

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sandhya B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Introduction

Varanasi is one of the seven holy pilgrimage centers in India and is also known as Banaras/ Benares or kashi. It is an amusing city situated in the south east part of the state Uttar Pradesh with its state capital being Lucknow and located at the bank of river Ganges with innumerable temples. It is the city of Gods and is said to be the holiest of all and is favorite of Lord Shiva, thus it is referred as City of Lord Shiva, 'Shiv Ki Nagri' as well. The city is very well-known for its temples, Kashi-Vishvanath temple being a noted one is dedicated to Lord Shiva, since the place is called as kashi the temple is also popularly known as Kashi Vishvanath temple.

Varanasi stands out for its rich cultural traditions and is called as cultural capital of India. It is a remarkable place and people come from all over to see this holy city and witness the city's charm. It is the oldest city inhabited, "older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend –and looks twice as old as all of them put together."- Mark twain on the city of Varanasi. The place is noted as old as Indian civilization.

Varanasi is an enchanting city, the narrow lanes, the houses close to one another, the people, the transportation- cycle rickshaws and electric ones, the junk food-chats and sweets, randomly roaming cows and ox, vintage buildings at the bank of Ganga and the Aghoris everything seems fascinating. Like the city Varanasi, the art and culture is also unique. It has also given master craftsmen and has been noted for handicrafts, fabrics, toys, adornments, metal works, clay and wood work and greatly for its beautiful Banarasi sarees. Banarasi sarees are well known, when one hears Varanasi the thought that comes after the river Ganges and the Kashi vishvanath temple would be of these Banarasi sarees. Brocade and Zari being the specialty of the city Banaras, the sarees are weaved along with gold or silver Zari threads, the sarees most of them have gold or silver zari threads weaved to the designs.

The Banarasi saree tracks or is encouraged by the Mughal designs. The Banarasi sarees came into existence in the course of the Mughal times when Muslim artisans and craftsmen chose Banaras as the dwelling that unified well with their culture and started weaving silk Banarasi sarees. It is also noted that the weavers were earlier focused in cotton weaving and have switched to silk weaving past fourteenth century. They also got specialized in brocade weaving. It is a textile in which patterns are created by thrusting the pattern threads (Zari) between the warp. Zari brocade involves use of gold and silver threads to create a glittering embossed pattern appearance.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details



Artisan involved in painting the patterns on model.



Process of pottery making.

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Different varieties of pottery items.



Bottle design made out of clay.

