# Documentation of Indigenous Craftsmanship, Culture and Traditions of the Boat Making Craft of Uru at the Malabar Coast, India

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## Abstract

India's extensive maritime history, tracing from the Indus Valley civilization to the Sangam literature, provides detailed accounts of coastal trade and boat-making activities. Additional evidence from the Jataka tales, medieval texts, temple carvings at Mahabalipuram, and various paintings and manuscripts further emphasize this rich tradition. In this context, this research documents and analyses the historical and cultural influence of boat-making along India's coastline, with a specific focus on the Malabar Coast through the study of the "Uru" – a distinctive "fat boat."

The documentation of Uru, wooden boat-making craft is approached in two comprehensive folds. Firstly, the study meticulously records the intricate process of Uru construction, delving into the techniques and materials utilized. The craftsmanship involved is largely intuitive, inherited, and often secretive, passed down through generations without written blueprints or plans. The expertise of two main communities, the Odayis and the Khalasis, is highlighted. The Odayis manage the technical aspects of boat making, while the Khalasis use traditional methods to launch the finished Urus into the water. The entire process, from conception to completion, is guided by the expertise of the master craftsmen. Beyond the technical aspects, the second part of this research emphasizes the cultural and social dimensions of Uru making. The craft is not merely a livelihood but a cultural heritage that embodies the collective memory and identity of the coastal communities. This research thus reveals the rituals, folklore, and communal practices associated with Uru construction, highlighting its role in fostering social cohesion and cultural continuity.

By providing a comprehensive documentation of the Uru boat-making craft, this research contributes to a broader understanding and appreciation of the maritime heritage of the Malabar Coast. It emphasizes the need to protect and promote this unique cultural legacy for the future generations, ensuring the preservation of this invaluable tradition.

**Keywords**: Boat-Making Craft, Cultural Heritage, Documentation, Maritime History of India, Malabar Coast.

## Introduction to Boat making as a Craft

Boat-making, as a craft, has ancient origins that extend back to a time before written language and formalized documentation. History reveals that people were constructing boats long before they could write or even draw, although the beginnings of seafaring are lost in the prehistoric era, commonly referred to as the *Stone Age*. What is particularly interesting is that the development of boat-making, like many technological and cultural advancements, followed a remarkably similar trajectory across isolated cultures around the world. This pattern of simultaneous development, despite geographic isolation, speaks to the fundamental human need to navigate water bodies, engage in trade, and explore new territories.

**Fig. 1:** Ajanta mural depicts an ancient Indian ship with high stem and stern and three oblong sails attached to three masts. Steering-oars can also be seen. Cave No. 2, Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad District, Maharashtra state, India
Source: Sweekar Bhushan Pamulaparthy, 15 August 2018, World History Encyclopedia

India's extensive maritime history, tracing from the Indus Valley civilization to the Sangam literature, provides detailed accounts of coastal trade and boat-making activities. Additional evidence from the Jataka tales, medieval texts, temple carvings at Mahabalipuram, and various paintings and manuscripts further emphasizes this rich tradition. In this context, this research documents and analyses the historical and cultural influence of boat-making along India's coastline, with a specific focus on the Malabar Coast through the study of the "Uru" – a distinctive "fat boat."

Mukerji's (1912) observation that the first evidence of Indian maritime activity can be found in Indian literature and art highlights the importance of textual and artistic sources for tracing the historical roots of indigenous boat-making. Indeed, this is mentioned in the paintings of Ajanta as shown in the Figure 1. In particular, Indian literature, such as the Yuktikalpataru, an 11th-century Sanskrit text attributed to King Bhoja, offers significant insights into early boat-making practices. The Yuktikalpataru divides vessels into two primary categories as follows.

- Ordinary (Samanya) vessels: Used for river navigation and domestic travel.
- Special (Visesa) vessels: Sea-going ships designed for longer, maritime voyages.

This distinction is crucial because it indicates a sophisticated understanding of different types of vessels based on their intended use, a theme that resonates with the findings of Uru boat-making at the Malabar Coast. Just as the Yuktikalpataru highlights the dual nature of vessels for river and sea travel, Uru boats are purpose-built for specific long-distance maritime activities, particularly trade with the Gulf nations.

In this context, this paper examines the craftmanship of boatmaking at the Malabar Coast. It is particularly focused on the art and craft of URU. Its aim is to reveal the complex tasks involved in boat making and how the craftsmen specialized in this craft have retained the tradition for centuries and continue to produce them today. Its objectives are as follows.

1. To ascertain the traditions associated with making of the Uru Boats
2. To identify the ways in which the craftsmen conceptualize the boats.
3. To identify the materials and technologies employed in boat making.
4. To establish the mathematical process of proportioning the specific boats

## Research Methods

The documentation of Uru, wooden boat-making craft is approached in two comprehensive folds. Firstly, the study meticulously records the intricate process of Uru construction, delving into the techniques and materials utilized. The craftsmanship involved is largely intuitive, inherited, and often secretive, passed down through generations without written blueprints or plans. The expertise of two main communities, the Odayis and the Khalasis, is highlighted. The Odayis manage the technical aspects of boat making, while the Khalasis use traditional methods to launch the finished Urus into the water. The entire process, from conception to completion, is guided by the expertise of the master craftsmen. Beyond the technical aspects, the second part of this research emphasizes the cultural and social dimensions of Uru making. The craft is not merely a livelihood but a cultural heritage that embodies the collective memory and identity of the coastal communities. This research thus reveals the rituals, folklore, and communal practices associated with Uru construction, highlighting its role in fostering social cohesion and cultural continuity.

