

Design Resource

Silk Weaving - Karaikudi

Silk Saree Tamilnadu

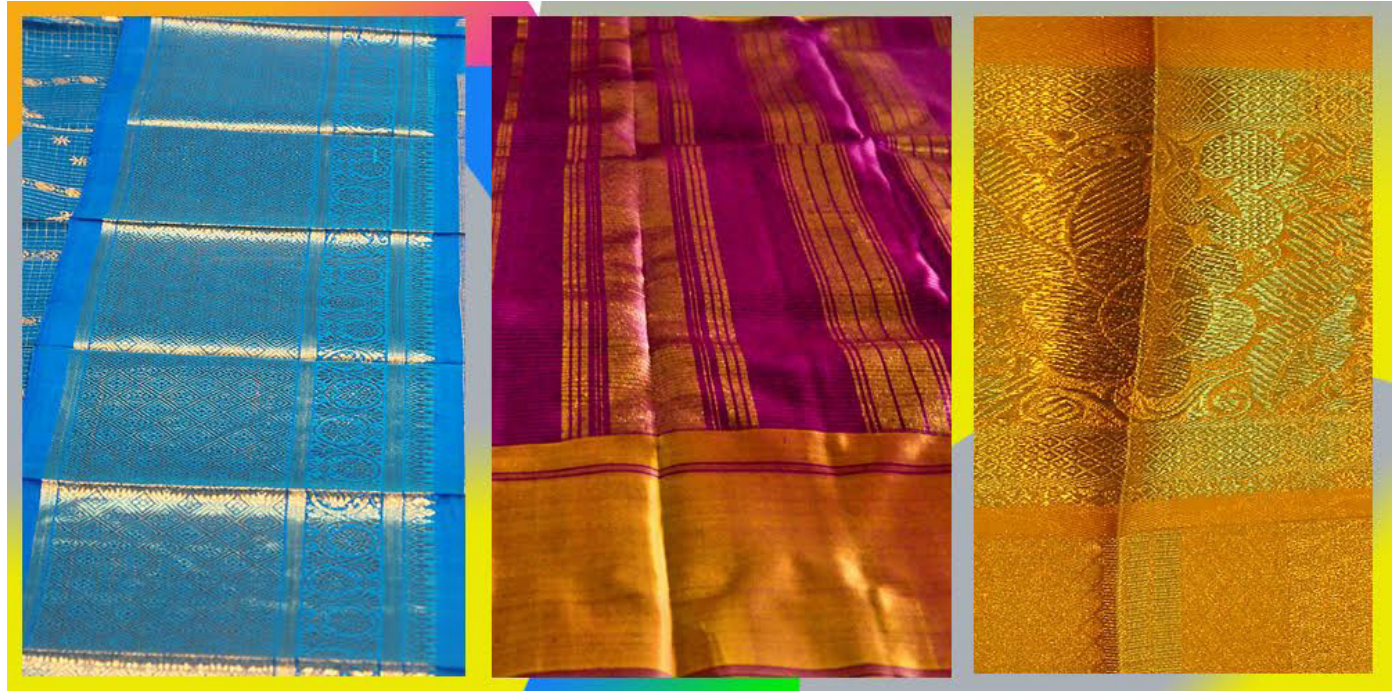
by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S.,
Abhishek Ganeshgudi and Vijay Kumawat
NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/silk-weaving-karaikudi>

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Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/chettinad-silk-saree/introduction>

Introduction

The saree is an unstitched garment worn by the women India, that reflects the vast aesthetics to suit a women's need for adornment and cultural identity. It is a traditional wear across India of different styles depending on the region and occasion. Silk sarees (Pattu sarees) are renowned for their intricate work and adds value through Zari work which is considered to be special. Mysore silk saree, Banarasi silk saree, Kanjeevaram silk saree, Baluchari silk saree, Kornad saree, Patola silk saree are some of the famous silk sarees in India. Each saree varies with their pattern of designs and motifs. The silk saree weavers of Chettinad area usually hails from the Kanchipuram weaving community who shifted their families to work for Chettiar community by weaving the pattern of designs of their desires. Both frame loom and pit loom is used to weave these silk sarees, throw shuttle (manually) is used for the production of these sarees since more than 2 colors are used as weft threads. Three shuttles are used to insert the color threads for the borders and the body of the saree. In the production of these sarees the weaver works on the right side and his aide on the left side shuttle. Pallu of the sarees (the border) and body of the saree is woven separately and then interlocked together.