1. Introduction

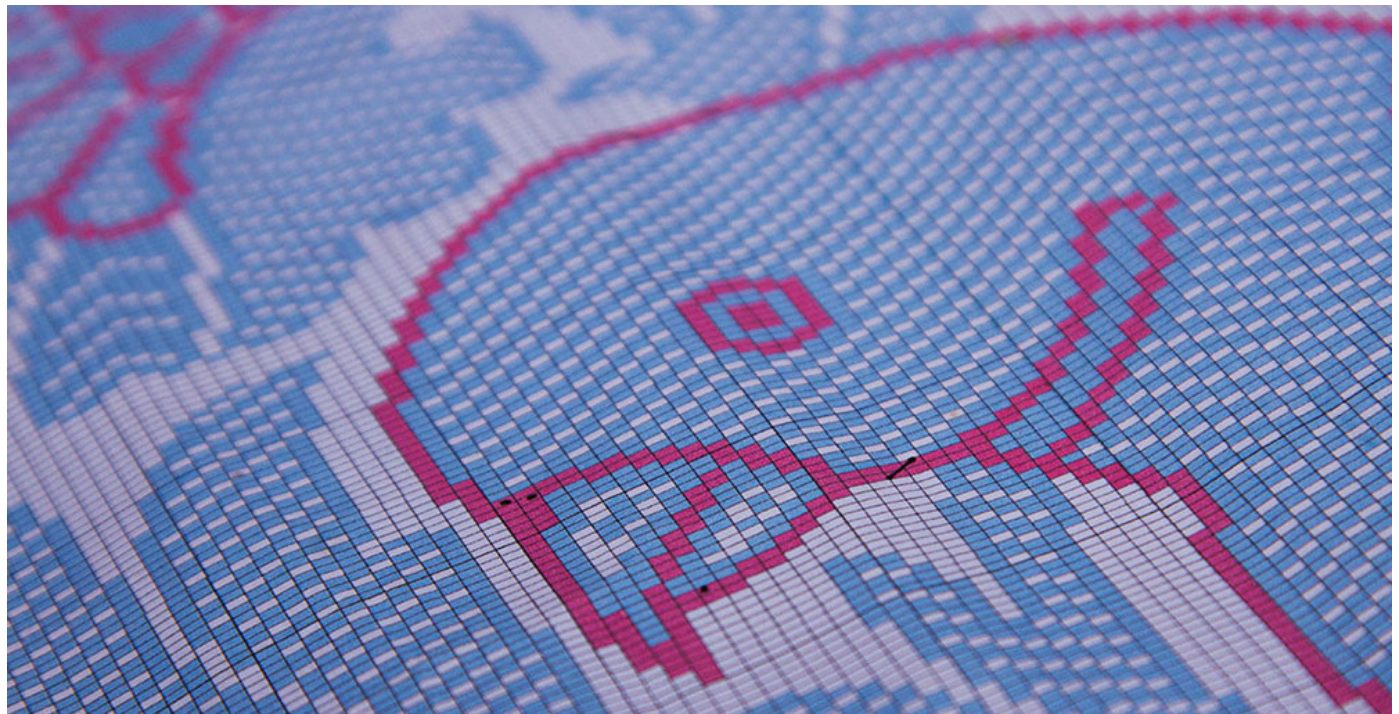
2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details



Jars made of clay.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Jacquard (saree design) Tools:

- **Manual Paper Cutter Machine:** It helps to cut the sheets to required lengths.
- **Brown Rectangle Sheet:** Thick brown sheets are used to punch and fix to the jacquard machine.
- **Measuring Scale:** It is used to mark the inches on the brown sheet before starting to punch.
- **Small Punch Tools with Rubber Washers:** It helps to punch the brown card and make holes.
- **Hammer:** Helps to punch the cards by striking on the punch tool.
- **Graph Paper:** These are used to draw designs and becomes reference to punch the cards.
- **Nail Paint:** Helps to mark on the jacquard punch plate

Weaving (handloom) Tools:

- **Yarn:** The basic raw material that is needed to weave.
- **Containers:** To boil the yarns.
- **Metal Rods:** Metal rods help to lift yarns from containers.
- **Dye Colors:** Colors which are used to dye the yarns.
- **Spinning Wheel:** Helps in turning fiber into thread.
- **Spindle:** Threads are rolled to spindle to load in the fly shuttle.
- **Fly Shuttle:** Holds the spindle with plain and zari threads (gold or silver).
- **Jacquard Machine:** Holds the punch cards.

1. Introduction

2. **Tools and Raw Materials**

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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- **Punch Cards:** The cards are perforated to create the designs.
- **Rubber Bands:** Thick rubber bands are used to tie to carry out the tie and die process.
- **Handloom:** The loom helps to weave the saree.
- **Spools:** Holds the threads that are taken to roll warp threads.
- **Warping Machine:** Helps to roll the yarn of required length to a warp beam.
- **Warp Beam:** Holds the base threads that helps to begin with weaving.
- **Heddles and Reed:** The yarn passes through heddles and reed.



A green dye prepared to color the yarn.

1. Introduction

2. **Tools and Raw Materials**

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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Spools with green, yellow and gold colored threads.



Pair of Fly shuttle.



Perforated base used to punch cards.

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

by

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Hammer is used to punch on the bolt and make a hole on the cards (Jacquard).



A graph sheet of parrot design spread out.

