

Name of the Element: Sankheda Nu Lakh Kam: Lacquered turned wood furniture of Sankheda, Gujarat, India.

Community/ies: Members of the Kharadi-Suthar caste residing in the town of Sankheda in Gujarat. Rana, Tadvi, Bariya – are the castes of some of the hired craftsmen from the surrounding areas, who are traditionally associated with the sawing of timber. The primary users are from Gujarati community (all religious affiliations) in India and all over the world.

Region: Sankheda, a small town in Vadodra district in Gujarat, India.

Brief Description: Sankheda, a small town in the eastern region of Gujarat derives its name from 'sanghedu', the word for a lathe in the Gujarati language. The town has about 80-100 families belonging to the 'Kharadi-Suthar' community identified with the occupation of wood turning. Lacquered, turned wood furniture with hand painted motifs and traditional method of ornamentation, popularly known as Sankheda furniture, is thought to have been produced in the town from about 1855.

The traditional craft process of making Sankheda furniture involves shaping and painting the members while the craftsman is turning the lathe. He wields the brush with great mastery to map the patterns freehand, achieving symmetric and even contours without using any measuring device or markings. As most of the craftsmen in Sankheda town are involved in this craft it gives them a strong sense of community identity and continuity. The ornate nature of the product lends itself to becoming a visible symbol of expression that has been identified as Gujarati within its local precinct and elsewhere. There is a wide range of furniture items produced including child's cradles, child's walkers to chairs, tables, and large swings, a response unique to tropical and humid climate.