These saree characterized by huge contrast border offers an ethnic look along with appealing color combination, made through the inclusion of checks of varied colors and geometric patterns. Fine stripes as well as checks in both horizontal and vertical manner add to the relish of the fabric. Traditional motifs found are peacock and parrot with colors in mustard, brick red and black.



Swift (parivattam) is used to spin the silk yarn.

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The weaver arranges the thread and loom for weaving.



Two or more colors of silk threads are wound on the parti to weave multicolor saree.

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Minimum of three weavers together weave this saree.

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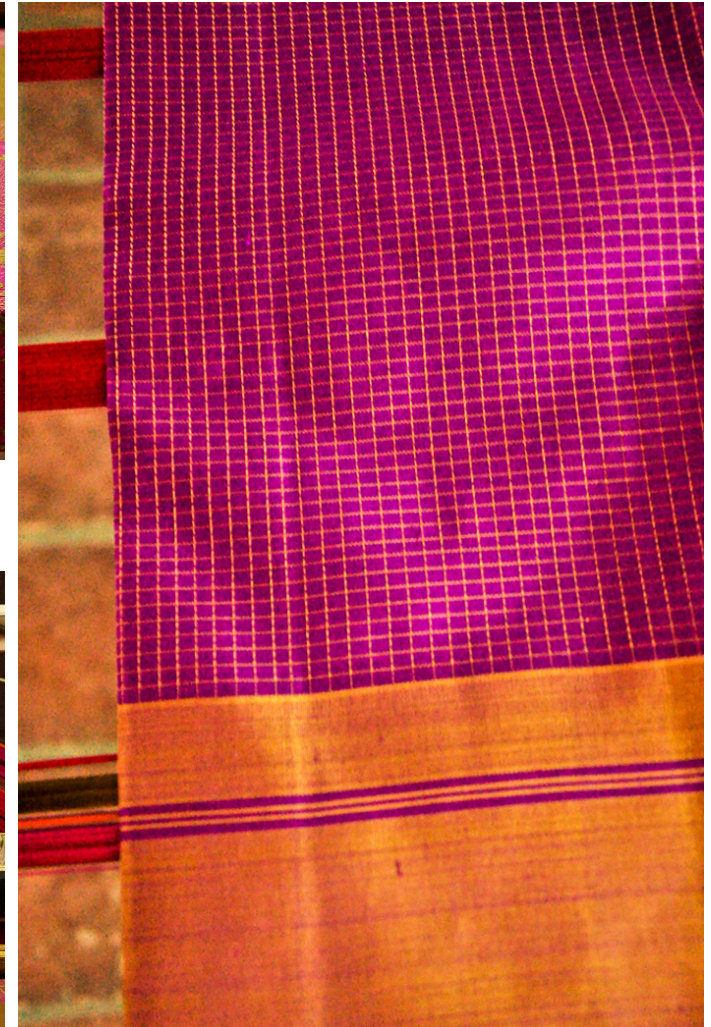
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Chettinad silk saree has also been incorporated with elephant designs on the pallu.



Fly-shuttle is used to interlock the weave. (Adai attachments are fixed to the loom for design insertions)



Checks pattern saree is famous saree design of Chettinad silk sarees.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Pure indigenous raw silk is used for the production of Chettinad silk saree- Zari thread, Kondhupassai (Gum arabic), plastic weft winding pirn to be used inside the shuttle

The Tools used are as follows.