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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Craftsman segregating the yarn.



The dye is being poured to the container.

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Wedding Attire

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Spindles without threads rolled to them.

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Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

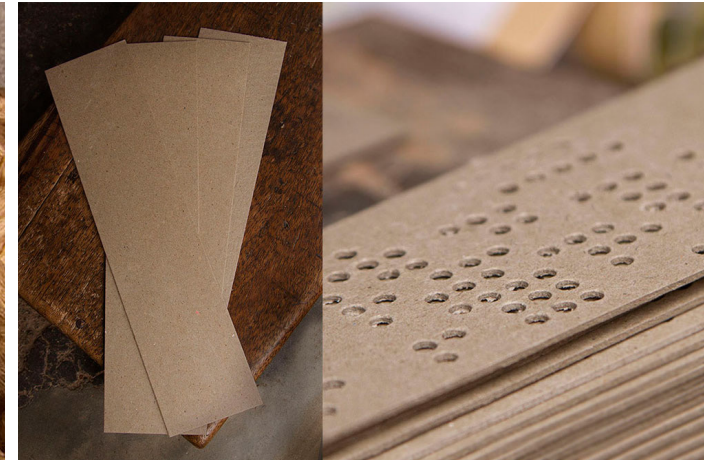
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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>



Rectangle cards, punched jacquard cards on the right.



Gold colored yarn on top with red colored yarn beneath it.



Twisting rods to remove the excess of solvent and rinse the yarn.

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Separating threads to prepare the warp beam.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



The handloom set up at Varanasi.



Tool used to punch the cards.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



A large brown sheet of card board.

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Wedding Attire

by

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction

2. **Tools and Raw Materials**

3. Making Process

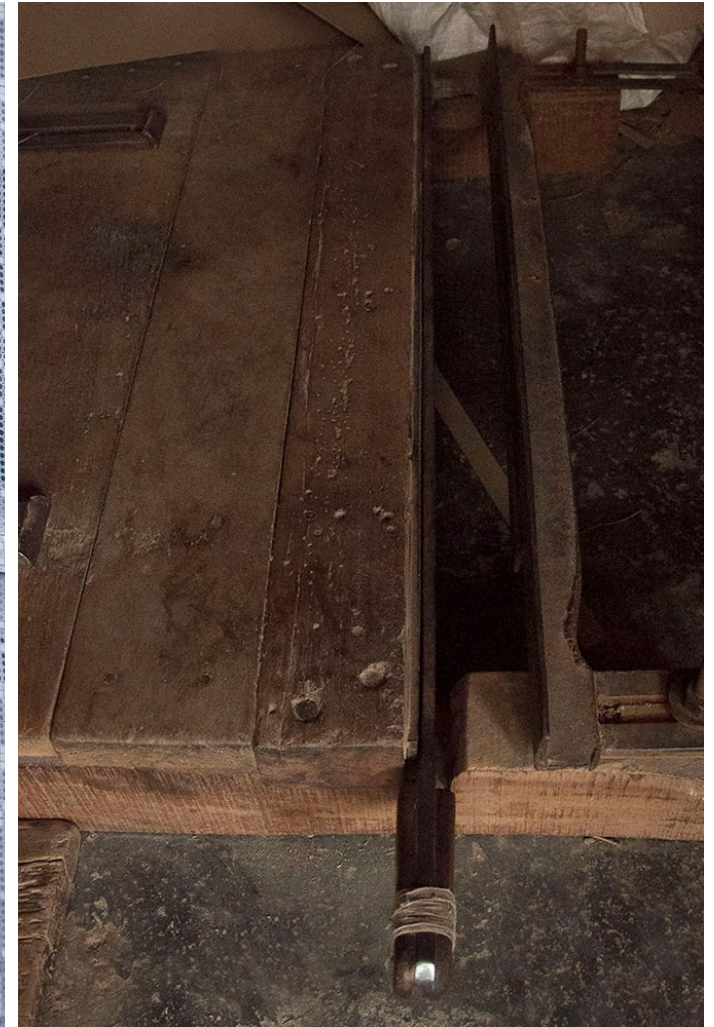
4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details



Designs that has to be punched are on the graph paper.