## Findings

The Uru boats of Beypore, built by master craftsmen, can be viewed as a continuation of this long-standing Indian tradition of specialized boat-making. While the specific techniques used in Uru construction are orally transmitted and highly specialized, the cultural context of maritime activity described by Mukerji in1912[1] and King Bhoja aligns closely with the Uru tradition. The use of large, sea-going vessels for international trade routes, particularly to the Gulf, demonstrates the continuity of maritime traditions that stretch back at least to the 11th century, if not earlier. The categorization of vessels in the *Yuktikalpataru* also emphasizes the advanced level of boat-building knowledge that existed in India centuries ago. This historical context helps to explain why Uru boat-building is considered such a prestigious and culturally significant craft. The craftsmen, particularly the *Odayis*, are heirs to an ancient legacy of maritime innovation that is both practical and deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual traditions of the region. The use of specific rituals and the passing down of knowledge without formalized documentation are consistent with the practices described in historical texts like the *Yuktikalpataru.*

Beypore had almost all the important requirements for a shipbuilding centre of high quality, such as, access to the centres of production of various sorts of timber required for different parts of an ocean-going vessel, qualified shipwrights and the work force in terms of skilled and unskilled labourers and the facilities for drawing the ships ashore for careening as well as launching the vessels into the sea. It is situated on the bank of river Chaliyam known also as the Beypore River. Beypore is connected with Nilgiri Mountains and Waynadu Ghats through the two branches of River Chaliyar which join together in the Nilambur Forest.

[1] Mukerji, P. (1912). *A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity from the Earliest Times*. Longmans, Green, and Co.

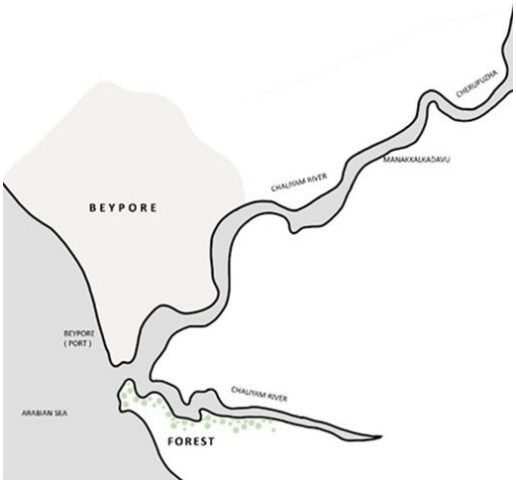



**Fig. 2:** Diagramatic layout of describing Beypore and its connection
Source: RSP of Uru documention at SEDA,2022; Mentor:Author

Beypore's connection with the Uru dates back to centuries when India began maritime trade with Mesopotamia. It is said that the Yemeni traders who settled in Kerala practiced the art of Uru-making which was gradually passed on, over generations, to the people of Kozhikode. Dhow (Uru in Malayalam)-making was a flourishing industry during the Zamorins, the kingdom that ruled the Malabar coast from the 12th to the 18th century AD. The skilled carpenters used to make dhows for the Zamorin's navy. The business continued to thrive even during the time of independence, but suffered a setback in the 1970s and completely stopped during the 1980s (India Together: 31 January 2015 Kerala's royal connection: The luxury 'uru)

Uru is a common word used to describe wooden vessels built at minor ports of Kerala such as Beypore, Vadakara and Valapatanam. Beypore on the west coast of Malabar near Calicut was renowned in historical times for the magnificent heritage of vessels and country boats. Boat building existed in full vigor and prosperity in all ports of Malabar Coast in the 15th and 16th centuries, when the European nations, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English came to trade. The author of Periplus[2] of the Eritrean Sea referred to this port town in the middle of 1st century AD. In the very early centuries of the Christian era, direct references to the vessels of the Malabar Coast[3] has been made by the foreign travelers in their writings. However not much of attention has been paid to the history of these enterprises, or to the detail of the boat building technology. This boat-making craftsmen of Kerala, particularly those involved in the Uru boat-building tradition, possess highly specialized knowledge about the types of wood used in the construction of these large vessels. This expertise is not just a practical skill but an art form, passed down through generations, deeply embedded in the cultural and ecological fabric of the region.

According to Nambudiripad (2011-2012), the craftsmen are highly skilled in identifying different species of wood, with teak and anjili (wild jackfruit) being the most commonly used for Uru construction. These woods are selected not only for their durability and resistance to water and salt but also for the specific patterns and properties of the wood grains. The craftsmen's intimate knowledge of how the grains behave, particularly under pressure and exposure to the marine environment, allows them to design boats that are strong, flexible, and resistant to the harsh conditions of long sea voyages. This research tries to document and understand different layers of important allied with boat making craft along Malabar with case of Uru boat documentation at Beypore, Calicut, Kerela.

[2] Periplus is a manuscript document that records the list ports and important coastal landmarks
[3] Malabar Coast in historical context is the South western coastal region of Karnataka and Kerala.

## Significance of Uru: Boat making Craft at Beypore

Indigenous craftsmanship embodies a deep connection to the environment and the community's cultural fabric. According to Ingold (2000), craftsmanship in traditional societies is often an "embodied practice" where skill is learned through doing, rather than through theoretical knowledge. This perspective aligns with the way Uru boats are constructed by the Odayis and Khalasis communities, where the craft is passed down through generations, often without written plans. Uru boat-making is not just a technical endeavour but a holistic one, blending the physical, cultural, and social dimensions of the craft. Sennett (2008) says that the Craftsman suggests that craftsmanship, especially within indigenous and traditional contexts, is tied to a sense of pride and identity. For the Odayis and Khalasis communities, the ability to build and launch Urus is not only a technical feat but a cultural expression of their history and expertise. Sennett's idea of "craftsmanship as a way of life" resonates with the way Uru-making is integrated into the cultural rituals and social structures of these communities.

The Beypore port in the Malabar is an estuarine port, where Beypore river discharges into the Arabian Sea. Beypore port is a Sub-port of Kozhikode port and is situated approximately 10 km south of Kozhikode. It is 180 km North of Cochin and 391 km away from Trivandrum. Beypore port is the second biggest port in Kerala after Cochin. Indeed, it is one of the oldest ports in Kerala from where trading was done to the Middle East. The Monsoon winds also helped the ship building industry in Beypore. The monsoon winds have been regular, and the extreme regularity of the seasons in Kerala has been noticed by even ancient and medieval writers and modern foreign administrator-scholars such as William Logan. One of the main criteria for the establishment of shipbuilding centre was the proximity to the timber-yielding forest and the connection to the forests by the river. Timber for the ship building yards of Beypore were obtained mainly from the Nilambur forests, 150 kms. upstream. The quality of the Nilambur teak was realized by the British administration. Teak is considered as the most valuable of all the known timbers.