1. **Winding Machine:** To wind the yarn to the spindle.
2. **Warping Machine:** To stretch the yarn on the roller.
3. **Loom:** To interlace the warp and weft yarns.
4. **Shuttle:** To insert the weft thread into the loom.
5. **Dyeing Machine:** To apply the color on the silk yarn.



Wooden planks (rakka palakas) are used for inserting equal spaces across the width of warp.

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Silk yarn is wound on Parivattams.



Fly shuttle is used for the weft insertion while weaving.



Small size plastic pirns are used to wind the silk yarn in Chettinad silk saree weaving.



Colored hank of silk yarns is used in the making of these saree.

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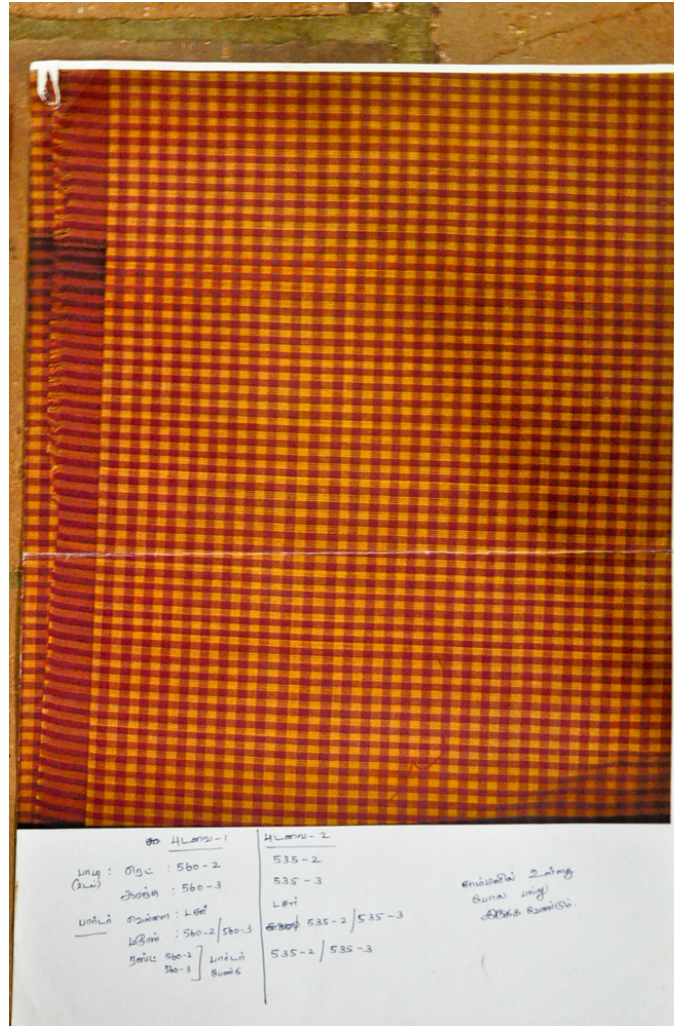
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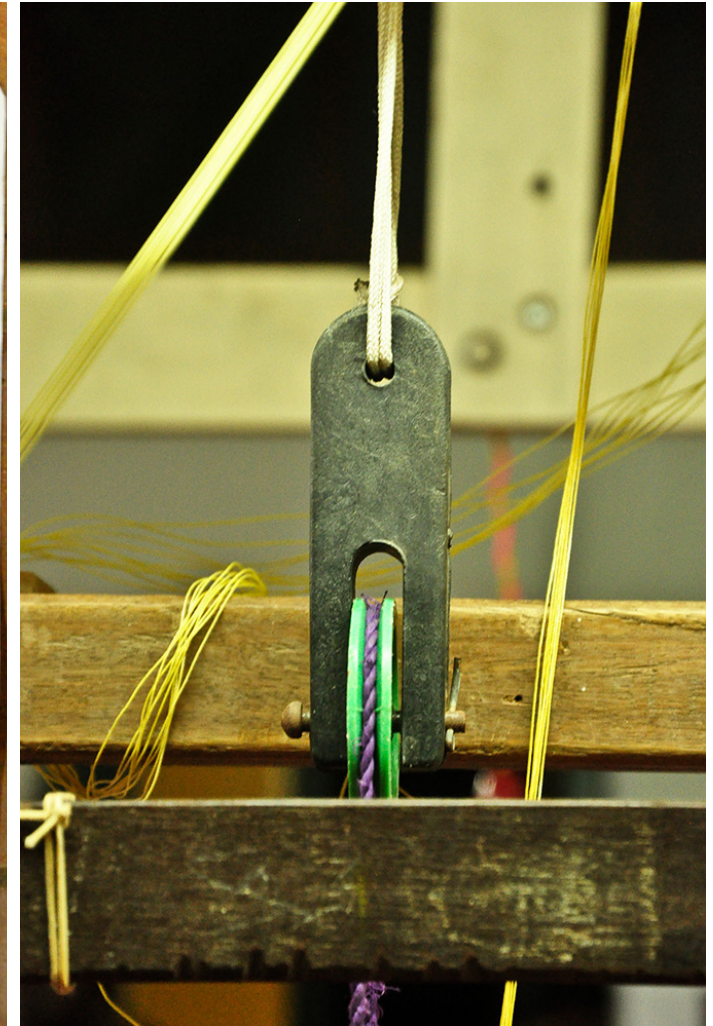
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A pattern with description is used as a guide in the making of this saree.