Manual Paper cutting machine.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/tools-and-raw-materials>

1. Introduction
2. **Tools and Raw Materials**
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Warp beam to segregate threads.



Nail paint is used to mark.



Thick rubber band is used to tie the yarns.

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Wedding Attire

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NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Making Process

The weaving of these Banarasi sarees is observed at Banaras and currently, approximate forty thousand active weavers are found along with them are active dealers, dyers, designers and supplementary support providers. The main product of Banaras Handloom Cluster is saree and the supremacy of it still continues. Banarasi brocade is an important wear for Banarasi brides and there are varieties in Banarasi brocade sarees even. The one that is noted is Organza with zari and silk, as per the designs it is also divided into Jangla, Tanchoi, Vaskat, and cutwork with embroidery designs. Before the weaving, the silk yarn undergoes few steps and then the weaving begins. The Jacquard card, spools and beam is set up with suitable color yarns and weaving is done.

• Jacquard cards – Saree designs

The desired design that is to be worked on the saree is drawn on a sheet of graph paper. The designs sometimes are hand drawn or mostly done in pixel calculations and printed on the graph sheet. This graph sheet becomes the reference to punch the cards. They are made to a set of cards that will be tied together and loaded to the jacquard machine. A large brown sheet is cut into small rectangle sheets of height 3inches and width of 12inches approximate. Then these cards are punched following the graph sheet that will have the desired designs. Once these cards are punched they are tied together. The Jacquard cards are completed to be loaded to the jacquard machine.

• The yarns

The silk yarns are processed dyed and are available ready in bundles in the markets. The weavers get the suitable silk threads. The raw silk yarns are processed they are dyed with suitable colors. The weaving is done and later the dyeing process is carried on. It follows something that of a tie and dye process. Sarees like chiffon undergo this tie and dye process (the yarn is tied where the color gets applied to the rest of the untied yarn). The yarn after the initial stages of processing and dyeing it is segregated to undergo warping and weft processes.

The threads are spun to spools with the help of spinning wheel to prepare the spools to load to the fly shuttle, the threads that fill up through fly shuttle is called weft. The warp threads are got ready by spreading them lengthwise creating pulls and is rolled to beam which is later fixed to the loom.

• The Weaving

The loom is set up with the threads and the process of weaving is began before which the jacquard cards are fixed to the jacquard machine and following the cards the threads are pulled and the desired design and the saree is weaved. In weaving warp, craftsmen build the base that runs of the required length. Once the punched cards are prepared those are spun with altered threads and colours on the loom allowing to design and are paddled in an orderly manner that the main weaving picks up right colour and pattern to produce the design and weave as well.

