

## Socio-Technological Status of Moratuwa Woodworking Industry

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### Abstract

Moratuwa has a long tradition in furniture manufacturing with a substantial population depending directly or indirectly on the wood working industry. This study was conducted to gather socio-technological information with the view of understanding the factors which affect the current trends of the Moratuwa wood working cluster. A sample of 314 out of 1,631 woodworking facilities in Moratuwa, representing five types of wood manufacturing industries were selected for the study. Results revealed that the industry is heavily dependent on Teak (*Tectona grandis*), followed by Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), Ginisapu (*Michelia champaca*) and Lunumidella (*Melia azedarach*). Majority of the species were originating from forest plantations with natural forest timber species such as Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*) and Nedun (*Pericopsis mooniana*) were less frequently used. Division of labour for furniture manufacturing was observed in Moratumulla, Indibedda, Kadalana and Willorawatta areas. Sawmills were more frequent in Horetuduwa and Korlawella areas. Approximately 57% of the carpentry sheds were home based industries. Majority of the carpentry sheds used basic machineries such as Table saw, Planer, Router, Grill machine, Grinder, Jig saw for furniture manufacturing. Very few carpenters recording a percentage of 3.08% used traditional equipment like “Burmaya (Grill)”, “Yathukataya (Hand planer)” and Hand saw. Frame saw, Band saw and Circular saw were very common in sawmills. However large mills in Moratuwa have a totally integrated production process with advanced saw mills, timber seasoning and treatment facilities. The dominant age category of employees was between 36 and 45 years (42.30%) and 49.66% have had an education up to Ordinary Level. Results further indicated that there is a reduction of the young generation coming to the industry. A percentage of 80.69% employees have acquired skills from onsite training and did not have any formal training in woodworking. Key issues found in this study were the demand reduction due to woodworking entities in other localities in the country, high cost of the quality timber and lack of modern marketing strategies related to woodworking industry. Strategies to develop the efficiency of Moratuwa wood working cluster are further discussed.

**Keywords:** Cluster, Furniture, Socio-technological, Woodworking