Pulley used to direct the yarns from jacquard attachment to the loom.

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Adai attachments are used for the insertion of the design pattern.

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Making Process

1. **Winding, Doubling and Twisting:** Raw silk is wound on the bobbin, doubled and then twisted for the warp and the weft preparations.
2. **Degumming and Dyeing:** Hank of yarn is degummed using soap and soda solution at alkaline pH level at near boiling temperature for a definite time and yarn is dyed using acid/ metal complex dyes at acidic pH level and glabour salt as a leveling agent.
3. **Warping and Piecing:** The warp threads are arranged (dressing) by stretching and looping in the open area by using stout bamboo rods. The newly prepared warp is attached to the corresponding thread of the previous saree (in case of same pattern), where the threads of the saree woven on the loom remains to knot to the preceding. This process is called piecing (knotting). This is a delicate and slow process which requires skill and patience.
4. **Drawing and Denting:** The warp is unrolled outside (street) to insert the lease rods and to mark the length of each saree by inserting bamboo sticks. The new warp which is being joined to the old warp by piecing is drawn forward through the healds and reed (locally called as Aluppiduthal).Warp is then rolled on the metal cylinder called as the warp beam.
5. **Weaving:** To weave the body and border portion, treadle is operated along with jacquard lever with great care and skill. Weft is inserted with hands by throwing a medium size shuttle from one end and beating the weft to the fell of the cloth. Narrow borders with an intermixture of ground colour are achieved by single shuttle, while broader borders of contrasting colours are woven using three shuttles. Small pirns of silk or Zari are used as shuttle for the weft insertion in case of small butta designs or motifs in the body for Pallu and borders. Motifs in the border and rich designs in the Pallu / Mundi are generated by pulling the lever connected to the jacquard boxes of different hook capacity.



Raw mulberry silk is procured from the silk markets for weaving the saree.