This wood which was used mainly for ship building was one of the chief items of Arab trade. The Uru is the famous example for Keralite carpentry, technical importance and manual skill. The prominent people among them are Odayis. We do not find the shipwrights of Malabar writing down or drawing the designs and the process of shipbuilding. Instead, the skill was passed from generation to generation through oral traditions. There was also a secret intention in it, that of not divulging the skill to anybody else or even to the same family members, except mostly to their own sons. Thus, the hereditary knowledge remained within the community.

The Mappila Khalasis are the prominent class in the ship building after the odayis. The khalasis are unique in lifting loads through pulleys and chains. They are the menial workers of a ship in making; Khalasis, launched the ships. Interestingly, Lévi-Strauss (1966) emphasizes that traditional craftsmanship is a form of "bricolage," wherein the craftsperson uses the materials available in their environment, adapting them to serve cultural and practical needs. In the context of Uru boat-making, the use of locally sourced timber and traditional tools reflects this idea of bricolage, where resources from the immediate environment are transformed into highly functional and culturally significant artifacts.

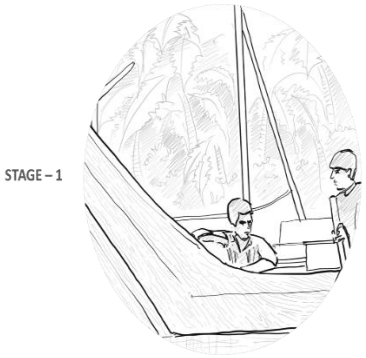
Uru building in Beypore near Calicut was not a sudden industrial development. Instead, it was a gradual historical development. It was influenced by the geographical factors such as estuarine port, monsoon winds, availability of variety of timbers and river transportation. The other factors that contributed to ship building in Beypore were the Arab trade relations with Malabar, development of skilled labourers like Odayis (*mesthiris*), Khalasis, and the carpenters. In the modern period, the agents like Baramies and Koyas also played a great role in the development of ship building in Beypore.

Uru boat-making can remain resilient, if supported by cultural pride and efforts to preserve heritage. Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" can be applied here, where the knowledge and skills involved in traditional craftsmanship represent a form of cultural wealth that is increasingly recognized for its value, both cultural and economic, which this study intends to preserve by documenting the construction process and also complete archiving the drawings of Uru boat making craft.

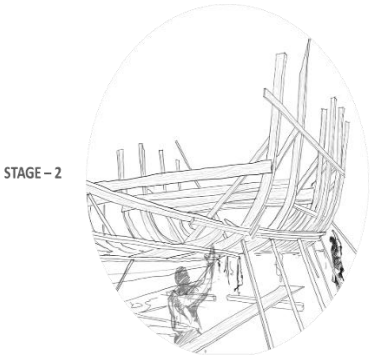
## Construction Process of Uru Making

Urus are constructed by institutive knowledge by master craftsmen using a set of thumb-rules. They are then categorized in different shapes and designs: Boom, Botil, Kotia, Kappal, Patava, Parao, Sambook, Berieck. The specialty of Boom is its elevated aniyam (front portion of boat) and amaram (back portion of the boat). In fact, it also has a flat bottom. Primarily, before the construction process, master craftsmen initially prepare a sketch of the Uru to meet the expectations of the buyer. Various factors must be considered while designing it. These are aspects such as the wind direction, the size, and shape of the vessel, and the nature of the seas in which the ship will eventually sail. The construction of the keel is the foundational step in building an Uru boat, and it plays a crucial role in ensuring structural integrity, balance, and seaworthiness of the vessel.

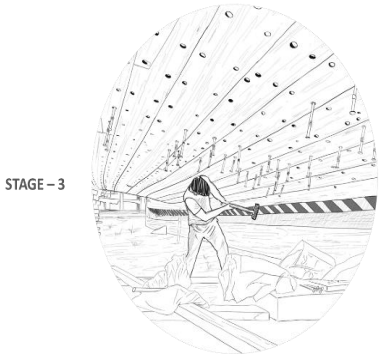
The keel serves as the backbone of the boat, running longitudinally along the bottom of the hull, and is the first component to be laid down during construction. The laying of the keel is also a culturally significant moment in the Uru construction process. Before the keel is placed, a pooja ceremony is performed, where prayers are offered to the gods for protection and blessings. The craftsmen and the community regard the keel as the most important part of the boat, and its successful construction is seen as a symbol of future success and safety at sea. The diagram below outlines the stages and describes the above the construction process of Uru and important elements incorporated in the boat while constructing the form.



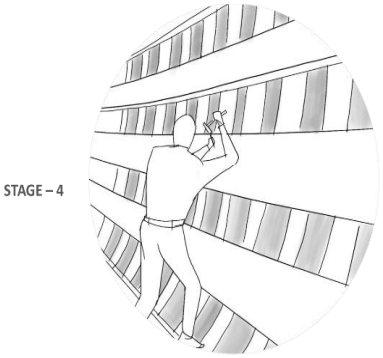

**Stage 1**: Thada is the inclined structural member of the frame. It is bolted to keel (Patan) , the bolts are flushed into the wood and never exposed to water.



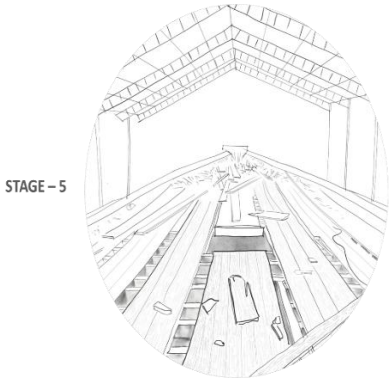

**Stage 2**: Manikkal (ribs that provide structural strength to the boat) are cut in the desired shape and fixed to the joined planks.



