

# BEAUTY INSPITE OF BAN

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## INTRODUCTION

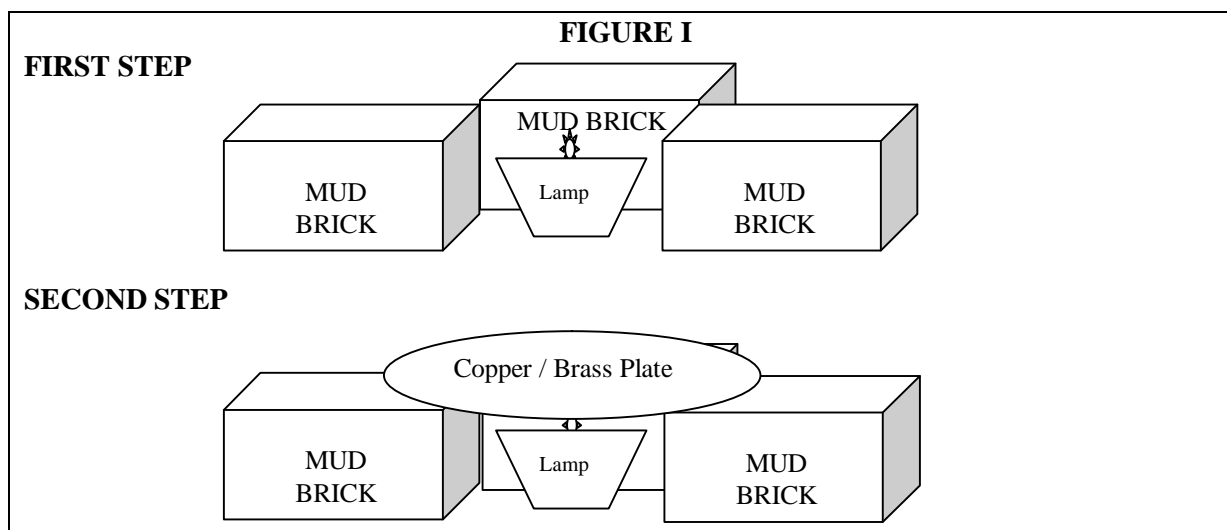
We are all now aware that New York city health department has rightly banned all South Asian, Kajal and Surma, as their investigations have revealed that these products contains abnormally high content of lead with concentrations exceeding the US federal recommended limit of 10ppm. in cosmetics products. Since ages, grandmothers have sworn that Kajal and Surma have the ability to ward of evil eye from little ones, and lend a unique beauty to countless eyes.

Kajal has been used in India for hundreds of years. Although no scientific studies have been carried out to prove the beneficial effects, home made kajal have been traditionally used without any harmful effect on the eyes. The problem lies in the commercially produced products that contain several impurities, like charcoal, silver nitrite, heavy metals like lead, in addition to dirt and microbial contaminants. So where does this ban leave us all? What about grandma's tales and its benefits? Nothing to worry! Can we all not learn to produce Kajal by ourselves at home like in olden times and avoid using the industrially produced impure commercial product?

## COSMETICS FOR EYES

Eyes are the reflection of our soul. It is said that eyes should necessarily outshine other parts of the face by their sparkle and size. There are reams of poetry that describe the beauty of the eye and link it to the beauty of the individual. Thus, eyes and the region around it are considered areas that are more important for one to address to enhance self-beauty. For a long time right from the epic ages, women have used 'Black kajal' or 'Kohl' eye paste around the eyes to make the eyes appear bewitchingly large in popular fashions styles like almond, mango, lotus, fish, etc.

Temple sculpture and painting show nymphs of the skies and trees (Gandharvas and Yakshis) use Kajal paste, encircling the eyes to create an illusion of a larger size eyes. Little babies are applied with Kajal paste, around their eyes, as it is also believed to promote the growth of long silky eyelashes and protect them against evil eye. A very popular fashion among women is to achieve almond shaped eyes by extending a line of Kajal paste beyond the corner of the eye in addition to the paste applied around it.



## HOME MADE – NATURAL BLACK KAJAL

Kajal Paste like all ancient Indian make up was made at home. A small earthen lamp is filled with 'Ghee' (milk fat), and a cotton wick placed in the lamp is allowed to **burn over night undisturbed** in a dark room. The black soot created by the flame is collected in a bronze or copper pan / plate arranged at an angle above the flame (See figure I). The soot obtained is mixed with some pure Ghee, and a drop of castor oil and Kajal paste is ready for use. The Kajal paste has a very long shelf life extending to years, but it is exhausted rather very quickly as Indian women both old and young use it regularly.

## BEAUTY SPOT

Hindu women married or unmarried wears, 'Tilak', 'Pottu', 'Kumkum', or 'Bindi' on the forehead. It is applied daily after a bath and on special occasions before or after a ritualistic worship or visit to a temple. When worn after worship it is termed as 'Tilak'. At other times it normally called, 'Pottu', 'Kumkum', or 'Bindi'. Varying in colour and form, wearing a 'Tilak' was not very prevalent in the 'Vedic' period. It gained popularity and prominence during the 'Puranic' period.

The use of Kumkum or bindi is believed to have originated in Southern India. Wearing a 'Tilak' invokes a feeling of sanctity in the wearer and onto others. It is usually made up of sweet smelling sandalwood paste 'Chandana', red and yellow, 'Kumkum', made out of turmeric powder, and 'Bhasma' or grey or black ash. It is applied in different shapes namely 'Ψ' or '≡' or '•' simple dot.

Human body emanates energy in the form of electromagnetic waves. The forehead and the subtle spot between the eyebrows are said to be the seat of memory and thinking. The point is called as the 'Anjna Chakra' in the language of the 'Yoga'. Application of 'Tilak' is said to cool the forehead, protecting the body from energy loss. The 'Tilak' or 'Kumkum', apart from fulfilling the religious necessity of the devout also serves the purpose of decoration, beauty, and good health.

The 'Tilak' is usually applied with the prayer, "May I remember the Lord at all times, his power pervade all my actions and activities and may I always be righteous in my deeds". Even when we temporarily forget this prayerful attitude, the mark on another's forehead reminds us of our solemn resolve. The mark apart from being a beauty spot is also a blessing of the lord and a protection against the forces of evil and wrongful tendencies present in us.

Nowadays plastic reusable 'Stick Bindis' or synthetically made "Liquid Bindi" being more convenient to use is popular and largely serves the purpose of decoration. The plastic bindi generally has a synthetic adhesive to keep the "Stick Bindis" in place. Inferior quality adhesives that are used in "Stick Bindis" and poorly made "Liquid Bindis" that are available in the market can cause severe allergy and skin ailments in sensitive individuals on regular usage.

## HOME MADE – NATURAL BLACK BINDI

Sago or popularly called "*Sabudana*" is taken in a thick bottom vessel or "*Kadaai*". It is roasted dry to dark black in high flame with continuous stirring to prevent lump formation. The dry roasted sago is then ground to a liquid paste in a grinder with water. The liquid paste is then boiled in a low flame to get a thickened paste with reduced the water content. The paste is then poured into a wide mouth container and dried in the Sun.

The product being a little hygroscopic can become moist over time. Sun drying helps to remove any excess moisture and prevent mould or fungus growth in the product through its shelf life. Alternatively one can add chemical or natural preservatives if essential. A small amount of the dried paste mixed with water when applied to your forehead serves the purpose of decoration, beauty, and good health.