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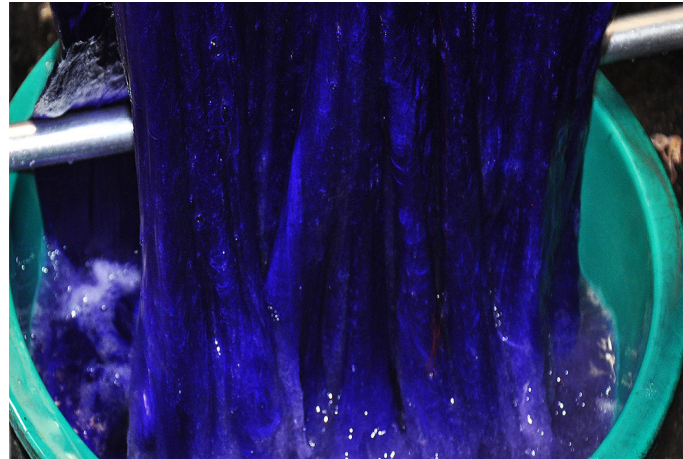
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Raw silk is dyed in chemical as per the required shade of color.



After dyeing it is dried in room temperature.



Colored hanks are bundle and sent for the warping process.



Each yarn is segregated and untangled by the artisan in the warping.

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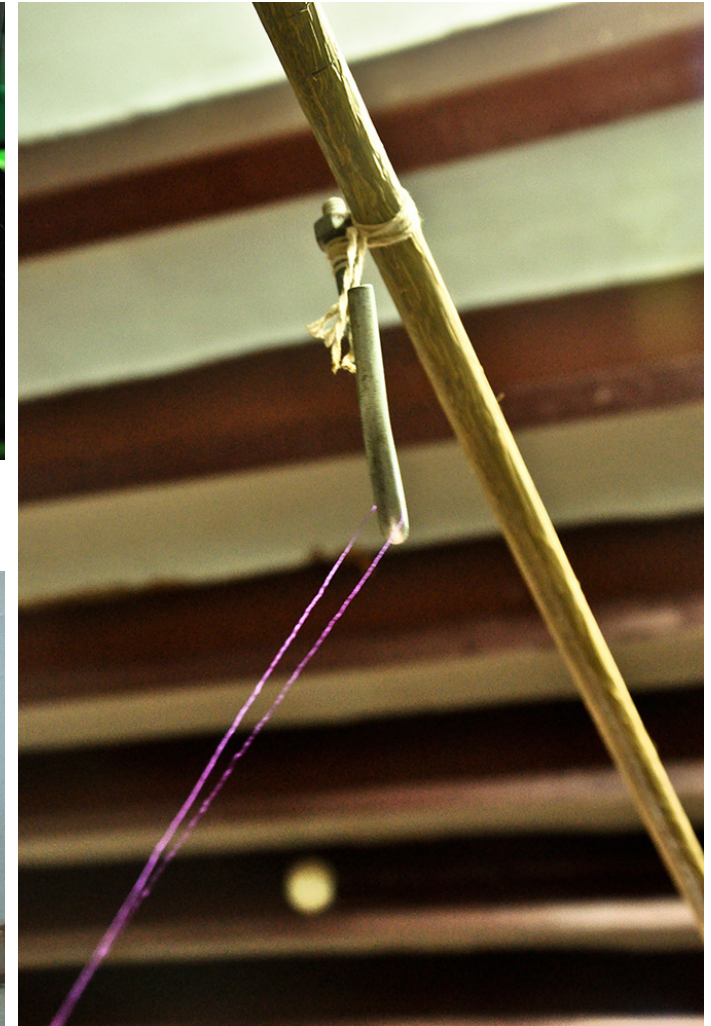
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The yarns are segregated and arranged as per the desired pattern to be weaved.



Silk yarns are wound to the parivattam.



With the help of holder tied to a stick, yarn is wound easily on parivattam.

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Craftsman rotate the parivattam held between their toes to wind the yarn.



The yarn is wound into pirns from parivattam with the help of Charkha.



These spindles are used in fly shuttle while weaving.



Planks (rakka palakas) are inserted in loom to tighten the thread for stiffness.

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Every part of the loom is checked and arranged properly before the weaving begins.

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Another plank is inserted horizontally between the warp threads to prevent from tangling.



Artisan begins to weave the saree creating intricate patterns with different colors of silk yarn.