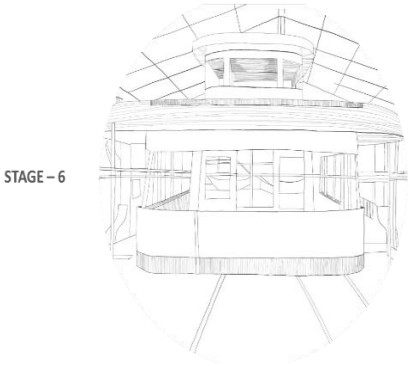

**Stage 3**: The planks are bent by force and bolted on to the manikkal. Fixing the planks begins from bottom.



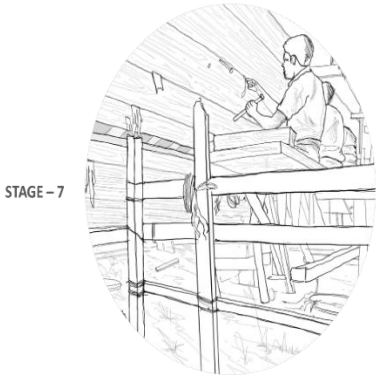

**Stage 4**: Planks run longitudinally in the interior of the hull. This layer provides additional strength to the hull.



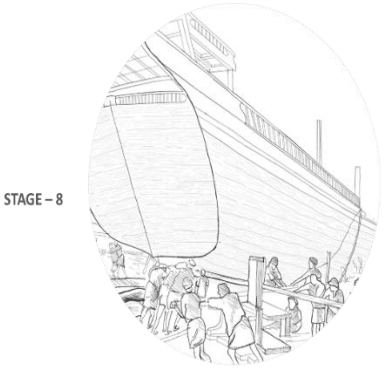

**Stage 5**: Planks run longitudinally in the interior of the hull. This layer provides additional strength to the hull.




**Stage 6**: Manikkal (ribs that provide structural strength to the boat) are cut in the desired shape and fixed to the joined planks.




**Stage 7**: The gaps are sealed with cotton and a compound made of fish oil is applied over the cotton.




**Stage 8**: Dockyard workers launch the Uru using a pulley-wheel method, using round logs, wooden rollers, steel ropes, wooden pulleys, and winches, a festive ceremony attended by a large crowd.

## Documentation process of Uru Boat Making Craft

The documentation of the Uru boat-making process in Beypore began with a close observation of the gigantic vessel under construction at the boat-making center. Upon arrival, we took time to fully comprehend the scale and intricacy of the boat by closely observing the craftsmen at work. The Mistry (master craftsman) provided us with an insightful explanation of the different parts of the boat and their functions in the construction process.

It is essential to note that the dimensions of each Uru boat may vary from one vessel to another. The Mistry (Master craftsmen) constructs these boats based on intuition and site-specific decisions, rather than following fixed blueprints or standardized measurements. As a result, every Uru is unique, with dimensions that are determined on-site and adapted to the requirements of the specific boat and the buyer.

The Uru we documented during the study has a specific configuration, such as the number of ribs was 104, with variations in their sizes and attachment points to the Pataan. The smallest rib, located at the mouth of the hull, measured 0.6 meters in width, while the largest rib, positioned near the center of the boat, measured 9.8 meters in width. The height of the ribs ranged from 2.5 meters to 5 meters, depending on their placement.

The construction of these traditional vessels involves the use of locally sourced wood, metal rivets, and organic materials such as cotton and fish oil. The craftsmanship of these boats, rooted in centuries-old techniques, continues to reflect the practical and sustainable use of regional resources.

About 10,000 cubic feet of wood is required for the construction of a regular Uru. The vessels were made from locally available timber and those from the Nilambur forest which is 60km away from Beypore. Rivets were made of copper traditionally. Higher expenses incurred have forced craftsmen to shift to iron rivets. Rivets are driven deeper into the planks. The holes are sealed with packing, so that the rivet heads are not in contact with water. The nails have groves in the reverse direction making it impossible for the nails to go back and thus ensuring a tight fixing. The construction of an Uru requires approximately 400kgs of metal nails. Sardine fish oil is used for waterproofing the surfaces of Uru. Around 1000 litres of oil is required for the manufacture of an ordinary Uru. Cotton is used to seal the gaps in between the planks. During this documentation material configuration and the quantities mentioned were also recorded with the help of the master craftsmen. It is noted that all these aspects of the construction process is guided by the craftsmanship passed down through generations.

## Documentation of the Inclining Member (thada)

The measurement process focused on the pataan (the bottom plank) and the inclined members in the front and back sections of the boat. For precise measurements, we used a laser measuring device to determine the inclination of the *thada* (inclined members) by measuring its height at various intervals from the ground. This gave an accurate understanding of the angles and dimensions of the inclined elements in the structure of the boat.

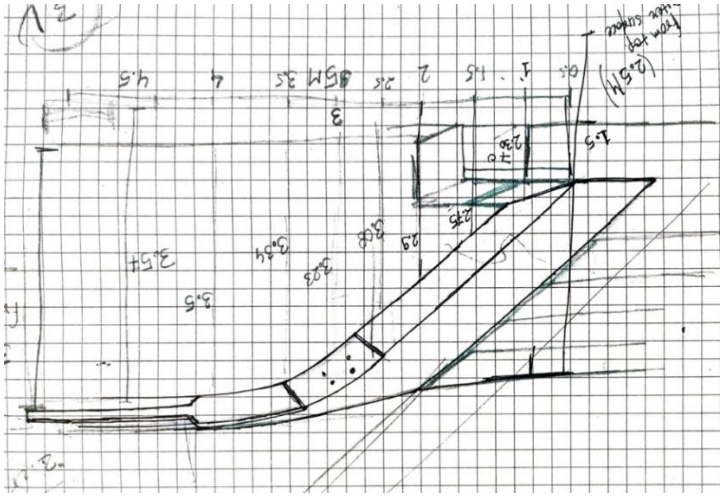


**Fig. 3:** Documentation drawing of Incline member (thada)
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA,2022,
Mentor: Author

**Fig. 4:** Thada member and rib connection
Source: Author

## Curve Deck Measurement from the Flat Ground Surface

Recording its height at regular intervals from a fixed ground level, the gradual curve can be documented that defines the bottom of the deck, an important element that contributes to the boat's hydrodynamic performance.