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

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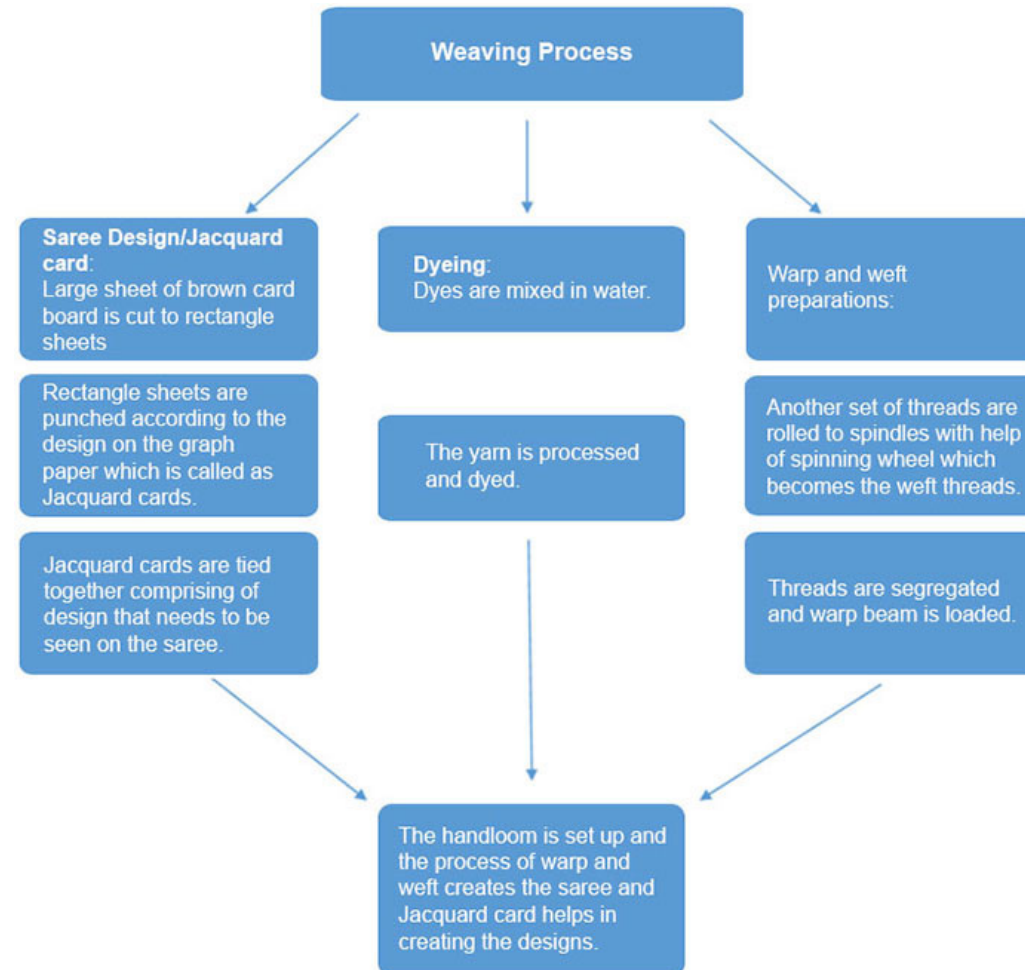
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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Bhiraj Kumar Prajapati who runs Handloom and power-loom at Varanasi, explains about the threads that run through reeds. Locally the reed is also called as fany, and is called in numbers like reed 108 which means that 108 threads make an inch or contains 108 threads. In an inch there will be columns in which two threads run together. Reed 120 is used for fatter threads. The designing of graph paper is done in the same calculations. For every inch of saree that is going to be weaved, design is done accordingly, inch wise. If the designs are symmetrical then only half of that design is drawn and the rest of the design is traced. Sometimes there are additional set of threads merged into the weft between the regular weft threads to bring up the attractive design supplementary to the elementary weave.

Flow Chart:



