



## National Award – First

### Sola Wood Sheet Making Machine

Dipak Sardar

South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Scout: Direct

Dipak Sardar (27) has had a keen interest in the development of innovative items since his childhood. His father operates a lathe workshop and repair centre. Dipak uses locally available materials to develop various projects in his father's workshop.

Sometime in 2016, during one of the discussions with his friends, he learned that the artisans involved in the sola handicraft\* industry were facing difficulties in manually peeling sola wood using a knife/blade. It would take a long time to produce a sola sheet, and during the process, they would also hurt their fingers. Encouraged by his uncle, who knew of his creative exploits, Dipak considered making a machine for solving these problems.

The sola wood sheet-making machine is a motorized machine that can slice four sola pith at a time to make sola wood sheets, which can then be used for making

handicrafts items. Four pieces of 12 cm long sola wood are inserted into the machine at a time. A roller rotates the sola wood through a slider-crank mechanism; simultaneously, a blade moves in to slide the sola wood. The machine produces a nicely finished, even surfaced, high-quality sheet of uniform thickness for the sola craft industry and eliminates the risk of physical injury to the worker. Manually one skilled labour can slice seventeen sola piths in an hour, whereas the machine slices over four hundred sola piths in an hour. No other sola wood peeling machine is not available in the market.

\*Sola wood comes from a plant Shola (*Aeschynomene aspera*). It is usually turned into paper-like sheets by slicing the wood by hand. Various artefacts like flowers are then made from that paper.