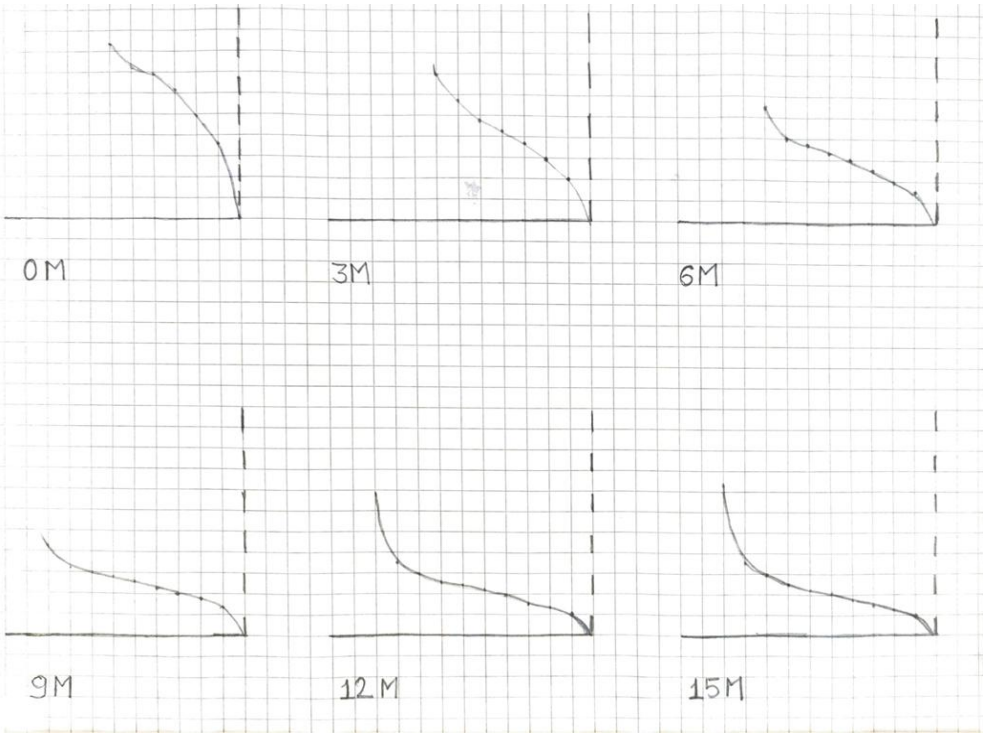



**Fig. 5:** Documentation drawing of the Deck
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA,2022.
Mentor: Author

**Fig. 6**: A View inside the Hull
Source: Author

## Measurements of the Rib Structure from Inside and Outside

One of the most complex parts of the documentation involved measuring the ribs of the boat from the inside. Given the large scale of the boat and the intricacies of its curved structure, we developed an improvised method, where the rod was placed at the center of the hull, and the horizontal measurements were taken from the rod to the edge of each rib at various heights.

This allowed us to plot one half of the rib's profile on graph paper. This process was repeated for every fifth rib to capture the gradual change in the form of the hull as it curved from the front to the back of the boat.

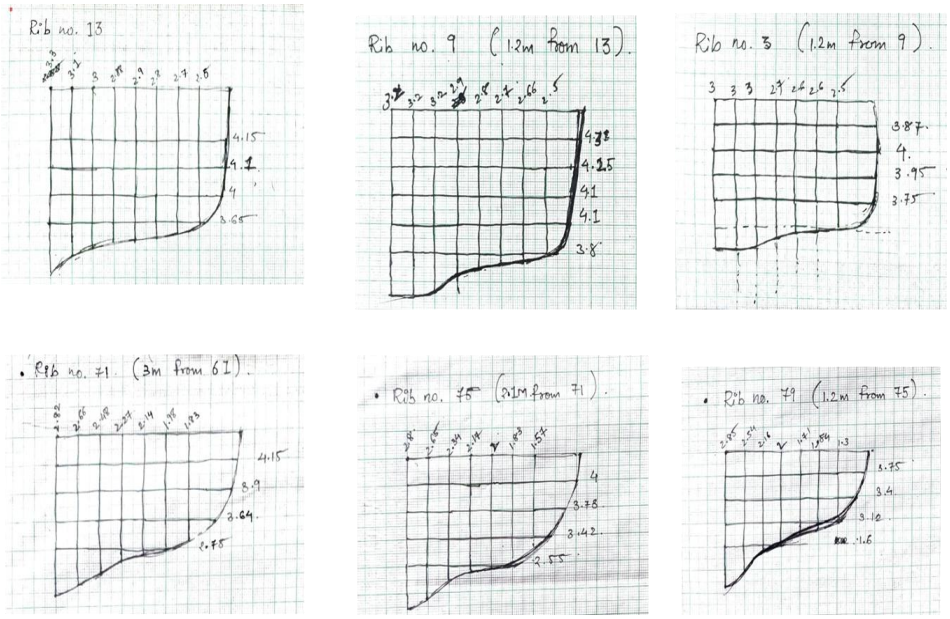



**Fig. 7:** Documentation drawing of Ribs and multiple interval
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA,2022
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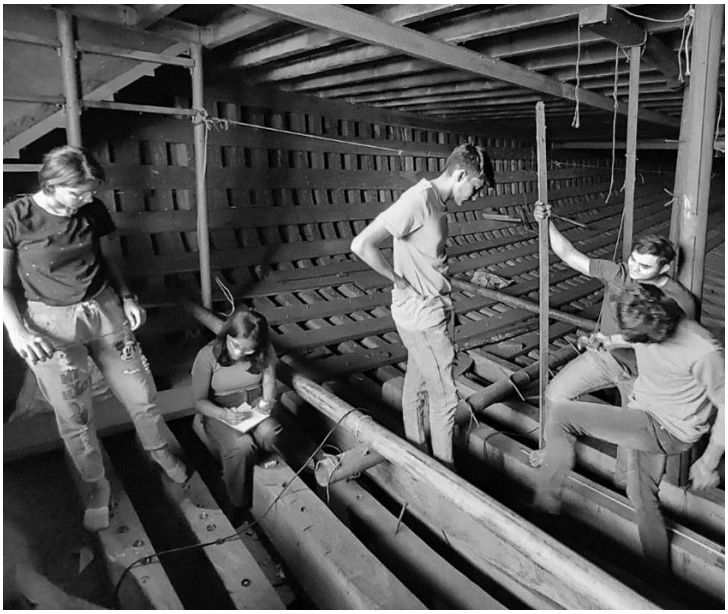