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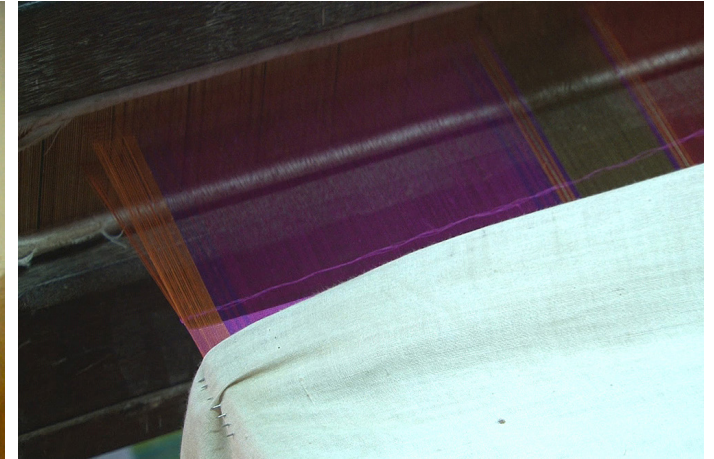
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Shuttle with weft color thread is used while weaving, which interlocks the weave.



The weaved part of the saree is held tightly with a plank with needles for stiffness and covered with a cloth.



Punch cards are used to insert the pattern of design.

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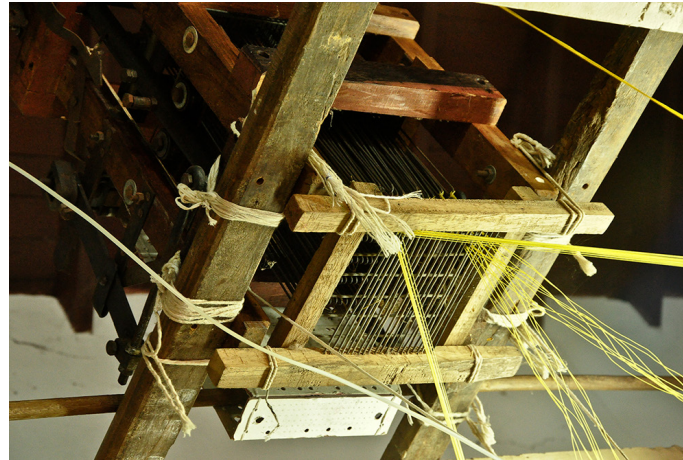
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Jacquard setting is placed on the top of the loom where the punch card is inserted.



Foot pedals are used to control the insertion of the pattern of designs.



Looms with adai are used to weave the silk saree.



The hand holder is pulled to keep changing the punch cards in the Jacquard to form the designs.

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These silk sarees are vibrant with zari borders and worn on festivals and other occasions, therefore referred as Pattu (Silk) Sarees. The popular designs in the border are brick, birds, animals, leaf, mango, nayapaisa, sovereign etc. The colors of the sarees must be pleasing and evoke consumer demand. The most popular colors used are blue, black, green and mustered. However, of late lighter shades are also quite popular.

Some of the popular designs worked into the saree are:

1. **THANDAVALAM or PARELLEL LINES:** Where the stripes run along the length of the saree.
2. **KOTTADI or CHECK PATTERN:** With squares or rectangle of various dimensions where the stripes run both the lengthwise and breadth wise.
3. **PUTTAS:** The figures and flowers are independently worked into the saree and joined to the pattern found on the saree.
4. **TISSUE SAREES:** The entire weft is woven with golden lace.



Chettinad sarees are mainly known for their check pattern designs.



Pallu of the saree are made with more intricate designs.

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Borders of these saree are filled with minute zari designs.



Most of the chettinad silk saree has broad borders with rich zari work on them.



Chettinad Silk saree pattern varies from richly ornamental to simple ornamental sarees.



The checks pattern saree pallu is designed with vertical or horizontal lines.

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Some saree pallus are designed with threads tied in the end known as Kutchu.

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