


Fig -7: View – One BHK housing

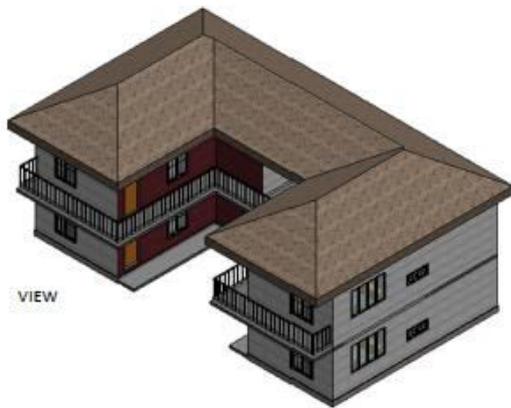


FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

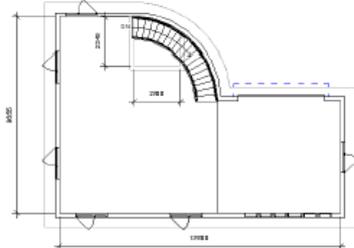
Fig -8Plan – Two BHK housing



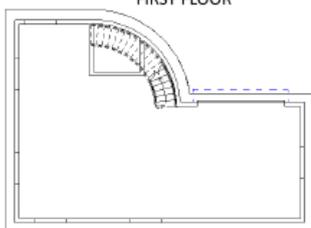
VIEW

Fig -9View – Two BHK housing

**Workspace and other areas** - Around fifty artisans can work in the workspace provided. The ground floor and first floor have been allocated for the said purpose. Enough space has been provided for artisans to work comfortably and securely. Public toilets have been placed near the exhibition area for the visitors. A separate storage area has been positioned on the site, to keep the finished toys to trade.



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

Fig -10Plan – Workspace for around fifty people

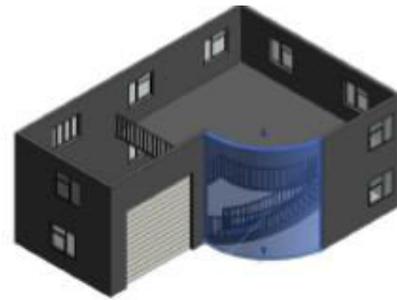


Fig -11View – Workspace for around fifty people

**Green initiatives on the site** - Solar panels have been installed on the roof of the exhibition area, considering the sun path direction. Investing in solar panels measures the project in a green building initiative. Solar panels are used for a photovoltaic (PV) module. A PV module is an assembly of photovoltaic cells set up in a framework for installation. Photo-voltaic cells use sunlight as a source of energy and generate direct current electricity.

**Rainwater harvesting**- It is the collection and storage of rain, rather than allowing it to run off. Rainwater shall be harvested and stored in a 50,000-gallon underground cistern and shall be used to flush public toilets and water the garden.

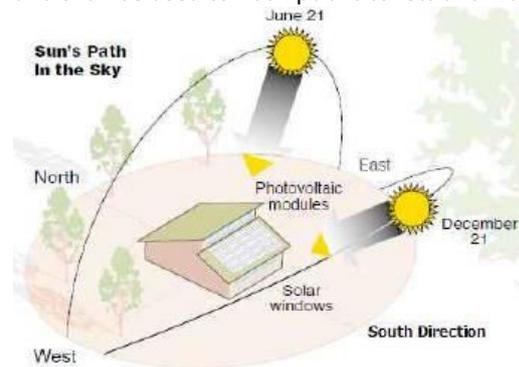


Fig -12Solar panels on the roof of Exhibition space

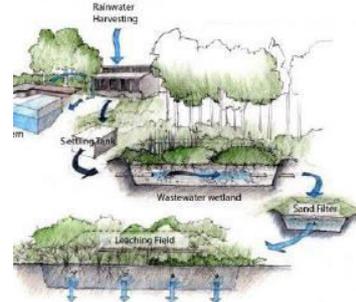


Fig -13Rain water harvesting on the site



SITE VIEW

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Bestowing artisans of Channapatna with better living conditions, satisfactory work environment, contented recreational areas, and exquisite exhibition area would ameliorate the condition of the Channapatna toy industry. As quoted by famous author Steve Berry which is true to life – “A concerted effort to preserve our heritage and tradition is a vital link to our cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational and economic legacies- all of the things that quite literally makes us who we are.”