**Fig. 8:** Rib and Deck junction
Source: Author

## Documentation of the Cabins and the Cantilever Deck

Using a rough structural plan on-site, we marked the positions of all the structural members and recorded their dimensions. The deck is supported by wooden box sections combined with metal I-sections running laterally. These lateral members are reinforced by two large I-sections running longitudinally along the entire length of the boat. This system of support ensures that the deck is strong enough to handle the stresses of maritime navigation.

The deck itself is composed of wooden planks that are covered with a waterproof coating to protect against seawater damage.

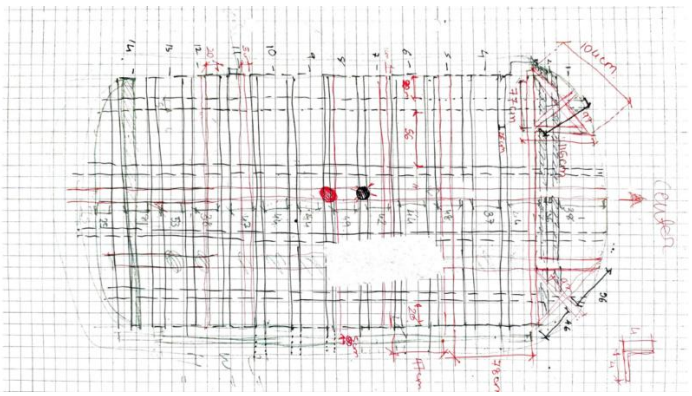


**Fig. 9:** Documentation drawing of upper lvel cabin
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA,2022
Mentor: Author

**Fig. 10:** Structural system of metal and wood for the upper-level cabin
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA,2022.
Mentor: Author

## Analyzing the Form and the System of Uru Boat Making Craft

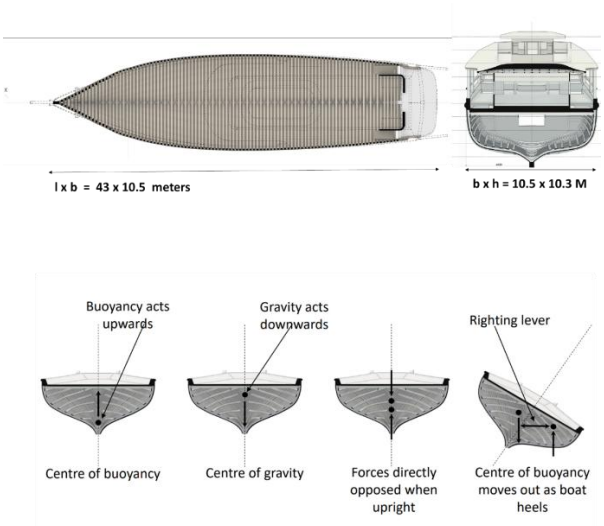
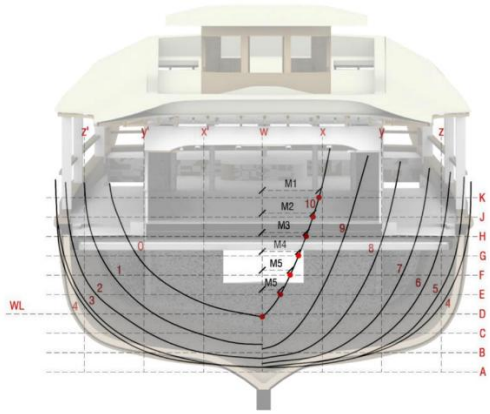



**Fig. 11:** The Analysis of the form
Source: Author

**Basic Principles of Boat Making**

A boat remains upright because of the way its weight and buoyancy interact. The basic principle of buoyancy is that the upward buoyant force on a body immersed in fluid is equal and opposite to the weight of the fluid that the body displaces. The weight of the fluid displaced is known as displacement and the displaced water has an upward-thrust, or buoyancy, which is equal to the weight of the boat.

The displaced water has a central point, or centre of buoyancy, which varies according to the shape of the hull and the keel of the boat. The weight of a boat is distributed along its length, pushing the entire vessel downwards. All the weight acts downwards through a central point, or centre of gravity, which is similar to the fulcrum or central point of a seesaw. All the structure and the distribution of weight aboard contribute to the centre of gravity of a boat.




**Stability:** the range of stability for a boat of given form and size depends on the magnitude of the metacentric height.
**Depth:** an increase in depth results in increase in center of gravity and reduction on metacentric height. When weight is added to a vessel, the center of gravity (g) of the vessel always moves in the direction of the added weight

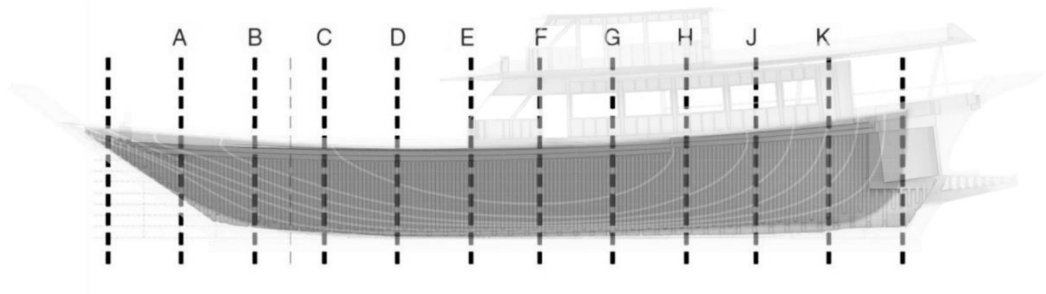



**Fig. 12**: An analysis of the hull
Source: Author

Essentially the process consists of using contours in various planes - a few chosen at random, which is only a slight complication and the results are a series of curved lines laid on grids of straight lines. The length of the vessel is divided into several parts longitudinally. Geometry of the ribs at each of these section lines governs the shape of the Uru.