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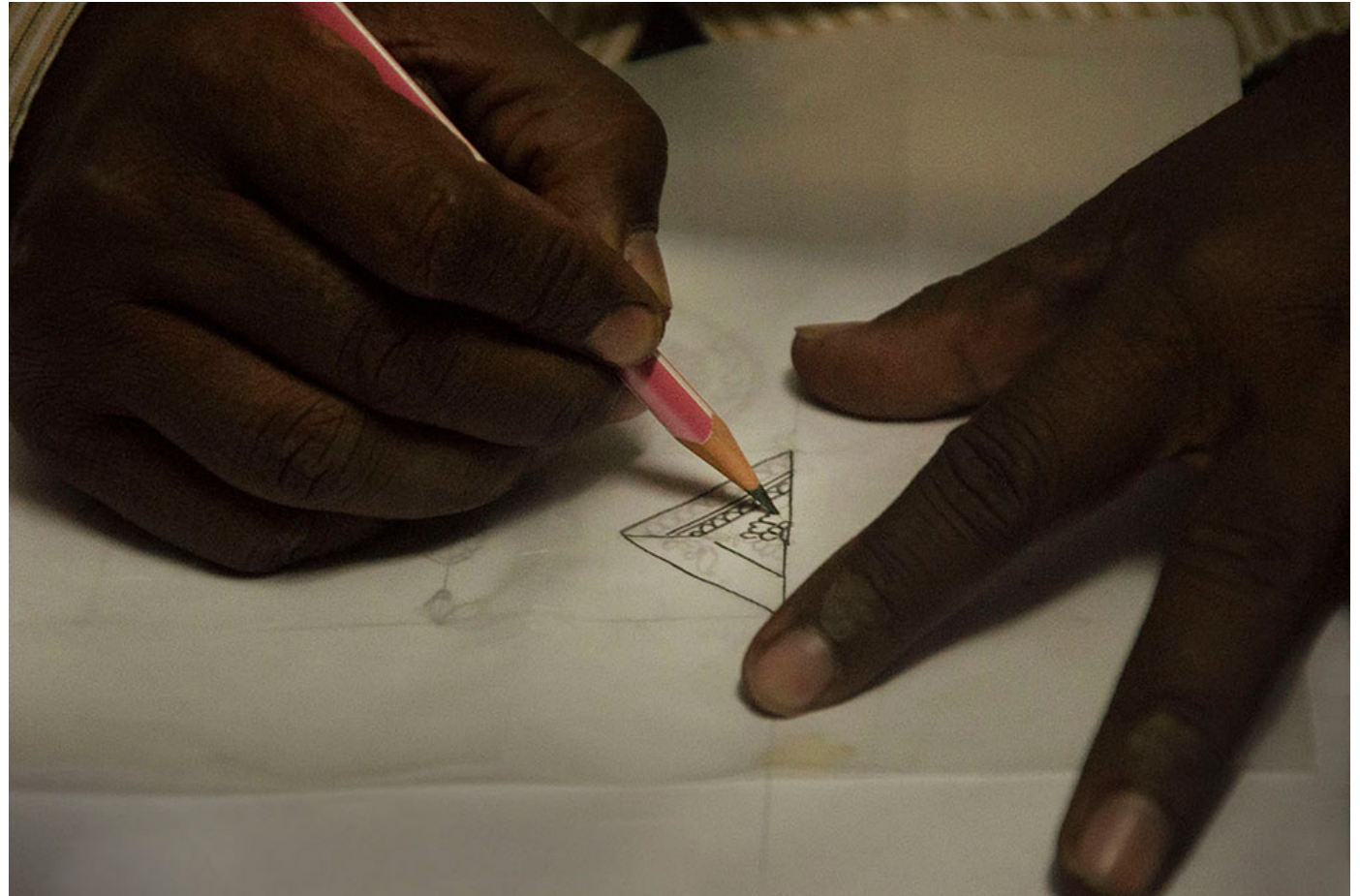
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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisan drawing the design on a trace sheet.

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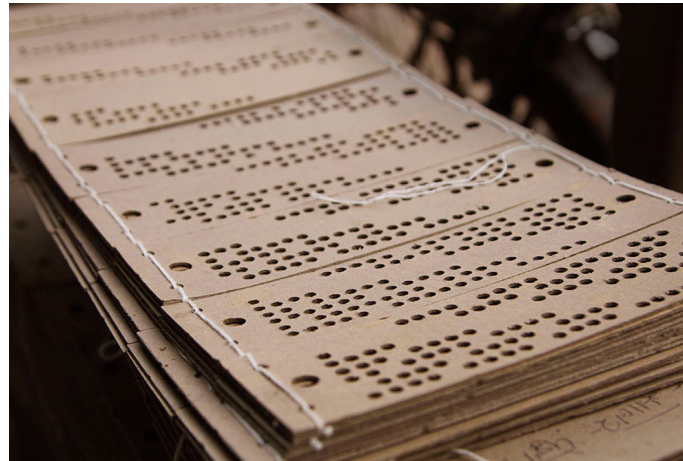
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<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>



Jacquard card is being punched.