## Importance of Documentation of Uru Boat Making Craft

Uru, the largest handcrafted boat in the world, stands as a symbol of the remarkable maritime craftsmanship of the Beypore region, embodying centuries of tradition and expertise. Crafted entirely using traditional techniques and tools, these vessels reflect the finest quality, strength, and durability, making them a unique and highly sought-after product. Historically, Urus played a vital role in facilitating trade across the Indian Ocean, transporting valuable goods such as spices and silk. Today, while these handcrafted masterpieces continue to be in demand, particularly among wealthy clients in the Middle East for use as luxury yachts and

floating restaurants, the decline in artisans proficient in these traditional techniques poses a significant threat to the survival of this craft.

The traditional methods of Uru construction are passed down orally from generation to generation. With fewer artisans now practicing the craft, the risk of these techniques being lost is significant. Systematic documentation helps capture every detail of the craftsmanship, ensuring that future generations can access, learn, and revive the knowledge, even if the number of practicing artisans continues to decline.

**Documented Drawings of Uru Boat, Beypore**

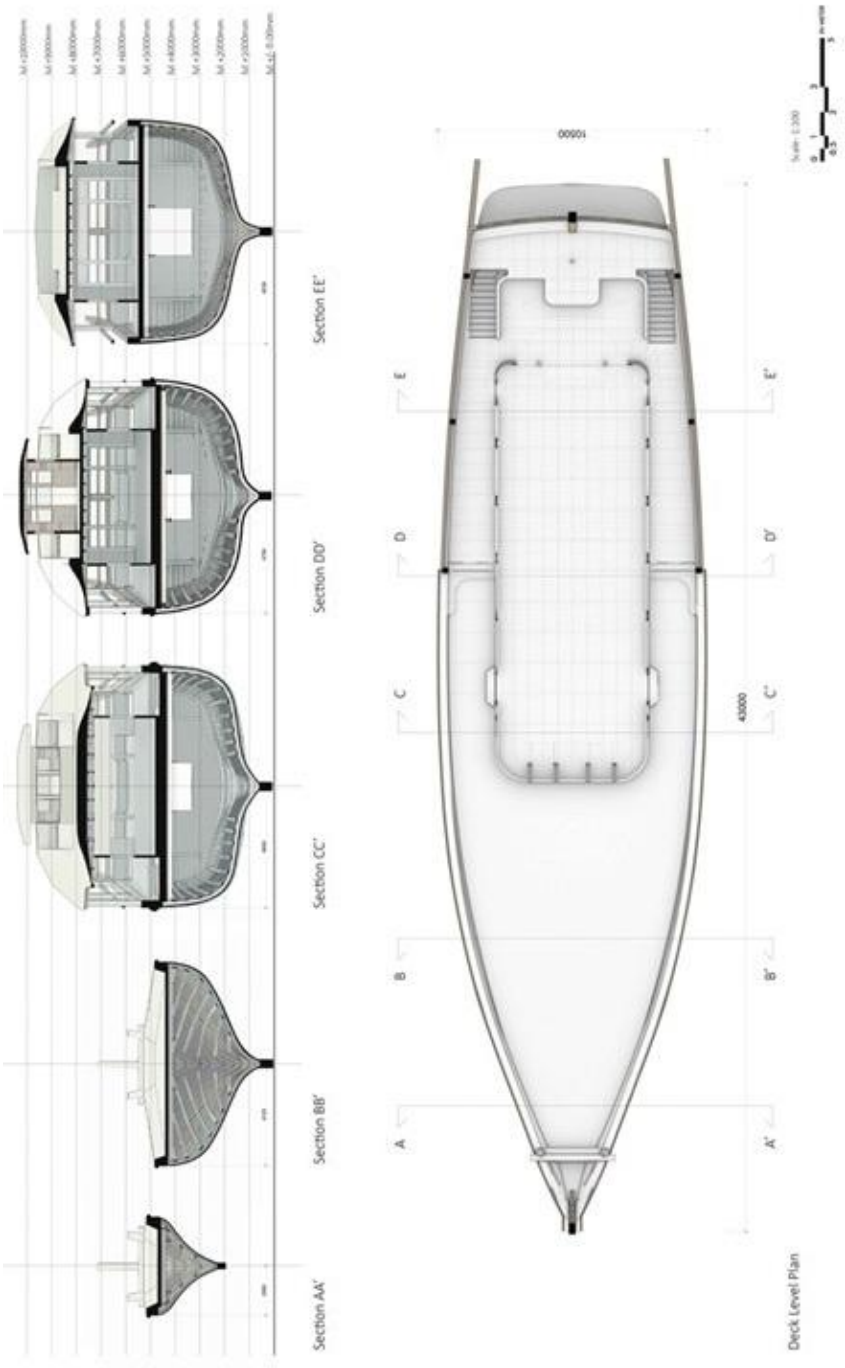



**Fig. 13:** Structural documented drawings
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA 2022
Mentor: Author

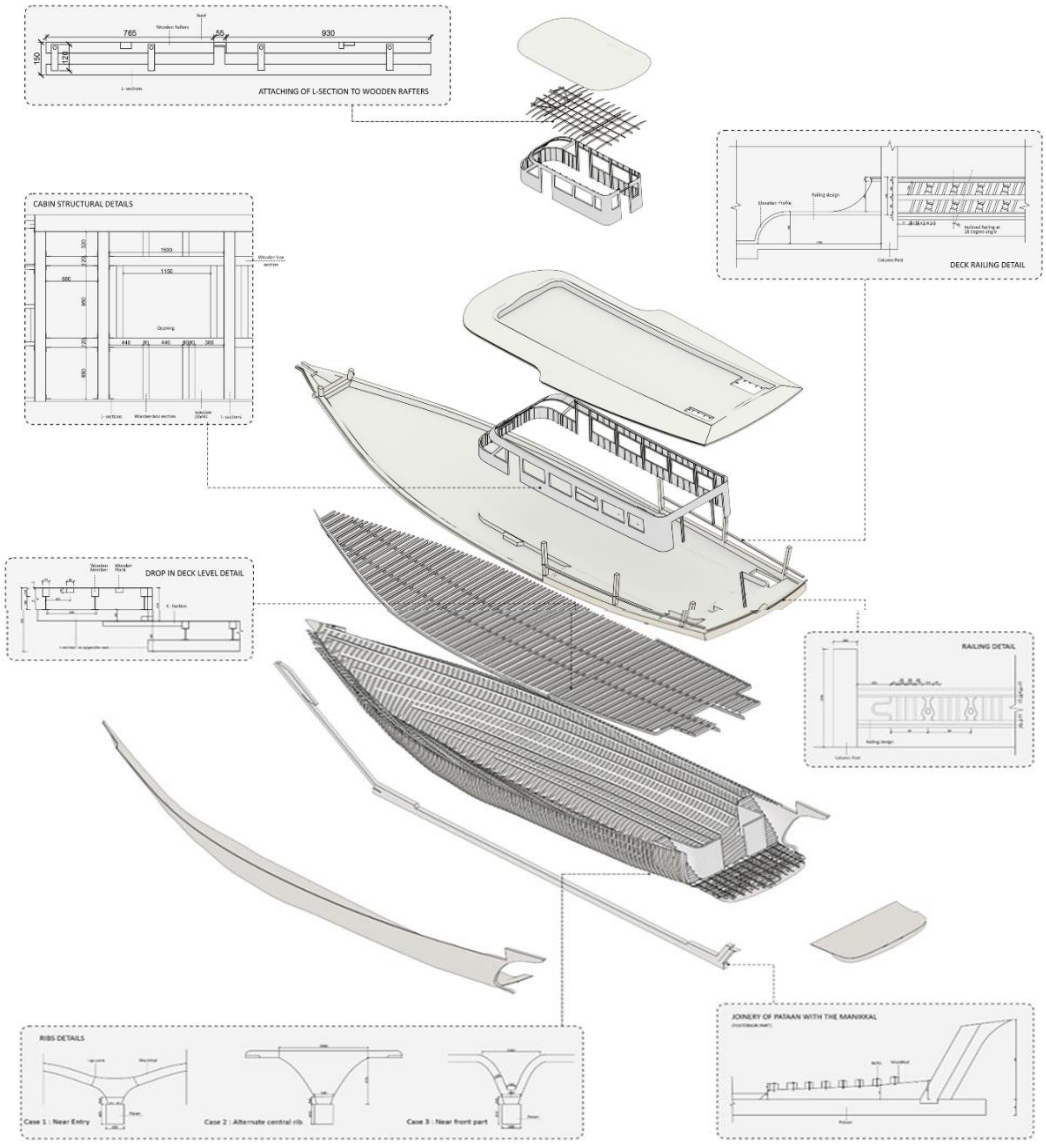



**Fig. 14:** Exploded detail for each structural system for the boat
Source: RSP of Uru documentation at SEDA ,2022,
Mentor: Author

Uru building is more than a technical skill; it reflects the cultural and historical continuity of the Malabar Coast. The construction techniques, the types of wood used, and even the rituals surrounding the launch of these vessels are deeply embedded in local traditions. Documentation helps safeguard this intangible cultural heritage, ensuring that the craft remains a living part of the community's identity and not just a relic of the past. Well-documented materials can serve as an educational resource for future artisans, historians, and designers who wish to study or replicate this unique craft. Detailed records of the techniques involved in building an Uru can also inspire new applications of these methods in modern shipbuilding or other industries, thereby sustaining its relevance.

Detailed field notes were maintained to document observations of the work environment, interactions between craftsmen, and the specific techniques they used. The goal was to document the embodied knowledge and tacit skills involved in Uru boat construction.

To complement the fieldwork and case study, archival research was conducted to gather historical and literary sources related to Uru boat-making and indigenous craftsmanship. This helped place the current findings within a broader historical and cultural context. The global shifts demand for quicker and cheaper alternatives to handcrafted boats has led to a decline in orders for traditional Urus. This documentation will allow increase cultural importance and awareness for preserving and continuing this craft making boat.

## Conclusions

This research presented the documentation and analyses of the historical and cultural influence of boat-making along India's coastline, with a specific focus on the Malabar Coast through the study of the "Uru" – a distinctive "fat boat." The documentation of the Uru boat-making process in Beypore began with a close observation of the gigantic vessel under construction at the boat-making center. The author and the team took time to fully comprehend the scale and intricacy of the boat by closely observing the craftsmen at work. The Mistry (master craftsman) provided an insightful explanation of the different parts of the boat and their functions in the construction process.

The documentation of Uru, wooden boat-making craft was accomplished in two comprehensive folds. Firstly, the study meticulously records the intricate process of Uru construction, delving into the techniques and materials utilized. The craftsmanship involved is largely intuitive, inherited, and often secretive, passed down through generations without written blueprints or plans. The expertise of two main communities, the Odayis and the Khalasis, is highlighted. The Odayis manage the technical aspects of boat making, while the Khalasis use traditional methods to launch the finished Urus into the water. The entire process, from conception to completion, is guided by the expertise of the master craftsmen. Beyond the technical aspects, the second part of this research emphasizes the cultural and social dimensions of Uru making. The craft is not merely a livelihood but a cultural heritage that embodies the collective memory and identity of the coastal communities. This research thus reveals the rituals, folklore, and communal practices associated with Uru construction, highlighting its role in fostering social cohesion and cultural continuity.

By providing a comprehensive documentation of the Uru boat-making craft, this research contributes to a broader understanding and appreciation of the maritime heritage of the Malabar Coast. It emphasizes the need to protect and promote this unique cultural legacy for the future generations, ensuring the preservation of this invaluable tradition.

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**Data Availability:** Data used in this research are available for scrutiny if so required. In any case, they have been used in this research with the consent of the owners of that data.

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