A set of jacquard cards.



The yarn is being processed.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



The color palette of dye colors for sarees.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



The mixing of dye colors with water.



Tieing yarn to die.

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Drying the yarns after dyeing.

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NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Dyeing yarn with the help of rods.



The yarn is being prepared to load the warp beam.

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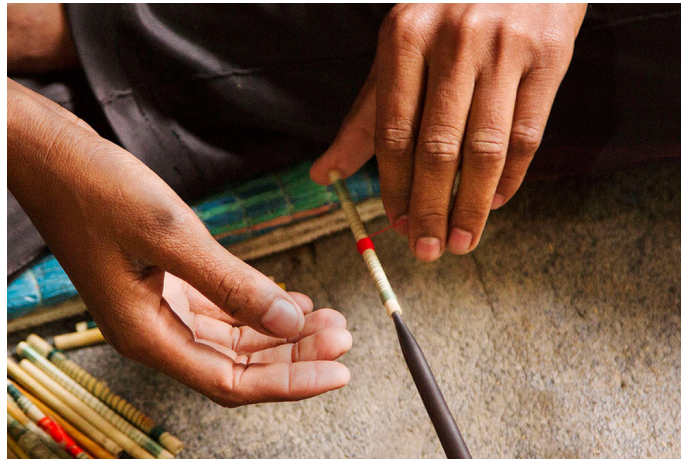
1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



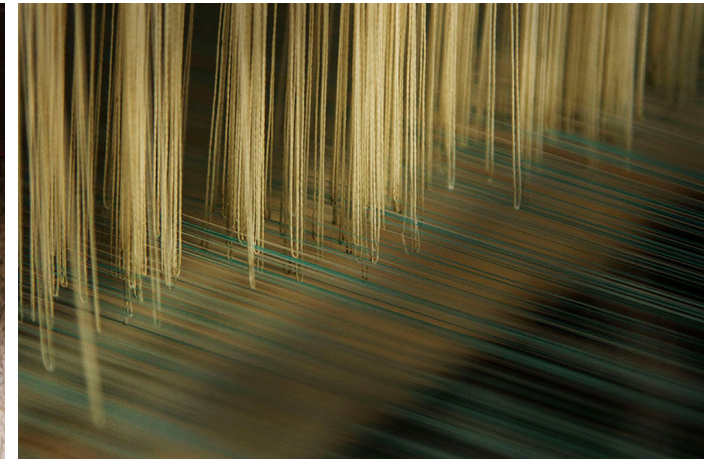
The segregated yarn is rolled to the beam.



Spinning of the threads.



The threads are rolled to the spindles.



Threads are passed through the hanging threads.

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Wedding Attire

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NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/making-process>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Fly shuttle.



Artisan pedaling to pull the threads and create design in the saree.



Artisan weaving the saree.

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The design on the saree is created with help of jacquard cards.



Banarasi saree weaved with gold colored zari threads.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. **Making Process**
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

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Products

The Banarasi sarees are known worldwide and the transactions happen across the world even. At Banaras the Banarasi sarees are renowned and is an important product of the city that gets good income. The price of the saree ranges from four thousand and goes up to forty thousand and so. The signature design of Banarasi Brocade is a narrow fringe like pattern, called Jhalar, and leaves patterns are also found along the inner and outer edge. The traditional Banarasi saree become the wedding attire mostly. The Banaras saree has made its mark all over and is one of the representations of our culture and tradition.



Pair of Banarasi sarees.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

by

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NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/banarasi-saree-weaving/products>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. **Products**
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Banarasi saree spread to reveal the beautiful Zari work.



A graceful Banarasi saree held by the craftsman.

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NID Campus, Bengaluru

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Video



Banarasi Saree Weaving

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. **Video**
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Banarasi Saree

Wedding Attire

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. **Contact Details**